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## V CORPS AIR DEFENDERS PIN NEW INSIGNIA ON WARRANT OFFICERS

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69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade Public Affairs Office

**GIEBELSTADT ARMY AIRFIELD, Germany --** Warrant officers of V Corps' 69th Air Defense Artillery Brigade replaced the "rising eagle" warrant officer insignia on their uniforms with their respective branch insignia at a ceremony here July 9 -- the 86th anniversary of the Army Warrant Officer Corps.



CAPT J. ADAM FALK

Col. R. Kirk Lawrence, commander of V Corps' 69th ADA Brigade, replaces the 'rising eagle' insignia of the Army's Warrant Officer Corps on the collar of Chief Warrant Officer Orville L. Wilson, the brigade's support operations officer, with ordnance branch insignia during a ceremony at Giebelstadt Army Airfield, Germany July 9.

The Army Total Leadership Development Program, a self-assessment focused on the training and leadership requirements for the Army, dictated that warrant officers begin wearing the insignia of the respective branches to which they are assigned.

The study concluded that the Army must make fundamental changes to the warrant officer corps to support a growing spectrum of operations. By

wearing the branch insignia of commissioned officers, the warrant officer corps moves one step closer to full integration with the officer corps.

Col. R. Kirk Lawrence, the 69th's commander, pinned the new branch insignia on each of the nearly 40 warrant officers in the brigade and then discussed the benefits of this evolution to the group.

"We are transforming, and this marks the first visible step in the transformation of the training, education and development of warrant officers," remarked Lawrence. "You will not be visibly set apart anymore. This is one team."

Lawrence continued by explaining that roles of each grade of warrant officer would be more specific and defined, just as there are specific roles for lieutenants and captains.

"The training and skills will be related to grade and position, rather than linked to promotion," said Lawrence.

Most importantly, he said, the warrant officer education system will be enveloped by the officer education system.

"The system will be synchronized so that you will have education opportunities that are similar and along the same paths as other commissioned officers...We can't underestimate the difference that's going to make in the future of the training and education system of the warrant officer corps. I think it's going to produce warrant officers who are even better trained than they are today," Lawrence stated.

"But it is just as important to mention what doesn't change. What doesn't change is that warrant officers are going to continue to be our second brain. You are going to continue to be the pre-eminent technical experts in your respective fields. And you're going to continue to mentor commanders, leaders and noncommissioned officers, making sure we don't get in trouble and screw things up -- as long as we listen."

Warrant officers attending the ceremony said they felt reluctant to change, but realized the benefits for the warrant officer corps and the Army.

"It's a significant change, and I think more people than not hate to see [the rising eagle] go in the warrant officer corps," said Chief Warrant Officer James P. Morris, 6th Battalion, 52nd ADA battalion readiness officer.

"We're starting a transformation where the warrant officer corps will begin to be more in line with the officer corps. That means more education opportunities...This will ensure that warrant officers are more prepared for the staff roles we fill," said Morris.

"Currently it takes approximately eight years from the time a [Warrant Officer 1] leaves the (warrant officer) basic course before returning for the advanced course as a [Chief Warrant Officer 2]. In that time, warrant officers who haven't been to the advanced course fill staff positions. Normally, officers will always go to school before they fill their staff positions," explained Morris.

Resistance to change, the warrants say, comes largely from the sense of community within the warrant officers corps that the eagle rising symbolized.

"We hope the change doesn't separate us, and it won't. We're strong enough that it won't matter what insignia we'll be wearing. All warrant officers will still be warrant officers," said Chief Warrant Officer James Wilke, system technician for the 69th's E Battery, 5th Battalion, 7th ADA. "We'll still be united just by being warrant officers."

