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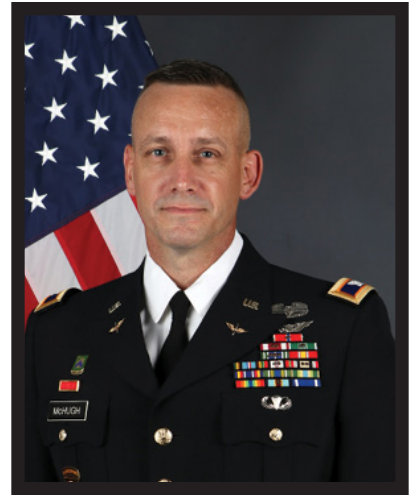
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Commandant's Corner

COL Kevin E. McHugh, Commandant, USAWOCC



Happy Holidays to you and yours from the USAWOCC Family! As you know, our editorial team encountered significant obstacles on the central axis of progress in delivering Issue Three, Volume 2. But here it is, and just in time to sit down by a warm fire during the best time of year and reflect on Army transformation. I want to thank all those who contributed articles to round out this issue. Within these pages, you will begin to peel back the impacts and need for individual understanding on how best to employ Artificial Intelligence (through prompts) to enhance strategic thought and combat effectiveness. Turning to page 22, we begin discussing and analyzing the role and value of the warrant officer as a critical component, leader, and combat multiplier within Army Transformation.

What is Army Transformation anyway? Change, within the context of the Army, has always been identified as a necessary facet for achieving individual or organizational improvement, but perhaps its effects have grown stale. Driving change on its own no longer achieves the desired ends; it is insufficient to meet the demands of the current operating environment and the changing character of war in LSCO. GEN Hodne describes change as “doing old things differently” and says that “transformation is doing entirely new things... to transform our Army.” This new concept forms the very root of Army Transformation and is nested as the number one priority across T2COM and the USAWOCC as we cross the line of departure and enter into 2026.

The USAWOCC team has accomplished a great deal over the last several years, delivering modernized educational and functional courses. Still, as expected, the world continues to evolve, and with it, so does our focus in support of the cohort and the Army. Thanks to you, the followers and readers of Strength in Knowledge...this is the warrant officer journal.

Strength in Knowledge!



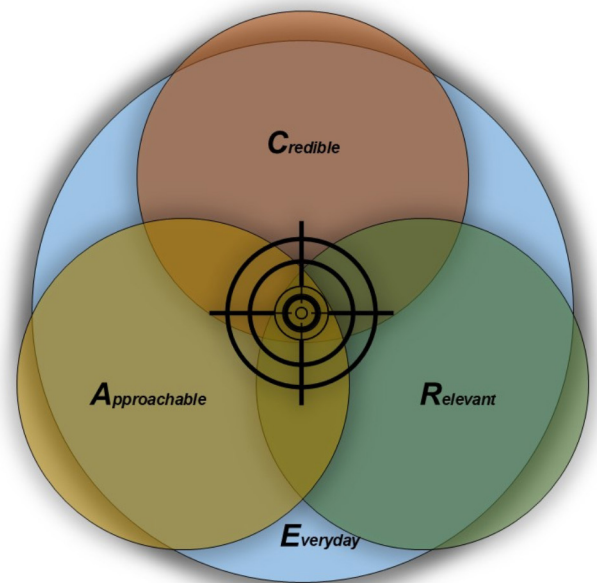
Mentorship Part 4

Dr. Stephen Napoli, CW5 (Ret), Director, Leadership Institute, Troy University

This quarter, we continue with the series of mentorship articles developed from an old warrant officer's (now a retired, old warrant officer's) perspective and experience. You will find that there is an overlap between mentorship and leadership through the series. As a reminder, the CARE Model was born from my poor answer to a good question about success that was shared in previous articles. The model is represented by being Credible, Approachable, & Relevant Everyday (CARE). Of course, it is much easier to spell it out than to put it into practice, because even warrant officers are human.

We have laid the foundation of mentorship in previous articles in Strength in Knowledge. We previously explored being credible and approachable. When mentors or leaders fail in those two areas, relevance is lost. Relevance is also lost when leaders refuse to embrace the responsibility of mentorship. Making those around us better at anything is foundational to mentorship. ADP 6-22 highlights numerous doctrinal concepts that can be connected directly to the value of relevance. For example, pages 5-8 clearly articulate that "leaders who commit to coaching, counseling, and mentoring subordinates build relationships that foster trust. These relationships built on trust enable leaders to empower subordinates, encourage initiative, reinforce accountability, and allow for open communication. Further, these relationships establish predictability and cohesion with the team." That is a lot of responsibility captured in three sentences... with a lot of return on the investment.

Reach back to the previous discussions on credibility and approachability in the model. It is rather simple to present the connections between the "C" and "A" in the CARE Model to the "R." Do not even stress out about being relevant if you are not credible or approachable. You have already lost relevance in the eyes of those you mean to lead, coach, or mentor. People who know their profession and are willing to continue learning are seen as credible. When approachability is added, they are sought out by others to help improve their lives, careers, or both. Leaders and mentors are given more opportunities to remain relevant when they make themselves appealing. It requires a marriage between opportunity and action for relevance to emerge. "Opportunities that challenge the individual and encourage learning enhance development" (FM 6-22: Leader Development, 2022, p. 2-3). Credibility and approachability tee up opportunities for relevance. Think about it—if you have even sought out a mentorship relationship, did you reach out to someone who was not first credible and approachable? I'm going to go out on a limb here and assume that ideal mentors have something to offer (credibility), are positively responsive (approachability), and are willing to share experiences and education (relevance).



The CARE Model by CW5 Stephen Napoli.

Another way to illustrate the relationship is to view credibility as a demonstration of what is known or learned. Bridges without benefits on both ends are dead ends. Approachability is the bridge linking credibility to relevance. And relevance is the willingness to share what is known or learned for the benefit of others. In my way of thinking and applying the model to many aspects of life, credibility is the brain (or knowledge) of mentorship, approachability is the attitude of mentorship, and relevance is the

heart of mentorship.

Next time, the discussion will focus on the most difficult part of the model to uphold—“everyday.” Until then, continue to self-develop the means to lead and mentor so that our replacements are well-equipped to continue the fight after we are gone.

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FM 6-22: Leader Development. (2022). Headquarters, Department of the Army.

Editor’s Note: Dr. Stephen Napoli is a former Deputy Commandant of the Warrant Officer Career College. He currently serves Troy University and its students as the Executive Director of the Institute for Leadership Development. Previously, he served for 32 years in the U.S. Army as an AH-64 aviator, instructor pilot, and educator. He has served, and continues to serve, in several leadership, mentorship, and educational positions. Dr. Napoli holds a bachelor’s degree in Mathematics, a master’s degree in Aeronautical Science, and a doctorate in Strategic Leadership.



Using CamoGPT as a Strategic Thought Partner: A Call to Action for Army Warrant Officers

CW4 (Dr.) Joshua Hart, DBA, Aviation

The AI-driven Leader: Harnessing AI to Make Faster, Smarter Decisions emphasizes that instead of asking “how can I solve this problem?” start by asking yourself “how can AI help me solve this problem?” (Woods, 2024). The growing innovation and complexity of modern warfare should compel Warrant Officers to actively improve their core competencies (integrate, communicate, operate, lead, and advise) by learning to use advanced tools such as CamoGPT efficiently and effectively.

CamoGPT is a generative artificial intelligence (AI) platform that assists users in data analysis, clear communication, strategic planning, and decision validation. Despite its robust potential, a leading misconception persists among Warrant Officers and military leaders alike, who often view such AI tools as merely a “cool or neat” writing assistant or a replacement for human innovation and judgment. This misunderstanding of generative AI’s use limits its strategic integration and the power it can offer users. No matter what you may hear from the media or marketing messaging, generative AI and similar AI model tools are created to amplify and enhance human capability rather than replace human insight and innovation.

Clear and precise communication, supported by AI, can enhance our decision-making accuracy, operational efficiency, and overall mission readiness. It is paramount that Warrant Officers understand how to use CamoGPT as a strategic thought partner, as it directly aligns with improving our ability to leverage our core competencies to the fullest as a cohort. AI is here to stay! Instead of waiting for the military to catch up and potentially train us, it is in our best interests to be proactive now. Keeping up with the rapid development of this thing we call “AI” not only ensures you stay technically relevant in daily operations but also helps ensure our collective capability to win the Nation’s future conflicts.

Strategies and Systems Thinking for CamoGPT Usage

By employing strategic and systems thinking, we can effectively integrate CamoGPT in a manner that aligns perfectly with the core competencies of Warrant Officers, which include our ability to integrate, communicate, operate, lead, and advise (Momeny et al., 2023). The U.S. Army trains its military leaders at the U.S. Army War College (USAWC) to apply strategic and systems thinking to comprehensively address complex operational environments, ensuring readiness and mission effectiveness (Waters, 2011). As Warrant Officers, we lack a deeper understanding of its application because of the surface-level knowledge we receive during our Professional Military Education (PME). CamoGPT, by design, aligns with the Army’s strategic objectives of enhancing operational efficiency, decision-making accuracy, and clarity in command communications, enabling Warrant Officers to rise to those we advise and apply our competencies more effectively (Enhancing Military Effectiveness through the Integration of CAMO and NIPR GPT, 2025).

Strategic thinking enhances our ability to anticipate the second- and third-order effects of decisions, a massive benefit of CamoGPT’s predictive analytics capabilities. For instance, Warrant Officers who apply systems-thinking principles can use CamoGPT to help validate and test operational scenarios, thereby enhancing our ability to advise commanders. This systematic approach helps to reduce uncertainty, increase operational readiness, and streamline the entire decision-making process.

Because CamoGPT integration upholds and promotes the Army’s professional values of integrity, responsibility, and excellence by reinforcing rigorous analytical standards and supporting human

oversight of outputs, it makes it a better option than using a non-military test system such as OpenAI's ChatGPT or Anthropic's Claude (Enhancing Military Effectiveness through the Integration of CAMO and NIPR GPT, 2025). Inherently, Warrant Officers who use CamoGPT, a U.S. Army-sourced and procured solution, show a commitment to ethical leadership, reflecting the core Army professional values and objectives.

Using and integrating CamoGPT through a strategic and systems-thinking perspective, Warrant Officers help reinforce our crucial role within the Army's command structure, as it directly supports Army-wide readiness and effectiveness (Fazekas, 2023). This deliberate integration also closely aligns with the Army's overarching goals of a holistic, elastic approach, forging a future advantage in warfare (Bahoque et al., 2025).

Understanding CamoGPT's Role to Enhance, Not Replace Expertise

By gaining a clear understanding of CamoGPT's capabilities, Warrant Officers are better equipped to use artificial intelligence (AI) effectively and efficiently, thereby enhancing our decision-making processes. CamoGPT can offer analytical, communication, and strategic advantages through its various applications, not just as a "cool" writing assistant. This tool extends beyond basic generative functions, enabling complex data analysis and strategic communication refinement to support commanders and staff (Army CAMO GPT, 2025).

It is important to understand that AI tools like CamoGPT are designed to complement human expertise, not replace it (Otto & Mănescu, 2023). The strategic use of CamoGPT enhances Warrant Officers' inherent analytical abilities by providing clarity in complex operational environments. Think of AI as the perfect "thought partner," where your ideas and intuitions can be assessed, validated, and refined. It also helps gain new perspectives on a problem set that you may be very familiar with. With that, certain biases can be reduced, as CamoGPT can aid in validating operational assumptions and exploring alternative courses of action (Schirmer & Léveillé, 2021). By doing so, CamoGPT reinforces the Warrant Officers' core competencies rather than diminishing their roles.

A Warrant Officer's effective use of CamoGPT closely aligns with our roles in advising commanders by helping streamline and improve communication clarity. This AI-driven capability enables more precise briefing preparations, deeper scenario analysis, and strategic validation, thereby promoting the operational effectiveness of our cohort (Fazekas, 2023; Warren et al., 2025). Therefore, understanding not only the strategic but also the practical use of CamoGPT promotes professional excellence, allowing Warrant Officers to enhance their decision-making abilities and uphold our role as trusted advisors to commanders, rather than a replacement for our inherent expertise.

CamoGPT's Practical Use in Various Roles

Generative AI (CamoGPT) will help guide this section by illustrating practical use-case scenarios. I have chosen CamoGPT as the organizer and architect so that the practical applications of this AI come directly from the source. Any actual use of generative AI by CamoGPT will be indicated, with "(Army CAMO GPT, 2025)" as the cited source. It is also essential to understand that when using prompts, you should either place the prompt before or after the information you are sharing to make full use of CamoGPT's assistance. The content you want help with will either be uploaded as a file or copied and pasted into the message window, along with the prompt being used. If it is already uploaded, you can make a request such as, "Using the attached/uploaded document, [prompt being used]." Always interact with generative AI as if you are explaining your request to a young child or a soldier unfamiliar

with the tasks you need completed. Use context and specific directions to increase the likelihood that the generative output aligns with the information you are seeking. When in doubt, fact-check, test a new prompt in a different chat window to help combat hallucination (making things up), or provide additional context and information.

Staff Planner

CamoGPT can support staff planners in applying the Military Decision Making Process (MDMP) and Army Design Methodology (ADM). Prompt examples such as “Develop initial framing questions for the commander’s intent and military end state,” and “Outline alternative courses of action considering operational constraints” (ADP 5-0 The Operations Process, 2019; Army CAMO GPT, 2025). These prompts help with scenario analysis, encourage structured problem-solving, and enable a comprehensive evaluation of operational possibilities (Army CAMO GPT, 2025; Fazekas, 2023). By employing AI-supported methodologies, staff planners can enhance their ability to quickly and correctly synthesize information, thereby strengthening their advisory role, operational clarity, and overall decision-making quality (Fazekas, 2023; Scholl et al., 2024).

Training Facilitator

CamoGPT empowers Warrant Officers as training facilitators to help design practical and scenario-driven exercises. Using prompts such as “create a realistic tactical scenario for immediate response drills” can quickly generate clear, concise, and relevant training content that aligns with the specific operational demands required (Army CAMO GPT, 2025; Schirmer & Léveillé, 2021). This AI-driven approach strengthens the competencies of communication, leadership, and operational integration by enhancing training realism, responsiveness, and accuracy (Army CAMO GPT, 2025). Warrant Officers who use CamoGPT can better ensure that personnel readiness aligns with dynamic real-world operations, thereby supporting improvements in unit readiness and mission effectiveness (Beagle & Rund, 2024).

Knowledge Manager

CamoGPT can serve as a perfect memory aid, thereby enhancing a Warrant Officer’s competencies in integration, communication, and operations by synthesizing and managing institutional and personal knowledge and experiences. Prompts such as “summarize critical lessons learned from recent operational engagements” enable Warrant Officers to understand and quickly disseminate these insights, thereby streamlining the flow of knowledge throughout the command structure (Army CAMO GPT, 2025; Warren et al., 2025). This AI-assisted management of information helps reduce cognitive overload, supports quick, informed decision-making, and enables better continuity and clarity in knowledge dissemination and management (Army CAMO GPT, 2025; Beagle & Rund, 2024; Fazekas, 2023).

Communications Aide

CamoGPT improves a Warrant Officer’s communications by refining and clarifying briefings and written correspondence for subordinates, peers, and senior leadership (Steddum, 2022). Through AI-driven prompts, such as “Refine this command briefing for precise senior leader engagement,” Warrant Officers can tailor complex information into concise, impactful communications (Army CAMO GPT, 2025; Caraher, 2020). This process enhances clarity, precision, and conciseness in messaging, thereby strengthening communication skills and advisement, both of which are part of our Warrant Officers’ core

competencies. By using CamoGPT, Warrant Officers can easily improve the quality and effectiveness of their interactions with key leaders, ensuring the timely, accurate, and strategic dissemination of critical information, which supports informed decisions (Army CAMO GPT, 2025; Otto & Mănescu, 2023).

Logistics and Operations Analyst

CamoGPT can accurately help Warrant Officers with logistical and operational analysis, directly aligning with our core competencies in operating, integrating, and advising. Example prompts, such as “Analyze logistical constraints for a 30-day sustained operation,” will help identify potential operational bottlenecks and resource limitations (Army CAMO GPT, 2025; Scholl et al., 2024). This rapid yet accurate analytical capability of CamoGPT helps enhance our strategic planning and decision-making, especially when we often find ourselves in resource-limited situations and/or with limited staff support (Fazekas, 2023). By using CamoGPT, Warrant Officers can systematically reduce risks and assumptions, thereby improving operational sustainment strategies and making practical, efficient contributions to mission readiness, operational success, and the strategic alignment of resources in complex military environments (Army CAMO GPT, 2025; Warren et al., 2025).

Matrix: CamoGPT Strategic Use and Prompt Examples

Warrant Officer Competency	Staff Role	Sample Strategic Prompt
Integrate, Advise	Staff Planner	“Formulate strategic framing questions for Commander’s intent and military end state.”
Lead, Communicate	Training Facilitator	“Create a realistic training scenario emphasizing tactical drills.”
Integrate, Operate	Knowledge Manager	“Summarize strategic lessons learned from past operations or AARs.”
Communicate, Advise	Communications Aide	“Clarify command briefing points for senior leader presentation.”
Operate, Integrate, Advise	Logistics/Operations Analyst	“Evaluate logistical and sustainment challenges for extended operations.”
Lead, Advise	Ethical Decision Support	“Identify ethical considerations for operational decisions.”
Lead, Integrate	Professional Development	“Develop leadership strategies addressing team cohesion issues.”

Note: This table was created by using OpenAI’s GPT 4.5 LLM (Chat.com, 2025)



Ethical Considerations and Limitations

Using CamoGPT requires professional integrity and a strong awareness of its limitations. Ethical considerations arise from inherent limitations in data accuracy, security classifications, and potential biases embedded in the AI decision-making process (Fazekas, 2023; Kone et al., 2024; Ryan, 2020). As CamoGPT largely relies on the quality and integrity of input data, inaccuracies or bias in these datasets may compromise outputs, potentially leading to flawed operational decisions (Army CAMO GPT, 2025; Warren et al., 2025).

The necessity for strict human oversight becomes apparent in light of these limitations. Warrant Officers must carefully validate any AI-generated insights and recommendations to ensure alignment with ethical standards, operational objectives, and professional military values (Army CAMO GPT, 2025; Conitzer et al., 2017). Moreover, because CamoGPT cannot currently process or manage Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) on NIPR networks, Warrant Officers must exercise caution when providing sensitive information to the platform (Army CAMO GPT, 2025). CamoGPT, however, is available on SIPR and other protected data networks, allowing it to provide the same capabilities regardless of the classification required for a strategic thought partner.

Conclusion

We, as Warrant Officers, now stand at a pivotal moment in the U.S. Army amid force structure changes and rapidly advancing technological innovations. We must lead the charge for change by starting to ask the question, “How can AI help me solve this problem?” This will not only elevate our core competencies (integrate, communicate, operate, lead, and advise) but also help us better understand and act on the increasingly complex and dynamic nature of modern warfare and military operations. By proactively welcoming, embracing, and mastering generative AI tools such as CamoGPT, we not only ensure our individual technical relevance but also collectively enhance the Army’s success and operational effectiveness. In our current era, characterized by the “do more with less” mentality, an initiative as a cohort can demonstrate to the broader Army the value and strategic necessity of AI integration to enhance, rather than replace, each of us. Through thoughtful, ethical use and human oversight, we can lead the way in fully embracing AI into daily operations, creating a more succinct and capable fighting force by becoming stronger and better together.

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The Importance of Emotional Intelligence for Special Forces Warrant Officers during Unconventional Warfare Operations

Dr. Daniel W. Ross, DM, MS, NRP

On June 6, 1962, President John F. Kennedy delivered the commencement address at the United States (U.S.) Military Academy in West Point, New York. Part of his speech highlighted special warfare activities and the growing number and importance of “unconventional” U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) soldiers for conflict in a constantly changing world. He stated, “In many countries, your posture and performance will provide the local population with the only evidence of what our country is really like. In other countries, your military mission, its advice and action, will play a key role in determining whether those people will remain free.” President Kennedy alluded to the importance of having highly trained individuals cultivate relationships abroad to represent U.S. values such as freedom in the face of “another type of warfare, new in its intensity, ancient in its origins, war by guerrillas, subversives, insurgents, assassins” (Tracy, 2023). To this day, the power to cultivate relationships remains a foundational element of U.S. Army SF operations.

This short article discusses the importance of emotional intelligence (EI) for cultivating relationships during unconventional warfare (UW) operations. The specific population of interest is the entry-level (WO1-CW2) U.S. Army Special Forces Warrant Officer (SFWO) serving on a Special Forces Detachment-Alpha (SFOD-A). These leaders play a distinct role in SF UW operations, and their key responsibilities within an SFOD-A hinge on their ability to develop and maintain relationships across multiple domains. The article covers a brief background on the SFWO, provides context to the UW principal task, and discusses relevant points concerning EI. The discussion focuses explicitly on the relationship management, social awareness, self-management, and self-awareness aspects of EI in UW operations. Unconventional warfare often takes place in complex, ambiguous, and challenging environments. The EI aptitude of an SFWO contributes significantly to the critical necessity of developing relationships with a partner force during UW operations. It can be the difference between life and death or mission success and failure.

The Special Forces Warrant Officer

The entry-level Special Forces Warrant Officer (MOS 180A) serves as the assistant detachment commander (ADC) of an SFOD-A. As second in command, the ADC assumes leadership in the detachment commander’s absence or during split-team operations. These SFWOs (WO1-CW2) serve as combat leaders and staff officers within SFOD-A. The ADC role, distinctive to SF, requires the SFWO to be the focal point for synchronizing all detachment staff functions (SFWOI, 2024; USAREC, 2024).

SFWOs advise commanders on all aspects of special operations, specifically UW, and maintain responsibility for integrating emerging technologies. The ADC may also advise, command, direct, or lead indigenous forces up to battalion size. The ADC serves a critical role in leading the SFOD-A through mission planning, fusing operations and intelligence, and facilitating Joint, Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Multinational (JIIM) coordination to ensure operational success. They oversee training and resource management while maintaining information flow and team continuity (SFWOI, 2024; USAREC, 2024). By synchronizing these responsibilities, the ADC enhances the SFOD-A’s effectiveness in executing complex missions across the operational continuum. Most importantly, they leverage their UW expertise to ensure an SFOD-A’s success in executing this important core activity and principal task.

Unconventional Warfare

Current U.S. doctrine considers UW a subset of irregular warfare (IW), a concept that also includes counterinsurgency, stability operations, foreign internal defense (FID), and counterterrorism (Kilcullen, 2019). Unconventional warfare is defined as “activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt, or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary, or guerrilla force in a denied area” (Theohary, 2024). UW remains one of USSOCOM’s core activities and is the founding principle and primary mission of the U.S. Army SF (Green Berets). Green Berets are specifically selected, trained, organized, and equipped to conduct UW on behalf of the United States government (USG) (Department of the Army, 2014; USASOC, 2016; Tovo et al., 2024).

At its most basic level, UW involves providing support to foreign resistance movements. Practically, SF executes UW missions by advising, assisting, training, and equipping indigenous fighters. This mission enables the U.S. to pursue an indirect approach to tackling adversarial threats abroad without resorting to overt conventional conflict (Tovo et al., 2024). Such a politically sensitive and strategic-level initiative aimed at shifting the balance of power within a foreign country or among sovereign powers requires creative, adaptable, and emotionally intelligent military leaders on the ground (Department of the Army, 2014). Special Forces leaders serve as the primary means of employing this national strategic politico-military tool on behalf of the USG (Department of the Army, 2021). Successful employment of special operations forces (SOF) to conduct relationship-based special warfare, such as UW, relies heavily on advisor EI aptitude to influence a resistance movement or indigenous partners in a manner consistent with USG objectives (Ekman et al., 2021).

Emotional Intelligence

An intriguing psychological and leadership concept related to the trait approach to leadership and emotional intelligence (EI) emerged in the last decade of the 20th century (Northouse, 2022). Emotional intelligence can be conceptualized as the ability to understand and manage personal emotions while influencing others’ emotions (Mazilu, 2021). The concept of EI involves the interplay between the affective and cognitive domains, enabling leaders to perceive emotions, use emotions to facilitate thinking, explore reasoning through emotion, and manage both internal and external emotions in their environment (Northouse, 2022). Four additional vital components of EI include relationship management, social awareness, self-management, and self-awareness (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017; Northouse, 2022).

The leadership ability to perceive and interpret emotions accurately and then respond to emotional situations accordingly should benefit job performance. Evidence exists that social-emotional skills such as EI enhance job performance in military populations that traditionally operate under stressful conditions (Krishnakumar et al., 2019). Since EI represents one of the few traits that can be trained, further evidence exists that EI-based training programs can enhance the success and effectiveness of military advisors, such as SFWOs, tasked with advising, training, and accompanying foreign security forces across the globe (Jeppesen, 2017). Emotionally intelligent skills, such as perceptiveness, regulation, emotional flexibility, and understanding, are crucial for SF leaders, such as SFWOs, to perform optimally in stressful, austere, and high-stakes environments (King, 2017).

EI for UW Operations

Both EI and UW emphasize the ability to influence human behavior, build relationships, and adapt to

complex, uncertain operational environments. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to identify, understand, and regulate personal emotions, as well as to perceive and influence the emotions of others (Mazilu, 2021). Well-developed EI aptitude requires numerous qualities, such as motivation, empathy, and social skills. More specifically, relationship management, social awareness, self-management, and self-awareness contribute significantly to EI capacity (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2017; Northouse, 2022). These qualities contribute to effective leadership, communication, and decision-making in ambiguous and complex environments. Unconventional warfare involves using irregular military forces and asymmetric tactics to achieve strategic objectives by enabling resistance movements or insurgencies against an adversary (Department of the Army, 2014; USASOC, 2016). Employing psychological operations, guerrilla tactics, intelligence operations, and influence campaigns to undermine enemy control during UW requires SF leaders to leverage the power of EI to manipulate and leverage social, political, and military dynamics to achieve broader operational goals. Success begins with the ability to manage relationships.

Relationship Management

Unconventional warfare typically occurs in complex, ambiguous, and austere environments where the ability to build relationships with a partner force can mean life or death for an SFOD-A or the difference between mission success and failure. According to Ekman et al. (2021), UW success often depends on an individual's or unit's ability to understand the vulnerabilities of their foreign counterparts at psychological, cultural, and operational levels. Leaders such as SFWOs must influence their host-nation counterparts in ways that align with U.S. military and USG objectives. For example, Nagata (2024) discusses the SF power of relationship management: "This vital form of intangible power originates from the thoughtful, deliberate, and persistent creation of relationships that lead to partnerships, and this intentional effort is irreplaceable for advancing and protecting U.S. national security interests." Overall, the application of special warfare is often relationship-based, requiring EI and empathy (Ekman et al., 2021). Thus, the relationship management aspect of EI remains crucial to the role of the SFWO and SFOD-A during UW operations.

Social Awareness

Social awareness also plays a distinct role in UW because SF leaders must develop a crucial understanding of a foreign population's cultural nuances, social dynamics, and grievances to effectively influence or support a social or resistance movement (Votel et al., 2016). Social awareness is the ability to recognize others' emotions and the dynamics at play within an organization or social environment (Landry, 2019). Part of social awareness involves meeting the UW challenges posed by social movements or social revolutions with appropriate training and education. Social and cultural awareness can be strengthened by focusing on social movement theory, cultural studies, language proficiency, influence operations, negotiation skills, subversion, and political warfare (Votel et al., 2016). As the central hub for information and training management on the SFOD-A, the SFWO must possess the capability to refine the team's social awareness efforts to enhance EI for UW operations.

Self-Management

As discussed, an SFOD-A is an elite cohesive unit that performs high-risk operations on behalf of the USG (Cooper et al., 2020). Unconventional warfare demands that individuals on an SFOD-A remain vigilant to their operational environment and manage their emotions during high-pressure, stressful situations. From an EI standpoint, self-management involves regulating one's emotions, particularly in high-stress situations, and maintaining a positive outlook despite daunting challenges. Many times,

leaders who fail to develop self-management skills respond impulsively and struggle to control their reactions effectively (Landry, 2019).

Consequently, SF personnel undergo rigorous, multidimensional screening processes and extensive training to assess their qualifications and prepare them mentally and physically to endure elevated stress levels and intense combat experiences that can last for months (Cooper et al., 2020). Self-management skills enable SF leaders, such as the SFWO, to perform effectively across extreme environments, from high-impact, kinetic actions to lower-tempo, advise-and-assist missions (King, 2017). To remain resilient during UW operations, these key leaders must sustain superior physical and cognitive performance to lead and navigate unique mission demands in the face of ever-evolving, challenging conflicts (Farina et al., 2017).

Self-Awareness

One final, and perhaps the most crucial, aspect of EI for SFWOs conducting UW operations involves self-awareness. Self-awareness serves as the foundation of effective leadership. It enables individuals to understand their strengths and weaknesses, recognize their emotions, and assess their impact on both personal and team performance (Landry, 2019). In 2005, the Department of the Army created an all-encompassing definition of the Army Warrant Officer and used the term “self-aware” as the first descriptor (USAWOCC, 2025).

Currently, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22, Army Leadership and the Profession, states, “Leaders require self-awareness if they are to accurately assess their own experience and competence as well as earn the trust of those they influence” (Department of the Army, 2019, p. 1-17; Horval, 2020). Unconventional warfare operations inherently demand significant cross-cultural skills (Delcours, 2014). Self-awareness is crucial for developing cultural competence (Pappamihel, 2013). Therefore, the self-awareness aspect of EI significantly contributes to the SFWO’s ability to manage UW operations effectively.

Conclusion

To be successful, SF leaders must build trust and maintain effective relationships with partner forces, local populations, and JIIM stakeholders. During UW operations, SFWOs often need to navigate various cultural differences, manage interpersonal conflicts, and adapt to rapidly changing situations. The EI aptitude of an SFWO serving on an SFOD-A is crucial to these complex, ambiguous, and politically sensitive UW operations. Their ability to manage relationships, navigate social dynamics, and exercise self-awareness and self-management helps to ensure operational effectiveness and ultimately influences mission outcomes. In UW, EI is one of the essential human dynamics that support the notion that “humans are more important than hardware” in the special operations community.



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Unlocking W4 Talent: The Case for AGR W5 REFRAD Boards

CW3 Matar Amit, Adjutant General's Corps

Despite the Army's emphasis on talent management and leader development, we struggle to address stagnant or peaked talent, particularly among Chief Warrant Officer Five (CW5 or W5) in the United States Army Reserve (USAR). Promotion to W5 is guided by a structured select-objective process designed to balance authorized positions with projected losses within a career management field (CMF) to determine promotion numbers for the upcoming promotion selection board (PSB). While this process ensures systematic promotion of qualified warrant officers, it also creates challenges, particularly when W5s remain in the Army Reserve long term, limiting promotion opportunities for Chief Warrant Officer Fours (CW4s or W4s). This bottleneck within the Selected Reserve (SELRES) affects the overall effectiveness of USAR leadership and progression. Establishing an annual W5 release from active duty (REFRAD) board, modeled after existing processes for Lieutenant Colonels (LTC) and Colonels (COL), could serve as a strategic mechanism, particularly in career management fields (CMFs) with a surplus of talented, eligible W4s. This paper will focus specifically on Active Guard Reserve (AGR) W5s.

Talent Management

The Army initiated efforts in 2016 to refine its talent management system, emphasizing a systematic and analytics-based framework. According to U.S. Army (2016), the Army Talent Management Strategy (ATMS) mission statement is to “acquire, develop, employ, and retain professional Soldiers and Civilians with a breadth and depth of talents needed to enhance Army readiness”, and the end state is “a ready, professional, diverse, and integrated team of trusted professionals optimized to win in a complex world” (p. 4). However, the ATMS neglects to address what happens when talent is stale, raising critical questions about how the Army can adapt its talent management framework to address talent gaps and replenish expertise, particularly by drawing from a ready pool of high-performing W4s. The Army People Strategy emphasizes retaining critical talent by actively engaging them and providing meaningful opportunities (Department of the Army, 2019). What greater incentive is there than offering promotion to W5 and the chance to continue serving in the USAR?

Strategic-level talent management required the development of policies, programs, and processes to identify, cultivate, and leverage essential skills, knowledge, and behaviors to achieve optimal effectiveness. In many cases, Soldiers reach their peak performance well before their mandatory separation date, which, for warrant officers, is set at age 60, a considerable duration in a military career. General (Retired) Odierno asserts that leader development is paramount to maintaining a competitive edge in today's complex operating environment (Odierno, 2015). Our enduring advantage lies in cultivating exceptional leaders who are not only agile and forward-thinking but can command with precision in uncertain, rapidly evolving conditions. This imperative also requires us to recognize when leadership has stagnated and, with care and professionalism, create space for emerging talent to strengthen and guide the future of our Army.

AGR LTCs and COLs REFRAD Boards

Each year, the USAR conducts a REFRAD board as a “force shaping process to help meet the needs of the Army, the USAR, and the AR AGR program” (MILPER Message Number 25-128, 2025). A military

personnel (MILPER) message is released each year outlining eligibility criteria, typically for all LTCs and COLs in basic branches. HQDA Policy Notice 600–4 (2024) provides selection guidance for REFRAD boards. The basic premise is that the board will recommend, by majority vote, the specified number of officers for release, based on their assessed potential for future contribution to the Army relative to their peers. It is challenging to determine how many officers have been selected for REFRAD because the results are not public. Nevertheless, the program appears to be contributing to effective force management within the Army Reserve, although limited data limit a more precise evaluation.

Select Objective Process

Each year, the Senior Leader Development Office (SLDO), which manages all USAR W5s, collaborates with the Office of the Chief of Army Reserve (OCAR) G-1 to determine the select objective for W5 promotions for the upcoming promotion selection board (PSB). Drawing from direct observation and personal involvement in the process, the candidate chooses an objective analysis that begins approximately three months before the promotion board convenes. The SLDO reviews and refines the select objective estimate by projecting losses extending 18 months beyond the board's convene date. Pending losses predominantly consist of approved retirement or mandatory removal date (MRD) within the time period. Still, they may also include REFRAD from the AGR program or transfers to the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR), in which case the W5 no longer counts against the AGR select objective.

To illustrate this principle, consider the following scenario. Suppose the authorized number of W5 AGR Property Book Officers (PBO or 920A) is nine, and the current assigned strength is also nine. In that case, the calculated select objective is zero, and no 920A promotions are authorized for that year. However, if the SLDO projects two losses, then the chosen objective is 2, meaning 2,920As can be promoted in the next W5 PSB. Consider another CMF with a more limited authorized strength. For CMFs where one is authorized and one is assigned, this means the selected objective is zero for the duration of the warrant officer's tenure in the AGR program. In a hypothetical scenario in which the warrant officer promotes to W5 at age 45, he or she could delay future promotions for 15 years until reaching MRD at age 60. Furthermore, even if the warrant officer subsequently vacates the hard-coded CMF position and is reassigned to an immaterial (011A) billet, the select objective is still zero. This is because the position itself remains inextricably linked to the warrant officer's rank and CMF, effectively blocking advancement opportunities for eligible W4s in that CMF.

REFRAD Board for W5s

One potential mitigation strategy for alleviating the W5 promotion bottleneck is the implementation of a REFRAD board for W5s. This will need to be executed carefully and methodically. While a REFRAD board could be beneficial for specific CMFs, it carries the risk of negatively affecting others due to a shortage of eligible W4 officers. The SLDO, in collaboration with OCAR G-1, will recommend which CMFs should be considered for a REFRAD board, ensuring a balanced and strategically informed decision-making process.

W5 REFRAD boards would be implemented with several proposed conditions. First, W5s will be protected from REFRAD boards until they have held that grade for three years. Second, they will be eligible for the REFRAD board regardless of their active federal service (AFS) time; however, if selected and they have at least 18 years of AFS, they will remain on active duty until they reach 20 years of AFS. Finally, suppose a W5 is selected for REFRAD. In that case, he or she may choose to revert to Troop Program Unit (TPU) or Individual Mobilization Augmentee (IMA), contingent upon the availability of a

suitable position. In instances where a TPU or IMA position is not available, the warrant officer would be required to either transfer to the IRR or retire, ensuring a dignified transition and maintaining the integrity of the force management process.

Conclusion

Stagnant senior talent within the AGR W5 population has created a structural barrier to advancement, limiting opportunities for capable W4s and slowing leadership progression across the USAR. Addressing this issue requires more than incremental adjustments. It demands a deliberate and strategic approach to force renewal. A targeted W5 REFRAD board, guided by thoughtful criteria and flexible transition options, offers a path to restore balance and momentum to the warrant officer talent pipeline. By creating space for rising leaders while honoring experienced ones, the Army Reserve can strengthen its adaptability, sharpen its edge, and uphold its commitment to a dynamic, future-ready force.

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Achieving Multi-Domain Convergence in Large-Scale Combat Operations

CW3 Matthew J. Marra, Field Artillery

The joint force is failing to achieve service interoperability and multi-domain convergence. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, Operations (2025), defines Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) as “the combined arms employment of joint and Army capabilities to create and exploit relative advantages to achieve objectives, defeat enemy forces, and consolidate gains on behalf of joint force commanders” (p. 25). This framework describes how the Army employs its capabilities in concert with the joint force to achieve joint objectives. ADP 3-0, Operations (2025), defines convergence as “an outcome created by the concerted employment of capabilities against combinations of decisive points in any domain to create effects against a system, formation, or decision maker” (p. 27).

Convergence results from collaboration and synergy among the components of the joint force, enabling them to achieve joint objectives. Convergence of joint force capabilities is a difficult concept to achieve, given the systems and interoperability challenges we face in today’s U.S. military. In practice, we face challenges in effectively and efficiently coordinating effects across echelons, domains, services, and commands. This article will examine these challenges and propose practical solutions to enhance interoperability and achieve multi-domain convergence. To successfully achieve multi-domain convergence in LSCO, the joint force must improve the fires and effects planning and synchronization process, enhance data sharing and interoperability, and modernize command and control systems.

Challenges to Multi-Domain Effects Convergence

Desynchronized Planning

Traditionally, fires and effects planning is very domain-centric, with each component developing its domain-specific plan primarily in isolation, and the plans then come together for the first time in the Joint Targeting Working Group (JTWG). From personal experience, observing and participating in Targeting Working Groups (TWGs) at the Division, Corps, and Theater echelons, I have found that the TWG is rarely an actual working group where plans are developed and synchronized. More often, the TWG serves as a rehearsal for the Joint Target Coordination Board (JTCB), where the Division, Corps, or Joint Force Commander approves the targeting and effects employment plan. This method is not a proper integration and synchronization of effects, which results in limited opportunities for convergence. In fact, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0 Appendix D, Fundamentals of Joint All-Domain Operations, acknowledges that previous joint doctrine sought to guide commanders in deconflicting operations rather than synchronizing efforts (JP 3-0 Appendix D, 2024). The consequences of lacking detailed and collaborative joint effects planning include inefficient resource utilization, missed opportunities for joint integration, and a failure to achieve convergence and create windows of opportunity for exploitation.

Interoperability Challenges

The joint force must reconcile interoperability challenges to achieve true convergence. Sharing data across domains, components, and with our allies is often inefficient due to incompatible systems within services, security protocol restrictions between partners, and a lack of common data protocol standards. Incompatible data formats or protocols make the sharing of targeting data difficult and, in some cases, incomplete. An example is the Air Force and Navy use of Link 16 J-series messages to communicate

targeting data to the Army, which primarily operates using VMF and USMTF data protocols. We operate on multiple networks to transmit information at varying security classifications and have established dedicated networks for communicating with partners and allies. The use of numerous security and message protocols, classification levels, and network architectures creates barriers to interoperability. The consequences of these interoperability challenges include delays in targeting and the passage of target quality data, as well as latent and incomplete situational awareness and dynamic coordination constraints.

Legacy Command and Control

The current legacy Command and Control (C2) systems used by the U.S. Army for the employment of effects and situational awareness are insufficient to coordinate complex multi-domain fires and effects. The Advanced Field Artillery Tactical Data System (AFATDS) and Joint Automated Deep Operations Coordination System (JADOCS) are the systems currently used by the U.S. Army. However, these systems do not use the same messaging format as our sister service's C2 systems. Furthermore, they cannot develop and coordinate fires and effects plans with the joint force. At best, these systems deconflict fires across domains. The consequence of this lack of interoperability between legacy C2 and mission command information systems (MCIS) is decreased situational awareness, slower decision-making, and the inability to rapidly and efficiently coordinate fires and effects across domains.

Proposed Solutions to Achieve Multi-Domain Convergence

Joint All-Domain Operations Planning

To mitigate these challenges to achieving multi-domain convergence, the joint force must establish Joint All-Domain Operations (JADO) planning teams at the Corps and above echelons. The JADO planning teams will consist of planners from each component, representing all five domains. Utilizing a JADO working group (JWG), planning teams will develop a JADO Concept of Operations (CONOPS) as input to the JTWG and JTCB. This function would be separate but entirely related to and follow the targeting cycle at echelon. Targeting establishes common objectives and coordinates targeting priorities. The JADO planners will then synchronize fires and effects and develop the CONOPS to achieve the joint force's goals. To ensure efficient and consistent collaboration across domains, the joint force must conduct regular joint training exercises and wargames utilizing JADO planning teams to improve coordination and interoperability.

Enhanced Data Sharing

The joint force, with its multi-national partners and allies, will never truly achieve convergence and synergy without adopting a shared network. A joint integrated data network uses common data standards and protocols to facilitate the flow of targeting data and enhance situational awareness across domains. The joint force is currently developing the Joint Fires Network (JFN) as part of its broader Combined Joint All-Domain Command and Control (CJADC2) initiative (Pomerleau, 2024). The JFN must be capable of receiving and distributing data across all classification levels (CUI, SECRET, TOP SECRET, CAP/SAP), parsing the data to each user at the appropriate level of classification in a "zero trust" manner. Intelligence and targeting data classified at the TOP SECRET (TS), Special Access Program (SAP), or Controlled Access Program (CAP) level would reside on the same network as SECRET data. Still, it would be accessible only to users with the appropriate security clearance and access. Data may be transmitted from a TS, SAP, or CAP system to a SECRET system, but only the data at the SECRET

classification would be visible to the receiver. This enhanced data-sharing network would streamline information sharing and reduce barriers to interoperability.

Modernized Command and Control

The joint force must modernize its current C2 systems infrastructure. Acknowledging that each service requires service- or domain-specific C2 systems, these systems must be compatible with one another to facilitate the interoperability required to achieve convergence. JADOCS is merely a deconfliction tool, and the Army is nearing fielding its replacement, the Joint Targeting Integrated Command and Coordination Suite (JTIC2S) (Kress, 2024). The systems of the future must incorporate AI and ML to increase efficiency, enhance situational awareness, and support rapid decision-making. Using AI to identify targets from streaming data, given specific Target Selection Standards (TSS) and a High-Payoff Target List (HPTL), will expedite the dynamic targeting process. ML using an Attack Guidance Matrix (AGM) to assign the quantity and type of effects to employ automatically will facilitate rapid decision-making for engagements with targets of opportunity. These systems should be capable of coordinating across domains and C2 within the JADO CONOPS to achieve true convergence.

Conclusion

In conclusion, to mitigate the challenges the joint force faces in effectively coordinating multi-domain effects across services to achieve convergence, a holistic approach to joint fires and effects convergence is necessary. The joint force must evolve its approach to planning and employing joint fires and effects, as well as modernize the data networks and C2 systems used to facilitate interoperability. To be successful, the joint force must prioritize improved fires and effects planning processes using JADO planning teams, enhance data sharing and interoperability through the Joint Fires Network, and field modernized command and control systems such as JTIC2S.

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The Warrant Officer Edge: Powering Army Transformation

CW4 David Vaughn, Cyber

The U.S. Army's Transformation Initiative (ATI), launched under the Secretary of Defense's 2025 directive, is revolutionizing warfare through advanced technologies like AI-enabled command nodes, unmanned aerial systems (UAS), and counter-UAS (C-sUAS) platforms. Transformation in Contact (TiC) 2.0, involving units such as the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team (ABCT), the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, and Special Forces Groups (1st and 5th), drives rapid prototyping and Soldier-driven innovation. Yet, history warns that transformations falter without institutional knowledge, risking repeated integration errors and impractical technologies. Warrant officers (WOs), with their decades of technical expertise, operational experience, and continuity, are the Army's linchpin, guiding commanders and junior officers through complexity. For WOs, this is a call to lead as systems-of-systems experts. For junior officers executing ATI tasks, it's a directive to rely on these professionals to ensure mission success.

The Challenge of Transformation

ATI aims to create a leaner, more lethal force, with TiC 2.0 expanding experimentation across two divisions, two Stryker brigades, National Guard units, two ABCTs, and Special Forces. Technologies must meet TiC Technology Accelerator Prioritization Criteria, including Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 5-7, Manufacturing Readiness Level (MRL) 5+, and alignment with warfighting needs. Total Army Analysis (TAA) validates force structure and resource allocation, while force management integrates doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTMLPF-P) to deliver cohesive capabilities. Chief Warrant Officer of the Army (CWA) Anderson's 90-day assessment emphasizes the need for technical expertise to navigate rapid change, highlighting WOs' role in preventing costly missteps. The challenge lies in integrating advanced systems without losing hard-won lessons.

Warrant Officers: The Army's Transformation Enablers

The Warrant Officer Cohort, spanning aviation, intelligence, signal, logistics, maintenance, Special Forces, engineers, ordnance, military police, cyber, human resources, and more, brings unmatched strengths: deep expertise, operational experience, and continuity. Warrant officers dedicate 20-30 years to their Military Occupational Specialties (MOS), cultivating deep expertise and serving as the Army's "organizational memory," complementing the dynamic leadership of commissioned officers. Their operational experience, honed through deployments and technology transitions, ensures new systems are practical and effective. Through Total Army Analysis (TAA) and force management, they align resources with strategic goals, driving ATI's three core efforts: delivering warfighting capabilities, optimizing force structure, and eliminating waste.

Delivering Warfighting Capabilities

Technical experts across branches power the integration of capabilities. Aviation WOs (MOS 150U, Tactical Unmanned Aerial Systems) draw on experience from early drones to modern UAS, ensuring reliability for exercises like Combined Resolve 2026. Their institutional knowledge prevents billion-

dollar integration failures, drawing on lessons from AH-64A to AH-64E transitions. Signal WOs (MOS 255A, Information Systems Technician) secure AI-driven command-and-control (C2) nodes, applying decades of network evolution to meet Zero Trust cybersecurity standards. Field artillery WOs (MOS 131A, Field Artillery Targeting Technician) align long-range missiles with the Army Warfighting Concept (AWC) Concept Required Capabilities (CRC), enabling human-machine integrated (HMI) formations. Logistics and acquisition WOs (MOS 920A, Property Accounting Technician; MOS 915A, Automotive Maintenance) refine capabilities based on Soldier feedback, ensuring scalability. Transportation and quartermaster WOs (MOS 880A, Marine Deck Officer; MOS 923A, Petroleum Systems Technician) address supply chain challenges and align with TiC's production metric.

The new MOS 390A Robotics Technician, introduced by the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, enhances TiC 2.0 by providing expertise in robotic and autonomous systems. Assigned to brigade-level and above, 390A WOs plan and integrate robotics operations, engineer solutions, and manage attritable systems' payloads, delivering tactical advantages in competition, crisis, and combat. Their expertise, rooted in operational experience with systems like the Ghost Robotics Quadraped, ensures Special Forces units like the 1st and 5th Groups leverage cutting-edge technology effectively, aligning with TiC's operational impact metric.

Optimizing Force Structure

ATI's restructuring, including the merger of Army Futures and Training and Doctrine Commands, demands agile force design. WOs act as force multipliers through TAA, balancing Active, Guard, and Reserve components. Intelligence WOs (MOS 350F, All-Source Intelligence Technician) integrate surveillance into Multi-Domain Task Forces, simplifying C2 networks. Engineer WOs (MOS 120A, Construction Engineering Technician) ensure infrastructure supports new formations, while military police WOs (MOS 311A, Criminal Investigation Special Agent) enhance security for distributed operations. Aviation maintenance WOs (MOS 151A) optimize unit readiness, such as that of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment, despite reduced resources. Cyber WOs (MOS 170A, Cyber Operations Technician) secure networks, leveraging knowledge of evolving threats. Their continuity, as Barno and Bensahel note, bridges institutional memory with innovation, ensuring structural changes enhance lethality without sacrificing stability.

Eliminating Waste

ATI targets obsolete systems, such as the AH-64D, HMMWV, JLTV, and Gray Eagle UAV, for divestment. WOs' long-term perspective identifies systems that retain value from those that need replacement. Maintenance WOs (MOS 948B, Electronic Systems Maintenance) and ordnance specialists (MOS 913A, Armament Systems Maintenance) guide transitions and maintain readiness. Chemical WOs (MOS 740A, Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Technician) manage safe disposal, while acquisition WOs (MOS 915A) secure stakeholder support for efficient transitions. Their lifecycle knowledge, emphasized in CWA Anderson's assessment, prevents wasteful investments and aligns resources with TAA's gap analysis.

Empowering Leadership and Innovation

WOs are adaptive leaders who mentor Soldiers and advise commanders. Signal, intelligence, and cyber WOs (MOS 255N, Network Management Technician; MOS 352N, Signals Intelligence Analysis Technician; MOS 170B, Electronic Warfare Technician) train units on AI-driven systems and identify

effective training methods. Human resources WOs (MOS 420A, Human Resources Technician) align personnel with ATI's leaner structure, while adjutant general WOs (MOS 420C, Bandmaster) boost unit cohesion. Their operational experience mitigates human factors challenges, ensuring smooth technology adoption. As WOs progress, their Professional Military Education (PME) must include strategic leadership training tailored to the leaders they support—company-grade, field-grade, or General Officer. The Warrant Officer Career College's planned PME evolution, starting in FY26, will equip WOs with these skills. Still, serious consideration should be given to allowing WOs to compete for Army War College slots, particularly for those supporting General Officers, to enhance their strategic impact. This aligns with CWA Anderson's call to grant WOs greater authority to lead transformation, ensuring they sustain the Army's edge in AI, cybersecurity, and robotics.

The Decisive Advantage

As adversaries struggle with rapid technology adoption, America's WOs provide a competitive edge. Their blend of institutional wisdom and operational savvy ensures ATI builds on proven foundations, delivering capabilities that maintain battlefield dominance. For WOs, this is an opportunity to embrace their role as systems-of-systems experts, guiding the Army through transformation with confidence. For WOs, this is a call to lead as systems-of-systems experts. For junior officers, it provides a clear path to leverage WOs' expertise to execute TiC 2.0 objectives successfully. Together, they ensure the Army's technological leap translates into lasting military superiority.

Conclusion

The ATI, amplified by TiC 2.0, is more than technological modernization—it's a strategic overhaul requiring institutional wisdom. The Warrant Officer Cohort, with its unmatched expertise, continuity, and operational experience, serves as the Army's transformation enablers. Through TAA and force management, they deliver capabilities, optimize force structure, and eliminate inefficiencies, ensuring new systems enhance lethality and survivability. Investing in their training and authority, as underscored by CWA Anderson, is critical to success. As the Army becomes increasingly technology-dependent, WOs remain the bridge between past lessons and future capabilities, securing America's decisive edge.

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Reconnecting Discipline and Mental Resilience: A Strategic Approach to Readiness and Mental Health in the U.S. Army

CW4 Brandon Marshall, Cyber

The U.S. Army experiences a dual problem based on a steady rise in mental health problems among service members and an erosion of basic military discipline, especially among those joining the force through Initial Entry Training (IET). Mental health issues expose soldiers to fatalities during combat. The problems are highly interlinked and have potential strategic impacts on the Army's long-run readiness, particularly in the context of Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO). The Secretary of Defense (SECDEF) and senior military leaders should evaluate and address the link between declining disciplinary standards in IET and rising mental health concerns across the force. The proposed strategic recommendation to frame mental health resilience as a byproduct of disciplined training settings carries significant implications for Army readiness, force structure, and policy. Moreover, it introduces ethical considerations, requires dynamic stakeholder management, and demands both strategic and systematic thinking to promote successful and sustainable actualization.

Effect on Readiness and LSCO

Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) demands physical stamina, psychological perseverance, and moral clarity from service members functioning under high-intensity, ambiguous, and lethal conditions. Present mental health challenges raise worries concerning the Army's capacity to sustain prolonged combat operations (U.S. Army Public API, 2013). Furthermore, diagnoses for anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder have risen across all services in the past. Leaders in IET settings report rising tolerance for correction, challenges instilling discipline, and weakened resilience among trainees (Total Military Insight, 2024). The Army's pillar toward a softer model in Basic Combat Training emphasizes emotional safety over stress inoculation and may unintentionally increase the psychological demands on LSCO.

Lack of exposure to controlled stressors during IET leads to underprepared soldiers experiencing combat trauma without foundational coping mechanisms. The strategic suggestion to associate mental health resilience with discipline across IET is connected not to punitive training but to structured adversity. Furthermore, holistic health and fitness start with harmonizing mental, physical, and spiritual aspects (Maegan, 2022). By returning to a disciplined, rigorous IET system that combines mental toughness and individual accountability, the Army can enhance its long-term readiness and strength.

The compounding effect of distorted mental resilience and undisciplined entry-level soldiers undermines the Army's force generation capability. For LSCO, which needs rapid decision-making, the absence of stress conditioning impairs cognitive power and increases psychological risk. Combat teams comprising soldiers with no experience of disciplined hardship are exposed to disintegration under duress, which can lead to mission failure, fratricide, or even raised casualties (Total Military Insight, 2024). The reduction of psychological readiness is not only a threat to an individual soldier but also to the general unit's cohesion (Defense Health Agency, 2025). Units that report higher connections and greater compliance with discipline in the IET context experience lower behavioral health attrition. Hence, discipline is a leadership value, a crucial force, and a psychological propeller. By reintroducing the aspects of structured adversity, including peer-reliant pressure drills, IET can reduce combat stress in both ethical and supportive ways. Soldiers who experience challenging environments can develop adaptive coping systems that enable quick recovery from trauma, improved performance under pressure, and heightened retention during long-lasting, dynamic LSCO engagements.

Convincing the Army to Put Priority on the Recommendation

To address the problem of insufficient discipline and mental resilience, a timely, appropriate strategic plan is needed. The suggestion has to correspond to the ongoing issues regarding force retention, suicide deterrence, and readiness shortfalls. An effective model would entail presenting concise data linking IET disciplinary activities to mental health outcomes, while stressing the Army's reduced capacity to deploy and sustain resilience forces in LSCO. Top advocates should be enlisted to provide testimony on the enduring value of detailed training. A pilot initiative could be recommended at selected BCT installations to reintroduce conventional stress-oriented training while tracking mental health outcomes and unit practices (Maegan, 2022). By ensuring this program aligns with the Army People Strategy, the integrated prevention model, and the H2F models, the recommendation can be positioned as a contemporary, data-driven, and progressive approach that is not culturally detrimental.

Stakeholder Associations and Communication Strategies

The approval and actualization of this suggestion require vertical and horizontal communication among the Army stakeholders. Vertical communication begins with briefings by SECDEF and Army senior leaders on the readiness impacts of poor discipline. TRADOC, the Army G-1, and IMT will work together to review policies and initiatives that instruct IET activities. Direct involvement with brigade- and battalion-level commanders ensures that transformations are feasible and measurable (U.S. Army Public API, 2013). Regarding horizontal communication, mental health experts, policymakers, and civilian advisors should be engaged in planning and designing psychologically compelling stress-exposure protocols. Furthermore, communication with installation chaplains, family readiness teams, and drill sergeants will ensure buy-in from the individuals directly mandated to implement it.

Counterproductive players, including those viewing the alterations as regressive or insensitive to mental wellness, should demonstrate empathy and reliance on facts. Strategic messaging ought to focus on shared goals of preventing suicide, facilitating retention, and preparing soldiers for real-world requirements (Maegan, 2022). Discussions, open data sharing, and cross-functional operational teams can reduce resistance and establish coalition-oriented momentum.

Ethical Considerations

Any policy that connects mental health issues with discipline should be considered ethically. Stigmatization of service members or implying that those with mental health problems are undisciplined should be avoided. The pursued strategy should emphasize the ethical importance of strengthening resilience through principled, consistent, and human training settings (Defense Health Agency, 2025). The Army Ethic offers a model to prevent any alterations. Leaders ought to ensure that all recommended reforms respect the dignity of soldiers while equipping them to endure challenges and overcome adversity. Stress inoculation should not result in abuse (Total Military Insight, 2024). The implementation of the recommendation must be monitored through robust response loops, anonymous reporting, and, if required, third-party oversight. By prioritizing ethical leadership and accountability, the Army is well-positioned to strengthen discipline and trust, which are fundamental to organizational appropriateness in LSCO.

Strategic and Systems Thinking

Resolving the foundational causes of mental health challenges through disciplined IET settings reflects a model thinking approach. Rather than isolating behavioral health programs to post hoc treatment, this recommendation restructures upstream aspects of the Army's human capital progressive system. Strategic thinking requires an understanding of the second- and third-order impacts of reduced initial

training thresholds. Furthermore, it is critical to balance resilience to pressures, including political optics and retention metrics. A systems model that incorporates educational intensity, mental welfare, unit cohesion, and ethical considerations enables leaders to monitor and change policy impacts over time (Defense Health Agency, 2025). However, the plan focuses not on altering the curriculum but on strategic changes in the Army culture. The culture should prepare stakeholders for the cognitive, emotional, and ethical requirements of combat (U.S. Army Public API, 2013). Ultimately, it should consider discipline not as a relic of the past but as a critical, vital resource that can protect the force against physical and psychological threats.

To persuade Army leadership, it is crucial to link this program to the broader national security model and modernization objectives. Discipline in IET directly impacts soldier operations in multi-domain practices, where cognitive burdens, risks, and mission dynamics are at their peak (Total Military Insight, 2024). Creating a connection between disciplined settings and improved decision-making under pressure can show that this is not an individual issue but one of strategic significance. Furthermore, this model can be advanced, as it offers many benefits that promote cost-effectiveness, alleviating long-term expenditures associated with behavioral health programs, attrition, and retraining. Reinvesting in mental challenges via structured adversity ultimately strengthens force efficiency and cohesion, which are critical in the case of peer rivalry.

Conclusion

The interconnectedness of discipline and mental wellness is a strategic concern, not just a debate over training issues. The increasing rates of psychological distress experienced by soldiers and the falling capacity of units to impart discipline at the initial phases of military service have converged to create a readiness risk that cannot be ignored. By adopting a system-informed, ethically grounded model to strengthen discipline within IET, the Army can build resilience through a bottom-up approach. The SECDEF and senior leaders ought not only to acknowledge this link but also to respond to it. The plan that should be implemented must commission data-oriented pilot initiatives involving stakeholders within the spectrum. Furthermore, it should monitor performance across the readiness metrics. Discipline and resilience should not exist as rival values. Altogether, they can help soldiers withstand the dynamic challenges of LSCO. Urgent action is needed to ensure the program's successful implementation.

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Breaking the Silence: Addressing Stigma, Barriers, and Resource Gaps in Military Mental Health Care

CW4 LaKeitha M. Smith, Adjutant General's Corps

Mental health challenges among Soldiers and Veterans remain one of the most urgent yet under-addressed issues facing the U.S. military and healthcare systems. It has been concerned by stigma, underreporting, and insufficient care. Despite growing awareness, many Soldiers and Veterans still face significant psychological challenges compounded by cultural and institutional barriers to receiving care. This report provides a detailed analysis of the interrelated factors: the determined stigma surrounding mental health in military culture, general barriers to accessing appropriate care, identifies regular obstacles to treatment, and evaluates the lack of resources currently available to support the mental wellbeing of Soldiers and Veterans. It is concluded that recommendations for cultural change, policy reform, and resource investment are intended to improve results and return self-respect to those who have served.

The men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces are exposed to unique stressors that put them at a delicate risk of mental health disorders. Deployments, combat, separation from family, and the pressure of military readiness cause elevated levels of mental health conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders. However, despite the known impacts of combat trauma, operational stress, and reintegration difficulties, many Soldiers do not seek help. This uncertainty is often fixed in the stigma surrounding mental health within military culture. Even when seeking help, they usually encounter physical barriers and inadequate resources. Considering and discussing these issues is critical to protecting force readiness and honoring the service of military personnel and veterans. The National Center for PTSD estimates that 11–20% of veterans from Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom experience PTSD each year (U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [VA], 2023). Many do not seek the required treatment until their symptoms have worsened considerably. This report explores why. It begins with a critical look at the deeply rooted stigma that discourages help-seeking, then examines systemic barriers—including geographic constraints, limited availability, and institutional obstacles—and finally evaluates the limitations of existing resources.

Mental health stigma in the military is both internal and institutional. The military culture prioritizes toughness, self-reliance, and discipline. These values, while essential for combat readiness, inadvertently foster a perception that seeking mental health support is a sign of weakness, unreliable, or unfit for duty if they seek psychological help. This may be reinforced by a long-standing “warrior ethos” that glorifies endurance and suppresses vulnerability (Greene-Shortridge et al., 2007). Many service members fear that acknowledging psychological distress will lead to negative consequences, such as

- Damaged reputation within their unit
- Loss of security clearance
- Being deemed non-deployable
- Hindrance to promotions

According to a 2004 study by Hoge et al., only 23–40% of soldiers who met the criteria for a mental disorder sought care. Among those who didn't, the most frequently cited reason was fear of being perceived differently by peers or superiors.

Beyond personal fears, structural stigma surrounds some military systems. Mental health screenings or treatments are sometimes recorded in personnel files, and even if not officially penalized, there is a perception that superiors will consider mental health history during evaluations. Although reforms have attempted to separate medical and performance records, implementation remains inconsistent across

commands (Greene-Shortridge et al., 2007).

Barriers to Accessing Care

Even when there is shame, there are other difficulties that can prevent military personnel and veterans from facing a range of physical barriers that hinder timely and effective mental health care.

Geographic and Logistical Constraints

Many veterans often live far from VA facilities, with limited access to specialists or mental health providers familiar with military trauma. According to the GAO (2021), geographic disparities in care contribute to uneven mental health outcomes and appointment backlogs. Though telehealth expanded access during the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not a solution; many patients lack reliable internet, digital literacy, or privacy for virtual therapy.

Limited Availability of Services

The VA enrollment process, eligibility rules, and required documentation can discourage veterans from initiating care. Military treatment facilities and VA hospitals are often understaffed and overwhelmed. Veterans repeatedly report delays of months before receiving initial appointments and confusion over where and how to access services (Institute of Medicine, 2014).

Gaps for Continued Care

Soldiers transitioning from active duty to veteran status are particularly vulnerable. Many veterans experience interruptions in care due to poor coordination between the Department of Defense (DoD) and the VA. While programs such as the Integrated Disability Evaluation System (IDES) attempt to bridge this gap, inconsistent implementation has left many service members without adequate post-discharge mental health care (Tanielian & Jaycox, 2008).

Administrative Hurdles

Directing VA systems can be difficult and frustrating, with unnecessary paperwork, unclear eligibility requirements, and poor service coordination (Institute of Medicine, 2014).

Inadequate Resources for Mental Health Care

Staffing Shortages

The VA and military health systems report unfilled positions. The VA Office of Inspector General (2022) found that nearly 40% of VA medical centers did not meet their staffing standards for mental health professionals. An increase in provider turnover, burnout, and recruitment difficulties, especially in underserved areas, excessive wait times, and reduced continuous care.

Outdated Infrastructure and Lack of Funding

Many VA clinics function with outdated facilities and partial technology, reducing the value and access, leading to long appointment wait times and a lack of therapeutic options for trauma-specific care.

Lack of Specialized Care

There are specific populations, including women, LGBTQ+ veterans, and survivors of military sexual trauma, that face higher rates of mental health conditions and often require specialized, trauma-informed approaches. Many providers lack training in military-specific issues such as these.

Importance of Crisis Rather Than Prevention

The most current efforts primarily address severe symptoms rather than preventing the start of chronic mental illness. While the suicide prevention hotlines and crisis interventions are essential, they are responsive. Programs that help resilience, provide early interventions, and teach emotional regulation are underfunded and underutilized.

Troubling statistics reflect the combined effect of stigma, barriers, and resource gaps: Veterans account for approximately 14% of all adult suicide deaths in the U.S. despite representing less than 7% of the population (VA, 2022). Untreated mental health issues also contribute to homelessness, unemployment, substance use, and incarceration among former service members.

To effectively improve mental health care within the military, a comprehensive strategy is needed, beginning with culture change and implementing a plan that has a multiple-aspect approach that directly addresses stigma, accessibility, and systemic resource gaps. Campaigns throughout the Department of Defense should feature veteran role models. Leadership at all levels must actively work to normalize conversations around mental health by incorporating mental wellness into routine training, communication, and performance evaluations. Leaders must extend education programs to include service members and their families, emphasizing that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Greater than ever, the availability of culturally competent mental health professionals—both on base and through telehealth services—can reduce wait times and improve the quality of care, particularly for deployed or rural units. In addition, the policies must change to guarantee that receiving mental health support does not threaten a service member's career progression or security clearance. Providing confidential, easily accessible care options, such as telehealth services; investing in digital literacy; and increasing funding to recruit mental health providers, especially in rural areas, for mobile clinics and peer-support networks can also further lower barriers to treatment. Finally, mental health providers should establish constant assessment and response involving service members themselves, to adjust involvement to developing needs, and targeted support must be expanded for high-risk groups by increasing trauma-informed care capacity. Also, ensuring safe, inclusive services for women, LGBTQ+ personnel, and individuals with co-occurring conditions.

In conclusion, focusing on mental health in the military requires a confident, complete commitment to separating the stigma, improving access, and delivering complete, approachable care. Service members and Veterans deserve a mental health system that reflects the greatness of their sacrifice. By prioritizing cultural change, reorganizing systems, and providing prevention and targeted support, the Department of Defense can foster a military environment where seeking help is normalized and mental wellness is treated as important as mission readiness. These recommendations can offer a straightforward path toward a more potent force in which Service Members, Veterans, and their families receive the full support they deserve, both during and after their time in uniform.

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A Strategic Advantage Suffering in Silence

CW4 Charles D. Gilmer, Ordnance

Imagine a scenario in which the U.S. Army is deployed for a large-scale combat operation, but its equipment is in disarray, and its maintenance teams are understaffed and undertrained. This is the harsh reality facing the Army Reserve today (Albrecht, 2021). With 78% of the Army's sustainment personnel and equipment residing in the Reserve (Albrecht, 2021), it is shocking to think that this critical component is struggling to keep up with the demands of modern warfare. The Army Reserve is at a breaking point, and it is time to take action to address the chronic underfunding, understaffing, and resource shortages that threaten its ability to support the Total Force.

The Army Reserve has been depleting and downsizing its resources, affecting the majority of its sustainment operations elements (Dunn, 2017). The Reserve is now in dire need of upsizing, resourcing, restructuring, and rebuilding its forces to a sustainable and manageable level for large-scale combat operations (LSCO) (Dunn, 2017). According to an article written by Luc Dunn, an interview conducted at an Association of the United States Army (AUSA) conference on Wednesday, October 11, 2017, "General Robert Brown, commander of U.S. Army Pacific, stated that he has never seen a better Total Force than in today's Army. 'In the Indo-Asia-Pacific, we simply cannot do our mission without those critical Army Reserve assets,' he said" (Dunn, 2017, para. 3). Luc Dunn's article goes on to say, "In the future, the Army must capitalize on the Reserve component to provide needed operational capabilities and capacity, Brown said. 'The ability to strike, protect, and maintain will require Reserve efforts above and beyond anything we have seen before,' he said" (Dunn, 2017, para. 4).

So, what is at stake if the Army Reserve cannot get its sustainment operations in order? The answer is simple: the success of the Total Force (Dunn, 2017). Without a reliable and well-maintained equipment fleet, the Army Reserve will struggle to support its fellow service members in the field, putting the entire mission at risk (Kapp & Torreón, 2020). Moreover, it is not just about equipment – it is about the people who maintain it. The Army Reserve not only needs skilled wrench turners and diagnosticians, but also maintenance managers, like Warrant Officers, to oversee the upkeep of its equipment and ensure it is ready for action at a moment's notice (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2023). However, with a severe shortage of these critical personnel, the Reserve is facing a perfect storm of maintenance challenges that threaten to undermine its ability to support the warfighter (Kapp & Torreón, 2020).

The Army Reserve is needed worldwide to provide sustainment elements for conflicts and training events (Cragin, 2020). However, it cannot conduct these missions with substandard equipment readiness and a severe lack of full-time maintenance personnel and managers (Warrant Officers) (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2023). Warrant Officers provide the technical and tactical level of expertise and management needed (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2023). They are the glue that ensures equipment readiness is maintained to a higher level (Kapp & Torreón, 2020). Currently, the Army Reserve does not have a full-time maintenance Warrant Officer in brigades and is losing those personnel in battalions, as of FY25 (DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, 2023). Without those full-time maintenance Warrant Officers at those critical levels of command, the Army Reserve is struggling to maintain equipment readiness (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2023).

In the same article written by Luc Dunn, "Lt. Gen. Aundre Piggee, deputy chief of staff, Logistics, stated, 'The U.S. is still the only military superpower in the world... That is because of our ability to project combat power anywhere in the world – and that is logistics. That's the power that the Army Reserve brings to this nation'" Dunn, 2017, para. 5). Unit readiness is essential to logistics, Piggee

said. 'Equipment must arrive on time when required,' he added, 'and that's the capability we're looking for from these Ready Force X formations. We have to be ready for those missions' (Dunn, 2017, para. 6). In the same article, Lt. Gen. Aundre Piggee added, "We're going to have to sustain ourselves. We need to start training now for that" (Dunn, 2017, para. 7). Now, is that time to start the training, to get our great Army's equipment readiness to a higher state of readiness and even more importantly, increase the Soldier's proficiency and confidence within the units (Kapp & Torreon, 2020). Unit readiness relies heavily on the combined efforts of the property book officer and maintenance managers at each level to ensure equipment is maintained and transferred appropriately (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2023).

The article, Analysis of Land Army Maintenance Techniques in the War in Ukraine (MILITARY REVIEW, May-June 2023), notes, "The assumption is that combat use will quickly lead to the required level of training for use, but maintenance is a far greater challenge that cannot be solved during combat operations" (MILITARY REVIEW, 2023, p. 12). Another article, Ukraine: Why has Russia's 64km convoy near Kyiv stopped moving? (BBC, 2022), reports that the convoy was stopped in part by determined Ukrainian resistance and by mechanical failures, as well as by Russia's inability to recover and repair its broken vehicles (BBC, 2022). If the United States Army gets into a conflict, will it face the same challenges as the Russian Army? What steps can be taken to mitigate these identified issues during the initial invasion into Ukraine? The U.S. Army needs to start thinking about and preparing its forces to sustain and maintain their equipment before facing these same challenges (Kapp & Torreon, 2020).

Strategically speaking, the Army Reserve's role has changed over the past 25 years, and military forces are increasingly reliant on the sustainment capabilities provided by Army Reserve components (Cragin, 2020), according to Capt. Justin Albrecht, "Current Army force structure puts 78% of its sustainment personnel and equipment in the U.S. Army Reserve. Of note, 55% of medical units, 65% of finance units, and 73% of human resources capability reside in the Reserve" (Albrecht, 2021, para. 2). Can you imagine that level of sustainment operations being provided by a force that has been degraded and downsized, and is now expected to give that kind of support for LSCO? What would the strategic outcome be if the Army Reserve continues at this level of support, versus increasing the number of personnel to manage and maintain the equipment and systems that require their expertise (Kapp & Torreon, 2020)?

In a Congressional Research report, Charles Cragin, a former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Reserve Affairs, summed up the changing role of the reserve components: "The role of our Reserve forces is changing in the United States. We have seen their traditional role, which was to serve as manpower replacements in the event of some cataclysmic crisis, utterly transformed. They are no longer serving as the force of last resort, but as vital contributors on a day-to-day basis around the world" (Cragin, 2020, p. 5). According to TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1 (2018), "The persistence of Army forward presence forces is a foundational element of dynamic employment of the Joint Force, as it enables joint strategic maneuver with critical combat, sustainment, protection, and mission command capabilities" (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2018, p. 10).

The Army Reserve's Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) is derived from a study of the Active Army's capabilities and then imposed on the Army Reserve to ensure it aligns with their capabilities (USAR 140-1, 2020). According to USAR 140-1, Force Management, "The MTOE is a modified version of a table of organization and equipment (TOE) that prescribes the unit organization, personnel, and equipment necessary to perform a mission in a specific geographical or operational environment" (USAR 140-1, 2020, p. 2). This one-size-fits-all approach has several issues when applied to an organization that conducts training once a month for 2 to 4 days, while the equipment sits for the rest of the month without being maintained or used (Kapp & Torreon, 2020). This inevitably leads to a decline in the proficiency of the Soldiers who operate and maintain this equipment (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2023).

Far too often, Army Reserve units are either ramping up for annual training or a mobilization/deployment and have a false sense of their equipment readiness based on data in GCSS-Army (Kapp & Torreon, 2020). This is the worst time to discover that the equipment on which the Army relies does not function, and the Soldiers who are relied on to diagnose and repair equipment are not proficient enough to provide that support when needed (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2023). The Army Reserve needs maintenance managers in those progressive roles, positions, and all echelon levels, as well as wrench turners, mechanics, and technicians (Soldiers) to build equipment readiness to a maintainable level and provide that sustainment operational piece during conflicts, missions, or training events (Kapp & Torreon, 2020). According to Army Regulation (AR) 750-1 (Army Materiel Maintenance Policy, Maintenance of Supplies and Equipment, 2023), “mechanics should spend 50 percent of their IDT and annual training time engaged in maintenance performance or training, including conducting 25 percent of field-level services on unit equipment in their respective functional areas” (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2023, p. 15).

Given the level of importance placed on sustainment operations, why are there few full-time Soldiers performing maintenance and maintenance management, and why are these functions not ingrained in the fabric of units (Kapp & Torreon, 2020)? How can the Army Reserve provide almost 80% of sustainment with only 5% of the budget allocated toward sustainment operations to strategically increase equipment and Soldier readiness throughout the Army Reserve (DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, 2023)? In the report from the DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Budget Estimates, Operation and Maintenance, Army Reserve Appropriation Highlights (2023), “The Army Reserve supports the National Defense Strategy by providing trained, equipped, and ready units and Soldiers capable of defending our nation and its interests as an essential member of the Total Army and Joint Force” (DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, 2023, p. 1). According to AR 750-1, “Sustainment consists of maintenance functions formerly known as general support and depot operations of the Army maintenance system, which is an Army-wide program for commodity-unique maintenance” (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2023, p. 10).

So, what is the way forward for the Army Reserve? It is time for the U.S. Army to recognize the critical role that the Army Reserve plays in sustainment operations and provide the necessary resources to support its growth and development (Kapp & Torreon, 2020). This means investing in the people, equipment, and infrastructure that the Reserve needs to succeed, from maintenance managers and technicians to equipment and facilities (Cragin, 2020). By doing so, the Army can ensure that the Reserve is ready to support the Total Force whenever and wherever it is needed, and that the nation’s military remains a dominant force on the battlefield (Dunn, 2017). The stakes are high, but with the proper support and resources, the Army Reserve can overcome its challenges and emerge stronger than ever (Kapp & Torreon, 2020).

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The Vicksburg Campaign (November 1862 – July 1863): A Military Battle Analysis

CW4 Wendy A. Strand, Geospatial Engineer

The Vicksburg Campaign was a significant military operation during the Civil War, led by Union Major General Ulysses S. Grant against Confederate Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton. The battle took place from November 1862 to July 1863, and culminated in the Union's control of the Mississippi River, effectively bisecting the Confederacy and marking a turning point in the war (Gabel, 2013). This paper provides a battle analysis of the campaign, highlighting strategic context, operational execution, and enduring lessons.

In the area of operations, Vicksburg's strategic significance lay in its location on the Mississippi River, which was vital. Control of the river would essentially divide and isolate parts of the Confederate Army and hinder their supply lines, with President Lincoln identifying it as the key to the war (Vicksburg, n.d.). The terrain around Vicksburg was challenging, characterized by bluffs, bayous, and floodplains. Heavy rains made military movement difficult and turned much of the area into mud. This environment restricted traditional maneuvers and required innovative operational solutions (Gabel, 2013). Logistically, the Confederates relied on railroads and local resources, while the Union relied on river-based supply routes and portable infrastructure (Rubis & Ryan, 2016).

Operations during the Battle of Vicksburg began with the Anaconda Plan, a Union strategy to gain control of the Mississippi River and divide the Confederacy. General Grant's early attempts, including General Sherman's Chickasaw Bayou attack and the Holly Springs raid, failed due to Confederate raids and terrain. Next, the Bayou Expeditions from January to April 1863 was a failed engineering and flanking maneuver that demonstrated General Grant's determination despite weather and tactical setbacks (Gabel, 2013).

After Union campaign victories at Port Gibson, Raymond, Jackson, Champion Hill, and Big Black River, General Pemberton retreated into Vicksburg. General Grant then shifted strategy, working with Admiral Porter throughout April 1863; his fleet used the ironclads in the river to outflank Vicksburg. Also during this time, other campaigns were distracting General Pemberton, including those of General Sherman and Colonel Grierson's troops (Gabel, 2013).

Finally, beginning in mid-to-late May, General Grant launched assaults to break through the Confederate fieldworks. This fighting led to bloody battles and lasted 6 weeks as they dug in and used trenches to advance toward the Confederates' fortifications. This siege warfare used artillery and Admiral Porter's Navy to maintain a steady bombardment of Vicksburg. After 47 days, General Pemberton surrendered on July 4, 1863. Grant's leadership, operational flexibility, and use of joint operations differed from the Confederates' indecision and fragmentation, which led to Union victory. By capturing Vicksburg, the Union disrupted Confederate supply lines and communications, weakening their position. The win also boosted Union morale and marked a critical step toward eventual victory in the Civil War (Gabel, 2013).

The comparative analysis of the forces shows that the Union had 77,000 Soldiers engaged while the Confederates had 33,000 (Vicksburg, n.d.). The Union Army suffered during the winter, which caused low morale, but it recovered after the landing. In contrast, the Confederate Army's morale eroded under the long siege conditions. In terms of technology, the Union Army had superior naval assets, including ironclads, mortar boats, and river transports. This gave them an edge over the Confederacy, which had heavy river batteries but a limited naval presence. The Union's navy vessels enabled them to blockade and bombard Confederate positions while allowing the movement of troops and supplies along the river. The minimal naval presence allowed the Union to gain control of the Mississippi River in the area, and the Union's victory at Port Hudson later that week gave them complete control. In contrast, the Confederate forces relied on heavy river batteries, and they had a limited naval presence, which hindered their ability to counter the Union's strategic maneuvers and maintain control over the vital waterway (Engal, 2023).

Current doctrine is evident in the analysis of both Armies. General Grant used combined arms during the siege and strike operations, which ADP 3-0 defines as “the synchronized and simultaneous application of arms to achieve an effect greater than if each element was used separately or sequentially” (2025). General Grant and General Pemberton both employed joint operations by working with naval forces. General Pemberton used static defenses and reactive deployments (Gabel, 2013). For command and control, General Grant had a unified command structure with effective coordination and a leadership style that demonstrated adaptability and aggressiveness. At the same time, General Pemberton had a divided command because he bypassed General Johnston, and his command style was reactive and constrained by poor strategic vision.

There were many lessons learned during the Battle of Vicksburg, and one still studied today is how to conduct siege warfare. General Grant’s strategy was to capture Vicksburg by isolating the Confederates from supplies and wearing down the troops. Another lesson was joint operations that enhanced battlefield effectiveness, as shown by General Grant and Admiral David D. Porter working together (Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1997). Other lessons learned were that strategic mobility and control of logistics corridors are essential, that unified command and initiative are decisive, and that terrain exploitation and adaptability can overcome superior defenses.

The Vicksburg Campaign demonstrates operational art in military history, which helps commanders and staff determine the optimal arrangement of their forces and operations. In ADP 3-0 (2025), operational art is “the cognitive approach by commanders and staffs, supported by their skill, knowledge, experience, creativity, and judgment, to develop strategies, campaigns, and operations to organize and employ military forces by integrating ends, ways, and means” (p. 33).

Studying the Vicksburg Campaign shows the value of strategic insight, joint operations, and decisive leadership. Its outcome shifted the balance of the Civil War, securing Union control of the Mississippi and isolating the Confederacy. For military professionals, the campaign remains a teaching point in overcoming adversity through innovation and resolve, and many of its lessons are incorporated into the current doctrine.

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Silent, but Crucial: The Relationship between Lieutenant and Warrant Officers

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While in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and the Basic Officer Leadership Course (BOLC), my instructors emphasized the importance of building strong relationships with non-commissioned officers (NCOs). This relationship significantly shapes a young officer's development. Commissioning programs and BOLCs should stress the importance of this relationship, as every lieutenant going to their first unit will be working with an NCO counterpart. These programs often overlook another critical relationship: the partnership between lieutenants and warrant officers. Many lieutenants go to maneuver units where the only two warrant officers are on the battalion staff, not at the company level. However, many new lieutenants report to chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear (CBRN), military intelligence (MI), signal, and logistics companies. These highly specialized technical companies require a technical expert at the company level. At these companies, a new lieutenant will find themselves working side by side with a Warrant Officer 1 (WO1) or Chief Warrant Officer 2 (CW2). In these types of companies, this relationship is critical to mission success. CBRN, MI, signal, and logistics BOLCs can better prepare new lieutenants for these relationships by incorporating warrant officer roles into programs of instruction (POI) and by conducting joint training with lieutenants and warrant officers.

Discussion

Arriving at my first assignment in South Korea, the number of warrant officers at my CBRN battalion surprised me. I initially assumed that warrant officers primarily served as helicopter pilots and did not really understand what non-pilot warrant officers did. I soon discovered that warrant officers play a vital role in technical units, especially at the company level.

In a standard CBRN Hazard Response (HR) Company, a CW2 serves as the Company Executive Officer (XO) per the modified table of organization and equipment (MTOE). Unlike most standard companies, this role is not filled by a first lieutenant (Headquarters, Department of the Army, N.D). This position is called a company CBRN warrant officer (CW). In CBRN technical escort companies, a WO1 serves as an assistant team leader (ATL), providing technical advice to the lieutenant team leader and team sergeant (Operations Division..., 2019). The positions of CW and ATL are key development positions for WO1s and CW2s and are among the most rewarding points in a WO's career (Garcia, 2025). The professional development of WO1s and CW2s focuses on proficiency in their military occupational specialties, aligning with all warrant officers' career paths (Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2023). In most CBRN HR companies, there are still lieutenant XOs who typically perform XO duties but are not in MTOE positions. A warrant officer serves as the XO because CBRN companies require a technical expert to oversee the specialized CBRN equipment and training. When I became a platoon leader (PL) in a CBRN company, the CW was invaluable to my platoon's success. The CW helped me craft a platoon training plan based on our company's mission essential tasks. He instructed my Soldiers on the various CBRN detectors and equipment our platoon had and coached my NCOs on creating maintenance plans for them. As PL, I observed how my XO at the time worked seamlessly with the company warrant; while essentially doing the same job, they split the duties based on their strengths and assisted each other in their weak areas.

I eventually became the XO of my company and got to work with a new CW. I wanted to have a similar working relationship with my old XO and CW that they had when I was a PL. Our relationship was probably the second-most important in the company, next to the commander and first sergeant, because we ultimately ran the company's daily operations. I would focus on typical XO duties, including

maintenance, supply, training management, and day-to-day operations. The CW focused specifically on CBRN training and equipment maintenance, and served as a technical advisor to the command team on training guidance and CBRN equipment maintenance. Even though we separated the duties, we ensured we understood each other's responsibilities to build situational awareness and cover for each other in the event one of us was absent. I taught the CW how to use systems like the Range Facility Management Support System (RFMSS) to reserve locations for training events and the Global Combat Support System – Army to view the status of our CBRN equipment. In turn, the CW would teach me more detailed aspects of CBRN training and equipment. This better informed me when we had to plan a company-sized field training exercise (FTX). I used his expertise to reserve RFMSS training areas suitable for CBRN training and to create a training plan nested in our commander's intent. I assisted him by resourcing his training lanes and advised him on the feasibility of specific training lanes given our company's capabilities. Our relationship helped ensure a successful FTX. I relied heavily on my CW's technical expertise and his tactical experience as an NCO. Although this discussion focuses heavily on CBRN companies, this relationship also exists in other technical and specialized companies. In Military Intelligence Companies, warrant officers exist at the platoon level, like in a signal intelligence (SIGINT) platoon, providing that technical expertise. At the platoon level, these warrants must work closely with the platoon leader.

Recommendation

Although I had successful relationships with my warrant officers while I was a lieutenant, I lacked sufficient knowledge to work directly with warrant officers. I had to quickly adapt and use my interpersonal skills to work through it, but it would have been helpful to have some baseline knowledge to build on. These are sentiments my peers in CBRN and in other branches share. BOLC and WOBC programs for CBRN, MI, signal, and logistics must adjust their POIs to prepare officers for these relationships better. At BOLC, this can involve classes taught by warrant officers and the roles they play in technical and specialized companies. Another option is to introduce joint training events between BOLC and WOBC classes. In some BOLCs and WOBCs, this has already occurred. When my 2nd CW was going through his WOBC at Fort Leonard Wood during the fall of 2022, his WOBC class conducted joint decontamination training with a BOLC class. This is a perfect opportunity for new Lieutenants to learn from brand-new warrant officers and for warrant officers to practice working with and mentoring lieutenants. BOLCs and WOBCs should have more of these trainings built into their training. These joint trainings benefit small branches like CBRN because building relationships early, especially in a small branch like the Chemical Corps, helps create trust and strong foundations (Garcia, 2025).

Conclusion

The relationship between lieutenants and warrant officers in technical companies is critical for mission success. This relationship is mutually beneficial, as it supports the professional development of both groups. BOLCs and WOBCs for these branches can better prepare these officers for these assignments by explaining this relationship and incorporating joint training between lieutenants and warrant officers.

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Warrant Officer in History: CW3 Doris Allen

WO1 Lashawnte Smith, Military Intelligence

In 1967, Washington, D.C., was optimistic about the campaign's success in Vietnam (Cesario, n.d.). As the holiday of Tet approached, the local population and U.S. forces began to embrace the idea of the North Vietnamese Army yielding resistance (Department of State, 1968). However, intelligence reporting indicated adversary forces were amassing and planning an imminent large-scale attack (Drammeh, 2012). By January 30, North Vietnam launched a series of coordinated assaults against allied forces, known as the Tet Offensive, significantly altering the Vietnam War, which challenged the U.S. strategy (Cesario, n.d.).

Despite one Soldier's prior intelligence warnings, this attack would create deadly consequences for allied and U.S. troops. This analyst was not discouraged and supported early threat warnings, upholding the Army profession and strengthening the built trust and stewardship. Her military expertise prevented further attacks, including those at the northeast Saigon rocket emplacements, the Song Be ambush, and the East Offensive (NSA, 2018, p. 102). The Soldier's intellectual endurance despite complex and ambiguous circumstances preserved the lives of 3rd Marine Division forces in Quang Tri, demonstrating honorable service (Department of State, 1968).

This dedicated intelligence professional was Chief Warrant Officer 3 (CW3) Doris Ilda Allen, also known as Lucki. Through esprit de corps and morale, CW3 Allen enforced trust, cohesion, and steadfast commitment to the Army competencies and attributes (ADP 6-22, 2019).

According to Army Doctrine Publication 6-22, the Army aligns expectations of "being" with attributes such as character, presence, and intellect, while competencies measured in performance include leads, develops, and achieves (ADP 6-22, 2019). CW3 Allen began her service in 1950, enlisting in the Women's Army Corps during a time of desegregation, but with still significant resistance to the integration of African American service members. She persisted in her mission to support despite facing discrimination and institutional obstacles, including gender bias and racial prejudice, displaying a strong embodiment of character. She demonstrated tactical presence and resilience by engaging with the local population, building cohesive relationships with allied forces, and conducting critical intelligence analysis while serving in an austere environment (Sandomir, 2024). Her confidence as a technical expert reinforced her presence as an all-source analyst, counterintelligence expert, and integrator.

Her intellect was unmatched, as evidenced by her ability to synthesize diverse intelligence sources, detect patterns in enemy movements, and apply innovative approaches to counterinsurgency and surveillance operations. She identified actionable target enemy courses of action by incorporating close air support platforms, which gave her command early warning and served as crucial safeguards for U.S. operations. Between 1 and 6 February 1968, she located guerrilla forces and identified 83-millimeter chemical mortars concealed for a convoy ambush attack and 122-millimeter rocket preparation tactics (NSA, 2018, pp. 7, 17, & 20). Her competency in addressing threats and in recommending counterattack platforms demonstrates her technical skills and leadership ability to achieve results under pressure (Department of State, 1968). Her all-source analysis and counterintelligence efforts reflected a critical understanding of operational outcomes and leadership.

Leadership through guidance is the cornerstone of the Warrant Officer, leading to the accomplishment of complex missions. CW3 Allen projected leadership by managing approximately 40 personnel at the Translation Branch, Combined Document Exploitation Center. Her supervision ensured the development of her subordinates and the accurate translation of captured enemy documents. Her ability to lead across cultural and operational boundaries contributed directly to intelligence effectiveness and

mission success, exemplifying the competencies of leadership and development. Finally, CW3 Allen's achievements throughout her intelligence service earned her a recommendation for the Legion of Merit and three Bronze Stars (Slayton, 2024). She pursued multiple educational paths in and out of the military, graduating from Tuskegee and the Defense Language Institute and becoming the first woman to complete the Prisoner of War Interrogation Course (Sandomir, 2024).

In conclusion, CW3 Allen's analytical foresight and application of intelligence synchronization enabled her to execute a full-spectrum analysis (ATP 2-01.3, 2019, p. 2-4). CW3 Allen exhibited all attributes and competencies: character, presence, intellect, leads, develops, and achieves (ADP 6-22, 2019). CW3 Allen's legacy illustrates what a trusted Army professional means. Her ability to maintain her military bearing amid racial adversity demonstrates presence, and sound judgment is required under the attribute of intellect. She exerted influence through multiple duty assignments and officer roles, serving as a steward of the profession with numerous achievements in and out of the military. Her story inspires me, as I am a military intelligence professional and an African American woman. Her strength, courage, and commitment to excellence exemplify professional growth, operational effectiveness, and moral leadership within the Army profession (ADP 6-22, 2019).

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Book Review: “Targeted: Beirut – The 1983 Marine Barracks Bombing and the Untold Origin Story of the War on Terror” written by Jack Carr and James Scott

Atria / Emily Bestler Books. 464 pages.

Dr. Leonard Scott Momeny, Ed.D., CW5 (Ret)

Jack Carr, author of the wildly popular fictional work *Terminal List*, has partnered with James Scott, well-known military history writer, to craft his first nonfiction work, “*Targeted: Beirut – The 1983 Marine Barracks Bombing and the Untold Origin Story of the War on Terror*.” *Targeted: Beirut* is a well-researched and compelling history on the American military and U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East with a significant focus on culminating events in Beirut. The quality of the book is substantial, and the in-depth research brings the reader face-to-face with the tragic events of October 23, 1983. After all, it was on that day that a suicide bomber attacked the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, killing 241 American service members. Even more significant, many would note the attack on the Marine Barracks altered the trajectory of U.S. foreign diplomacy and military involvement in the Middle East for the foreseeable future.

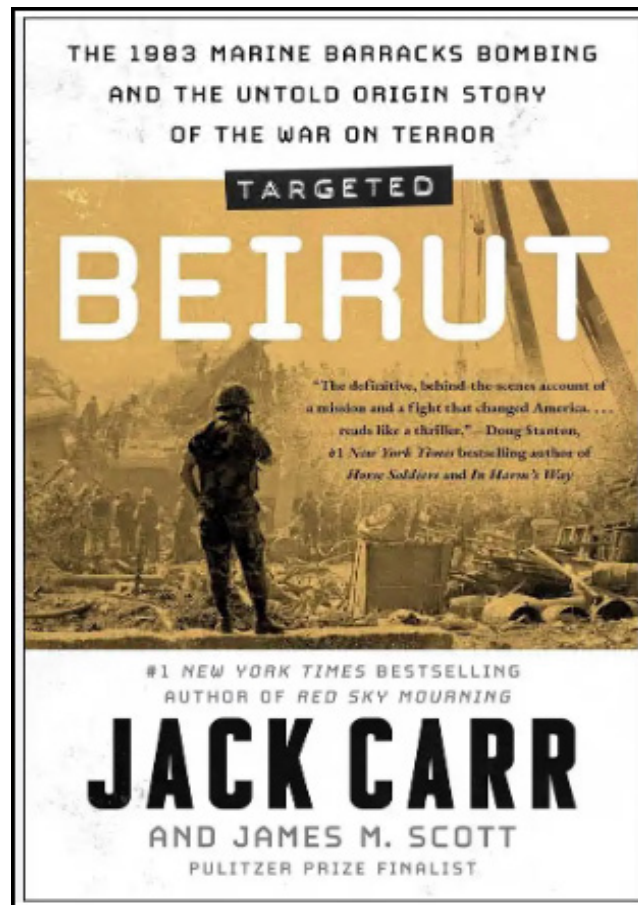
The authors open the book by reconstructing all of the associated events proceeding the lead-up to the bombing of the Marine barracks, chronicling the geopolitical complexities of post-civil war Lebanon, the rise of Hezbollah, and the broader context of regional and global politics. Some of the details in the book draw upon only newly declassified materials, interviews with survivors and policymakers, and a careful examination of failures at a variety of levels in both the military and government. One thing is for sure; this book does not try to reduce the complexity of the event but instead weaves a historical narrative through what the authors consider the most significant point shaping America’s future approach to counterterrorism. In many ways, for America, *Targeted: Beirut* provides a historical accounting for the birth of what many would come to call the “War on Terror.”

So, why should the Army Warrant Officer read this book? Simply put, any Army officer must have an understanding of all aspects of the greater global operational environment. Politics, policy, global affairs are all elements in the global operational environment that contribute to an eventual breakdown in the competition continuum, potentially leading to conflict between parties. *Targeted: Beirut* provides the reader with a perspective on what happens in the background of global affairs, discussing movements in Congress, the then Department of Defense, and even the office of the President. Additionally, there is insight into the perspective, thoughts, and eventual testimony by senior military leaders when required to provide forces for the first-ever mission of “presence.”

Many historians simply brief over the Beirut bombing, but Carr and Scott provide the moment in time their full attention. The most shocking thing, albeit beneficial all the same to the reader, is the provided firsthand account of the gruesome effects of such a large-scale attack. Future warfare requires preparation, and that includes preparation of the mind for the horrors of war. The unfiltered accounts to the mass-casualty event describe how an overwhelmed battalion of Marines, worked through the chaos of a massive bombing, and found a way to stand back on their feet and continue to conduct their mission.

“*Targeted: Beirut*” is a vital contribution to professional military reading, with specific focus on the innerworkings of terrorism, military history, and U.S. foreign policy. This work describes the beginnings of a war that would grip a generation, and most likely continues in the shadows of the government and

the greater operational force. I highly encourage the Army Warrant Officer to engage with *Targeted: Beirut*, as this book will provide insight into what leads, or can lead, to eventual war. In short, works like this help military readers learn to read the tea leaves of current affairs and ultimately better prepare their formations to be ready when called to fight.



Call for Papers and Submission Guidelines

Strength in Knowledge: The Warrant Officer Journal is a professional bulletin of the United States Army produced by the faculty and staff working at the United States Army Warrant Officer Career College (USAWOCC). The editorial staff makes the quarterly publication to improve all areas of the Warrant Officer's education, whether common core or technical. This resource intends to inform and shape organizational systems in the greater profession of arms by sharing key insights and lessons learned.

We continuously accept manuscripts for rolling publications and subsequent journal editions. The journal invites practitioners, researchers, academics, PME students, and military professionals to submit manuscripts that address the issues and challenges of military education and training, training development, doctrine (whether specific data from manuals or discussion of concepts), systems warfare, Army modernization and other subjects relevant to the profession of arms. Submissions related to technical areas of various Warrant Officers' specialties will be considered case-by-case. Book reviews of published relevant works are also encouraged.

Submission Guidelines

Submissions should be between one and five thousand words and supported by research, evident through citing sources. Scholarship must conform to commonly accepted research standards, such as those described in The American Psychological Association Publication Manual, 7th edition. For resources on writing in approved APA format, simply contact USAWOCC. Book reviews should be between 500 and 800 words, and the book should be concisely evaluated regarding its relevance to the professional warrant officer or current fight. The editors recommend using Professional Writing (2024) available at: https://armyuniversity.edu/cgsc/cgss/DCL/files/ST_22-2_US_Army_CGSC_Writing_Guide_March_2024.pdf.

Articles and manuscripts must be submitted in Microsoft Word or a compatible format, with separate, author-owned or Creative Commons-licensed picture files and a 100–150-word author's note. We will publish articles individually and/or on a quarterly schedule. For additional information or to submit an article, email to wo_journal@army.mil.

Writing Challenge (Submission Ideas)

Senior leaders have recently commented on the journal's articles and content, noting that our writers tend to target the specifics of the Warrant Officer community. These same senior leaders have expressed an interest in seeing writers take the next step and consider how Warrant Officers can translate their experiences to increase Army lethality and capability on the current and future battlefield. So, what can we start to write about?

Consider writing about the Army Transformation Initiative, or ATI, and the subsequent impacts on programs of record mentioned in the memorandum. The transformation plan impacts everything from AH64-D and Gray Eagle to the newly acquired Booker. UAS seems to be evolving by the minute, and autonomy and data management are substantial areas of interest and concern. What do the Army's technical experts and systems integrators have to say on the subject? Everything from acquisition to system implementation for several record programs is actively evolving. Everyone across the Army would be interested in what "Chief" has to say regarding the impacts of these changes. Also, consider how tech has changed everything, such as the recent drone attacks by Ukraine in Operation Spider Web. How is war changing, and how will it impact our cohort? The force wants to read about that, so the challenge has been issued. Good luck, writers.

The Chief Warrant Officer EJ Kahn, Jr. Professional Writing Award

1. The Chief Warrant Officer EJ Kahn Jr. Professional Writing Award (KPWA) aims to advance literature on training, doctrine, and policy for professional development from a systems perspective. The KPWA recognizes writers who express systematic knowledge, experiential wisdom, and enthusiastic candor or discourse regarding the Strength in Knowledge theme for 2025: “systematic, data-driven approaches to address strategic gaps in operational readiness.”

- a. Background. Strength in Knowledge: The Warrant Officer Journal was established in January 2023 at the US Army Warrant Officer Career College at Fort Novosel, Alabama. The Journal is managed by faculty as an additional duty with support from volunteers. The Secretary of the Army recognized it as a Professional Bulletin (PB) 1918 in October 2024 with the third issue of Volume 2.
- b. The Chief of Staff’s Harding Project prompted the Journal to research Major General Harding. The research led to the article Beer and Skittles (2024), titled after Major General Harding’s quote, “Army life, especially in war, is not all beer and skittles.” This quote is found in the forward of Chief Warrant Officer EJ Kahn, Jr.’s book *Army Life* (1942), published by the Infantry Journal.
- c. Chief Warrant Officer EJ Kahn Jr. was drafted in WWII and served most of his Army career as a writer for Major General Harding and a *New Yorker* war correspondent. He published many works throughout his life, many characterized by his unique skill to make complex information accessible to diverse audiences through storytelling.

2. Three award levels recognize voluntary article submissions to Army professional bulletins contributing to the Army’s body of knowledge or professional discourse.

- a. The Bronze Award recognizes writers selected for PB 1918 by at least five peers published in PB 1918. The award recipients will be announced in the quarterly Strength in Knowledge: The Warrant Officer Journal issue.
- b. The Silver Award recognizes writers submitting and publishing two articles in Army professional bulletins within six months, one of which must be PB 1918. This award is limited to two annual awards, and each is announced in quarterly issues of Strength in Knowledge: The Warrant Officer Journal.
- c. The Gold Award recognizes a writer with three or more different published articles in at least two separate Army professional bulletins within one calendar year. This award is limited to one award per calendar year and will be announced in the Strength in Knowledge: The Warrant Officer Journal.

3. Requirements.

- a. Writers must have submitted their original work using the published submission guidelines, and the publisher selected and published the article.
- b. Writers must affirm that the article is their original work and that no part of the article was plagiarized from other sources; that all references to other work have been properly and fully attributed; that it has not been previously published; that it is not now being considered elsewhere for publication; and that it is not currently pending consideration as an entry in any other competition.
- c. Nominations for silver and gold award recognition must be received from:

- (1) two officers (CW2 or above), or
 - (2) two Army Civilian Professionals (GS-11 equivalent or above), or
 - (3) any combination of officer and Army Civilian Professional.
- d. Nominations must be received within six months of the latest original publication. The nomination should include the author's name, the article's title, and the publication's volume and issue. The nomination should also briefly explain why the article is relevant to contemporary Army issues or historically significant. Nominations must be sent by email to WO Journal@army.mil. There is no specific format for the nomination.
 - e. The Commandant of the US Army Warrant Officer Career College will make the final selections and announce the winners.
4. Evaluation is unavoidably subjective; however, these questions help evaluate essays and articles more objectively.
- a. Does the article speak to all generations clearly with a reader-centric hook and maintain the reader's attention with candor, humor, wit, or charm?
 - b. Does the article fairly represent the background facts and provide a credible examination of the issue that is easily discernible by diverse audiences?
 - c. Does the article show evidence of research using accepted academic standards? Is the research mainly from primary sources properly cited using the style required by the publisher?
 - d. Does the article offer plausible solutions, recommendations about the problem or issue, or opinions about how the Army can find innovative solutions to face future challenges and threats despite work-force reductions and budget cuts?
 - e. Is the article well-organized? Does it move logically from a clear thesis through a well-developed argument using supporting evidence to yield persuasive conclusions or a call to action?
 - f. Does the article contribute anything new to the professional knowledge on the selected topic?
 - g. Does the article avoid excessive acronyms or jargon?
5. Point of contact for this award is the managing editor of the wo_journal@army.mil.

**** Cash prizes are provided by the Above the Best Silver Chapter, US Army Warrant Officer Association, a IRC 501(c)(3) public charity. For more information, see their social media content. No governmental endorsement of this private organization is implied.*

