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NETC Commander advises Pensacola-area chief selects

PENSACOLA, Fla. – Rear Adm. Mike White, commander of Naval Education and Training Command met with chief petty officer selectees from the Pensacola-area military complex Sept. 2 to discuss their new role as leaders and mentors to the fleet.

The admiral was invited to address the group by Naval Air Station Pensacola's Command Master Chief, Jeffery Grosso as part of the CPO 365 transition process for the chief selectees. CPO 365 is a three-phase year-round training cycle aimed at preparing board-eligible first class petty officers to become future chief petty officers.

"I think it's very important to hear from Rear Adm. White on his expectations of a chief petty officer," said Grosso. "The chief selects not only need to know how important it is to take care of junior Sailors, but also how it is equally important to develop junior officers. To get the perspective of the admiral and how senior enlisted members had lasting impacts on him

throughout his career really sends the message home to our up-and-coming chief petty officers.

White shared his experience as a junior officer, just out of flight school in an A-7 squadron, where his command master chief advised him on being a better division officer and taking care of his Sailors. He stressed that one critical role of a chief is to help junior officers develop as leaders.

"The responsibilities of a chief petty officer are huge," said White. "Even the Harvard Business School acknowledged that the success of the Navy was due in large part to the chief's community. Their study of an aircraft carrier and the responsibilities delegated to chiefs was the foundation of the only business model that would permit such a complex operation to work.

Chief Naval Aircrewman (Sel) (NAC/AW/EXW/SW) Roger Richards, Aviation Rescue Swimmer School training chief valued the Admiral's opinion on his new role as a chief.

"I really appreciated Rear Adm. White taking the time with the selects and the value that he places on his senior enlisted members," said Richards. "He really stressed the difference in responsibility between petty officers and chiefs - and the transition from technical experts to primary leaders who mentor junior officers and counsel Sailors."

The NAS Pensacola CPO 365 process wraps-up for 2014 with the new chief's pinning on Sept. 16 at 9 a.m. in the Naval Aviation Schools Command Auditorium.

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Story by Ed Barker, NETC Public Affairs