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Former MCPON Provides Perspective to Sailors

Story by Lt. Andrew C. Legayada, TSC San Diego Public Affairs

SAN DIEGO – Retired Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) James L. Herdt spoke with Sailors from Training Support Center (TSC) San Diego aboard Naval Base San Diego (NBSD) June 7.

“It’s a rare opportunity for a former MCPON to visit our command and speak with our Sailors,” said TSC San Diego Command Master Chief (CMDCM) Daniel Marsch. “Our Sailors are fortunate to gain a fresh perspective from someone like him.”

Herdt, a machinist mate by trade, was selected as the ninth MCPON in 1997 and retired in 2002 after more than 35 years of service.

Herdt polled the audience to see how many Sailors had higher education degrees and explained that education increases capacity for growth and broadens a Sailors capability to accomplish tasks.

“We’ve never been as educated, fit, and proficient as you are today,” said Herdt. “The level of education among the enlisted ranks is exponentially higher than before.”

In addition, he praised the CPO 365 program as a powerful and profound program that grooms first class petty officers for higher leadership positions with heavier responsibility.

“Being a chief petty officer is all about teaching and mentoring Sailors,” said Herdt. “Sailors join the Navy to show what they can do; they turn to the chief petty officer to learn how to do things.”

Herdt praised current MCPON, Michael D. Stevens for his leadership and provided some guidance on how Sailors can better prepare themselves to become a candidate for MCPON.

“With the right people, we can do so much and fundamentally improve our Navy,” he added.

“It’s an honor to have a former MCPON provide some guidance and perspective to our Sailors,” said Capt. John D. Wilshusen, TSC San Diego commanding officer. “His diverse experiences serving in air, surface, and sub-surface platforms throughout his 35 years of service hold valuable lessons for our Sailors.”

Some of Herdt’s tours included serving as the command master chief aboard USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), Naval Training Center Great Lakes, and as the Force Master Chief at Naval Education and Training Command. He is a graduate of the U.S. Navy Senior Enlisted Academy and holds a Master of Business Administration degree with a concentration in human resources management from Florida Institute of Technology.

Training Support Center San Diego provides centralized student management and training support to 24 Naval Education and Training Command Learning Sites throughout the Pacific rim.

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