DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
MASTER CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OF THE NAVY
2000 NAVY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20350-2000

5 November 2012

MCPON GUIDANCE MEMORANDUM (MGM) #2013 - 01

From: Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
To: Navy Chief Petty Officers

Subj: **ZEROING IN ON EXCELLENCE**

1. At our Leadership Mess Symposium in September, I mentioned that my refrain as MCPON will be *Zeroing in on Excellence*. For me, that is about solidifying our lines of operation with three fundamental focus areas:

(1) Developing Leaders;
(2) Good Order and Discipline; and
(3) Controlling What We Own.

In three supporting documents, I will share more detailed thoughts on each of these areas and begin to actively associate them with ways we can functionally support the CNO's Sailing Directions.

2. *Zeroing in on Excellence* is a universal theme we can all apply in our respective positions. It does not distract from or add to existing individual roles and responsibilities - it provides a sturdy framework around which we can build sound, durable readiness. Each of you has your own professional obligations, and your sustained success in meeting them is a large reason our Navy is the world's preeminent maritime force. I simply ask that as you carry out the business of leading Sailors, you do so not only with energy aimed at accomplishing a stand-alone task but also at building an environment where our entire organization gets stronger.

3. I believe developing leaders, fostering good order and discipline and controlling what we own help us get precisely that type of environment, now and down the road. These are not single actions; they are deliberate mindsets that permeate our processes and procedures. Each directly advances the CNO's tenets of warfighting first, operating forward and being ready. Each already falls within our assigned swim lane, and can be a powerful engine of influence if it becomes a heightened part of our consciousness.

4. I've said before that together, pulling methodically on the same line, our Navy CPO Mess has the credibility and fortitude to

effect sea change. If we grab *Zeroing in on Excellence* and maintain a steady strain on the ideas it entails, we will have a positive impact on readiness and get after some of the issues tainting our Navy, including sexual assault, suicide, domestic violence and alcohol/drug abuse. I need your leadership and support to make it work. Please begin the *Zeroing in on Excellence* drumbeat in your AOR and consider ways we can make it most effective. I welcome your thoughts. Thank you.

MIKE STEVENS
MCPON

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From: Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
To: Navy Chief Petty Officers

Subj: **ZEROING IN ON EXCELLENCE: DEVELOPING LEADERS**

1. I believe effectively and efficiently executing mission requires innovative leadership. Without competent leadership, even the most routine tasks can become difficult. In John Maxwell's book, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, he states, "Without leadership ability, a person's impact is only a fraction of what it could be with good leadership. The higher you want to climb, the more you need leadership." He calls this the **Law of the Lid**, which suggests "Wherever you look, you can find smart, talented successful people who are able to go only so far because of the limitations of their leadership". If our Navy is going to continue climbing, then we as Chief Petty Officers must always seek to increase our and our Sailors' ability to lead.

2. We develop leaders through a combination of mentorship, practical experience and training. Do not downplay the acute impact you have in your routine daily interaction with enlisted and commissioned Sailors on how they ultimately evolve as leaders. It, more than any other element, sets the tone for exactly how singularly irreplaceable personal example is in building bold, accountable, confident leadership.

3. Much to our advantage, we already have a solid inventory of quality leadership training available. We need to ensure that the right people are delivering the training at the right time in the right way.

4. If you have not already done so, I encourage you to download the Petty Officer Selectee Leadership training material (E-4 - E-6) from NKO and take a look at it. What you will find is that, by-and-large, it is robust training. Recently, we revamped the Chief Selectee Leadership Training course to include vignettes with year-round training modules. Done correctly, this is an outstanding course of instruction.

5. U.S. Fleet Forces and Pacific Fleet are also offering a one-day leadership course of instruction called "Fleet CPO Training." This is a shot in the arm that has proven to be very effective as noted in the large majority of critiques that have been received.

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6. The Senior Enlisted Academy (SEA) in Newport, RI continues to provide top-notch education for all eligible E7 - E9s. Unfortunately for the past several years, we have not seen the participation necessary to meet SEA capacity. This is an exceptional opportunity for our Chief Petty Officer to hone and develop their leadership skills at the level required to function as a Departmental Leading Chief Petty Officer and is a prerequisite to become a Command Master Chief. It is my personal opinion that there should be such a desire to attend this course that it would be standing-room only with a waiting list to attend.

7. The Command Master Chief / Chief of The Boat course is a two-week senior level leadership course that does an outstanding job of preparing our CMCs and COBs to take on the challenging duties of command leadership. For a select few, we also offer the Keystone Course joint training with National Defense University, and the Navy Senior Leadership Seminar Course in Monterey, CA.

8. CPO 365 is our year-round, steady-state process for preparing First Class Petty Officers to join the CPO Mess. I view this as our most pervasive and creative avenue to productively engage Chiefs with petty officers and junior officers, and to form enduring relationships characterized by mutual respect. It is deliberately dynamic in nature, ideal for our diverse working environments and limited only by imagination.

9. I believe that if we take full advantage of each of these resources and deliver them correctly and consistently, we have a great opportunity to increase our entire force's ability to lead and support the CNO's tenets of Warfighting First, Operating Forward and Being Ready.

10. It is my charge to every Chief Petty Officer to seek opportunities to receive and participate in consciously fostering the leadership necessary to ensure our Navy's continued success today and in the future. By enthusiastically doing so, you will make a positive difference to all enlisted and commissioned Sailors serving our force.

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From: Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy
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Subj: **ZEROING IN ON EXCELLENCE: GOOD ORDER AND DISCIPLINE**

1. Very few things have a greater impact on warfighting readiness and our ability to accomplish mission than *Good Order & Discipline*. *Good Order & Discipline* is something difficult to define but easy to sense. To me, it is about establishing, sustaining and enforcing professional standards that set the condition for individual and unit success. Anything that interferes with or detracts from those conditions is contrary to *Good Order & Discipline*.

2. By-and-large we are doing a solid job in this area, but I also believe there is an opportunity for us to "kick it up a notch." We know that when a CPO Mess is firing on all cylinders and leading by example, the entire command will respond in kind. I believe with all my heart that many of the challenges we face such as sexual assault, domestic violence and drug/alcohol abuse, are symptoms of a larger disease. This disease is often the fundamental breakdown or conspicuous absence of *Good Order & Discipline*.

3. I have come to fully respect and understand that when Chief Petty Officers decide to get after an issue together, there is nothing we cannot accomplish. Chiefs, our Navy and our Sailors need us to get after an issue. The issue is *Good Order & Discipline*. Chief Petty Officers … I repeat **Chief Petty Officers** … OWN *Good Order & Discipline*, and we MUST ensure that we are providing the leadership our Sailors expected the day they joined the Navy. If we don't, how can we expect others to?

4. Recently, I requested that members of my Leadership Mess query their own Messes to identify the top three areas where our Navy CPO community can make a positive, immediate impact *Good Order & Discipline*. After reviewing hundreds of responses, it became overwhelmingly clear that four areas stand out above all others:

(1) Leadership through personal example;
(2) Accountability commensurate with responsibility;

Subj: **ZEROING IN ON EXCELLENCE: GOOD ORDER AND DISCIPLINE**

(3) Clear, unambiguous and personal communication throughout the chain of command; and

(4) Excellence in the things we have rather than continuously inventing new solutions

5. Based on the Fleet feedback, it is my charge to every Chief Petty Officer to take full ownership of *Good Order & Discipline* and in a constructive approach, better set the conditions for success. We will do this first and foremost through personal example and integrity in our own actions. Our fundamental standard is to work hard, stay out of trouble and be good and decent people.

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Subj: **ZEROING IN ON EXCELLENCE: CONTROLLING WHAT WE OWN**

1. It is easy to become distracted by things that are beyond our control. World events, natural disasters and challenging global economics drive much of what you and I are unable to control. By leading and providing recommendations, we are sometimes able to influence the way our Navy responds to these things, but we cannot always predetermine an outcome.

2. That said, there are many things that you and I do own and control, including Good Order & Discipline, technical training, maintenance/administrative production, and the execution of orders. We also have the ability to control much of our own lives by becoming and remaining physically, mentally, morally and spiritually sound.

3. As Chief Petty Officers, we have the responsibility to lead our Sailors, mentor our junior officers, and ensure the Navy's mission is being accomplished. To do this effectively requires our absolute focus and attention. Making the Navy run is a job for professionals only - we simply do not have room for amateurs. Professionals know what the priorities are and where to apply energy - they are not easily distracted by white noise beyond their control.

4. My charge to each of you is to think about and "get after" those things that are most important and relevant to the success of our Navy and that are within your sphere of influence and control. If we do this collectively I am confident we will have a major impact on the readiness and mission accomplishment of the United States Navy.

MIKE STEVENS
MCPON