



0. BREAKING THE RULES - Story Preface

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**10. BREAKING THE RULES**

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13. REMINISCENCES OF CARL BRASHEAR

This image depicts Carl Brashear as he gets suited-up in his diving gear. Online via the U.S. Army official website, the picture has this description: "In this undated photo, a U.S. Navy Sailor fits Carl Brashear, the first African-American U.S. Navy diver, with a diving suit prior to a training mission. After recovering from a diving incident that resulted in the amputation of his left leg below the knee, Chief Petty Officer Brashear returned to service. He was the first African American to be certified as a U. S. Navy master diver in 1970. Brashear retired in 1979 as a master chief petty officer. (Photo courtesy/Chief Warrant Officer 4 Phillip Brashear) (RELEASED)"

Carl knew Chief Warrant Officer Axtell, the man in charge of the diving school in Washington, D.C.

Pleading to let him dive, so he could prove (with pictures) that his injury should not mandate his discharge, Brashear convinced Axtell to help him break the rules. Carl recalls the reaction from his friend:

*Ax said, "My career goes right out the window if I let you dive and something happens to you."*

Nothing bad happened to Carl as he did his dives in the deep-sea rig and the shallow-water rig. Nothing bad happened when he dove with scuba gear. He had the pictures to prove it. But he wanted more pictures.

Carl kept sneaking out of the hospital, diving, working out and being photographed. He wanted to build a portfolio of evidence to prove he was still up to the job.

Carl had one major problem, however. He was still assigned to the naval hospital. In order to be transferred to a naval station, he had to convince someone to sign transfer orders. He didn't have to look far for the signature.

*Between the naval hospital and the naval station, I endorsed my own orders and put, "FFT" [for further transfer] to the second-class diving school.*

When he reported to the second-class diving school, more than a few people were baffled. The Lt. Commander called to find out how he got there.

Carl had a simple - and truthful - answer:

*Orders, sir.*

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/BREAKING-THE-RULES-Men-of-Honor-Story-of-Carl-Brashear>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/BREAKING-THE-RULES-Men-of-Honor-Story-of-Carl-Brashear>

## Questions 2 Ponder

### How Satisfying Is It to Achieve by Breaking the Rules?

It isn't easy to bend or break rules when working for the U.S. military. On the other hand, if friends in high places are willing to help, they can make a big difference.

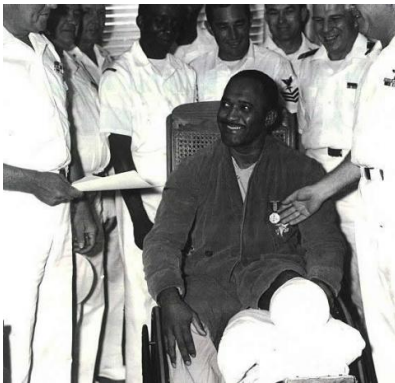
Carl Brashear had such a friend in a high place. In fact, it was exactly the place where Carl needed to be to further his goal to become the first African-American master diver. Carl knew Chief Warrant Officer Axtell, the man in charge of the diving school in Washington, D.C.

Pleading to let him dive, so he could prove (with pictures) that his injury should not mandate his discharge, Brashear convinced Axtell to help him break the rules.

Ax took a big risk to help his friend. Have you ever had a friend, like Ax, who risked a great deal to help you? If so, do you think the risk was worth taking? Why, or why not?

Carl was so focused on furthering his training that he signed his own orders. If anyone had found out about that, what might have happened to Carl? Was that worth the risk?

## Media Stream



### Carl Brashear - After His Amputation

Carl Brashear photo online, courtesy U.S. Navy.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Carl-Brashear-After-His-Amputation>



### Carl Brashear - Running with a Prosthesis

Photo online, courtesy U.S. Navy.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Carl-Brashear-Running-with-a-Prosthesis>



### Carl Brashear - Climbing with Weights

Photo of Carl Brashear, online courtesy U.S. Navy.

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### BREAKING THE RULES

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