

IMPORTANT CHAPTER LEADERSHIP INFORMATION FOR CHAPTER OFFICERS

(Updated January 21, 2003)

TO OPEN, A CAUTION: To your chapter members, your command, and surrounding community, you are viewed as the spokesperson for the chapter, the Association, and the warrant officer corps. It is important to understand this role as you speak about or deal with various issues. **Know the facts.** It is also important that you know USAWOA's long-held policy: this being that **we do NOT get involved in *personal* issues.** Our Association and your chapter is neither a "grievance committee" nor a "complaint department" to higher levels.

On the other hand, it is proper and encouraged for chapters to identify, discuss and make recommendations concerning systemic problems. If a member (or others) brings up such a subject related to a personal problem, steer the discussion to an "off-line" forum. You, or other chapter members, may be qualified to advise (mentor) the individual. However, it is neither the responsibility nor role of the chapter to do so in a meeting. Involving a chapter in such matters (and by association, the USAWOA headquarters) has potential to destroy the credibility of both. Unfortunately, in several locations, it has taken many years to overcome a "bad reputation" received by a chapter through involvement in personal issues.

If there is doubt about how to handle an issue, consult the home office for a recommendation.

MEETING TIME AND LOCATION: It is difficult to find one perfect meeting time or place. However, chapter leaders should seek to accommodate the *majority* of members that are "regulars" at your meetings. However, it is beneficial to ***periodically change meeting time and location.*** Several times a year, highly successful chapters set up a special meeting. They arrange for a guest speaker that will interest a diverse group, for example, the commissary manager; TRICARE coordinator or hospital/clinic commander; state veterans' service coordinator; military museum curator, etc. They widely advertise this meeting. Often, they invite spouses and provide childcare. Experience shows that at such special meetings, you will get not only an excellent turnout of your regular members, but also other warrants that do not attend your regularly scheduled meetings.

MEETING CONDUCT AND CONTENT: USAWOA members expect and deserve organized, professionally conducted chapter meetings. Chapter meetings must **provide value** to the members; they want to **learn something**, not just hear "how it was," war stories or gossip. Shortly before chapter meetings, many successful chapter officers go to the USAWOA web site and review "Hot Topics" for discussion during the meeting. As a chapter president or officer, you must **guide discussion** in a productive manner; **yet not stifle expression** of opinions or ideas. This is a tricky task, but many master the skill.

CHAPTER PUBLICITY: Many installations and communities have a "military" newspaper or some form of paper or electronic "unit bulletin." Contact the individual responsible for such publications to learn what's needed to publicize chapter meetings and events. Send them material and photos about chapter activities and individual achievements; **"toot the chapters horn."** The publicity will gain chapter members and appreciation within the community. (See Web Site and NEWSLINER submissions.)

MINUTES OF CHAPTER MEETINGS: A copy of the minutes of chapter meetings ***must be submitted*** to the USAWOA home office. This is for several reasons.

1. USAWOAs incorporation documents **require** we retain copies of chapter minutes.
2. Minutes are **proof of a meeting**. One meeting per calendar quarter **qualifies a chapter to receive a rebate** of a portion of members' dues. (See "Rebates," below.)
3. The Awards Committee reviews chapter minutes to **determine winners of national level awards.**

It is important to know that **minutes do not need to be signed or approved in a subsequent meeting** before submission. Just as soon as written, minutes should be submitted to the home office by mail, fax, or email.

If a chapter meeting is scheduled and you do not have enough members present to have a quorum, a Memorandum for Record can be submitted in the absence of formal minutes. **The receipt of such an MFR qualifies the chapter for a rebate.** (See "Major Deployments or Unit Training.")

REBATE POLICY AND PROCEDURES: **A portion of each chapter member's dues is returned to the chapter.** Rebates are \$ 2.50 for each \$ 45.00 membership and \$ 1.50 for each \$ 30.00 (retiree) membership. (Recently organized chapters receive double these amounts for the first two years.)

Rebates are paid in the "anniversary" quarter for members with multi-year memberships. Checks are issued in February, May, August, and November, for the previous calendar quarter. **Please deposit the checks promptly. The checks are valid for 90 days. Checks will not be "re-issued."**

MAJOR DEPLOYMENTS OR UNIT TRAINING: Major unit deployments or training often makes it difficult for a chapter to meet. In these cases, **any** chapter officer may write or email to advise the home office of the situation. **The Executive Director has the authority to grant a waiver** to the "minutes for rebate qualification rule" for a short period (usually six months). This action allows the chapter to continue to receive a rebate even though the deployment or major training exercise prevents the chapter from holding regular meetings.

MEMBERSHIP DUES AND APPLICATION FORM: USAWOA National Bylaws state that chapters cannot charge "chapter" dues. This is the reason why we have the rebate program. Members pay only the Association's annual dues of \$ 45.00 or \$ 30.00; or the appropriate multi-year rates. **USAWOA Form 600-1 is the only form approved** for membership application. The form is available in the NEWSLINER and on the USAWOA web site. It is also part of certain other promotional materials. **"Local" forms are not to be used.** However, a chapter may overprint the approved USAWOA form with certain chapter unique information.

PROCESSING MEMBER APPLICATIONS: Members are to send new applications and renewal payments directly to the home office. This is because chapters have, on occasion, not been timely in submitting membership applications, renewals, data changes, and/or payments. **This reflects poorly on the professionalism of the overall Association.** The Home Office processes applications once a week. All members receive, by first class mail, a membership card, welcome letters and information, USAWOA decals, and a recent copy of the NEWSLINER. Our USAWOA insulated mug is also sent to all but introductory (no-cost) members. This is because USAWOA gives a mug without cost to each candidate at the WOCC.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER: You will receive a periodic mailing from the USAWOA President and/or the home office. The Association President writes about "broad-spectrum" topics of importance to the Association and the Corps. The home-office letter will focus more on administrative topics and/or items of chapter management. The mailing will also contain the most recent NEWSLINER. You can use this NEWSLINER as a "heads-up" copy; or, you can route it up your chain of command to bring attention to certain articles.

If there has been "membership action" in your chapter, the mailing will contain important **chapter management reports**. The reports are:

1. A copy of the database record for each member that has **moved into** your area, and/or those that have **specifically requested affiliation** with your chapter.
2. A report showing **members that have recently joined (or rejoined)** the Association.
3. A report showing the **members that are about to let their membership expire.**

Reports 1 and 2 are tools to "grow" chapter membership. Successful chapters contact each new arrival and/or new members to welcome them to the area and the chapter. Many chapters use a committee or volunteer individuals to make the first contact. **Personal contact is particularly important in the case of WO1 members.** A chapter can help recently appointed warrant officers get off on the right foot. In addition, you can get these new members involved in the activities and operations of your chapter.

The importance of contacting new chapter members cannot be over emphasized, particularly "first-time" members. Statistics prove that about 80% of our members renew. However, the renewal percentage of our "first-time" WO1 members is **about 50%** and other (CW2-5) "first-time" members is **about 60%**. This shows that we **attract** new members, but need to work hard **to keep them.** You can help place emphasis in this area.

The third report is a roster of members that have let their membership expire. Presidents of successful chapters tell us that **it is effective** to contact these members; however, **professionalism** is very important during this contact. **"Inquire" but don't "perspire"** the non-renewing member. In other words, **ask them** to renew, but **don't pressure them** to do so. If they chose return as a member, we want them as **willing members.**

During such contact, you may learn that the non-renewing member has moved and that perhaps our renewal requests have not reached the member. **If this is the case, please advise us here at the home office.** Be aware that on occasion you will encounter a member with a "gripe" about the Army, his or her unit, the USAWOA, or another chapter member.

Your role as Chapter President or officer is to listen as they unload their baggage. Don't be personally offended or defensive. Try to guide the discussion to positive subjects rather than negative. (New chapter officers, programs, activities, etc. Often, you will turn them into a satisfied Association and chapter member **just because you listened**.)

RENEWAL POLICY AND PROCESS: The home office mails renewal requests to the member about 45 days **prior to expiration**. The request contains a return envelope, membership benefit information, and a membership card that shows a **new expiration date that assumes the member will renew**. If no renewal is received, we mail a "final notice" **following the month of expiration**. Finally, if no renewal is received, the 15th of the next month the member's record is moved to our "ex-member" file.

"AUTOMATIC" RENEWALS: Nearly 600 members have this option. They find it helpful during times of PCS and/or deployments as it keeps their membership uninterrupted. To set up automatic renewal (1) members must hold a credit card issued by the Pentagon Federal Credit Union (PFCU); and, (2) authorize us in writing to charge annual dues to this account. This is a **good program to encourage** because it retains members. The home office will provide the necessary forms to individuals or to chapters in quantity.

MATERIAL FOR P.D. DAYS: For special chapter events the home office can provide limited quantities of back editions of the NEWSLINER, memorabilia order forms, and other material. **Advance coordination is required** to allow the most economical mailing/shipping rates. Other material, fact sheets, etc. can be downloaded from the homepage. We will gladly help you with this.

CHAPTER RECRUITING DRIVES: Successful chapters hold periodic membership drives, typically once a year of about 90 to 180 days. We can send you recruiting materials and/or make memorabilia available at reduced rates for incentives. **In some cases, chapters will reduce the membership fee and make up the difference from chapter funds**. We'll be glad to discuss this topic with you further.

NEWSLINER AND/OR WEB SITE SUBMISSIONS: Chapters are encouraged to submit material concerning chapter events, individual and/or chapter recognition, and "warrant officers in action." Generally, we limit submissions to events that have occurred within the past six months. Exceptions may be made for material that is clearly relevant to USAWOA or the Corps, and/or historical in nature. You don't need to write the article, however, the information must contain the **"what, when, where, and who."** Full proper names and rank are important. The **"why"** is also important to hold the readers interest. Provide details as to how the members, chapter, installation, community, etc. benefited from the event. If an event is "annual," so advise.

Photos can be "slick" or "digital." Photos embedded in another application, i.e. Power Point, do not reproduce well. Digital image photos work well **provided camera output is of medium or higher resolution**. **The original file in full density works best**.

A simple rule: Good photos reproduce well in the NEWSLINER; poor quality photos do not. Subjects must be close enough to the photographer so that their images will "fill" the finished photo. Do not "zoom" subjects close; use your feet. The lens may zoom; the flash does not. Position subjects in the center of the photo. It may be necessary to recreate ("stage" the photo) an award presentation, swearing-in ceremony, etc. In most cases, all concerned will understand. Take an extra second to insure proper camera focus. To achieve proper contrast and clarity of facial features, indoor photos must set up with a background of a light-colored solid wall or curtain. Do not pose subjects in front of windows. Outdoor photos should be set up with an uncluttered background making sure that **faces are not in a shadow**. Use a flash even it's not indicated. **Credit** will be given for NEWSLINER and Web Site submissions. Please provide the name of the individual who took the photo or provided the photo. Generally, hard copy photos are not returned, but every effort will be taken to do so if requested.

RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT: The home office has two recognition certificates, one for **"Appreciation"** and the second for **"Academic Achievement."** At your request, we will complete and sign appreciation certificates and mail them to you. If your chapter is located at an installation where warrant officer training is conducted, **you are strongly encouraged** to link up with the training department and arrange use of our academic achievement certificates. We will pre-sign these certificates and mail them in quantity to either a chapter POC or to the training department.

Many chapters develop "chapter unique" certificates. With the common availability of high-quality laser printers and special paper, this is easy to do. You are encouraged to do so. For informational purposes, we simply request that you mail us a blank copy of each certificate.

NEWSLINER MAILING PROCEDURE: We use **bulk-rate postage to U.S. addresses** because it is prohibitively expensive to use first-class mail. The post office does not forward bulk-rate mail. ***This is important to emphasize to your members,*** because it means that if a member moves and fails to update the home office, they will not receive the NEWSLINER ***even if they file a forwarding order.***

For APO/FPO AE and AP addresses, we box and mail NEWSLINERS by first class mail to designated USAWOA POCs. The POCs place the NEWSLINERS into the Military Postal System. This has proved to be the most effective and timely method to get NEWSLINERS to our overseas members. However, the "No-Foward" rule still applies to these NEWSLINERS.

ARMY OFFICIAL OPERATING AUTHORITY: HQDA considers USAWOA as an approved "National Military Service Organization." This means that Permissive TDY, or if command approved, Funded TDY, may be used to attend our Annual Meeting (AMM). **Advise your commander of your chapter position and request funded TDY to attend our AMM,** early in the budget cycle. Contact the home office for assistance.

With our HQDA approval, comes responsibility for USAWOA chapters to comply with certain long-standing requirements. The requirements clearly apply to chapters that have "huts;" hold meetings on post; conduct fund-raising and/or social activities on post; advertise meetings and events in military unofficial publications (daily bulletins), etc. Full requirements and guidance are in Army Regulation 210-22, October 2001.

USAWOA chapters must apply to their "installation" for "approval to operate" and provide chapter bylaws for review by the installation staff judge advocate (SJA). After approval, the chapter must provide the installation with copies of minutes, financial statements, a roster of officers, and proof of an annual audit. Most installations required periodic "re-certification" for continued operation. USAWOA chapter officers must be aware of and comply with installation approval requirements and procedures. If difficulties are encountered, please contact the home office for assistance.

BANK ACCOUNTS: ***Your chapter must have an "Employer Identification Number" (EIN) from the IRS (or your state) to set up an account.*** The chapter should **NOT** use the Headquarters EIN (520992682) or the SSAN of a member. Some states issue EINs to not-for-profit associations. Ask your bank for the forms; or, obtain the federal form (SS-4) from the Internet (IRS.gov). Contact the home office for instructions on how to complete the IRS form. It takes a bit of time to request a chapter EIN, but it's the proper way to do business.

The treasurer is the primary "check-writer" in most chapters. However, it is prudent that several other officers have check signature authority and to hold a blank check from the end of the check series. This way, in the unplanned absence of the treasurer or the checkbook, the chapter can access its funds.

TAX EXEMPTION: The IRS granted "**501c(4)**" status to USAWOA and its chapters. This means that USAWOA (and chapters) is "**not-for-profit,**" as opposed to a "**non-profit**" organization. USAWOA and chapters **are not automatically exempt from local sales taxes.** It is up to each chapter to determine if the state and/or local jurisdiction grants exemptions to 501c(4) organizations; and, if the action will benefit the chapter, to apply for such exemption.

MEMORABILIA: Most successful chapters sell memorabilia. Not only does this augment chapter funds, it also brings a chapter together to plan, select, and market memorabilia items. Feel free to use the home office as a sounding board for your ideas for new memorabilia. We encourage use of the USAWOA logo on memorabilia items. **The home office must approve memorabilia items before a chapter contracts for purchase.**

USAWOA does not grant exclusive memorabilia "franchise" to chapters. However, most chapters cooperate with one another and do not compete by selling the exact same items. Some chapters and the home office will "consign" certain items of memorabilia to your chapter. This is a good idea as it gives you something unique to sell and/or use as an incentive. It also builds up chapter funds for future special activities or a memorabilia item of your own.

We're here to help you be successful. Don't hesitate to call to ask questions or to test your ideas.