



An Interview With Master Chief Petty Officer Melvin Lewis

Please describe your experience with the Navy: What motivated you to enlist? How long have you served? What is your current rank? Where are you stationed? What are your responsibilities?

I am a Master Chief Petty Officer (E-9), Master-At-Arms (Navy Police), and I have been in the Navy for over 21 years. I am currently stationed at Commander of Pacific Fleet (COMPACFLT) in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. I work in the Anti-Terrorism Force Protection Office. Some of my responsibilities include, but are not limited to, tracking a myriad of Navy ships as they pull in and out of various ports and ensuring that the ships have properly trained personnel who can effectively protect the ship while in port. We oversee the AT/FP training and policies of shore installations, and I have worked on numerous ships in the Navy—engaging in law enforcement/anti-terrorism duties and communications.

Please describe your experience with the Certified in Homeland Security Program: How did you first hear about CHS? What motivated you to join? What effect has CHS had on your professional development?

My experience with the CHS program has been nothing less than outstanding. Marianne Schmid (Chief Association Officer of the CHS program) was very nice and professional. She answered all my questions in a timely manner, which made the training session go very smooth. I have always had

an interest in Homeland Security, so when I found out (through the Navy COOL program) that CHS was offering a certification course, I jumped at the chance to get this training. Since attending the CHS Level IV and V training, I have gained a much better understanding of how to be better prepared in the event an attack would happen in our country, and I understand how each section of the Homeland Security department works with local and state agencies. I have also been able to provide invaluable knowledge to the various training teams in my local area to help improve our training and awareness.

What was the certification class like? Feel free to comment on the instruction, the content of the class, or any other aspect of the course.

The certification class was very informative, with open dialogue and personal experiences related to the topics being discussed. The class provided lots of history-related topics on various types of attacks, the methods that were used, and in some cases, personnel involved. We were taught various weapons that were used in the attacks and shown some very intense, but enlightening, videos. We were also taught the different levels of Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, and Explosives: the characteristics of each, how they are used, and their effects. The training was phenomenal; it left me with a broader knowledge of homeland security and more prepared to effectively react to any given crisis.

What feedback did you receive from the others in the class?

I was the organizer for Hawaii's first CHS training session. We had over 50 personnel attend the training, and I have received nothing but great comments and thank you's for bringing this training to Hawaii. Numerous personnel that attended have asked me if there are more types of CHS training that could be given; and, because of the great reviews, the personnel who could not attend have asked if I could schedule another training session and if CHS could come back to Hawaii. There is another one scheduled for May of 2009.

How do you anticipate the certification will contribute to the Navy?

In my opinion, this certification has prepared a great number of its personnel in disaster preparedness and will greatly enhance the Navy's ability to respond to and assist any local or state government with combating the War on Terror.

How will the information presented benefit the sailors? How will the credential affect their careers?

As with any training, the CHS certification will greatly affect the value of a sailor and provide an in-house subject matter expert to the Navy. Another benefit is that a person with this, and any other similar certification, will have a greater chance of promotion than a person who does not have this training.