

Remarks at the Chief Petty Officer Pinning Ceremony
General David H. Petraeus
Al Faw Palace, Baghdad, Iraq
21 September 2007

Good Afternoon! Admiral Masso, Command Master Chief Covington, thanks for being here and thanks for the opportunity to attend today's Chief Petty Officer Pinning Ceremony.

It is very evident that a lot of hard work went into planning this event – and your hard work has certainly paid off. This event has been first-rate! Indeed, I cannot think of a more fitting way to pay tribute to our nation's 31 newest Chief Petty Officers. Well done. First Team Band, you sound great, as always. And, to our newest Chief Petty Officers, Congratulations again!

One of the greatest privileges of being the Commander of Multi-National Force-Iraq is serving once again in combat with our nation's finest Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen. It takes a collective effort to be successful in this challenging endeavor, and our team of teams has many go-to players achieving results. One of the teams that we repeatedly turn to for their wisdom, their good will, their authority on personnel relations, and their technical expertise is the Chiefs. These senior leaders of the world's finest Navy are serving across Iraq, excelling in positions as diverse as Chief Explosive Ordnance Disposalman, Chief Builder, Chief Hospital Corpsman, and Chief Cryptologic Technician. But regardless of the specific job, the specific skill set, or the specific location, these individuals are bound by the unique fraternity to which they all belong – the fraternity 31 more of you have joined here today in Baghdad, and that 50 other Chief Petty Officers have joined in ceremonies across Iraq – that of Chief Petty Officers.

By becoming a Chief, each of you is doing far more than simply pinning on anchors, changing your uniform, and donning a new cover. Beyond these outward signs of transformation, you are internally transforming as well. You are accepting new responsibilities and new privileges, ones that no other service grants, and ones that have been part of the Navy for over 114 years. As your creed states, your entire way of life

has changed. More will be expected of you; more will be demanded of you. You will now become your service's newest standard bearers and standard enforcers.

I know, however, that none of you are overwhelmed by the newfound expectations or increased demands. Each of you has been raised right and trained well by the scores of individuals who also assembled charge books and helped write the 114-year history of your ranks – Chiefs whose line you now join and extend. From what I understand that training only recently culminated, with your induction! And why don't you give a round of applause to all your mentors who stayed up late, ensuring you received the induction you deserved? I might add, though, that your mentors tell me they were up far longer than you were, swapping sea stories late into the night!

As a result of your training and your experience, you should not be daunted by what lies ahead of you. Instead, you should be excited about and honored by your increased responsibilities. And I am excited for each of you, for your Navy, and for our military. For I know that you are willingly accepting your new challenges to train another generation of junior officers and another generation of future Chiefs; to maintain high standards -- be it on ship, on shore, or in the sands of Iraq; to be the technical experts we continually rely on to help complete the mission; and to always be ready with an answer when we turn and "ask the Chief."

Congratulations again on your impressive achievements to date, and best of luck in your future endeavors. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this important ceremony. Congratulations!