

# U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officers 1893-Present

U.S. Navy Regulation Circular No. 41 dated 8 January 1885 established three classes of petty officers and three classes of seaman. There was no Chief Petty Officer rating. However, some first class petty officers, such as, Boatswain's Mates, Quartermasters, and Gunner's Mates were referred to as Chief Boatswain's Mate, Chief Quartermaster, and Chief Gunner's Mate.

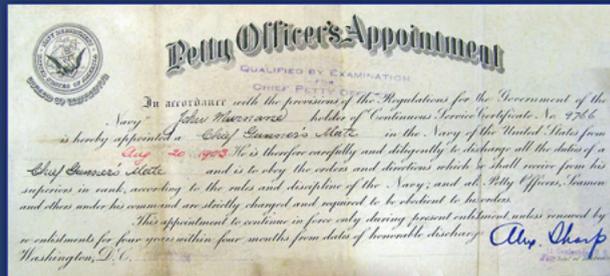
In 1885, the senior first class petty officer rating was Master-at-Arms. Master-at-Arms wore a distinctive rating badge. The badge had a five point star as a specialty mark with three arcs over three chevrons. All other first class petty officer rates wore a similar badge but without the three arcs.

U.S. Navy Regulation Circular No. 1 dated 13 March 1893 announced the establishment of the Chief Petty Officer rating to take effect 1 April 1893. The Chief Petty Officer rates included Master-at-Arms, Boatswain's Mate, Gunner's Mate, Quartermaster, Machinists, Carpenter's Mates, Yeoman, Bandmaster, and Apothecaries. CPOs, like other petty officers, initially received a temporary or acting appointment. Eventually, after satisfactory service, they received permanent appointments. This practice continued until the 1960s.

CPOs wore a sack coat style uniform, which was the same uniform worn by first class petty officers, prior to April 1893. After the CPO rating was established, first class petty officers wore the same uniform as other junior enlisted men. Chief Petty Officers wore a rating badge with three arcs over three chevrons. It was similar to the rating badge worn by pre-1893 Master-at-Arms first class petty officers. In 1894, a new style rating badge for CPOs and other petty officers was adopted. That basic style is still worn today. In 1897, the CPO cap device was adopted for wear on blue caps only.

The enlisted rating structure of the Navy remained the same until 1958 when the Senior Chief Petty Officer and Master Chief Petty Officer ratings were established. The CPO device was worn by all Chief Petty Officers until 1969 when separate devices were established for Master Chiefs and Senior Chiefs.

In 1967, the office of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) was established. In 1972, the specialty mark for MCPON was introduced as a five-point star--the same mark worn by Master-at-Arms nearly a hundred years earlier.



1903 Chief Petty Officer Appointment Letter



1885 Master-at-Arms First Class Petty Officer rating badge.  
1893 Chief Master-at-Arms rating badge.



1894 Chief Master-at-Arms rating badge



1972-present Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy (MCPON) rating badge



1897 CPO cap device



1969-present Senior Chief cap device



1969-present Master Chief cap device