Bridging the Technical Capabilities Gap.

BY COLONEL TOM MATELSKI, CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER 3 CHRIS LUDWICK AND FIRST SERGEANT CHRISTOPHER R. GREZ

The active component Civil Affairs (CA) community has witnessed significant changes in capabilities over the past 17 years while actively contributing to counter-terrorism efforts globally (in combat operations and Phase 0 shaping activities). This Active component of the branch has grown from one Battalion (BN) with five geographically-aligned Companies to a Special Operations aligned Brigade (BDE) manned with over 1,300 Soldiers. Today, the 95th Civil Affairs Brigade (Special Operations) (Airborne) provides Civil Affairs support to the global Special Operations Forces (SOF) network through the training, manning, and equipping of five subordinate, regionally-aligned Battalions in support of Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs). In recognition of the overwhelming impact and desire for Civil Affairs capabilities in the full range of military operations, the Army implemented the growth of the 85th Civil Affairs Brigade to meet the increased number of mission requirements. With five of their own regionally aligned Battalions in support of Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs), the 85th provided support to the Conventional Force. As the Department of Defense and Army reduced capabilities in the mid-late 2010s, the battalions and headquarters of the 85th Civil Affairs Brigade was deactivated completed through early 2018, leaving only the 83rd Civil Affairs Battalion with regionally aligned companies to support the ASCCs.

Despite the obvious benefits of increased CA capacity, there have been challenges to such rapid expansion and then contraction. The most critical of these challenges may be viewed in terms of operational experience, detailed technical knowledge of critical systems (such as those used in mapping and understanding aspects of the Human Domain), and Army and Joint operational planning capacity at the tactical and operational levels (Joint Planning Process, Army Operational Planning Methodology, etc). The routine transition of experienced officers and senior NCOs, although necessary for development, created significant gaps in detailed technical expertise, institutional knowledge, and experienced operational level planners. It is very common for Captains to remain on a Civil Affairs Team (CAT) for a short 24 months before being moved to critical staff positions at higher headquarters and Branch critical requirements. The same is true for the enlisted population, where an increased number of senior NCOs are waiting to complete key developmental positions (e.g. Team Sergeant). In some cases, this has hindered the ability to leave highly
competent and capable personnel in place for more than 24 months. The common theme across both enlisted and officer populations is lack of operational planning depth, detailed knowledge of non-lethal targeting mechanisms, and significant experience at the company level, which begs the question: What is the focal point of these desired capabilities within the Company and higher? Continuity is a part of the solution, but the need for a highly trained, capable Soldier, is the main part of the solution.

THE ARMY’S TECHNICAL EXPERTS: WARRANT OFFICERS

In the traditional sense, a Warrant Officer provides technical expertise in a specific Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) that he or she has mastered over time through experience, schooling, and mentorship. This highly specialized individual also provides continuity to the command leadership as senior Commissioned and Non Commissioned Officers (NCO) rotate through their various key developmental positions. Across the services, Warrant Officers fill the gap of experience and knowledge, ensuring the continuity of military efforts for their organization. The Civil Affairs Branch has not had the benefit of this capability. Only in the past five years has the Army provided Warrant Officers as a part of the Civil Affairs Battalion’s staff expertise; through Maintenance Technicians, Property Book Officers, and Targeting Officers.

CA WARRANT OFFICERS: WHY NOW?

The implementation of a Civil Affairs Warrant Officer career field is not a new idea to the branch. The concept has been studied for potential implementation over the last 10-15 years; however, the viability of a CA Warrant Officer has not been acceptable until now. Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) has long benefited from the experience and expertise of Warrant Officers. In 2014, then-Commander, John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School, Major General Eric Wendt issued guidance to both the Civil Affairs and Psychological Operations Commandants to examine the feasibility of developing a combined Warrant Officer program for the two respective branches. In USASOC Strategy 2035, one of the core competencies that makes ARSOF unique is, “providing joint force commanders with culturally astute professionals who are agile, adaptive, flexible, bold, innovative, and possess a high degree of advanced training.” Only through sustained exposure in garrison and the operational environment can ARSOF Soldiers develop the necessary skills and education to have a nuanced understanding of a region, a country, or a culture’s opportunities and challenges.

Since the transition in 2006 from a Functional Area to an Active component Branch (in addition to the Reserve CA Branch), Civil Affairs Soldiers have professionally developed and matured into a highly sought after, often employed portion of ARSOF capabilities (in addition to Psychological Operations and Special Forces). As the Army discusses potential options to make additional reductions to the Active and Reserve components, the Civil Affairs branch is not exempt. In order to adequately retain and invest in the experience and education of these Soldiers, a Warrant Officer program in Civil Affairs is appropriate.

THE CIVIL AFFAIRS WARRANT (380A): PROPOSED CONCEPT

If implemented, a CA Warrant Officer would fill vital roles within the SOF Civil Affairs community with priority of fill going to those positions with the greatest need for longevity. Given the relatively small composition of the active duty CA force, initial implementation should be focused within the 95th CA BDE (SO) (A) and the training/education pipeline. This can be accomplished by eliminating 38A billets that are traditionally not used or that are rarely filled due to a shortage of branch qualified Captains and inserting a Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2) billet. A Warrant Officer at the Company level would work in the Civil Military Operations Center (CMOC), becoming the keeper of all institutional and operational knowledge within the Company for a minimum of three years, but no longer than five. During this time he or she should be working diligently towards achieving an undergraduate degree prior to their primary zone of consideration for advancement to Chief Warrant Officer Three (CW3). Advanced educational opportunities which emphasize planning would further professionally develop the newly-appointed Warrant Officer and prepare them for future assignments at various echelons. Ideally, the Warrant Officer would remain at the Company for the majority of their time as a CW2. Figure 01, page 40, is a draft model for potential implementation.

As a Chief Warrant Officer Three (CW3), Civil Affairs Warrant Officers would work in positions focused on planning and analysis at the BN level. The BN staff is another entity within a military organization that typically sees a fairly regular turnover of personnel. Once again, we can see the need in certain sections for increased continuity. Those positions (shown in Figure 01, page 40) cover a wide range of critical staff functions. Top performers from this population will be afforded the opportunity for assignment outside the traditional Civil Affairs organizations. These position include, but are not limited to the Special Forces Group’s 4th BN S9s, Combat Training Center Observer, Controller, Trainer (CTC/OTC), Doctrine Writer, CA Selection and Training Cadre or as Professional Military Education instructors at the Army, Service, and Joint education centers. They would also have the same advanced schooling opportunities that were afforded to them while working in the CMOC. Civil and military education progression in this phase moves toward focusing on the attainment of baccalaureate degree and attendance to Warrant Officer Intermediate Level Education (WOILE), prior to their primary zone of consideration for promotion to Chief Warrant Officer 4 (CW4).

Initial assignment as a Civil Affairs CW4 would place the Warrant Officer inside the BDE headquarters, mirroring the same functions they performed as a member of a Battalion staff but with increased scope and responsibility. What is unique about this grade is that it would be the first time in a CA Warrant Officers career that he or she had the opportunity to apply for and

IF IMPLEMENTED, A CA WARRANT OFFICER WOULD FILL VITAL ROLES WITHIN THE SOF CIVIL AFFAIRS COMMUNITY WITH PRIORITY OF FILL GOING TO THOSE POSITIONS WITH THE GREATEST NEED FOR LONGEVITY.
attend advanced civil schooling through the National Defense University (NDU), Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), or the National Defense Intelligence College (NDIC). It also serves as the first occasion in which to compete for nominative or Joint assignments such as the Proponency Office as the Civil Affair Proponent Warrant Officer, Human Resources Command as the Career Manager, in the Civil Military Advisory Group (CMAG), potentially selected to serve as a Command Warrant Officer for one of the Civil Affairs battalions. However, CA CW4s are not competitive for selection to serve in one of the aforementioned positions until minimum of three years has been completed in S-3 Training, S-3 Operations, CAPT, CIM, or the Fusion Cell.

The pinnacle of the Civil Affairs Warrant officer program would be selection to Chief Warrant Officer 5. As the senior Civil Affairs Warrant officers in the Branch, these highly experienced and specialized Soldiers, would serve in a variety of critical roles, both inside and outside of Brigade. These positions include the Command Warrant Officer for the 95th CA BDE (SO) (A), Chief Warrant Officer of the Civil Affairs Branch (CWOB), and potentially as a key member of a Geographic Combatant or Functional Command staff.

MAKING THE CASE: AN INVESTMENT FOR THE FUTURE

Just stating a need for a capability doesn’t necessarily provide an adequate argument for why something is needed. In the case of a CA Warrant Officer program, an example may be more appropriate. The example used in Figure 02 starts from the position of a senior CW4, CW4 Chris Geracz and moves backward to SFC Chris Geracz over the life span of his later military service.

The case of CW4 Chris Geracz goes beyond the immediate benefit to the individual Soldier or a Civil Affairs unit. In the case of Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF), USASOC gains the benefit of a seasoned, qualified planner and deep area knowledge expert relative to his/her Language and Regional Educational Concentration (LREC). This Soldier has multiple operational rotations that are accompanied with the requisite understanding of Army SOF and conventional capabilities to build and develop Special Warfare campaign plans. For US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM), the wider SOF portfolio gains a culturally attuned, advanced practitioner that has worked in Joint Operational and Strategic levels capable of understanding the underlying causes of instability and can craft long term SOF campaign Plans to meet Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) and Country Team objectives. For the Nation and for the Soldier’s family, the benefit is a highly trained, agile, flexible, and adaptive leader.

GETTING FROM HERE TO THERE: IMPLEMENTATION

The concept of developing and implementing a Civil Affairs Warrant Officer program is not without considerable, but worthwhile challenges. Implementation requires much analysis and consideration. Above all, two major considerations are required: the Army’s Average Grade Distribution Matrix (AGDM), which governs the sustainability of a Ca-
The 740A MOS allowed the career field to grow into its appropriation of a CBRN Warrant Officer Program (740A) in 2010. In execution, the 740A CBRN Warrant Officer was introduced through a phased approach that allowed the career field to grow into its appropriate AGDM. The process allowed the 740A MOS to be utilized to implement a new Military Occupational Specialty (MOS). Assuming that these two considerations can be met prior to implementation, below are three potential implementation options.

The first option is to study past implementation programs involving the creation of a Warrant Officer specialty from across the Army. In recent history, the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) (CMF 74) conducted implementation of a CBRN Warrant Officer Program (740A) in 2010. In execution, the 740A CBRN Warrant Officer was introduced through a phased approach that allowed the career field to grow into its appropriate AGDM. The process allowed the 740A MOS to incrementally recruit, train, and field the personnel required to fill the identified gap in capabilities.

A second option for implementation is the potential recruitment of Soldiers from other Warrant Officer Branches in order to build the first generation CA Warrant Officer force. Based on the desired skillset CA Warrant Officers would ideally possess upon the completion of training, there are two potential Courses of Action (COA). The first is to permit current active duty Special Forces Warrant Officers, or 180As, with exposure to CA, the opportunity to either transfer branches or fill key positions until the CA Warrant Officer Program matures. The Course of Action is not without precedent. From 2004 until 2014, Special Forces Command Sergeants Major (CSMs) filled the critical roles of Battalion and Brigade CSM until the Civil Affairs NCO Corps had enough depth and experience to compete for these highly selective positions. Utilizing this option would allow senior CA Warrant Officer Positions to be filled immediately with experienced personnel from a branch with a wealth of knowledge in growing a professional, well-educated Warrant Officer force. It must be noted that in order for this course of action to be effective, the 180As should consider potential branch transfer, similar to previous Special Forces officers that sought to remain in Civil Affairs. A second option presents itself in the 131A Field Artillery Targeting Technician that operates within a CA BNs Targeting and Fusion Cell. The 2013 Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) changes added the 131A to the CA BN organization structure in an attempt to provide operational targeting expertise to support SOF Civil Affairs Teams (CAT) across the Combatant Commands. Each of these individuals, although a small pool from which to pull, are exposed to a wide variety of operations during their tenure in 95th CA BDE (SO) (A) that also make them uniquely qualified and potential candidates for branch transfer.

In considering other potential MOSs with Warrant Officers not currently in an ARSOF Military Occupational Specialty, there is a third Course of Action. These personnel would attend Civil Affairs Assessment and Selection (CAAS) followed by attendance in the Civil Affairs Qualification Course. Qualified personnel would be trained and prepared for employment as Civil Affairs Warrant Officers upon completion of the Civil Affairs Warrant Officer Basic Course. Although this Course of Action would be the least likely option due to the lack of Civil Affairs experience, it would expand the available pool of personnel from which to establish the Warrant Officer program.

---

**PROPOSED CIVIL AFFAIRS WARRANT OFFICER (380A) LIFECYCLE**

---

**Operational Capability**
- Senior Planner/Tactician
- Command Support
- GCC/Service Level Scope

**Soldier Benefit**
- PHD Level Opportunities
- Command Credit
- Joint Staff Experience

**Operational Capability**
- Campaign Design
- Command Support
- Joint/Army Level Planner

**Soldier Benefit**
- ASC/TSOC Experience
- Master’s Level Education
- Senior Advisor/Mentor

**Operational Capability**
- Joint SOF Planning/ Campaign Design
- UW Understanding/Integration

**Soldier Benefit**
- Advanced Education
- Joint Planning Ability

**Operational Capability**
- Non-lethal Targeting SME
- Operational Depth
- Deep Cultural Understanding

**Soldier Benefit**
- Advanced Education
- Family/Soldier Stability
- Advance Language Proficiency

---

**Experience**
- 3 years in BDE staff
- 3 years minimum as a CMOC WO
- 2 years as a Team Sergeant
- 1 year as staff or CMOC

---

**Enlisted Experience / Qualifications**
- 60 total college credit hours
- WOAC
- CW3
- CW4
- Civilian Education Undergraduate complete prior to promotion to CW4

**Civilian Education**
- Undergraduate complete prior to PZ promotion board to CW3

**Education**
- WOSSE
- Education WOILE
- NPS/NDU
- SAMs
- WOC5
- CW5
- CW4
- CW3
- PME
- UWODC
- UWDC
- Joint CA Planners Course
- Lean Six Sigma
- Joint Staff Experience
- Senior Advisor/Mentor

**Benefit**
- Senior Planner/Tactician
- Command Support
- GCC/Service Level Scope
- Joint SOF Planning/ Campaign Design
- UW Understanding/Integration
- Joint Staff Experience
- Advanced Education
- Joint Planning Ability
- Non-lethal Targeting SME
- Operational Depth
- Deep Cultural Understanding
- Advanced Education
- Family/Soldier Stability
- Advance Language Proficiency

---

**Accession Requirements**
- 110 GT Score
- Current DUPT/OPI
- Current SERE-C Physical
- Current TS-SCI
- Current APTT - No Waivers
- No Permanent Profiles

---

**TIME IN SERVICE**
- 31-ETS
- 31-33
- 26-28
- 21-23
- 14-16

**TIME AS CA WO**
- 17-22
- 12-17
- 10-12
- 0-7

---

---

**Figure 02**
LAYING OUT THE CHALLENGES:

DOTML-PF IMPLICATIONS

As with developing and implementing force structure and career development changes, there are a host of implications across the DOTML-PF (Doctrine, Organization, Training, Material, Leadership, Personnel and Facilities) domains (shown right). Additional analysis is required prior to implementation of a Civil Affairs Warrant Officer program. The analysis listed below is not to be considered all inclusive.

CONCLUSION

The benefits of establishing a Civil Affairs Warrant Officer program are many and the challenges are many, but the benefits far exceed the challenges. As ARSOF capabilities continue to mature and the Civil Affairs branch plays a key role in conflict mitigation and prevention, the need for a highly experienced and expert Soldier is evident.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Col. Tom Matelski is the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Director, Commander’s Action Group. He joined the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Staff in June 2016 as a member of the future operations planning division (J35) at Camp HM Smith, Hawaii. Col. Matelski is a U.S. Army Senior Service College Fellow and a former commander of the 97th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), an Asia-Pacific aligned organization supporting Special Operations. His deployments include operations in Iraq and multiple tours at various levels in Afghanistan.

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Chris Ludwick is currently the Brigade Targeting Officer for 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). At the time the article was created, he was serving as the Battalion Targeting Officer for the 97th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne) where he spent nearly four years supporting the SOF Civil Affairs mission.

1st Sgt. Christopher R. Grez is assigned to Co. D, 97th Civil Affairs Battalion, 95th Civil Affairs Brigade. As a member of a Civil Military Support Element, 1st. Sgt. Grez has deployed twice to Bangladesh. He also had a CMSE rotation in the Philippines in support of Operation Enduring Freedom–Philippines, with a follow-on assignment to the Regional CMSE in Singapore. He also served as a member of a Theater-CMSE in Hawaii.

DOTMLPF ANALYSIS

DOCTRINE – Development and implementation of doctrine relevant to the Civil Affairs (CA) Warrant Officer will take significant time. Until creation and approval is complete, 380As would use a hybrid form of 38A, 131A, and 180A doctrine to guide their training and utilization. Appropriate doctrine will be identified for use from each MOS field and approved by CA Proponent prior to execution of the initial round of Professional Military Education (PME), Warrant Officer Basic Course (WOBC).

ORGANIZATION – CA Warrant Officers would be initially utilized and positioned within CA Battalions and Brigade (BDEs). Reallocation of an underutilized billet; with appropriate recoding of MOS requirements and Advanced Skills Identifiers (ASIs), will minimize the need for position growth at the company and battalion levels. Positions at the BDE and higher would be created to allow for continued career progression of the 380A.

TRAINING – Like the doctrine aspect of this analysis, the training portion will take time to create. Prior to the establishment of a formal training pipeline, CA Warrant Officers would attend the necessary schooling upon completion of CA Assessment and Selection from the BN in which they will be assigned. Maximum utilization of already existing opportunities in the 180A and 131A highlighted in the Professional Development Model will reduce the need for creation of new courses. This training progression and prioritization will be monitored at the BDE level and by the CMD Warrant Officer with a bi-weekly or monthly reporting requirements to the CA Proponent.

MATERIAL – There will be new material needed for the development of the 380A Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) but it will be material that is already organic to the Army inventory. Equipment for additional personnel will be utilized form existing positions at the company level therefore there will be zero increase in equipment outside of new technological developments. However, there will be an increased authorizations for weapons, night vision devices, and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Electrical equipment, equal to the increase in personnel seen at the BN level and above.

LEADERSHIP AND EDUCATION – Professional and military development will occur across all ranks of the MOS. The initial training pipeline will culminate in appointment of graduates to Warrant Officer One (WO1). While the grades of WO1 and Chief Warrant Officer Two (CW2) training outside of the pipeline will be focused on planning and analytics at the tactical level of war. Prior to promotion to Chief Warrant Officer Three (CW3), 380As will attend the Warrant Officer Advance Course (WOAC). Additional education opportunities will become available in advanced planning and analytics while in grades of CW3 and Chief Warrant Officer Four (CW4). PME for senior CW#s and CW4s will be in accordance with the pre established Warrant Officer Education System (WOES). This system outlines that CW3s who have successfully completed the WOAC and have a minimum one year Time In Grade (TIG) are eligible for attendance to the Warrant Officer Immediate Level Education (WOILE). CW4s who have successfully graduated form WOILE and have a minimum one year TIG will be eligible for attendance to the Warrant Officer Senior Service Education (WOSSE). Additionally it is in these same ranks that the opportunity to compete for advanced civil schooling opportunities in pursuit of a Graduate Degree form the National Defense University (NDU), the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), or the National Defense Intelligence College will present itself. Chief Warrant Officer Five (CW5) personnel selected for assignment as a Command Chief Warrant Officer will attend the Pre-Command Course Prior to assuming duty.

PERSONNEL – Further analysis must be conducted to determine the amount of qualified people on hand for peacetime, wartime, and various contingency operations the 380A will be utilized for.

FACILITIES – Creating the 380A MOS will require no change in real property already being utilized Civil Affairs organizations.