

### New Cap Device Authorized for Senior Chiefs and Master Chiefs



BuPers Notice 1020 of 14 January 1969 announced a change to Navy Uniform Regulations that provided for a unique cap device for senior chief and master chief petty officers. The cap device for senior chief petty officers had one star above the fouled anchor and the master chief device had two stars. All senior chiefs and master chiefs, active and reserve, were directed to immediately begin wearing the device.

### First African American Navy Nurse Commander

Navy Nurse Hazel P. McCree was selected for promotion to Commander. She was the first African American woman to attain that rank in the Navy Nurse Corps. Commander McCree entered the navy in 1956. She was a graduate of New York's Harlem School of Nursing and Columbia University Teacher's College where she earned a bachelor's and master's degree in student personnel administration. McCree's sister, Dorothy, was also a Navy Nurse. [AH January 1969](#)



Commander Hazel P. McCree, USN  
Navy Nurse

### Navy Chaplain Awarded the Medal of Honor



Lieutenant Vincent Robert Capodanno was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor. He was the third chaplain to receive the award and the second Navy chaplain to be so honored. Capodanno was killed in Vietnam while serving with M Company of the 5<sup>th</sup> Marine Regiment. Chaplain Capodanno, even though seriously wounded, ministered to wounded and dying marines. He was killed while rushing to the aid of a wounded hospital corpsman. [AH February 1969](#)

### Combat Action Ribbon Authorized

SECNAV Notice 1650 of 17 February 1969 authorized the Combat Action Ribbon. The ribbon was authorized by the Secretary of the Navy in recognition of Navy personnel who actively engaged in ground and surface combat. The ribbon was authorized for officer and enlisted personnel below the rank of Captain. Sailors engaged in riverine and coastal warfare, SEAL Teams, UDT were among those that were immediately eligible for the award. Shipboard Sailors were eligible when the safety of the ship was endangered by enemy attack. The Combat Action Ribbon was authorized to be awarded retroactively for combat actions that occurred from 1 March 1961. [AH April 1969](#)



### Prototype Uniform of First Class Petty

“The Chief of Naval Personnel has released details of a prototype first class petty officer’s uniform which has been undergoing limited reaction tests for the past two months. This uniform, which is made of gabardine material, is one more indication that the Navy is focusing more attention on the improvement of the appearance and enhancement of the prestige of its senior petty officers.

The Navy blue uniform consists of a naval jacket type coat and cuff less trousers of straight leg styling. The proposed uniform will be worn with a distinctive cap which can be worn with all uniforms. The cap has a cloth-covered bill of the same Navy blue gabardine used in the uniform. The white cap cover is accented with a 1-1/4 inch black band with flat gold “U.S. NAVY” lettering across and in front of the cap. A silver first class rating cap device is centered above the band on the cap cover.

The uniform coat is single breasted with three silver buttons. The coat’s distinctive features are that it is tailored to the end of the sleeve, and it has double side vents in the back. The rating badge and hashmarks, red or gold, are sewn on the left sleeve in the usual positions. The coat has two chest pockets, an inside right pocket and an outside pocket on the left over which ribbons and/or medals are worn. The coat is worn over the conventional white shirt and black tie.



The cuffless trousers have front slash pockets, fore-and aft creases, a right watch pocket, and two back pockets. The Navy blue web belt and buckle will remain the same. This is by no means the final uniform. Changes may be made to all or part of the uniform as the reaction tests continue. This uniform is a long way from being for issue to the Fleet, and it will get further thorough testing and official approval and then take over a year to manufacture and stock”. [AH MAY 1969](#)

### **Polaris Breast Pin Awarded**

The Navy announced that a new Polaris submarine breastpin was being awarded to personnel in ship’s companies of the submarine fleet. The pin which was a successor to the Submarine Combat Patrol Insignia that was awarded for submarine patrols during World War II. The official designation of the pin was SSBN Deterrent Patrol Insignia. Awards of the pin were retroactive to the first Polaris patrol of the USS George Washington (SSBN-598) which was completed on 21 January 1961. [AH June 1969](#)



### **Navy Transfers 109 Riverine Craft to South Vietnamese Navy**



During the month of June 1969, the U.S. Navy transferred sixty-four Mobile Riverine Force patrol boats to the Republic of Vietnam Navy (RVN). This brought the total number of river craft transferred to the RVN, in 1969, to over one hundred. Nearly 500 U.S. Navy Sailors were involved in the transfer. Most were reassigned to other Mobile Riverine Force Commands or rotated back to the United States. [AH August 1969](#)

### **Enlisted Advisors Appointed to Serve on Reserve Policy Board**

MCPON Delbert D. Black, Senior Chief Yeoman H.A. Barriger, and Chief Engineman W.D. Shaver were appointed by the Secretary of the Navy to serve on the 1969 National Naval Reserve Policy Board. They were the first enlisted personnel appointed to act as advisors to the board on matters relating to enlisted service members. The board was first convened in 1939. In 1956, it was given statutory status by law, under Title 10 of the U.S. code. [AH August 1969](#)



**CPOs on 1969 NR Board--** l-r ENC W.S. Shaver; MCPON Delbert D. Black; RADM J.T. Burke, Jr., Assistant CNO (Naval Reserve); and YNCS H.A. Barriger.

### **Fire Trucks on Aircraft Carriers**

Fire trucks of the type used on Navy air bases and air stations were added to the fire fighting capability of attack air craft carriers. The addition of fire trucks on flight decks was a response to the threat of fire and explosions that occurred on USS Enterprise CVAN-65 and USS Forrestal CVA-59. The first trucks were delivered, in March 1969, to USS Kitty Hawk CVA-63 and USS Coral Sea CVA-43. The fire trucks replaced smaller motorized carts that proved inadequate in combating the fires on Enterprise and Forrestal. The new trucks carried six times more water and foam than the smaller carts and had a range of 100 feet. [AH August 1969](#)



## Social Security Account Number (SSAN) replaced Service Numbers

In August 1969, it was announced that the SSAN would replace military service numbers. BuPers Instruction 1070.20 would go into full effect on 1 January 1972 when all enlisted service numbers and officer file numbers would be replaced by Social Security Numbers. Beginning with the automated personnel and financial systems the SSAN was phased-in over the next two and a half years. [AH August 1969](#)

## V-Neck Shirt Ruling Modified

BuPers notice 1020, dated 11 July 1969, modified Navy Uniform Regulations which had prescribed a V-neck undershirt for officers and chief petty officers to be worn with Tropical Khaki and Tropical White uniforms. The modification rescinded the authorization for chief petty officers to wear V-neck undershirts. Officers continued wearing the V-neck undershirt or no undershirt if desired.

## Master Diver, Diving Officers, and Naval Observer Insignia Authorized

BuPers Notice 1020, dated 16 June 1969, announced that a breast insignia was approved for wear by Master Divers and Diving Officers. The insignia was a metal pin with two seahorses in an upright position facing a diving helmet, with two tridents projecting upward and canted outward from the helmet cover. The Diving Officer insignia was gold and the Master Diver insignia was silver.



A Naval Aviation Observer insignia was also authorized to be worn by Flight Meteorologists and Naval Aviation Observers not designated as Flight Officers. The insignia was described as “A gold embroidered or gold color metal pin; winged with a central device consisting of an ‘O’ circumscribing an erect, plain anchor, both in the color silver; the ‘O’ and the anchor in bold relief, the center of the ‘O’; filled with the color gold. The embroidered device should be on a background which matches the color of the uniform on which worn.

## Five Subs Retired

Five Pacific Fleet submarines—all veterans of World War II action—were decommissioned at Mare Island. They were USS Bream (SS-243), Bluegill (SS-242), Charr (SS-328), Raton (SS-270), and Tunny (SS-282).

Tunny, oldest of the group, was commissioned 1 Sep 1942. She won the Presidential Unit Citation for the second and fifth of her nine war patrols. In 27 years, she has filled the roles of Fleet submarine, guided missile submarine and unconventional warfare submarine. As a guided missile sub, she launched the first *Regulus* fired from a submarine. Later for her performance in unconventional warfare duties she received the Meritorious Unit Commendation.

Raton, commissioned 13 Jul 1943, sank 44,000 tons of enemy shipping in seven patrols, and received two Navy Unit commendations.

Bluegill, commissioned 11 Nov 1943, sank the light cruiser *Yubari* on her first patrol, to earn the first of two Navy Unit Commendations in six patrols. During the last patrol, her crewman swarmed ashore with small arms and sabers to capture Pratus Atoll, site of a Japanese radio and weather station. Bluegill men raised the U.S. flag and renamed the island for their submarine.

Bream was commissioned 24 Jan 1944, and made six war patrols. During one, she made a solo attack on a column of cruisers. She eliminated the heavy cruiser *Aoha* from the Battle of Leyte Gulf; afterward she was severely depth-charged and was claimed as a victory by Tokyo Rose.

Charr, commissioned 23 Sep 1944, made three patrols. In one daring action, she lay at anchor a mile off the coast of Indochina (now Vietnam) for four hours in broad daylight, while crewmen paddled ashore to rescue a downed aviator.