



By CW5 Patrick Lott
Warrant Officer Career College

HOW “THEY” FEEL ABOUT SENIOR WARRANT OFFICERS’ SUPPORT OF CHANGES IN THE WARRANT OFFICER COMMUNITY

Who are “they” you ask? “They” are the future, the individuals who will replace the current Warrant Officers. They are Warrant Officer Candidates and newly appointed Warrant Officers who think they should have a say in what their future looks like. Over the last two years I have been very fortunate to have had the opportunity to spend time with these new and future Officers. Unfortunately, during question and answer sessions with them, some of the statements they’ve made and some of the questions they’ve asked pertaining to retired and senior Warrant Officers have been embarrassing. Many of these questions and statements pertain to their perception of these Warrant Officers’ knowledge and support of changes that have recently occurred and continue, changes that greatly affect their lives and Army careers. In the following paragraphs, I’ll share some of their concerns.

They believe that many senior Warrant Officers, particularly retired senior Warrant Officers, just don’t have a true picture of today’s Army. These Officers don’t seem to understand that things are not the same as when they were Junior Warrant Officers. They don’t understand that the Army of today is nothing like the Army of 20 or 30 years ago—or even of 10 years ago. Education opportunities are better, pay has improved considerably, and Warrant Officers are being recognized for their contribution as leaders and Officers. Today, Soldiers aren’t selected as Warrant Officers one day and then pinned the next day. The average Warrant Officer Candidate has two combat tours of duty and many have more. Candidates have an average of eight years of service, and a large number have more than 12 years service. More than 50 percent have college degrees, and a majority of the rest have more than 30 hours of college credit. And, it’s true: Candidates aren’t required to fold and measure their underwear during their training, and they have no sympathy with the retired and senior Warrant Officers who say, “I did it, and they should too.” While the Candidates and WO1s acknowledge and appreciate that retired Warrant Officers truly contributed to helping the community reach where it is today and served this great nation with honor, they believe that they must accept the reality that the Army has changed and Warrant Officers’ roles in that Army have changed—and they should get on board for a better tomorrow.

They believe that senior Warrant Officers talked change and appeared to support change when they were Junior Warrant Officers, but, unfortunately, it was just talk; now that these Warrant Officers have become senior Warrant Officers, they aren’t following through. They say that senior Warrant Officers found it easy to talk about change when everyone around them had the same mindset, but they modified their positions on change as they progressed through the ranks. They firmly believe that senior Warrant Officers need to fight the “legacy” of Warrant Officers that they once talked about, a legacy espoused by those who do not want the responsibility of being leaders, trainers, teachers, and mentors and, in reality, just do not want to change. These Junior Warrant Officers and Candidates ask questions of senior Warrant Officers like, “When do you start working for change?” or “At what time in your career do you start looking out for the future and not so much yourself?” or “When do you start making it better for them?”

Not only do they think that senior and retired Warrant Officers have an incorrect perception of today’s Army and that they aren’t following up on their pledges to help bring about change, but they are convinced that too many senior and retired Warrant Officers are zealously fighting change and progress. They see them refusing to support Army’s senior Leaders who are trying to bring about needed changes. They see them frequently ridiculing Junior Warrant Officers who strive to be professional, who want to be respected as Officers, leaders, tacticians, and technicians because that is what they are. They see them making statements like, “Don’t call me ‘Sir,’ my name is Bill,” or giving directions like, “Don’t salute me.”

This is just a small sample of what “they,” Warrant Officer Candidates and WO1s, those Soldiers who are the future, are asking and some of the “hard” statements they’re making about retired and senior Warrant Officers. However, hopefully this sample is enough to help those of us who fall into the category of retired and senior Warrant Officers better understand how we’re perceived by those coming behind us; it’s not too late to help change these perceptions. I encourage all of us to become greater supporters of a better future for Warrant Officers. ■

A JUNIOR WARRANT OFFICER'S PERSPECTIVE ABOUT THE FOREGOING ARTICLE

by CW2 Joe L. Boggess

I just finished reading the article "How (THEY) Feel about Senior Warrant Officers Support of Changes in the Warrant Officers Community" for the third time. This article, by CW5 Patrick Lott, in the July 2010 NEWSLINER struck a cord with me and I would like to respond from a CW2s perspective.

As an overall opinion I was disappointed to see these issues were wider spread than I thought. At 43 I have a total of 20 yrs of combined service of active duty and reserve time. As young warrant officers we all would and should like to have a say in what our future is like. Each one has a perspective on what they believe what today's Army Warrant officer should be and do. But I think a lot fall short on what the total army concept should be for warrants. In the second paragraph it was mentioned that young warrants don't believe that the senior or retired warrants don't have a true picture of today's Army. That the seniors don't understand today's Army and it is not the same as when they were young warrants. I disagree. First Warrant Officers are mostly a type "A" personality. Now this works only if the warrant truly believes and lives within the Army Values, mostly "Selfless Service". So as young warrants we still have the thought process of the NCO Corp. It takes time and hard work in making the separation from a NCO to a Warrant Officer. Only with time comes wisdom and knowledge.

What young warrants don't understand is, they don't get to see the big picture or see what goes on behind closed doors. Each level of a Warrant Officer comes with more or different responsibility. There are decisions that are made on a bigger scale based upon where the Army is today. So if the young warrant is not privy to the info that seniors are, then their beliefs are based upon ideas without all the facts. What the young warrant should be doing is learning his or her MOS as a Warrant Officer at their perspective level. There will be plenty of time in their future to be involved in what goes on within the Army at a bigger scale; but for now they need to learn their skills as a young Warrant Officer. The article continues to expound on the cliché or statement from seniors stating "if I did it, they should too". Again I agree to a point. There are traditions that we need to keep around, there are time proven tactics that still work, with our history we can see what worked and what didn't. But like anything else, the Military is an ever-revolving entity. Like a river it changes to meet the needs of today. The path might alter but it still has the same results at the end. I find my self saying "when I first came in" to soldiers and I chuckle inside. When I was a young soldier I heard the same from my seniors. But again, there is knowledge and wisdom that comes after that statement. Young warrants should embrace the conversations with senior Warrant Officers. There is allot to learn, and this goes both ways. The seniors should listen to the younger warrants. They are the ones that are closest to the fight. They are the ones that are still in the trenches. It should be a blended conversation that the senior warrant can take from the younger. The eyes and ears of what we are all dealing with might come from that young warrant. But to indicate that the military has changed and the seniors are out of touch with today's Army is a statement that shows that the younger warrants are the ones who are not truly in touch with the military at all levels in today's Army.

It is the senior Warrants who have been in touch with the military throughout all its changes and who continue to fight for all warrants in making the changes we see today. Warrants at all levels are leaders, trainers, teachers, and mentors. We don't just do this for the younger warrants but for all soldiers. This includes enlisted and O-grade officers as well. We are subject matter experts that pass on all our learning to all soldiers. The definition of a warrant officer speaks for itself; Selfless Service, the Quiet Professional. As a Warrant Officer we don't seek promotions or awards as badge hunters. We do strive to be the best at what we do. We also strive to better ourselves in continuing our education and self development. But our work will speak for its self. The statement of "when do we start looking out for the future and not so much for ourselves"? Again selfless service. As far as senior warrant stating not to salute or call them SIR. Well that should be considered a privilege and an honor amongst warrants. Yes we are officers but we are Warrant Officers. When we meet, the right thing to do is address the soldier appropriately. So if a fellow warrant says to call him or her by their first name and not to salute, well there is a time and place for that, and as professionals we learn when and how to address each other depending on the setting.

But we all belong to the same association at different levels and if a senior Warrant Officer says you don't have to salute or you can call them by their first name, we'll be honored to have that kind of respect bestowed upon you. Most likely the senior has been watching you and sees that you are professional in all accounts and has bestowed this privilege upon you making for a better working environment. Yes, I am older than most my peers, but I am also a young warrant officer in today's Army. I learn as much as I can so I may pass it along. I have a saying within my emails "Knowledge is Power, Imagine if we Shared the Wealth". So I challenge all young warrants to take a look and "See What Right Looks Like and Just DO IT"!!

Joe L. Boggess
CW2, OD
BN Maintenance Tech
FSC, 94th EN BN, 4th MEB
FT Leonardwood, Mo