

“The Future of the Warrant Officer” OIF 07-09 Warrant Officer Conference

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Defining Warrant Officers and their roles, increasing recruitment and a need to strengthen the existing Warrant Officer Network were objectives of the OIF 07-09 Warrant Officer Conference, which took place April 15, 2008 at Camp Victory and Camp Anaconda, Iraq.

The Warrant Officer by definition is “The WO of the Objective Force is a self aware and adaptive technical expert, leader, trainer, and advisor. Through progressive levels of expertise in assignments, training, and education, the Warrant Officer administers, manages, maintains, operates, and integrates Army systems and equipment across the full range of Army operations. Warrant Officers are innovative integrators of emerging technologies, dynamic teachers, confident war-fighters, and developers of specialized teams of soldiers. They support a wide range of Army missions throughout their career.” Or as Chief Warrant Officer Christie Stewart, Electronic Systems Maintenance Technician, 63rd Expeditionary Signal Battalion puts it, “Quiet Professionals always working behind the scenes making mission happen.” Keeping that in mind, we faced the task of coordinating an event that would encompass both the technical and professional development of current Warrant Officers as well as an opportunity to recruit Warrant Officers into the Corps. These requirements gave birth to the conference theme “The Future of the Warrant Officer.”

The keynote speaker of the conference was CW5 Andy Barr, the Signal Corps Regimental Chief Warrant Officer, U.S. Army Signal Center & Fort Gordon, Ga. The Warrant Officer Conference and CW5 Barr’s visit were an enormous success. During his week long visit in the Iraq Theater of Operation, he was able to conduct Senior Warrant Officer Seminars, Warrant Officer Professional Development, Recruitment events and a promotion. The afore mentioned events included a VTC with the United States Army Recruiting Command and a 5K Warrant Officer Fun Run totaling in over 1,000 Officers, NCOs, Soldiers, Marines, Airmen, Sailors and a Australian Warrant Officer attending. Mr. Barr also visited numerous Signal Leaders, Soldiers and Sites within MND-B, MND-C and MND-N. The event titled “The Future of the Warrant Officer” was kicked off at Victory Base Compound with remarks from the MNF-I Chief of Staff, MG Paxton and MNF-I SCJS, Col Winiewski. It culminated at LSA Anaconda with remarks from General Couch, the Commanding General of the 316th SCE and COL Jennings, Deputy Commander, 316th SCE.



Senior Warrant Officers attending the Briefing



CW5 Barr conducting WOPD at LSAA

Issues discussed were not solely related to Warrant Officer Issues, such as education, promotion and pay, but they included relevant items that affect all war fighters. Specific items of interest to the Signal Corps Warrants included frequency management, JNTC training, COTs Training, the development and utilization of MOSs 251/254, standards for officers, ongoing missions such as those in MND-SE, COMSEC, contractor utilization, NETOPS, ESB operations, Warrant Officer Training and a host of other topics. “It was a great week for the Warrant Officer Corps. This event provided a forum for junior, senior, and possible future warrant officers to come together and interact. It was rewarding to see the planning and coordination of all involved culminate into such a successful event. It was interesting how many personnel traveled from different camps to attend this function.” Chief Warrant Officer Omar Lopez, The Network Management Technician from Task Force Thunderbird concluded. From a potential Warrant Officer standpoint, “The most important thing that I noticed during the briefing was that after 38 years of service Chief Barr still spoke about the Warrant Officer Corps with a true passion that really resonated with me” Staff Sgt. Jonathan Vlieger stated.



Warrant Officer One Allen being promoted to Chief Warrant Officer Two.

Left to right: LTC Ann Kramarich, Commander 44th ESB, MAJ Paul, Howard, 44th ESB S3 OIC, CW2 John Allen, 44th ESB Network Management Technician, CW5 Andy Barr, Signal Corps Regimental Chief Warrant Officer



CW3 James Ebeler and SPC Tillery brief Chief Barr during a site visit at CP Victory TCF #2

Chief Barr visited with Senior Signal Officers and NCOs during his stay. He discussed key items that were presented to him by the Commanders and Command Sergeant Major of the 11th Signal Brigade, MNC-I C6 and Sergeant Major, 40th ESB, 44th ESB, 63rd ESB, MND-B and MND-C G6s OICs and Sergeant Majors. Chief Barr also visited various signal sites such as the Victory Hub and Tropo sites at Balad.



CW3 Buckles, Network Management Technician for the Victory Hub is shown here receiving the Regimental Chief Warrant Officer Coin





Less than stellar running conditions did not hinder over 400 service members from participating in the 5K Warrant Officer Fun Run held at LSA Anaconda.



CW5 Barr, CW5 Willams and CW4 Newkirk boarding a flight enroute to Balad



Preflight Briefing onboard a C12

Travel within the ITO can be an issue, however with the assistance of CW5 David Williams, C-3 Air Tactical Operations/Senior Warrant Officer Advisor to the MNF-I CG, flight support was flawless. Chief Williams was not only instrumental in ensuring that travel arrangements in the ITO were complete, but his guidance was crucial in the entire planning process.

CW5 Barr's visit and the Warrant Officer Conference was a result of months of coordination by Warrant Officers within the Task Force, MNC-I and MNF-I. The success of the conference was indicative of the professionalism of Chief Barr as well as that of Commanders within Task Force Thunderbird, MNC-I C6 and the Warrant Officers that were instrumental in the planning and execution of this event. As an Army at War, retaining Soldiers with a high level of technical and tactical competence is a vital part of our mission as leaders. Recruiting these individuals in the Warrant Officer Corps will build upon the foundation of the Corps, guaranteeing the dominance of our Armed Forces. This event strengthened the Warrant Officers Corps and ensured success as we solidified "The Future of the Warrant Officer."