

E-PME *Enlisted* PROFESSIONAL MILITARY EDUCATION

Heritage of Rates 4-7.01-K

KNOW the heritage that led to the creation of the following rates,

- Chief Petty Officer
- Senior Chief Petty Officer
- Master Chief Petty Officer

Heritage of Rates The Coast Guard is distinguished as one of America's armed forces with a proud humanitarian heritage. Many Coast Guardsmen are willing to sacrifice personal interests to accomplish our missions and to defend our Nation.

This unique military and humanitarian identity demands leadership grounded in integrity as well as professional competence. It requires leaders with an understanding of a broad range of leadership techniques. They need to be able to apply these techniques appropriately and across a wide variety of situations involving every component of Team Coast Guard.

This section presents the heritage for the senior enlisted corps.

Chief Petty Officer



The nautical origin of the Chief Petty Officer goes back to April 1, 1893, when the Navy created this rank. Earlier use of the title "Chief" can be traced back to 1865 during the Civil War era.

The merger of the Revenue Cutter Service and the U.S. Life Saving Service in 1915 brought about a need for a position of higher authority. A clash ensued between the "Surfman" of the Life Saving Service and the "Petty Officer" of the Revenue Cutter Service as to whom was in charge. To resolve the issue, the higher authority position of Chief Petty Officer was created.

On May 18, 1920, the 55th U.S. Congress officially approved and established the Coast Guard's Chief Petty Officer grade. Since the Coast Guard adopted the Navy's rate structure, its chiefs inherited equal status with their Navy counterparts.

***Chief Petty Officer
(continued)***

The first Coast Guard chiefs were the former station keepers of Life Saving stations. They were given the title Chief Boatswains' Mate (CBM) with an (L) for "Lifesaving" attached to their rate to distinguish them from their seagoing counterparts.

Since its inception, the Chief Petty Officer has led the enlisted ranks and is responsible for bringing the crew's concerns to the attention of the command and for enforcing policies. Many Chiefs have served with honor, respect, and devotion to duty in the finest traditions of the Coast Guard.

When conditions arise that demand experienced leadership, the Chief is called upon to address the issues. The words "Ask the Chief" resound throughout the Coast Guard.

Senior Chief Petty Officer and Master Chief Petty Officer



The heritage of Senior Chief Petty Officer and Master Chief Petty Officer are intertwined. In May 1958, Congress established two additional senior enlisted pay grades, E-8 and E-9, with the enactment of Public Law 85-422. Each service was left to define its two new pay grades. Although the Coast Guard adopted the Navy's version, Coast Guard roles did not accurately match Navy roles as the two had different missions.

Service-wide examinations for outstanding Chiefs were held on August 5, 1958. On November 1, 1958, Master Chief Yeoman Jack Kerwin became the first Coast Guardsman to advance to E-9. A few months later, a second group of Chiefs from the February 1959 examinations were elevated to E-8 and E-9 effective on May 16, 1959.

However, little had changed in terms of identifying new roles and responsibilities for E-8s and E-9s. So, a role and responsibility analysis was conducted.

Under the guidance of the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Coast Guard, Vincent Patton, the Senior Enlisted Advisory Team (SEAT) conducted a cursory review of the language and contents of Public Law 85-422 and its usage within our current Coast Guard human resource system.

Upon review of the collected data, SEAT members quickly realized that the Navy's definition of Public Law 85-422 did not align with Coast Guard organizational missions.

This resulted in chartering a Senior Enlisted Needs Assessment (SENA) study to identify and realign our Senior Enlisted ranks. Based upon historical data, the SENA was the first known comprehensive analysis of E-8 and E-9 ranks.

Senior Chief Petty Officer and Master Chief Petty Officer (continued)

The Coast Guard's goal was to shape an enlisted force that would best meet the requirements of the service while, at the same time, provide career opportunities for those who serve.

The new role identified for Senior and Master Chief Petty Officers includes, as always, career preparation and job skill development for our junior people. The Coast Guard senior enlisted corps need to provide the foundation so personal development is culminated along the way in one's career path. They must represent the *experience* of the enlisted ranks where leadership has traditionally been expected.

The single most important variable in the Coast Guard's Enlisted Career Development Program is that Senior and Master Chiefs *set the example* for the entire fleet.

Senior and Master Chief positions are too critical to be filled by anyone representing less than *the best* and must be *imprinted* with only the best of Coast Guard role models. In this regard, Senior and Master Chiefs have one of the most important jobs in the Coast Guard...*being a Coast Guardsman*.

A recent analysis of Coast Guard leadership indicates that the "organizational leadership" most often affecting enlisted performance is from the Chief Petty Officer corps rather than the Officer corps.
