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### ***Warrants don branch insignia, new CW5 rank***

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, July 9, 2004) -- As warrant officers across the Army celebrated the 86th birthday of their Warrant Officer Corps July 9, they removed the distinctive "Rising Eagle" insignia from their collars and replaced it with the insignia of the branches they serve.

Top warrant officers also received a new chief warrant officer 5 rank to wear -- a silver bar with a single black stripe in the middle. Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Richard A. Cody pinned the new rank onto five chief warrant officers July 9 in a Pentagon ceremony, and then eight warrants had their new branch insignia pinned on their collars. Four donned adjutant general insignia, three aviation and one the ordnance branch insignia.

"These are two significant changes in the warrant officer corps that has served us so well" throughout the Army's history, Cody said. He explained that the changes are necessary as the Army moves toward a modular and more joint and expeditionary design and were recommended by a warrant officer leadership development study. The changes also bring the Army's warrants more in line with the other military services, he said.

The old warrant officer insignia -- a brass eagle standing on a bundle of arrows, enclosed in a wreath -- will still be worn by warrant officer candidates as a means to honor the lineage and heritage of the Warrant Officer Corps which was founded July 9, 1918, according to personnel officials.

Symbolism is important, said Lt. Gen. F.L. Hagenbeck, Army G1, so much so that changing the insignia warrants wear should reflect a better integration of warrant officers into the Army. Neither enlisted, nor officer -- warrants are often perceived as strange animals to the rest of the Army, he said.

Better integration into the Army and with the branches warrants serve was one of 63 recommendations of the Army Training and Leadership Development survey for warrant officers conducted in late 2001 and early 2002.

Other Warrant Officer ATLDP fixes already in place include establishing warrant officer force structure positions by grade, rather than grade banding.

"Under the old system, you could have a chief warrant officer 3 serve in a position that really calls for a CWO4, requiring that person to do a job he really wasn't ready for because of the lack of experience," said CWO5 Al Eggerton, G1 warrant officer personnel policy integrator. "Likewise, you could have a CWO4 move into a position that really calls for a CWO3, when he should be moving on to bigger and better opportunities that use his experience. That's been fixed now."

The ATLDP recommendation to roll back the warrant grade structure has also been implemented, Eggerton said. The issue was too many higher-grade slots that were unevenly distributed, he said. The grade rollback allows for more consistent promotion opportunities across the warrant officer force.

On the issue of providing a single-source document that provides up-to-date career management and development information, Eggerton said Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3 is currently undergoing its final edit and should be ready for publishing in the near future.

CW5s had been wearing master chief warrant officer rank insignia created in the late 1980s.

With an expanded Warrant Officer Corps supporting the Vietnam War, the Army first proposed the creation of CW5 and CW6 ranks in the early 1970s. While the proposal won Department of the Army staff approval, the force structure position changes for the new grades were not implemented at the time as the Army downsized immediately following the Vietnam War.

Selected CW4 were designated master chief warrant officers in 1988 and wore a new master chief warrant officer rank insignia. The CW5 grade was established in December 1991 with the master chief warrant officer insignia adopted as its rank insignia - four black squares with silver squares inside.

"Lots of times people called me a CW4," said CW5 Christopher Dodd, executive officer to the G8 director of materiel at the Pentagon. The similarity between the two ranks sometimes "generated confusion," Dodd said, adding that the new rank should "make a difference."

Insignia for a CW6 rank was actually approved years ago - two stripes across a bar - even though promoting into that rank was never authorized by Congress, said CW5 Fred Hawn, assistant executive officer to the Army's vice chief of staff.

Cody said that warrant officers helped him in every position that he has served over the past 32 years.

"I probably wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for warrant officers," Cody said. "They taught me leadership, technical and tactical proficiency."