

A "Warrant Officer Museum."

Many warrant officers may recall that what was known as the "Warrant Officer Hall of Fame," located at Fort Wolters, Texas (now deactivated). Later, this facility was moved to Fort Rucker, Alabama, and was located in a WW II style building. The facility primarily displayed material from flight school classes and other artifacts related to Army aviation. Additionally, the building also contained a memorial room dedicated to WOC Mark E. Elenio, an aviation flight student killed December 9, 1986, in a Fort Rucker training accident.

Shortly after the establishment of the Warrant Officer Career Center (WOCC) at Fort Rucker, the candidate company assumed much of the operation and maintenance of the facility.

In the fall of 1996, the WOCC moved the artifacts to 2nd Floor of a WOCS billeting building (Bldg 5910). There, display cases are used for smaller artifacts and several rooms have been set up in "tableau" style displays using larger artifacts. However, this space is officially billet space. Therefore, Fort Rucker could require that the space be return it to billet use at any time

In recent years and currently, warrant officer candidates provide volunteer time and labor to maintain the area, artifacts and displays. Candidates often guide visitors through the facility.

It is important to note that neither the WOCC nor the "candidate curators" solicit donations. Never the less, when touring the display area, it was common for visitors to seek to make "a donation," often leaving money anonymously or surreptitiously. In such case, funds were provided to USAWOA's Career Center Chapter for deposit and accounting in a specific "museum fund." USAWOA chapters and members also donated to the museum fund.

At the request of the WOCC senior staff and the Career Center Chapter leadership in 1998, the USAWOA home office received all "museum fund" money from the chapter. Consensus was that the account would be more appropriately managed at the USAWOA "national" level. In addition, those museum visitors and others might be more willing to donate to a fund if maintained by other than a local area chapter.

According, USAWOA established a separate bank account and IRS identification number to clearly separate "warrant officer museum money" from USAWOA funds. Members, chapters, and others continue to donate to this fund. The account balance as of 15 December 2001 was \$ 9021.88. No expenditures have been made are or anticipated from the fund.

Over the years, there have been several efforts to bring an official, Army "warrant officer museum" into being. None have been successful and there are hurdles yet to overcome. Most significant are:

- a. The intense competition for limited "new construction" money.
- b. A specific "warrant officer" museum is not a high priority for the Army leadership. This is generally because any Army museum, particularly those located on a "warrant officer proponent" installation, are free to display warrant officer material, either separately, or integrated with display of other material.
- c. HQDA policy is that no more than one official museum shall exist at any installation. The Army Aviation Museum is located at Fort Rucker. Therefore, it is highly likely this museum will remain at Fort Rucker as long as the aviation proponency remains. Exception to this policy is highly unlikely.

USAWOA fully supports the establishment of a separate and distinct Army "Warrant Officer Museum." However, we also remain open to other options. USAWOA shall continue to work with HQDA regarding this subject and shall continue to encourage and account for donations. If a warrant officer museum comes to be in the future, collected monies will be released for this purpose.

As of October 10, 2002 there was \$9,500 in the WO Museum Fund.

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