

CHAPTER I

FROM PROUD BEGINNINGS

101. THE HISTORY OF LIMITED DUTY OFFICERS, CHIEF WARRANT OFFICERS AND WARRANT OFFICERS

The warrant officer community is as old as navies themselves. In the distant past, warfare was conducted by the aristocracy whose livelihood depended upon the income from agricultural lands given to them by the king, in exchange for their obligation to provide armed fighting men when called upon. The king or prince might command an entire military expedition, while various aristocrats commanded, as Captains, their own "companies" of men-at-arms. There were also junior officers who would command in "lieu" of the Captain, if the latter was killed or wounded - a Lieutenant.

Actual fights at sea were rare in the late middle ages, but if ships were needed, men were drafted into military service from traders and merchants. The ship would then be commissioned and a captain placed in command. The land-bound, part-time soldiers knew nothing of piloting, ship handling, or navigation. The ship's master, his principal officers, and the sailors or "swabbers" were necessary for the success of the operation. As commoners who were employed for their specific skill, these 'expert seamen' were issued royal warrants which bound them to serve the king in their special capacities.

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, the colonies quite logically modeled the nucleus of the naval establishment after the British. Our history records show that on 13 December 1775, Congress agreed to construct thirteen frigates. The grades of officers to lead this force were as follows:

<u>COMMISSIONED</u>	<u>WARRANTS</u>	
Captains of Ships	Boatswains	Chaplains
Captains of Marines	Gunners	Surgeons
Lieutenants of Ships	Carpenters	Pursers
Lieutenants of Marines	Masters	Secretaries of the Fleet
	Mates	

Contrary to popular belief, most warrant officers of the 1800s were not Sailors who had begun at the bottom of the Navy's ladder and worked their way up. Boatswains, gunners, carpenters, and sailmakers were often appointed directly into the Navy after learning their trades in merchant vessels or as privateers. In 1859, most warrant officers had as little as

six months service as enlisted men, some had none at all.

In 1862, the rank of Ensign was introduced. By 1865, the Navy had Vice Admirals, Rear Admirals, and Commodores. Master ranked between Ensign and Lieutenant until 1881, when the rank was changed to Lieutenant Junior Grade. From the end of the Civil War, until 1900, warrant officers were boatswains, gunners, carpenters, sailmakers, and mates. The duties of the mate were simple: "He will perform duties as assigned by the commanding officer." The mate was junior to all officers and warrant officers, but senior to all enlisted men and to naval cadets, as graduates of Annapolis were then known.

Commissioned warrant grades (the chief warrant officer to "rank with but after ensign") were introduced to the Navy at the turn of the nineteenth century.

By the beginning of World War I, warrant ranks were used to meet the demands of the rapidly developing technology of the time. There remained on active duty only one chief sailmaker, but added to the register were 84 chief pay clerks, 101 pay clerks, and 52 acting pay clerks. In the past, pay clerks had received an appointment after having been selected by a commissioned paymaster to work for that officer only. Very often they came directly from civilian life. Warrant pay clerks, on the other hand, had to be a chief petty officer before they could apply for promotion.

It was during this period that the responsibilities of the gunner began to change, which eventually led to the creation of several new warrants. The gunner was also assigned the duty of supervising the electrical systems of ships. The original answer for this new specialty requirement was to split the gunner warrant into gunner and gunner (e) who was, despite his insignia, the electrical officer. With the introduction of wireless, gunner (e) was further divided to include gunner (w), which was later changed to gunner(r).

In 1910, congress authorized the annual promotion of ten warrant officers to the rank of ensign. After World War I, almost all warrant officers and chief warrant officers were former enlisted men. The warrant officers mess was the abode of long service enlisted men who had achieved first class petty officer or chief petty officer status before becoming warrants.

On the eve of World War II, a chief petty officer or first class petty officer could be advanced to warrant if:

- Under the age of 35 on the date appointed
- Had no proficiency mark lower than 3.4 out of a 4.0 scale (Navy adopted the current 5.0 scale in 1996)

- Able to read and write English, understand the four rules of arithmetic and proportion, was able to keep accounts of stores and was thoroughly conversant with all instructions and regulations pertaining to the grade for which examined.

- Could pass a professional examination; and

- Had five years of sea duty, at least one which was in the rate of chief petty officer or first class petty officer.

Manpower requirements of the rapidly expanding Naval Establishment prior to World War II required a substantial departure from the peacetime laws pertaining to the procurement, appointment and promotion of officer personnel. Outlined in the Congressional Act of 24 July 1941, temporary appointments during a time of war or national emergency was authorized. Understanding the needs of a rapidly expanding Naval Establishment with correspondingly greater officer personnel requirements, Congress enacted Public Law 188, 77th Congress, 1st Session, which provided, among other things, the granting of temporary commissions to first class and chief petty officers and to warrant officers of the Regular Navy. Those temporary appointments remained in effect until after the end of World War II, at which time the Navy Department was faced with the necessity of establishing a peacetime alternative to retain the services of thousands of career specialists in their most useful capacities.

The demands of World War II forced the creation of several new warrant specialties, and by 1950 there were 12: boatswain, gunner, torpedoman, electrician, radio electrician, machinist, carpenter, ship's clerk, aerographer, photographer, hospital corps (formerly pharmacist), and pay clerk. By the end of the war, approximately one-fourth of the lieutenant commanders, over 1,000 lieutenants, and one-third of the lieutenants (junior grade) were either permanent chief warrant officers or permanent enlisted.

By 1948, the Navy realized that it often lost critical skills and knowledge that was learned as enlisted men or warrant officers when these individuals were promoted to commissioned status in the unrestricted line community. To retain these skills and to provide a fair competitive position for officers promoted from the ranks, the Limited Duty Officer Program was established.

In 1948, the Limited Duty Officer category was established under the Officer Personnel Act of 1947. The community was envisioned as a relatively small, elite group of officers who would retain their specialties acquired as enlisted men and warrant officers and support the unrestricted line community during periods of personnel shortages or when technological advances required. They were not to compete with the unrestricted line officers. Limited duty officers commissioned after inception of the Limited Duty Officer Program through 1956 were given permanent appointments under

Title 10 USC, section 5589. As these permanent limited duty officers progressed through the grade structure, they were given promotion opportunity equivalent to that experienced by unrestricted line officers.

The Defense Reorganization Act of 1949 created four warrant officer grade levels: WO1, CWO2, CWO3 and CWO4.

Commencing in 1957, all initial appointments to limited duty Officer were temporary appointments under Title 10 USC, Section 5596. The input to the program increased markedly beginning in 1957 so that, by 1959, of the 2,502 officers comprising the total strength of the limited duty officer community, 1,148 were temporary officers.

In 1958, the Career Compensation Act was amended to establish pay grades E-8 and E-9. In 1959, the "Williams Board" was convened to study the warrant officer and limited duty officer programs in relation to the new E-8/E-9 pay grades. The board recommended that the limited duty officer program be expanded to meet the shortage of experienced junior officers and that the warrant officer program be concurrently phased out, utilizing senior and master chief petty officers to assume some of their duties. As a result, input to the limited duty officer community was increased, including the selection of warrant officers to limited duty officer status. By the mid-1960's, the limited duty officer (Temporary) structure reached a peak population of about 7,500 officers.

Four years later, in October 1963, the "Settle Board" was convened to restudy the issue. It concluded that the expected functional overlapping of the duties of warrant officers and the new senior enlisted grades had not been demonstrated. The phase-out of warrants had created a void not effectively filled by LDOs and master chiefs; a void incompatible with the Navy's needs for more, not fewer, officer technical specialists. Accordingly, the warrant officer program was revitalized with a corresponding reduction in the limited duty officer program. There were no new limited duty officer accessions in FY-66, 67, and 68.

In 1974, a study directed by the Chief of Naval Operations was conducted under the sponsorship of the Bureau of Naval Personnel Career Planning Board. The following recommendations, designed to improve the limited duty officer, chief warrant officer and warrant officer programs and to improve stability in those communities, were approved by the Secretary of the Navy on 5 December 1974:

- Retention of the Limited Duty Officer, Chief Warrant Officer and Warrant Officer programs, but with functional role definitions developed separately for each.

- Separate billet structures for the Limited Duty Officer, Chief

Warrant Officer and Warrant Officer communities, based on the criteria expressed in the new functional role definitions.

- Realignment of the Limited Duty Officer, Chief Warrant Officer and Warrant Officer designators and categories to provide warfare community identification and to facilitate centralized management of these two officer groups.

- New procurement and appointment procedures to provide separate paths to limited duty officer, chief warrant officer or warrant officer directly from enlisted status, as well as the retention of a path to limited duty officer, lieutenant (junior grade) from chief warrant officer. The changes created a younger LDO, capable of promoting to LCDR/CDR well before statutory retirement (30 years total active naval service), and a more seasoned, experienced and capable warrant officer.

In the 1970's, the rank of warrant officer (W1) was discontinued; qualified enlisted personnel were selected directly to chief warrant officer, receiving commissions as CWO2s. In 1980, the requirement that applicants for limited duty officer and chief warrant officer be under 35 years of age was discontinued. Subsequently, master chief petty officers with up to 24 years of service became eligible for promotion to chief warrant officer.

In 1985, congress lifted the "O-5 cap", authorizing LDO promotions to captain. The first LDO captain was promoted in 1986. By 1991, there were 24 LDO captains on active duty and, as of 2022, we have over 50 captains in the LDO community.

As a result of the Warrant Officer Management Act (WOMA) of 1991, the warrant officer grade of CW05 was authorized, at service secretary discretion, effective 1 February 1992. Although not implemented for several years due to rightsizing and force shaping measures, SECNAV decided to implement CW05 in 2002. In October of 2003 (FY04), 17 warrant officers were promoted to CW05. As of 2022, there are currently over 80 CW05s.

Warrant Officer (WO1) was reintroduced in 2018 via NAVADMIN 140/18 announcing the modification of the Navy Cyber Warrant Officer (784X) program. In 2021, NAVADMIN 141/21 announced a second WO1 program - Air Vehicle Pilot (737X) designator.

Over the years, the duties, responsibilities, authority, and status of limited duty officers, chief warrant officers, and warrant officers have grown from those of common seafarers, reluctantly admitted to officer status by aristocrats, to today's highly respected technical managers and technical specialists valued by our various enterprises and essential to the successful operation of modern naval forces.