MCPON testifies before Congress on hazing

Story and photo by MC2 Thomas L. Rosprim,
Office of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON)(SS/SW) Rick D. West testified before Congress March 22.

MCPON appeared before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel on Hazing in the Military along with top enlisted leaders from the Marines, Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard to discuss hazing prevention in the Navy and respective military branches.

"People are absolutely our most precious asset," said West. "Their individual success and Navy's collective mission accomplishment lie in our ability to provide an environment that promotes inclusiveness and a validated sense of value to the team."

Hazing is not tolerated in the Navy due to its demoralizing and destructive nature to an individual's self-esteem and detrimental impact on unit cohesion.

"The secretary of the Navy's instruction on hazing is the cornerstone of our approach to education, prevention, enforcement and accountability," said West. "Training on hazing, equal opportunity, and core values begins with recruits at boot camp and is reinforced regularly in a variety of forums throughout a Sailor's service."

Since 2009, 46 hazing incidents have been reported with 20 of these resulting in punitive, administrative or disciplinary action.

"Navy policy requires Commanders to formally report every suspected incident of hazing to the chain of command as soon as possible," said West. "Every Sailor has the responsibility to make the appropriate authorities aware of hazing. Those who commit violations of the policy and those in leadership positions who may tolerate such acts are held accountable."

MCPON pointed to the deck plate leaders aboard the ships and on the ground throughout the Navy as the pinnacle of success or failure of the Navy's hazing prevention policies and corrective measures.

Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Rick D. West and Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force James A. Roy speak together before testifying before the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel on Hazing in the Military at the U.S. Capitol March 22.

"We understand people are truly the singular measure of your Navy's success," added West. "We appreciate your passionate interest in protecting their welfare and stand committed to meeting your expectations."

Happy 119th birthday chief petty officers

A special from CDMC Paul Kingsbury
U.S. Naval Forces/Navy Region Japan,
Command Master Chief

Happy 119th birthday chief petty officers (CPO)! I was reflecting on the history and challenges that our community has faced in the last 119 years and I started to realize that every generation of chief probably has the same challenges and when we think the Navy has never been worse off, a quick stroll down memory lane makes you realize that's not really true. From a relatively quick read of history, you realize that each generation of CPO mess is presented with both organizational and operational challenges and that those challenges often repeat themselves, although they may be presented under different circumstances. However, regardless of that environment, the focus and expectation of the CPO mess stays the same. I always find myself going back to 1918, when an officer wrote guidance to CPOs in the Bluejackets manual:

(1) You have a position in which you must have expert knowledge of every detail that applies to your branch of the profession.

(2) Your duties in training and instructing men of lower ratings (I will add division officer as well) are even more important than your duties in connection with the material.

(3) Your conduct must be entirely above reproach and your daily life such as to set an example both from a personal as well as from a professional point of view.

(4) Whatever may be your special branch, always bear in mind the military side of the life. Comply strictly with the formalities of military life and require the same of your juniors.

(5) Yours is a position of honor and responsibility. Do your work from a sense of duty. Be thorough in all you do and require of your subordinates thoroughness and military exactitude.

We have all heard these duties in one form or another, whether in a discussion with our commanding officer, or in master chief petty officer of the Navy guidance, and though the words may change a bit, once you cut thru the fluff, you see the expectations and the core of what we do remains the same. As I read thru some of our history, I was amazed to see how past challenges parallel with the ones we are dealing with todays and/or those you remember as you progressed in your career. Let's take a look at some challenges our CPO mess has faced during our 119 year journey.

In 1970, Vietnam and the Cold War were our operational challenges. As far as organizational challenges….well, Navy climate at that time was not so good. Racism and retention were horrible. None of the programs that we take for granted today (Drug and Alcohol Prevention Advisor, Command Managed Equal Opportunity, Fleet and Family Service Center etc.) existed or were even considered. The MCPON's office was only just established to figure out solutions, but the position was not appreciated or supported by many senior officers. We were decommissioning 100 ships and as a result reducing manpower by 68,000 enlisted and 4,000 officers. Reenlistment quality control measures for E-3 and below and a review board for 4,061 SCPO and MCPOs with unfavorable evaluations was conducted, none were discharged but given letters of caution. "We had a problem in those days in the chiefs community," MCPON Black said. "Ten percent of the Chiefs were doing 90 percent of the bitching and none of the work. We cleared out a lot of dead wood. The word got around." Does any of this sound familiar to you?

In 1972 Admiral Zumwalt took over as CNO and a period of dramatic change was ushered in via his famous Z-grams. This was a period of increased operational tempo while drawing down both ships and personnel. On March 30, 1972, North Vietnam launched a major offensive against South Vietnam. The number of ships and units in Southeast Asia doubled. Reinforcements came from the Atlantic and Pacific fleets, impacting schedules and operating tempo all over the world. At shore stations, manpower was decreased to meet fleet requirements while support demands increased. One senior naval officer candidly remarked, "We cannot come close to one-in-three deployment ratios. With Atlantic Fleet (LANTFLT) carriers deploying to WestPac, all carriers are now averag¬ing 6.6 months in CONUS between 7.6 month deployments; present deploy¬ments for both LANTFLT and Pacific Fleet'(PACFLT) are projected as an average of 8.6 months."

*See **CPO** pg. 12*

CFAY VITA Center Tip of the Week

Death Gratuities: Any death gratuity paid to the survivor of a member of the Armed Forces is excluded from gross income.

Therefore, although you are receiving money as a result of a death gratuity, you do not have to include it on your 1040 as taxable income.

For more information, visit the Naval Legal Service Office or the CFAY Tax Center.