**Episode 25 – Chief’s Package**

**INFORMATION:** Discuss the process of composing and submitting a CPO package

**History Segment: History of the Chief Petty Officer**

http://navylive.dodlive.mil/2015/03/31/happy-122nd-birthday-chief-petty-officers/

Effectively running and fighting a warship relies on bridging the gap between officers and enlisted personnel. It was from this need that the creation of the rank of Chief Petty Officer was born.

Since the days of antiquity, highly skilled seamen have been prized for their knowledge and skill. As vessels grew more complex, duties began to split into different responsibilities, which evolved into a rating system that was first formally organized by the Royal Navy and later adopted by the U.S. Navy.

This system of rank and position aboard a ship traces its roots to English society. In his book “England’s Sea-Officers,” author Michael Lewis describes the creation of this system as a mix of two hierarchies, one of official ranks and a social divide between gentlemen and non-gentlemen.

According to “History of the Chief Petty Officer Grade,” by U.S. Navy Chief Warrant Officer 4 Lester B. Tucker, the earliest known use of the term dates back to 1776 when Jacob Wasbie, a cook’s mate, was pronounced “Chief Cook” aboard USS Alfred.

Although given the title, Tucker surmises that rather than hold any position of authority amongst the crew, it was to denote him as the foremost cook aboard the ship amongst his peers in his rating.

Perhaps the earliest formal attempt to create the rank of Chief Petty Officer came in 1853. Jason M. Juergens, author of the “Chief Petty Officer Leadership Thesis,” wrote that as manning levels increased to accommodate a growing fleet, attempts to establish the precedence of petty officers under Navy regulations began.

Initially approved by the President, it was revoked a few months later by the attorney general, as only Congress could approve these regulations.

The rank of Chief Petty Officer as it is recognized today was officially established April 1, 1893, and with the exception of schoolmasters, ships’ writers and carpenters’ mates, all petty officers of the first class were automatically shifted to the new rank in April 1895.

Ratings have come and gone to evolve with the modernization of the Navy, but Chief Petty Officer have been used to head these ratings in official capacities since 1893. According to Tucker, only two ratings have remained in continuous use since 1797 – boatswain’s mate and gunner’s mate.

Armed with official recognition, Chiefs of the past went on to lay the foundation for their modern day counterparts. As servant-leaders, they acted as the unique lynchpin between officers and enlisted personnel who executed daily operations, and also took a leading role in the career development of junior petty officers.

Additionally, Chiefs were celebrated not only for their technical expertise, but their administrative abilities as well. Knowledge in the intricacies of the ship’s daily operations and ability to coordinate with various departments gave Chiefs unique abilities that were unrivaled by even the most senior officers.

With this newly recognized position of authority and expertise they were bestowed with uniform devices to recognize their merit. At first, the only distinction was the advent of a rocker to their rating badge. According to Juergens, borrowing the master-at-arms rating that used three stripes, a single rocker was added and became official in 1894. The fouled anchor as a cap device was introduced in 1905; collar devices did not become an official part of the uniform until 1959.

Additionally, Chiefs were given their own space on ships. Referred to as the “Chief’s Mess,” it is off-limits to anyone else (officer or enlisted) without invitation and is affectionately called the “Goat Locker.”

Up until the Second World War, Chiefs evolved into disciplinarians that exercised and dispended a great deal of unwritten naval law. According to “The Role of the Chief Petty Officer in the Modern Navy” by Don A. Kelso, “they served as exacting supervisors, highly proficient specialists and acted as advocates to higher authority.”

After World War II, the demobilized Navy was left with a top-heavy organization that frequently utilized Chiefs in billets normally filled by junior petty officers.

Kelso cites that this overflow of manpower, compounded with administrative overhauls to the Uniform Code of Military Justice, which frowned upon negative enforcement of discipline, began to obscure the basic importance of the Chief Petty Officer in the modern Navy.

The changes did not go unnoticed. As Kelso writes, both Chief Petty Officer and commissioned officers recognized the dangers of reducing the vital role of Chiefs from servant leaders to mere figureheads.

Efforts began to repurpose the mess to reflect the prewar role of the Chief as leaders, specialists and the main liaison official between officers and the enlisted Sailor.

“The Chief Petty Officer is responsible for three facets of leadership relative to the men placed in his charge,” Kelso writes. The effective discipline of their Sailors, the effective supervising of the work their Sailors perform, and finally, to act as an advocate for their Sailors’ best interests.

These repurposing efforts of the past have carried on reflecting the Chief of today’s Navy. Chief Petty Officers fulfill a vital function in the operation of the Navy’s military and work schedule. Drawing on their past, they serve as technical experts, act as the liaison to commissioned officers and possess the ability to establish and maintain the conditions that provide Sailors with opportunities for success.

The ability to bridge the gap and provide solutions to both officers and enlisted personnel makes them not only silent professionals, but also ensures the old mantra, “ask the Chief,” shall remain a vital part of the Navy well into its future.

**I. Introduction**

A. Attention (There’s a lot of tribal knowledge, misinformation and speculation as to what should be in a Chief’s package. Turns out, there’s a book for that.)

B. Motivation (Knowing the policy, reading the book and following that guidance is how you, the board eligible Sailor, gets selected by the board.)

C. Overview (When I was coming up, I remember furiously searching for every scrap of information I could find on how to promote. I asked people, I read instructions, I googled it, everything I could think of. This led me to message boards, Facebook groups, speculations, rumors, guesses…essentially, misinformation. I started to question the book. I started to focus on the wrong things. I started to BELIEVE the wrong things about what I needed to be doing. And specifically, the construction of the Chief’s package. I literally spent time stressing out over whether I could or should use a PAPER CLIP. A PAPER CLIP. Seriously. Like using a paper clip would piss off some Master Chief so bad I would get black-listed forever. It was ridiculous. So, I’m going to do my best to dispel some of that and guide you through the process, BY THE BOOK, of how to construct and submit this important piece of your career progression.

\*\*\*Fair warning to my normal listeners! While this is GREAT TRAINING if you have the goal of becoming a Chief Petty Officer some day, this will be long and probably dry if you’re a junior E5 or below and are looking for normal leadership development type topics. This is specifically targeting prospective Chiefs so I just want to warn you in advance! If you stick around, that’s what you’ll be getting for the next hour or so.\*\*\*

D. Plug “Ask DGUTS!” segment. dontgiveuptheshippodcast@gmail.com

**II. Body**

A. Main Point 1 (What is a “Chief’s Package”?) – A Chief’s Package, is also known as you, the member’s, “Letter to the Board”. The Letter to the Board is your only authorized correspondence to the board. This is your ONLY opportunity to communicate any information to the selection board. There USED TO BE the ability for your command to communicate an award or significant qualification or achievement via Naval Message after the package deadline but before the board convening. This is no longer the case, which I’ll get into when we move on to references. But to get an idea of what this “Letter to the Board” looks like, first, get yourself over to the Navy Personnel Command’s (NPC) website, and go to the board’s page. This is the most up to date source of information on how to construct and submit your package. It will also guide you to where we always begin. The REFERENCES.

B. Main Point 1 (References) –This is especially important in this scenario. There are several resources, including NPC which we mentioned. But this time around we’re starting at the beginning with the NAVADMIN.

1. Sub-point (NAVADMIN) – ALL advancement cycles begin with a NAVADMIN. You can find it on the Navy Personnel Command’s website under “Reference Library > Messages > NAVADMINs” (http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/reference/messages/NAVADMINS/Pages/default.aspx). When the NAVADMIN is released, it contains a WEALTH of information for all cycles so ensure you’re taking the time to actually read it. In the case of the Chief’s board, it has significant and important information that affects you, beginning with the timeline. In paragraph 2 of the NAVADMIN, the timeline for the advancement cycle and selection board is laid out in detail. The most important date you will find there is the deadline for your package submission! Take note of this, it HAS TO BE THERE BY THIS DEADLINE. There is detail as to exactly when, down to the time zone and time an emailed package must be submitted. Paragraph 5 is equally important as it provides detailed instructions on reviewing your record as well as the ways you can submit your package and to which board (number) you are submitting it to! Take the time to run through this message with a high-lighter! I will cover submitting your package and the methods for doing so in detail more later.

2. Sub-point (Navy Advancement Manual, BUPERSINST 1430.16[series]) – The advancement manual is up next. This can also be found on NPC, under “Reference Library > Instructions > BUPERS Instructions” (http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/reference/instructions/BUPERSInstructions/Pages/default.aspx). Generally, I would tell you to start here, but as mentioned previously, the NAVADMIN SUPERCEDES THIS INSTRUCTION. There is specific information regarding a command’s ability to submit a message to the board on your behalf that is SUPERCEDED by the NAVADMIN, which explains that this is no longer the case. So make sure you START with the NAVADMIN. There is however, really great information contained in this instruction. Chapter 12 is titled “Enlisted Selection Boards” and in this chapter you will find things like the composition of the board, how quotas are determined, and particularly paragraph 1204; “DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD”. Want to talk about clarity on what they can see, it’s all spelled out for you RIGHT HERE. This paragraph references exactly what is considered which I will delve into in more detail next, but it’s your Official Military Personnel File (OMPF), your Personnel Service Record (PSR) and your Letter to the Board (Package). THAT’S IT.

3. Sub-point (MILPERSMAN) – Referenced within Chapter 12 of the Advancement Manual is MILPERSMAN Article 1070-080 (Official Military Personnel File). This can be found on NPC under “Reference Library > MILPERSMAN” (http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/reference/milpersman/1000/1000General/Pages/default.aspx”).

It references this article in the context of “Field Codes” for the documents in your OMPF that the board will review. These codes are 30 through 38, which are:

30: Procurement - contracts, enlistment, and reenlistment documents (e.g., service agreements and statements of understanding).

31: Classification and Assignment – history of assignments (miscellaneous correspondence on classification and assignment).

32: Administrative Remarks (entries required for permanent retention).

33: Separation and Retirement (e.g., DD-214 Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, DD-215 Correction to DD-214 Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty, statements of service, separation orders, reserve retirement point credit reports, Reserve Component survivor benefit plan election, casualty reports, miscellaneous separation, and retirement correspondence).

34: Miscellaneous Professional Service History - (e.g., DD-1966 Record of Military Processing – Armed Forces of the United States, OPNAV 5350/1 Drug and Alcohol Abuse Statement of Understanding, key employee determination, miscellaneous correspondence concerning professional service history).

35: Enlisted Performance Documents – performance evaluations (e.g., fitness reports, Service member rebuttal, letters of explanation, performance evaluation correspondence).

36: Training and Education (e.g., NAVPERS 1070/604 Enlisted Qualifications History, NAVPERS 1070/881 Training, Education, and Qualification History, language proficiency test, college transcript and diploma, completion certificates for courses not documented on NAVPERS 1070/604 or NAVPERS 1070/881).

37: Decorations, Medals, and Awards – personal award citations (e.g., NAVPERS 1070/880 Awards History, entitlement letters, weapon qualification letters).

38: Adverse Information (e.g., unauthorized absence, in hands of civil authorities, court memorandum, punitive letters, drug and alcohol abuse report, civil conviction/probation report, and adverse case files).

Now that we’ve finished off the references, lets talk about what the board can actually see.

C. Main Point 3 (What does the board see?): THIS is what wraps so many people around the axle and causes so much unnecessary stress for board eligible Sailors..SO, let’s see if we can’t provide some clarity. The CPO Selection Board can see your OMPF (Field Codes 30 – 38), PSR (Personal Data Summary and your Performance Summary Data), your Letter to the Board and whatever you send as enclosures. THAT IS IT. They can’t see anything else. Not NSIPS. Not PRIMS. NOTHING ELSE. So, if you WANT THEM TO SEE IT, IT GOES IN YOUR PACKAGE. You will constantly hear the advice given that “it’s YOUR package”. That is absolutely true. IF YOU WANT THE BOARD TO SEE IT, PUT IT IN YOUR PACKAGE. PERIOD. There are limiters, like don’t submit redundant information (things that are already in your OMPF), avoid ridiculously long documents, etc. But at the end of the day, if you believe the board should consider it in deciding whether your name ends up on that list, send it in.

1. Sub-point (OMPF) – REVIEW IT. If you do not know where your OMPF is…which I sincerely hope is NOT the case, you will find it at BUPERS Online (BOL) (https://www.bol.navy.mil/). Use those field codes to SCRUB YOUR OMPF. You need to a) make sure everything that is supposed to be there is, in fact, present (Awards, Evals, etc.). If not, there’s an enclosure to your package. But don’t stop there. Take that document to your personnel folks and GET IT IN YOUR OMPF! Fix your record. There’s absolutely no reason you should have 30 enclosures in your package. b) Make sure everything that’s there is SUPPOSED to be there! If it’s not yours, get rid of it! I used to have another guy’s evals in my OMPF and luckily caught it back when they were still paper. Review ALL THE FIELD CODES to ensure no ones adverse eval or mast documents are in your record. IT HAPPENS. If it IS there and you can’t feasibly get it fixed before package submission, THAT is something that you note in your Letter to the Board! Explain that this document is there, that it is not, in fact, you, and you’re working to fix it. That is sufficient notification to the board to discard that document from their grading of your package.

2. Sub-point (PSR/Eval Continuity) – This is a quick reference for board members to get the performance data off of your evaluations. It’s fairly straight forward when you look at it. Again, bring any errors you see to the attention of your personnel folks. Also, while on BOL, select the link for “CCA/Eval/FITREP Reports”. Next, you will see a link for “Performance Evaluation Continuity Report”. Click here. This report SHOULD show unbroken dates listing all your performance evaluations and at the bottom, under “Missing Periods” it should read “No Missing Periods.”. If it lists a missing period, or a “gap” in your eval continuity, you need to address that RAPIDLY. The board looks at your last FIVE YEARS of evals unless a tie exists, in which they will look back as far as is needed to break said tie. So, your evals need to be present in order for them to do that. Identify the period, get out your “I love me” binder and take a hard copy of that eval to your personnel office and submit it with your package with an explination in your Letter to the Board.

3. Sub-point (Letter to the Board) – Your “Letter to the Board” is just that. It is a properly formatted letter addressed to the selection board for which you are being considered. So, if you’re not familiar with the SECNAV Manual 5216.5 (Navy Correspondence Manual), this is an example of why you should be. There is an example template on the NPC Boards Page (http://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/boards/activedutyenlisted/Pages/GeneralInformation.aspx)

under “General Information”. Use this template and follow the instructions provided! Your letter should list all of your enclosures, have your name and full social, be addressed to the CORRECT BOARD NUMBER (found in the NAVADMIN) and be SIGNED. They WILL NOT ACCEPT AN UNSIGNED PACKAGE.

D. Main Point 4 (What goes in your package):

1. Sub-point (Letter) – Utilize your personnel folks to help you format. Follow the very detailed instructions in all the references and ensure you SIGN IT.

2. Sub-point (Enclosures) – Your enclosures are what make just a letter, a package. Your enclosures are what you want the board to see! This can be ANYTHING. It could be an eval or award not yet in your record, a qualification, a certificate or degree, a professional certification, a report from NSIPS (you can run reports and get things like your “Training Education and Qualification History; NAVPERS 1070/881” so you don’t need to submit a screenshot of NSIPS). It is important that each enclosure is legible, displays your FULL NAME, FULL SOCIAL (upper right corner) and ENCLOSURE NUMBER (lower right corner). Reference the Correspondence Manual or talk to your personnel folks on how to label these.

3. Sub-point (Career Summary Letter) – Ahh, the vaunted Career Summary Letter. I’ve heard wildly varying opinions on this. I’m not sure where it came from, but it got my attention when I was still wading through the tribal “knowledge”. I’ll tell that I have, on numerous occasions including the one that promoted me to Senior Chief, submitted a Career Summary Letter to a selection board. I want to very clearly and definitively state that I don’t believe this hand any real effect on by being promoted. I DO think I probably made some Senior or Master Chief’s job easier. And they’re reviewing HUNDREDS of packages each day. So if I make it easier for them to review my record, I’ve helped them out and helped myself by potentially ensuring they don’t miss anything important out of simple fatigue and being human. Win-win, so that’s why I decided to do it. Again, I don’t think it’s the difference between ANYONE being promoted or not. Just a helpful tool for the person reviewing your package.

E. Main Point 5 (How to submit your package):

1. Sub-point (Mail) – Mail it! There is specific guidance on how to do this in the Advancement Manual and NAVADMIN! DO NOT STAPLE ANYTHING! Just put everything, in order, in an envelop that will protect it and ship it to the address in the NAVADMIN to the correct board number for which you are being considered. The NAVADMIN specifically discourages certified mail as it can delay shipping.

2. Sub-point (Encrypted Email) – Scan it and email it! There are literally paid employees in Millington removing your paper copies, scanning them in, and shredding your originals. SO, why not save them the work? You can email it to cscselboard@navy.mil; but you must have the ability to encrypt it. If you can’t…

3. Sub-point (AMRDEC) – Army Safe File Exchange to the rescue! AMRDEC can be found at https://safe.amrdec.army.mil/safe/Default.aspx or just google “AMRDEC” and it’s the first thing you’ll see. This service requires a CAC login but will walk you through uploading your file (scanned package) and how to send a secure email. It will even give you the option of having them email you when your package is downloaded!

E. Main Point 5 (Board Member Brief):

CMDCM(SS) thoughts on letter to the board:

AT BEST, we grade about 20 to 25 records a day. We work 12 hour days, 6 days a week. (at least to begin with).

If you know someone but do not think you can be objective, you do not grade their record. If you know someone, and have adverse information about them that is not in the record you cannot say anything or you will be in trouble. If you know them and can clarify good points, you are allowed to add that information.

If a package is sent to the board it is scanned into the system used at Millington, which is different than any system available to Sailors BTW. If you send a package, it has to be reviewed. If you send the information do not worry so much about “pissing off the board” If it is pertinent the board will review it.

Review your NSIPS and PSR to look for any gaps in eval data. I have seen a missing eval cause a sailor not to get selected.

While the board looks at your entire record, the last 5 years of evals are what count. A missing eval 10 years ago will not make a difference in a sailors selection. Go back 6 years to be safe.

If an award is missing on your PSR, but we find it in your record, we count it.

If an award is missing on your PSR and your record, but you send it to the board, we count it.

If a qualification is not in your record but we find it in an eval, we count it.

If you include a certified copy of your page 4 with the qualification listed, we count it.

Things to include in your package (if not already in your OMPF):

1. Awards (NAMs, NCMs, SOQ, SOY) include copies of the certificate.
2. Copy of diploma or certificate for education
3. Last 5 years of evaluations, especially if you transferred; transfer evals are notorious for not getting entered.
4. Page 4’s with qualification or education data (NOT generally updated in OMPF).

I don’t think a career summary letter really makes any difference. We can read your evals and a PSR to get a pretty good idea of who you are and where you have been.

How the board works:

*Grading:* The board decides attributes to be graded (the scoring and points system is “secret”, but we determine what quals someone should have …DOOW, COW, DCPO, Senior in rate, *(DCTT, OOD, CDO),* etc. What collateral duties to grade: CCC, Urinalysis Coordinator, PFA Coordinator, SAPR, etc. We consider education, and community service. Watch qualifications are going to count more than collateral duties, and collaterals more than community service (generally…there is some equity but not much).

Strength of recommendation for Chief counts! *(Block 43)*. Do not have the recommendation removed to be replaced with “Recommended for Officer Programs”. The board wants to see the recommendation for Chief. The Officer programs will equate a great recommendation for Chief with a great recommendation for selection to an officer program. Plus for CWO/LDO stuff the Skipper is allowed to write a separate letter (*CO’s endorsement’s are required for Officer Programs applications*).

Two people will grade your record according to the previously mentioned attributes. If they are 100 points apart the two board members will discuss the differences, and it is normally resolved there. If they can not resolve it the record is given to two other members to grade.

*Deliberation*: Once the records are graded we find natural break in the grading. If we are selecting 20 sailors that line could be at sailor number 50. This list is then presented to board president and approved.

Then deliberation, or “murder board”. The board members from that panel who graded your record will brief that individual and we will vote, one over the other for every record. Sailors move up and sailors move down as we determine who is the most qualified. This can be a very heated process.

Once we have our slate, we take it to the board president and brief our last select and next three non-selects. If the president does not approve our slate, we go back to the previous process. If it is approved, it goes to “the Tank”.

*The Tank*: Your panel briefs your selections, criteria, description of your rate, etc. to the other panels (*ratings*). There is a secret electronic vote. If there is above a certain percent approval, your slate is approved and your recommendations for selection to chief are forwarded to NAVPERS. If not you go back to the murder board process until you have your selectees.

**III. Conclusion**

A. Summary (We talked about…)

1. What the “Chief’s Package” is and what it contains…

2. The references governing the process…

3. And how to construct and submit your package…

B. Re-motivation (Knowing the policy, reading the book and following that guidance is how you, the board eligible Sailor, gets selected by the board.)

C. Closing –

D. Plug “Ask DGUTS!” segment. [dontgiveuptheshippodcast@gmail.com](mailto:dontgiveuptheshippodcast@gmail.com)