

Things All Junior Officers and Company Commanders Need To Know About The “Chief”

By CW4 Christopher Volkert, August 2010

1. Chief can teach you about a lot of things, if only you will listen.
2. Chief can be your most valued advisor, and among your best mentors, if only you will listen.
3. Chief can save you from yourself when you're about to screw up, if only you will listen.
4. Chief will “tell it like it is”. Don't mistake this for disrespect or arrogance. As a commander, you can't fix problems if no one tells you about them. If you are surrounded by people who are afraid to give you the bad news, you aren't getting the unvarnished truth you need.
5. Chief won't be a “yes” man. Again, do not confuse this with disrespect or arrogance. He's trying to help you succeed in your mission. If everyone is in agreement and thinking alike, chances are that no one is really thinking.
6. It may seem at times that Chief is resistant to “The Plan”...that's because he's probably been on the receiving end of numerous misguided Great Ideas, and he understands what they can put the Soldiers and the unit through. Things look a lot different from the foxhole than they do from the PowerPoint presentation. Chief knows what works, and perhaps more importantly, what doesn't work.
7. When it comes to his area of expertise, let Chief call the shots. Weigh in with the power of your command when needed. Support his efforts to support you. Chief is only as effective as you enable him to be.
8. Chief is not a lieutenant. Do not treat him like one, even if he's only a W01. Remember he probably has several years of enlisted and NCO experience. Don't micro-manage or hang over his shoulder. He needs your guidance, but not necessarily your constant direct supervision. Give him room to succeed.
9. Give Chief his “fair share” of additional duties, but don't forget what the Army selected and trained him to do. Allow him to practice his craft, so he can become the Subject Matter Expert the Army needs in the future.
10. Like you, Chief needs to go to school. Don't deprive him of opportunities for Warrant Officer Advance Course (WOAC), Warrant Officer Staff Course (WOSC), and Warrant Officer Senior Staff Course (WOSSC) without very good reason.
11. Chief will never let you down – be sure you can say the same in return.