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For 370 years the Army National Guard has proven to be the country's most enduring institution. It continues to be a ready and relevant force in support of today's missions throughout the world. We're serving in 40 countries with around 50,000 Soldiers deployed, another 6,000 are on the southwest border, with thousands of others called out at any time to support a variety of state missions by their Governors.

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about warrant officer issues in today's Army National Guard (ARNG). The key topics I will be covering today will be the ongoing operations of the Warrant Officer Senior Advisory Council (WOSAC); the annual conference for the National Guard of the United States (NGAUS); Warrant Officer Professional Development; Warrant Officer Candidate School for the Reserve Components; and Warrant Officer strength challenges.

The Army National Guard Warrant Officer Senior Advisory Council (WOSAC) continues to evolve and mature as a professional leadership team. The WOSAC provides advice and assistance through national and regional committees on matters affecting policy, plans, programs, resources, training, readiness and professional development of ARNG Warrant Officers. Throughout the year the WOSAC has met at the national and regional level.

The WOSAC Executive Committee represents each of the six regions in the United States. They meet three to four times a year to address issues that need to be resolved at the national level but without needing to convene the entire WOSAC. They focus on a variety of positions that will enhance warrant officer issues while supporting the mission and objectives of the WOSAC.

The WOSAC is guided by the Chair, CW5 Sal Green CCWO-FLARNG; Vice-Chair, CW5 Richard Ernest, CCWO NCARNG; and the new NGB ARNG CCWO, CW5 Thomas O'Sullivan.

On 31 January 2007 the WOSAC convened at the ARNG Readiness Center to be briefed on the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) model and its impact on the Army National Guard.

The ARFORGEN training model provides an outline that identifies a projected mobilization and deployment plan that will enable a unit to reset/train, become ready and available along a set training timeline. There will be an increased number of training tasks completed during the predeployment phase which enables units to complete a 365 day mobilization period.

The WOSAC annual conference met the end of February 2007 with a variety of briefings given by the leadership of the California ARNG, policy and training personnel from the National Guard Bureau, as well as senior active Army Warrant Officer representatives and Branch Chiefs. The topics presented by everyone focused on warrant officer policy issues, regulatory changes, and the Army's expectations to meet requirements for warrant officer appointment.

Currently the WOSAC is focusing on the following position papers:

- 2003-05: Support ARNG WO eligibility for promotion regardless of grade on MTOE/TDA position coding (CW2 – CW4)
- 2004-01: Alternative accessioning for Warrant Officer Appointments
- 2004-03: Need for a Full Time WO-SME on all state's Officer Strength Teams
  - 39 positions currently funded. Need this expanded to all states.
- 2005-01: Eligibility of AGR and full time technicians for the WO Accession Bonus
  - May require legislative change.
- 2005-02: Authorization of CW5 MOS 255Z to the JFHQ TDA
  - Proposal to update DA Pam 600-3 & DA Pam 611-21 has been submitted
- 2005-03: Retention Bonus for Critically Short WO MOS
- 2006-01: Appointment of SFC/E7 to CW2 with WOBC qualification
  - Approved by NGB policy in August 2007.
- 2007-01: Basic Officer Leader Course II (BOLC II)
- 2007-02: Combat Service Support Automation Management Office (CSSAMO)
  - Staffing proposal and potential MOS change from 920B to 251A
- 2007-03: Orientation/Training for new CCWOs

Many warrant officers attended the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) conference this past August. There were a number of exceptional speakers addressing national issues affecting the role and responsibilities of the Army National Guard. There was a separate Warrant Officer Caucus conducted. CW5 (Ret) Larry Massey is the Warrant Officer Representative to the NGAUS Board and held a separate meeting for the warrant officers attending the conference. CW5 Sal Green, NGB ARNG Acting CCWO, was the guest speaker and addressed a number of "hot topics" affecting Army National Guard warrant officers. A WOSAC update was provided by CW5 Pruett, Acting Asst WOSAC Chair.

From 11-12 September the National Guard Bureau hosted a Warrant Officer Senior Leaders Seminar (WOSLS). CW5 Green hosted this training session and had a number of senior leaders come and speak to the entire WOSAC as well as additional ARNG senior warrant officers from throughout the country. The leadership addressed issues affecting the Army National Guard today and how warrant officers are an integral part of it's success. Some of the key speakers included: LTG Blum, Chief NGB; LTG Vaughn, Director ARNG; BG Nuttall, Deputy Director, ARNG; Maj Gen Scherling, Director, Joint Staff at NGB; and, many other senior directors within the National Guard Bureau. The topics addressed during the WOSLS were: the change from a strategic reserve to an operational force; ARFORGEN (projecting mobilization timelines); transformation (major force structure changes); the mobilization process and training changes; ARNG equipping status; ARNG domestic operations – civil support missions; aviation transformation; personnel transformation (DIMHRS, PSDR) and WO military schools. It was an excellent experience to be briefed as senior leaders on issues affecting us at the national and international level.

Formal Warrant Officer Professional Development (WOPD) briefings continue to be presented by an increasing number of states. This training allows them to focus on a training day specifically focusing on their warrant officers. They gain increased knowledge in OER preparation, understanding of education required for promotion, how to review their files on-line (PERMS), leadership development and training, responsibilities in warrant officer recruiting and retention and how ARFORGEN now affects mobilization readiness.

The Warrant Officer Candidate School at Fort Rucker and has become a single school for both active Army and reserve component Soldiers. The length of the course can vary from 4-6 weeks dependant on their having PLDC/WLC or not.

Warrant Officer Candidate School for reserve component (RC) soldiers was established in 2006. It is for ARNG and USAR warrant officer candidates (WOC). There are three separate phases to the program: Phase 1, Distance Learning (DL) phase; Phase 2 they attend five IDT weekends; and, Phase 3 is for two weeks at either Camp Atterbury, IN or Fort McClellan, AL.

WOCS-RC has proven to be highly successful with 119 Warrant Officers graduating in 2006. In 2007 there were over 200 graduates. 2008 is expected to be even better with the training and appointment of future warrant officers.

Strength challenges continue with critical shortages identified in a number of WO MOS. Strength growth in the past year is just barely staying ahead of retirements. Strength goals for the past year have been met, but more accessions are needed to fill existing vacancies. The Warrant Officer Corps is a mature force (we're old). Over 62% are eligible for reserve retirement.

A number of initiatives are in place to improve the strength posture. Additional WO recruiters are being staffed. Bonuses are being made available for accessions and retention. Streamlining the predetermination process has significantly increased the time it takes to identify, qualify and appoint a future warrant officer. The Director of the ARNG has reinforced the position and role of the CCWO at the state level. G-RAP (Guard recruiting assistance program) has been expanded to include warrant officer accessions. BOLC-II relief is being sought, especially for those with high levels of military education and deployment experience. SFC to CW2 appointment policy, if WOBC qualified, is approved. Time in grade reductions have been approved for promotions from CW2 to CW3.

It has been a busy year but one that shows us making progress in the right direction. Thank you again for this opportunity to talk to the United States Army Warrant Officer Association about what is happening in the Army National Guard and it's impact on fellow Warrant Officers. The Army National Guard continues to be "Always Ready – Always There" with Warrant Officers taking the lead. Let me know if there are any questions I can answer for you on where we are at and our focus for the future.