

**100 Great Chiefs**  
**Nomination: YNCM Linda Laswell, USCG (retired)**

The Chief who inspired me the most (and still inspires me today) is YNCM Linda Laswell, retired. She served in the Coast Guard from March 16, 1986 to December 1, 2013. When I met Linda in 2003, she was a YN1, about to make YNC, serving as the Executive Petty Officer (XPO) of the brand new small boat station in Valdez, Alaska. Her expert handling of the logistics, training, and varied personalities of the people newly assigned to that harsh environment was amazing. Even though she was a YN by trade, expert in pay, personnel and travel, she took on the role of Boarding Officer, she was a small boat coxswain, she was a cold weather survival specialist, and she also had a great working knowledge of Military Out Load (MOL) operations and Marine Safety. I had never met a person working out of rating who could do everything that she did. She taught me the value of stepping outside your comfort zone, and that hard work will always pay off. She also knew how to take care of her people, regardless of the situation, and many of us relied on her kindness and sound judgement on more than one occasion. Though she was a Reservist, she took on many challenging extended active duty (EAD) assignments. One notable assignment was as the YNCM Logistics Chief at Marine Safety Unit Port Arthur, Texas where she led her crews and their families through several potential crises. Quickly assessing existing problems, she prepared and negotiated contracts with outside entities prior to two devastating hurricanes to ensure lodging for 500+ members and families. She developed and initiated a plan to track all members and their families during mandated evacuations resulting in 100 percent accountability of everyone through each disaster. This plan and methodology is still used in Port Arthur today. When she won the Angela McShan Inspirational Leadership Award in 2007, I was not surprised. She has always had time to mentor me (and many others) in my career, and I still rely on her advice and opinions today.

Master Chief Laswell blazed trails for women like me in the Coast Guard, and I am a Command Master Chief now because of her. She gave me the courage to reach higher and taught me how to be a fair and effective leader.