

The Mid-Northern Region

By CW3 Yolanda Peterson

CANDIDATE FOR USAWOA NATIONAL LEADERSHIP

CW3 Peterson, is a native of Wauchula, Florida, enlisted in the U.S. Army in September 2002. In February of 2014, CW2 Peterson was appointed as an Ordnance Warrant Officer after graduating from the Warrant Officers Candidate School (WOCS) at Fort Rucker, Alabama.

In August 2022 my daughter and I PCS to Camp Humphreys, SK. October 2022 I was sworn in as the Morning Calm Chapter President. As President I built a strong bond with our community (active and retiree) and the local community, leaving a lasting relationship with our host country.

In 2018 I served as the Thousand Island Warrant Officer Vice President for a year and shortly after took the reins of the President position. In October 2021, the Thousand Island Warrant Officer Association recognized at the Annual meeting of the members 2021 USAWOA Chapter Secretary of the year: CW3 Ret) Katherine A. Garvey-Ixtlahuac, 2021 community affairs for sustaining programs Thousand Island Chapter, 2021 community affairs for service to the community Thousand Island Chapter, 2021 outstanding Chapter Thousand Island Chapter.

In July 2014 at Fort Hood, Texas, I registered as a USAWOA member and attended meetings, roadside cleanup, bingo at our local nursing homes, and many other volunteer events. I served as Secretary. Over the course of 2.5 years I coordinated, planned, and oversaw so many amazing events hosted in the central Texas area while serving as the Fort Hood Silver Chapter Warrant Officer Association Secretary.

Warrant Officer Cohort Challenges

With all of these accomplishments, Warrant Officers face challenges like all other military demographics. The support required from Officers is not consistent for the Warrant Officer Cohort, for example LPDs hosted for CPTs and below we are invited as an afterthought. Actively serving in numerous organizations with my critical MOS and Professional organizations we are most times an afterthought when it comes to requirements, PME, and daily unit operations. I ensure I attend training meetings and IPRs when training exercises are taking place so that if any mission requirement questions have to be answered I am readily available.

Warrant Officers are technical experts, but still leaders. I have had to correct senior leaders and noncommissioned officers during more times when discussing our roles in organizations. I ensure that I keep myself present so that my leadership and Soldiers know that CW3 Peterson is a team player who has your best interest at heart. If we are all on the same page as a collective, the team is unstoppable.

Our Senior Warrant Officers need to be more hands on with professional development for junior Warrants that get to units from Warrant Officer Basic Course. I also strongly encourage junior Warrants to seek out a mentor; we can learn and become developed by people from all occupations. Professional growth is a personal choice to seek out those who can help you be better not only during your time as a service member, but in all lifestyles. Continue to learn and perfect your craft as a leader, subject matter expert, and Warrant Officer.

USAWOA Challenges

As a Chapter President and serving in other positions at duty stations I know personally it is hard to get members and nonmember to see the benefits of being a part of something bigger than themselves and maintaining their membership status. When we do have those willing to serve selflessly, it can cause them to stop volunteering and stop giving their efforts to helping.

Forwarding of membership information to follow on duty assignments for welcoming of Warrant Officers and their family members. If this were implemented it could make us stronger as an Association. This would improve communication between Warrant Officer Association Chapters to host joint events.

Warrant officers will benefit, and their family members can, for example, many high school students require volunteer hours for graduation, and opportunities are unlimited. You must seek something that is bigger than you are and to me that means helping the collective team be better. I understand not everyone desires to be in a position of "authority" but all help is appreciated.

No matter your schedule or time constraints, there are plenty of ways to get involved. Build the future for those that come after as well as influence positive change. As a leader, I know that my ability to influence change is important. Being a part of professional organizations allows you to gain different target audiences required to influence change for the better. Effective communication is important in all lifestyles, especially as a mother. I strive to set the example for my daughter when we are involved in all tasks required of us. I will bring these same principles to the USAWOA.