

Navy establishes the Maritime Cyber Warfare Officer (MCWO) Designator – 1880



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SUFFOLK, VA. – The Navy has announced the establishment of the Maritime Cyber Warfare Officer (MCWO) Designator via Naval Administrative Message (NAVADMIN) 143/23.

The 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), signed into law on Dec. 23, 2022, directed the Secretary of the Navy, in coordination with the Chief of Naval Operations, to establish a cyber warfare operations designator for officers within 180 days after enactment of the NDAA.

Previously, the Navy has utilized officers within the Information Warfare (IW) community, including Cryptologic Warfare (CW) and Information Professional (IP) to fill billets across the Cyber Operations Forces (COF). The establishment of MCWO will allow officers to build expertise and professional experience within the COF.

Vice Adm. Kelly Aeschbach, commander of Naval Information Forces and the Navy's Information Boss, explained how the Navy developed its plan to establish the MCWO designator.

“The Navy is committed to meeting current and future cyber capability requirements. Naval Information Forces and key leaders in IW domain closely examined the IW construct and

determined it did not adequately support multiple tours in the cyber mission area. Creation of the MCWO designator creates a career path for those officers to specialize in the cyber mission and develop their unique and critical skillset.”

The establishment of the MCWO designator is a major milestone in expanding the Navy cyber mission and recognizes the critical need for cyber specialization among the Navy officer line community. MCWOs are experts in cyberspace operations, focused on both Offensive Cyberspace Operations (OCO) and Defensive Cyberspace Operations (DCO).

“IW Officers have been absolutely critical to addressing threats in cyberspace – ensuring our Navy and joint force stay in competition,” continued Aeschbach. “The Navy is committed to developing cyber specialization and skill sets among the MCWO Community to pace this competition, and to prevail in conflict if they are ever called to do so.”

NAVIFOR’s mission is to generate, directly and through our leadership of the IW Enterprise, agile and technically superior manned, trained, equipped, and certified combat-ready IW forces to ensure our Navy will decisively DETER, COMPETE, and WIN.

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