

DCCM Jeffrey Miller

I am sure that many of you are like me. For better or worse you can name the top and bottom five people who had influence in your Coast Guard career. I don't have to think twice about who influenced me the most. To many he appeared a tad bit unconventional. To be honest, DCCM Jeffrey Miller is and was downright quirky. But if you have ever served with him you are aware of his tireless work ethic and his relentless, yet subliminal, leadership style. His impact on me has literally crossed over into both my professional and military lives.

In 1986 I was a PS3 assigned to Reserve Unit Long Beach Island (RU LBI), NJ. RU LBI had two stations supported by our unit, Station Barnegat Light and Station Beach Haven. I was languishing at Barnegat Light. A victim of too many personnel and not enough boats or hours to get some of us qualified. Our Reserve Commanding Officer at the time was Lt. (now Captain, Ret.) Dan Croce. He was looking for two personnel to voluntarily transfer to Beach Haven to offset a manpower deficit. PS3 Mike Dreher and I volunteered and my career was forever changed. Prior to reporting in I got a letter, in the actual US Mail, from my new Chief Petty Officer. In this letter he gave me a thumbnail sketch of personnel assigned and noted at the end that I "should be prepared to work." The first time I met him he called me "dude." When you think of when that was he was rather trendy and still continues to be. Because I and many others are still "dude." What I did find out was that when Chief Miller advised that we would be training he wasn't kidding. In reality he was the prototype of what we would later be calling the Senior Enlisted Reserve Advisor or SERA. Drill weekends were an event that I looked forward to because we had an interesting crew of characters in the "*Beach Haven Mafia*." BM3 Williamson, BM3 Princiotta, MK3 Williams and to name a few and there was constant activity. I got qualified as a Communications Watchstander, Boat Crewman and Boarding Officer in the first year. He also put a great emphasis on EPME and coaxed us forward toward taking the Servicewide Exam and advancing. We also did unconventional training, for that time period, venturing into the "camouflage world" by drilling with the Air Force aircrews and Army Special Forces. In 1990 this cross training paid dividends as eight of us from LBI were called to active duty in support of Operation Desert Shield/Storm. Seven of us deployed with PSU's to Saudi Arabia including Jeff.

In 1994 when I was advanced to Chief Petty Officer he was my sponsor for the CCTI process. He also drove me insane until I put in a package to attend the Chief Petty Officer Academy. Back then it was not a requirement or automatic and a selection process was conducted for potential attendees. I am a proud graduate of Reserve Class No. 4 and several other "sister service" senior enlisted schoolhouses. He made me realize that being a "PME junkie" was a good and necessary thing for Senior Enlisted Leaders. The three shipmates listed above all either continue or retired as Master Chief Petty Officers. George Williamson currently serves as the Command Master Chief of the Reserve. Bill Princiotta retired as the D5 Reserve Command Master Chief. I had the distinct privilege of serving in several Gold and Silver Command Master Chief posts before retirement. The common denominator for all of us: Master Chief Jeff Miller. Jeff

has always led by example and has showed many of us the true meaning of taking care of your people. His counsel is always sought and is greatly appreciated by me.

The “dude” is and will always be a great friend, mentor, DC, surfer, carpenter, lighthouse maintainer, husband, father and grandfather. His leadership style is abstract at best. But whether he knows it or not he sure has impacted a lot of folks out in the field.

MCPO Bill Dikun (Ret.)

(11/6/2019)