

Charging toward an even brighter future

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Not the same, but equal is a good way to describe the warrant officer corps in relation to our O-grade cohorts.

Members of the Warrant Officer Career College in collaboration with the Senior Warrant Officer Advisory Council are continuing efforts to ensure the understanding that we are not trying to become the same as our O-grade officer counterparts, but rather seeking to be treated with equal recognition in all aspects such as protocol, etiquette, housing, and evaluation reporting, etc.

The Problem at Hand

Since its formal inception on July 9th, 1918 the Army warrant officer rank has existed in a state of ambiguity. In fact, in 1921 there was one rank (the Eagle Rising) with two pay grades. Years later, the Career Compensation Act of 1949 provided two new pay rates for warrant officers. The designations of warrant officer junior grade and chief warrant officer were retained. However, the grade of chief warrant officer was provided with pay rates of W2, W3 and W4. Throughout this period it was commonplace to associate all warrant officers as equal regardless of pay rate.

A whole new era for warrant officers began when the Army chief of staff chartered the Department of the Army Total Warrant Officer Study Group in September 1984. This was the first DA-level comprehensive study of warrant officer management. A key element of TWOS was coding of posi-

tions in authorization documents by rank. This provided a distinct requirement and clearly recognized the progressive increase in expertise and responsibility.

The Army has made tremendous strides with the formal integration of warrant officers into the officer corps. In fact, the Army has combined the officer and warrant officer corps in many areas, such as Professional Military Education, Officer Evaluation Reports, and wearing of branch insignia. This integration is in keeping with the recommendations outlined in the July 2002 Chief of Staff of the Army chartered Army Training and Leader Development Panel-Warrant Officer Study Final Report. Nonetheless, this merger is only partially complete.

One critical aspect of the effort to form a single officer corps that the Army has not formally addressed is the delineation of the precedence of WO ranks in numerous publications (e.g., DA Pamphlet 600-60).

The truth of the matter is that times are changing faster now for the warrant officer cohort than at any other time in the Army's history. Senior warrant officers are serving at all levels of command to include the Army chief of staff level where the senior warrant officer advisor serves as an AXO to the CSA.

The U.S. Army National Guard, U.S. Army Reserves, and all states have command chief warrant officers. Each branch has a CWOB or regimental chief warrant officer. The WOCC has a senior warrant officer deputy commandant. The Combined Arms Command has a command warrant

officer. Special Forces has a regimental and group chief warrant officer.

Senior warrant officers fill numerous other high-level strategic and operational level positions. However, the Army has not formally acknowledged these significant historical gains by updating its regulations. Indisputably, the warrant officer role and level of responsibility has expanded greatly. Current protocols do not appropriately reflect those changes.

The lack of official clarification of warrant officer precedence in Army regulations sets a stage for inconsistent treatment of warrant officers from one installation to the next. Installations normally address order of precedence in installation standing operating procedures. The lack of clarity and standardization for warrant officer precedence is not merely an issue of recognition or equity. Rather, it affects a multitude of duty roles and responsibilities such as staff duty, field officer of the day, inspector general activities, financial liability officers, and investigating officers, etc.

Based on the decision by Army leaders that warrant officers will be fully integrated into the officer corps, integration actions should go forward in a deliberate, formal, and meaningful manner. The delineation of precedence should address how warrant officers will be categorized by rank with respect to officer utilization and recognition. The questions of duty rosters, boards (e.g. administrative action, courts martial, etc.) and housing authorizations should be addressed.

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What Has Changed and What it Means

There have been a number of small changes over the last several years that appear very promising to the WOCC/SWOAC and all warrant officers. One example is outlined in DA PAM 420-1-1 (Housing Management). In the past, all warrant officers were characterized as company grade officers. In most cases this works well. Many post commanders, however, would offer field grade officer housing to W3s and above; but not all.

The current regulation now delineates tri-service-sizing benchmarks by pay grade and number of bedrooms under five categories: (1) General/flag officer (O-7 and above); (2) Senior officer (O-6); (3) Field grade officers (O-4 and O-5), warrant officers (WO4 and WO5), and senior Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) (E-9); (4) Company grade officers (O-1 through O-3), warrant officers (WO1 through WO3), and senior NCOs (E-7 and E-8); and (5) Junior NCOs (E-5 and E-6) and private (E-1) through corporal/specialist (E-4).

While some have said this is a success story and the beginnings of a formal delineation of precedence for warrant officer ranks, a closer look indicates several inadequacies (similar to the inadequacies of Army Regulation (AR) 420-1). One recommendation by the WOCC/SWOAC is for CW5s serving as regimental chief warrant officers, chief warrant officer of the branches, the command chief warrant officer of the reserves, the command chief warrant officer of the National Guard, or in any of the three- and four-star nominative positions should be considered key and essential personnel and, therefore, accorded senior grade housing.

Additionally noted is an officer in the grade of CW3 who would (under the old informal system) often be assigned field grade housing. So, in the case of housing, W3s are given company grade officer correlation while W4s and W5s are afforded field grade officer correlation. That does not make W4s and W5s field grade officers. We are not the same; nor should we be. I, even as the RCWO, do not have anywhere near the same level of responsibility (or authority) as a battalion or brigade commander. However, even though we are not the same, this division begins to provide an equality in delineations with the w-grade ranks as compared to the o-grade and enlisted ranks. (Should this be inequality?)

But what about the W3? AR 623-3 (Evaluation Reporting System) mandates the use of the Developmental Support Form (DA) Form 67-9-1a) to support developmental actions and integrate it with performance for officers in the rank CPT/LT (company

grade officers) and warrant officers in the rank of CW2/WO1. The only place in official Army guidance that specifically addresses the point of delineation precedence by rank is in the mandate for the implementation and use of the Developmental Support Form. The use of the DSF as outlined in AR 623-3 and DA PAM 623-3, Chapter 2-2, for all company grade officers is mandated. Company grade officers were identified in the instructions as WO1s, CW2s, 2LTs, 1LTs, and CPTs. Thus, based on the DSF implementation guidance, WO1s and CW2s are considered equivalent to company grade officers while all CW3s, CW4s, and CW5s are categorized as possessing significant experience and, although not identified as field grade or higher officers (i.e., not the same), implicitly recognized as being equivalent to field grade officers (but equal). The intent of the DSF is widely understood and, although it was not intended as a tool to identify an officer's standing within the officer corps, it does demonstrate the awareness and appreciation the Army has for warrant officers' vast experience.

Furthermore, AR 623-3 states that Part VIIb will not be completed on MGs, CPTs, LTs, CW5s, CW2s, and WO1s. An electronically generated label that states "No Box Check" will be placed over the boxes in Part VIIb by HQDA. This section of AR 623-3 makes a number of critical points relative to precedence of officer ranks.

First, it clearly infers that WO1/CW2 are equivalent to company grade officers by allowing the rater and senior rater the opportunity to develop and mentor young officers without the worry of "Box Checks."

Secondly, it infers that the ranks of CW3 and CW4 closely correlate to the ranks of MAJ and LTC in terms of status. Both have matured within their functional areas by serving in a variety of professionally rewarding positions that are ultimately preparing them to serve in senior level military positions.

Finally, CW5s, similar to MGs, do not receive a "Box Check" on evaluation reports. Evaluations are not required for CW5s serving in nominative three-star and four-star level positions. Regardless of the level at which they serve, CW5s have reached the pinnacle of their profession. This regulation recognizes that success.

Another recommendation the WOCC/SWOAC is offering suggests that all regulations and publications conform to the following equivalency standard: (1) WO1/CW2: Company Grade Officers (2LT

(Continued on page 78)

(Continued from page 77)

through CPT), (2) CW3/CW4: Field Grade Officers (MAJ/LTC), and (3) CW5: Senior Grade Officers (COL).

AR 600-89 (GEN Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award Program) is another benchmark for use in such delineation of warrant officer ranks. According to this AR candidates must meet the following criteria: (1) be company grade officers in the rank of second lieutenant (2LT), first lieutenant (1LT), captain (CPT), warrant officer one (WO1), or chief warrant officer two (CW2) in the U.S. Army. Captains or CW2s must not be on a promotion list to major or CW3, respectively, as of 31 December of the calendar year considered. The nomination criterion clearly eliminates the possibility of CW3 and above competing for the GDMLAP even though there is no formal recognition of warrant officers of any rank as field grade officers. The WOCC/SWOAC agrees that W3s and above should not be eligible for the GDMLAP. However, we do seek formal recognition in appropriate regulations identifying W3 and above as possessing a correlation to field grade status; again, not the same, but equal.

AR 385-10 (The Army Safety Program) currently reads, "The president of the board will be a field grade officer (W4/W5 is considered field grade) or an Army civilian, familiar with the type of operation, in the grade of GS-12 or higher." AR 385-10 is one more reference that supports the WOCC/SWOAC position on formal delineation of precedence of w-grade ranks. Specifically, this regulation recognizes "W4/W5" as equivalent to field grade as well as GS-12 or higher. When considered with other regulations such as DA PAM 600-60 (A Guide to Protocol and Etiquette for Official Entertainment) where warrant officers are placed lower in order of precedence than GS-7s, the incon-

sistency becomes apparent. This inconsistency fosters confusion and widespread misunderstanding about the order of precedence for warrant officers. The WOCC/SWOAC recommendation is to replace "W4/W5" with "CW3 thru CW5" and use the order of precedence outlined in this regulation to update DA PAM 600-60 as noted below.

What Has Not Changed and What it Means

AR 420-1 (Army Facilities Management) still maintains family housing designations for occupancy as follows: (1) General and flag officers (O10 through O7); (2) Senior grade officers (O6); (3) Field grade officers (O5, O4, CW5, and CW4); and (4) Company grade officers (O3 through O1, CW3 through WO1). As noted above, this structure is incongruent with that provided in other publications. This type of disparity continues to create confusion as to the recognition of warrant officers. This supports the perception that the warrant officer cohort is simply an appendage of the officer corps that, as a whole, is not fully integrated.

AR 15-6 (Procedures for Investigation Officers and Boards of Officers) currently reads, "Who may be appointed. Investigating officers and board members shall be those persons who, in the opinion of the appointing authority, are best qualified for the duty by reason of their education, training, experience, length of service and temperament. (1) Except as provided in paragraph 5-1e, only commissioned officers, warrant officers, or Department of the Army civilian employees permanently assigned to a position graded as a GS-13 or above will be appointed as investigating officers or voting members of boards." The wording of this paragraph places warrant officers in the same category as GS-13s, clearly supporting that warrant officers should not be placed in order of precedence

below GS-7s as is done in DA PAM 600-60. Again, placement of WOs at different precedence levels in different Army publications makes it extremely difficult to identify the warrant officers' standing within the Army. This regulation's implication that WO1s are equivalent to GS-13s appears to be appropriate in that many GS-13 civil service jobs are non-supervisory journeyman, whereas their professional supervisory equivalent is a WO1 (for example, the 1811GS-13 Criminal Investigator as compared to the 311A Army Criminal Investigator).

The WOCC/SWOAC considers AR 15-6 another success story in that it supports our request for formal delineation of order of precedence for warrant officer ranks. The wording of the regulation acknowledges that warrant officers are professional Soldiers who possess the prerequisite leadership attributes and characteristics to execute sensitive duties such as investigating officers' duties. However, the term "commissioned or warrant officers" should be changed to "O-grade or W-grade officers" as all warrant officers in the grade of CW2 and above are commissioned officers. The current wording creates confusion.

AR 600-60 (Physical Performance Evaluation System) states that the convening authority will ensure all cases forwarded by the MOS/Medical Retention Board are reviewed. The review of the cases may be delegated to an officer on the MMRB convening authority's staff in the grade of major or higher or CW4. Again, this regulation correlates a warrant officer rank with that of a field grade officer. However, the use of CW4 in lieu of MAJ is inconsistent with the whole of the WOCC/SWOAC's premise and the recommended order of precedence and as such CW4 should be replaced by CW3.

These are not all of the publications the WOCC/SWOAC is reviewing, nor are these all recommended changes. Field Manual

22-6 (Guard Duty), AR 20-1 (Inspector General Activities and Procedures), AR 570-4 (Manpower Management), AR 405-7 (Facilities and Areas Policies), DA PAM 735-5 (Financial Liability Officer's Guide), and AR 27-10 (Military Justice) are also being reviewed with numerous changes recommended due to their inconsistencies, errors in wording, and equating W5s with O3s and GS-10s, for example.

One final example is relevant. DA PAM 600-60 (A Guide to Protocol and Etiquette for Official Entertainment) contains a table which lists the precedence of civilian and military persons and places all warrant officers under VIP Code 8 of 8, between second lieutenants / GS-07s and master sergeants. Based on this pamphlet, WO1 through CW5 are categorized as one entity and accorded a lower precedence than 2LTs and GS-7s. However, command sergeants major and all of the O-grade officers are individually broken out.

As highlighted throughout this article and validated by numerous regulations, CW3s and CW4s routinely supervise and rate civilian employees. CW5s are nominated to serve as the RCWO/CWOB for school commandants, usually a commanding general, in 15 Army branches, and the Army chief of staff has senior warrant officer advisor. In essence, the CW5 RCWO/CWOB is entitled to no true protocol etiquette, although the other two members of the command team -CG and CSM--receive full protocol privileges at functions which they all attend.

The reality for warrant officers is that we regularly experience protocol issues, even ones as simple as seating arrangements at military ceremonies, funding for attending official military events, and billeting while on TDY. Installation protocol personnel routinely lack the guidance to appropriately delineate treatment of warrant officers. In most cases protocol personnel fail to acknowledge warrant officers at all.

I am extremely proud to say that the Signal Center of Excellence command group protocol team members have done their utmost to take care of me as well as all other warrant officers visiting Fort Gordon. When one considers the fact that DA PAM 600-60 suggests that the RCWO of the Signal Regiment serving at the two-star level is accorded a lower precedence than a 2LT serving as a platoon leader, it becomes extremely evident that the pamphlet is outdated.

This failure to specify an order of precedence for warrant officer ranks in keeping with their designation as officers and their levels of responsibility continues to drive a wedge among cohorts. The recognition warrant officers receive for rising to the top of their profession is decidedly unequal. This is incongruent with delineation of order of precedence for other cohorts. Unless the Army directly and specifically addresses these issues, the inconsistency

will continue. The WOCC/SWOAC will continue addressing these issues.

In DA PAM 600-60 we recommend that the protocol precedence for warrant officers be addressed using the company grade, field grade, and senior grade officers construct outlined below and that positions such as RCWO and all nominative positions be addressed as is done with CSM duty positions.

Recommended Changes to Appendix D Precedence List: warrant officer ranks should be broken down individually with the recommended equivalency listed below:

WO1: Company Grade Officers Equivalent to 1LT Falling Under VIP Code 8

CW2: Company Grade Officers Equivalent to CPT Falling Under VIP Code 8

CW3: Field Grade Officers Equivalent to MAJ Falling Under VIP Code 8

CW4: Field Grade Officers Equivalent to LTC Falling Under VIP Code 8

CW5: Senior Officers Equivalent to COL Falling Under VIP Code 7

Specific Position Precedence:

011A Nominative Positions equal to the level for which they serve

Senior Warrant Officer Advisor to the CSA: VIP Code 4 (Same as SMA)

Senior Warrant Officer Advisor to VCSA: VIP Code 5

Senior Warrant Officer Advisor to the Secretary of the Army: VIP Code 5

Deputy Commandant Warrant Officer Career College: VIP Code 7

CASCOM Senior Warrant Officer: VIP Code 7

Regimental Chief Warrant Officers/Chief Warrant Officers of the Branch: VIP Code: 7

Chief Warrant Officers of the State: VIP Code: 7

Some Final Thoughts

The formal integration of warrant officers into the officer corps as outlined in the July 2002 Army chief of staff chartered ATLDP-WO Study resulted in a need for the Army to re-examine its established system for recognizing warrant officers. According to US Code Title 10, Subtitle B, Part II, Chapter 345, Section 3575 "Warrant officers rank next below second lieutenants and rank among themselves within each warrant officer grade under regulations to be prescribed by the Secretary of the Army."

It is acknowledged that the warrant officer cohort fully understands that a newly commissioned 2LT will always outrank the most senior CW5 in the same manner that the 2LT outranks the SMA. However, those fortunate enough to have achieved noteworthy ranks such as general officers, colonels, lieutenant colonels, sergeant major of the Army,

(Continued on page 80)

(Continued from page 79)

command sergeant major, and sergeant major are all accorded honorary privileges that CW3s, CW4s, and CW5s are not accorded.

The premise of recognition sought refers to whatever duty or responsibility is accorded that status – field officer of the day, housing, parking, event protocol, and etiquette, not seniority in rank. By standardizing protocol regulations, the Army will remove the current inconsistencies for warrant officers in comparison to the officer and noncommissioned officer cohorts. Therefore, the purpose of the WOCC/SWOAC emphasis is to obtain CSA approval to update all regulations, pamphlets, and policies regarding the formal delineation of the precedence of Army warrant officers.

Formally addressing this issue will require a significant cultural change for the Army including officers, warrant officers, NCOS, and civilians. It was the ATLDP-WO Study Final Report, which highlighted the necessity for cultural change to how warrant officers are recognized, utilized, managed, and educated. In support of our request for clarification of warrant officer precedence the ATLDP-WO study states, "It is also about the practices and policies that dilute their efforts and detract from their remarkable, selfless, and honorable service to the Nation." Additionally, the report discusses how the Army must implement the ATLDP recommendations in their entirety to receive the synergistic benefits. Therefore, correcting the warrant officer precedence disparity is a significant step toward meeting the recommendation of this report and an essential ingredient to successfully integrating warrant officers into the larger officer corps.

What This Will Mean

If approved, there will be a requirement to update Army as well

as local regulations and policies. There is no impact on equipment, funding, environment, or stationing. The major impact will be on the utilization of warrant officers. A subset of this recommendation will be an unambiguous order of precedence that establishes distinction amongst ranks within the warrant officers cohort.

In the past, warrant officer ranks have been bundled together as one rank whereas the other cohorts specifically address their senior personnel and the recognition of each of those ranks. By clarifying order of precedence for warrant officers, the Army would pave the way for warrant officers to truly become a part of the greater officer corps. This would ultimately impact the warrant officer component of the officer corps significantly, clearly conveying the message that warrant officers truly are integrated and, as such, professionals that the Army values and recognizes.

Those of us who are "Quiet Professionals" stand ready to continue our service to our Soldiers, commanders, our Army, and this great Nation. We serve with honor and take great pride in our contributions as Soldiers and warrant officers. However, we are convinced that the lack of Army-wide understanding of the level of expertise and experience that we bring to the table negatively impacts our ability to fully serve at the level and to the degree to which we are capable. Because of this conviction, we humbly request that the Army's senior leadership continue and, if possible, accelerate the positive progression toward formally recognizing warrant officers' standing among the other cohorts. Toward that end, revision of DA PAM 600-60 should be a matter of urgency. If the Army is to successfully integrate the warrant officer cohort into the Officer Corps, it must revise/re-write this pamphlet immediately.

This ongoing concern is not

about becoming the same as any other cohort, but rather seeks equality in setting a formal recognition of delineation within the warrant officer ranks.

It would be unfortunate to take away from this article the idea that the warrant officer cohort is looking for a set of increasing privileges. This is far more encompassing than privileges. This is a necessary step toward clarification, recognition and duty. With the earned position of senior rank, warrant officers must be empowered to assume greater responsibility and exercise greater authority

In a previous letter to the Regiment in the front of the *Army Communicator*, I related how on several occasions my flight reservations were bungled, during my travels through Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Iraq. However, as a CW5, I was also given a seat on the flight because I was afforded category 1 status on military flights. This status has always been extended to colonels, sergeants major and command sergeants major, but not always for CW5s.

Some might view this as a privilege. However, my itinerary was packed with visits to senior level commanders and operating units. The daily battle rhythm was interrupted to meet my published itinerary. Therefore, I was responsible to be where I was supposed to be, when I was supposed to be there.

In other words, there is more at stake here than a parking spot at the post exchange.

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