

FROM PROUD BEGINNINGS

THE WARRANT OFFICER, AND IN SOME CASES THE LIMITED DUTY OFFICER COMMUNITIES, ARE AS OLD AS NAVIES THEMSELVES. IN THE DISTANT PAST, WARFARE WAS CONDUCTED BY THE ARISTOCRACY WHOSE LIVELIHOOD DEPENDDED UPON THE INCOME FROM AGRICULTURAL LANDS GIVEN TO THEM BY THE KING, IN EXCHANGE FOR THEIR OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE ARMED FIGHTING MEN WHEN CALLED UPON. THE KING OR PRINCE MIGHT COMMAND AN ENTIRE MILITARY EXPEDITION WHILE VARIOUS ARISTOCRATS COMMANDED, AS CAPTAINS, THEIR OWN "COMPANIES" OF MEN-AT-ARMS. THERE WERE ALSO JUNIOR OFFICERS WHO WOULD COMMAND IN "LIEU" OF THE CAPTAIN IF THE LATTER WAS KILLED OR WOUNDED - A LIEUTENANT.

ACTUAL FIGHTS AT SEA WERE RARE IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES BUT IF SHIPS WERE NEEDED, THEY WERE DRAFTED INTO MILITARY SERVICE FROM TRADERS AND MERCHANTS. THE SHIP WOULD THEN BE COMMISSIONED AND A CAPTAIN PLACED IN COMMAND. THE LAND-BOUND, PART-TIME SOLDIERS KNEW NOTHING OF PLOTTING, SHIP HANDLING OR NAVIGATION. THE SHIP'S MASTER, HIS PRINCIPAL OFFICERS AND THE SAILORS OR "SWABBERS" WERE NECESSARY FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE OPERATION. BEING COMMONERS, EMPLOYED FOR THEIR SPECIFIC SKILLS, THESE EXPERT SEAMEN WERE ISSUED ROYAL WARRANTS WHICH BOUND THEM TO SERVE THE KING IN THEIR SPECIAL CAPACITIES. WHETHER THE MASTER COULD BE CONSIDERED A LIMITED DUTY OFFICER OR A COMMISSIONED WARRANT OFFICER IS A MOOT POINT, AS RANK, AUTHORITY AND PRECEDENCE WERE LESS PRECISE IN THOSE TIMES.

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1907 PHOTO OF CONFEDERATES WHO SERVED ON CSS VIRGINIA



HARLOW KINNEY ACTING CARPENTER, USN
CIRCA 1963



JOSEPH G. THOMAS CARPENTER, USA



PHOTO BY CHIRROLIN, FRANCE APR 1964.
THE OFFICERS WORN CAPS DOUBLY AS THE WEAPON WITHOUT A CENTER SEVERE ARE MARGINAL OFFICERS



CARPENTER WILLIAM O. JENKINS, USN



SHIPS AFTER 11" PIVOT GUN, IN JUNE 1864.
NOTE GUN 1 AND GRABE SHOT ON DECK BY THE GUN

AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR, THE COLONIES QUITE LOGICALLY MODELED THE NUCLEUS OF THE NAVAL ESTABLISHMENT AFTER THE BRITISH. OUR HISTORY RECORDS SHOW THAT ON 13 DECEMBER 1775, CONGRESS AGREED TO CONSTRUCT THIRTEEN FRIGATES. THE GRADES OF OFFICERS TO LEAD THIS FORCE WERE AS FOLLOWS:

COMMISSIONED

CAPTAINS OF SHIPS
CAPTAINS OF MARINES
LIEUTENANTS OF SHIPS
LIEUTENANTS OF MARINES

WARRANTS

BOATSWAINS
GUNNERS
CARPENTERS
MASTERSMATES

CHAPLAINS
SURGEONS
PURSERS
SECRETARIES OF THE FLEET

CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF, MOST WARRANT OFFICERS OF THE 1800'S WERE NOT SAILORS WHO HAD BEGUN AT THE BOTTOM OF THE NAVY'S LADDER AND WORKED THEIR WAY UP. BOATSWAINS, GUNNERS, CARPENTERS AND SAILMAKERS WERE OFTEN APPOINTED DIRECTLY INTO THE NAVY AFTER LEARNING THEIR TRADES IN MERCHANT VESSELS OR AS PRIVATEERS. IN 1859, MOST WARRANT OFFICERS HAD AS LITTLE AS SIX MONTHS SERVICE AS ENLISTED MEN. SOME HAD NONE AT ALL.

IN 1862, THE RANK OF ENSIGN WAS INTRODUCED. BY 1865, THE NAVY HAD VICE ADMIRALS, REAR ADMIRALS AND COMMODORES. MASTER RANKED BETWEEN ENSIGN AND LIEUTENANT UNTIL 1881 WHEN THE RANK WAS CHANGED TO LIEUTENANT JUNIOR GRADE



OFFICERS OF USS WINGALIA ON DECK WITH GENERAL GRANT. MRS. GRANT AND SON, GENERAL GRANT OBSERVED THE BATTLE OF Vicksburg, 22 JUNE 1863. PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES M. SMITH.



GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL

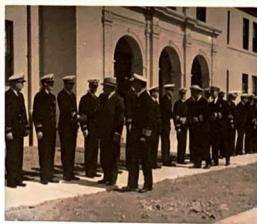
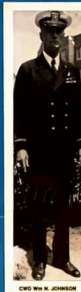


210 MASTER FRANK W. MADON
211 JOHN WILLIAM W. CRAB



SCENE IN WARRANT OFFICERS' STATEROOM, IN 1888. NOTE THE COLLAR WISDOMA

THE DEFENSE REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1949 CREATED FOUR WARRANT OFFICER GRADE LEVELS: W1, CW02, CW03 AND CW04.



FOUR YEARS LATER, IN OCTOBER 1963, THE "SETTLE BOARD" WAS CONVENED TO RESTUDY THE ISSUE AND CONCLUDED THAT THE EXPECTED FUNCTIONAL OVERLAPPING OF THE DUTIES OF WARRANT OFFICERS AND THE NEW SENIOR ENLISTED GRADES HAD NOT BEEN DEMONSTRATED. THE PHASEOUT OF WARRANTS HAD CREATED A VOID NOT EFFECTIVELY FILLED BY LDOS AND MASTER CHIEFS - A VOID INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE NAVY'S NEEDS FOR MORE, NOT FEWER, OFFICER-TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS. ACCORDINGLY, THE WARRANT OFFICER PROGRAM WAS REVITALIZED WITH A CORRESPONDING REDUCTION IN THE LIMITED DUTY OFFICER PROGRAM. THERE WERE NO NEW LIMITED DUTY OFFICER ACCESSIONS IN FY-66, FY-67 AND 68.



LEADERSHIP

THE SPEED OF THE LEADER DETERMINES THE RATE OF THE PACK.

ON THE EVE OF WORLD WAR II, A CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OR FIRST CLASS PETTY OFFICER COULD BE ADVANCED TO WARRANT IF

- A. HE WAS UNDER 35 YEARS OF AGE ON THE DATE APPOINTED
- B. HE HAD NO PROFICIENCY MARK LOWER THAN 34
- C. HE WAS ABLE TO READ AND WRITE ENGLISH WITH FACILITY UNDERSTAND THE FOUR RULES OF ARITHMETIC AND PROPORTION, WAS ABLE TO KEEP ACCOUNTS OF STORES AND WAS THOROUGHLY CONVERSANT WITH ALL INSTRUCTIONS AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO THE GRADE FOR WHICH EXAMINED
- D. COULD PASS A PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATION
- E. HAD FIVE YEARS OF SEA DUTY, AT LEAST ONE OF WHICH WAS IN THE RATE OF CHIEF PETTY OFFICER OR FIRST CLASS PETTY OFFICER

THE DEMANDS OF WORLD WAR II FORCED THE CREATION OF SEVERAL NEW WARRANT SPECIALTIES, AND BY 1950, THERE WERE 12: BOATSWAIN, GUNNER, TORPEDOMAN, ELECTRICIAN, RADIO ELECTRICIAN, MACHINIST, CARPENTER, SHIPS CLERK, AEROGRAPHER, PHOTOGRAPHER, HOSPITAL CORPS (FORMERLY PHARMACIST) AND PAY CLERK. BY THE END OF THE WAR, APPROXIMATELY ONE FOURTH OF THE LIEUTENANT COMMANDERS, OVER 1,000 LIEUTENANTS AND ONE THIRD OF THE LIEUTENANTS (JUNIOR GRADE) WERE EITHER PERMANENT CHIEF WARRANT OFFICERS OR PERMANENT ENLISTED.

BY 1948 THE NAVY REALIZED THAT IT OFTEN LOST CRITICAL SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE LEARNED AS ENLISTED MEN OR WARRANT OFFICERS WHEN THEY WERE PROMOTED TO COMMISSIONED STATUS IN THE UNRESTRICTED LINE COMMUNITY BECAUSE, ALL TOO OFTEN, THIS "MUSTANG" OFFICER WAS NOT COMPETITIVE FOR PROMOTION WITH OTHER COMMISSIONED OFFICERS. TO RETAIN THESE SKILLS AND TO PROVIDE A FAIR COMPETITIVE POSITION FOR OFFICERS PROMOTED FROM THE RANKS, THE LIMITED DUTY OFFICER PROGRAM WAS ESTABLISHED.