

## Foreword

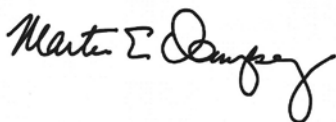
All of us who have served in uniform—from the newest recruits to four-star generals and admirals—have respected and learned from the outstanding men and women who wear the chevrons, anchors, and stripes of our noncommissioned officer and petty officer corps. We know them to have exceptional competence, professional character, and soldierly grit—they are exemplars of our Profession of Arms.

Through the nature of their charge, our force's mid-level enlisted corps bears tremendous responsibility for accomplishing the mission. Just as important, they uphold the moral obligation for the care and success of the men and women they lead.

The mid-grade enlisted force plays a unique role within the entire force. They are the frontline of our profession. They represent our values, behaviors, and character to our most junior ranks every day, no matter what transitions we face today or challenges we will face. Noncommissioned officers and petty officers also safeguard the voice of the enlisted force, informing senior leaders' decisions with candor and care.

Our noncommissioned officers and petty officers have chosen the uncommon life unique to all members of the Profession of Arms, a life of service and sacrifice, grounded in our sacred oath to defend the Constitution. I am enormously proud of them. Their honorable service on and off the battlefield has earned America's respect and trust. And the mutual trust they build with their subordinates, peers, and superiors enables them to be the Backbone of the Armed Forces.

To the intrepid noncommissioned officers and petty officers who will use this book to advance your careers and our profession, thank you for your service and for the example you provide to the force.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin E. Dempsey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping 'D' at the end.

—Martin E. Dempsey  
*General, U.S. Army*  
*18<sup>th</sup> Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff*