

Warrant Officer Corps boasts long history

by CW4 (Ret.) Wesley Bender

Officially, the Army Warrant Officer Corps birthday is July 9, 1918, when Congress established the Army Mine Planter Service as part of the Coastal Artillery.

At that time, most of the Iowa National Guard was deployed to Deming, N.M. and the 168th Infantry Regiment deployed to Europe with the 42nd "Rainbow" Division during World War I.

The early history of the Warrant Officer Corps and the U. S. Army Bands coincide in time. It was felt Army bands required experts who could lead instrumental musical groups in support of military functions. Gen. John "Blackjack" Pershing, Commander of all Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe during WWI, dis-

covered the band music of France and Great Britain was greatly superior to that of the U.S. He believed bands were essential to troop morale and in 1920, implemented an intense program to improve the Army Band Program.

Pershing knew, to have a great band was to have a leader who could achieve the desired results. The band leader's duty had to include conducting techniques, music theory and having knowledge of harmony, range, and characteristics of instruments.

These Warrant Officer Band Leader's talents had to provide everything included in today's Warrant Officer definition.

The Act of 1920 expanded use of warrant officers, authorizing appointment of warrant officers in band-leading activities, plus clerical and administrative experts. The Iowa Adjutant General's reports for the first two decades afterwards show 12 different Iowa Warrant Officer band leaders, the first being Leslie Leo Schmidt, Band Leader for the 133rd Infantry's Band in Fairfield. He was appointed Nov. 25, 1922.

On Dec. 12, 1922, Cleveland Dayton was appointed Warrant Officer Band Leader for the 113th Calvary Band. There was a band for each regiment; the 133rd Infantry (Fairfield), 113th Calvary (Ottumwa), 168th Infantry (Council Bluffs), and 185th Field Artillery (Boone).

At no time during the 1920's and 1930's, were Warrant Officers serving in any other capacity in the Iowa National Guard.

All Iowa National Guard units deployed during WWII - the bands included - and Iowa National Guard units did not return until late 1945. The Act of 1941 provided many provisions for today's Warrant Officer rank. Most of the 40 occupational areas were incorporated into the structure.

The first "Tables of Organization and Equipment" (TOEs), after the war, assigned strength statewide at 37 Army and five Army Air Corps Warrant Officers. The first Iowa Transportation, Personnel, Supply, Communication, and Ordnance Warrant Officers were appointed in 1946-48. Engineer, Foodservice, Finance, Medical, and other Warrant Officers were appointed in the years that followed.

In 1947, after the US Air Force became a

More than 100 WOC graduates take part in their swearing-in ceremony at the War Memorial in downtown Indianapolis, Ind. (Contributed photo)



branch of the service, Army Aviation became seriously interested in the helicopter when air rescue, during WWII, alerted the Army to its great potential.

The Army TOEs, published in 1950, showed positions that called for Warrant Officer Helicopter Pilots. The Army did begin the inception of the Warrant Officer Flight Program in 1955 and the first class of two Warrants and 17 Warrant Officer Candidates (WOCs) graduated in April of that year. The Army training base used was Camp Rucker, Ala.

In October 1955, the Army expanded. The program was transferred to Camp Wolters, Texas. Iowa Warrant Officer pilots trained there and went on to advanced flight training at Fort Rucker. The first Warrant Officer helicopter pilots were assigned to the Waterloo-based 1063rd Transportation Company.

After studying personnel files, it was discovered the first Warrant Officer helicopter pilot was WO1 Max John Oltman, appointed Oct. 28, 1959. During WWII, he was an Army Air Corp Flight Officer and on Aug. 4, 1944, became a pilot.

The Iowa National Guard continued to grow and by 1970, the assigned Warrant Officer strength was 92. Later in the 1970s Iowa Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Joe May, appointed Jean Nelson the first female Warrant Officer.

Army National Guard Warrant Officers were integrated into the Army's professional development program in 1978 and in 1984, the Army Chief of Staff chartered the Total Warrant Officer Study Group (TWOS). This was the first Department of the Army-level comprehensive study of Warrant Officer Management from pre-appointment to retirement.

The establishment of the (other than aviation) WOC School was the direct result from recommendations of the TWOS. CW4 Louis Cavros is the first Iowa National Guard, non-aviation candidate, to graduate from an Army WOC School, held at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Md., in 1987.

The culmination of TWOS was the passage of the Warrant Officer Management Act (WOMA) in 1992. Provisions of the new law included the grade of CW5, conditional appointment to WO1 upon completion of WOC School, and establishment of a Warrant Officer Career Center at Ft. Rucker. Gerald Klinkefus was Iowa's first CW5, pinned in May 1993.

The Army Training and Leader Development Plan (ATLDP) released in 2002, makes fundamental changes for the Warrant Officer Corps,



completing recommendations made by the TWOS study. These provisions represent the most significant changes within the Warrant Officer Corps since the inception in July 1918.

Included are Warrant Officer recruiters (Iowa's is CW3 Dennis Hall), a Command Chief Warrant Officer and the WOC School underwent a complete transformation.

These changes ensure Soldiers becoming warrant officers have skills relevant to an Army at war. WOC School is no longer just "Basic Training on Steroids," to quote the February 2006 Army White Paper.

Changes include pilot programs to conduct WOC Schools at 13 different states Regional Training Institutes (RTIs). Iowa's first WOCs class had 12 Candidates training at Camp Dodge's 185th RTI. In September 2006, the candidates completed their training at Camp Atterbury, Ind. and were appointed Iowa's newest warrant officers.

The Iowa Army National Guard appointed then-CW4 Julia Mosman to replace retired CW5 Billy Foley as Iowa's second Command Chief Warrant Officer. Mosman became the first female CW5 upon her promotion, April 20, 2006.

Since 1922, Iowa Soldiers who possess the knowledge and skills have received authority from the Secretary of the Army to be a leader and technical expert. The Army Warrant Officer, no matter what specialty, should read the duties of the Army Bandmaster. That incredible duty position is an example of what Pershing had in mind when he wanted a leader and expert.

That legacy is what all Warrant Officers carry today.

Recent graduates of the first Regional Training Institution Warrant Officer Candidate school pose following completion of their 10-month course. (Contributed photo)