



NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**THE SEAL CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER'S VALUE
PROPOSITION TO NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE**

by

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December 2020

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**THE SEAL CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER'S VALUE PROPOSITION TO
NAVAL SPECIAL WARFARE**

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ABSTRACT

In 1987, the Department of the Navy enacted the Special Warfare Technician/SEAL chief warrant officer designator to support the Naval Special Warfare SEAL Teams' officer community. In general, the U.S. Navy recognizes the chief warrant officer program's value; however, amid Naval Special Warfare's Force Optimization plan, the SEAL chief warrant officer's value proposition is unclear. This study aims to answer the question: How should Naval Special Warfare select and employ their SEAL chief warrant officers in order to best contribute to the improvement of Naval Special Warfare's organizational effectiveness? This thesis provides recommendations from the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data that examines and compares the selection requirements and employment utilization of U.S. Navy SEAL chief warrant officers and Army Special Forces warrant officers.

The results of the study reveal that SEAL chief warrant officers are not tactically employed; are too diverse across the Naval Special Warfare spectrum; are not optimally utilized as newly commissioned chief warrant officers; may not be remaining at the same command for repeated tours; and face qualification selection requirements that are too broad. This research offers a framework and mechanism for coherent action among the stakeholders that will increase the value proposition of the Special Warfare Technician and, consequently, improve Naval Special Warfare's organizational effectiveness.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	assistant detachment commander
AFS	active federal service
ARSOF	Army Special Operations Forces
BOW	battalion operations warrant officer
CCWO	command chief warrant officer
CMF	Career Management Field
CNO	Chief of Naval Operations
COW	company operations warrant officer
CWO	chief warrant officer
DA PAM	Department of the Army Pamphlet
DH	department head
DIVO	division officer
DOD	Department of Defense
DODI	Department of Defense Instruction
FCWO	force chief warrant officer
JIIM	joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational
LCPO	leading chief petty officer
LDO	limited duty officer
MOS	military occupational specialty
NAVADMIN	naval administrative message
NEC	Navy Enlisted Classification

NOBC	Navy Officer Billet Classification
NSW	Naval Special Warfare
NSWC	Naval Special Warfare Command
NSWCEN	Naval Special Warfare Center
NSWDG	Naval Special Warfare Development Group
NSWG	Naval Special Warfare Group
OIC	officer in charge
OPNAVINST	Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instruction
SDV	SEAL Delivery Vehicle
SECNAV	Secretary of the Navy
SF	U.S. Army Special Forces
SFOD-A	Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha
SOF	special operations forces
SRT	Special Reconnaissance Team
SW	special warfare
SWOA	senior warrant officer advisor
TRADET	Training Detachment
TSOC	Theater Special Operations Command
USASOC	U.S. Army Special Operations Command
U.S.C.	United States Code
USSOCOM	United States Special Operations Command

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

The warrant officer rank was created by the Continental Congress in December 1775 to help man the colonies' newly acquired and constructed ships to support the Revolutionary War.¹ Nearly 200 years later, in January 1962, the U.S. Navy's first SEAL Teams were commissioned² and in 1987, the U.S. Department of the Navy enacted the Special Warfare Technician (715X)/SEAL chief warrant officer (CWO) designator to fill officer billets within the SEAL Teams.³

The U.S. Navy's CWOs are commissioned within the line or staff officer corps and are unique in that over years of enlisted service within a specialty rate they have acquired extensive knowledge, technical expertise, and historical background. These unique officers are nested within the senior enlisted and line officer ranks and through repetitive tours at the same command provide valued professional specialization and continuity.⁴ The U.S. Navy's CWO program requires a minimum of 14 years of enlisted time in service in order to apply for a warrant officer commission. This prerequisite allows the program to produce mature and technically specialized leaders at an economical cost to support the U.S. Navy's officer communities.⁵ According to *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook*, their duties are to be limited in scope, technically based,

¹ Department of the Navy, *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook 2011 Edition* (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2011), 1–1, https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/officer/communitymanagers/active/ldo_cwo/Documents/LDO-CWO_Guidebook.pdf.

² Timothy L. Bosiljevac, *SEALS: UDT/SEAL Operations in Vietnam* (New York: Ivy Books, 1990), 6.

³ James G. Kelz, *The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook*, (Coronado, CA: Center for SEAL and SWCC, 2020), 20.

⁴ Department of the Navy, *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook*, 2–3-2-4.

⁵ Department of the Navy, *FY-21 Active-Duty Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer In-Service Procurement Board*, NAVADMIN 142/19 (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2019), para 5.

repetitive, and should not be affected by an increase in rank.⁶ In general, the U.S. Navy recognizes the CWO program's value, however, amid Naval Special Warfare's (NSW) Force Optimization plan, the SEAL CWO's value proposition is unclear.

Over the past 33 years, United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) has grown and undergone organizational changes to effectively absorb the additional responsibility and requirements necessary to fulfill the nation's demands in the fight against terrorism and the great power competition. To align with USSOCOM and the ever-changing complex operational environment, NSW has undergone two major organizational transformations to optimize the force's warfighting capabilities and enhance its value to USSOCOM. The first was NSW-21, which was implemented by Rear Admiral (Admiral retired) Eric Olson in order to centralize and standardize the force.⁷ According to Louis McCray and Steven Renly's "Naval Special Warfare 21: An Analysis of Organizational Change in the 21st Century" thesis, the plan consisted of five initiatives, which were the development of the NSW squadron, the reorganization of the force and deployment cycle, the realignment of the training programs, the enhancement of deployed command and control relationships, and the creation of a command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance structure within NSW. McCray and Renly explain that as part of this initiative, each SEAL Team was downsized from eight to six platoons and two SEAL Teams, two Logistics and Support Units, two Training Detachments, and a Mission Support Center were created.

NSW is currently implementing NSW Vision 2030, which entails strengthening the force, competing with the nation's adversaries, and reforming organizational culture and processes; the second significant change to NSW's organizational structure is nested within

⁶ Department of the Navy, *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook*, 2–4.

⁷ Louis M. McCray and Steven K. Renly, "Naval Special Warfare 21: An Analysis of Organizational Change in the 21st Century" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2001), 50–71, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/5986>.

NSW Vision 2030 and is an ongoing effort known as Force Optimization.⁸ According to Scott Gourley’s “NAVSPECWARCOM Interview,” Force Optimization was initiated by former Commander of Naval Special Warfare, Vice Admiral Tim Szymanski and implemented by the current Commander, Rear Admiral Collin Green. Force Optimization is the result of a complete review of how NSW organizes, trains, and operates to counter the nation’s current and future threats. The U.S. is operating in an environment where technological advances and asymmetric activities within military domains are being used by great power states to conduct ambiguous activities below the threshold of conflict in an attempt to balance international power. At the same time, violent extremists and terrorist organizations continue to disrupt and create instability across the Middle East, Africa, and the Indo-Pacific theaters. Rear Admiral Green states that the effort contains:

the most impactful organizational changes since NSW 21 in the late ‘90s. Our most significant effort is a three-phase overhaul of our legacy structures, realigning capacity from geographically fixed formations into agile, strategic capability formations. This will enable more efficient command and control by streamlining support for Theater Special Operations Commands and the U.S. Navy’s numbered fleets through tailorable, flexible, and sustainable O-6-led task forces in support of competition, crisis, and contingency operations.⁹

Through Force Optimization, NSW continues to advance Vision 2030 and adapt to this ever-changing and ambiguous international environment. To provide optimal value to U.S. special operations forces (SOF), this endeavor will require the expert selection and utilization of SEAL CWOs.

B. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the Special Warfare Technician (715X) program to determine the SEAL CWO’s value proposition to NSW and propose recommendations for how NSW should select and employ their SEAL CWOs in order to

⁸ Scott R. Gourley, “NAVSPECWARCOM Interview: Rear Adm. Collin P. Green, Commander Naval Special Warfare Command,” *Special Operations Outlook*, 2019–2020, https://issuu.com/faircountmedia/docs/soo19a_issuu_prepped__2_.

⁹ Gourley, “NAVSPECWARCOM Interview.”

best contribute to the improvement of NSW's organizational effectiveness. The authors use the term "organizational effectiveness" in light of *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook's* statement, "Warrant officers bridge the gap between the enlisted technician level and other officers, thereby improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization."¹⁰ There are a variety of organizational effectiveness interpretations, theories, and definitions, however the focus of this study is not to analyze the organizational effectiveness of NSW but to provide insights and recommendations for how to improve effectiveness through the optimization of its SEAL CWO program. For these purposes the research uses Robert Quinn and John Rohrbaugh's definition of organizational effectiveness and their competing values framework, which is further defined in the literature review of Chapter II.¹¹

The scope of this thesis includes an examination and comparison of the current selection criteria and employment utilization of two groups of warrant officers within USSOCOM. These include U.S. Navy SEAL CWOs and U.S. Army Special Forces (SF) warrant officers. This study also aims to analyze SEAL and Army SF officer, senior enlisted, warrant officer, and CWO input to identify the positives and negatives of the SEAL CWO program and review the most relevant data to determine what changes could be implemented.

C. RESEARCH QUESTION

How should NSW select and employ their SEAL CWOs in order to best contribute to the improvement of NSW's organizational effectiveness?

D. METHODOLOGY

The thesis uses a qualitative and quantitative comparative analysis of the selection and employment of SEAL CWOs and Army SF warrant officers. Additionally, the primary

¹⁰ Department of the Navy, *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook*, 2–4.

¹¹ Robert E. Quinn and John Rohrbaugh, "A Competing Values Approach to Organizational Effectiveness," *Public Productivity Review* 5, no. 2 (June 1981): 122–140, https://www.jstor.org/stable/3380029?seq=1#metadata_info_tab_contents.

means of collecting data for the analysis is through the review of policy, regulations, manuals, and guides from the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), Department of the Navy, and Department of the Army, an assessment of relevant research studies, and an online survey administered to U.S. Navy SEAL and Army SF officers, senior enlisted, warrant officers, and CWOs. The survey includes closed-ended questions using the Likert scale and multiple choice, and open-ended questions for the respondents to provide written comments in order to gain in-depth insight from experienced leaders within the U.S. Navy and Army's special operations communities. For data collection purposes, only the branch of service, rank, and SOF component is documented. The survey is anonymous and Appendix A provides the questions.

E. STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

The introduction has delivered a historical overview and statement of the problem. The chapter has also provided the purpose, scope, and methodology of the research.

Chapter II offers a literature review of the U.S. DOD, Navy's, and Army's departmental policies, regulations, manuals, and guidelines. The chapter also describes prior academic research relevant to this study and examines organizational effectiveness as applied to the improvement of the selection and employment of the SEAL CWO program.

Chapter III provides a comparative analysis of the SEAL CWO and Army SF warrant officer programs' selection criteria and employment utilization.

Chapter IV presents the survey results and findings. The chapter provides a quantitative and qualitative comparative analysis between U.S. Navy SEAL and Army SF officer, senior enlisted, warrant officer, and CWO respondents. The survey results offer an analysis of the problem and highlights the selection and employment deficiencies of the SEAL CWOs.

Chapter V delivers the recommended actions and conclusion. The chapter presents recommendations to improve the selection and employment of the SEAL CWO program and describes their value proposition to the NSW force.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. OVERVIEW

This chapter, divided into eight sections, provides a review of documentation related to the U.S. Navy SEAL CWO and Army SF warrant officer programs: Section B reviews U.S. Code (U.S.C.) Title 10 statutory roles and responsibilities, Section C reviews DOD policy, Section D examines U.S. Navy issuances and guidance, Section E examines U.S. Army guidance, Section F reviews U.S. congressional study, Section G explores academic research, and Section H provides a definition and model for organizational effectiveness as applied to this research.

B. TITLE 10, UNITED STATES CODE

The U.S.C. represents the general and permanent laws of the U.S. that are divided “into 53 titles and published by the Office of the Law Revision Counsel of the U.S. House of Representatives.”¹² In particular, U.S.C. Title 10 delineates the armed forces role and legal requirements. Service components are legally bound by the administrative and operational tasks and methods to ensure interoperability of equipment and forces across the U.S. DOD. Sections § 571 through § 583 of Chapter 33A describe the “Appointment, Promotion, and Involuntary Separation and Retirement for Members on the Warrant Officer Active-Duty List.”¹³

Title 10 empowers the secretary of a U.S. Armed Forces department to establish and provide incentives, not otherwise sanctioned by statute, that encourages personnel to accept appointments as commissioned officers or warrant officers, or to enlist.¹⁴ U.S.C.

¹² “United States Code,” United States Government Publishing Office, accessed January 29, 2020, <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/USCODE>.

¹³ “Appointment, Promotion, and Involuntary Separation and Retirement for Members on the Warrant Officer Active-Duty List,” Department of Defense, title 10 (2018): 33A, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2018-title10/pdf/USCODE-2018-title10-subtitleA.pdf>.

¹⁴ “Enlistments: Recruiting Campaigns; Compilation of Directory Information,” Department of Defense, title 10 (2018): § 503, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2018-title10/pdf/USCODE-2018-title10-subtitleA.pdf>.

Title 10 § 571 through § 583 represent public law and permit considerable flexibility in the management of warrant officers under the Secretary of Defense. In turn, each military service department secretary maintains the flexibility to outline DOD policy that provides sequential guidance and policies in the form of DOD Instructions (DODI) and service issuances.

C. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE POLICY

The U.S. DOD Issuances Program, a subcommittee to the Executive Service Directorate, processes the documents that establish and implement DOD policy, commonly referred to as DOD Issuances, which include DODIs, DOD Directives, DOD Manuals, Directive-Type Memorandums, and Administrative Instructions.¹⁵

A DODI implements the policy or describes the manner, specific plan, or action for carrying out the policy and assigning responsibilities. The DOD maintains DODI 1312.03, which serves as the policy for *Entry Grade Credit for Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers*.¹⁶ DODI 1312.03 “Applies to Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments, the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Joint Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Defense, the Defense Agencies, the DOD Field Activities, and all other organizational entities within the DOD.”¹⁷ Secretaries of the military departments ensure all personnel are granted constructive service credit proportionate to the advanced education, training, and experience acquired and per this DODI.¹⁸ An individual awarded entry grade credit and “placed on the active-duty list or reserve active-status list” shall “have an entry grade”

¹⁵ “DOD Directives Division,” Executive Services Directorate, accessed January 14, 2020, <https://www.esd.whs.mil/DD/>.

¹⁶ Department of Defense, *Entry Grade Credit for Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers*, DOD Instruction 1312.03 (Washington, DC: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, 2018), <https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/DD/issuances/dodi/131203p.pdf?ver=2018-12-28-080819-550>.

¹⁷ Department of Defense, 3.

¹⁸ Department of Defense, 4.

chosen “by comparing entry grade credit with the appropriate promotion phase points of the military service and competitive category concerned.”¹⁹

D. DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY ISSUANCES AND GUIDANCE

Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) and Office of the Chief of Naval Operations directives represent the Department of the Navy Issuances and reflect the formal documents that provide lawful order, which establishes U.S. Navy policy, procedures, and requirements.²⁰

The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) issues the U.S. Department of the Navy’s Office of the Chief of Naval Operations Instructions (OPNAVINST). Specifically, OPNAVINST 1420.1B with supplemental naval administrative message (NAVADMIN) 090/17 serves as instruction and regulation for application to the U.S. Navy’s CWO program.²¹

1. OPNAVINST 1420.1B

OPNAVINST 1420.1B, *Enlisted to Officer Commissioning Programs Application Administrative Manual*, dated December 14, 2009, delineates the commissioning program criteria applicable to enlisted personnel.²² Chapter 7, “Limited Duty Officer (LDO) and Chief Warrant Officer (CWO) Programs,” outlines in detail the eligibility requirements and the Navy’s CWO program application roadmap.²³ Eleven years later, OPNAVINST 1420.1B remains unrevised, even in light of the U.S. Navy’s expanded role and pursuit towards organizational effectiveness. In the interim, the CNO publishes NAVADMINs to provide supplemental, superseding, and updated guidance.

¹⁹ Department of Defense, 5.

²⁰ “Department of the Navy Issuances,” Department of the Navy, accessed January 21, 2020, <https://www.secnav.navy.mil/doni/default.aspx>.

²¹ Department of the Navy, “Department of the Navy Issuances.”

²² Department of the Navy, *Enlisted to Officer Commissioning Programs Application Administrative Manual*, OPNAVINST 1420.1B (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2009), 1–1.

²³ Department of the Navy, 7–1.

2. NAVADMINs

NAVADMINs are issued by the CNO to provide policy, guidance, and announcements or supplement, supersede, and update OPNAVINSTs and old policy. In the absence of revising and publishing OPNAVINSTs on an annual basis, NAVADMINs serve as official publication dissemination and take precedence.

NAVADMIN 090/17, *FY-19 Active-Duty Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer In-Service Procurement Boards*, dated April 13, 2017, is a supplemental reference to OPNAVINST 1420.1B, therefore assuming precedence and providing U.S. Navy service members with relevant in-service procurement boards and administrative requirements.²⁴

NAVADMIN 142/19, *FY-21 Active-Duty Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer In-Service Procurement Board*, dated June 27, 2019, represents the official announcement for the solicitation of applicants for the Navy's CWO and LDO programs. In the event there are discrepancies with OPNAVINST 1420.1B, NAVADMIN 142/19 takes precedence.²⁵

3. The LDO and CWO Professional Guidebook

The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook, issued by the Department of the Navy's Bureau of Naval Personnel in 2011, provides guidance and information regarding both the LDO and CWO programs, to include professional occupational standards for each specific designator. The revised edition provides a comprehensive overview of CWO application and selection laws, policy, requirements, and procedures.²⁶ Although the guidebook provides career guidance, it does not provide a career path, stating, "The complexity of LDO/CWO programs and the many

²⁴ Department of the Navy, *FY-19 Active-Duty Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer In-Service Procurement Boards*, NAVADMIN 090/17 (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2017), para 1.

²⁵ Department of the Navy, *FY-21 Active-Duty Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer In-Service Procurement Board*, para 1.

²⁶ Department of the Navy, *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook*, i.

individual, highly specialized designators make it impractical to provide detailed career planning/guidance in this publication.”²⁷

4. The NSW CWO Career Playbook

The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook, is a document first issued by NSW in 2011 and recently revised in 2020.²⁸ The playbook is a compilation of U.S. Navy and NSW issuances, policy, guidance, and sources pertaining to SEAL CWO history, guiding principles, career progression, professional development, personnel record management, promotion boards, and retirement. The intent is to guide an NSW CWO from commissioning to separation from the Navy. Although the document outlines the SEAL CWO career path and encourages varying assignments across NSW, it does not provide a full description of SEAL CWO roles within each assignment.²⁹

E. DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY GUIDANCE

Department of the Army Pamphlet (DA PAM) 600–3, *Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, provides a U.S. Army warrant officer background perspective, outlines utilization policy, criteria for selection of warrant officer positions, and instructions for conversion to the current warrant officer military occupational specialty (MOS) system.³⁰ DA PAM 600-3, an expedited version, dated April 3, 2019, supersedes all previous editions, to include DA PAM 600-3, dated December 3, 2014.

1. DA PAM 600-3

In Chapter 3, “Officer Personnel Management System and Career Management,” paragraph 3–11 outlines warrant officer development changes to flourish the efficacy and

²⁷ Department of the Navy, 5–2.

²⁸ Kelz, *The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook*, 2–3.

²⁹ Kelz, 40–43.

³⁰ Department of the Army, *Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2019), <https://ssilrc.army.mil/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/DA-PAM-600-3-Officer-Professional-Development-and-Career-Management-3-April-2019.pdf>.

professionalism of the warrant officer corps. While not limited to such, Chapter 3 also includes improvements in training, development, assignment (employment), promotion, and retention.³¹ Beyond satisfying the Army's initiative to enhance effectiveness and professionalism, the revised DA PAM identifies several fundamental requisites that align with Field Manual 6-22, Leader Development.

The current DA PAM 600-3 does not account for previously detailed branch overviews and perspectives. Whereas, DA PAM 600-3, dated December 3, 2014, Chapter 16, "Special Forces Branch," provides a comprehensive overview to include, officer and warrant officer selection prerequisites, roles (employment), officer characteristics, developmental positions, SF warrant officer training prerequisites, to include an SF warrant officer development model.³² The current publication primarily focuses on the full spectrum of developmental opportunities while emphasizing the need to broaden future force leaders. Concurrently, "Smartbook DA PAM 600-3"³³ provides an extensive branch and proponent broadening overview for both the SF commissioned officer and warrant officer specialties.³⁴

The *Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, DA PAM 600-3 encourages all officers to read the "DA PAM 600-3 and Smartbook DA PAM 600-3, regardless of branch, functional area, MOS, or career field held," because each resource provides special and useful experiences in the philosophy of the Army and the professional growth of officers.³⁵ "Smartbook DA PAM 600-3" requires access to MilSuite using a

³¹ Department of the Army, 17–18.

³² Department of the Army, *Commissioned Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2014), <https://api.army.mil/e2/c/downloads/376665.pdf>.

³³ Daniel C. Mctigue, "Smartbook Department of the Army Pamphlet 600-3: Special Forces Branch" (unpublished specific guidance, last modified August 6, 2019), (common access card required), <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-378775>.

³⁴ Department of the Army, *Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, 1.

³⁵ Department of the Army, 1.

common access card and provides unpublished and updated branch specific career guidance and information.

2. Smartbook DA PAM 600-3

“Smartbook DA PAM 600-3: SF Branch,” outlines the requisite features of the SF Branch to include a full description of SF warrant officer roles, unique attributes, warrant officer development and assignments, SF warrant officer selection prerequisites, and the SF warrant officer development model that provides a developmental trajectory roadmap.³⁶ In particular, the SF Branch version addresses the information previously outlined in DA PAM 600-3, dated December 3, 2014. It addresses sufficient details about SF warrant officer training prerequisites (e.g., selection) and developmental (e.g., employment) assignments from the detachment to SF Group (brigade equivalent) levels and beyond.

“Smartbook DA PAM 600-3” delineates an SF warrant officer’s application and selection process, providing an illustrated developmental model, and recommends broadening assignment portfolios (employment) from the detachment to battalion level. Guidance encompasses professional education and intensive self-development programs to become an expert in special operations.

3. The Army Warrant Officer 2025 Strategy

In 2016, the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center authored *The Army Warrant Officer 2025 Strategy*.³⁷ The document outlines how future warrant officers are accessed (e.g., selected), developed, and employed as they support the Army in their highly specialized roles across a competitive security environment. The strategy was created and synchronized with the *Army Operating Concept, Force 2025 and Beyond, Human*

³⁶ Mctigue, “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3,” 1, 3, 11.

³⁷ Department of the Army, *The Army Warrant Officer 2025 Strategy: In Support of Force 2025 and Beyond* (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 2016), https://usacac.army.mil/sites/default/files/publications/WO2025_Strategy_20160329.pdf.

Dimension Strategy, and the *Army Leader Development Strategy*.³⁸ Shaping the future Army warrant officer entails exercising a series of concepts and strategies, each of which represents the basis and guiding principles to enable Army synchronization and evolution.

The Army Warrant Officer 2025 Strategy is paramount at a time when current and future Army requirements necessitate the adaptation and flexibility to align with the 2017 National Security Strategy³⁹ and the 2018 National Defense Strategy.⁴⁰ General Richard Clarke, Commander, USSOCOM, further states that our nation faces near-peer adversaries and rogue regimes, which requires the joint force to unite in a collective and moral purpose to compete in the great power arena.⁴¹ Furthermore – in a similar fashion to professional individuals collaborating in the civilian sector – the strategy recognizes the future force must be adaptive and operate as a cohesive team. This vision includes professional warrant officers who inherently possess the character, competence, and commitment to thrive across ever-changing and complex environments. According to the U.S. Army Chief of Staff, General, Mark A. Milley:

The relevance of our Army warrant officer cohort has never been greater. The Army must define the steps necessary to ensure warrant officers are technologically agile, adaptive, and innovative leaders—trusted professionals—who will maintain capability overmatch and effectively manage logistical demands to “*Win in a Complex World*.”⁴²

F. CONGRESSIONAL ANALYSIS

In 2002, the U.S. Congressional Budget Office, in collaboration with the House and Senate Budget Committees, analyzed the management practices for warrant officers across

³⁸ Department of the Army, 11.

³⁹ White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: White House, 2017), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Department of Defense, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2018), <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

⁴¹ Mandy Mayfield, “News from SOFIC: New SOCOM Leader Lays Out Command Priorities,” *National Defense*, May 21, 2019, <https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2019/5/21/new-socom-leaders-lays-out-command-priorities>.

⁴² Department of the Army, *The Army Warrant Officer 2025 Strategy*, i.

the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. In *The Warrant Officer Ranks: Adding Flexibility to Military Personnel Management*, author Richard Fernandez sought to answer questions raised by policymakers, who inquired whether the U.S. DOD should consider enhancing “warrant officer ranks as a tool for attracting and retaining high-quality, skilled individuals.”⁴³ The analysis focuses on the U.S. Army, Navy, and Marine Corps LDO and warrant officer programs, however, it indicates there is little research on warrant officers and that across the U.S. Armed Forces they are the least understood among the officer and enlisted corps. Fernandez and his team provide remarkable research for the Senate Armed Services Committee, yet, fall short of providing recommendations based on nonpartisan analysis clauses.

Nearly 20 years later, given the implementation of Force Optimization, NSW’s roles across the DOD have intensified and senior leaders envision significant change to their organizational structure. Serious concerns continue to exist in light of the analysis presented to the Senate Armed Services Committee illuminating the following:

The Navy selects its warrant officers from among enlisted personnel late in their careers and generally does not give them additional training before they assume their new duties. Most of those selected are in grade E-7 (chief petty officer); the rest have advanced even farther. Although the Navy bypasses the lowest warrant officer pay grade, appointing most selectees to W-2, a late-career transfer to the warrant ranks yields only a small initial pay advantage over enlisted service for someone with good prospects for promotion.⁴⁴

G. ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Much research has been conducted to suggest ways of utilizing the CWO program more efficiently.⁴⁵ However, there are few academic papers written by military officers themselves regarding the selection and employment of SOF warrant officers. Of those

⁴³ Richard L. Fernandez, *The Warrant Officer Ranks: Adding Flexibility to Military Personnel Management*, (Washington, DC: Congress of the United States, Congressional Budget Office, 2002), 1.

⁴⁴ Fernandez, 5–6.

⁴⁵ Walter F. Manual, “Who Becomes A Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer? An Examination of Differences of Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officers in the Navy” (master’s thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2006), 11, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/2824>.

publicized, each provides excellent analysis and sound claims to support their theses. Focusing on qualitative and quantitative analysis across their respective military service department. Of note, CW4 Michael Varner examines the SF warrant officer recruitment and retention trends through the lens of an experienced Army SF warrant officer and the effects at the SF Regimental level.⁴⁶ Varner acknowledges that the SF Regiment was experiencing a decrease in its warrant officer recruitment and retention rates and if not addressed, would continue to decline, therefore, providing sound recommendations for the future sustainment of the regiment's warrant officer corps. Similar to Varner's acknowledgment, the NSW Officer Community Manager (Bureau of Naval Personnel 311D) seeks to examine how to better select and employ SEAL CWOs in the midst of evolving Force Optimization efforts.

In addition to Varner's 2015 academic research, U.S. naval officers have conducted research analysis addressing the study of prior enlisted service on Navy officer performance⁴⁷ and a comparative analysis between Navy LDOs and CWOs.⁴⁸ In 1998, Lieutenant Mark Astrella compared selected measures of performance between U.S. Navy commissioned officers who had prior-enlisted service with those who had no prior-enlisted service.⁴⁹ Astrella's framework measures U.S. Navy commissioned officer programs, to include the CWO and analyzes reasons why enlisted personnel choose to become an officer, but the framework lacks a comprehensive selection and employment analysis of NSW's CWOs. Astrella's approach focuses solely on the U.S. Navy's commissioned officer career spectrum and provides a limited analysis of the CWO program. His study

⁴⁶ Michael G. Varner, "The Recruitment and Retention of the 180A: The Special Forces Warrant Officer" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2015), v, <http://hdl.handle.net/10945/45269>.

⁴⁷ Mark G. Astrella, "An Analysis of the Effect of Prior-Enlisted Service on Navy Officer Performance" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 1998), v, <https://calhoun.nps.edu/handle/10945/32679>.

⁴⁸ Manual, "Who Becomes A Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer," v.

⁴⁹ Astrella, "An Analysis of the Effect of Prior-Enlisted Service on Navy Officer Performance," 2-3.

addresses CWO prerequisites and outlines a contributing factor for an enlistee's desire to commission is upward mobility.⁵⁰

Of the work this chapter analyzes, Lieutenant Walter Manual's 2006 LDO and CWO academic study aims extensively towards identifying characteristic variances and serves as the most comprehensive U.S. Navy research.⁵¹ His logistic regression analysis results reveal that age, education, race, and ethnicity characteristics are significantly different between the LDO and CWO communities.⁵² The author also details the U.S. Navy CWO program and cites its mission statement, while briefly encompassing the U.S. Army warrant officer program. Beyond these immediate benefits, the analysis illuminates future recommendations relevant at the time of the research and captures datasets across the U.S. Navy at large from 1990 through 2005.

These authors present valid research questions and use effective methods to relate them to the technical expertise, maturity, and experience of warrant officers for their specific military service. The papers each address a service-specific warrant officer framework, however they do not address NSW CWO selection and employment. In short, the quality of previous research provides this study with a fundamental foundation to accurately analyze the future of SEAL CWO selection and employment, which will contribute to the improvement of NSW's organizational effectiveness.

H. ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The concept of "effectiveness," when applied in the context of measuring an organization or coalition's effectiveness, has left scholars and theorists grappling with an accurate definition of the term. In "A Competing Values Approach to Organizational Effectiveness," Robert Quinn and John Rohrbaugh provide an extensive research analysis and model in an era where the term, organizational effectiveness was convincingly elusive,

⁵⁰ Astrella, 16.

⁵¹ Manual, "Who Becomes A Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer," v.

⁵² Manual, v.

lacked a set of constructs to comprise a theory, and lacked an accepted definition.⁵³ This thesis contends organizational effectiveness should be defined through the lens of Quinn and Rohrbaugh, who assert “organizational effectiveness is a value-based judgment about the performance of an organization.”⁵⁴ Thus this research embraces the Quinn-Rohrbaugh definition and their competing values framework. The inability to apply a scholarly definition and model when addressing the auspice of this research would derogate the question and present potential vulnerabilities. It is therefore, necessary to adequately define Quinn and Rohrbaugh’s definition and model and explain the correlation with the SEAL CWO program.

Quinn and Rohrbaugh present a logical definition and delineate a set of value-based criteria consisting of individual values, hierarchical positions, unit type, external and internal perspectives, and an array of other factors.⁵⁵ The authors conclude the simplistic definition will be applicable in varying degrees and by different coalitions. In essence, the value-based organizational structure criteria provide the judgmental framework, therefore, empowering organizations the latitude to openly interpret organizational effectiveness.

Three sets of competing values and sixteen effectiveness criteria represent the fundamental framework, which together form four distinct models of effectiveness.⁵⁶ The first set of values are dependent on whether an organization’s focus is internal and employee centric or external, focusing on overall organizational benefits. The second set of values illuminate organizational flexibility vice stability or control, while the third set of values identify competing values, from an emphasis on organizational means and ends. The values and effectiveness criteria represent four distinct models that are categorized as (1) human relations model, (2) open system model, (3) rational goal model, and (4) the internal process model. Quinn and Rohrbaugh acknowledge that organizations may transverse from one model to another based on the importance of values and effectiveness

⁵³ Quinn and Rohrbaugh, “A Competing Values Approach to Organizational Effectiveness,” 122–140.

⁵⁴ Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 138.

⁵⁵ Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 139.

⁵⁶ Quinn and Rohrbaugh, 130–138.

criteria changing over time or adapting with different situations. Figure 1 depicts Quinn and Rohrbaugh's competing values framework.

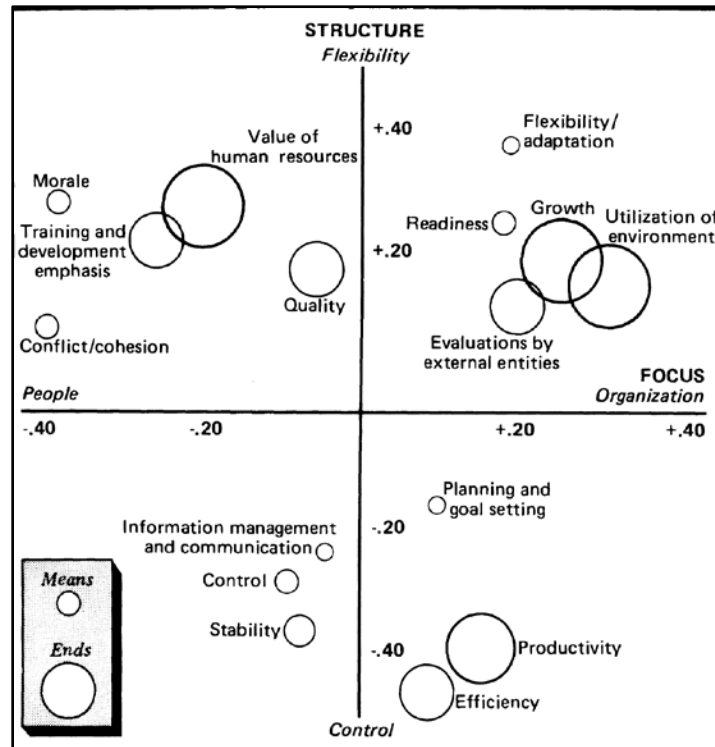


Figure 1. Competing Values Framework⁵⁷

Where do the SEAL CWOs belong within a professional organization such as NSW, and where do they fall in the competing values framework? Richard Daft, an organizational and management theorist further expounds on the Quinn and Rohrbaugh competing values approach to provide an answer. Daft asserts that by embracing a stakeholder approach, the organization focuses on a group of people that hold a stake in the performance of an organization, which in turn enhances reciprocal interdependence, while grouping initiatives for ease of access and adjustments.⁵⁸ Therefore, as stakeholders,

⁵⁷ Source: Quinn and Rohrbaugh, "A Competing Values Approach to Organizational Effectiveness," 131.

⁵⁸ Richard L. Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design* (Mason, OH: Thomson Learning, 2003), 27–28.

SEAL CWOs aide in fulfilling the organization's strategy, forming the structure, driving the processes, and determining NSW's organizational success or failure.

The authors contend that this research falls within the human relations model, as Figure 1 depicts in the upper left quadrant, which places organizational focus internally on its people, the stakeholders, while providing structural flexibility. The U.S. military, and in particular SOF, continually strive to mentor subordinates and facilitate cohesive teams that are applicable to understanding self and others, managing conflict, and communicating effectively. Therefore, by defining the SEAL CWO's value to NSW and improving the program's selection and employment, NSW will enhance the effectiveness criteria of quality and value of their human resources or stakeholders, thus contributing to the enhancement of NSW's organizational effectiveness.

III. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

A. OVERVIEW

This chapter divided into nine sections provides a comparative analysis of the current selection criteria and employment utilization of two groups of warrant officers within USSOCOM. These include U.S. Navy SEAL CWOs and Army SF warrant officers. This section provides a chapter overview. Sections B and C describe the U.S. Navy's and SEAL CWO application requirements for selection. Sections D and E define the U.S. Army's and SF warrant officer application requirements for eligible selection. Section F delivers a selection comparison between the two programs. Sections G and H examine the employment of the two groups within their respective special operations communities and Section I provides an employment comparison.

B. U.S. NAVY CWO APPLICATION AND SELECTION REQUIREMENTS

To apply for the U.S. Navy's CWO program, applicants must possess U.S. citizenship, have a physical fitness assessment score of satisfactory-medium or higher, and have zero drug or alcohol incidents, felonies, misdemeanors (outside of minor traffic violations), courts-martial convictions, or other offenses resulting in non-judicial punishment under the Uniform Code of Military Justice within three years of applying.⁵⁹ In addition, the *Enlisted to Officer Commissioning Programs Application Administrative Manual* states that a positive recommendation from the applicant's commanding officer and a high school diploma or general education development diploma is required. Applicants must also pass a sea duty screening, be assignable to any location in or outside the U.S., and receive three interview appraisals from active duty naval officers, who possess the minimum rank of O-3 or CWO3.⁶⁰ According to the *FY-21 Active-Duty Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer In-Service Procurement Board*, applicants

⁵⁹ Department of the Navy, *Enlisted to Officer Commissioning Programs Application Administrative Manual*, 7-6-7-7.

⁶⁰ Department of the Navy, *FY-21 Active-Duty Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer In-Service Procurement Board*, paras 4-7.

must have at least 14 and no more than 20 years of time-in-service with a minimum pay grade of E-6, but must already be selected for advancement to E-7, and a maximum grade of E-8 or frocked E-9. Those who are selected, commission as a CWO2. However, personnel who have advanced to E-9 with between 14 and 22 years of time-in-service are also eligible and if selected, commission as a CWO3.

Among eligible applicants, the best qualified candidates are then selected by a board consisting of naval officers and CWOs from across the line and staff corps.⁶¹ The occupational diversity of these appointed officers and CWOs provides the selection board with members who possess the necessary knowledge of the respective naval occupational specialties to which they are applying within the CWO program. Favorable consideration is given to those who possess higher education, professional military education, specialization, needed skill sets, and have performed well in assignments directly supporting overseas contingency operations, irregular warfare, and the National Defense Strategy.⁶² According to the Deputy CNO's "Selection Board Guidance," the following is to be adhered to by the CWO selection board:

Among the fully qualified applicants, you must recommend for selection the best qualified applicants within their respective competitive category. Proven and sustained superior performance in leadership positions in difficult and challenging assignments is definitive measure of fitness for selection. Furthermore, successful performance and leadership in combat conditions demonstrate exceptional selection potential and should be given special consideration. Each board member shall apply this guidance when deliberating and voting.⁶³

⁶¹ Department of the Navy, *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook*, 3–9.

⁶² Department of the Navy, "Selection Board Guidance," in *Precept Convening a Selection Board to Consider Applicants for Participation in the FY-21 Active-Duty Navy and Reserve Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer In-Service Procurement Programs*, (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2020), B-1-B-3, https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/boards/administrative/ldo_cwo/Documents/FY21/FY-21%20LDO%20CWO%20ISP%20BOARD%20PRECEPT%20CO%20SIGNED.pdf.

⁶³ Department of the Navy, B-1.

C. NAVY SEAL CWO SELECTION REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the U.S. Navy’s CWO application requirements listed in Section B of this chapter, to apply for the Special Warfare Technician (715X) designator or SEAL CWO program, applicants must fulfill further prerequisites and qualifications. These include:

1. Holding a minimum rank of E-7.
2. Designation as a SEAL/Navy Enlisted Classification (NEC) O26A.
3. Completing an assignment as a leading chief petty officer (LCPO) of either a SEAL platoon, SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV) platoon, Special Reconnaissance Team (SRT) platoon, or Naval Special Warfare Development Group (NSWDG) team.⁶⁴

Additionally, the “FY-21 Active Duty LDO/CWO Primary Discrete Requirements” states that personnel who are E-9 in rank should receive “favorable consideration” if they fulfill the previously mentioned requirements, in addition to completing an assignment as a troop LCPO within a SEAL Team, SDV Team, or SRT and serve in at least one of the following positions: training LCPO, operations LCPO, staff department LCPO, or senior enlisted advisor within a Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) or joint task force.

The SEAL CWO program values applicants who have operational leadership experience and hold a range of supervisory qualifications to include, but not regulated to: dive supervisor, helicopter rope suspension techniques/cast master, static line jumpmaster, military freefall jumpmaster, master training specialist, and range safety officer designations.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Department of the Navy, “FY-21 Active Duty LDO/CWO Primary Discrete Requirements,” in *FY-21 Active Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Selection Board Quotas*, (official memorandum, Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2019), 5, [https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/boards/administrative/ldo_cwo/Documents/FY21/FY-21%20Discrete%20Requirements%20\(Active\).pdf](https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/boards/administrative/ldo_cwo/Documents/FY21/FY-21%20Discrete%20Requirements%20(Active).pdf).

⁶⁵ Department of the Navy, 5.

D. U.S. ARMY WARRANT OFFICER APPLICATION AND SELECTION REQUIREMENTS

The *Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, DA PAM 600-3, defines an Army warrant officer as “a self-aware and adaptive technical expert, combat leader, trainer, and advisor.”⁶⁶ The U.S. Army Recruiting Command delineates all applicants must meet U.S. Army administrative requirements and minimum warrant officer MOS prerequisites.⁶⁷ The Army Recruiting Command states further the prime candidate for warrant officer has five to eight years of active federal service (AFS) and meets all other prerequisites. Applicants have an option to apply regardless of the AFS but all technician specialties (e.g., Special Forces) require a waiver if the applicant has 12-years or more of AFS. All-inclusive, applicants must possess U.S. citizenship and have a general technical score of 110 or higher, be a high school graduate or hold a general education development diploma, possess a secret-level security clearance, and initiate a request for a top-secret security clearance.⁶⁸ The aforementioned administrative requirements are non-waivable.

Notably, physical fitness is a critical component of U.S. Army readiness, and fitness levels must be maintained and consistently challenged to ensure applicants are commensurate with Army Regulation 600-9 height/weight standards. Therefore, an applicant must be physically fit and successfully pass the standard three-event Army Physical Fitness Test or six-event Army Combat Fitness Test. Concurrently, each applicant must pass the commissioned appointment physical for technicians, have at least 12-months remaining on their enlisted contract in accordance with AFS, and be less than 46-years of age.⁶⁹ Age, AFS, and expiration of term of service waivers are applicable, but must be

⁶⁶ Department of the Army, *Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, 4.

⁶⁷ “Warrant Officer Prerequisites and Duty Description: 180A – Special Forces Warrant Officer,” U.S. Army Recruiting Command, accessed August 26, 2020, <https://recruiting.army.mil/ISO/AWOR/180A/>.

⁶⁸ U.S. Army Recruiting Command, “Warrant Officer Prerequisites and Duty Description: 180A – Special Forces Warrant Officer.”

⁶⁹ U.S. Army Warrant Officer Recruiting, *Warrant Officer Applicant Brief* (Fort Knox, KY: United States Army Recruiting Command, 2018), <https://recruiting.army.mil/Portals/15/Documents/WO/WO%20Brief%2030%20May%2018.pdf>.

requested and endorsed before submitting an application packet. Figure 2 depicts the U.S. Army warrant officer recruiting administrative requirements, which focuses on “recruiting highly qualified in-service applicants who demonstrate character, competence, and commitment ... required to ‘Win in a Complex World.’”⁷⁰



U.S. Army Warrant Officer Recruiting
EST. 1918

Administrative Requirements

1. US Citizenship **(No Waiver)**
2. General Technical (GT) Score of 110 or higher **(No Waiver)**
3. High School Graduate or have a GED **(No Waiver)**
4. FINAL Secret or Top Secret Security Clearance **(No INTERIM; No Waiver)**
5. Must Have ≥ 12 Months Remaining on Enlistment Contract **(*ETP Avail.)**
6. Pass Commissioning Physical for Tech or Flight Physical for Aviators **(*Waiver/ETP Avail.)**
7. Age: Technicians < 46 yrs / Aviators < 33 yrs at time packet is boarded **(*ETP Avail.)**
8. Active Federal Service: <12 yrs at time the DA61 is signed by applicant **(*ETP Avail.)**
9. Pass the Standard 3-event Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) and Meet Height/Weight Standards

- WAIVERS/ETPs ARE GRANTED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS UNDER EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES AND PROCESSED ONE-AT-A-TIME (NOT INCLUSIVE). APPLICANTS SHOULD BACKWARD PLAN FOR THE SUBMISSION OF THEIR PACKET FROM THE 1ST DAY OF THEIR DESIRED BOARD, ADDING THE MAXIMUM PROCESSING TIME FOR EACH WAIVER

- SISTER SERVICE/USAR/NG/AGR APPLICANTS ARE CONSIDERED A NEW ACCESSIONS WHEN THEY ENTER ACTIVE DUTY. SINGLE APPLICANTS WITH CUSTODY OF MINOR CHILDREN (UNDER 18) OR DISABLED CHILDREN (OVER 18) ARE NOT ELIGIBLE TO APPLY

U.S. ARMY

Figure 2. U.S. Army Warrant Officer Recruiting Administrative Requirements⁷¹

⁷⁰ U.S. Army Warrant Officer Recruiting, 2.

⁷¹ Source: U.S. Army Warrant Officer Recruiting, *Warrant Officer Applicant Brief*, 5.

E. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES WARRANT OFFICER SELECTION REQUIREMENTS

Army warrant officers are characterized as single-track, highly specialized military officers who provide quality advice, counsel, and solutions to support the command, and are capable of executing policy and managing the Army's systems.⁷² The SF warrant officer program values applicants who possess the following: operational experience with documented superior performance, unique attributes to solve complex political-military problems, excellent interpersonal and cross-cultural communication skills, and are adaptive, self-confident team members who can operate individually or in closely knit small teams as leaders.⁷³ These unique attributes require unquestionable moral and ethical courage and unresolved physical, mental, and spiritual fitness, which are reflective of SF warrant officers, a population that continually capitalizes on their experiences, training, and organizational culture. As the "Smartbook DA PAM 600-3" succinctly notes, Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) represents the premier DOD force designated to conduct special warfare (SW), which entails specially selected, trained, and educated Soldiers who are capable of shaping foreign, political, and military environments. These are crucial aspects of a force that carries out SW campaigns, which *Army Doctrine Publication Army Special Operations*, ADP 3-05 defines as "lethal and non-lethal actions taken by a specially trained and educated force that has a deep understanding of cultures and foreign language."⁷⁴ SW capabilities mitigate uncertainty by providing the U.S. with a self-contained force capable of conducting unconventional warfare, foreign internal defense, stability operations, and counterterrorism.⁷⁵

In addition to the U.S. Army's warrant officer application requirements listed in Section D of this chapter, to apply for the SF warrant officer (180A) program, applicants

⁷² Department of the Army, *Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, 7.

⁷³ Mctigue, "Smartbook DA PAM 600-3," 5.

⁷⁴ Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Publication Army Special Operations*, ADP 3-05 (Washington, DC: Department of the Army 2019), 1-3, [https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/ARN18909_ADAP%203-05%20C1%20FINAL%20WEB\(2\).pdf](https://armypubs.army.mil/epubs/DR_pubs/DR_a/pdf/web/ARN18909_ADAP%203-05%20C1%20FINAL%20WEB(2).pdf).

⁷⁵ Department of the Army, 1-3.

must also fulfill further prerequisites and qualifications. The U.S. Army SF warrant officer program mandates all applicants be SF qualified and possess at least one Career Management Field (CMF) 18 MOS.⁷⁶ According to “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3,” SF Branch section:

The primary recruiters for new accessions are SF warrant officers. Individuals meeting MOS 180A prerequisites submit an application packet through the United States Army Recruiting Command ... where a centralized warrant officer selection board will select the best-qualified applicants based on the needs of the Army.⁷⁷

The minimum prerequisites outlined on the U.S. Army Recruiting Command official website include:

1. Must be a staff sergeant (E-6) or above.
2. Possess a minimum of 36-months experience on a Special Forces Operational Detachment-Alpha (SFOD-A) documented on a DA Form 2166-8 (non-commissioned officer evaluation report).
3. Have a current DA Form 330 (within one year of the start date of the desired selection board) with at least a 1/1 language proficiency.
4. Meet the medical fitness standards for SF duty and commission within 12-months of application submission.
5. Obtain the minimum letters of recommendation from the following: SF Group commander (O-6) or authorized representative, SF command chief warrant officer (CCWO), SF battalion commander (O-5), and SF company commander (O-4).⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Mctigue, “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3,” 18.

⁷⁷ Mctigue, 17.

⁷⁸ U.S. Army Recruiting Command, “Warrant Officer Prerequisites and Duty Description: 180A – Special Forces Warrant Officer.”

Additionally, applicants “serving outside an operational SF Group must receive a letter of endorsement from the gaining SF Group Commander indicated or CCWO.”⁷⁹ The “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3” further expounds that applicants possess the Achilles Dagger qualification and perform associated tasks within 24-months of applying to the accession board.⁸⁰ The Smartbook also notes all SF warrant officer applicants be Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape Level C (High Risk) qualified before attending the Warrant Officer Technical Tactical Certification Course.

Holistically, the SF warrant officer cohort recognizes potential candidates as leaders first, who are disciplined, mature, experienced and knowledgeable of SF SW core missions, culturally astute, and physically fit.⁸¹ In addition to displaying these unique attributes, the SF warrant officer applicant selection process is done in concert with respective leadership teams to ensure the regiment is selecting the most qualified individuals.⁸² Figure 3 depicts the U.S. Army SF warrant officer training prerequisites and provides a broad delineation to active duty SF officers who aspire to transition to the 180A program.

⁷⁹ U.S. Army Recruiting Command, “Warrant Officer Prerequisites and Duty Description: 180A – Special Forces Warrant Officer.”

⁸⁰ Mctigue, “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3,” 19.

⁸¹ Mctigue, 5.

⁸² Mctigue, 19.

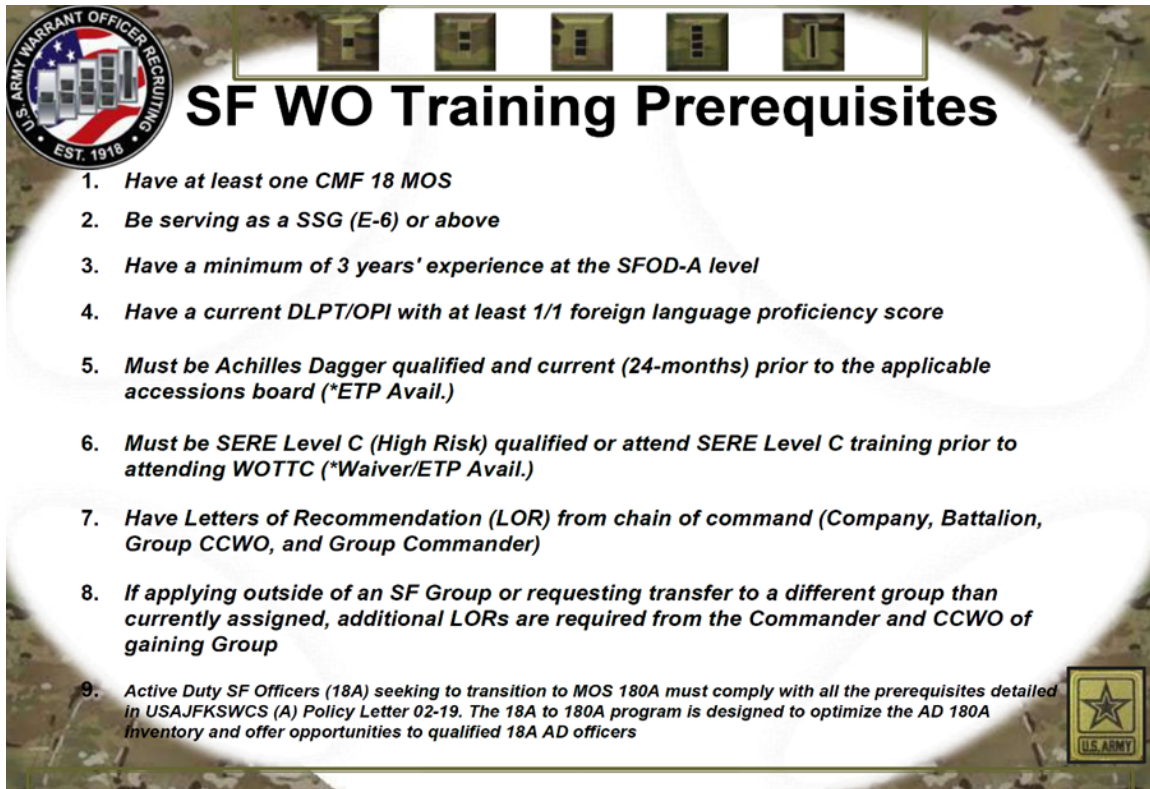


Figure 3. U.S. Army SF Warrant Officer Training Prerequisites⁸³

F. SELECTION COMPARISON

Analysis of SEAL CWO and Army SF warrant officer selection reveals differences in the following requirements: enlisted time-in-service or AFS, minimum rank, operational experience, language proficiency, advanced training qualifications, and letters of recommendation. More specifically, NSW prefers a more senior and operationally experienced candidate with a minimum pay grade of E-7 whereas Army SF selects from candidates who are E-6 in grade. Additionally, Army SF's advanced training qualifications requirement is narrower in scope compared to NSW's desire for SEAL applicants to possess a wide range of certifications. Lastly, the Army SF warrant officer program mandates language proficiency while the SEAL CWO program does not. Figure 4 provides a comparison and displays these differences in the selection criteria of SEAL CWOs and Army SF warrant officers.

⁸³ Adapted from Mctigue, "Smartbook DA PAM 600-3," 18–19.

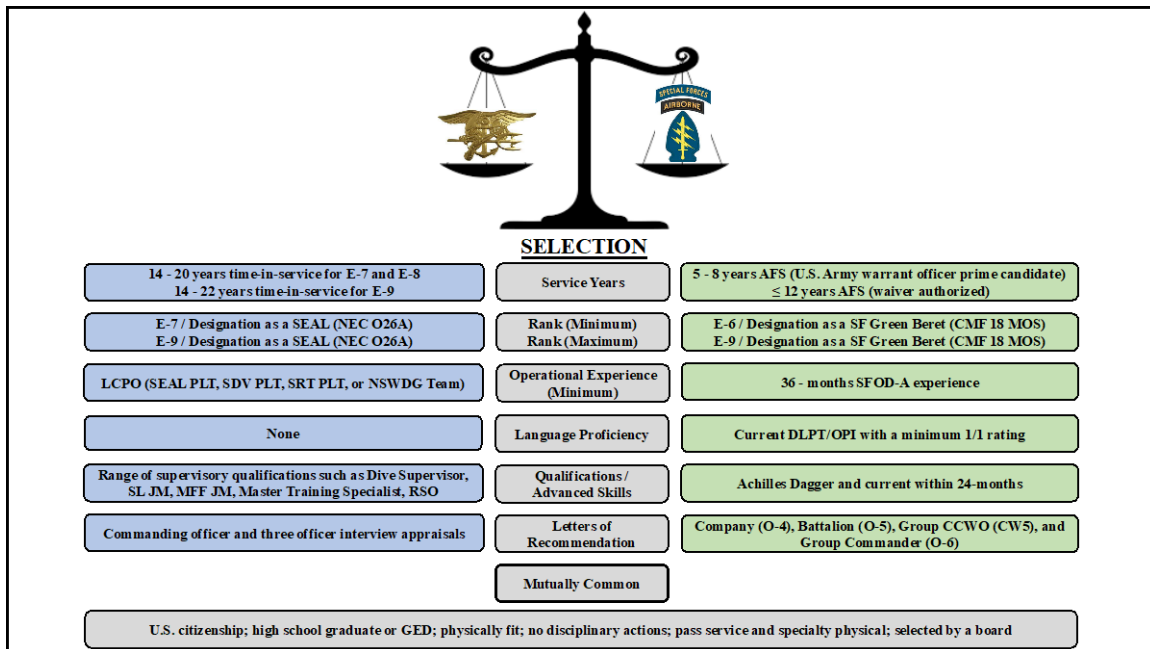


Figure 4. SEAL CWO and SF Warrant Officer Selection Comparison

G. NAVY SEAL CWO EMPLOYMENT

While *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook* does not provide a CWO career path, it does delegate the responsibility to individual designators, stating:

The complexity of LDO/CWO programs and the many individual, highly specialized designators make it impractical to provide detailed career planning/guidance in this publication. It is not possible to define “career enhancing billets” or a single career pattern that will fit all LDOs or CWOs. Some designators are sea-intensive, while others have limited or no sea duty billets ... In short, the nature/diversity of their duties makes it impossible for LDOs or CWOs to have established career paths.⁸⁴

The guidebook does, however, describe the U.S. Navy CWO’s intended employment as that of technical specialists, filling repetitive or successive tours that are narrow in scope. Additionally, they may also assume positions as division officers (DIVO),

⁸⁴ Department of the Navy, *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook*, 5–2.

department heads (DH), or officers in charge (OIC).⁸⁵ Paralleling this intended utilization, Figure 5 depicts the FY-21 SECNAV approved general CWO career path for the Special Warfare Technician (715X) designator, which values DIVO at-sea tours and repetitive, technical, and tactical assignments.⁸⁶ Further aligning with the above descriptive purpose and career progression, *The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook* portrays the SEAL CWO's unique functional role as that of a commissioned, technical expert, employed in support of the U.S. Navy, USSOCOM, and NSW with the ability to remain or "hover on station" for repetitive tours.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Department of the Navy, 2-3-2-4.

⁸⁶ "Community Briefs," Navy Personnel Command, last modified January 17, 2020, <https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/boards/activedutyofficer/Pages/CommunityBriefs.aspx>.

⁸⁷ Kelz, *The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook*, 19.



Chief Warrant Officer (Surface) Career Progression

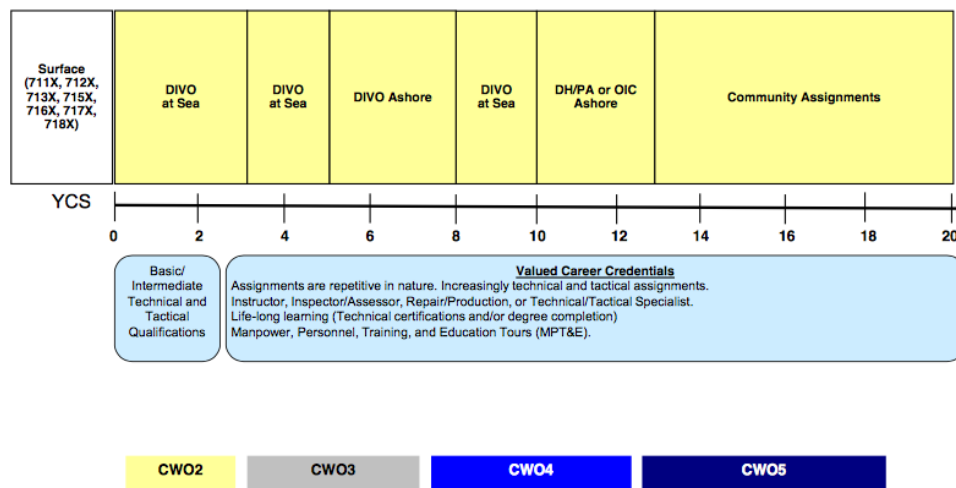


Figure 5. FY-21 SECNAV Approved CWO (Surface) General Career Progression⁸⁸

Regarding roles and responsibilities, the NSW CWO Playbook describes their primary responsibility as continuously demonstrating value to the team and that by serving in a variety of NSW assignments, the SEAL CWO acquires greater skills and experience to prepare him for advancement in rank.⁸⁹ Within NSW, Special Warfare Technician's serve as tactical and technical experts who fulfill a wide range of roles and responsibilities across the force with their primary assignments in the operations, training, and special programs departments.⁹⁰ The generic occupational descriptions of each SEAL CWO assignment are found in the "Navy Officer Billet Classification (NOBC) Codes" within the

⁸⁸ Source: Navy Personnel Command, "Community Briefs."

⁸⁹ Kelz, *The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook*, 41.

⁹⁰ "LDO/CWO Career Pattern Sheets/Guidebook," Navy Personnel Command, last modified October 24, 2019, https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/officer/communitymanagers/active/ldo_cwo/Pages/Career%20Path%20Sheets.aspx.

Manual of Navy Officer Manpower and Personnel Classifications.⁹¹ It should be noted that these are only broad, general descriptions of the positional roles and do not cover the entirety of the job's duties and responsibilities.

In 2016, to best support and meet NSW force requirements, commander, Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC) established the NSW CWO Council with the force CWO5 (FCWO) presiding as the chairman.⁹² The council's purpose is to ensure the proper employment, career progression, detailing recommendations, and assignment of SEAL CWOs. Additionally, the FCWO coordinates with and through the NSW assistant officer detailer to ensure the appropriate placement of SEAL CWOs within NSW.⁹³ The following are the employment assignments and responsibilities of the separate, successive CWO grades:

Upon commissioning, CWO2s primarily fulfill their DIVO tours by serving as an operations or training warrant officer at a SEAL Team, SDV Team, SRT, or within NSWDC.⁹⁴ NOBC code 9293, SEAL officer, provides the general job description and duties, which states the responsibilities include: planning and conducting NSW within maritime environments and executing dive, military freefall, static line, and demolition operations.⁹⁵ Additionally, CWO2s fulfill duties in accordance with NSW missions as indicated in naval war publications. In this capacity, they advise the commanding officer on command readiness, manage the command's training cycle, oversee readiness

⁹¹ Department of the Navy, *Manual of Navy Officer Manpower and Personnel Classifications: Volume I Major Code Structures*, NAVPERS 15839I (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, October, 2020), <https://www.public.navy.mil/bupers-npc/reference/noc/NOOCSVOL1/Documents/Entire%20Manual%20I%2073.pdf>.

⁹² Department of the Navy, "Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Council Charter," (San Diego, CA: Naval Special Warfare Command, 2016), 1–2.

⁹³ Kelz, *The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook*, 23.

⁹⁴ Brian Glenn, "NSW Chief Warrant Officer Information Brief," (unpublished PowerPoint presentation, December 6, 2019), on file with author.

⁹⁵ Department of the Navy, *Manual of Navy Officer Manpower and Personnel Classifications*, C-112.

requirements, align training budget and resourcing priorities, and coordinate with outside entities for training and exercise events.⁹⁶

According to the “7150 (SEAL) Career Path,”⁹⁷ select CWO3s may also fill operations and training assignments at SEAL Teams, SRTs, and within NSWDCG, as described in the preceding paragraph. As CWO3s acquire more experience, they progress to assistant DH positions where they may serve as training officers in a Training Detachment (TRADET) under the 3290 NOBC code. In this role, they develop, administer, and direct training for SEAL commands.⁹⁸ Additionally, they may serve on operations staffs or manage programs for a major command such as an NSW Group (NSWG) or fulfill training warrant officer assignments at the Naval Special Warfare Center (NSWCEN) under NOBC codes 3250 and 3251; developing, organizing, and conducting training, demonstrations, or seminars on advanced, technical, academic, or professional subjects. Lastly, they have the latitude to serve outside of NSW on a TSOC staff as a strategic plans officer (NOBC 9086).

Special Warfare Technicians begin serving in DH roles once they reach the rank of CWO4. They primarily fill these roles as operations, training, programs, or acquisitions and requirements warrant officers on the major command staffs of a NSWG, NSWDCG, or at NSWC.⁹⁹ They may also serve in a DH capacity at a TRADET as the operations or training officer or within the NSWCEN under NOBC code 9420 as a detachment OIC. As an OIC, CWO4s initiate and direct detachment operations in support of NSWCEN’s mission by ensuring effective performance and high morale from personnel and

⁹⁶ Glenn, “NSW Chief Warrant Officer Information Brief.”

⁹⁷ Glenn, “NSW Chief Warrant Officer Information Brief.”

⁹⁸ Department of the Navy, *Manual of Navy Officer Manpower and Personnel Classifications*, C-45-C-46.

⁹⁹ Glenn, “NSW Chief Warrant Officer Information Brief.”

maintaining compliance with policies, directives, and instructions.¹⁰⁰ In order to promote to CWO5, a CWO4 should complete a DH staff tour at a major command or NSWC.¹⁰¹

The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook states that the rank of CWO5 is the pinnacle for a Navy CWO. In NSW, the CWO5 serves as a major command CWO at a NSWG or as the FCWO at NSWC. His responsibilities include advising the command's staff, managing programs, advising and mentoring junior CWOs, and ensuring proper assignment and utilization of NSW's CWOs.¹⁰² Figure 6 depicts the SEAL CWO assignments and career path.

¹⁰⁰ Department of the Navy, *Manual of Navy Officer Manpower and Personnel Classifications*, C-117.

¹⁰¹ Kelz, *The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook*, 41.

¹⁰² Kelz, 41.



UNCLASSIFIED

715X (SEAL) Career Path

Years of Service Accession Zone								
14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	33
CWO2 DIVO	CWO3 ASST DEPT HD	CWO4 DEPT HD	CWO5 CCWO					
SEAL TEAM - OPERATIONS WARRANT OFFICER SRT -TROOP OPS WARRANT OFFICER NSWDG -TRNG AND OPPS WARRANT OFFICER -PROGRAM AND CFT OIC -ADV TRNG DIVO SDVT -TRNG AND OPS WARRANT OFFICER	SEAL TEAM - OPERATIONS WARRANT OFFICER SRT -TROOP OPS WARRANT OFFICER TRADET -DIVISION OFFICER NSWCEN -TRNG WARRANT OFFICER AND AOIC NSWG -CURRENT AND FUTURE OPS CWO -LOGSU OPS OFFICER -NSWC CDC PROGRAM MANAGER NSWDG -TROOP AOIC -OPS OFFICER -TRNG OIC -MOBILITY DEPARTMENT HEAD TSOC (SOC PAC) -OPERATIONS WARRANT OFFICER	NSWC -OPS AND TRNG WARRANT OFFICER -ACQUISITIONS/REQUIREMENTS OFF NSWG -OPERATIONS WARRANT OFFICER SRT -OPERATIONS WARRANT OFFICER -TRNG WARRANT OFFICER NSWDG -OPERATIONS OFFICER -PROGRAM OIC -ADV/BASIC TRNG OFFICER TRADET -OPERATIONS OFFICER -TRNG OFFICER NSWCEN -DETACHMENT OIC CENSEALSWCC -NSW CWO PROGRAM OFFICER	NSWC -FORCE CWO NSWG -COMMAND CWO					

UNCLASSIFIED

Figure 6. 715X (SEAL) CWO Career Path¹⁰³

H. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES WARRANT OFFICER EMPLOYMENT

The *Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, DA PAM 600-3, states U.S. Army warrant officers “refine their technical expertise and develop their leadership and management skills through tiered progressive assignment and education.”¹⁰⁴ SF warrant officers represent seasoned service members who excel in SW, along with the ability to adapt and perform as staff officers in the sphere of operations and intelligence fusion.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰³ Adapted from Glenn, “NSW Chief Warrant Officer Information Brief.”

¹⁰⁴ Department of the Army, *Officer Professional Development and Career Management*, 16.

¹⁰⁵ Mctigue, “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3,” 3.

In ADP 3–05, *Special Operations*, SW campaigns aim to combine both “lethal and nonlethal actions taken by a specially trained and educated force that has a deep understanding of cultures and ... the ability to build and fight alongside indigenous combat formations in permissive, uncertain, or hostile environments.”¹⁰⁶ Therefore, SF warrant officers must continue to fill warrant officer positions across the ARSOF formation with the best and brightest Soldiers, which USSOCOM and U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) desire at all levels across an ever-changing operational continuum. For this reason, SF warrant officers advise commanders on all aspects of special operations and exert influence through relevance, credibility, and value.¹⁰⁷ The following are specific characteristics and responsibilities of the separate, successive SF warrant officer grades:

Warrant officer ones (WO1), chief warrant officer twos (CW2), and select CW3s serve on an “SFOD-A primarily as the assistant detachment commander (ADC) and can also serve as the detachment commander (in the absence of a commander) or commander of specialized teams.”¹⁰⁸ The ADC’s primary responsibility is to ensure the preservation of institutional knowledge and continuity of leadership on the detachment. Additionally, the SF warrant officer serving in this capacity provides a level of consistency to the SFOD-A that is not feasible through officers (e.g., detachment commanders) who transition off the detachment after their key developmental 24-month timeline.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, the “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3” delineates as the ADC gains expertise in special operations, the focus transitions to integrating SOF across the joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational (JIIM) environment. Although ADC’s primarily serve on SFOD-As, they may serve as subject matter experts on advanced special operations skill detachments specializing in sophisticated methods of infiltration, exfiltration, or developmental

¹⁰⁶ Department of the Army, *Army Doctrine Publication Army Special Operations*, 1–3.

¹⁰⁷ Mctigue, “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3,” 3.

¹⁰⁸ U.S. Army Recruiting Command, “Warrant Officer Prerequisites and Duty Description: 180A – Special Forces Warrant Officer.”

¹⁰⁹ Mctigue, “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3,” 7.

assignments on an SFOD-G or SFOD-E.¹¹⁰ Consequently, the Smartbook further emphasizes a WO1/CW2 serves successfully on an SFOD-A for a minimum of three years, with the preferred minimum being six years on an SFOD-A or SFOD-G before assuming a position of higher responsibility. The reason for this matrix is to ensure the WO1/CW2 refines his key responsibilities and represents the continuity of the detachment.¹¹¹

CW3s through CW5s “serve as staff operations warrant officers within the SF Group and at higher commands within SF, Army SOF, and joint SOF staffs.”¹¹² “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3” further highlights CW3s are advanced-level experts in special operations who fulfill company operations warrant officer (COW) roles and responsibilities on a SFOD-B, which is a key developmental assignment. COWs incorporate special operations and intelligence fusion into Army and JIIM planning at the tactical and operational levels.¹¹³ Although these principles and planning methodologies are a cornerstone in development, the COW’s number one priority is operations and intelligence fusion throughout the mission planning and execution cycles, to include fundamental phases consistent with company training management and future operations.¹¹⁴ SF CW3s further “serve as the senior warrant officer advisor (SWOA) to the commander (O-4) and the company for all warrant officer-related matters to include ... professional development” and can be designated for developmental assignment on an SFOD-G or SFOD-E.¹¹⁵

The “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3” states SF CW4s are “senior-level experts in special operations who perform the duties and responsibilities of the battalion operations

¹¹⁰ Mctigue, 3.

¹¹¹ Mctigue, 11.

¹¹² U.S. Army Recruiting Command, “Warrant Officer Prerequisites and Duty Description: 180A – Special Forces Warrant Officer.”

¹¹³ Mctigue, “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3,” 3.

¹¹⁴ Mctigue, 12.

¹¹⁵ Mctigue, 12.

warrant officer (BOW), which is a key developmental assignment.”¹¹⁶ The Smartbook further illuminates the BOW as the commander’s primary advisor for all warrant officer matters within the battalion; the BOW’s priority is operations. Furthermore, the BOW serves as the SWOA to the battalion commander (O-5) and manages assigned warrant officers in accordance with guidance provided by the SF Group CCWO. Unlike conventional forces, the SF BOW/SWOA, along with the command sergeants major, serves as the senior operations advisor to the commander and his staff on all matters across the battalion’s range of military operations.¹¹⁷

Additionally, select CW4s may serve in broadening assignments. A developmental broadening assignment may entail, but not limited to serving as an operations warrant officer in SOF, Army, or joint staffs. The SF warrant cohort assesses broadening assignments in terms of strengthening weaknesses and building on strengths. For this reason, select CW4s are highly sought-after commodities across the SOF enterprise and joint environment. CW4s are considered integral planners who are capable of “applying doctrine and resource planning across the operational continuum and full range of military operations.”¹¹⁸ Both DA PAM 600-3 and “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3” provide a comprehensive overview and a breadth of broadening assignments in accordance with Army requirements.

The Smartbook states further that the “SF CW5 is a master-level expert in special operations who performs the duties and responsibilities of the SF Group operations warrant officer or is command selected to serve as the SF Group CCWO; both are key developmental assignments.”¹¹⁹ Equally significant, select CW5s serve as the CCWO for the commander, 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) and U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School (Airborne), CCWO for commanders of the SF Groups, and SWOA to the commander, USASOC, as an important part of the commander’s

¹¹⁶ Mctigue, 4.

¹¹⁷ Mctigue, 13.

¹¹⁸ Mctigue, 4.

¹¹⁹ Mctigue, 4.

staff.¹²⁰ There is one CCWO in an SF Group and the position is a nominative position selected by a Command Select List and approved by the commanding general, 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne). As the master-level expert in special operations, the SF CW5 is “chartered to think, advocate, and act on behalf of warrant officers at their echelon and provides experienced advice on all operational matters to the commander.”¹²¹ The designated SF Group CCWO is responsible for the talent management, assignment, and professional development of all warrant officers assigned to the organization while ensuring to make sound decisions to preserve the organization’s combat readiness.

More importantly, SF CW5s are entrusted to provide solutions to complex problems and display critical and creative thought analysis. By focusing on providing sound advice to the commander, senior-level warrant officers are capable of thoroughly communicating special operations requirements and capabilities, in addition to delivering technical and tactical knowledge at the operational and strategic levels.¹²² Figure 7 depicts the SF Branch warrant officer duration of key “Developmental Model” life-cycle assignments and career paths outlined in “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3.”¹²³

¹²⁰ U.S. Army Recruiting Command, “Warrant Officer Prerequisites and Duty Description: 180A – Special Forces Warrant Officer.”

¹²¹ Mctigue, “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3,” 4.

¹²² Mctigue, 4.

¹²³ Mctigue, 16.

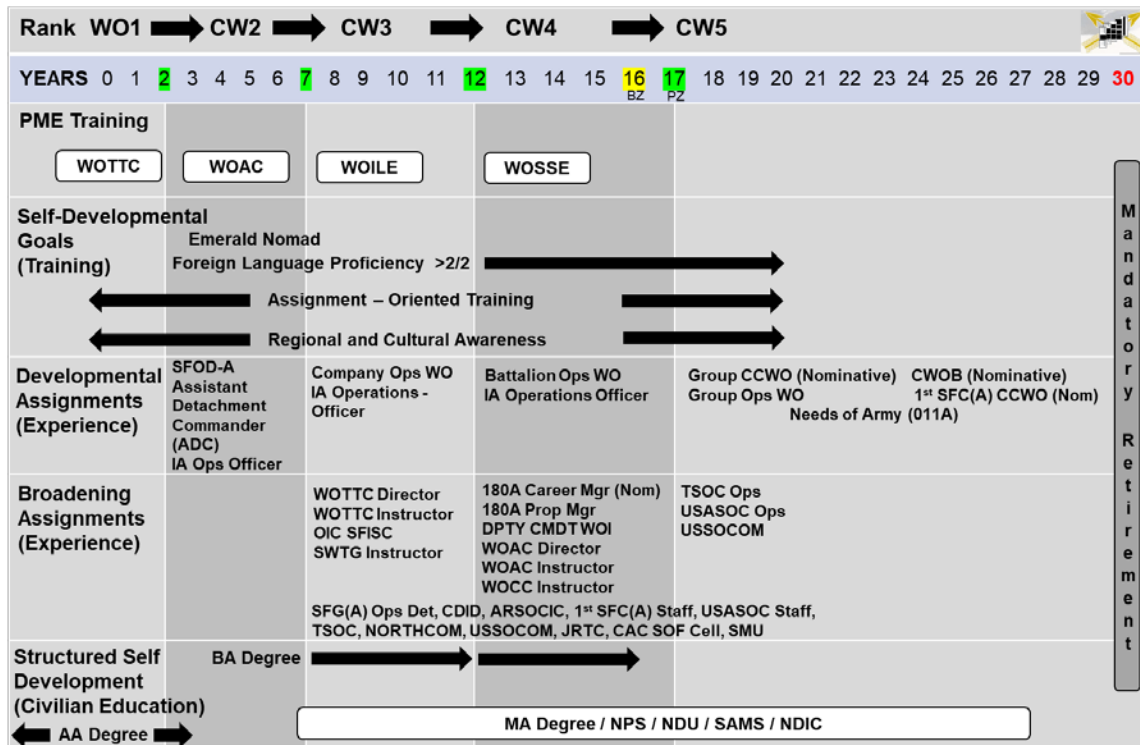


Figure 7. SF Warrant Officer Developmental Model¹²⁴

I. EMPLOYMENT COMPARISON

Analysis of SEAL CWO and Army SF warrant officer employment reveals differences in their utilization. Specifically, newly commissioned SEAL CWO2s are generally not tactically employed but instead are primarily assigned in an operations and training staff or managerial role. In contrast, SF warrant officers are expected to assume tactical roles and responsibilities as an SFOD-A ADC at the immediate level as a WO1 to CW2. Additionally, SEAL CWOs fulfill more assignments within training departments and commands than their SF warrant officer counterparts, who instead prioritize SW and operations and intelligence fusion. Figure 8 provides a comparison and displays these differences in the employment utilization of SEAL CWOs and Army SF warrant officers.

¹²⁴ Adapted from Mctigue, "Smartbook DA PAM 600-3," 16.

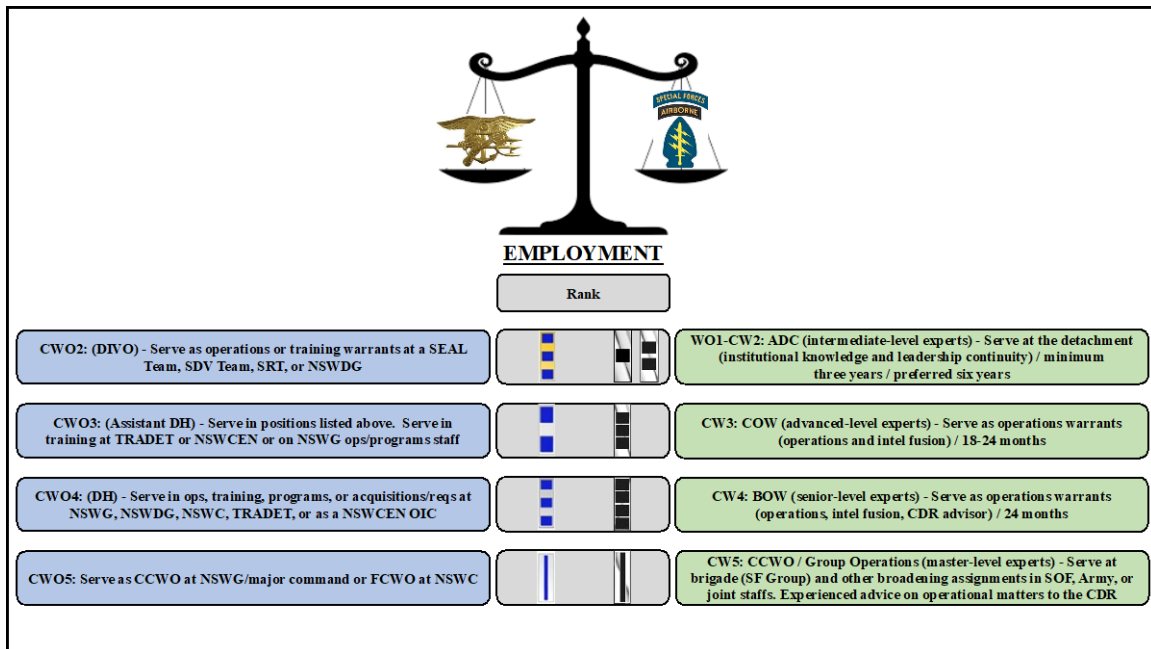


Figure 8. SEAL CWO and SF Warrant Officer Employment Comparison

IV. SURVEY DATA ANALYSIS

A. OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an analysis of a survey taken by U.S. Navy SEAL and Army SF officers, senior enlisted, warrant officers, and CWOs in support of this effort. The chapter is divided into three sections. This section offers an overview, Section B delivers a quantitative comparative analysis between SEAL and Army SF survey respondents, and Section C provides a qualitative comparative analysis.

The 21-question anonymous survey, referenced in Appendix A, included seven closed-ended questions using the Likert scale, seven multiple-choice questions, and seven open-ended questions for respondents to provide written comments in order to gain in-depth insight from experienced leaders within the U.S. Navy and Army's special operations communities. The survey used LimeSurvey, a DOD and Naval Postgraduate School approved online survey tool and was sent on May 4, 2020, to the work email addresses of SEAL and Army SF officers, senior enlisted, warrant officers, and CWOs. The survey remained open for four weeks with one reminder sent on May 18, 2020 and closed on May 31, 2020. Of the 860 SEALs who received the survey, 187 responded, yielding a 22% response rate. Of the 1,216 Army SF personnel who received the survey, 227 responded, yielding a 19% response rate.

Both SOF organizations demonstrated interest in the survey, as reflected in the response rate and quality of the 414 total responses. The demographics consist of U.S. Navy SEAL and Army SF active-duty personnel between the ranks of O-4 to O-6, CWO2/CW2 to CWO5/CW5, and E-7 to E-9. Overall, officers, between the ranks of O-4 to O-6, deliver the highest response rate and therefore provide the strongest comparison opportunity among the demographic groups. Table 1 provides the survey demographics and response numbers for the respective special operations sample populations.

Table 1. Survey Demographics and Responses

	Number of Responses	
Rank	U.S. Navy SEAL	U.S. Army SF
O-4	47	58
O-5	22	33
O-6	11	3
Total	80	94

CWO2 / CW2	3	34
CWO3 / CW3	16	29
CWO4 / CW4	9	23
CWO5 / CW5	5	10
Total	33	96

E-7	33	16
E-8	20	9
E-9	21	12
Total	74	37

Total Responses	187	227
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The survey presented the Likert scale as a five-point rating scale in the form of “strongly disagree” = 1, “disagree” = 2, “neither disagree nor agree” = 3, “agree” = 4, and “strongly agree” = 5. For clarity, the graphics used in this research combine “strongly disagree” and “disagree” and “strongly agree” and “agree,” therefore creating a three-point rating scale. The means and standard deviations also reflect the three-point scale, where “strongly disagree/disagree” = 1, “neither disagree nor agree” = 2, and “strongly agree/agree” = 3. The quantitative descriptive results are reported as a percentage of the population demographic and for ease of reading, have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Therefore, not all totals may add up to exactly 100%. Additionally, some multiple-choice questions allowed for more than one selection and consequently the sum is greater than 100% for these questions. Summary themes are used to provide qualitative data for

this research. All survey statistical results and information used for this study can be accessed through the NSW Officer Community Manager (Bureau of Naval Personnel 311D) and U.S. Army Human Resources Command Special Forces Warrant Officer Assignment Officer.

B. QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Survey respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements regarding the selection and employment of CWOs and warrant officers within their organizations. Figure 9 presents the responses to the level of agreement to the proposition that warrant officers provide value. Of note, over 65% of all respondents surveyed agree with this statement. However, there is a 23% disparity between SF officers (89%) and SEAL officers (66%). Additionally, there is an 8% disparity between SF senior enlisted (78%) and SEAL senior enlisted (70%). Therefore, the analysis suggests that both SOF organizations value their warrant officers, however SF values warrant officers more than the SEAL community values CWOs. There are three possible explanations for this disparity. First, NSW may not do an excellent job of selecting CWOs, second, CWOs may not fill technical specialist positions, and third, CWOs may not be tactically employed. Table 2 delivers the means, standard deviations, and the number of responses.

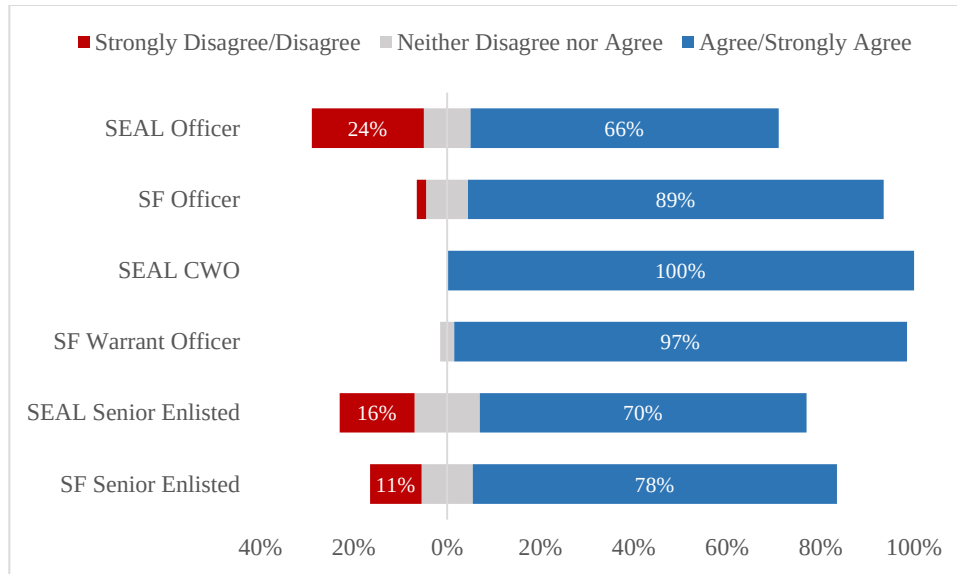


Figure 9. Warrant Officers Provide Value to My Organization.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Number of Responses

Rank	SEAL Officer	SF Officer	SEAL CWO	SF Warrant Officer	SEAL Senior Enlisted	SF Senior Enlisted
Mean	2.43	2.87	3.00	2.97	2.54	2.68
Std Dev	0.85	0.39	0	0.17	0.76	0.67
Responses	80	94	33	96	74	37

Regarding the selection quality of warrant officers, Figure 10 provides the level of agreement to the statement, “my organization does an excellent job of selecting future warrant officers.” Table 3 provides the means, standard deviations, and the number of responses. Besides SF warrant officers and SEAL CWOs, SF officers (63%) and SF senior enlisted (41%) provide the greatest level of agreement. Whereas 38% of SEAL senior enlisted agree and 39% of SEAL officers disagree.

It should be noted that of the SEAL officers that disagree with the proposition, “warrant officers provide value to my organization,” 89% of these same respondents also disagree that NSW does an excellent job of selecting future CWOs, and the other 11% neither disagree nor agree with the statement. Additionally, of the SEAL senior enlisted that disagree with the

proposition that CWOs provide value to NSW, 67% of these same participants also disagree that NSW does an excellent job of selecting CWOs, and the other 33% neither disagree nor agree. Therefore, the analysis concludes that there is a strong correlation between the SEALs who do not believe CWOs provide value to NSW and their satisfaction level with SEAL CWO selection.

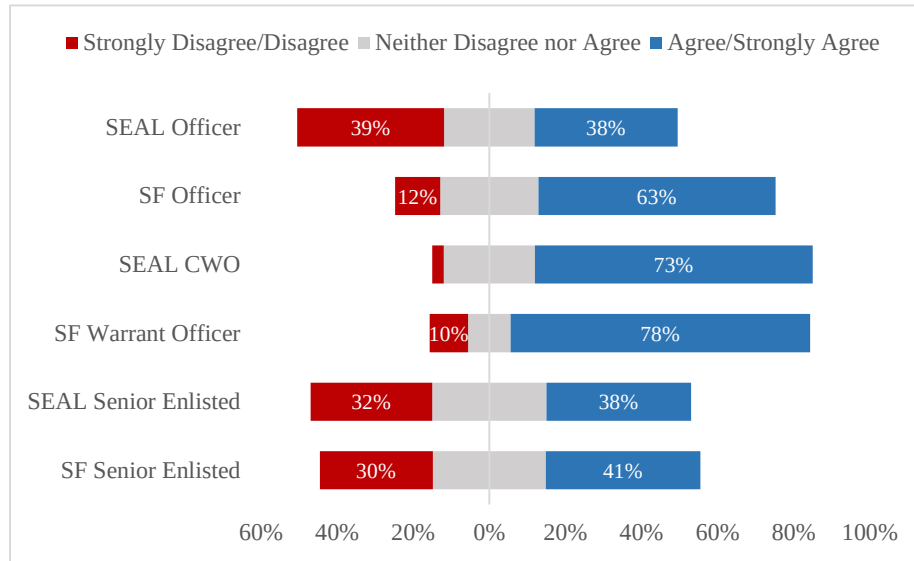


Figure 10. My Organization Does an Excellent Job of Selecting Future Warrant Officers.

Table 3. Means, Standard Deviations, and Number of Responses

Rank	SEAL Officer	SF Officer	SEAL CWO	SF Warrant Officer	SEAL Senior Enlisted	SF Senior Enlisted
Mean	1.99	2.51	2.70	2.68	2.05	2.11
Std Dev	0.88	0.70	0.53	0.66	0.84	0.84
Responses	80	94	33	96	74	37

Figure 11 and Table 4 present the level of agreement and data to the proposition that warrant officers fill positions that officers and senior enlisted cannot fill. Results show that 50% of SEAL senior enlisted disagree, followed by SF senior enlisted (49%), and SEAL officers (46%). Only 30% of SF officers disagree, while 41% agree. The data implies that in general, SEAL officers and senior enlisted believe they have the necessary skills and

knowledge to fill CWO positions within NSW. In contrast, SF officers and senior enlisted diverge on the subject.

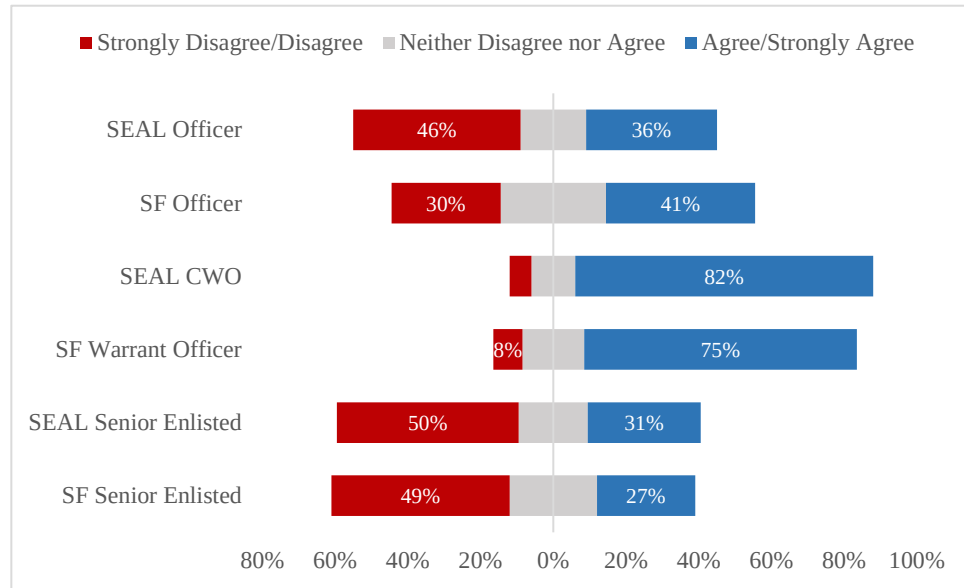


Figure 11. Warrant Officers Fill Positions that Officers and Senior Enlisted Cannot Fill.

Table 4. Means, Standard Deviations, and Number of Responses

Rank	SEAL Officer	SF Officer	SEAL CWO	SF Warrant Officer	SEAL Senior Enlisted	SF Senior Enlisted
Mean	1.90	2.12	2.76	2.67	1.81	1.78
Std Dev	0.91	0.84	0.56	0.63	0.89	0.85
Responses	80	94	33	96	74	37

When presented the statement, “warrant officers are better suited for the positions they currently fill than officers or senior enlisted,” 51% of SF officers agree, followed by SEAL officers (43%), and SEAL senior enlisted (42%). However, 43% of SF senior enlisted disagree with the statement, while only 38% agree. Figure 12 and Table 5 provide these results. These statistics when combined with the data from Figure 11, indicate that SEAL officers and senior enlisted believe they can fill CWO positions, but also view

CWOs as better suited for these assignments. Comparatively, SF officers and senior enlisted are in conflict when given these two propositions. Therefore, in regards to this subject, it is more difficult to assess the data among the SF community.

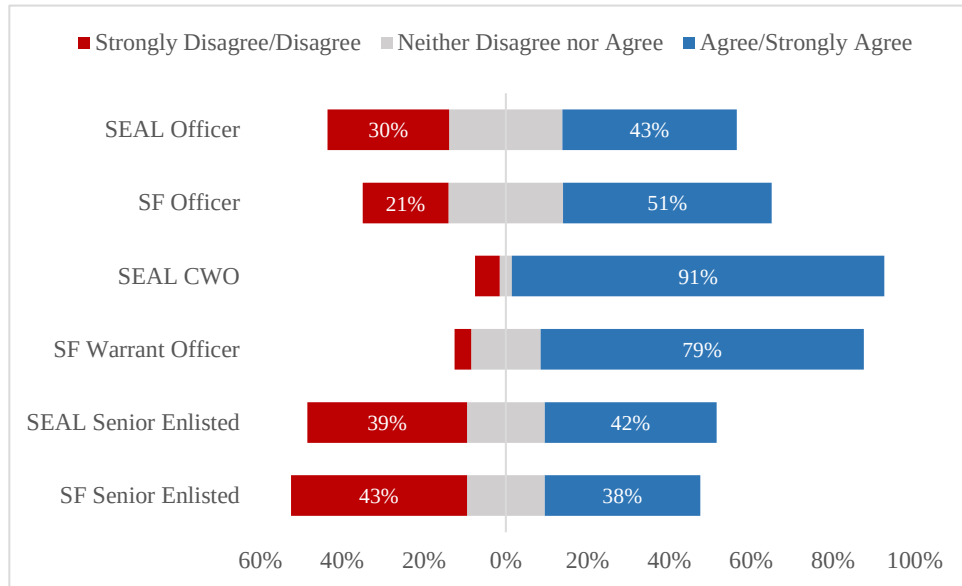


Figure 12. Warrant Officers Are Better Suited for the Positions They Currently Fill than Officers or Senior Enlisted.

Table 5. Means, Standard Deviations, and Number of Responses

Rank	SEAL Officer	SF Officer	SEAL CWO	SF Warrant Officer	SEAL Senior Enlisted	SF Senior Enlisted
Mean	2.13	2.30	2.85	2.75	2.03	1.95
Std Dev	0.85	0.80	0.51	0.52	0.91	0.91
Responses	80	94	33	96	74	37

The following results provide a commonality among all the surveyed demographics. As Figure 13 depicts, 59% of SF officers, 51% of SEAL senior enlisted, 46% of SEAL officers, and 46% of SF senior enlisted agree that warrant officers fill technical specialist positions in their organizations. Table 6 displays the means and standard deviations of these responses. Importantly, the analysis illuminates a relationship

in responses between those who do not believe SEAL CWOs provide value and their disagreement with the proposition, “warrant officers fill technical specialist positions in my organization.” In fact, of the SEAL officers that disagree with the statement, “warrant officers provide value to my organization,” 68% of these same survey participants also disagree that CWOs fill technical specialist assignments, and another 16% neither disagree nor agree with this proposition. Additionally, of the SEAL senior enlisted who disagree that CWOs provide value to NSW, 92% of these same respondents do not believe CWOs fulfill technical specialist positions. Given this data, the analysis suggests there is a strong relationship between the SEAL respondents who disagree that SEAL CWOs provide value to NSW and their employment as technical specialists.

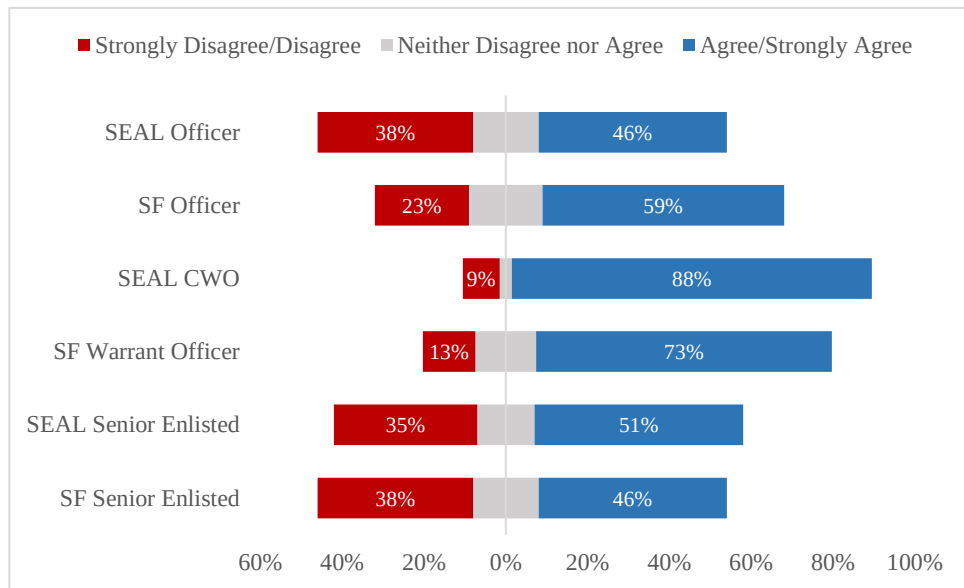


Figure 13. Warrant Officers Fill Technical Specialist Positions in My Organization.

Table 6. Means, Standard Deviations, and Number of Responses

Rank	SEAL Officer	SF Officer	SEAL CWO	SF Warrant Officer	SEAL Senior Enlisted	SF Senior Enlisted
Mean	2.09	2.35	2.79	2.60	2.16	2.08
Std Dev	0.92	0.84	0.60	0.70	0.92	0.92
Responses	80	94	33	96	74	37

Analyzing the data further, Figure 14 and Table 7 provide a large disparity between SEAL and SF personnel in response to the statement, “warrant officers perform tactical duties and responsibilities in my organization.” Survey results show that 73% of SF officers and 59% of SF senior enlisted agree, whereas a minority of only 26% of SEAL officers and 16% of SEAL senior enlisted agree.

A possible explanation for the disparity may be the employment career path differences between the SEAL and SF warrant officer cohorts. Of note, as Chapter III, Figure 8 depicts, SEAL CWOs are traditionally not tactically employed whereas SF warrant officers are expected to assume this role and responsibility at the immediate level as a WO1 to CW2. Nevertheless, the results strongly indicate that SF warrant officers perform tactical duties and responsibilities and SEAL CWOs generally do not.

Notably, the analysis highlights a strong correlation between the responses of SEAL participants who do not believe CWOs provide value to NSW and their view that CWOs are not tactically employed. Specifically, of the SEAL officers that disagree with the proposition, CWOs provide value to NSW, 84% of these same respondents also disagree that CWOs perform tactical duties and responsibilities, and another 11% neither disagree nor agree with the statement. In addition, all of the SEAL senior enlisted respondents that disagree with the statement, “warrant officers provide value to my organization,” also disagree that CWOs perform tactical duties and responsibilities.

Another important observation reveals a relationship between the SEAL respondents who disagree that SEAL CWOs fill technical specialist assignments and their level of agreement that CWOs perform tactical roles and responsibilities. More specifically, of the SEAL officers who disagree that CWOs fill technical specialist positions, 83% of these same respondents also disagree that they perform tactical duties and responsibilities. Moreover, of the SEAL senior enlisted who disagree with the statement, “warrant officers fill technical specialist positions in my organization,” 96% of these same participants also disagree that CWOs perform tactical roles and the other 4% neither disagree nor agree with the statement. Lastly, of the SEAL CWO respondents who disagree that they fill technical specialist positions, all of them also disagree that they perform tactical duties and responsibilities.

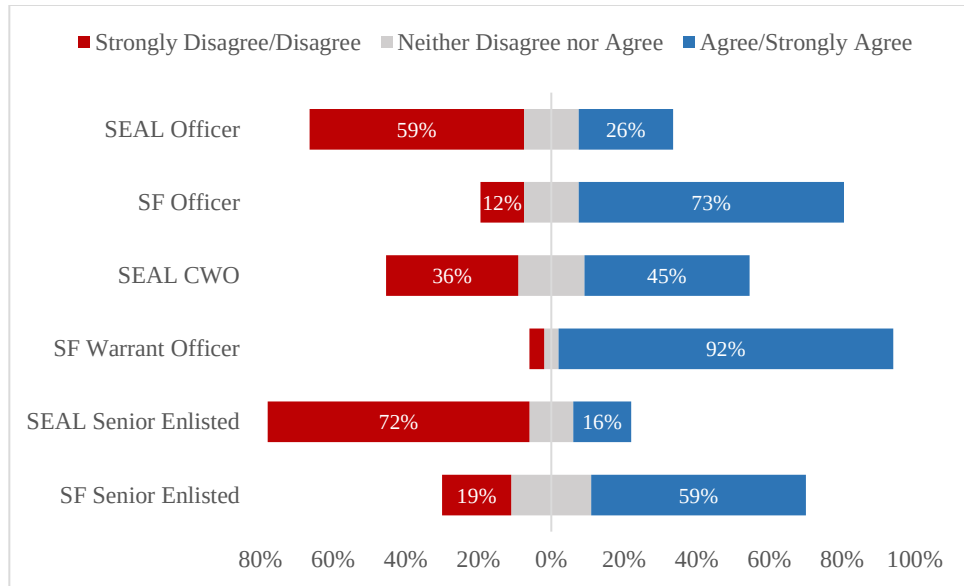


Figure 14. Warrant Officers Perform Tactical Duties and Responsibilities in My Organization.

Table 7. Means, Standard Deviations, and Number of Responses

Rank	SEAL Officer	SF Officer	SEAL CWO	SF Warrant Officer	SEAL Senior Enlisted	SF Senior Enlisted
Mean	1.68	2.62	2.09	2.88	1.45	2.41
Std Dev	0.87	0.69	0.91	0.44	0.76	0.80
Responses	80	94	33	96	74	37

Furthermore, Figure 15 and Table 8 also deliver a disparity in responses between SEAL and SF participants with regards to warrant officers remaining at the same command for repetitive tours/assignments. While 83% of SF officers and 68% of SF senior enlisted agree with this statement, only 49% of SEAL senior enlisted and 40% of SEAL officers agree. Therefore, regarding this specific subject, the analysis infers that SF warrant officers generally remain on station longer and abide by prescribed guidelines more than their SEAL CWO counterparts.

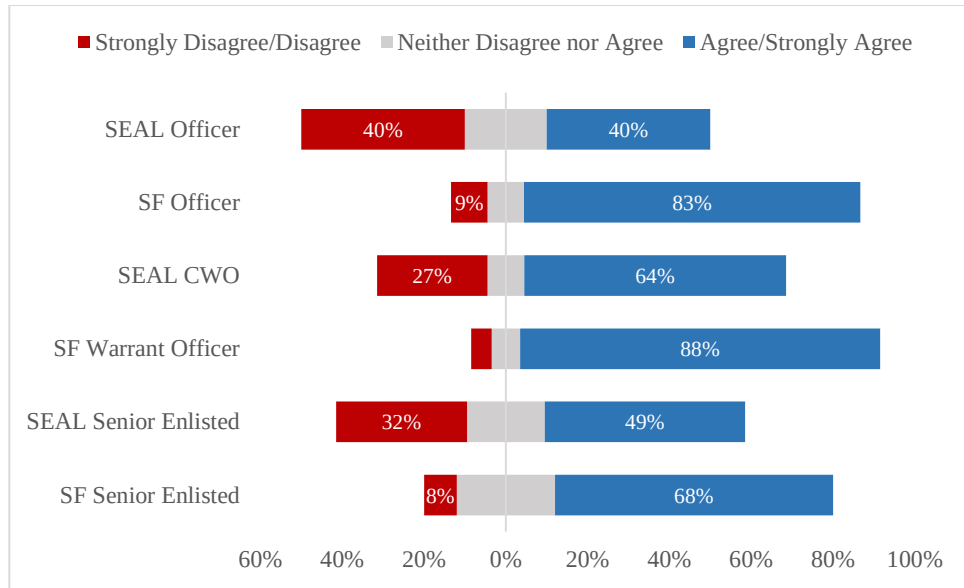


Figure 15. Warrant Officers within My Organization Remain at the Same Command for Repetitive Tours/Assignments.

Table 8. Means, Standard Deviations, and Number of Responses

Rank	SEAL Officer	SF Officer	SEAL CWO	SF Warrant Officer	SEAL Senior Enlisted	SF Senior Enlisted
Mean	2.00	2.74	2.36	2.82	2.16	2.59
Std Dev	0.90	0.60	0.90	0.50	0.89	0.64
Responses	80	94	33	96	74	37

Participants were also asked to indicate the minimum and maximum enlisted ranks that should be required for an applicant to submit a warrant officer application. Overwhelmingly, SEAL officers (60%), SF officers (67%), SEAL CWOs (91%), SF warrant officers (69%), SEAL senior enlisted (59%), and SF senior enlisted (73%) all identify E-7 as the minimum rank. However, SEAL and SF respondents disagree on the maximum rank required. SEAL officers (64%), SEAL CWOs (61%), and SEAL senior enlisted (73%) strongly indicate the rank of E-9, while SF officers (50%), SF warrant officers (70%), and SF senior enlisted (57%) heavily suggest E-8.

As Chapter III, Figure 4 details, the current maximum rank requirement for both SEAL CWO and SF warrant officer applicants is E-9. However, the survey results indicate that SF desires a change from E-9 to E-8, suggesting that an E-9 applicant is too senior in rank to apply for the SF warrant officer program. Conversely, the SEAL participant results show a general satisfaction with the current maximum rank requirement and do not desire a revision.

Although there is a difference in agreement regarding the maximum rank, the minimum rank results suggest that both SOF organizations prefer a more senior and experienced applicant. Additionally, the analysis indicates the SF community desires a revision to the current prerequisite by increasing the minimum rank from E-6 to E-7, which would produce the preferred senior and more experienced SF warrant officer. Furthermore, this modification aligns with the current SEAL CWO program's prerequisite, which the results conclude the SEAL community is content with and does not desire a change. Figures 16 and 17 present the response data.

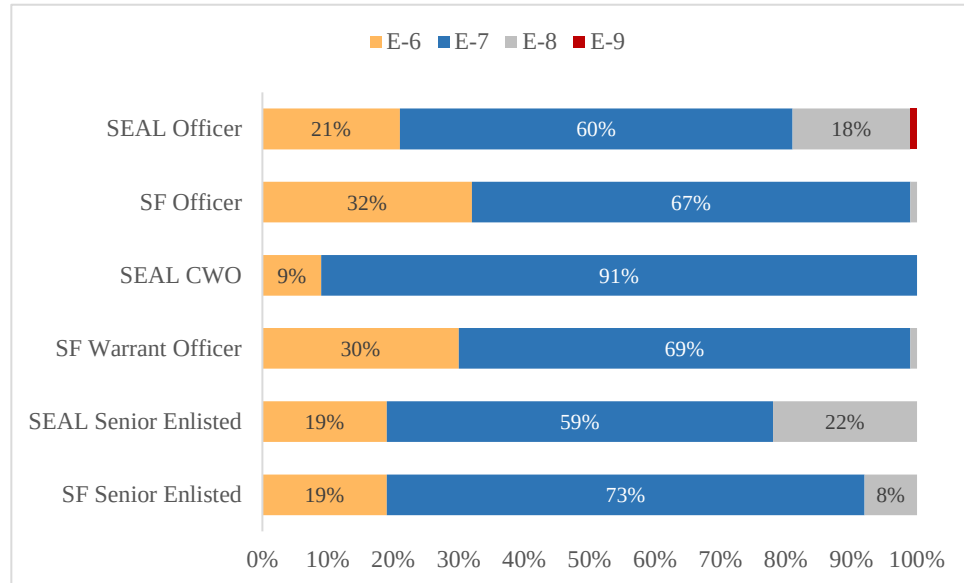


Figure 16. What Should Be the Minimum Enlisted Rank Required before Submitting a Warrant Officer Application?

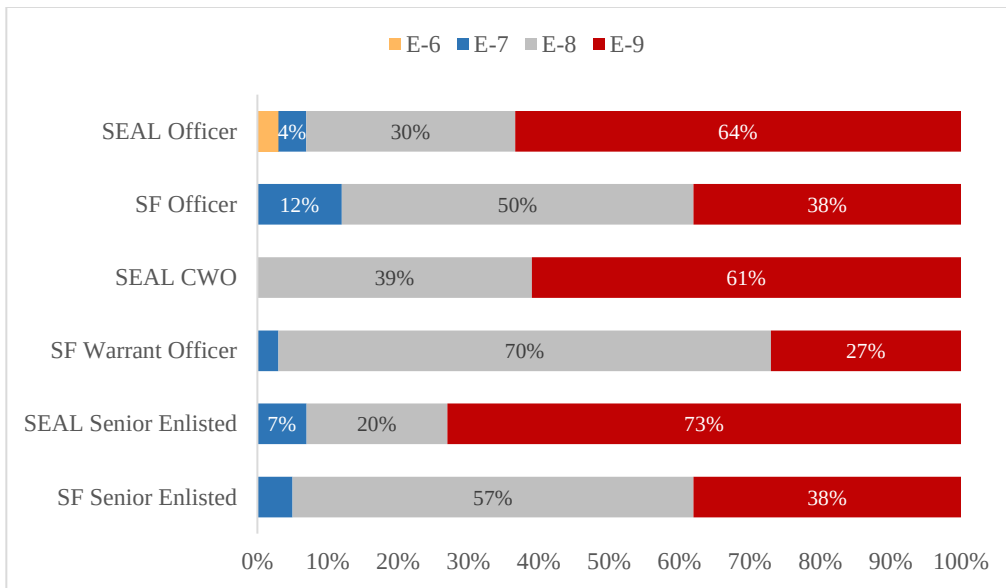


Figure 17. What Should Be the Maximum Enlisted Rank Required before Submitting a Warrant Officer Application?

Continuing with the analysis, Figures 18 and 19 represent the disparity between the selection requirements with regards to pre-screening advanced training qualifications for Army SF warrant officers and SEAL CWOs. SEALs value training (e.g., master training specialist) followed by dive supervisor whereas SF survey participants value special activities (e.g., Achilles Dagger) followed by static line jumpmaster as key attributes a candidate must possess to apply for their organization's CWO or warrant officer programs. An explanation for this disparity may be attributed to differences in a SEAL CWO and SF warrant officer's current employment, roles, and responsibilities. As Chapter III details, SEAL CWOs fulfill more assignments within training departments and commands than their SF warrant officer counterparts. In contrast, SF warrant officers perform more tactical roles and responsibilities than SEAL CWOs and further specialize in SW and operations and intelligence fusion.

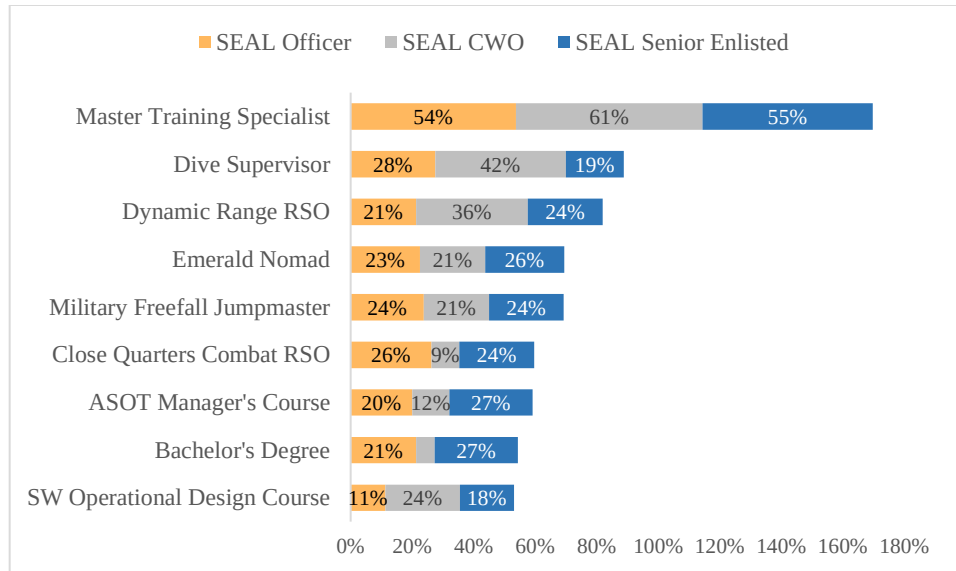


Figure 18. What Specific Advanced Training Qualifications Should Future Warrant Officer Candidates Possess in order to Apply to the SEAL CWO Program?

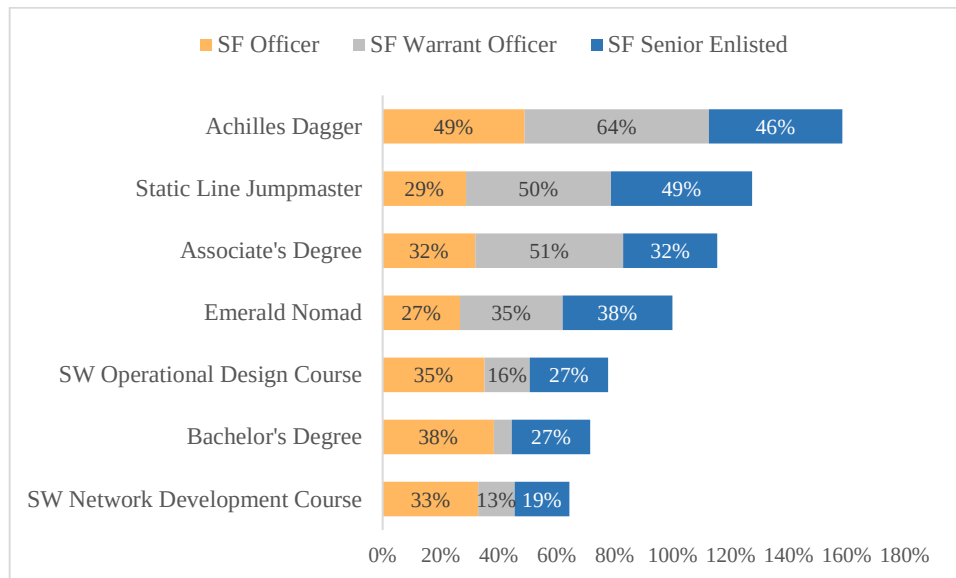


Figure 19. What Specific Advanced Training Qualifications Should Future Warrant Officer Candidates Possess in order to Apply to the SF Warrant Officer Program?

There are significant differences between the SEAL CWO and SF warrant officer mandated operational experiences, so it is not surprising that the survey responses suggest

the Sailor and Soldier career glide paths generate varying operational experience importance. For example, the SEAL CWO garners his experience from the onslaught of SEAL platoon training and frequent deployments, whereas the SF warrant officer traditionally serves with a conventional force before attending the SF Assessment and Selection course and completing the SF Qualification Course. Although the SF 18X program is an exception to this claim, an 18X never serves in a conventional force unit. In addition, the current SF warrant officer candidate application states a candidate must have 36-months of SFOD-A experience, whereas a SEAL CWO applicant must complete a platoon/team LCPO assignment. Therefore, the degree of disparity is appropriate based on each organization's career glide path.

Figures 20 and 21 illustrate the differences between the SEAL community's platoon/team LCPO and SF's 36-months of SFOD-A experience. Key explanations based on the survey results between the two communities are as follows:

1. SEALs who complete an LCPO assignment typically have greater than ten-years of NSW operational experience, whereas the SF warrant officer application requires a minimum of 36-months of SFOD-A operational experience.
2. The SF survey question represented both minimal requirements and a host of other options; however, based on amplifying responses, the authors conclude that SF respondents suggest revisions to the 36-months of operational experience.
3. There is a strong consensus among SF respondents, many of which alluding that 48–60 months SFOD-A experience is more realistic and the recommendation to review, revise, and implement modifications to the SF warrant officer candidate application requirement checklist to reflect more experience.
4. In addressing the question, “what should be the minimum qualifications and operational experience required before submitting a warrant officer application?” overwhelmingly, both SEAL and SF communities indicate

that “experience” is the overarching factor. This response aligns with the analysis of Figure 16, where both SEAL and SF respondents heavily prefer E-7 as the minimum rank requirement before submitting a SEAL CWO or SF warrant officer program application and also suggests that both SOF organizations prefer a more senior and experienced applicant.

It should be noted that the authors phrased the available answers to the SF question in accordance with the service application checklist. Another option would have been to offer SF respondents with alternative experience levels (e.g., 48-months, 60-months, 72-months) rather than advanced skill or qualification options. Nonetheless, the “other” option yields the data to conclude the ponderous of SF participants express the need to increase SF warrant officer experience requirements.

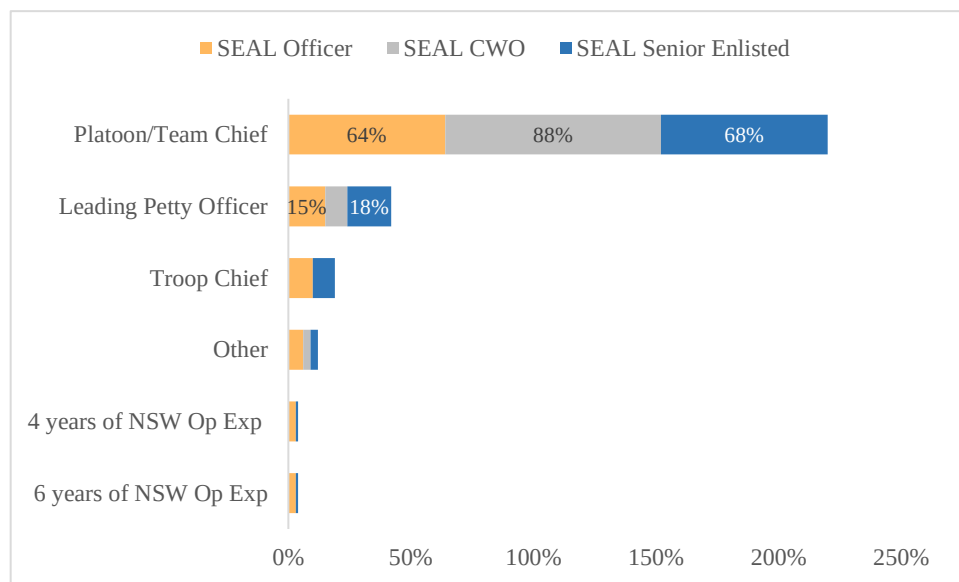


Figure 20. What Should Be the Minimum Qualifications and Operational Experience Required before Submitting a SEAL CWO Application?

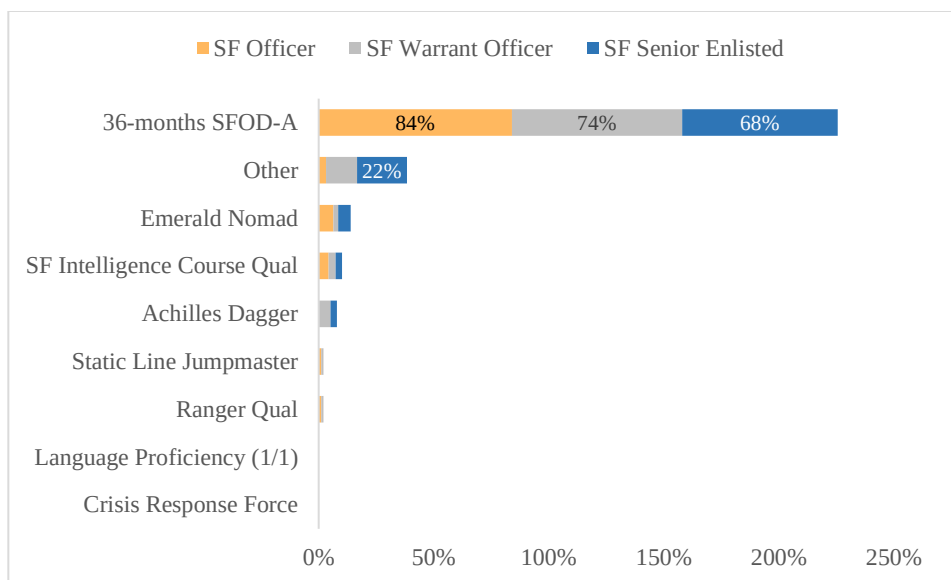


Figure 21. What Should Be the Minimum Qualifications and Operational Experience Required before Submitting an SF Warrant Officer Application?

Moving further along in the analysis, Figure 22 depicts the disparity in responses regarding the areas of technical expertise future warrant officer candidates should be proficient before applying to the SEAL CWO or SF warrant officer programs. These results show that 71% of SEAL officers, 79% of SEAL CWOs, and 76% of SEAL senior enlisted value training followed by operations and intelligence fusion, whereas 88% of SF officers, 80% of SF warrant officers, and 81% of SF senior enlisted value operations and intelligence fusion followed by special activities.

As previously noted, SEAL CWOs generally fulfill more training roles and responsibilities within a team's operations department or at training commands such as a TRADET or the NSWCCN. On the contrary, SF warrant officers perform more tactical duties as an ADC on an SFOD-A and specialize in SW and operations and intelligence fusion. Given this information, it is not surprising the results indicate that SEALs prefer CWOs to specialize more in training and the SF cohort desires their warrant officers to focus more on operations and intelligence fusion. These results further align with the data from Figures 18 and 19 where SEALs suggest master training specialist and SF prefer

Achilles Dagger as the advanced training qualifications future warrant officer candidates should possess in order to apply to the SEAL CWO or SF warrant officer programs.

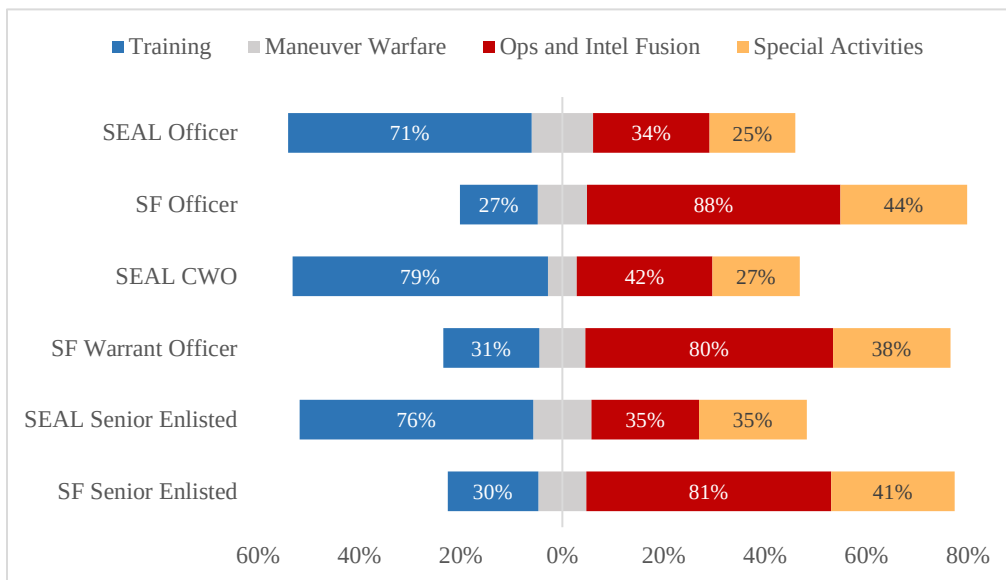


Figure 22. What Specific Areas of Technical Expertise Should Future Warrant Officer Candidates Be Proficient in order to Apply to Your Organization’s Warrant Officer Program?

SEAL and SF survey participants were also asked to select the positions where warrant officers currently provide the most value across their organizations. A separate question was also presented for respondents to choose the positions where warrant officers provide the least value. As Figure 23 indicates, SEAL officers (38%), SEAL CWOs (48%), and SEAL senior enlisted (46%) view the staff role of SEAL Team training/operations as the position where CWOs currently provide the most value. However, in stark contrast, Figure 24 suggests SEAL officers and senior enlisted also consider SEAL Team training/operations as the position where CWOs currently provide the *least* value.

Additionally, out of 33 possible selections, this same staff position was the fourth most chosen among the SEAL CWO demographic as the position where CWOs currently provide the least value within NSW. More specifically, in response to why this position provides the least value, one participant states, “Officers are well suited for operational positions, enlisted are well suited for training positions. CWOs are technical experts.”

Another comment further explains, “The community wastes a sizeable amount of CWO tactical leadership and expertise as SEAL Team training officers inputting Fleet Training Management and Planning System and Corporate enterprise Training Activity Resource System requests and coordinating names for force readiness manual schools. That task could be managed by lesser qualified individuals at a Team.” Although the analysis cannot fully explain this inconsistency, it can conclude that the value of a CWO in the SEAL Team training/operations position is questionable. Additionally, survey comments imply that CWO employment may not be fully optimized in this assignment and they could be better utilized in other positions within NSW.

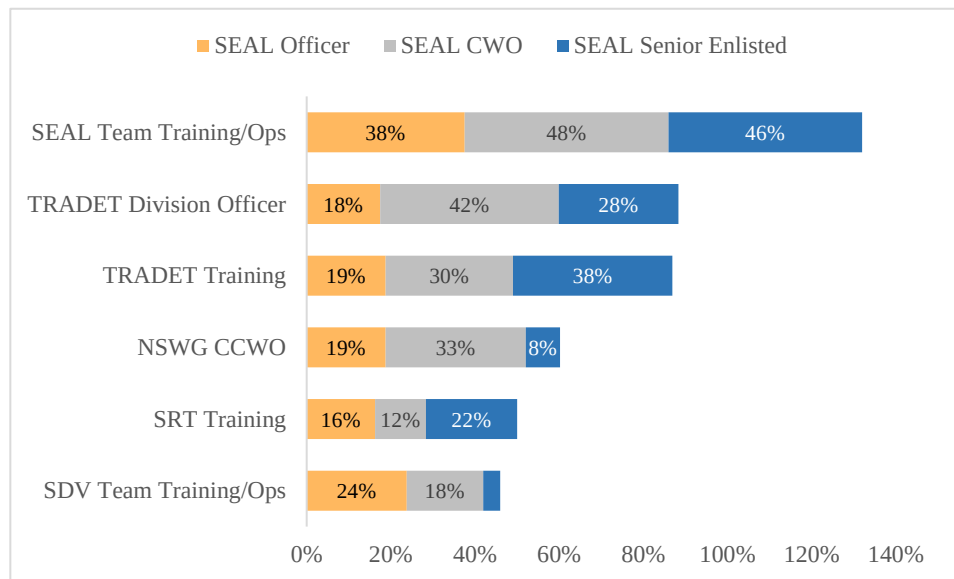


Figure 23. What Positions Do Warrant Officers Currently Provide the Most Value Across NSW?

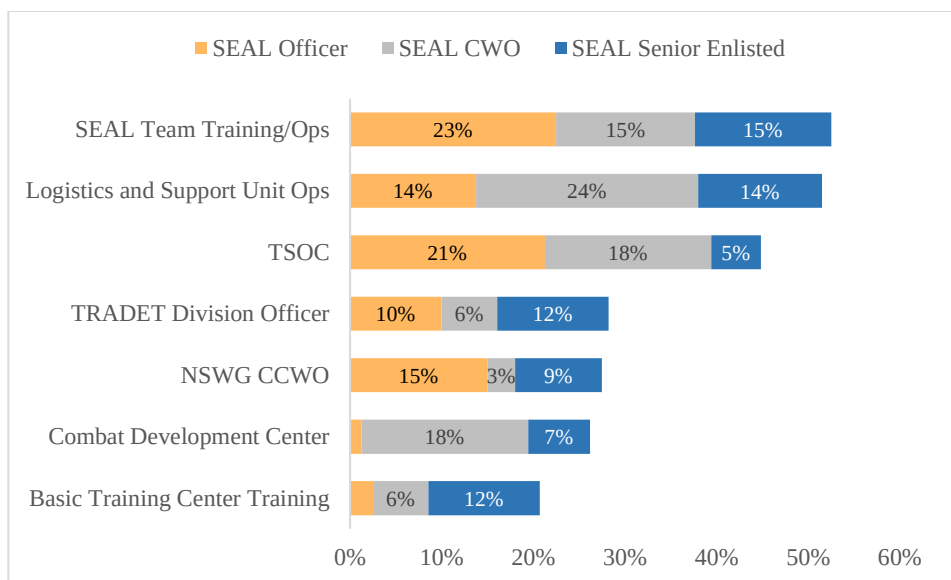


Figure 24. What Positions Do Warrant Officers Currently Provide the Least Value Across NSW?

The same two questions were asked of Army SF: Figures 25 and 26 provide the results. There is a very strong consensus among Army SF officers (80%) and warrant officers (90%) that the tactical role of the ADC (SFOD-A) position is where warrant officers currently provide the most value. Additionally, SF senior enlisted (73%) view it as the second most valuable. The responses also define the company operations warrant officer position as highly valued by SF officers, warrant officers, and senior enlisted. In response to why the ADC position provides the most value, one respondent states, “At the tactical level warrants provide the most value because of the relative level of inexperience by the captain.” In addition, other participants further explain, “Retainability and Subject Matter Expertise. With 18As and 18Zs rotating out of detachment command shortly after 24 months the 180A provides the stability on the detachment” and “Because this is why the 180A position was created, to serve as a detachment XO. This is where they have the most impact, facilitate the most continuity, and lead detachments when necessary.”

The analysis further suggests two possible explanations for why ADC (SFOD-A) is chosen as the position where warrant officers provide the most value. The first reason is that SF warrant officers remain in this assignment for repetitive tours and the second explanation is that the position requires the performance of tactical duties and

responsibilities. The analysis reveals that of the SF officers who view the ADC position as where warrant officers provide the most value, 87% of these same participants also agree that warrant officers remain at the same command for repetitive tours and 83% further agree that they perform tactical duties and responsibilities. In addition, of the SF senior enlisted who chose the ADC position, 70% of these same respondents also believe warrant officers hover on station for successive assignments and 78% agree that they perform tactical roles. Therefore, the data concludes there is a strong relationship between the SF participants who view the ADC assignment as where warrant officers provide the most value and their ability to remain on station for successive tours and perform tactical duties.

Regarding the least valuable position, the SF community is more divergent: SF officers view the CCWO position as the least valuable, SF senior enlisted indicate the USASOC CCWO and detachment commander (SFOD-A) positions are the least valuable, and SF warrant officers suggest the advanced skills company warrant officer as the position where warrant officers currently provide the least value.

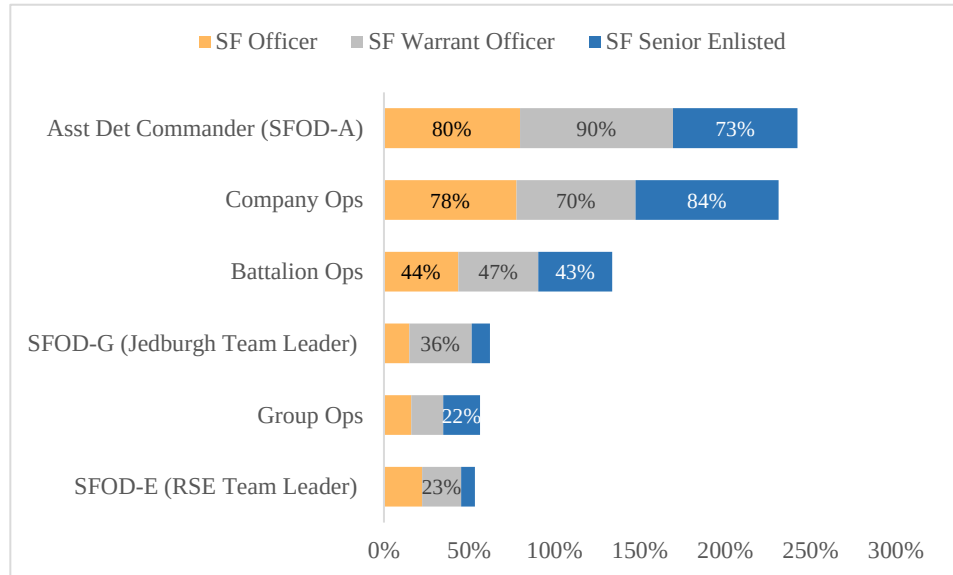


Figure 25. What Positions Do Warrant Officers Currently Provide the Most Value Across Army SF?

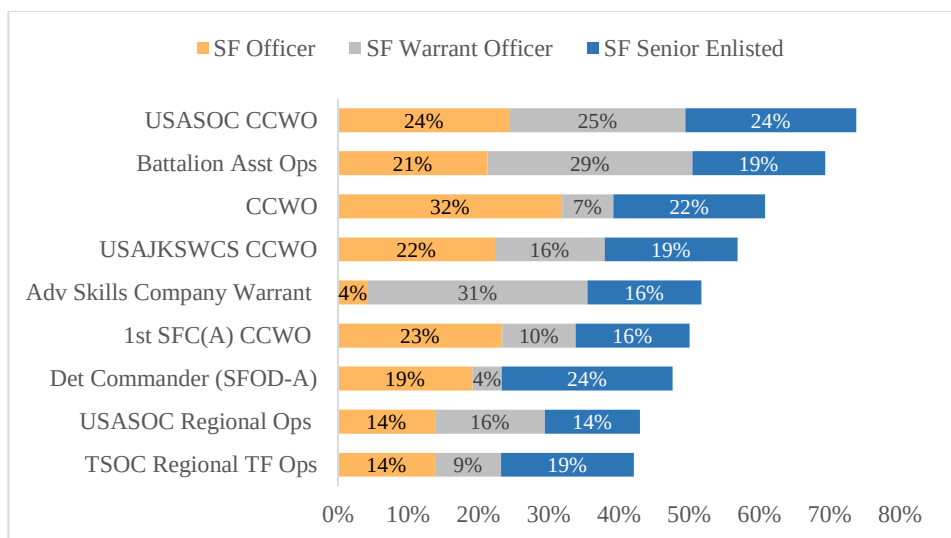


Figure 26. What Positions Do Warrant Officers Currently Provide the Least Value Across Army SF?

A comparison and analysis of these employment responses between SEALs and SF demographics reveal a disparity in positional value and a difference in the roles placed on SEAL CWOs and SF warrant officers within their SOF communities. Over 72% of all SF respondents favor the SFOD-A ADC position, and none of the groups place it near the top of their least valuable assignments for SF warrant officers, which indicates the SF organization strongly values a tactical role for its warrant officers. In contrast, it is more difficult to discern the position where SEAL CWOs provide the most value within NSW. The SEAL CWO demographic provides the highest favorability towards the non-tactical SEAL Team training/operations position, but at only 48%. Additionally, as previously mentioned, SEAL officers and senior enlisted also view this position as the least valuable, and the SEAL CWO response data suggests the cohort believes the role is a less valued assignment. Lastly, it should be noted that while SEALs additionally place the NSWG CCWO and TRADET division officer positions as two of the most valued (Figure 23), they also select them as the least valued (Figure 24). This further complicates the ability to accurately determine the assignments where the SEAL CWO currently provides value across the NSW force. In contrast, none of the most valued positions within the SF responses as depicted in Figure 25 are found in the least valued assignments displayed in

Figure 26. Therefore, it is clearly distinguishable within the SF community where the SF warrant officer currently provides the most value.

C. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Survey participants were asked to respond to open-ended questions regarding the employment of SEAL CWOs and SF warrant officers. An examination of the open-ended survey questions reveals several common themes among the demographics. The following subsections provide the qualitative analysis and summary themes of the SEAL and SF survey responses.

1. Navy SEAL Respondent Analysis

An examination of the data reveals three consistent CWO employment themes, one selection, and one professional development theme among the SEAL respondents. The first and very common proposition among officers, senior enlisted, and CWOs is that CWOs should be employed in tactical roles, specifically within the troops or platoons. As one surveyed participant writes, “They typically fill in as a training officer at SEAL Teams but are better fitted to support tactical maneuver elements as deputy commanders.” Another comment further expounds by stating, “I believe they could provide the most value if each troop had a CWO as a technical mentor and experienced SEAL.” This employment recommendation is similar to that of the Army SF warrant officer’s heavily valued tactical role as an SFOD-A ADC.

The second consistency, specifically among the officers and senior enlisted, reveals SEAL CWOs are too diverse across the NSW spectrum. Many respondent comments state the need for CWOs to be more specialized and employed as experts within a unique field of NSW. One participant recommends NSW to, “Actually, identify a warrant for what they are: a highly specialized individual (i.e. 160th pilots being CWO). Use them for extreme specialization.” Additionally, others candidly elaborate by stating, “Stop attempting to diversify NSW CWOs,” and “Make them the subject matter experts that they are!” Furthermore, survey answers include terms such as “focused experts,” “NSW skill-set subject matter experts,” “niche,” “specific expertise,” “esoteric skill sets,” and “technical

experts” to describe how SEAL CWO employment could be enhanced or how they should be employed within NSW.

The third commonality among the survey participants, predominantly within the officer demographic, suggests SEAL CWOs’ roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined and there is no clear employment task and purpose. As one respondent notes, “No one has really told them what their job is and everyone else at the command doesn’t understand how to utilize them.” Moreover, numerous statements recommend defining and formalizing their job descriptions and establishing a distinct career path. A SEAL expresses this sentiment by explaining that, “Clearly defining their roles, responsibilities, training and lateral limits will not only benefit the force, it will be a clearly articulated career field that will attract ideal candidates.”

Two other common themes indicate deficiencies within CWO selection and professional development. Many comments focus on improving the screening process to ensure quality individuals and the best applicants are selected for the SEAL CWO program. Additionally, numerous respondents note that senior enlisted SEALs who apply to the program should have worthy intentions, as opposed to becoming CWOs for greater monetary benefits or to avoid operating or deploying. With regards to professional development, officers, senior enlisted, and CWOs view continuing education and additional training as important to enhancing the SEAL CWO program. Moreover, a few participants specifically mention that graduate and joint professional military education should be provided.

Further analysis reveals among officers, CWOs, and senior enlisted that the most common adjectives to describe SEAL CWOs are “experience” and “expertise.” Officers and senior enlisted also view CWOs as “knowledgeable.” Additionally, these terms are consistent in response to the question, “What benefits have you observed concerning the employment of warrant officers across your organization?” Respondents identify these three qualities as pivotal to a CWO’s ability to advise commanding officers, navigate through difficult or complex problem sets, influence decisions, coordinate training events and exercises, and mentor, network, and manage. It can therefore be inferred that these attributes are key to the value SEAL CWOs bring to the NSW force.

2. Army Special Forces Respondent Analysis

Likewise, an examination of the survey data reveals three consistent SF warrant officer employment themes and one selection theme among the SF respondents. The first and very dominant theme among officers, senior enlisted, and warrant officers indicates that SF warrant officers should remain tactically employed at the SFOD-A and SFOD-B levels under DA PAM 600-3, rather than identifying junior to mid-grade CW2s and CW3s for table of distribution and allowance and broadening assignments sooner than later. To this effect, abiding by the DA PAM empowers the SF warrant officer cohort with a much broader range of options to enhance organizational effectiveness and solidify intermediate and advanced-level expertise. Likewise, several survey respondents critique the frequent SF warrant officer reallocations. General comments address the concern with frequent SF warrant officer reallocations by stating, “Abide by the DA PAM which states six-years SFOD-A time, rather than transitioning mid-grade CW2 to table of distribution and allowances or other positions.” While another states, “SF warrant officers who perform at the team/detachment and company levels are invaluable, and a warrant officer’s knowledge and experience are instrumental in the future development of young SF team leaders while complementing the team sergeant with training refinement and sound advice.” Although this empirical data suggests a sense of emotion tethered to personal experiences, it does reflect the innate capability and personality an SF warrant officer offers between organizational changes and growth.

The second consistency, among all respondents, reveals that the SF warrant officer should be fully integrated into command team planning and decision matrixes. Unequivocally, the preponderance of this response identifies the need to employ the SF warrant officer at levels of higher responsibility, while simultaneously, codifying their role within respective command levels. Respondents expand on this sentiment, stating, “Warrant officers provide a long-range view that keeps command teams focused and able to traverse from day-to-day into achieving long-range objectives.” Habitually, the decision to empower the warrant officer is personality propelled and subject to the command climate. A respondent notes, “The continuity of a warrant officer sustains integration in the formal and informal systems and processes that facilitate an organization’s effectiveness.”

While another states, “Warrant officers are incredibly professional with a balanced approach. They are able to ground a commander’s bright ideas into reality and provide context that other members of the organization lack.” Essentially, encouraging commanders to consider warrant officers as an equal partner along with their senior enlisted advisors and command sergeant major rank bridges the gap between the officer and non-commissioned officer corps, where frequent turnover creates weaknesses in the organizational memory.

Concurrently, when asked to describe an SF warrant officer, the overwhelming terms include, “experience,” “knowledgeable,” “continuity,” and “competent” military officers who when properly employed are “irreplaceable members of the team, possessing the demeanor and intellect of the officer while providing a depth of operational and technical expertise that would otherwise lack.” Another participant notes, “Warrants are the institutional longevity of the organization. We provide the only memory of how things used to work before whatever the current crisis or focus is.” The warrant officer, regardless of what level they serve, shall aim to provide an organization with a listen, learn, and lead mentality, thus the reason why “warrants are viewed as the forward thinkers of the organization.” While not limited to such, the technical and tactical expertise, maturity, and experience of SF warrant officers is the key ingredient to successful command teams that benefit an organization. In turn, these top-tiered SF warrant officers leverage—or at a minimum, expose their command teams to external resources and doctrinal insights with experience. Moreover, a few participants specifically mention that the regiment should continue to invest in a warrant officer’s undergraduate and graduate programs while considering more opportunity to attend the School of Advanced Military Studies and other advanced civilian educational institutions.

The third consistency, specifically among the officers and senior enlisted, reveals that SF warrant officer roles and responsibilities are vaguely defined. Although much more descriptive than the SEAL CWOs roles and responsibilities, the SF participants state the SF warrant officer’s role should be specific and of value to the organization, therefore, further enhancing the regiment’s effectiveness. One respondent touches on a theme in the survey, stating “Some warrants use the vague description only to perform tasks that they

are good at or like.” While others note there is an ambiguity to what an SF warrant officer is inherently responsible for accomplishing. Conversely, SF warrant officers were presented the same survey questions and surprisingly, an SF warrant officer participant states, “The role should be specific rather than codified with operations and intelligence fusion.” Furthermore, suggesting a “reevaluation and job analysis would determine the knowledge, skills, and abilities that role requires; therefore, adapting the SF warrant officer program to fill that role.”

Although unbeknownst to many, the statement illuminates a shortcoming with the “Warrant Officer MOS Security Requirements Listing,” dated October 1, 2019. Table 1–9 for Security Clearance Code Definitions and Table 6–11 “Warrant Officer MOS Security Requirements Listing”¹²⁵ delineates the 180A – Special Forces Warrant Officer (W2-W5) maintain a secret clearance.¹²⁶ In fact, the Personnel Security Investigation – Center of Excellence and personnel security investigation portal will reject an SF warrant officer’s top-secret request unless a list of clearance verification documents are attached. The *Personnel Security Investigation Portal Requester Guide* provides a list of acceptable clearance verification documents.¹²⁷ The aforementioned dilemma is counter-intuitive to the current SF warrant officer’s defining role and not consistent with the SF officer and SF intelligence sergeant top-secret clearance authorizations. SF warrant officers fill roles across both the operational and intelligence continuum, yet each role and responsibility find the warrant officer immersed with operational planning and intelligence fusion requiring a top-secret clearance.

Beyond the immediate benefits, the survey further highlights a central theme attributed to the deficiencies within the selection process of an SF warrant officer.

¹²⁵ Larry E. Reid, “Smartbook DA PAM 611-21: Warrant Officer Classification System,” (unpublished specific guidance, last modified January 23, 2020), (common access card required), <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-202070>.

¹²⁶ Reid, Table 6–11.

¹²⁷ Department of the Army, *PSIP Requester Guide*, (Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD: Department of the Army, 2020), (common access card required), <https://www.psip.army.mil/Portals/0/References/PSIP%20Requester%20Guide/PSIP%20Requester%20Guide.pdf?ver=2020-08-07-065700-017×tamp=1598033638774>.

Although many comments center on improving the screening process to ensure the regiment is selecting the best applicants, it is also worth noting that several respondents praise the current selection program, and note it is a vast improvement from its predecessor. However, the selection process remains a common theme with predominately the SF senior enlisted who emphasize the goal shall always be selecting the right candidate with the appropriate attributes. One respondent notes, “It is prudent to be more discerning with the selection of SF warrant officer candidates because less experienced or talented personnel undermine the credibility of the warrant officer cohort by executing their duties ineffectively.” For this reason, the warrant officer accessions process is critical, and it is incumbent upon SF professionals to fill the SF warrant officer ranks with the best and brightest soldiers.

More so, operational experience is one underlining variable that participants persistently address. Several participants, including SF warrant officers themselves, express their concern with the three-year SFOD-A requirement, indicating three-years of experience is not sufficient when charged with comprehending the roles and responsibilities of a warrant officer. The predominately preferable timeline ranges from four to five years or more of enlisted experience compared to the current three years. As one participant comments, “Not all SF warrant officers are created equal. We need to have a more defined selection criterion with a continued evaluation and performance metrics.” While other participants address that the selection process should highlight a non-commissioned officer’s experience and expertise to ensure they continue to serve the regiment well into the future.

As previously mentioned, survey participants note the most common terms to describe SF warrant officers are “experience,” “expertise,” and “continuity.” Additionally, these themes are consistent in response to the question, “What benefits have you observed concerning the employment of warrant officers across your organization?” By and large, the Army SF cohort respondents view the warrant officer as a unique breed, who offers unlimited options to support and enhance an organization’s mission, although more so at the operational and tactical levels when afforded the opportunity and employed to their fullest capabilities. Likewise, many respondents address these qualities as pivotal to SF

warrant officers advising commanders, navigating complex problem sets, influencing decisions, providing sound advice across the organization, and networking to enhance the organization further. Therefore, the analysis infers that these attributes are instrumental and intuitive to SF warrant officers' contribution to the ARSOF formation and beyond.

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V. RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

Our ability to understand the operational landscape, adapt quickly and evolve capacity, capabilities and concepts based on operational requirements is one of our great strengths, and these characteristics, I think, are what our nation most expects from us. Dating back to World War II and the Underwater Demolition Teams of the 1940s, we have a long history of transforming and leveraging our capabilities at the time and place of our choosing to provide increased effect. It is who we are. It is what we do.¹²⁸

—Rear Admiral Collin P. Green Commander,
Naval Special Warfare Command, May 21, 2019

A. OVERVIEW

This chapter intends to define the SEAL CWO's value to NSW by highlighting ways of enhancing their selection and employment in order to best contribute to the improvement of NSW's organizational effectiveness. In addressing this issue, the study acknowledges that entrenched organizational culture and complexity, differences in stakeholder opinions, interests, and knowledge gaps increase the level of difficulty in providing clear answers to the problem. For this reason, the authors further recognize that there is no definitive solution to the question, "How should NSW select and employ their SEAL CWOs in order to best contribute to the improvement of NSW's organizational effectiveness?" and therefore, view this complex issue through the lens of a wicked problem. As Brian Head states, "You don't so much 'solve' a wicked problem as you help stakeholders negotiate shared understanding and shared meaning about the problem and its possible solutions. The objective of the work is coherent action, not final solution."¹²⁹

With this intention, the authors are providing recommendations from the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data that examines and compares the selection requirements

¹²⁸ Gourley, "NAVSPECWARCOM Interview."

¹²⁹ Brian W. Head, "Forty Years of Wicked Problems Literature: Forging Closer Links to Policy Studies," *Policy and Society* 38, no. 2 (July 2018): 181–183, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14494035.2018.1488797>.

and employment utilization of U.S. Navy SEAL CWOs and Army SF warrant officers. More importantly, the authors understand the relevance of an individual stakeholder's experiences and perceptions in formulating solutions to problems, and further acknowledge that the value of the responses increases when in alignment with other stakeholders. Thus, by embracing a stakeholder approach, the study casts a wide net across the SEAL and SF enterprises to capture SOF officers, CWOs, warrant officers, and senior enlisted leadership input regarding the SEAL CWO and SF warrant officer communities. However, the research also grasps the social complexity attributed to the diversity of personnel across the organizations who participated in this endeavor and, for this reason, stakeholder involvement and buy-in are critical for change implementation to succeed.¹³⁰

With this in mind, the recommendations below are in alignment with U.S. Navy guidelines and stakeholder feedback and implementation is certainly attainable. Additionally, although these solutions do not ultimately solve the problem within the SEAL CWO community, they do provide a framework and mechanism for coherent action among the stakeholders that will increase the value proposition of the Special Warfare Technician and consequently improve NSW's organizational effectiveness.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Tactically Employ

a. Findings

The employment study reveals that in general, SEAL CWOs do not fulfill tactical roles and responsibilities, but instead are primarily assigned in an operations and training staff or managerial role. The survey data further supports this conclusion with only 26% of SEAL officers and 16% of SEAL senior enlisted agreeing with the proposition, "warrant officers perform tactical duties and responsibilities in my organization." Equally important, a common theme among the survey participant comments indicates that SEAL CWOs should be employed tactically, specifically at the troop or platoon level within a team.

¹³⁰ Jeffrey Conklin, *Dialogue Mapping: Building Shared Understanding of Wicked Problems* (West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons, 2006), 5–6.

In stark contrast, the research determines that SF warrant officers are employed tactically from WO1 to CW2 as SFOD-A ADCs. Additionally, the survey results support this evidence with 73% of SF officers and 59% of SF senior enlisted survey participants in agreement that SF warrant officers perform tactical duties and responsibilities. Of significance, the data also indicates that the SF warrant officer's role in the tactical ADC position does provide high value to the SF organization. Moreover, the survey results highlight that the SF community in general, believes warrant officers provide more value to their organization in comparison to NSW's SEAL CWOs. Additionally, the analysis depicts a strong correlation between the value a SEAL CWO or SF warrant officer provides to their organization and their performance of tactical duties and responsibilities.

b. Recommendation

Given these findings, the research concludes that NSW will increase the value of Special Warfare Technicians, and enhance organizational effectiveness, by employing newly commissioned CWOs tactically within the maneuver elements of NSW teams. Therefore, the authors recommend employing CWO2s and CWO3s at the tactical level within troops or platoons.

2. Specialize in the Unique and Technical Fields

a. Findings

As Chapter III describes, the research also finds that SEAL CWOs are employed across a broad spectrum of NSW. *The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook* supports this finding stating, "The proven way to get ahead is through sustained superior performance, across a myriad of tough assignments ... By varying assignments in authorized billets, NSW CWOs strengthen their resumes while gaining increased functional skills, abilities, and managerial experiences."¹³¹ Similarly, the 715X career pattern sheet notes that SEAL CWOs, "direct personnel in the execution of full

¹³¹ Kelz, *The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook*, 41.

spectrum special operations in every environment and every theater.”¹³² Equally important, many SEAL officers and senior enlisted survey comments recommend SEAL CWOs specialize and fulfill roles as subject matter experts within unique fields, as they are currently too diverse across the NSW enterprise. In contrast, the study shows that the Army’s SF warrant officers do not value diversity, but instead specialize in SW and operations and intelligence fusion, which is codified in the “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3.”¹³³

Although SEAL CWOs value employment diversity, this priority runs contrary to a Navy CWO’s role of performing duties that are limited in scope, technically oriented, repetitive, and not affected by rank advancement.¹³⁴ This conclusion is drawn from the understanding that a CWO who diversifies is fulfilling duties that are broader in scope versus limited in scope. In addition, a CWO who continues to diversify will have difficulty remaining in the same assignment for repetitive tours. Consequently, a CWO who does not stay for successive assignments will have trouble acquiring the knowledge to become an expert in a particular field, and therefore, may not be fulfilling technically oriented roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, encouraging diversity “as the proven way to get ahead” and to “strengthen their resumes” contradicts *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook’s* description of CWO duties, which attempts to incentivize commands to retain CWOs for successive tours regardless of advancement in their rank.¹³⁵ Additionally, the analysis illuminates a strong relationship in responses between those who do not believe SEAL CWOs provide value to NSW and their disagreement with the proposition, “warrant officers fill technical specialist positions in my organization.”

¹³² Navy Personnel Command, “LDO/CWO Career Pattern Sheets/Guidebook.”

¹³³ Mctigue, “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3,” 3.

¹³⁴ Department of the Navy, *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook*, 2–4.

¹³⁵ Department of the Navy, 2–4.

b. Recommendations

Given these findings, the study concludes that NSW will raise the value of SEAL CWOs and improve organizational effectiveness by fostering specialization instead of diversification and by employing Special Warfare Technicians in more technical fields. The authors recommend revisions to SEAL CWO employment to discourage diversity and align more with Navy CWO guidelines. In addition, the thesis advises developing and utilizing Special Warfare Technicians as skill-set subject matter experts who fulfill duties that are limited in scope, and within the unique and technical fields of NSW, such as the SDV Teams and SRTs.

3. Phase into the Technically Oriented SDV Teams and SRTs

a. Findings

The study shows that junior SEAL CWOs currently fill the operations warrant officer position at a SEAL Team and that this assignment is both non-tactical and non-technical. However, Chapter III, Figure 5 depicts the “FY-21 SECNAV Approved CWO (Surface) General Career Progression,” which describes the valued career credentials for a CWO, as assignments that are “increasingly technical and tactical” or serving as a “technical/tactical specialist.”¹³⁶ Similarly, *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook* describes their primary intended employment as “technical specialists.”¹³⁷

Of importance, the analysis also highlights that the value of a CWO in the SEAL Team operations position is questionable. Specifically, SEAL respondents cannot identify this assignment as one where CWOs provide the most or least value. Additionally, as noted in prior findings, SEAL officers and senior enlisted recommend that SEAL CWOs be more specialized and tactically employed, much like their SF counterparts. More importantly, the analysis infers a strong relationship between the value a SEAL CWO provides to NSW

¹³⁶ Navy Personnel Command, “Community Briefs.”

¹³⁷ Department of the Navy, *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook*, 2–3

and their performance of tactical duties. Furthermore, the study illuminates another strong correlation between those who disagree that SEAL CWOs fill technical specialist assignments and their level of agreement that CWOs perform tactical roles and responsibilities.

b. Recommendation

In view of these findings, the research determines that Special Warfare Technicians are not fully optimized in the SEAL Team operations position and will offer greater value and enhance NSW's organizational effectiveness by filling a different assignment as tactical/technical specialists. Therefore, the authors recommend phasing CWO2s and CWO3s out of the SEAL Team operations assignment, and instead, employing them in the tactical units of the more technical and skill-specific SDV Teams and SRTs.

4. Retain for Repetitive Tours

a. Findings

The survey analysis reveals that SEAL CWOs may not be remaining at the same command for repetitive tours; on the contrary, the findings infer that SF warrant officers generally remain on station longer and abide by prescribed guidelines to a greater degree than their SEAL CWO counterparts. Additionally, although the analysis shows that a high percentage of SF respondents agree that SF warrant officers remain at the same command for repetitive tours, they also recommend their warrant officers stay at the SFOD-A tactical level for even longer periods. Many survey respondent comments suggest that the SF community abide by the DA-PAM 600-3, and have junior warrant officers remain as an SFOD-A ADC for six years rather than removing them early for follow-on assignments. Lastly, as previously stated, the SF community believes their warrant officers provide high value in the tactical ADC position, and the analysis further highlights a strong relationship between the respondents who believe SF warrant officers provide value in this assignment and their ability to stay on station for repetitive tours.

Importantly, the following documents state that U.S. Navy CWOs should or are intended to remain at the same command for repetitive tours or assignments:

- *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook*
- “FY-21 SECNAV Approved CWO (Surface) General Career Progression”
- *The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook*
- *FY-21 Active-Duty Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer In-Service Procurement Board*

More specifically, *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook* states, “Because CWO assignments are often repetitive in nature, they continue to grow in experience, knowledge, and value to the Navy as they progress through the warrant officer ranks.”¹³⁸

b. Recommendations

Considering these findings, the study determines that NSW will improve SEAL CWOs’ value and subsequently increase organizational effectiveness by having CWOs remain on station for repetitive assignments. Therefore, the authors recommend ensuring Special Warfare Technicians follow the intended U.S. Navy CWO’s utilization, which entails retaining them for repetitive tours. More specifically, employ SEAL CWO2s and CWO3s in a tactical position within the same command for a minimum of six years, and employ CWO4s for a minimum of four years at an NSW staff assignment within the same command.

5. Revise and Narrow Qualification Selection Criteria

a. Findings

The thesis also finds that NSW’s current CWO selection criteria values applicants who possess a wide range of leadership and advanced training qualifications. Explicitly, the “FY-21 Active Duty LDO/CWO Primary Discrete Requirements” for the 715X

¹³⁸ Department of the Navy, *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook*, 2–4.

designator states, “The objective is to select operationally proven leaders possessing a wide variety of supervisory skills such as, but not limited to ...”¹³⁹ In contrast, the Army SF community does not value a broad range of qualifications, but instead requires only Achilles Dagger as the sole tactical certification for their warrant officer applicants. Moreover, the value SF places on Achilles Dagger aligns with the importance the community places on specialization within the SW and operations and intelligence fusion realms and supports the SF warrant officer’s role of being an “expert” in a given specialty.

On the contrary, the value NSW places on a broad spectrum of certifications runs counter to a CWO’s primary purpose as defined in *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook*¹⁴⁰ and *The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook*,¹⁴¹ which describes them as “technical specialists” that perform duties that are “technically oriented” and “limited in scope.” Additionally, as previously stated, a recurring theme among SEAL officers and SEAL senior enlisted respondents indicates a lack of specialization among the SEAL CWO cohort.

Furthermore, the survey analysis attempts to determine the advanced training qualifications future CWO applicants should possess in order to apply to the SEAL CWO program. Notably, the results depict master training specialist and dive supervisor as the primary certifications, and therefore, the findings conclude that in general NSW considers these qualifications important for SEAL CWO applicants to possess.

b. Recommendations

Given these results, the research also concludes that NSW will increase organizational effectiveness and advance the 715X program by narrowing the qualifications the SEAL community values for selection. Therefore, the thesis recommends revising the 715X advanced qualification selection criteria to align with the Navy CWO’s

¹³⁹ Department of the Navy, “FY-21 Active Duty LDO/CWO Primary Discrete Requirements,” 5.

¹⁴⁰ Department of the Navy, *The Limited Duty Officer and Chief Warrant Officer Professional Guidebook*, 2–3–2–4.

¹⁴¹ Kelz, *The Naval Special Warfare Chief Warrant Officer Career Playbook*, 19.

intended primary employment guidance, which is that of a technical specialist, who fills assignments that are limited in scope. More specifically, the authors advise placing value on only two or three qualifications or areas of expertise that are narrow in scope and technically and tactically based. Lastly, to align with the study's employment recommendation of further developing and employing Special Warfare Technicians as specialists in the unique and technically skill-oriented SDV Teams and SRTs, the research recommends prioritizing applicants who possess not only the master training specialist certification but also undersea and special activities qualifications.

6. Maintain E-7 Minimum Rank Selection Requirement

a. Findings

Currently, E-7 is the minimum rank required to apply for the SEAL CWO program and E-6 is the necessary rank to apply for the SF warrant officer program. In addition, the analysis highlights that both SEAL and SF survey participants overwhelmingly prefer E-7 over the ranks of E-6 or E-8 as the minimum rank prerequisite. Therefore, the findings suggest SEALs do not seek changes to this current requirement. In contrast, SF desires a modification by recommending an increase in rank from E-6 to E-7.

b. Recommendation

Subsequently, the research infers both SOF organizations desire their CWO and warrant officer candidates to be more senior and experienced. The authors recommend maintaining E-7 as the minimum rank required to apply for the 715X program.

7. Maintain E-9 Maximum Rank Selection Requirement

a. Findings

Applicants for both the U.S. Navy's CWO program and the Army's warrant officer program can be E-9 in rank. However, an E-9 SEAL applicant can have no more than 22 years of time-in-service, and if selected, will commission as a CWO3 and therefore limits and may negate his time in a DIVO assignment. Additionally, the selection of E-9 candidates also removes the most highly qualified and experienced SEALs and SF personnel from the U.S. Navy and Army's enlisted ranks. Nevertheless, SEAL survey

respondents prefer E-9 to be the maximum rank requirement, followed by E-8. Whereas, SF participants indicate the opposite, believing that E-8 should be the maximum rank, followed by E-9.

b. Recommendations

These results lead to the recommendation of maintaining the rank of E-9 as the maximum rank required to apply for the 715X program. However, the authors advise strong scrutinization of E-9 applicants to ensure NSW's overall best interests are considered, and that the commissioning of an E-9 outweighs removing his significant experience, credentials, and qualifications from the enlisted ranks.

8. Maintain LCPO Selection Requirement

a. Findings

NSW currently requires SEAL CWO applicants to complete an LCPO assignment of either a SEAL, SDV, or SRT platoon, or NSWDC team; the findings highlight that SEAL officers, CWOs, and senior enlisted strongly believe this should remain a prerequisite to apply for the 715X program. Subsequently, given that SEALs who complete an LCPO assignment typically have greater than ten-years of NSW operational experience, the analysis further concludes that the SEAL community desires a more operationally experienced applicant. Furthermore, this preference aligns with the study's prior finding that SEALs desire the more senior and experienced E-7 rank to remain a minimum application requirement. Moreover, SF respondents imply a need for revisions by recommending an extension to the current SFOD-A operational experience requirement from 36-months to either 48-months or 60-months.

b. Recommendation

The analysis concludes that both SEAL and SF communities strongly favor greater operational experience as a key attribute for SEAL CWO and SF warrant officer applicants. Therefore, the authors recommend maintaining the current application requirement of completing an LCPO assignment of a SEAL, SDV, or SRT platoon or NSWDC team.

9. Ownership of the Selection Process

a. Findings

Importantly, Chapter IV of this thesis reveals that the credibility of SEAL CWO selection is in doubt. Despite these results, the analysis of the survey data determines that most of the current selection requirements should remain intact. Additionally, many survey comments indicate that the problem does not rest with the current requirements, but instead with a portion of SEAL applicants, who, despite not being the best qualified, still receive favorable officer interview appraisals, favorable recommendations from their commanding officers, and are subsequently chosen by the selection board.

However, this thesis can only suggest the minimum requirements that are needed to apply for the SEAL CWO program, as it is beyond this research's scope to define how a U.S. Navy selection board should be conducted to ensure the best qualified applicants are chosen for the 715X program. It is also beyond this study's purview to determine what factors influence officers to provide favorable interview appraisals, or a commanding officer's decision to recommend an individual for selection. Furthermore, the burden of recommendation and selection of the SEALs who meet these minimum requirements is placed on the officers who deliver the interview appraisals, the commanding officers who provide the recommendations, and the officers who comprise the selection board.

b. Recommendations

Given these findings, and to provide optimal value to NSW, it is imperative that expert screening occurs at the command level to guarantee the selection of only the best qualified applicants. Furthermore, NSW should ensure SEAL officers, who have the unique privilege of interviewing applicants for the 715X program, are recommending only the best qualified SEALs. Likewise, commanding officers who have the unique privilege of writing letters of recommendation should ensure they are also recommending only the best qualified candidates.

Moreover, NSW should encourage all SEALs to take ownership of the selection process within their commands. If an applicant is not the best qualified then the officers who sit on the interview appraisal boards and the commanding officer who writes the letter

of recommendation need to be made aware of the applicant's shortfalls and be given candid feedback on his capabilities as a leader and SEAL operator.

C. CONCLUSION

The primary objective of this thesis is to determine the SEAL CWO's value proposition to NSW and deliver recommendations to enhance the selection and employment of SEAL CWOs in order to best contribute to the improvement of NSW's organizational effectiveness. The research reveals that the Special Warfare Technician's current value proposition is the following: a SEAL CWO delivers experience, expertise, and knowledge to the NSW force. However, the implementation of this thesis' solutions will enhance the SEAL CWO's value and subsequently produce this proposition: a SEAL CWO is a unique, technical, and tactical specialist who delivers continuity, experience, expertise, and knowledge to the NSW force. Certainly, this is the value proposition NSW expects.

Additionally, in Chapter II, the research argues that organizational effectiveness should be defined through the human relations model of Quinn and Rohrbaugh's competing values framework,¹⁴² which places organizational focus internally on its people, the stakeholders, while providing structural flexibility. As stakeholders, SEAL CWOs have a stake in the performance of NSW, aide in fulfilling the organization's strategy, forming the structure, driving the processes, and determining organizational success or failure. Therefore, implementation of the thesis' recommendations will place focus on stakeholder enhancement by increasing the selection quality of SEAL CWOs, optimizing their utilization, and consequently raising their value and improving NSW's organizational effectiveness.

Lastly, through Force Optimization, NSW continues to advance Vision 2030 and adapt to an ever-changing and ambiguous international environment. To provide optimal value to U.S. SOF, this endeavor will require the expert selection and utilization of SEAL CWOs. This research hopes to provide the mechanism for coherent action among relevant

¹⁴² Quinn and Rohrbaugh, "A Competing Values Approach to Organizational Effectiveness," 131.

stakeholders to address the selection and employment shortfalls within the 715X program and produce the value proposition NSW expects from their SEAL CWOs. To reiterate Rear Admiral Green, “we have a long history of transforming and leveraging our capabilities at the time and place of our choosing to provide increased effect. It is who we are. It is what we do.”¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Gourley, “NAVSPECWARCOM Interview.”

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APPENDIX A. SURVEY QUESTIONS

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Warrant officers provide value to my organization.					
My organization does an excellent job of selecting future warrant officers.					
Warrant officers fill positions that officers and senior enlisted cannot fill.					
Warrant officers are better suited for the positions they currently fill than officers or senior enlisted.					
Warrant officers fill technical specialist positions in my organization.					
Warrant officers perform tactical duties and responsibilities in my organization.					
Warrant officers within my organization remain at the same command for repetitive tours/ assignments.					

1. What should be the minimum enlisted rank required before submitting a warrant officer application?
2. What should be the maximum enlisted rank required before submitting a warrant officer application?
3. What specific advanced training qualifications should future warrant officer candidates possess in order to apply to your organization's warrant officer program?
4. What should be the minimum qualifications and operational experience required before submitting a warrant officer application?
5. What specific areas of technical expertise should future warrant officer candidates be proficient in order to apply to your organization's warrant officer program?
6. What positions do warrant officers currently provide the most value across your organization?
7. Why do warrant officers assigned to these positions provide the most value across your organization?
8. What positions do warrant officers currently provide the least value across your organization?
9. Why do warrant officers assigned to these positions provide the least value across your organization?
10. What positions within your organization could warrant officers provide the most value, but currently do not?
11. What benefits have you observed concerning the employment of warrant officers across your organization?
12. How would you enhance the employment of warrant officers across your organization?

13. Provide three (3) adjectives to describe a warrant officer's value/contribution to your organization.
14. Has this survey failed to address a particular aspect of warrant officer selection and employment?

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APPENDIX B. ARMY SPECIAL FORCES RECOMMENDATIONS

Our people are our advantage—their strength, agility, and lethality are the foundation of Army Special Operations. We must invest in our Soldiers, Civilians, and Families through modern programs and policies that will attract, retain, and sustain our force.¹⁴⁴

—Lieutenant General Francis M. Beaudette

A. OVERVIEW

Military leaders must prepare for the next two decades of global trends and conflicts as power shifts to individuals, networks, and coalitions in a multi-power world, as the 21st Century poses significant and ominous challenges to our national security and SOF's ability to compete in the great power arena. The USSOCOM enterprise is comprised of leaders who are competent and decisively ready to conduct a full range of military operations. In turn, the Army SF warrant officer cohort spans more than three-decades and possesses the attributes to adapt to more lethal, trans-regionally integrated, and contested domains. However, in this era of individual empowerment and diffusion of power, military leaders will continue to tackle ill-defined problems that have a myriad of divergent solution sets—"wicked problems." As social scientist Brian Head states, "You don't so much 'solve' a wicked problem as you help stakeholders negotiate shared understanding and shared meaning about the problem and its possible solutions. The objective of the work is coherent action, not final solution."¹⁴⁵

The entrenchment of problems across organizational cultures and complexity, differences in stakeholder opinions, interests, and knowledge gaps exacerbates the level of difficulty in providing clear answers to the problem. Within this ever-changing environment, ARSOF must champion and cultivate designers and exercise their

¹⁴⁴ Francis M. Beaudette, "Army Special Operations 2020" (official memorandum, Fort Bragg, NC: United States Army Special Operations Command, 2020), https://www.soc.mil/AssortedPages/OpGuidance_Priorities.pdf.

¹⁴⁵ Head, "Forty Years of Wicked Problems Literature," 183.

stakeholder claims accustom to skillfully taking the complexity out of problems. To that end, this appendix intends to define the SF warrant officer's value to ARSOF by highlighting ways to enhance the cohort's selection and employment criteria to best contribute to the improvement of ARSOF's organizational effectiveness.

Concurrently, the SF warrant officer cohort comprises of professionals who deal in a currency of trust and loyalty, which equates to sophisticated thinkers and creative problem solvers who use these skills to overcome the conceptual blocks that obscure viable strategies. Likewise, internal designers work with organizational stakeholders to determine sustainable initiatives that capitalize on information and services. These SOF professionals resemble seasoned designers who consistently assess an organization by displaying introspective knowledge to overcome bureaucratic and erratic risks for the well-being of the organization. Brian Head further notes, "policy design" emphasizes creativity, innovation, and learning dimensions to support policy alternatives.¹⁴⁶ However, organizations tend to fragment issues that often lead to supplemental "wicked problems." The complexity of issues across an array of organizations, whether commercial or governmental, requires research knowledge, practitioner knowledge, and experiences that complement the dynamics of human behavior and overall organizational effectiveness.¹⁴⁷

Furthermore, the SF warrant officer cohort understands that for the SF Regiment to succeed, they must institute human resource policies and structure that support the 2018 National Defense Strategy and USASOC strategies, while prioritizing talent management development, job satisfaction, and well-being. To accomplish this endeavor, the cohort continually assesses policies that instill individual autonomy, accountability, ownership, identity, purpose, and spirit, creating a cultural mindset of excellence. In general, talent management is essential for readiness and must balance the needs of the organization with the needs and desires of the individual. Ultimately, talent management aims to accurately select and employ the right warrant officer who assumes the right position at the right time

¹⁴⁶ Head, 186.

¹⁴⁷ Head, 186.

in their career. Focusing on people results in strategic and procedural success, which in turn leads to enhanced organizational effectiveness.

This thesis examines the significance of the SEAL CWO and the comparison of the current selection criteria and employment utilization of two groups of warrant officers within USSOCOM. These professional officers include U.S. Navy SEAL CWOs and Army SF warrant officers (180As). The research further aims to analyze SEAL and Army SF officers, senior enlisted, warrant officer, and CWO input to identify the positives and negatives of the SEAL CWO program and review the most relevant data to determine potential implementation changes. Beyond satisfying the primary research objectives, the collective survey feedback and collaboration among NSW and ARSOF identifies several key topics requisite of further consideration. The research illuminates the significant potential of sustaining and growing similar opportunities in the future. While not limited to such, the technical-tactical expertise, maturity, and experience of SF warrant officers shall continue to evaluate their own and ensure the selection and employment of highly skilled professionals remains relevant for the foreseeable future. In turn, these top-tiered SF professional officers will leverage—or at minimum, expose their organizations to joint force components and intergovernmental agencies.

Through gathered quantitative and qualitative data, this research identifies that military organizations continue to show a common pattern of awareness and attempts to resolve plaguing symptoms through collective efforts. To effectively frame the problem, SF warrant officers are both stakeholders and design thinkers. There is a saying within the special operations community that people are more important than hardware, and as stakeholders, they fulfill the strategy, form the structure, drive the processes, and contribute to the calculated institutional success or failure. The SF warrant officer cohort embraces a stakeholder approach to organizational effectiveness, which, according to Richard Daft, focuses on a group of people that hold a stake in the performance of an organization.¹⁴⁸

The recommendations below are in alignment with U.S. Army guidelines, stakeholder feedback, and implementation is certainly attainable. Additionally, although

¹⁴⁸ Daft, *Essentials of Organization Theory and Design*, 27.

the current selection and employment models are predominantly successful, the following solutions do provide a framework and mechanism for coherent action among the stakeholders. While the Army SF warrant officer value proposition increases, the meaningful improvement of ARSOF's organizational effectiveness at all levels across the operational continuum is attainable.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Revise SF Warrant Officer Minimum Rank Selection Requirement

a. Findings

Currently, E-6 is the minimum rank requirement to apply for the SF warrant officer program and E-7 is the necessary rank to apply for the SEAL CWO program. Notably, the analysis highlights that both SF and SEAL survey participants overwhelmingly prefer E-7 over the rank of E-6 as the minimum rank prerequisite. Therefore, the findings suggest the SF community does seek changes to this current requirement.

b. Recommendation

As the majority of SF respondents desire a modification by recommending an increase in rank from E-6 to E-7, recommend a reassessment of the E-6 minimum rank requirement to apply for the 180A program, and changing the minimum rank to E-7.

2. Define SF Warrant Officer Maximum Rank Selection Requirement

a. Findings

Applicants for both the U.S. Navy's CWO program and the U.S. Army's warrant officer program can be E-9 in rank. However, Navy CWO applicants who advance to E-9 must have at least 14 and no more than 22 years of time-in-service. The U.S. Army Recruiting Command SF prerequisites and duty description state a candidate must be an E-6 or above with no maximum rank delineation.¹⁴⁹ Aspiring SF qualified applicants must meet all U.S. Army administrative requirements and feeder MOS (180A) prerequisites to

¹⁴⁹ U.S. Army Recruiting Command, "Warrant Officer Prerequisites and Duty Description: 180A – Special Forces Warrant Officer."

become an SF warrant officer. For instance, an Army SF warrant officer; technician applicant must have 12 years of AFS or less prior to the signature date on the Department of the Army Form 61, Application for Appointment.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, an SF qualified service member must be less than 46 years of age and meet the medical fitness standards for SF duty and commission within 12 months of the desired selection board.¹⁵¹ Although the transition from E-9 to warrant officer is not customary in Army SF, the current prerequisites afford aspiring candidates the option to explore and pursue lateral and forward career opportunities within guidelines and limited waiver availability. The U.S. Army Recruiting Command official website notes the standard for approving an AFS waiver or exception to the policy is more stringent than for a prerequisite waiver or exception to the policy.¹⁵² Although the current prerequisites are broad and require an applicant to navigate multiple documents (e.g., DA PAM 600-3, Smartbook DA PAM 600-3) and websites, candidates are encouraged to request AFS and age waivers. Even though the U.S. Army Recruiting Command indicates Headquarters Department of the Army, G-1, is the approval authority, the Commanding General, U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School is delegated the final waiver authority for all SF course prerequisites, qualification requirements, and branch-transfer requirements.¹⁵³

Given these factors, the survey analysis attempts to determine the maximum rank required to apply to the SF warrant officer program. Notably, the results reveal a healthy response rate from the SF participants that suggest E-8 should be the maximum enlisted rank.

¹⁵⁰ U.S. Army Recruiting Command, “Warrant Officer Prerequisites and Duty Description: 180A – Special Forces Warrant Officer.”

¹⁵¹ U.S. Army Recruiting Command, “Warrant Officer Prerequisites and Duty Description: 180A – Special Forces Warrant Officer.”

¹⁵² U.S. Army Recruiting Command, “Warrant Officer Prerequisites and Duty Description: 180A – Special Forces Warrant Officer.”

¹⁵³ Mctigue, “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3,” 18.

b. Recommendation

In general, the findings show that SF considers this to be the most senior rank for an SF warrant officer applicant. Therefore, suggest a revision of the 180A minimum prerequisites to reflect an E-8 maximum rank, and also consider clearly annotating that an aspiring candidate must have 12 years of AFS or less on the SF warrant officer prerequisites and duty description website and “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3.”

3. Increase SFOD-A Operational Experience Selection Criteria

a. Findings

SF currently requires warrant officer applicants to complete 36-months of experience on an SFOD-A, including official documentation in the form of a Department of the Army Form 2166-8 (Non-Commissioned Officer Evaluation Report). The findings highlight that SF officers, warrant officers, and senior enlisted strongly believe the selection criteria should increase to either 48-months or 60-months. Subsequently, given that SF enlisted who previously serve with a conventional force have nearly eight to ten-years of military experience, the analysis further concludes the SF community desires a more operationally experienced applicant. Two anomalies to this system exist, one being the SF 18X program, where a soldier has no prior military service, and the other being an active duty SF officer (18A) seeking a transition to 180A. The U.S. Army Recruiting Command, SF Warrant Officer prerequisites and duty description website states 18As must complete 24-months utilization as an SFOD-A detachment commander. Notably, SF Proponent Manager closely monitors 18A to 180A transition application packets prescribed according to annual authorizations.

This preference aligns with the study’s previous findings that Green Berets desire the more senior and experienced E-7 minimum rank prerequisite. In comparison, SEAL CWO applicants must complete a platoon/team LCPO assignment equating to greater than ten-years of NSW operational experience.

b. Recommendation

As the study concludes that both SEAL and SF communities strongly favor greater operational experience as a critical attribute for SF warrant officers and SEAL CWO applicants, the authors advise reassessing the 36-months experience on an SFOD-A, and consider adopting a minimum of 48-months or 60-months experience at the SFOD-A/E/G levels.

4. Optimize SF Warrant Officer SFOD-A Employment

a. Findings

The employment study reveals that survey participants note the most common terms to describe SF warrant officers are “experience,” “expertise,” and “continuity.” Additionally, these themes are consistent in response to the question asked, “What benefits have you observed concerning the employment of warrant officers across your organization?” By and large, the Army SF cohort respondents view the warrant officer as a unique breed, a Soldier who offers unlimited options to support and enhance an organization’s mission, although more so at the tactical and operational levels when afforded the opportunity and employed to their fullest capabilities.

Of note, like Chapter III, Figure 8 depicts, SF WO1s - CW2s serve at the detachment for a minimum of three years but preferably six years. However, the results indicate that SF warrant officers perform tactical duties and responsibilities, thus the reasoning why several respondents indicate SF warrant officers provide the most value at the SFOD-A level. When presented with the proposition, “What positions do warrant officers currently provide the most value across Army SF,” 80% of SF officers, 90% of SF warrant officers, and 73% of SF senior enlisted overwhelmingly indicate the ADC position is the most valued. Notably, the analysis indicates that over 72% of all SF respondents favor the SFOD-A ADC position, and none of the groups place it near the top of their least valuable assignments for SF warrant officers. Therefore, the data reveals that, in general, SF treasures SFOD-A ADC capacity.

From an organizational stakeholder perspective, SF warrant officer shortages present challenges to the organizational culture and complexity. Most importantly, the

findings capitalize on the data analysis and common qualitative theme among the survey participant comments. Comments indicate SF warrant officers will enhance organizational effectiveness while employed tactically and more specifically for longer durations at the SFOD-A and company operations level within the organization. Therefore, the study indicates the Army SF community values its warrant officers at the tactical level, emphasizing the core principles of SW and operations and intelligence fusion, which “Smartbook DA PAM 600-3: SF Branch” codifies.

The findings further show two possible explanations for why the SFOD-A ADC position offers the most value: SF warrant officers remain in this assignment for repetitive tours, and the role requires the performance of tactical duties and responsibilities. Specifically, the study illuminates a strong relationship between the SF participants who view the ADC assignment as where warrant officers provide the most value and their performance of tactical duties and ability to remain on station for successive tours. Of importance, the current trend encumbers the continuity sought after by units of action at the tactical (SFOD-A/B) levels, which highlights the research data analysis. Therefore, without violating a SOF truth, “SOF cannot be mass-produced,” the findings and recommendations illuminate the significance a WO1 - CW2 SF warrant officer provides to a warfighting organization at the SFOD-A level.

It is of note that several survey respondents opted to expand on their comments, highlighting that this new generation of SF warrant officers lack the opportunity to provide these unique characteristics. SFOD-A ADC voids attribute to this perception and are becoming more prevalent due to SF warrant officers that must fill vacancies in higher staff positions. Compounding the issue are requirements to attend extensive and lengthy specialty and advanced schooling focused on the SFOD-A/G/E utilization or assuming a singleton role as a task-organized SOF liaison element.

b. Recommendation

Given this analysis, the researchers recommend retaining mid-level and senior-level CW2s at the SFOD-A ADC level even if it results in vacant utilization assignments outside the SF Regiment or elsewhere within the greater SOF enterprise. The authors also

advise restructuring the grade plate requirements for SF warrant officers and solidify the SF ADC billet for WO1 - CW3. By doing so, this affords an SF warrant officer enough time on an SFOD-A, including SFOD-E/G levels, to provide the detachment, team, or regional support element the expected experience, tactical expertise, and continuity—thereby preserving institutional knowledge and employing combat power.

C. CONCLUSION

Warrant officers are a unique breed and offer unlimited options to support and improve the accomplishment of the DOD's mission, whatever that may be. Contrary to some, the warrant officer formation is one of the few, if not only, positions in the DOD inventory specially trained and designated to mentor superior, subordinates, and peers alike. They do so at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. Their time in service renders them a cost-effective option. By and large, warrant officers' careers span a much more extended period than that of their officer and non-commissioned officer contemporaries. As USSOCOM struggles with recruiting and retention goals, they are adapting to a more lethal, trans-regionally integrated, and contested domains that incur the costs associated with such. Although not explicitly focused on SF warrant officer selection and employment, this research highlights areas worthy of consideration.

The primary objective of the appendix recommendations is to further enhance the SF warrant officer's value proposition to ARSOF and enhance the selection and employment of SF 180As to best contribute to the development of ARSOF's overall organizational effectiveness. The research reveals that SF warrant officer's current value proposition is the following: an SF 180A provides experience, expertise, knowledge, and continuity to ARSOF formations. However, the authors contend that the implementation of this thesis' solutions will further enhance the SF 180A's value, strength, agility, and lethality. Subsequently, producing this proposition: an SF warrant officer is an adaptive and seasoned leader who excels in SW, with the ability to perform as a staff officer in the sphere of operations and intelligence fusion across the special operations continuum. Indeed, this is the value proposition USASOC, SF Regiment, and USSOCOM expects.

Additionally, in Chapter II, the research contends organizational effectiveness should be defined through the human relations model of Quinn and Rohrbaugh's competing values framework,¹⁵⁴ which places organizational focus internally on its people, the stakeholders while providing structural flexibility. As stakeholders, SF warrant officers retain a stake in the performance of ARSOF, aide in fulfilling the organization's strategy, forming the structure, driving the processes, and determining organizational success or failure. Therefore, implementation of the recommendations will improve the selection quality of SF 180A candidates, optimize their utilization, enhance their value, and consequently improve USASOC's organizational effectiveness. To reiterate Lieutenant General Beaudette's statement, "Our people are our advantage ... We must invest in our Soldiers, Civilians, and Families through modern programs and policies that will attract, retain, and sustain our force."¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Quinn and Rohrbaugh, "A Competing Values Approach to Organizational Effectiveness," 131.

¹⁵⁵ Beaudette, "Army Special Operations 2020."

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