

THE CHANGING ROLES OF THE WARRANT OFFICER

As our military becomes more demanding and expecting more from us all Warrant Officers are no exception. More and more Warrant Officers are being asked to perform duties outside what would be the norm for their technical field.

CW4 (P) Michael Toter is a 920A Property Book Technician, assigned to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC), located on Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii. JPAC's mission is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all Americans missing as a result of the nation's past conflicts. JPAC personnel search for, recover and identify remains of Americans unaccounted-for from the Persian Gulf War, the Vietnam War, the Cold War, the Korean War and World War II. In addition, JPAC also performs other humanitarian missions to recover and identify individuals as directed by Pacific Command.

As the J4 Support Operations Officer, CW4 Toter's main focus is developing Concept of Support (COS) for 18 recovery teams that deploy around the world. A mission that is not easy considering the typical recovery team consists of 10 to 14 personnel. The unique requirements and team make up of a team leader, forensic anthropologist, team sergeant, linguist, medic, life support technician, forensic photographer, explosive ordnance disposal technician, and several mortuary affairs specialists requires logistics never broached in any or military environment. These teams conduct field operations for 35 to 45 days per mission. JPAC search and recovery team members commonly deploy five to six months a year in some of the most austere areas of the world.



In the photo above CW4 Toter is talking to representatives of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK), otherwise known as North Korea. These discussions took place on the Demilitarized Line (DML); previous talks took place in Bangkok, Thailand. They are discussing the details of sending thousands of tons of equipment and supplies in support of JPAC's recovery teams over land from the Republic of Korea (ROK) into DPRK, and the return of the recovery teams, equipment, and the remains of our fallen heroes from the Korean War. This has never been done before and there are security concerns, so the details are very important. In the past commercial and military air or ocean freight have moved the personnel, equipment and remains of unaccounted-for servicemen.

CW4 Toter has established eight warehouses/storage facilities around the world in places such as Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam to name a few. In the past few years he has traveled to these places, plus Burma, Palau, Australia, China, and North and South Korea, developing COS plans and cementing relationships with vendors supporting the JPAC mission.

CW4 Michael Toter will be promoted to CW5, 1 July 2004. He is being reassigned to NORTHCOM J4P Strategic Planning, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

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