

## **The Chief Who Inspired Me Most**

*by BMC Patrick Davis*

My good friend and fellow Chief, although he did go Chief Warrant Officer, who has inspired me throughout his career and mine, is Craig Brewis. Craig had a Coast Guard career that took him from east coast to west coast, and North Pole to South Pole. Craig devoted his time in the Coast Guard to making sure his people always had what they needed. As a result of his hard work, he has been a mentor to many people in the Coast Guard, especially me.

The year was 1989. Craig, a newly pinned Electrician's Mate Third Class, arrived for duty on the CGC TAMAROA. I was a merely a non-rate striking Quartermaster, but we became good friends. He and his wife, Tricia, would open their home to us to just get away from boat life from time to time. Our friendship took us to ports like Key West, Grand Cayman, and a wonderful trip to Little Creek for REFTRA. I finally received my orders to QM "A" school and it was time for me to move on. After graduating from "A" school, I got transferred to Panama City. Craig, knowing that I was stationed on CGC KODIAK ISLAND, made it a point to stop when he was on a MAT team visits from Tampa. Friends always look to find other friends when they go somewhere. Craig was certainly no different.

Time went by and I decided to end my Coast Guard career. I moved to Georgia yet had a summer house in Maine. I was again contacted by Craig, this time it using the new technology of e-mail. He said that he was stationed at the Recruiting Office in Providence, Rhode Island. From that point on, whenever we went to Maine during the summer, or when we rang in New Year of 2000, he was always there. I recall one time in Maine, a friend was getting married and asked to use the back yard for their wedding since it had a remarkable ocean view. Without hesitation I agreed and then advised Craig of what weekend it was going to be. As the wedding was about to start, the flower girls got cold feet. Embarrassed by all of the people there, they insisted that they could not perform their mission. Being the creative spirit that he is, Craig took hold of the flower pedals and assumed the role of flower girl. Again, thinking outside of the box, he did whatever it took to help others.

Craig retired from the Coast Guard in 2007 after 20 years of honorable service. I remember talking to him and his excitement to retire. One thing he mentioned was how proud he was to have achieved the rank of Chief and to retire as a Chief Warrant Officer. Realizing that I had joined the same year that he had, I too could have been retiring myself. As I mentioned that to him, you could hear the recruiter in him come out. He simply mentioned, "Have you thought about the Reserves?" I had not, but looked into it. His simple phrase made me look into returning the Coast Guard. In 2008, thanks to Craig, I was back in.

After coming back into Coast Guard, I was sent to Boatswain's Mate "A" School in Virginia. Knowing that Craig lived three hours away, I decided to go to Maryland to pay him and his family a visit. I remember one night as we were talking at his house, he pointed to a mannequin in the corner. This mannequin had on the dress whites of a Coast Guard officer, but the Combination Cover of a Chief. Craig pointed to that cover and firmly stated, "That is the

first cover you will wear as a Chief.” Those words echoed loud as I worked my way towards making Chief.

In 2016 I was advanced to Chief. One of the first people that I had to tell was Craig. I called him to let him know. After the congratulations, he asked when the pinning was and when I would be going through Initiation. I told him I would let him know. I remember these words as clear as a bell, when he said, “You better, because I am gonna be your damn sponsor.” The day of my pinning, I was honored to have Craig pin me, and yes, that Combination Cover was that he showed me back in 2009 was firmly placed upon my head. As for CCTI, the first day required PCPO and sponsor to be in tropes. I held up my end of the bargain and Craig arrives in a Hawaiian shirt, cargo shorts, and flip flops. There was no mistaking who my sponsor was. During CCTI, Craig was also a mentor to the other PCPO’s going through. Being a Chief to him means friendship and unity, and to pass along the teachings from his vast storehouse of knowledge. He did just that and much more.

Craig inspired me through all of his trials and tribulations throughout his Coast Guard career. Never losing his determination to succeed and help others, he pressed on, leading and conducting business as any good Chief would do. From being awarded Recruiter of the Year, to being deployed on CGC POLAR SEA, to being an inspector in Houma, Louisiana, Craig never lost his focus. As a direct result of what he did in his Coast Guard career, I have been determined to equal or better his long list of accomplishments. Since becoming a Chief, I constantly seek his advice and his knowledge. If one were to say that I was a good Chief, it can be attributed to Craig. He is still a friend and a mentor. Without Craig, I am not sure if I would have had a second chance in the Coast Guard. He has made me a better person and a better Chief. I know there are many others out there that would say the same exact thing,