

---

## **Chapter 6.**

# **Warrant Officers**

Most Marines go through their entire careers as either enlisted Marines or commissioned officers. A select few enlisted earn their commission somewhere along the way. An even fewer number make up the ranks of warrant officers. The warrant officer program gives sergeants and SNCOs an opportunity to remain in their MOS and assume a greater level of responsibility, while allowing them to continue providing their technical expertise to the Corps. (A chief warrant officer serving as an infantry weapons officer also carries the title “Marine gunner,” which does not replace their rank. However, a Marine gunner replaces the chief warrant officer insignia on the left collar with a bursting bomb insignia.) Warrant officers are a crucial part of the officer corps and have a unique understanding of what it means to sustain the transformation as a Marine.

Warrant officers benefit from the transformative experiences that took place when they were enlisted Marines. During those years of enlisted service, they gained an appreciation for the work required for a specific warfighting capability to accomplish its mission. As enlisted leaders, they developed a deeper understanding of Marine Corps doctrine, programs, orders, regulations, and traditions. After being selected into the warrant officer program, they received officer training

comparable to lieutenants as they attend the Warrant Officer Basic Course and an MOS-producing school within their respective occupational fields.

The distinguishing characteristic of Marine warrant officers is their dedication and passion for their occupational specialty. Unlike enlisted poolees who select an occupational field based on qualifications and preference, or lieutenants who are assigned an occupational specialty based on class ranking, prior contract, or preference, warrant officers maintain their occupational specialty as they progress into their new roles. It is through their unique technical expertise that they are able to sustain the transformation in themselves and others.

## **SUSTAINING SELF**

### **Mission Accomplishment**

Warrant officers serve as technical advisors to a commander and are sought for their expertise in their specific fields. Their role traces back to the origin and history of the rank. Warrant officers are selected from the ranks of enlisted members who have accumulated enough experience to become experts in their field. In the early days of the US military, longevity of service (and the expertise that came with it) was difficult to find. The rank of warrant officer served as a form of bestowing reward and appreciation upon an individual. The warrant officer rank also granted authority and seniority to the member, filling a crucial leadership gap among officers without experience. Today, warrant officers bring an invaluable combination of authority

and experience. This is the reason some enlisted Marines choose to become warrant officers. The love of their craft drives them to seek new opportunities for enhancing their own capabilities and the abilities of those around them. Finding fulfillment in the satisfaction of a job well done is one of the ways warrant officers can continue to sustain the transformation within themselves. Whether it be overseas or stateside, taking their training and education into real-world execution allows the warrant officer to see their work in action. They should frequently seek opportunities to employ their expertise outside of training.

Most warrant officers see deployment as an opportunity to apply their skillset. In challenging situations, austere conditions, and under demanding circumstances, warrant officers can lead Marines toward mission success. With their depth and breadth of expertise and knowledge, they are able to guide Marines through high-stakes situations. In these times they can see how their involvement contributes to sustaining operations, shaping the battle space, or even saving lives. Through these experiences they are able to renew their purpose for becoming a warrant officer and reinvigorate their commitment to their craft. Read “Marine Awarded Hulbert Trophy” on pages 6-4 and 6-5 to see how Chief Warrant Officer Anthony Viggiani made a difference with his experiences and expertise.

### **Marine Awarded Hulbert Trophy**

The Marines' top general selected Chief Warrant Officer-3 Anthony Viggiani as the next Hulbert Trophy recipient one decade after the gunner's leadership on the battlefield earned him the nation's second-highest valor award.

Viggiani received the Gunner Henry Lewis Hulbert Trophy for Outstanding Leadership for his contributions at Advanced Infantry Training Battalion, School of Infantry-West, where he trains Marines responsible for creating the next generation of infantrymen. The annual accolade is presented to the infantry weapons officer who "most exemplifies outstanding leadership, courage and technical, tactical and doctrinal expertise within the Marine gunner community," according to the award criteria.

Viggiani earned top praise from staff noncommissioned officers and officers at the school after he enhanced two dozen programs of instruction at Advanced Infantry Training Battalion.

Despite his hesitancy to talk about himself, Viggiani's passion for his profession is evident when he speaks of training the Corps' next infantrymen. His advice is direct: Know your craft and learn from your leaders.

"There is no one thing that outweighs the other, especially when dealing with the techniques, tactics and procedures," Viggiani told Marine Corps Times. "Amateurs train until they

Continued...



**CWO-3 Anthony Viggiani accepts the Hulbert Trophy from then-Commandant, General Robert B. Neller.**

get it right; professionals train until they can't get it wrong. Never stop learning your craft. This is a profession, not a job.”

Viggiani said serving as a squad leader, platoon sergeant, and company gunny helped him hone his tactical skills and informed the leadership skills he now instills in others. He credits his earning the Hulbert Trophy to Marines who have influenced his career along the way.

“I would not be here without the support of my family, as well as the staff NCOs and officers at [the School of Infantry] and throughout my career,” said Viggiani.<sup>29</sup>

## **SUSTAINING OTHERS**

### **Inspirational Leadership**

A warrant officer's knowledge is important in the development of Marines, both those in the enlisted and officer ranks. In addition to leading Marines in their occupational fields, warrant officers are often called upon when shaping operational planning, directing the employment of weapons or technical equipment, reviewing policy, and editing technical publications. The impact they make in their field is vast and can be felt for years to come.

Technical expertise, coupled with officer leadership training, allows the warrant officer to fill a unique position within the Corps. As both a teacher and a leader, they experience the hands-on involvement of the day-to-day job, and the broad scope influence of developing their field. Where the warrant officer truly sustains the transformation of others, however, is through their passion and commitment to their skillsets. Many warrant officers can say their inspiration for joining the ranks is the example set by another warrant officer. Beyond that, warrant officers inspire Marines to learn more, be more creative, practice more, and find their own passion for their work. They are a force multiplier for commitment and dedication to mission accomplishment.