



@USNPEOPLE WEEKLY WIRE

1.) CNO, CNP Talk Personnel on Conversation with a Shipmate/ 03 MAR 15 [\[LINK\]](#)

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1.) CNO, CNP Talk Personnel on Conversation with a Shipmate/ 03 MAR 15 [\[LINK\]](#)

By Chief Mass Communication Specialist Julianne F. Metzger, Chief of Naval Operations Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- The Navy's top admiral and personnel chief released another installment March 2 of the Internet video series, "Conversation with a Shipmate."

Lt. Caroline Hutcheson and Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Elliott Fabrizio interviewed Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) Adm. Jonathan Greenert and Chief of Naval Personnel (CNP) Vice Adm. Bill Moran last week.

Deep in the belly of the Pentagon, CNO and CNP answered questions regarding Navy personnel. Together they tackled salient manning issues: modernizing Navy's outdated personnel system, maximizing career-long technical training, moving away from year-group management, and reassessing the Body Composition Assessment (BCA) standards for the biannual Physical Fitness Assessment (PFA).

Greenert began the conversation by saying that taking care of Sailors is both a short and long term issue. Today, the Navy is focused on improving manning and manpower by filling gapped billets at sea, stabilizing promotion opportunities, and working to make deployment lengths shorter and more predictable. In the future, CNO said the focus will be on recruiting, training and retaining the right force to meet tomorrow's challenges.

"People are our asymmetric advantage," Greenert said. "We ask them to do so much and we need to take care of them in the here and now."

Meanwhile Moran addressed opportunities he views now to update and invest in how the Navy manages its people. He noted that the current personnel system requires a major overhaul, having not been appreciably changed since the 1940's.

"We want motivated, smart people to stay in our Navy," said Moran.

Moran went on to say specifically that the year-group system for officers and enlisted is a "fundamental flaw" in the Navy's system for managing its people.

"We've upgraded our ships, our computers and our weapons systems," said Greenert. "It's time to upgrade our personnel system. We're going to pull together and make this right."

Despite both leaders' desire to modernize the systems in place, both enthusiastically praised those Sailors working in and around the Navy that diligently manage the Navy's human resources.

"We've got phenomenal people working in Millington; community managers, and detailers," said Moran. I look forward to the coming months where we can create tools they can use to make the Navy even better, Moran said also.

Greenert too had a message of gratitude to Sailors who enable the Navy to sail smoothly on a daily basis.

"Our people are getting it done," said Greenert. "We're going to bring our personnel system to the 21st century."

For the full-length interview, tune into Conversation with a Shipmate on your Direct-to-Sailor network or go to this link: <http://www.navy.mil/viewLdrVideo.asp?id=130&v=20251>.

For more news from Chief of Naval Operations, visit www.navy.mil/local/cno/.

2.) Liberty Policy Update Expands CO's Authority/ 02 MAR 15 [\[LINK\]](#)

WASHINGTON (NNS) -- Navy liberty policy revisions announced March 2, and outlined in MILPERSMAN 1050-290 provide commanding officers with greater clarification and authority to manage their people and meet mission requirements.

Consistent with Chief of Naval Personnel's goal to provide more authority back to command triads and allow for more effective management of their people, the revised policy expands descriptions of when special liberty may be appropriate, including for compassionate reasons.

Those examples include granting special liberty after extended deployments or time away from homeport, to reward exceptional performance, allow for Sailors to attend a funeral of a family member or assist one dealing with serious illness or injury, or any special occasion or circumstance determined by the commanding officer.

Leaders will also be able to establish their own "out of bounds" for liberty and special liberty and modify it as operational requirements dictate.

What's not changed is that special liberty may not exceed four days, or be combined with normal liberty or special holidays to allow for an absence exceeding four days. Sailors combining regular leave with special liberty still must start and finish leave at their home station or port.

The revised MILPERSMAN 1050-290 can be reviewed at www.npc.navy.mil.

For more news from Chief of Naval Personnel, visit www.navy.mil/local/cnp/.

3.) MCPON: Chief induction is not a tradition/ 02 MAR 15

NAVY TIMES, Mark D. Faram

Mike Stevens knows what it's like to be accused of breaking traditions.

As the 13th master chief petty officer of the Navy, he has faced outrage and dismay over his decision two years ago to "respectfully sundown" the practice of chief's induction — and all the alcohol and misbehavior that often came with it — in favor of tough, professional training that marks a sailor's entrance into the fleet's most coveted ranks.

"Tradition is a word that's thrown around a lot, but not many really take the time to fully understand what it means and put it in the proper context," Stevens told Navy Times. "It all goes to how you choose to understand and define what tradition really is."

But Stevens has spent time doing just that. Two years ago, he asked Master Chief Information Systems Technician Jim Leuci, a drilling reservist with the Naval History and Heritage Command, to scour the history books and find the origins of chief's induction.

His report, "A Tradition of Change — CPO Initiations to CPO-365," is the first official research of the history of CPO rites, and charts changes from the days of tossing selectees off the pier to the more elaborate and frat-house like rituals of recent decades.

"One of the things I learned from the research ... is that many of our traditions are those things we have experienced during our time of service," Stevens said. "It's strongly based on what we have experienced."

The Navy is full of formal traditions — rendering honors to the flag and to individuals by ringing a set number of bells, or a specific call on a bosun's whistle — and many of these have long been laid down in Navy edicts and instructions. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines tradition as "a way of thinking, behaving, or doing something that has been used by the people in a particular group, family, society, etc., for a long time."

"There's a definition of tradition, but how you interpret that is really all about your service and your time," Stevens said. "You came in the Navy and we were doing X while you were in, and then we stopped doing it. We then view that as a break in tradition — regardless of how long that perceived tradition has been around."

Given the facts in the new report, to be released April 1 in honor of the observed CPO birthday, Stevens says chief's initiation doesn't quite fit the mold of a tradition, though he realizes some chiefs will disagree.

"I know CPOs didn't come into existence until 1893, but in the now nearly 122 years since then, initiation has only been around for roughly half that time," Stevens said.

It's never been formally mandated by the Navy or consistent, Stevens added.

"When you look at the historical record and the facts, it's pretty obvious that much of the initiation process was essentially entertainment for the genuine chiefs of the day," Leuci said. "But when you step back and look at it over time, the process has grown much more difficult — and often forcibly mandated reform — it has grown and made the transition itself into a tough professional training program designed to prepare first classes to be effective chiefs."

Stevens says he's comfortable with the ending of the initiation and said the professional training is tough, meaningful and beneficial to the selectee, their commands and the service.

Evolving roles

One of the most popular arguments in favor of chief petty officer initiations is that chiefs are considered separate and distinct from the rest of the enlisted ranks and therefore need a rite of passage.

This wasn't always the case.

"The role of the chief petty officer has evolved [from] one that fits between the officers and the rest of the enlisted ranks," said Leuci. "Really, it's a role that has evolved over time."

April 1, 1893, is commemorated as the chief petty officer birthday and celebrated by khaki balls and other events, but at the time, the service didn't announce the arrival of "the chief" with much fanfare.

A Navy circular — an early equivalent to today's NavAdmin messages — was sent out to commands announcing the establishment of a "chief petty officer classification" effective April 1.

Leuci says there were 57 sailors advanced to that rank when that day arrived.

"However, the appointment of the first chief petty officers was not a major event of the day," Leuci wrote in the soon to be released report. "The first chief petty officers of 1893 were not immediately elevated to a higher enlisted status as a result of their appointments."

Chief's messes weren't immediately established, nor did chiefs get new uniforms either — they didn't even get paid differently right away, Leuci found.

"After April 1, 1893, chief, first, and second class petty officers shared the same mess," he wrote. "For nearly ten years, chief petty officers continued to mess and berth with first and second class petty officers."

That all changed in 1902, however, when Navy regulations formally established a separate mess for chief petty officers. All other enlisted men were consolidated into one general mess. It was the first time all enlisted didn't mess and berth together as they had since the Navy's founding.

Going overboard

For those who hold up chief initiations as long standing traditions, Leuci says they need to look at the historical record.

For six decades after the establishment of the CPO rank , there still was no such thing as chief initiations.

"There is really no record of initiation before World War II," Leuci said. "When you talk to those who made chief during this time, you can see the beginnings start to evolve, though it was more of a jovial and social event — there was no formal training — nothing like it has evolved to today."

During his research, Leuci said he talked to WWII and Korean War chiefs. They either didn't recall an initiation or said it was relatively simple — they went swimming.

Consider the story of Chief Yeoman (SS) Albert Dempster. He joined the Navy in 1940, signing on for an initial six-year hitch. He served on submarines before and during the war, making four war patrols on the submarine *Crevalle* in the Pacific, operating out of Fremantle, Australia. It was during one of these patrols that he got word that he and one of his shipmates had advanced to chief.

"There was no CPO initiation while they were underway in the South China Sea," Leuci wrote. "When *Crevalle* returned to Fremantle, Australia, the two new chiefs were initiated. Their initiation consisted of being thrown over the side of the boat, followed by drinking at a local bar. Dempster remained in the Navy after the war and retired as a chief yeoman in 1960."

"Though they were called initiations at the time, they weren't secret events, though they generally happened behind closed doors in the chief's mess," Leuci said.

The fact that chiefs existed for so long before the emergence of induction rites after WWII cast doubt on the oft-heard arguments that chief initiations are a sacred right or intrinsic to the role of CPO, said Stevens.

"By definition, traditions are long standing things, over time," he said. "So based on the historical record, one could argue that establishing the process of initiation in the first place was a departure from the long standing tradition of the day."

Traditions of convenience

Today, when new chief selectees go through the Phase II of CPO-365, which begins after the Navy announces who's been selected for chief each summer, they are given charge books to carry during their final stages. When they are pinned, the book is put inside an ornate wooden box or "vessel" as a keepsake of their transition.

"There are a lot of myths about these and where they came from," Leuci said. "The going story is charge books were carried by petty officers in World War I and chiefs would often write advice in them, and though this is a nice story, there's really not a lot of evidence to back it up."

What the evidence shows, he said, is that they started appearing in the 1960s.

Then as today, the book was a green Navy log book that often was fixed to a chain or rope and worn around the selectee's neck.

"It was simply a place to document the transgressions of the chief select so they could be read by the judge at their initiation," he said.

Far from the hallowed objects of today, Leuci writes that these logbooks often were fouled by initiation rites run amok.

Former MCPON Duane Bushey said he threw his charge book away after he finished his initiation in 1974.

"Bushey had a charge book that was stolen a few days after he got it," Leuci wrote. "It wasn't returned until a week before initiation."

"The book had been spit on, ejaculated on, defecated on, and was full of profanity ridden comments. After initiation he threw the book away."

Other traditions and keepsakes have been added over the years, many taken from crossing the line ceremonies known for forcing the uninitiated wogs to eat or crawl through food.

"There are other official Navy photographs dating from the mid-1950s that show new chief petty officers in wash khaki or dress uniforms participating in various events such as eating their first meal in the CPO mess from a wooden trough," Leuci said.

Selects would build the troughs and on their initiation day would eat from it either with a large spoon — or with no utensils at all and their hands tied behind their back. These were traditions of convenience, borrowed from other rites, and not intrinsic to the role or the training to be a chief. They were simply disgusting and often degrading.

"But it doesn't appear that they ate anything different than the other chiefs in the mess in those troughs," Leuci said, "unlike many initiations in later years where many inedible things were required to be eaten. At my own initiation I was required to eat raw eggs through a condom."

Borrowed traditions

The old saying that there's nothing new under the sun could apply to initiation day, when the selectee faces a judge who lists a litany of transgressions and shortcomings.

Defenders of these events say that what is endured during initiation hammers home the idea that chiefs must work together as a group — as a mess — to accomplish things. They can't do it alone, and they need to listen to the experience and wisdom of those who came before if they hope to be successful.

Others disagree and believe that shenanigans are degrading and lack training value.

The facts show that much of what became chief initiations in the 1960s and lasted for decades was borrowed from other naval ceremonies — especially those from the rite of crossing the equator and becoming a "shellback."

"Some of the rituals seen in crossing the line ceremonies, such as eating distasteful concoctions of food products and drinking 'truth serum,' were adopted for CPO initiations," Leuci said. "Some of the props used in crossing the line ceremonies such as stocks and ice-filled coffins began to be seen in CPO initiations. Characters like the 'judge,' 'defense attorney,' and 'sheriff' became fixtures as CPO initiations essentially became mock trials or kangaroo courts."

Other induction rites borrowed from "tacking" on crows for junior sailors or "blood pinning," where shipmates puncture a sailor's skin with newly awarded military pins and qualification insignia.

These rituals all made it into chief initiations, Leuci said, adding that the "practices and events were in direct conflict with Navy regulations relating to hazing, bullying, and harassment — especially when viewed by today's standards," he said. "However, the attitudes of senior enlisted and officer leadership of the 1960s and 1970s were often tolerant of questionable practices as long as there were no serious injuries and no serious complaints."

In the 1990s as Navy leadership sought to rein in the initiation antics, some chiefs fought back and offered voluntary alternatives, away from the Navy's prying eyes and rules.

"There were reports that some CPO messes offered 'traditional' initiations to interested selectees that were not sanctioned by the Navy and were held off-base," Leuci said. "It seems almost ludicrous."

Pranks and controversy

Nearly every MCPON has had to deal with some sort of initiation controversy during his time wearing the three-starred crow that is the symbol of the office.

That started with Master Chief Gunner's Mate Del Black, the first MCPON. Black had to respond to chiefs outraged that a 1967 instruction prohibited "hazardous or detrimental" rites, or that involved "unbecoming conduct." That was widely interpreted to mean that informal initiations would be replaced by formal ones, with none of the fun and games.

But in what became the first ever initiation guidance issued by the Navy, Black wrote in the January 1968 issue of All Hands Magazine that it just wasn't so.

"There is no objection to CPO initiations conducted in a humorous vein, but at the same time, they should not be hazardous," Black wrote. "Proper supervision and planning can ensure that the honor and pride that go with making chief are not overshadowed by fun and games. We should not force the initiates to eat or drink against their wishes, nor should we do anything that could lead to bodily injury."

Black went on to say that the chiefs conducting the ceremonies should "avoid any humiliation to the initiate."

Despite Black's prohibitions, Leuci wrote, initiations went on unabated.

"Many provisions of SECNAVINST 5060 were generally ignored," Leuci wrote in the report. "Alcohol abuse, the consumption of food concoctions, unsafe events and the humiliation of CPO selectees remained the norm."

Sometimes things got so bad that the chief of naval operations tried to shut down initiations.

"Every MCPON, starting with [William] Plackett through Scott, was confronted with concerns about, or actual orders to end, CPO initiations from the Chief of Naval Operations," Leuci wrote. "Discussions to eliminate CPO initiations were generally kept out of the media and were not common knowledge within the fleet."

Such was the case during the time Duane Bushy was MCPON in the early 1990s. Nearly every year there were reports of alcohol-fueled misconduct at initiations.

In 1988, then-CNO Adm. Carlisle Trost and members of Congress were drawn into the debate by "reports of lewd, crude, and disgusting behavior during initiations" which were reported directly to them, according to the report.

The straw that broke the CNO's back was a complaint of a lewd incident in Groton, Conn. Nine newly minted chiefs came down with strep throat after being forced to put a plastic facsimile of a penis in their mouths, one after another. The disease was then transmitted to family members, according to accounts told to Navy Times by sources close to the discussions.

Leuci mentions the incident, but does not describe what spread the disease, citing only unsanitary conditions during the initiation were the cause.

This led to a crackdown. Alcohol use by selectees was banned from the events. Promises were made to hold command master chiefs accountable for degrading or hazardous conduct at inductions. Officials expanded the rules to ban selectees from performing any acts against their will.

"The reforms were not popular among all CPO messes," Leuci wrote. "However, even though some CPO messes were slow to accept or simply ignored the MCPON's guidance, the reforms had begun."

A few years later, Leuci said, in the wake of the Tailhook scandal, MCPON John Hagan saved initiations from the scrap heap by instituting reforms.

Nearly every MCPON since has issued some sort of reform, instituting formal leadership training and other more acceptable and arguably more beneficial ways of welcoming in new chiefs each year.

It was Stevens in 2013 who took the final step, and moved the process to one that mandated a professional transition, eliminating alcohol from any formal events and ending chief's initiation and the sophomoric antics that had so long gone with it.

Frocking, boards and chief's season

The current practice of having a "chief's season," where newly selected chief petty officers are promoted or frocked to their new paygrade on Sept. 16, has only been in practice since 1980.

And it's only been since 1974 that the Navy has held a selection board for advancement to chief.

Before that time, advancement to chief was a year-round affair, with advancements — and initiations — being held nearly every month as a new crop of chiefs earned their anchors.

As with petty officers today, there were twice-annual chief exams.

And these exams were graded and a final multiple score based on that test score and the sailor's annual evaluations ranked the candidates. Those on the list were promoted in their order of ranking.

These lists, according to Leuci's research, were mailed to commands.

"A posted advancement list was the way that most sailors found out they were selected for chief," Leuci wrote. "CPO promotion lists promulgated by naval message did not become common until the late 1960s."

Frocking — the practice of allowing someone to wear the rank and assume the rights and responsibilities of the next pay grade — wasn't authorized, yet.

Once the selection board was established in 1974, the twice a year lists went away and a single annual list was published.

Advancements and initiations continued monthly until 1980 when frocking was authorized for all enlisted paygrades.

So, when the selection boards met that year and the results were released in July, the Navy held its first "chief's season," where all those selected were either advanced or frocked in September — a practice that continues today.

Covers and khakis

The longest-standing symbol of a chief petty officer

The longest-standing symbol of a chief petty officer is their cover. Chief Hospital Corpsman Tarren Windham dons hers at a 2013 ceremony aboard aircraft carrier Carl Vinson. (Photo: MC2 Timothy A. Hazel/Navy)

The last tradition in a pinning ceremony is also the oldest: the chief's cover.

Today, it's considered tradition that chiefs and officers wear combination covers and khakis, but that wasn't always the case.

From the start, chiefs wore a separate dress uniform, but the day to day working uniform for all enlisted was dungarees. The only way to recognize a chief was by his or her hat.

Khaki working uniforms were authorized only for aviation chiefs who were qualified pilots in 1929. It wasn't until 1941 that the Navy authorized khaki as a working uniform for chiefs and officers.

The chief's fouled anchor first appeared in 1897 as a cap device only — collar devices were still almost sixty years away. Since then, it's been reworked. Initially the anchor was just pinned to the cloth of the cap, but later it was put on a background, like the officer insignia.

Today, chiefs are taught an alternate meaning for the USN on their covers, that it stands for unity, service and navigation.

"It's a nice tradition that someone made up," Leuci said.

Even the practice of pinning was created as the process went along. Until 1959, 55 years ago, collar devices weren't worn. They were added after the creation of the E-8 and E-9 pay grades in 1958.

Initially, all three paygrades wore the same fouled anchor without the stars we know today. Separate collar devices for each paygrade came in 1961.

"When you step back and look at it all, it's not so much tradition as it is an evolution, a process of constant change," Leuci said. "But no matter what the evidence says, there will always be those who think that any change is bad."

4.) CNO: Shorter carrier cruises a year away/ 28 FEB 15

NAVY TIMES, David Larter

The Navy is showing signs of progress in reigning in the long deployments that have strained the fleet for the past three years.

The amphibious assault ship Makin Island and her escorts arrived in San Diego Feb. 25 after seven months at sea, for example, a deployment that included strike missions over Iraq. That's way down from the Bataan amphibious ready group's marathon, 321-day deployment three years ago — one of the longest Navy deployments since World War II.

Seven-month deployments are to be the standard for gators, and the rest of the fleet will follow suit over the next two years, the Navy's top officer told sailors at a Pearl Harbor all-hands call.

"Today the [carrier Carl] Vinson is on deployment in the Arabian Gulf, she's on a 9.5-month deployment," Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jon Greenert said, adding nine-month deployments stemmed, in part, from maintenance backlogs caused by heavy sequestration budget cuts.

"Now as we've had stable budgets, we're getting that work done on the carriers, on the ships, on the airplanes, and we're still shaking out the effects of [sequestration]. Vinson will be on a 9.5-month deployment. She'll be followed by Teddy Roosevelt, which will be on an 8.5-month deployment. The carriers after that will be on seven-month deployments."

Greenert said the plan for shortening carrier strike group deployments is gaining steam.

"We are going to seven-month deployments," he said, emphatically. "The system is in place. We can do this."

The plan to rein in deployments was designed, shaped and championed by former Fleet Forces Command boss Adm. Bill Gortney, now the head of U.S. Northern Command. It was initially met with widespread skepticism in the fleet among those who thought the Navy couldn't catch up because of heavy demands from combatant commanders, four-star officers who oversee operations around the world.

Greenert, speaking to reporters on Capitol Hill Feb. 26, said he's been working with the Joint Chiefs of Staff to rein in the COCOM demands.

"We've gone down to the Joint Staff with this process called the global force management allocation plan and said, 'We believe this is a sustainable presence plan ... and inherent in that is a seven month deployment,' and they said 'OK.' So that's what we've laid out. ... But we believe that, again, we need a stable budget, we need this manning, organization and training, and with that I think we can get to seven months."

Two sources familiar with the internal deliberations said Greenert has been working with the Joint Chiefs and the COCOMs to rein in and head off heavy demands.

He has also leaned on FFC, now led by former 6th Fleet boss Adm. Phil Davidson, to shorten deployments, sources said.

Originally, Gortney was preaching eight-month deployments, but talking points changed abruptly after Greenert came out in opposition to eight months in October.

"We cannot do eight-month deployments over and over and over again," Greenert said in a speech to sailors aboard the amphibious assault ship Kearsarge, which returned from an eight-month cruise in late 2013. "It's regrettable that you had to do it."

As he approaches the end of his three-year CNO tour, he has also been more vocal about holding back forces that aren't prepared to deploy.

During an all-hands call in mid-October, he told sailors he would oppose going to a two-carrier presence in 5th Fleet to support operations against the Islamic State group and in Afghanistan, saying that those missions could be conducted by the ships already there.

Greenert went further in his Kearsarge speech, saying his goal is to get deployments down to seven months in the next two years and that the service's maintenance backlog is beginning to ease.

"We're almost out of that and we should be back at what I think is a sweet spot at seven-month deployments by early [fiscal year] 2016," Greenert said.

He warned that the fleet is very close to a "red line" for the diminishing amount of home time fleet sailors are seeing.

"Our op-tempo is higher ... time at home has [reduced] from 63, 64 percent to about 52, 53 percent," he said. "So we want to get that back up to 63, 64, 67 percent time at home during a 36-month [cycle]."

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