

**DOD REPORT ON
THE
"WARRANT OFFICER MANAGEMENT ACT"
(WOMA)**



November 30, 1989

Act of Congress in 1918 established three Army warrant officer grades--master mate, first mate and second mate.

A 1941 law created two grades of rank of warrant officers--Warrant Officer Junior Grade and Chief Warrant Officer. The authority and responsibility of warrant officers were broadened, and the position of flight officer, among others was added to the warrant officer corps. Before World War II ended, however, the position of flight officer in the Army Air Corps was restricted to commissioned officers in all but a few cases.

The Military Pay Bill of 1949 provided two new pay rates for warrant officers. The grades of rank of Warrant Officer (JG) and Chief Warrant Officer were continued. But among chief warrant officers there were three pay rates--Chief Warrant Officer W2, W3 and W4. In the Warrant Officer Personnel Act of 1954, these three pay rates became pay grades and WO(JG) became simply Warrant Officer.

Warrant officer utilization has varied over the years but the basic requirement has remained unchanged. Warrant officers are the highly skilled technical officers filling positions of systems operations, maintenance and management, who remain in the same career field for repetitive assignments. From World War II to the present, the rapid growth in technology has caused increased specialization requirements and launched new warrant officer careers in numerous occupational fields across the services.

The Army currently employs about 15,000 Active and 18,000 Reserve Component warrant officers covering 77 occupational specialties. Army warrant officers may be found in aviation, automotive and missile maintenance, communications and radar repair, engineers, signal, intelligence, marine and administration. The Navy utilizes 3,000 Active and 500 Reserve warrant officers in 30 occupational fields. Navy career fields utilizing warrant officers include ordnance, operations, engineering, communications and electronics, nuclear power, data processing, intelligence, food service and supply.

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The Marine Corps, with approximately 1,500 Active and 500 Reserve warrant officers, has recently expanded its Active Component warrant officer requirements to approximately 2,000, with a decrease of approximately 800 LDO requirements. Marine Corps warrant officers are employed in career fields such as postal, intelligence, automotive maintenance, supply, police, legal and personnel administration, engineering and survey and meteorology.

The United States Coast Guard, which employs approximately 1,400 Active and 400 Reserve Component warrant officers spread over 12 career fields, operates as an armed force under the Department of Transportation. Even though the Coast Guard is not a part of the Department of Defense, their warrant officer promotion, separation and retirement system is governed by these sections of law to be amended (U.S.C. Title 10). The "Warrant Officer Management Act" has been thoroughly staffed with the U.S. Coast Guard through the Department of Transportation and the Office of Management and Budget. All agencies have concurred with the proposed legislation.

The Air Force discontinued its warrant officer program in 1959 following the passage of legislation (Military Pay Act of 1958) which created the grades E8 and E9. After a careful review of the duties performed by their warrant officers, Air Force leadership decided to restructure the warrant officer authorizations into senior enlisted grades (E7/E8/E9). They felt that the highly technical mission could be met by officers and senior enlisted force. Such technical duties as acquisition, logistics and scientific were felt to be best performed by commissioned officers. Other diverse functions such as data systems operations, radar and avionics maintenance were given to the enlisted force. Loss of the warrant officers cut out an additional management layer and a separate personnel management system, and additionally created increased promotion opportunity for the senior enlisted force.

The services frequently examine more cost effective means of meeting requirements. The Army aviation community is currently examining the utility of converting a number of aviation logistician and

assistant operations officer positions from commissioned to warrant officer. The Army's warrant officer study identified grade coding requirements, but also revealed warrant officer career fields which were more appropriate for senior enlisted fill, such as General Officer Administrative Technicians, Club Managers, Air Traffic Controllers and Mapping Specialists.

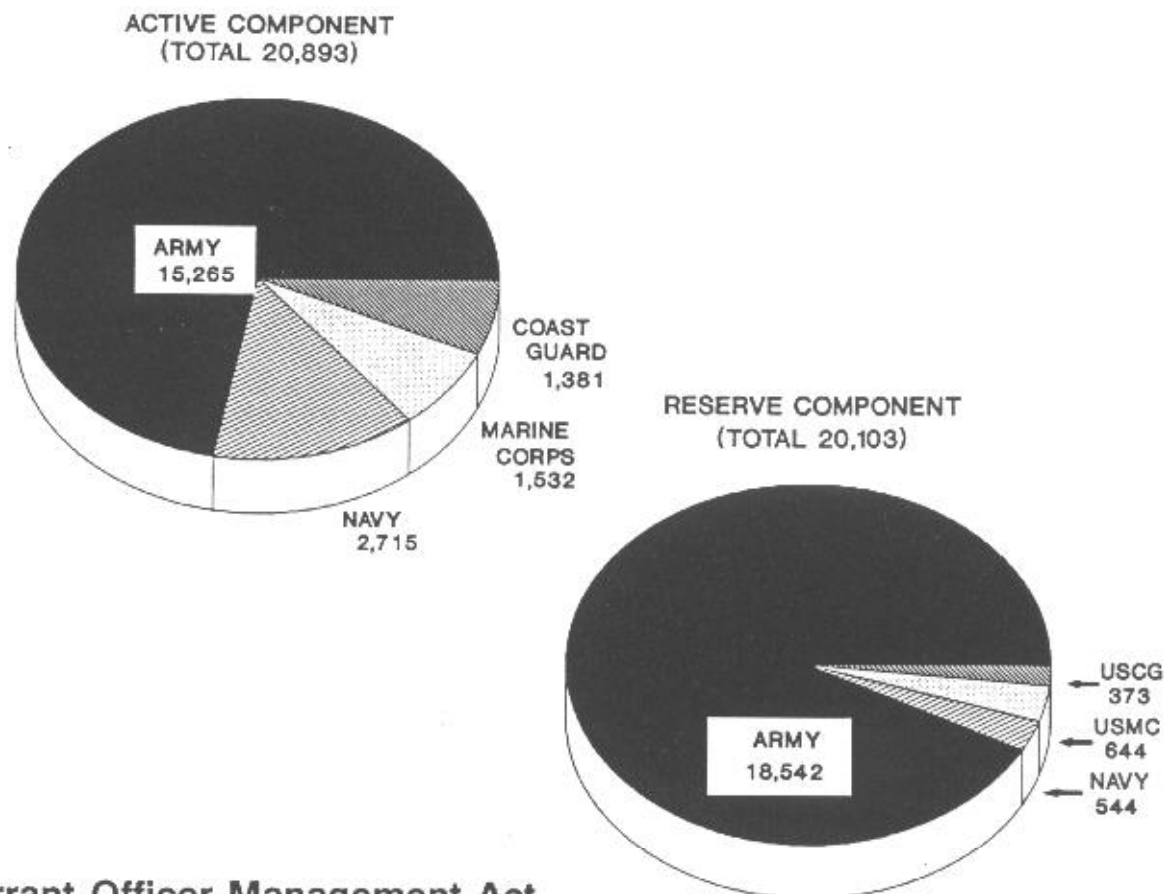
The Marine Corps just completed a comprehensive review of its warrant and LDO requirements. As a result of this revalidation process, some requirements were deleted, some converted to senior enlisted, and 792 LDO billets were converted to warrant officer billets.

The Navy regularly revalidates its Shore, Ship and Staff Officer manning documents and is currently eliminating some small warrant officer specialties by combining them with other officer skills. The Underwater and Surface Ordnance designators have been consolidated into a single Ordnance Technician designator, while Submarine Communications, Air Traffic Control, Bandmaster and Aerographer designators are being combined into other warrant officer or LDO designators. Requirements have been deleted or reprogrammed to other officer categories, where necessary, to ensure optimum utilization of officer authorizations.

Since 1959, the Air Force has continued to review the potential use of warrant officers to fill specific needs. In each case, however, they have determined that utilizing the existing enlisted and officer structure offered a better solution to meeting the requirement. Specific areas considered were physicians assistants, nurses, pilots and navigators. To organize a warrant force at this time would require eliminating either senior enlisted or junior officer positions. Either alternative would create new career management problems within the respective communities.

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WARRANT OFFICER FORCE BY SERVICE



Warrant Officer Management Act Background

In 1984 and 1985, the Army conducted a comprehensive review of its warrant officer program to determine if accessions, utilization and retention could be enhanced to meet future Army requirements. In June of 1985, the Army Chief of Staff approved study group recommendations to create a life cycle personnel management system for warrant officers similar to the one used to manage commissioned officers (second lieutenant/ensign through general/admiral). This system is comprised of a balance of both personnel policy initiatives and updated legislation. The goal of the new system is to attract and retain needed capable technical officers while remaining affordable from a budgetary standpoint.

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The Army initiated and coordinated this DoD legislative proposal which is designed to provide the service secretaries with the management tools necessary to more effectively and efficiently manage warrant officers within their organizations. The proposal establishes a new grade, W5, to improve career progression and enhance retention of senior warrant officer expertise.

In June of 1989, DoD submitted the "Warrant Officer Management Act" to Congress for legislative action. Congressman Bennett (D-FL) introduced the bill in the House (HR 2979) on July 24, 1989. The Senate Armed Services Committee, following an initial review of the proposal, requested a report from the Secretary of Defense concerning warrant officer tenure, grade management and control, and warrant officer utilization. The following summarizes the conclusions of this report.

Summary of Study Conclusions

Tenure

The study group recommends the provision in the proposed "Warrant Officer Management Act" which changes mandatory retirement points to years of warrant officer service for Regular Army warrant officers only, remain unchanged.

Reasons:

- Existing law provides for the mandatory retirement of regular warrant officers after completing 30 years of active Federal service (combined enlisted and warrant officer service). The Navy and Marine Corps' traditional warrant officer programs are relatively small; mandatory retirement based on total years of service better suits their typical career program. Because these programs are intended to be a capstone to an enlisted career, the current 30 year active Federal service mandatory retirement point continues to be an appropriate force shaping tool.
- The Army's much larger and somewhat younger warrant officer force structure presents some

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inherently unique problems. Their designed solution is to implement a "beginning to end" life cycle management system which incorporates tenure based on years of warrant officer service. The current 30 year active federal service retirement law prevents implementation of this new system.

The Navy and Marine Corps meet their warrant officer technician requirements by accessing highly experienced mid to senior level noncommissioned officers relatively late in their careers. Their missions and the size of their forces necessitate that level of experience. Extending the retirement points for Navy and Marine Corps senior warrant officers would severely impact on accessions for meeting their specific requirements, thus causing imbalances in future year groups.

The Army's warrant officer program accesses a younger warrant officer (averaging seven fewer years of service than the Navy and the Marine Corps Gunner programs) who is professionally developed throughout an entire warrant officer career.

Release points based on years of warrant officer service are essential to the Army's warrant officer personnel management system in order to provide a consistent career expectation for their younger warrant officer force.

Grade Controls

The study group recommends against any additional grade management and control beyond the requested five percent limitation on the new grade, W5, proposed in the "Warrant Officer Management Act."

Reasons:

- Management of small populations within numerous career fields would be hampered under additional grade constraints.
- Grade controls below the grade of W5 would restrict accessions, causing adverse impacts on readiness, particularly in the Sea Services.

- Warrant officer grades below W5 are paid less than the three lowest equivalent commissioned officer grades which are not subject to Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) grade limitations.
- All warrant officer grades are junior in rank and precedence to the lowest commissioned officer grade (O1).

In order to meet changing requirements, expansion and contraction of each service's force must occur predominantly in the lower grades. Warrant officer grades are budgeted with the lowest three officer grades (O1, O2 and O3). Each service secretary needs the flexibility to annually determine the mix of both categories based on service requirements and budget.

Jobs Warrant Officers Can Fill

The services' utilization of warrant officers are well-developed solutions for meeting their requirements for officer-level technical expertise. Warrant officers provide the cost effective balance between the "hands-on" technical expertise of the enlisted force and the "generalist" management and leadership expected of the commissioned officer.

Each program was considered in the context of its evolution in meeting that service's particular officer technician requirements. The study group also addressed future warrant officer utilization as the services continue to examine more cost effective ways of meeting their technical officer requirements. A number of initiatives are underway to identify and convert requirements appropriate for fill by warrant officers.

Under Consideration By:

Navy:

- Technical Nurse
- Diving Officer

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Marine Corps (Conversions from LDO to WO):

- Postal Officer
- Tactical Intelligence Officer
- Ground Supply Operations Officer
- Motor Transportation Maintenance Officer
- Legal Administration Officer
- Corrections Officer

Army:

- Aviation Assistant Operations Officer
- Aviation Logisticians