

My Great Chief

I wish to nominate SSCM John Young, USCGR who served as my unit's Administrative Officer at Sandy Hook Station during the 1980s. Under a cloud, Master Chief Young arrived at Reserve Unit Sandy Hook around December 1979. Our skipper Lieutenant Albanese didn't know what to do with him and he immediately asked that he be the unit's cook. Then, a Senior Chief he told the skipper "that he still had his whites and he could still make scrambled eggs." During the next few years, the Chief trained several seamen that eventually became Coast Guard cooks.

The Master Chief never did reveal that cloud, but I eventually learned that got into a dispute with a Reserve Commander, who was on Active Duty on Governors Island. The dispute had to do with identification when entry into restricted areas and the officer decided to teach the Chief a lesson. Travel from Rockland County (New York) to Sandy Hook or New London for meeting. Lucky, the Chief choose the hook!

After being promoted to Master Chief Petty Officer, Lt. Albanese made him a unofficial ADMIN OFFICER where he performed that duty until OPSAIL 1986. During that period Chief Young performed his annual ACDUTRA at Sandy Hook Station. He ran the galley like a Greek Diner, keeping it open 24 hours, so that personnel (245 regular and reservists) would get two hot meals and a boxed lunch to go.

I believe the station was in the black, when OPSAIL ended but on the last day (July 4, 1986) Master Chief Young caught several mess cooks stealing juice. The youth came from the inner city (Newark) and were assigned to helping in the galley. They had been previously caught and had been warned. On their second occasion, the boys were banned after refusing to wash the garbage cans. The boys were told to report to the boat house, where their supervisor had other boys.

Immediately, the Group Commander came to galley, requesting they be taken back as mess cook. It was part of a community relations program and that if he didn't take them back- there were no other personnel available for mess cooking. In other words take the boys back or the cooks would have to perform that duty. True to form, the Chief told the Commander "No problem, I started my career, as a mess cook at Cape May and I still know how to wash dishes." He took off his shirt, tied on an apron and started to wash some pots and pans for the rest of the afternoon.

By October 1986, Master Chief Young transferred into the Retired Reserve. At his retirement ceremony, he was given a wooden MCPO cap device made of 5 different woods and the Rear Admiral's flag that was left on station's 44 Motor Lifeboat. Its boat coxswain had secured the flag, after the Admiral's aide had forgotten it when the admiral boarded Cutter Eagle in lower New York harbor. Our commanding officer, CDR Biller gave Chief Young his father's Chief Ship's Cook crow for many years and looking after the boys and girls at the "Hook." Hope he had fair winds and following seas.

Anonymous