



## CHIEF PETTY OFFICER BIRTHDAY

*1 April 1893*

**GENERAL ORDER 409**

- On April 1, 1893, Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Tracy issued General Order 409 **establishing the rank of chief petty officer**. The rank was first adopted into nine enlisted ratings.
- Original nine rates: Master-at-Arms, Boatswain's Mate, Quartermaster, Gunner's Mate, Machinist's Mate, Carpenter's Mate, Yeoman, Band Master and **Apothecary (forerunner of today's Hospital Corps)**.
- Every year, April 1 is celebrated across the Navy to honor the dedication and accomplishments of senior enlisted leaders (E-7, E-8, and E-9), both past and present.



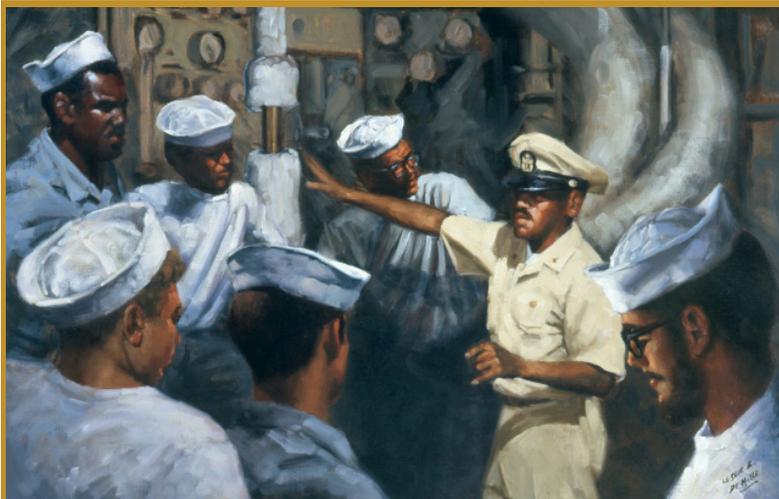
### HOSPITAL STEWARDS: NAVY CHIEF PETTY OFFICER ADJACENT

- When the Hospital Corps was established on June 17, 1898, it was composed of **warrant officers** (pharmacists) and **enlisted Sailors serving in three grades**—hospital apprentice, hospital apprentice first class and hospital steward.
- Although **hospital steward was equivalent to an E-7**, there were no enlisted chiefs (by name) to be found in Navy Medicine.
- On Aug. 22, 1912, warrant officer pharmacists with six years of service were eligible to be promoted to the **new rank of chief pharmacist**.
- On Aug. 29, 1916, the Hospital Corps was organized into six new enlisted grades, among them **chief pharmacist's mate**.
- On Dec. 1, 1916, **360+ hospital stewards transitioned to the grade of chief pharmacist's mate**. Among them was Robert Stanley, Navy Medicine's first Medal of Honor recipient.

### NAVY HOSPITAL CORPS CHIEFS TODAY

ORGANIZATION	NAVY MEDICINE	UNITED STATES NAVY BUREAU OF NAVAL PERSONNEL	UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS	UNITED STATES FLEET FORCES COMMAND	COMMANDER UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET	NAVAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING COMMAND FLEET READINESS STARTS HERE	UNITED STATES NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE COMMAND
USN E-7	637	23	290	169	138	105	65
USN E-8	158	8	70	54	57	10	13
USN E-9	94	3	14	18	20	5	4

\*as of March 2026



Reservists receiving instructions from their chief aboard USS Strong, August 1972. Painting by Leslie Benjamin De Mille, 1972. Navy History and Heritage Command

## WHY THE FOULED ANCHOR?

While the origins of the fouled anchor can be traced back to British Royal Navy as early as the 16th century, the symbol has evolved into the quintessential hallmark of chief petty officers. It represents the inherent challenges of leadership. The “foul”—the anchor chain wrapped inextricably around the shank—represents the daily trials, unforeseen obstacles, and complex burdens that a chief must navigate. Wearing the fouled anchor signifies that one has not only endured these tribulations but has mastered them, serving as the steadying force amidst the storms.



## AWARDS & DECORATIONS



**NAVY CROSS**

**9**



**SILVER STAR**

**47**



**BRONZE STAR**

**160+**

\*These numbers only includes individuals who were E-7 and above at the time of action that would earn them the combat medal.

- **HMCS Donel Kinnard (1936-2009)** served in the Navy from 1954 to 1979, including two tours in Vietnam. He was awarded the Navy Cross for actions with Underwater Demolition Team Twelve (UDT-12) Detachment Golf in the Mekong Delta, while then an E-7.
- After retiring from the Navy, Kinnard became an advocate for veterans' health. He was later honored as the namesake of a cemetery in his homestate of West Virginia.



## HONOR & REMEMBRANCE

Since 1916, there have been **106 Hospital Corps Chief Petty Officers** who lost their lives in the line of duty (either killed in action and / or died in captivity as prisoners of war).

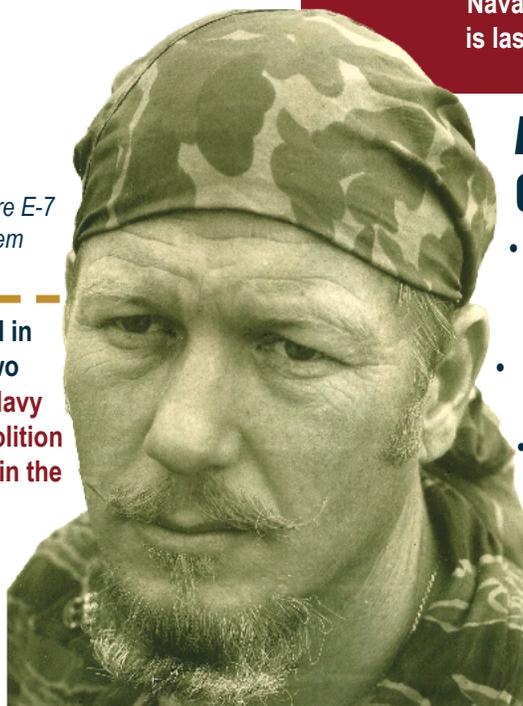


**CPhM Ellis Shields (1911-1944)**

Chief Pharmacist's Mate Shields was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross for heroism with the 40<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion (Admiralties, 1944). He is last hospital corpsman E-7 awarded a Navy Cross posthumously.

## A FEW NOTABLE HOSPITAL CORPS CHIEFS

- **HMCM (FMF / SW) Joe Campa**—the first hospital corpsman to serve as Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (2006-2008).
- **HMCM Robert Swartout**—the first enlisted leader of the hospital corps (July 1971).
- **CPhM Horatio Gates**—the first hospital corps CPO to be killed in action (July 1918).
- **CPhMs Stella Cerra and Barbara Unsworth**—the first women promoted to chief (E-7) (1945).



LEFT. Chief Kinnard with UDT-12, ca 1970