

Sustainment Warrant Officers' Expanded Roles

BY CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 4 WAYNE A. BAUGH

The Army Combined Arms Support Command has charged senior warrant officers with facilitating the reverse collection and analysis team program to translate observations, insights, and lessons learned into changes in doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities.

Many would argue that our continuously changing contemporary operational environment and the Army's move toward a full-spectrum capability are the driving forces behind the expanding role of sustainment warrant officers in the modular force. In many ways, not everyone would agree with the wisdom of this expansion. Some people in the warrant officer and other communities are concerned that we may be headed in the wrong direction with these expanded roles.

Expanding Responsibilities

Historically, the warrant officer cohort's roles and re-

sponsibilities have been fairly narrow in focus because warrant officers are subject-matter experts in their respective fields or disciplines. Right or wrong, the roles of today's warrant officer are being broadened. Many would say this is because of the operational environment, globalization, and cultural shifts in the Army.

In today's environment, warrant officers can no longer afford to be just technical experts; that would be considered "old think." Because of their expanded roles, warrant officers have to be able to understand the commander's intent and turn it into action in order to execute today's complex full-spectrum missions.

Junior and senior warrant officers have to be technical experts, but they also must possess staff skills to assist the organization in accomplishing its mission. Skills such as the ability to analyze, anticipate, plan, coordinate, and prepare detailed briefings, reports, memorandums, and orders are all part of what warrant officers do routinely in their daily duties. These skills are needed to complement their technical expertise, and have proven vital to mission accomplishment.

This is a point of friction among warrant officers today. While part of the cohort wants to hold to its legacy charter as technical experts, others would like to broaden their horizons and enhance their overall

A warrant officer and a captain mentor a fuel handler staff sergeant during the 3d Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, full-spectrum operations training rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center.



operational skill sets. The following story is about three warrant officers in the sustainment community who have embraced the idea that there are no boundaries to warrant officer duties and involvement.

Warrant Officers in Action

The Sustainment Center of Excellence recently assigned three of the Army's logistics experts to its Directorate of Lessons Learned and Quality Assurance (DL2QA) at Fort Lee, Virginia. Chief Warrant Officer 4 Percy Alexander (a senior property accounting technician), Chief Warrant Officer 4 Mark Brubeck (a senior mobility officer), and I, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Wayne Baugh (a senior automotive maintenance officer), are the first warrant officers selected to work in this capacity within the sustainment community.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Alexander was the first quartermaster warrant officer to graduate from Intermediate Level Education (ILE) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. ILE is normally attended by only commissioned officers, and Chief Alexander was part of the first ILE class to include warrant officers.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Brubeck was selected as one of the Army's first mobility warrant officers (military occupational specialty 882A) and later became the course manager for that specialty. I was the first warrant officer to attend the Theater Logistics Studies Course (TLog) at the Army Logistics University, another course normally attended by commissioned officers. Each of us has deployed several times in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, serving in our areas of expertise at the theater level of command.

Today, warrant officers are placed in positions of increased responsibility based on their progressive training and experience. DL2QA's three warrant officers are no different. The contemporary Army warrant officer understands that you cannot move into the future until you fully understand the past. Working in DL2QA at the Army Combined Arms Support Command (CASCOM) has allowed us to broaden our individual skill sets, enabling us to provide a valuable capability to the sustainment community and the Army as a whole.

DL2QA affords us the opportunity to look at Army sustainment from the top down, across the different levels of war: strategic, operational, and tactical. We work in the domains of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF). We warrant officers may be aligned functionally to our specific branches of quartermaster, ordnance, and transportation, but our daily responsibilities involve a holistic sustainment outlook.

The Reverse Collection and Analysis Team

As the Army experienced changes because of modularity and the execution of full-spectrum operations,

the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) drove a requirement to distribute information to the operational force faster than ever before. The vision was to provide the Army with best practices and lessons learned through "rapid adaptation."

Sustainment leaders quickly recognized the importance of this initiative, and the CASCOM commander at the time, Major General Mitchell H. Stevenson, approved the addition of the three senior warrant officers to CASCOM's table of distribution and allowances. He wanted to use their expertise to validate many of the issues units were reporting.

Army warrant officers are unique in many ways, but in this capacity they are able to call on their expertise at all levels of war to reduce the burden on the CASCOM staff. They routinely conduct first-cut analysis on

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sustainment issues before CASCOM's directorates start working on solutions.

DL2QA's warrant officers champion a program called the reverse collection and analysis team (R-CAAT). An R-CAAT is a team at CASCOM that hosts a commander and a few of his key staff members at Fort Lee immediately after a deployment. For 2 days, they conduct a leader professional development session, which includes a commander's interview and roundtable sessions with each of the DOTMLPF domain owners at CASCOM.

The program derives from a CALL program called the collection and analysis team (CAAT). A CAAT is a team sent out by CALL to a unit in theater to collect observations, insights, and lessons. These events are high priority so that senior leaders can obtain feedback from the operational force and resolve sustainment issues that affect the warfighter. CALL is in constant communication with the highest Army leaders, who often participate in this program and recognize it for its value added to the sustainment community and the Army as a whole.

Why Warrant Officers?

Some may ask why we should use warrant officers in this capacity. The answer is simple: Who other than an Army warrant officer has the ability, understanding, expertise, knowledge, and breadth and depth of experience to work highly technical, tactical issues at an operational level while knowing how to embrace and engage strategic partners to accomplish the mission?

Warrant officers have instant credibility when dealing

with different organizations. We three warrant officers function in an environment where we communicate routinely with Department of Defense and Army agencies, such as the U.S. Transportation Command, Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command, Defense Logistics Agency, Army Training and Doctrine Command, Army Combined Arms Center, Army Forces Command, Army Materiel Command, Army TACOM and CECOM Life Cycle Management Commands, Army Human Resources Command, and many more.

We three warrant officers have dubbed ourselves “change agents” because it is our charter to change the culture of the sustainment community. Changing a culture that has been in place for years is a complex and daunting task, but we have signed up for the mission. We provide an initial briefing to every sustainment professional military education class at the Army Logistics University, outlining the sustainment lessons learned program and the importance of filling out surveys and writing observations, insights, and lessons learned.

Positive Results

The work that we execute daily has contributed to numerous sustainment changes in DOTMLPF, enabling our current and future force to fight and win on the battlefield. The R-CAAT program alone is responsible for several logistics concepts, including the central receiving and shipping point, operational contract support, convoy protection platform gunnery, joint personal effects depot, and the responsible drawdown, just to list a few. Our work and that of the entire DL2QA team has affected the sustainment community in many ways.

The above-mentioned initiatives and many more have resulted in changes to 12 field manuals, 21 collective support training packages, 12 force design updates, 9 convoy force protection functional needs analyses, 12 CALL-produced handbooks, 10 capabilities-based analyses, and 4 capabilities needs assessments. These are just the long-term products that have been produced or initiated. We have also enabled the completion of other significant products, such as the 47 R-CAATS, focused interviews with the most senior Army logisticians, 19 *Army Sustainment* articles, and countless video teleconferences with the operational force.

All of these initiatives are used to bridge the gap between the generating force and the operating force. Our cumulative knowledge has benefitted doctrine, training, and combat developers in CASCOM and the junior leaders at ALU and the quartermaster, ordnance, and transportation proponent schools. Our actions have resulted in an improved ability to make field manuals and platform instruction and training more effective and relevant to the rapidly changing wartime environment. As we move forward with the Army Learning Concept 2015, we are going to continue to stress the capabilities of senior logisticians like us.

The “so what” of this entire article is this: What benefits are provided from using warrant officers in this capacity for the warrant officer cohort, the Army, and individual Soldiers? As we move forward, we realize that the Army is a learning environment. Our environment is changing at a much faster rate than before. In order to get ahead of these changes, we should consider investing more in our warrant officer cohort.

The Army should consider integrating a certain percentage of senior warrant officers into the Army War College, ILE, TLog, and other advanced training opportunities to expand and complement the education, training, and future utilization of the warrant officer cohort. This initiative will allow warrant officers to train in a joint service and intergovernmental environment with coalition partners. This will afford the Army’s technical experts the opportunity to share their expertise and experience when operating within a joint and foreign environment. Warrant officers are capable of so much more than they are currently asked to do.

Army warrant officers are leaders, competent and confident warriors, innovative integrators of emerging technologies, dynamic teachers, and developers of specialized teams of Soldiers. Their extensive professional experience and technical knowledge qualifies them to be invaluable role models and mentors for officers and noncommissioned officers. The Army Warrant Officer Corps comprises over 24,550 men and women in the Active Army, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve. Today’s warrant officers are highly educated, physically fit, mission focused, and ready to serve their country.

For access to unit R-CAAT briefings, videos, interviews, and information, visit <https://forums.army.mil/secure/communitybrowser.aspx?id=466463&lang=en-US> and www.cascom.army.mil/unit.aspx.

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