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In this official U.S. Navy photo, which is part of the Naval History and Heritage Command collections, we see Senior Chief Boatswains' Mate Carl M. Brashear, USN. The photo was taken by Chief Photographer's Mate R.A. Walker, USN, while at sea aboard the USS *Hunley* (AS-31), circa April of 1971.

Turning down promotions because they would interfere with his goal, Brashear went to Washington D.C.'s Experimental Diving Unit in 1970. Using a Titan II mask, and breathing a helium/oxygen mixture, he did saturation dives of 600-1,000 feet.

He was evaluated for five weeks. A candidate either makes it or doesn't make it. Many don't.

Carl describes what it means to be a Master Diver:

Master diver is a man that's proficient in all phases of diving. The highest position that you could hold in the diving community is master.

After years of dedication, training, frustration, disappointments, and obstacles Carl Brashear's tenacity was rewarded. He became a Master Diver in June of 1970. He had achieved his goal.

His superiors were amazed he had pulled it off. Advising Brashear of the decision to make him a Master Diver, the Commanding Officer gave Carl high praise:

Let me tell you something. If there was a mark that we'd give, you made the highest mark of any man that ever come through this school to be evaluated for master. You did not make a mistake.

By this time Carl had attained the rank of Senior Chief Boatswain's Mate (E-8). His fellow black chiefs, who knew how hard he was striving to become a Master Diver, weren't sure he would make it. Blacks, after all, had never been Master Divers before.

As a Master Diver, Brashear was assigned to the USS *Hunley* where he had his first experiences diving on nuclear-powered submarines. He also served on the USS *Recovery* (ARS-43).

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

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/MASTER-DIVER-Men-of-Honor-Story-of-Carl-Brashear>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/MASTER-DIVER-Men-of-Honor-Story-of-Carl-Brashear>

Questions 2 Ponder

How Does Deferred Gratification Work?

Carl Brashear, who wanted to be the U.S. Navy's first African-American master diver—and then, after he lost his leg, the Navy's first amputee diver—turned-down promotions, which would have resulted in more pay, so he could keep working toward achieving his goal.

Is short-term gain worth giving-up on long-term goals? Why, or why not?

How do you decide which option to pursue?

Media Stream

Photo # USN 1150152 USS Hunley near Guam, October 1971



USS Hunley

Image online, courtesy the U.S. National Archives. USN 1150152.

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Photo # NH 107679 Senior Chief Boatswain's Mate Carl M. Brashear, USN



MASTER DIVER

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