

Last wish granted for Navy Sailor

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“Ask the chief” is a saying many service members come to know and respect. Being a Navy chief has more meaning than many realize because the role of a chief entails being relied upon by both subordinates and seniors to get things done, especially if a service member has an issue or crisis situation.

Chiefs must be the example of an exceptional service member that sets the tone for others. Only 10 percent of enlisted in the Navy achieve the rank of chief petty officer. To attain chief, a Sailor must pass the test for rank and be selected for chief at a board.

For Petty Officer First Class John Hubbert, Navy Operational Support Center Phoenix, achieving the rank of chief was a goal just outside of reach, but through the efforts of Master Chiefs throughout the Chain of Command, Hubbert was able to put on Chief Petty Officer anchors on March 13, 2015.

“Being a chief is very unique in the Navy because it’s not just a promotion, it’s a change of uniforms and lifestyle,” said Command Master Chief Scott deLage, Navy Operational Support Center Phoenix command master chief. “It’s a brotherhood, a way of life, it becomes who you are. Chief Hubbert’s goal was to wear the chief anchors.”

According to deLage, Hubbert joined the Navy as active duty and crossed over to the Reserves. After 10 years in the Reserves and a deployment where he was mobilized with the Naval Expeditionary Logistics Support Group during Operation Iraqi Freedom, he took an administrative reduction in rank to rejoin active duty because of how much he loved the Navy.

“He embodied the Navy core values of honor, courage and commitment,” Chief Petty Officer Joseph Corley, NOSC Phoenix leading chief petty officer. “His best quality was his ability to make those around him want to be better, because he always put others before himself.”

As service members advance through their careers, one has to question what contributions or regrets they might have or leave behind.

“Hubbert’s lasting contribution, or at least how to sum it up, would be how much it means to be a chief,” deLage said. “His one regret was that he would be unable to test for chief or attend a board and with his record he would have performed well at a board.”

Few Sailors at the NOSC knew Hubbert personally but many knew his goal and how much he wanted it.

“I only knew John for a short time, however, in the four months I got to know the man, husband, father and Shipmate that he was,” Corley said. “John was only a chief for a short week, a week I’m so happy he got to experience. He refused to take his khaki top off the night he put on chief and wanted to sleep in it. I’m so proud to have gotten a chance to know John. He will forever be my brother.”

Chief Petty Officer John Hubbert passed away on Mar. 17, 2015, due to cancer, only four days after assuming the rank of chief.