

2006 Annual Meeting, President's Report By CW4(R) Roy A. Valiant, USAWOA President

First, I would like to begin by thanking everyone for taking time out of your busy schedule to attend this 35th Annual Meeting of the Members (AMM) here in St. Petersburg. Like the Army, USAWOA is a professionally rewarding and personally enriching environment in which people take pride in being part of the only non-profit organization for Army Warrant Officers. We have a great program planned for you during the meeting and at nights.

This year's meeting is especially significant because of the recent events that have surrounded the planning for this AMM. For those of you that attended last year's AMM you know that Bob Lee made the announcement that he was diagnosed with cancer. Since that time he has had ups and downs, but unfortunately he is currently on a down. As you can see he is not in attendance. About six weeks ago Bob turned over the planning and execution to Dick Sauer as Bob was no longer able to carry out the planning. Dick along with other Southeast Region members continued to march on to get the job done. Late last Thursday I received a call from Arbie McInnis that Dick had suffered a heart attack and was in the hospital but expected to pull through. Again the reigns were turned over this time to Arbie. With all of that, I think that this will be a successful AMM.

It has indeed been an honor for me to serve these past two years as your Association President. As all of you know, it takes the collective efforts of all of us for this Association to work and grow, and I appreciate all of your support this past year. This has been a difficult year since I last addressed you as I will mention later.

However, I would like to highlight some of the USAWOA's accomplishments this past year and what our future holds for next year.

Membership: Gary Nisker will talk in more detail about membership but two areas I want to point out. We had a lull in new WO1 memberships due to the PCS of personnel at the Warrant Officer Career Center. That has since been back on track and we are getting those WO1 applications. The other area is the new alternate school house that graduated their first class of 119 newly appointed WO1s in Camp Atterbury, IN. Ts will do two things allow more WO1sto be appointed and thereby increasing our possible membership share. More on this later in the week.

Targeted Pay Raise: We have finally seen the fruits of our labor! Not just the past two years but past many years. Due to past efforts of the association leadership we have finally convinced Congress that this was the right thing to do. Our latest attack was letters to the memberships of the House Armed Services Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee prior to their recess last spring. I would like to think that these letters did play a part in the pay raise. It is not what we want but a step in the right direction.

Annual Awards: Our awards year is from 1 July to 30June. Your minutes are important and need to reflect what your chapter is doing. All National, Region and Chapter awards are described in USAWOAM 900-1, National Awards Manual.

USAWOA Scholarship Foundation: The foundation is starting its second year as part of Combined Federal Campaign. CW4 (Ret) Bob Scott will bring you up to date on the important work of the foundation.

Warrant Officers Heritage Foundation: CW5 Dick Markle is the Chairman of the Board and CW5 Dave Welsh is the President and a Director of the Warrant Officers Heritage Foundation. A report will be presented later on the future of a Warrant Officer Museum.

Executive Director: As you may know, the USAWOA has not had a full-time executive director for over two years. This has been a big issue for the operations of the headquarters. We have still been able to conduct business but not to the level that our membership deserves. With our budget we cannot pay what other organizations pay for similar positions. Until recently we have not had any interest in someone filling this position. The EXCOM has recently interviewed two very good candidates that are willing to accept the position for the pay we are offering. We are currently in the final stages of negotiating with one of the individuals and should make a selection soon.

In closing, I would like to thank you for your support during the past two years. I particularly want to express my sincere appreciation to the staff, the Vice President, the Secretary, the Treasurer, European Region President, Regions Directors, Assistant Vice Presidents and Committee Chairs for their dedication and devotion to the USAWOA during the past two years. We have achieved many successes during the past two years and all of you have played a key role in our successes. We have a strong organization and our future is bright. I look forward to our organization continuing to grow and prosper. FOR THE CORPS! - Roy Valiant