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Warrant Officers in the British Armed Forces



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WARRANT OFFICERS IN THE BRITISH ARMED FORCES

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1.0 Introduction

“...though the ranks are few, the appointments which may be held by them are many. Indeed, there are, today, over seventy appointments among the Warrant Officers...”
(Dawnay, 1949, p.3).

The rank of warrant officer has a rather interesting history which is not well known, even amongst those who hold that rank. The military grade of warrant officer is one of the oldest in Western military systems dating back to the 1200s during the early years of the English Navy.

Until the latter stages of the 1800s only the Navy operated the warrant officer rank, until the British Army and Royal Marines elevated a number of Sergeant-Majors and other ranks to the military grade of warrant officer around 1880.

Since their implementation, warrant officers have been valued as technical experts - Subject Matter Experts (SME) in the modern vernacular - due to their specialist knowledge and skills gained within their particular field.

While a commissioned officer is responsible for both tactical and strategic command they will rely on their warrant officers to provide them with advice and knowledge in the many details necessary to efficiently run a military unit.

In the modern military environment, warrant officers are now often part of a command team in which they and the commissioned officers work together to provide their subordinates with a synergistic team-leadership capability. This team approach combines two, or more, individuals with different skills and experiences, resulting in a sum which is greater than the parts.

This article is divided into seven sections for easier reading with Section One being the introduction and Section Two providing an historical overview which describes the origins of the warrant officer. Section Three provides the reader with the distinction between a commissioned officer and a warranted officer before moving onto Section Four which defines the role of a warrant officer. Section Five can be considered the meat of the article and provides the reader with a fairly comprehensive overview of warrant officers in the Armed Forces of the United Kingdom by Service Branch. Section Six highlights some of the major differences between the UK and US systems of warrant officer. Finally, Section Seven provides some useful links and documents, as well as identifying applicable legislation and references.

The information contained in this article is correct as far as I am able to ascertain from the various sources available (wherever possible, the information has been drawn from official records and contemporary documents). It is not intended to be an exhaustive or complete history of the subject (but not far from it!).

2.0 Historical Overview

2.1 Thirteenth Century Beginnings

Commissioned officers were placed in command of ships of the English navy starting in the 13th century, later adopting the Army ranks of Captain and Lieutenant. These commissioned officers were often aristocrats whose position in society placed them in command; they were usually not career sailors and therefore did not possess experience or training in the skills of seamanship.

This meant they often had no first-hand knowledge of life on board a ship, let alone how to navigate such a vessel. Instead, they relied on the expertise of the ship's Master and other expert/senior seamen who were the heads of specialist technical branches of the ship's company and reported directly to the Captain. Due to their knowledge and skill set these experts were granted officer status by various authorities through the issue of a warrant; for example, the ship's gunner was warranted by the board of ordnance.

For administration they reported to the different boards which governed naval affairs at the time, such as the Navy Board, Victualing Board and Ordnance Board. They were usually examined professionally, by a body other than the Admiralty and had usually served an apprenticeship.

In addition to their knowledge and skill set a warranted officer was also required to be literate. These warranted officers were professionals who bridged the gap between the commissioned officers and the regular seamen (or ratings) who were normally illiterate and used as the general workforce on board ship. Other specialists such as a ship's carpenter, boatswain and surgeon were vital to the safety of all on board, and were accordingly ranked as officers - though again by warrant rather than by commission. This warrant was a special designation, designed to set these individuals apart from other sailors, but not violate the strict class system that was so prevalent during this nascent period of warrant officers.

2.2 Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, there were two branches of warrant officer (Royal Naval Museum Library, 2000):

- **Sea Officers:** whose status was equal to commissioned officers and could therefore stand on the quarterdeck; and
- **Inferior Officers** (keeping no accounts).

Of the warrant officers, a number were classed as standing officers; meaning they were warranted to a ship for her lifetime, whether in commission or not (Privy Council, 1808). When in reserve, they were borne on the Ordinary books of the dockyard and employed in maintenance of the ship.

Warrant officers had varying levels of authority and status and were allotted a personal team of subordinates or 'Mates' to assist them in carrying out their duties. For example: the Boatswain's mate (pronounced Bosun), Master's mate, Gunner's mate etc.) These 'mates' were typically 'Petty Officers' (appointed to their position by the ship's Captain) but in some cases also included other warrant officers. A number of warrant officers were also known as Wardroom officers because they shared access to the Wardroom and the quarterdeck

(privileges normally reserved for commissioned officers) and included the Master, Surgeon, Purser and Chaplain. The pay of a warrant officer commenced when they first appeared on board the ship to which they had been appointed (Privy Council, 1808).

2.2.1 Sea Officers

- **Master:** this was the senior warrant rank and can be equated to a 'professional' seaman and specialist in navigation, rather than as a military commander. Their rank was approximated to that of Lieutenant and they were well educated. Masters were professionally examined by Trinity House and re-qualified if appointed to a larger rated ship. Masters were able to stand watches and command ships in non-combatant duties. As part of their duties they were responsible for:
 - Navigation (taking ship's position daily and setting the sails as appropriate for the required course);
 - Supervised entry of parts of the official log such as weather, position and expenditure.
 - Supervising Midshipmen and Mates in taking observations of the sun and maintained the ship's compass;
 - Ensuring the maintenance of the rope rigging and sails;
 - The stowing of the hold, inspecting provisions, taking stores so that the ship was not too weighted down to sail effectively and reporting defects to the Captain; and
 - Security and the issue of drink on board.
- **Surgeon:** warranted to ships by the Navy Board and had the right to walk the quarterdeck (Privy Council, 1808). Their examining boards were conducted by various bodies including the Barber-Surgeons Company, Sick and Hurt Board, Transport Board and the Victualing Board (until 1832 when the Admiralty became responsible for their qualifications). They were the only medical officers on the ship and were assisted by one or more Surgeon's Mates (inferior warrant officers). Surgeons were responsible for:
 - The sick and injured;
 - Performing surgical operations as necessary and dispensing medicine.
 - Keeping a journal of treatment and advising the Captain on health matters.
- **Purser (Standing Officer):** warranted by the Navy Board but did not require professional qualifications, although a bond was required on taking up their warrant (Privy Council, 1808). A purser's duties included overseeing the supply and issue of victuals, slops (clothes) and other consumables.
- **Boatswain (Standing Officer):** was appointed by the Admiralty and responsible to the Navy Board (Privy Council, 1808). A Boatswain was not eligible to command ships but could stand watches. They were less educated than the more senior warrant officers, although they needed to keep accounts. A Boatswain had responsibility for rigging, cables, anchors, sails and boats. The sail maker and boatswain mate were under the command of the boatswain.
- **Carpenter (Standing Officer):** was responsible for the maintenance of the hull and masts of the ship. Carpenters were unusual in that many passed most of their careers as civilian employees of the Navy Board in the dockyards and only partly as officers on ships, with the majority qualifying as shipwrights in the dockyards before going to sea.
- **Gunner (Standing Officer):** was examined, appointed by and responsible to the Ordnance Board (Privy Council, 1808). They had to adhere to strict rules and were responsible for:

- Making tackle and breeches for guns and making regular inspections during a voyage;
- Ensuring the powder in the magazines were kept dry; and
- The maintenance of guns and their equipment.

2.2.2 Inferior Officers and Petty Officers

- **Midshipman:** In medieval navies, Midshipmen were ratings whose duties were centred at 'mid-ship'; hence the title. Though officially only a Petty officer (one appointed by the Captain of a ship rather than by warrant of the Navy Board) a Midshipman was understood to be a 'gentleman' and was given many of the privileges of commissioned officers (e.g. permitted to walk the quarterdeck). The number of Midshipmen on a ship was fixed by the rating of the ship and it was at the discretion of the Captain as to who was carried. Therefore, to overcome the issue of large numbers of young gentlemen wishing to be Midshipmen to gain service time (at least two years at sea to be rated Midshipman) various supernumerary posts, paid as able seamen, were created. Although the rank never achieved commissioned status, the position evolved to become the apprenticeship leading to a commission (Privy Council, 1808). During their period as Midshipmen, the young gentlemen were provided instruction on a variety of subjects such as navigation and seamanship, and undertook duties such as supervising sections of gun crews, acting as officer's messengers and taking charge of prizes. After at least six years of service and a minimum age of nineteen, a Midshipman could take their examinations for Lieutenant (Privy Council, 1808). While waiting to take these examinations, or for their first commission, it became customary for senior Midshipmen to take appointments as Master's Mates. Midshipmen were given uniforms in 1748, before any other non-commissioned officer.
- **Chaplain:** was examined by the Bishop of London and appointed by the Admiralty.
- **Sail Maker:** warrant issued by the Commissioners of the Navy (Privy Council, 1808).
- **Rope Maker:** warrant issued by the Commissioners of the Navy (Privy Council, 1808).
- **Caulker:** warrant issued by the Commissioners of the Navy (Privy Council, 1808), reported to the Carpenter.
- **School-Master:** appointed by warrant from the Lord High Admiral or the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty (Privy Council, 1808). To qualify they had to undertake an examination before the Master, Warden and Assistants of the Trinity-house of Deptford Stroud and gain a certificate stating they were well skilled in the theory and practice of navigation and in all branches of mathematics as may be necessary to qualify them to instruct young men.
- **Master-at-Arms (MAA):** appointed by warrant from the Lord High Admiral or the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty (Privy Council, 1808). Responsible for the instruction of small arms (i.e. muskets and rifles), discipline, attending the gangway. The MAA was assisted by Ship's Corporals.
- **Cooks (Standing Officer):** appointed by warrant from the Commissioners of the Navy, to which the cook had to be a Pensioner at the Chest at Greenwich (Privy Council, 1808).
- **Other Petty Officers:** this group included Boatswain's Mates, Armourers, Surgeon's Mates, Carpenter's Mates, and Clerks.

In 1808 the order in which officers took precedence and command in the ship to which they belonged was: Captain or Commander; Lieutenant; Sub-Lieutenants; Master; Second

Master; Gunner; Boatswain; Carpenter; Master's Mate; and Midshipmen (Privy Council, 1808).

In general warrant officers were examined and appointed by their board, however, in exceptional circumstances they could be examined and appointed through a modified, but strictly regulated pathway (Privy Council, 1808). Further, none of the standing warrant officers of a ship could be removed by a Flag Officer (i.e. Admiral) without their consent (Privy Council, 1808).

There is some evidence to suggest that Napoleon used warrant officers as communications links between his commissioned officers and the rank-and-file soldiers. These Napoleonic era soldiers are the first to have their rank linked to the possession of a technical expertise. Napoleon himself was appointed as a Warrant Officer-Major of a battalion of the National Guard of Ajaccio on 14 January 1792 (Napoleon Empire, 2014).

2.3 Professionalisation of the Royal Navy

During the late 18th and early 19th century the naval officer paradigm evolved; a commission as a naval officer was seen to be a career rather than a means for social advancement. This meant that commissioned officers were now given seamanship training which included navigation and how to set the sails. As a result, tasks previously completed by a warrant officer were now being completed by the ships commissioned officers. At the same time, the seamen were now becoming better educated, with the educational gap between commissioned officers and seamen becoming less pronounced. As a consequence the warrant officer rank became increasingly obsolete within certain branches of the Royal Navy, and it began to be phased out in these branches by around 1842, with certain warrant officers receiving commissions.

- **Masters:** In the mid-nineteenth century Masters attained full commissioned rank, and titles were changed to assimilate them into the main commissioned structure. The specialised Navigating branch was no longer required and phased out.
- **Surgeons:** became a fully commissioned rank in the nineteenth century.
- **Purser:** In the nineteenth century became a commissioned rank and another aspect of their duty appeared. It became customary to pay the crew at regular intervals which entailed carrying money and became the Purser's responsibility.
- **Boatswain:** This rank did not rise to commissioned status although in the nineteenth century there were limited opportunities for boatswains to rise to commissioned officer status.
- **Carpenters:** In 1918, Carpenters were renamed Warrant Shipwrights when their work ceased to be solely timber. Their rank did not get transferred to commissioned status.
- **Gunners:** Like boatswains, they remained a warrant rank but had limited opportunities for promotion to commissioned posts in the nineteenth century.
- **Chaplains:** In 1808 they were granted wardroom status until 1843 when they became a commissioned rank.

Another change was the necessity to distinguish between the types of officers who could command and those who could not (broadly equivalent to the modern Executive and Non-Executive officer branches). Initially, warranted officers had no rank (per se) nor wore any rank, their warrant served as their status. However, later on promotion opportunities were developed which comprised a number of ranks (typically three, although more appeared

with time), and the Royal Navy operated a rule under which deserving warrant officers were promoted to commissioned officer from warrant rank after 10 years' service as a warrant officer (AFO 2794 dated 19 Aug 1921). Some individuals could reach the relative rank of Commander Royal Navy (AFO 271 dated 28 Jan 1920). The rank of warrant officer was finally abolished in the Royal Navy in 1949, although it made a reappearance in the 1970s.

2.4 Sergeants and Generals

The term General comes from the Latin *Generalis*, meaning of a particular kind. One derivative, when used as a pre-nominal or immediate post-positive, is to have a superior or extended authority or rank; for example, General Manager.

With this in mind, the term 'general' is used in two ways: as the generic title for all grades of general officer and as a specific rank. It originates in the 16th century, as a shortening of captain-general, a rank which was taken from Middle French '*Capitaine Général*'. The adjective general had been affixed to officer designations since the late medieval period to indicate relative superiority or an extended jurisdiction.

In the 16th and 17th century there were three levels of general:

- Captain-General: senior General in command of the Army.
- Lieutenant-General: in command of the Cavalry, senior to;
- Serjeant-Major: in command of the Infantry (could also act as a sort of Chief of Staff to the Army commander).

The distinction of Serjeant-Major-General only applied after Serjeant-Majors' were introduced as a rank of field officer in the 17th century. These field officers, third in command of their regiments (after their Colonels and Lieutenant Colonels), had a role similar to the older, Army-level Serjeant-Majors' (albeit on a much smaller scale). The original position of Serjeant-Major was retitled Serjeant-Major-General to distinguish it from the field officer position.

Comerford (2003) suggests that the term Serjeant-Major was first used around 1680, with 'Major' meaning '*greater than*', and was applied to the senior Sergeant in the Colonel's company of an Infantry regiment. However, Comerford (2003) goes on to state that it was not formalised until 1797 when the Serjeant-Major was added to the battalion or regimental staff. When chevrons were introduced as badges of rank, the rank holder wore four, later under a crown.

The term Serjeant was eventually dropped from both titles, giving rise to the modern ranks of Major and Major General (explaining the anomaly of a Major General being junior in rank to a Lieutenant General).

The full title of Serjeant-Major fell out of use until the latter part of the 18th century, when it began to be applied to the senior NCO of an Infantry battalion or Cavalry regiment. Dawnay (1949) suggests the Serjeant-Major as a non-

Serjeant-Major, as a term, came to mean the rank of a man leading a particular group, and as such there could be:

- A Serjeant-Major in charge of soldiers and non-commissioned officers;
- A Serjeant-Major in charge of a company of men or the staff officer of a regiment; and
- A Serjeant-Major-General in charge of a corps of men.

commissioned rank was introduced in the early 1700s, and Quartermaster-Serjeants first mentioned in 1793. In 1881, these Sergeant-Majors' heading non-commissioned officers, were issued with a warrant to serve, thus becoming warrant officers.

3.0 The Difference between a Warrant and a Commission

From a military point of view, a commission is a formal document (Commissioning Script) authorising the holder to perform duties in the service of the State (Donald, 2011). They are granted by, or on behalf of, the sovereign and the recipient is ranked as a commissioned officer. In contrast, a warrant is a legal document (also known as a Warrant Parchment or Warrant of Appointment) which is signed by a person authorised to issue warrants (currently the Secretary of State for Defence). Simply put, a warrant officer is an officer next below a commissioned officer, acting under a warrant from a department of state and not under a commission (Graham, 1915). With regards to the issuing of (contemporary) warrants:

- Warrants are issued at the time of an individual's substantive promotion (some warrant officers might inform you it arrives a bit later!).
- British Army and Royal Marines warrant officers receive their parchment on promotion to class 2, no further parchment is granted on promotion to class 1.
- Royal Logistics Corps warrant officer class 1s on appointment to Conductor receive a parchment to signify this appointment (Section 5.3.4).

Further, unlike their commissioned brethren, warrant officers are not saluted, but are addressed as 'Sir/Ma'am' by subordinates the same as commissioned officers. Their seniors may address them either by their appointment (e.g. QMSI, RSM or Sergeant-Major) or as 'Mister', 'Mrs', or 'Ms' and then their last name, e.g. 'Mr Smith'.

Originally there was no insignia to denote rank, an officer's clothing and familiarity with their subordinates was all that was required to be recognised as to the position they held. However, as militaries became larger and formal uniforms were introduced a rank insignia was needed.

Although often referred to along with non-commissioned officers (NCOs), they are not NCOs, but members of a separate group (traditional official terminology for the personnel of a unit is 'the officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers and men'), although all have been promoted from NCO rank; a definition most in military service would probably agree with. However, the Queen's

Regulations for the Royal Navy (2014, p.xxii) disagrees with this definition:

“Warrant Officers. *The highest rate in the rating structure of the RN.” ... and ... “Non-Commissioned Officer, Royal Marines.* *To include all Royal Marines from Lance-Corporal up to Warrant Officer 1st Class, inclusive.”*

The British military rank system currently in use defines all warrant officers, NCOs and privates (including all equivalents) in the umbrella term 'Other Ranks'.

4.0 The Role of a Warrant Officer

For those military systems that operate the military grade of warrant officer, their primary task is to serve as a technical expert, providing valuable skills, guidance, and expertise to commanders and organisations in their particular field.

The role of a modern warrant officer is no different to that of their historical peers, however, their status has changed from that of officer to Other Rank.

5.0 Warrant Officers by Service Branch

Warrant officers can be found in service across the British Armed Forces. However, there is some variation in the number of grades utilised as outline in Table 1 and discussed in the following sections.

Also, there are a number of rules and regulations governing warrant officers, including their appointment, seniority and precedence which are contained in a variety of documents; although the basis is usually grounded in the Queen’s Regulations for the particular Service Branch.

Prior to 1972, the different classes of warrant officer, class 1 and 2, were represented by Roman numerals; I and II respectively. The introduction of computers saw this practice discontinued because the information system in use would only accept numerical data (i.e. 1 and 2) and not Roman numerals (RMRO 140).

Those with warrant rank are known collectively as warrant officers and within a military organisation are generally responsible for the maintenance of discipline. Their authority is derived from the warrant that they hold. When originally instituted officers could issue warrants to selected personnel to help them carry out their tasks; once these duties were fulfilled the warrant was withdrawn. In 1879 the British Army introduced a permanent warrant to define the authority of its most senior NCOs and these soldiers become known as warrant officers.

Table 1: Warrant officers by Service Branch

NATO Rank Code	British Army	Royal Air Force	Royal Navy	Royal Marines
OR-9	Warrant Officer Class 1	Warrant Officer	Warrant Officer Class 1	Warrant Officer Class 1
OR-8	Warrant Officer Class 2	N/A	Warrant Officer Class 2 (2004-2016)	Warrant Officer Class 2
Together are the Naval Service				

5.1 Warrant Officers in the Royal Navy

Warrant officers date from the beginnings of the Royal Navy (Section 2.1) and these specialists retained their distinctive rank and status until 1949, when the rank of warrant officer was abolished. A proposal to reintroduce warrant rank in 1961 was turned down (Mason, 2011).

On 07 August 1970, DCI (RN) 923 announced that the Royal Navy would be introducing a new rate above the rank of Chief Petty Officer (CPO), with the first selection boards operating

in early 1971. The principal function of the new rate, termed 'Fleet Chief Petty Officer' (FCPO) would be managerial. The FCPO would be expected to plan, allocate and control work, and to play a significant part in the divisional system. The designation of the rate as a whole was 'warrant officer' but would not amount to a re-introduction of the old naval warrant officer (being ratings rather than officers). The FCPO would also be ranked as equivalent to warrant officers class I in the British Army and Royal Marines and with warrant officers in the Royal Air Force, and wore the same rank insignia, the Royal Coat of Arms.

However, on 30 August 1985 DCI (RN) 339 stated the individual title 'Fleet Chief Petty Officer' was to be abolished and warrant officer used instead for all purposes. The change was made to acknowledge the fact that Royal Navy warrant officers receive a Warrant of Appointment like warrant officers in the other Service Branches and thus emphasize their equivalent status and position. The change did not entail the granting of additional privileges.

DCI (RN) 146 'Implementation of WO2 Rate' issued on 14 November 2003 decreed that on 01 April 2004 the Royal Navy's warrant officer class would be divided into class 1 (WO1) and class 2 (WO2) when the non-substantive rate of Charge Chief Petty Officer (CCPO) would be replaced by WO2 for Artificers and Technicians.

Previously the rate of CCPO was ranked at OR-7 within the NATO Rank Code system, although above other CPOs who were also OR-7. A Charge Chief Artificer (a highly qualified technical CCPO) could be given a NATO OR-8 status, but still ranked below WO2 in the British Army and Royal Marines. However, with the introduction of the WO2 rank they were uprated to OR-8 status, becoming equivalent to their Service Branch counterparts and wearing the same rank insignia; a crown within a wreath worn on the lower arm.

Existing warrant officers were retitled WO1 and became the highest rank in the rating structure of the Royal Navy.

2014DIN01-027 'Transition to single Warrant Officer (WO) rate within the Royal Navy (RN): 2014 Warrant Officer Selection Boards' stated that from 01 April 2014, the Royal Navy (with the exception of the Royal Marines) would start the transition to a single warrant officer rate. This meant that the current WO1 rate would become the only warrant officer rate at the end of the transition. Existing WO2s would remain eligible for promotion to WO1 and continue to function in their roles as WO2 until: selected for promotion; they reached their retirement age; or they applied for release.

However, due to legacy arrangements selection boards, for some branches, would continue to consider CPOs in certain branches for promotion to WO2 until 01 April 2016, after which promotion would be directly to the rank of WO1. For example, Chief Petty Officer Engineering Technician (Marine Engineering Submarine) (CPOET(MESM)) to Warrant Officer 2 Engineering Technician (MESM) (WO2ET(MEMS)).

For formal and documentary use, a warrant officer's specialisation is identified by adding the appropriate specialisation abbreviation as a suffix. For example, Warrant Officer Class 1 (Air Engineering Mechanic) is abbreviated WO1 (AEM).

5.1.1 Executive Warrant Officers

The appointment of Executive Warrant Officer (EWO) was established in the Royal Navy in 2005 for both ships and shore establishments. The EWO, by appointment, is the senior warrant officer within the unit and a member of the senior command team. The appointment is held by a warrant officer class 1.

Currently, the overarching purpose of the EWO is as the Command Advisor on the Moral Component of Operational Capability, moral and manpower issues, responsible to the Command for the management and co-ordination of the manpower components of operational capability. The EWO has a number of primary and secondary roles, with the primary ones including:

1. To be head of the Executive Support Sub Department.
2. To be the Command Advisor on the Moral Component of Operational Capability, morale and manpower issues.
3. To manage the Ship's Manning System to meet operational requirements and to ensure individual personal harmony and training and development are delivered.
4. To be the Ship's principal point of contact with the Regional CMC, Geographical Squad Pool and CBC for the provision of assignments, course bookings and career advice.
5. To co-ordinate, via DEPCOs (departmental coordinators) on board manpower employment and tasking as Whole Ship Manpower Manager.
6. Under direction from the CO and XO, set and maintain the Moral Component of the Warrant Officers, Senior and Junior Ratings on-board.

EWOs are accountable to the Executive Officer of the ship for the delivery of their routine responsibilities and accountable to the Commanding Officer for advising the Command Team on issues of the Moral Component.

5.1.2 Base Warrant Officers

At some point prior to 2001, the appointment of EWO was retitled Base Warrant Officer (BWO) for shore establishments, although EWO was retained for ships.

BWOs are authorised to carry a black silver top cane with Royal Arms on the top (BR3, 2014, p.39-9).

5.1.3 Command Warrant Officers

The purpose of a Command Warrant Officer (CWO) is to act as an independent and autonomous command advisor to the Navy Command Headquarters (NCHQ) on any matter affecting Operational Capability, for example the moral component. Acting in this capacity CWOs undertake the following roles and are accountable to:

- The Head of their Fighting Arm (FA) to assess the Moral Component of Operational Capability, engaging with and representing the feedback of FA personnel.
- The Commodore Naval Personnel Strategy (CNPS) to provide feedback on current pan-Naval Service personnel policy and to provide advice on future policy development.

- The Warrant Officer of the Naval Service (WO (NS)), advising on ratings/other ranks specific matters requiring Navy Board consideration.

There are currently five CWOs who are titled and suffixed in the same manner as the Head of their Fighting Arm:

- Surface Ships (SS);
- Submarines (SM);
- Royal Marines (RM);
- Fleet Air Arm (FAA); and
- Maritime Reserves (MR).

Appointment to CWO is via selection process and personally approved by the Head of their Fighting Arm. On appointment CWOs are awarded the CWO badge, which may only be worn during the period of the appointment. “The badge is to be worn on the left breast in the same position as a NATO force emblem” (Royal Navy, 2014, p.39-9). Like BWOs, CWOs are also authorised to carry a black silver top cane with Royal Arms on the top.

Due to the nature of the appointment CWO SS, SM, FAA and MR are considered the senior serving rating in their FA, as is the Corps RSM for the Royal Marines. CWO RM is subordinate to the Corps RSM (Section 5.2.1). All are authorised to exercise functional authority over all FA ratings in pursuance of their duties. All five CWO are equal in status to each other, but subordinate in status to the WO (NS), discussed next.

5.1.4 Warrant Officer of the Naval Service

The Warrant Officer of the Naval Service (WO (NS)) is the most prestigious role, and senior appointment, for a warrant officer in the Royal Navy (Royal Navy, 2013) and works alongside the First Sea Lord.

The role was first established in 2010, replacing the post of Second Sea Lord's Command Warrant Officer (Navy News, 2010).

The WO (NS), sometimes written WONS, primary responsibility is to act as a channel between the ratings/other ranks and most Senior Naval officers, ensuring top level policy messages are understood and comprehensive honest feedback is provided in return. The WO (NS) makes use of the Fighting Arms CWOs to aid them in these duties. The WO (NS) wide ranging portfolio embraces involvement in the most senior forums including (Navy News, 2010; Taylor, 2013):

- The Navy Board (as an observer);
- The Naval Command Operating Board;
- The Personnel Executive Group;
- Trustee for the Victory Services Club and Royal Naval Association; and
- Sits on the Fleet Amenities Board.

Like BWOs and CWOs, the WO (NS) is also authorised to carry a black silver top cane with Royal Arms on the top. However, for ceremonial occasions the Victory cane may be carried which is made out of wood from the oldest still commissioned ship in the world, HMS Victory (Royal Navy, 2013).

5.1.5 Modern Context

Presently, warrant officers in the Royal Navy are referred to by their appointment, of which there are a number (QR RN, 2014) as outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Royal Navy warrant officers by appointment and precedence

Rank	Appointment
Warrant Officer, Class One (WO1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warrant Officer of the Naval Service • Command Warrant Officer • Executive Warrant Officer • Any other appointment on the establishment of a ship or shore establishment carrying the rank of WO1.
Warrant Officer, Class Two (WO2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only utilised between 2004 and 2016.

5.2 Warrant Officers in the Royal Marines

In December 1881, the London Gazette (1881, p.6466) announced the introduction of warrant rank into the Royal Marines. The London Gazette recorded the following (1881, p.6167-6168):

- 9 Sergeant-Majors (Warrant Officers);
- 4 Bandmaster (Warrant Officer);
- 5 Superintending Clerk, Commandant's Office (Warrant Officer);
- 5 Superintending Clerk, Paymaster's Office (Warrant Officer); and
- 13 Schoolmasters (Warrant Officer after 12 years' Service).

The reasoning behind this change was to extend to the Royal Marines the same advantages which had recently been conferred upon the non-commissioned officers of the Army; therefore the analogous ranks were promoted to warrant officers (Hansard, 1881).

In August 1899, General Order 51 announced that on 14 July 1899 Royal Marines First Sergeant Instructors of Gunnery, Musketry, Infantry, Gymnastics and Swimming would be re-titled as:

1. Quartermaster-Sergeant;
2. Barrack-Sergeant;
3. Quartermaster-Sergeant Instructor Gunnery;
4. Quartermaster-Sergeant Instructor Musketry;
5. Quartermaster-Sergeant Instructor Infantry;
6. Quartermaster-Sergeant Instructor Gymnastics; and
7. Quartermaster-Sergeant Instructor Swimming.

Note: 1 and 2, in that order, ranked senior to all others in their class.

These appointments were also raised from Class III to Class II status for pension purposes.

In 1910, Gunnery Sergeant-Majors were to be appointed (Order-in-Council dated 07 Nov 1910), however, at sea there was confusion between them and the Senior NCO of the Royal Marines Detachment, who was always known as the Sergeant-Major. A consequence of this confusion was a title change to Royal Marine Gunners in 1912 (Order-in-Council dated 29 Feb 1912).

It was not until February 1916, with the issue of Royal Navy General Order 20 (GO 20), that the ranks of WO1 and WO2 were established in the Royal Marines. GO 20 stated that all warrant officers serving on 27 August 1915 would now be known as WO1s and included: Sergeant-Majors; Bandmasters; Superintending Clerks; and Schoolmasters (Warrant Officers).

Roles granted WO2 status included: Staff Clerks, London; Quartermaster Sergeants (QMS, including Barrack QMSs); Quartermaster-Sergeant Instructors of Gunnery; Quartermaster-Sergeant of Musketry; Quartermaster-Sergeant Instructors of Physical Training; Quartermaster-Sergeant Instructors of Infantry; Quartermaster-Sergeant Instructors of Swimming; and Schoolmasters (Non-Commissioned Officers).

GO 20 also stipulated that Colour Sergeants appointed as Company Sergeants would be placed under WO2s who would have the title of Company Sergeant-Major (CSM); although a number of Colour Sergeants were promoted to the new rank of WO2. Further, GO 20 authorised the wearing of the Royal Arms for WO1s and Crown for WO2s.

Alistair Donald, a retired Royal Marines Major, states (2011, p.1):

“In the November 1918 Navy List ‘Warrant Officers, Royal Marines, Class 1’ were listed as Sergeant Majors, Superintending Clerks, Bandmasters, Chief Gunners and RM Gunners, Chief Schoolmasters and Schoolmasters. By January 1920 they were all shown simply as ‘Warrant Officers’ again. They wore no badge of rank. Their next promotion was to Commissioned RM Gunners, Commissioned Sergeant Majors, Commissioned Superintending Clerks and Commissioned Bandmasters, and by an Order-in-Council dated 22 January 1920 the term ‘Commissioned Warrant Officers’ was abolished and replaced by ‘Commissioned Officers from Warrant Rank’. Their badge of rank was a single star on their shoulder.”

In addition to Commissioned Officers from Warrant rank in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, warrant officers were also entitled to be saluted by Chiefs and Petty Officers, NCOs, ratings and other ranks.

By an Order-in-Council (dated 26 Jul 1926) no further appointments were to be made to Royal Marine Gunner and the title would no longer exist, although twelve years later it was reintroduced (Order-in-Council dated 04 Nov 1938).

In 1937 the junior Sergeant-Major in each Royal Marines Division became equivalent to a British Army WO1 (Order-in-Council of 02 Feb 1937), was to live in the Sergeants Mess and wear the same uniform as a Royal Marines Staff Sergeant, but with the badge of rank of the Royal Arms. After two years these Sergeant-Majors’ would be eligible for promotion to Staff Sergeant-Major, having the seniority as a warrant officer from the date they were promoted Sergeant-Major. Their service as a Sergeant-Major would also count as for warrant rank. Donald (2011) suggests this change almost certainly came about due to the Battalion formed for London Duties in 1935, when the Regimental Sergeant Major (new style warrant officer)

of the Coldstream Guards was required to salute the Sergeant-Major of the Royal Marines Battalion, Sergeant-Major E.H.F. Bonnett, the latter being a Royal Marines (old style) warrant officer. The Queen's Regulations for the Army (1899, p.28) stated that all warrant officers in the British Army will salute "such warrant officers of the Royal navy as have rank corresponding to that of commissioned officer in the army."

In the March 1940 Navy List a Commissioned Master Tailor and Warrant Master Tailors are included. Also in this list, Schoolmasters were shown as a Chief Schoolmaster (to rank as Captain), Headmasters and Schoolmasters (both as Commissioned Warrant Officers).

With the reformation of the Royal Marines Engineers (RME) during WWII, three Temporary Warrant Officers RME appeared in the Navy List: a General Works Foreman; a Quay Foreman; and another titled 'Mechanical'. In line with the Royal Navy, a Warrant Recruiter was included in 1942.

On 01 July 1948 warrant officer messes were closed (AFO 1629) and all warrant officers joined their local Wardroom or Officers' mess. On 05 April 1949, in both the Royal Navy and Royal Marines, the generic title 'Warrant Officer' was replaced by 'Branch Officer' (AFO 913). Branch Officers were to be appointed by commission and not warrant. Warrant officers became 'Commissioned Officers' and the previous Commissioned Officers from Warrant rank became 'Senior Commissioned Officers'. The change was instigated in order to avoid confusion with warrant officers in the other two Services who were listed as other ranks rather than warranted officers in the historical sense. The changes in title did not involve any change in status, relative rank, uniform, duties or pay.

A consequence of the above change entailed the amalgamation, in the senior and junior grades, of Staff Sergeant-Majors and Superintending Clerks to become Senior Commissioned Sergeant-Majors and Commissioned Sergeant-Majors respectively. The senior grades wore a large star on their shoulder, whilst the junior grades wore a small star. This was now very much in line with the thick and thin stripes which had been worn by equivalent Royal Navy officers and warrant officers since the second half of the 19th century (May, 1974).

Prior to 1949 the Royal Marines utilised the rank of Staff Sergeant and Colour Sergeant. However, a Royal Marines Staff Sergeant had a true relative rank in the British Army of WO2, whereas a Colour Sergeant was equivalent to a British Army Staff Sergeant (one below WO2). AFO 3386 decreed on 07 October 1949 that all Royal Marines Staff Sergeants would now be re-titled Quartermaster Sergeant (QMS) with equivalence to British Army WO2s.

On 01 January 1957 Branch Officers were retitled Special Duties List Officers (AFOs 1 & 555/56), with the result that Commissioned Officers and Senior Commissioned Officers became 2nd Lieutenants and Lieutenants respectively.

With the publication of RMRO 106 on 01 July 1972, under the provisions of the Armed Forces Act 1971, the Royal Marines moved to the system of warrant officer currently in use. The ranks of Regimental Sergeant-Major, Quartermaster-Sergeant, and Staff Bandmaster were replaced by WO1, WO2 and WO2 (Bandmaster) respectively. They were to be addressed as 'Sir' by those junior to them, as 'Mr' by those senior and their warrants signed by the Secretary of State for Defence.

DCI (RN) 923 published on 07 August 1970 stated that Royal Marines warrant officers, along with their Fleet Chief Petty Officer (Section 5.1) counterparts would receive formal Warrants of Appointment.

5.2.1 Corps Regimental Sergeant Major

On 01 January 1989 WO1 (RSM) D.M. Stollery became the first Corps Regimental Sergeant Major (CRSM) for the Royal Marines. The Commandant General Royal Marines (CGRM) personally appoints the CRSM from the extant RSMs. On establishment of the appointment, the CRSMs responsibilities included (RMRO 24):

- Convening RSM seminars and formulating the agenda, in consultation with Department of the CGRM.
 - Chair the seminar.
 - Produce minutes, and
 - If appropriate, nominate RSMs and/or WO1s to represent any specific issues through the chain of command.
- Organisation of the centralised Sergeants' Mess activities, such as the reception following Beat Retreat.
- Advising the CGRM from time to time on matters of Corps interest and is to call upon CGRM as directed.
- Advising the Corps Dress Committee when warrant officer, NCO and Marine uniform matters are being considered.

The responsibilities of the CRSM are in addition to their normal employment (RMRO 24). The CRSM is, by appointment, also a trustee of the Royal Marines Charitable Trust Fund.

5.2.2 Modern Context

Presently, warrant officers in the Royal Marines are referred to by their appointment, of which there are a number (QR Army, 1975, p.9/3-8) as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Royal Marines warrant officers by appointment and precedence

Rank	Appointment
Warrant Officer, Class One (WO1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corps Regimental Sergeant Major (CRSM). • Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM). • Any other appointment on the establishment of a unit carrying the rank of WO1.
Warrant Officer, Class Two (WO2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant (RQMS), Company or Troop Sergeant Major. • Any other appointment on the establishment of a unit carrying the rank of WO2, e.g. First Drill or Bandmaster.

5.3 Warrant Officers in the British Army

In the early Eighteenth century, the highest non-commissioned rank (NCO) in the British Army was that of Serjeant-Major and Quarter Mafter Serjeant (War Office, 1807). These ranks were Sergeants who wore 4 chevrons (stripes) point downwards above the elbow and in some cases (mostly Guards Units) was surmounted by a Royal Coat of Arms.

In 1813 Cavalry regiments introduced the rank of Troop-Serjeant-Major (TSM) to replace the Quartermaster (or Quarter Mafter Serjeant) as the senior NCO of a troop. This required the existing position to be explicitly re-designated the Regimental-Serjeant-Major (RSM). Later, the rise of the squadron as the principal sub-unit in the regimental system saw the corresponding introduction of the Squadron-Serjeant-Major (SSM), superseding the rank of TSM.

The Infantry being the Infantry, however, hung on to the undifferentiated, one-per-battalion Sergeant-Major until World War One, when the introduction of the Company-Serjeant-Major forced them to adopt the RSM title as well. An infantry regiment could/can consist of two or more battalions and the reader may expect the Infantry title to be Battalion-Serjeant-Major (BSM) rather than RSM; although anecdote suggests that perhaps the Infantry, at the time, felt this would imply a lower status than their Cavalry equivalents. The posts of Regimental and Squadron Corporal Major are the Household Cavalry's equivalent of Sergeant Majors, as the Household Cavalry traditionally does not have ranks named Sergeant. The Rifles use the spelling 'Serjeant Major'.

The Cardwell Reforms, initiated in 1872, were the foundation for a number of structural changes to the British Army. And, as part of these structural changes an Army Circular, on 11 January 1879, announced the introduction of:

"...a class of Warrant Officer to assist in the discharge of the subordinate duties of the Commissariat and Transport and of the Ordnance Store Departments of our Army, to be denominated 'Conductors of Supplies' and 'Conductors of Stores' respectively. Their position in our Army shall be inferior to that of all commissioned officers and superior to that of all noncommissioned officers. Conductors shall at the same time have full power to exercise command over any subordinates of the Departments of our Army, or noncommissioned officers or soldiers of our Army, who may be placed under their orders."

Conductors are discussed further in Section 5.3.4. Due to the success of the new rank of warrant officer, in March 1879 the Adjutant General suggested its extension to include a number of senior NCO positions. On 01 July 1881 selected Staff-Serjeant-Majors and Serjeant-Majors, such as the Cavalry RSM and Infantry Serjeant-Major, were confirmed with warrants, thus making them warrant officers (Pay Warrant, 1881). As noted earlier, the Serjeant-Major's badge of rank was four chevrons, point downwards above the elbow. However, from 1881 it was ordered that throughout the British Army the chevrons would now be worn point uppermost, below the elbow.

In 1882, an order introducing the badges to be worn by the '1881' warrant officers stated that they would no longer wear chevrons. Anecdote suggests that the final choice of the Crown as the badge of the '1881' warrant officers was likely adopted because the majority of Staff-Serjeant-Majors 1st Class already wore a crown above a four-bar chevron. All that occurred was that the wearing of the chevrons was discontinued.

By 1899 the number and classes of warrant officer had swelled and the Queen's Regulations and Orders for the Army (War Office, 1899, p.22) identified four classes of warrant officer in the British Army (Table 4) and states that these warrant officers were inferior to all commissioned officers but superior to all non-commissioned officers. Class, in this instance, meant seniority of one over another rather the future class I and II division witnessed in 1915.

Table 4: British Army warrant officers by appointment and precedence in 1899

Rank	Class	Appointment
Warrant Officer	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conductor, Army Ordnance Corps. • Master-gunner, 1st class. • Staff-Serjeant-Major, 1st class, Army Service Corps.
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master-gunner, 2nd class.
	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garrison-serjeant-major.
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporal-major (Household Cavalry). • Serjeant-major (<i>and above, senior to all others in class 4</i>) • Armament-serjeant-major. • Armourer-serjeant-major. • Bandmaster. • Barrack-serjeant-major. • Foreman-of-proof, serjeant-major. • Foreman-of-works, serjeant-major. • Mechanist-serjeant-major. • Schoolmaster (when a warrant officer). • Serjeant-major, Educational Establishment. • Serjeant-major-foreman-examiner of laboratory stores. • Serjeant-major-instructor. • Staff-serjeant-major. • Staff-serjeant-major, Army Service Corps (except Staff Clerk Section). • Sub-conductor, Army Service Corps. • Superintending-clerk.

Further, the Queens' Regulations and Orders for the Army (War office, 1899, p.28) stated that all warrant officers in the British Army will salute "such warrant officers of the Royal navy as have rank corresponding to that of commissioned officer in the army." However, British Army warrant officers were not to be saluted.

The next big change for both warrant officers and NCOs was during World War One. The British Army had evolved a system of 'rank' and 'appointment', which had arisen from the Regimental System that underpinned it (some might use the term tribal). In essence, there had long been a tendency for each Arm or branch of the British Army (i.e. the Royal Artillery, Cavalry, Infantry, Army Service Corps and Army Ordnance Corps) to give different titles to what in status was the same rank. For example, Squadron-Serjeant-Major and Battery-Serjeant-Major would be found in the Cavalry and Royal Artillery respectively. When these Arms operated separately there was no problem. However, as All Arms (combined and mixed) formations became the norm, there was some confusion and equivalence was not always clear.

Prior to 1915 all warrant officers were embraced in the umbrella term of warrant officer by the Quarterly Army List but were sub-divided, in order, as Staff, Educational, Regimental, Departmental, and Special Reserve (Table 5). During 1915 and beyond, warrant officers in the Quarterly Army List were identified as warrant officer, class I. From 1919 Conductors in the Army Ordnance Corps were listed as regimental rather than departmental warrant officers.

Table 5: British Army warrant officers by type and rank title in 1914

Type	Corps/Regiment	Rank	Number
Staff	Unknown	Staff or Garrison Serjeant-Major	12
		Schoolmaster (1st Class Warrant Officers)	41
Educational	Education	Schoolmaster (Warrant Officers)	168
		Serjeant-Major	9
		Superintending Clerk	1
		Corporal-Major	4
Regimental	Cavalry	Serjeant-Major	21
		Farrier-Serjeant-Major	4
		Military Mounted Police	Serjeant-Major
	Royal Artillery	Master Gunners (1st Class)	20
		Master Gunners (2nd Class)	41
		Serjeant-Major	81
		Serjeant-Major (Artillery Clerk)	17
		Superintending Clerk	10
		Farrier-Serjeant-Major	3
	Royal Malta Artillery	Serjeant-Major	0
	Royal Engineers	Serjeant-Major	98
		Superintending Clerk	34
		Farrier-Serjeant-Major	1
	Royal Flying Corps, Military Wing	Serjeant-Major	22
	Foots Guards & Line of the Infantry	Serjeant-Major	152
	Unknown	Superintending Clerk	4
	Band	Bandmasters of the Army	207
	Army Service Corps	1st Class Staff-Serjeant-Major	20
		Serjeant-Major	5
		Staff-Serjeant-Major, Supply and Transport	128
Mechanist Serjeant-Major		20	
Farrier-Serjeant-Major		1	
Royal Army Medical Corps	Serjeant-Major	96	
Army Veterinary Corps	Serjeant-Major	1	

Table 5 cont.: British Army warrant officers by type and rank title in 1914

Type	Corps/Regiment	Rank	Number
Departmental	Army Ordnance Corps	Conductor	44
		Sub-Conductor	52
		Serjeant-Major (recorded 1915)	
		Serjeant-Major (Armourer Section)	27
		Serjeant-Major (Armourer Artificer Section)	26
	Army Pay Corps	Staff-Serjeant-Major	44
	Corps of Military Foot Police	Serjeant-Major	1
	Military Provost Staff Corps	Serjeant-Major	13
Special Reserve &c.	Royal Garrison Artillery	Serjeant-Major	1
	Royal Engineers		2
	Infantry		74
Total:			1507

Table 5 provides a fascinating insight into the appointments that, within the different branches of the British Army, held a warrant until the introduction of Army Order 70 (AO 70) in 1915.

AO 70 published on 28 January 1915 announced the creation of a new rank of warrant officer, class II (Hansard, 1930) for the following ranks and appointments:

- Master Gunner, 3rd Class;
- Army Schoolmaster (when not a warrant officer, class I);
- Garrison Quartermaster-Serjeant;
- Quartermaster-Corporal-Major (Household Cavalry);
- Regimental Quartermaster-Serjeant;
- Squadron-Corporal-Major (Household Cavalry);
- Squadron-Serjeant-Major;
- Battery-Serjeant-Major;
- Troop-Serjeant-Major; and
- Company-Serjeant-Major.

AO 70 also stated that all warrant officers serving as such prior to 18 January 1915 would form class I (Table 5). The decision to introduce a new warrant rank was in part due to differences in levels of responsibility, and by 1949 there were over 70 appointments between the two classes (Dawnay, 1949). Army Order 174 of 1915, in reference to AO 70 stated that all warrant officers, class I would wear the badge of rank as outlined in Table 6.

Table 6: Badges of rank for warrant officers, class I from 1914-1918

Rank Title	Badge of Rank (Pre-1915) ⁽¹⁾	Badge of Rank (1915-1918) ⁽²⁾	Badge of Rank (Post-1918)
Conductor, Army Ordnance Corps	Crown and Wreath	Crown and Wreath	Royal Arms in Wreath
1st Class Staff-Serjeant-Major	Crown	Crown and Wreath	Royal Arms in Wreath
Master Gunner, 1st Class	Crown and Gun	Crown and Wreath and Gun	Royal Arms in Wreath with Gun
Schoolmaster, 1st Class	Unsure	Crown and Wreath	Unsure
Sub-Conductor, Army Ordnance Corps	Unsure	Royal Arms	Unsure
Master Gunner, 2nd Class	Crown and Gun	Royal Arms and Gun	Unsure
Garrison Serjeant-Major	Unsure	Royal Arms	Unsure
Schoolmaster	Unsure		Unsure
Serjeant-Major	Crown		Unsure
Farrier-Corporal-Major	Unsure	Royal Arms and Horseshoe	Unsure
Farrier-Serjeant-Major	Unsure		Unsure
Serjeant-Major, Royal Army Medical Corps	Unsure	Royal Arms and Geneva Cross	Unsure
Serjeant-Major, Gymnastic Staff	Unsure	Royal Arms and Crossed Swords	Unsure
Serjeant-Major, School of Musketry	Unsure	Royal Arms and Crossed Rifles	Unsure
Bandmaster	Crown and Lyre and Wreath	Special Badge, except Household Cavalry and Foot Guards	Unsure

Source: (1) Graham, 1915; (2) Army Order 174;

Army Order 309, published in October 1918, specified the Crown and Wreath for many warrant officer, class II appointments, for example: Master Gunner, 3rd class (with gun); Artificer Quartermaster Sergeants (with crossed hammer and pincers); other Quartermaster Sergeant appointments with appropriate horseshoe, crossed rifles etc.; and all Quartermaster Sergeants of line infantry.

The appointment of Troop-Serjeant-Major (TSM) was formerly current in British Cavalry units and was introduced in 1813 to replace the Quartermaster as the senior NCO of a troop. TSM was roughly equivalent to a Colour Sergeant in the Infantry. As the Squadron replaced the Troop as the main tactical and administrative division of the regiment, so the Squadron-Serjeant-Major superseded the TSM.

A version of the TSM was revived in 1938 as an appointment of the short-lived rank of warrant officer, class III (WOIII). The 'new' TSM, and their Infantry counterpart, the Platoon-Serjeant-Major, were part of an experiment in giving experienced NCOs command of units formerly reserved for commissioned officers (i.e. Troops and Platoons). Army Council Instruction 398, published in 1938, stated that the Crown in Laurel Wreath would be worn by warrant officers, class II on the introduction of class III, who in turn wore the Crown.

The class III experiment was not considered a success, and no promotions were made to the rank after 1940: most existing WOIII's were commissioned as Lieutenants. As such, the rank of warrant officer, class III was placed in suspension in 1940, although technically it still remains a rank of the British Army.

Army Council Instruction 991, published in 1947, stated that warrant officers, class II appointed as Quartermaster Sergeants would revert to wearing the Crown in Laurel Wreath and any remaining warrant officers, class III would wear the Crown.

Consequent on her Accession in 1953, the Queen commanded that the St. Edwards Crown would supersede the Tudor (Imperial) Crown previously borne on badges and buttons. (Comerford, 2003).

5.3.1 Garrison Sergeant Major, London District

Garrison Sergeant Majors (GSMs) have been appointed to military districts in the UK and abroad since the mid-1800s (Table 5). Since World War Two they have become increasingly prominent in the London District due to its association with the ceremonies conducted there.

The change from purely garrison administrative duties to the present ceremonial specialist has been a gradual one. The original administrative appointment bore the title London Garrison Sergeant Major. Following the death of King George VI in 1952 and the appointment of WO1 (GSM) George Stone, the title was changed to Garrison Sergeant Major, HQ London District (Defence Focus, 2014). It is since WO1 (GSM) Stone's appointment that the duties have become almost wholly associated with ceremonial. It is one of the top appointments for a warrant officer in the British Army (Table 10 below).

The holder is responsible for the organisation of state ceremonial events at all levels; from providing guards of honour and street-lining parties to the precise orchestration of multiple military elements for occasions such as the State Opening of Parliament. Some of the London ceremonial events during the year for which the GSM takes military ceremonial responsibility are:

- Trooping the Colour, Horse Guards Parade;
- The Garter Ceremony, Windsor Castle;
- Beating Retreat, Horse Guards Parade;
- The State Opening of Parliament, Westminster;
- The British Legion Festival of Remembrance, Royal Albert Hall;
- Remembrance Parade, Whitehall; and
- Other special events such as Royal Weddings, State Funerals, and of course Coronations!

Unlike other postings at the same level (Section 5.3.8, rank, precedence and seniority), which usually last two or three years, the unique nature of the London job requires the holder to decline commission to the officer ranks and remain in post for continuity; with the original concept of implementing the post making sure that ceremonial occasions were conducted correctly.

The GSM London District is appointed from the pool of Guards RSMs. The current incumbent, WO1 (GSM) Andrew John Stokes, Grenadier Guards, was the Academy Sergeant Major (Section 5.3.2) of the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst from March 2012 to February 2014. The previous post holder was WO1 (GSM) Bill Mott (Welsh Guards), OBE and MVO, who had been in post since 2002. The post holder is also known by their other title 'Garrison Sergeant Major, Household Division' which sits within the command structure of the Household Division (The Guards Museum, 2015).

In 2011, the GSM London District received a new badge of rank (JMHS, 2011) to consist of the large Royal Coat of Arms superimposed on a four bar chevron. There was an historical precedent for this, as before 1882 all GSMs wore the large Royal Coat of Arms on a four bar chevron on both arms (JMHS, 2011).

More information on GSMs can be found here: <http://www.trooping.london/gsm/index.htm>.

5.3.2 Academy Sergeant Major, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst

At the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS), the training establishment for the British Army's officers, the senior warrant officer holds the unique appointment of Academy Sergeant Major (AcSM).

After a title change, from Regimental Sergeant Major, in December 1960 the appointment of AcSM was upgraded to group (i) in Queen's Regulations (Table 10) making it one of the most senior appointments for a warrant officer in the British Army. Prior to the introduction of the Sergeant Major of the Army appointment (Section 5.3.5), the AcSM appointment was the senior Sergeant Major in the British Army.

The badge of rank for the RSM RMAS was the small WO1 badge below the right elbow, but on the title and status change a new large badge was designed by Major-General Sir Philip Ward and authorised for wear above the elbow (CITATION).

The appointment is almost always held by a warrant officer of the Foot Guards and is considered the senior Guards RSM appointment (*although this is not officially written anywhere*). The first AcSM of the RMAS (Table 7) was John Lord, a member of the Parachute Regiment (1941 to 1963) although he started his career in the Grenadier Guards (1933 to 1941). John Lord had a long and distinguished career: http://www.pegasusarchive.org/arnhem/john_lord.htm. He was the RSM of 3rd Battalion, the Parachute Regiment, during Operation Market Garden at Arnhem in World War Two.

The role of the AcSM includes:

- Advising, selecting and mentoring the instructors at the RMAS;
- Organising and chairing the Regimental RSMs conference (Chief of the General Staff and Adjutant General in attendance);
- Organising and chairing the Corps RSMs conference (Adjutant General in attendance);
- Ex-officio member of the Army Dress Committee; and
- Ex-officio patron of the Army Benevolent Fund.

Table 7: Academy Sergeant Majors of RMAS			
Name	Unit	Period of Appointment	Remarks
John Clifford Lord	Parachute Regiment	1948-1960 (RSM) 1960-1963 (AcSM)	Originally Grenadier Guards
Horace Cyril 'Phil' Phillips	Welsh Guards	1963-1970	Note 1.
Raymond P. Huggins	Grenadier Guards	1970-1980	As well as an MBE (1973), MSM (1974), he was awarded the Cross of Recognition by the French Army in 1976 and appointed Admiral in the Texas Navy by the Governor of Texas in 1978!
Denis P. Cleary	Irish Guards	1980-1992	Note 2.
Kevin Roberts	?	?	Note 3.
Peter J. Carr	Coldstream Guards	2007-2010	
Ross Martin	Irish Guards	April 2010 to December 2011	
Andrew (Vern) Stokes	Coldstream Guards	March 2012 to February 2014	GSM London District from 2014
Glenn John Haughton	Grenadier Guards	February 2014 to April 2015	In April 2015 became the first Sergeant Major of the Army (Section 5.3.5).

Notes:

1. <http://yeomenoftheguard.com/yeomenbiogs.htm>, [Accessed: 22 February, 2015].
2. Margetts, J. (1987) 'Mr Average' sarn't Major? He is certainly not that! *Soldier: Magazine of the British Army*. 09 February 1987, pp.14-15. [Accessed: 22 February, 2015].
3. <http://navigator.oilsandsreview.com/blog/kabul-christina-lake/>, [Accessed: 22 February, 2015].

5.3.3 Royal Artillery Sergeant Major

The Royal Artillery Sergeant Major (RASM) is, by appointment, the senior warrant officer in the Royal Regiment of Artillery. The post was established in 1989 and the post holder is responsible for providing advice on all soldier matters to:

- **The Director Royal Artillery (DRA):** is the professional head of the RA; and
- **The Master Gunner St James's Park:** is the head of the Regiment in all Regimental matters and the channel of communication between the Regiment and the Captain General. The appointment was instituted in 1678 and was originally known as Master Gunner of Whitehall & St James's Park. The earlier Master Gunners were responsible for the artillery defence of Whitehall Palace and the Palace of Westminster. The

appointment of Master Gunner St James's Park is held by a distinguished Royal Artillery Officer selected by the Captain General on the advice of the Colonels Commandant and has honorary status over all Commonwealth Artilleries. The RASM will also accompany the Master Gunner on visits to units.

Similar to the Royal Corps of Signals CRSM (Section 5.3.6), the RASM will have been selected for commission. Finally, my understanding is that the RASM is appointed from the pool of Master Gunners, Royal Artillery (who are, by appointment junior, to the RASM) (Section 5.3.9, Table 10).

5.3.4 Conductor, Royal Logistics Corps

The appointment of Conductor, abbreviated Cdr, is one of the most senior appointments for a select number of warrant officers in the British Army, and has a long history dating back to the early 1300s, although as a military grade of rank it was not introduced until the late 1800s. For example: the Statute of Westminster in 1327 gives the first mention of Conductors in which they are described as the men whose job it is to conduct soldiers to places of assembly and the Conductor of Ordnance is mentioned in the records of the siege of Boulogne in 1544.

As early as 1776, there existed subordinate officers styled Conductors who were assistants to the Commissaries of Stores, as described in Thomas Simes' book *The Military Guide for Young Officers* as assistants to the Commissary of Stores, but, in the British Army, the title seems to have fallen into disuse early in the nineteenth century (Dawnay, 1949).

The Cardwell Reforms, initiated in 1872, were the foundation for a number of structural changes to the British Army. And, as part of these structural changes the title was resuscitated when an Army Circular, on 11 January 1879, announced that Queen Victoria had signed the Royal Warrant which introduced:

“...a class of Warrant Officer to assist in the discharge of the subordinate duties of the Commissariat and Transport and of the Ordnance Store Departments of our Army, to be denominated 'Conductors of Supplies' and 'Conductors of Stores' respectively. Their position in our Army shall be inferior to that of all commissioned officers and superior to that of all noncommissioned officers. Conductors shall at the same time have full power to exercise command over any subordinates of the Departments of our Army, or noncommissioned officers or soldiers of our Army, who may be placed under their orders.”

As such, the Conductors of Supplies and Stores, in the Army Service Corps and Ordnance Store Branch respectively, became the British Army's first warrant officers. However, due to the success of the new rank of warrant officer, in March 1879 the Adjutant General suggested its extension to include a number of senior NCO positions. On 01 July 1881 selected Staff-Serjeant-Majors and Serjeant-Majors, such as the Cavalry RSM and Infantry Serjeant-Major, were confirmed with warrants, thus making them warrant officers (Pay Warrant, 1881).

In 1892, Conductors of Supplies were renamed Staff-Serjeant-Majors 1st Class, but Conductors of Stores remained in what in 1896 became the Army Ordnance Corps. Staff-Serjeant-Majors in the new corps were renamed Sub-conductors.

In 1899 the appointments of Conductor and Sub-conductor in the Army Ordnance Corps were departmental appointments, open to warrant officers and non-commissioned officers of all arms (Pay Warrant, 1899), however, if a Staff-Serjeant was over the age of 35 they could not apply.

From 11 July 1900, Conductors were authorised to wear a Crown in a Laurel Wreath on their lower sleeve and Sub-conductors a Crown, although they did not start actually wearing these until 1901 and 1904 respectively.

In February 1915, with the introduction of two classes of warrant officer to the British Army, Conductors and Sub-conductors became warrant officers, class I. Conductors were authorised a Crown in a Laurel Wreath and Sub-conductors the Royal Coat of Arms. In 1918, Conductors began wearing the Royal Arms in a Laurel Wreath, still their badge of rank, and Sub-Conductors the Royal Arms alone.

After the McCleod reorganisation of 1965 there were five warrant officer class 1 appointments in the Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC): Conductor; Sub-conductor; Staff Sergeant-Major 1st Class; Staff Sergeant-Major; and Regimental Sergeant Major.

Sub-conductors reverted to the appointment of Staff Sergeant-Major in 1967, but the appointment of Conductor passed to the new Royal Logistic Corps (RLC) in April 1993. A major change on the formation of the RLC was the opening up of the Conductor appointment to all Trades, and not just the 'supply' ones that came from the Royal Army Ordnance Corps (RAOC).

Another change since the RAOC merged into the RLC is the Territorial Army (TA, now Army Reserve) Conductor, three have been appointed; although only one Army Reserve Conductor has held the appointment at any one time. The Army Reserve Conductor is considered to be the focal point for the Army Reserve RLC. The title was previously Regimental Warrant Officer of Volunteers, HQ RLC TA 1999 – 2003 (Coyle, 2003).

Since 2001, Conductors have received their Warrant of Appointment on a parchment scroll, reviving an ancient tradition. In 2006 the time in rank criteria for warrant officer, class 1s to be appointed to Conductor was reduced from three years to one year, although they may not be currently serving as RSMs (but can on the relinquishment of the appointment of RSM). Since 2009, no more than eight serving warrant officer class 1s of the RLC at any one time (excluding RSMs) may hold the appointment of Conductor.

[[LINK: Corps Instruction for WO1 \(Cdr\) RLC \(2009-09-25\)](#)]

Presently, the appointment of Conductor may now be held by any warrant officer, class 1 in any of the RLC trades: transport, catering, pioneer, ammunition technician and postal warrant officers, as well as the original suppliers. The most senior Conductor has the novel title of Senior Conductor.

5.3.5 Sergeant-Major of the Army

In April 2015 the British Army established the position of Sergeant-Major of the Army (Soldier, 2015).

The individual, by appointment, is the most senior soldier in the British Army and provides the troops' perspective at the top level, advising the Chief of the General Staff.

The post holder is also a member of the executive committee of the Army Board, working with the Secretary of State for Defence, Armed Forces ministers, top civil servants and generals to shape Service policy.

Warrant Officer Class 1, Academy Sergeant Major (WO1 (AcSM)) Glenn Haughton (Grenadier Guards) became the first incumbent (Section 5.3.2).

5.3.6 Corps Regimental Sergeant Majors

The Corps Regimental Sergeant Major (CRSM) is the senior appointment within a particular Corps and the title varies depending on the Corps (Table 8). Typically, though it varies, the responsibilities of the Corps RSM are in addition to their normal employment.

The primary purpose of the CRSM is to advise the Director of their particular Arm/Service, for example the CRSM of the Royal Logistics Corps (RLC) would advise the Director RLC and the Regimental Colonel on many Corps issues and is the voice of 'the soldiers'. In analogy, a CRSM is to the Director as a RSM is to the Commanding Officer.

However, the appointment of CRSM is not currently acknowledged in the latest Queen's Regulations for the Army 1975 (Amendment 31, dated October 2012) (Section 5.3.9, Table 10).

Corps/Regiment	Appointment Title	Remarks
Royal Armoured Corps	Corps Sergeant Major (CSM)	Notes 1 & 10.
Royal Regiment of Artillery	Royal Artillery Sergeant Major (RASM).	Note 1. View Section 5.3.3.
Royal Corps of Signals (RCS)	CRSM	Notes 1, 3 & 4.
Royal Army Medical Corps (RAMC)	CRSM	Notes 1, 3 & 5.
Small Arms School Corps (SASC)	CRSM	Notes 1 & 6.
Corps of Army Music (CAMUS)	CRSM	Notes 1 & 7.
Infantry	Infantry RSM	Notes 1 & 8.
Royal Electrical & Mechanical Engineers (REME)	Corps Artificer Sergeant Major (Corps ASM)	Notes 1, 9 & 11.
Royal Logistics Corps (RLC)	CRSM	Notes 1 & 12.
Other Corps/Regiments Not Mentioned Above	CRSM	Note 1.
Adjutant General's Corps (AGC)	CRSM	Notes 1 & 13.

Notes

1. For an individual to gain a CRSM appointment, it is becoming (or has become) increasingly popular for warrant officer class 1s to have successfully passed the Late Entry Commissioning Board (LECB). As such, CRSMs are not only on a deferred commission, thus ensuring they do not have to chase it, but also a guaranteed

Intermediate Regular Commission. Seniority for their commission starting from the date of their appointment to CRSM.

2. My understanding is that CRSMs sit within group (iv) but are senior, by appointment, to other RSMs and WO1s (any other appointment). The QRs may clear this up when they are published in April 2015, apparently with an online version.
3. Also, CRSMs wear a new approved badge (by the Army Dress Committee), consisting of a Royal Coat of Arms surrounded by a laurel wreath.
4. The Signals CRSM wears a different badge of rank to other RSMs in the RCS (SOinC(A)s Policy Directive no. 213 - Corps Dress Regulations).
5. Also acts as the Army Medical Service (AMS) CRSM. The AMS encompasses the: RAMC; Royal Army Veterinary Corps (RAVC); Royal Army Dental Corps (RADDC); and Queen Alexandra's Nursing Corps (QARANC). Each of these Corps have their own CRSM.
6. Has specific responsibilities not undertaken by a RSM at regimental level.
7. The first CRSM for the Corps of Army Music was Guy Bennett in 2012 (Emsworth Concert Band, 2013).
8. Also known as Centre RSM (historical link) and School of Infantry RSM.
9. Senior warrant officer within trade, rather than CRSM.
10. The appointment was established in January 2007 with WO1 Clive Towell of the King's Royal Hussars Regiment.
11. The Corps ASM is the Senior Warrant Officer (Soldier) in the Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. Their role is to represent the Junior Soldiers of the Corps and deliver their views wherever sought. The Corps ASM promotes Esprit de Corps and reinforces Corps Ethos whilst contributing to the development of Engineering and administrative policy and has a role in how it is presented to Corps Members.
12. Within the RLC the Corps RSM is classed as the Senior RSM by appointment and serves at HQ DRLC. The rank of Conductor remains the senior warrant officer (Section 5.3.4).
13. The AGC Corps RSM is selected from the trades within the AGC, from 2012-2015 the Corps RSM was also the Provost Sergeant Major (of the Royal Military Police, RMP).

5.3.7 Other Appointments for Senior Warrant Officers

Table 9 outlines selected appointments for senior warrant officers of the British Army.

Table 9: Senior warrant officer appointments

Corps/ Regiment	Appointment Title	Remarks
Army Air Corps (AAC)	Master Ground Crewman	
	Master Aviation Crewman	Correct 2015.
Royal Logistics Corps (RLC)	Brigade Master Driver	Responsible for providing Transport and Logistics assurance to a large infrastructure Brigade (correct 2013). Usually warrant officer class 2.
	Staff Master Driver	Responsible for providing SME regulation and governance regarding Driver Training Policy for wheeled vehicles across Defence (correct 2014).
	Master Driver	Vehicle Accident Trend Investigator at MOD (correct 2010).
	Command Master Driver, Land Forces	Responsible for Transport Policy, Safety, Training and Assurance at HQ Land Forces (correct 2010).
	Defence Master Driver	Correct 2001.
	Senior Master Driver Training	Defence School of Transport (correct 2008).
	Garrison Master Driver	Responsibilities as Brigade Master Driver.
	Force Master Driver	Theatre appointment, e.g. Iraq.
	Master Air Despatcher (MAD)	Within 47 (Air Despatch) Squadron RLC.
	Regimental Operations Warrant Officer (Ops WO)	One each for Port Operators and Maritime.
	Command Warrant Officer Equipment Support (Materiel)	Correct 2006.
	Command Food Services Warrant Officer (CFSWO)	Capability Management, Trade Sponsor and Subject Matter Expert for Military Chefs and Food Services Worldwide (correct 2012).
	Command Ordnance Warrant Officer (COWO)	Correct 2008.

Table 9 cont.: Senior warrant officer appointments

Corps/ Regiment	Appointment Title	Remarks
Royal Artillery	Master Gunner, Royal Artillery	In the Royal Regiment of Artillery Master Gunners are experts in the technical aspects of gunnery, occupying advisory rather than command posts. The appointment is split into two classes: Master Gunners 2nd and 1st class, both holding the rank of warrant officer class 1. Formerly there was also an appointment of master gunner 3rd class, who held the rank of warrant officer class 2. The appointment of Master Gunner should not be confused with that of Master Gunner, St James's Park, who is the ceremonial head of the Royal Regiment of Artillery (Section 5.3.3).
	Master Gunner, Unmanned Air Systems Operating Standards	Role includes: focal point for all Army unmanned air systems flight safety & operating standards issues. Drive standards, air safety & provide the delivery duty holder first party assurance.
Various	Sergeant Major Instructor (SMI)	An appointment held by WO1s in the Small Arms School Corps (SASC), Royal Army Physical Training Corps (RAPTC), and by some WO1s in the Royal Engineers.
	CGSs Briefing Team Warrant Officer	CGS (Chief of the General Staff) Army Engagement Group, (correct 2015).
	Training Operations Initial Warrant Officer	HQ ARTD (Army Recruiting and Training Division), (correct 2015).
	Command Sergeant Major (Comd SM)	Senior appointment at Divisional level, similar role to Corps RSMs.

5.3.8 Rank, Precedence and Seniority

There is, typically, no better dog whistle for soldiers than the matter of seniority and precedence, especially at the rank of warrant officer class 1. This Section is taken from the Queen's Regulation for the Army 1975 (Amendment 31, October 2012).

The general principles of rank and precedence are:

- A. Officers holding substantive rank are to take precedence over all those holding acting or local rank of the same grade. They are to take precedence among themselves according to their date of promotion to that rank.
- B. Officers of the TA or Regular Officers on Home Service Part Time terms of service holding brevet rank are, when employed outside their regiment or corps, to take precedence with Officers holding substantive rank of the same grade, according to

- date of promotion. When serving regimentally they are to take precedence within their regiment or corps in accordance with the date of their promotion to substantive rank.
- C. Officers holding acting rank are to take precedence over all those holding local rank of the same grade and are to take precedence among themselves according to the date of their appointment to acting rank.
- D. Officers holding local rank are to take precedence among themselves according to the date of their appointment to that local rank.

Precedence among warrant officers and NCOs follow these principles but is also governed by the precedence of Corps (QR Army 1975, Para 8.001) and in some cases by the appointment held.

With regards to seniority, the holders of substantive rank are senior to all holders of the same acting rank, who in turn are senior to all holders of the same local rank. Seniority between those of the same substantive rank is determined in accordance with their dates of promotion to that rank, except where provided to the contrary. Seniority of individuals promoted on the same date is determined as follows:

- If in different Corps: by corps precedence as shown in QR Army 1975, Para 8.001.
- If in the same Corps: by their relative positions on the corps rank seniority roster.
- When it is necessary to determine the seniority of soldiers listed in, for example, Table 10 (Section 5.3.9), seniority will depend on the period of reckonable individual's service as defined in the Pay Warrant 1964 (being the Royal Warrant and Schedule governing pay, promotions and appointments of the army) and, should this be the same, then on age.

For the groupings, by custom and for administrative purposes, appointments of warrant officers are listed in the groups shown in Table 10 (Section 5.3.9). Notwithstanding seniority as outlined above, a warrant officer may exercise authority over those of equal rank in other groups, when required to do so in the execution of the duties of his appointment.

Finally, some get confused with pay bands and ranges on the salary scales currently in use for the British Army, which should not to be confused with precedence of one rank over another; for example, WO2 and Staff Sergeant which overlap.

5.3.9 Modern Context

In the British Army, warrant officers are referred to by their appointment, of which there are many (QR Army, 1975, p.9/3-7) as outlined in Table 10.

Table 10: British Army warrant officers by appointment and precedence 2012

Rank	Group	Appointment
Warrant Officer, Class One (WO1)	(i)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sergeant Major of the Army (from April 2015 and not currently in QRs) (refer to Section 5.3.5). Conductor, Royal Logistics Corps (refer to Section 5.3.4). Royal Artillery Sergeant Major (refer to Section 5.3.3). Academy Sergeant Major, Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS) (refer to Section 5.3.2). Garrison Sergeant Major, London District (refer to Section 5.3.1).
	(ii)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master Gunner, Royal Artillery.
	(iii)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garrison Sergeant Major, except London District.
	(iv)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regimental Corporal Major. Regimental Sergeant Major (<i>and above, rank regimentally above all others in class iv</i>) Bandmaster. Staff Sergeant Major, Royal Logistics Corps or Adjutants General's Corps (Staff & Personnel Support). Sergeant Major. Any other appointment on the establishment of a unit or corps carrying the rank of WO1, e.g. Artificer Sergeant Major or Superintending Draughtsman.
Warrant Officer, Class Two (WO2)	(i)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Garrison Quartermaster Sergeant. Regimental Quartermaster Corporal. Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant. Regimental Quartermaster Corporal (Technical). Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant (Technical). Staff Quartermaster Sergeant. Quartermaster Sergeant Instructor. Quartermaster Sergeant.
	(ii)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Farrier Quartermaster Corporal or Quartermaster Sergeant. Squadron Corporal Major; Squadron, Battery or Company Sergeant Major. Bugle, Drum, Pipe or Trumpet Major. Any other appointment on the establishment of a unit or corps carrying the rank of WO2, e.g. Warrant Officer Instructor, Class 2 (Physical Training).

Interesting to note that nowhere in QRs is there reference to a “Warrant Officers’ and Sergeants Mess” but only to a “Sergeants Mess”. My understanding is that the Sergeants’ Mess was introduced before the introduction of the warrant officer rank. At some point, I am unsure of the year, the title was changed within units to the Warrant Officers’ and Sergeants’ Mess but not amended in QRs (*I am currently researching this and will amend as required*).

An ASM rules the workshop, The RSM rules regimental matters and the Pay WO1 is king of all when it comes to their domain.

5.4 Warrant Officers in the Royal Air Force

Upon its formation in 1918, the Royal Air Force (RAF) adopted the rank titles and badges for Other Ranks from the British Army, specifically the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). The RFC ranks of warrant officer class I and warrant officer class II were directly adopted, with the rank insignia of the Royal Coat of Arms and crown respectively. Until the 1930s, these ranks were often known as Sergeant-Major 1st and 2nd class respectively.

In 1939, the ranks of warrant officer class I and warrant officer class II were combined into the new rank of warrant officer. Since 1939, the RAF has had no equivalent to WO2 (OR-8), with an RAF warrant officer being equivalent to WO1 in the British Army, Royal Navy and Royal Marines (OR-9).

On 01 July 1946, warrant officers serving as aircrew were assigned different rank badges which distinguished them from their peers in the ground trades, Eagle within wreath below Royal Arms, and were retitled Master Aircrew (RAF Web, 2012).

In 1950 a new grading system was introduced for technicians, with warrant officers in the technical trades being retitled Master Technician (RAF Web, 2012). In 1964, with the exception of Junior and Chief Technician, the technician ranks were abolished and Master Technicians reverted to the title warrant officer (RAF Web, 2012).

For formal and documentary use, a warrant officer's specialisation is identified by adding the appropriate specialisation abbreviation as a suffix. For example, Warrant Officer (Engineering and Logistics Wing) is abbreviated WO (ELW).

5.4.1 Station Warrant Officer

The Station Warrant Officer (SWO) is, by appointment, the senior warrant officer on a RAF station. The SWO is responsible for (RAF Odiham, 2014):

- Discipline, ceremonial events and standards in the RAF at individual station level; broadly comparable to a RSM appointment within the British Army;
- The allocation of single junior ranks' accommodation;
- Station duties roster; and
- Monitoring the Station cleaning contractors.

The SWO is also the station commander's link to the other ranks.

Once an individual has attained the rank of warrant officer (including RAF Regiment) they are eligible to apply for a SWO appointment. There are examples of Flight Sergeants acting in the position of SWO (RAF Forum, 2013).

In the fashion of their Royal Navy counterparts, SWOs have a cane as a symbol of their appointment.

5.4.2 Chief of the Air Staff's Warrant Officer

The Chief of the Air Staff's Warrant Officer (CASWO), by appointment, is the senior warrant officer of the Royal Air Force. The post was established in 1998 with the purpose of advising the Chief of the Air Staff on matters concerning airmen and airwomen of the RAF.

Since the inception of CASWO, the Chief of the Air Staff has held an annual warrant officers conference which is attended by members of the Senior Leadership Team.

5.4.3 Modern Context

Presently, warrant officers in the RAF do not hold appointments as in the British Army or Royal Marines; the exception being the SWO and the CASWO (Table 11). Warrant officers are the highest NCO rank in the RAF and they rank above Flight Sergeants (OR-7). Warrant officers in the RAF take precedence according to their date of promotion (QR RAF, 1999, p.4-5).

Table 11: Royal Air Force warrant officers by appointment and precedence

Rank	Appointment
Warrant Officer (WO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of the Air Staff's Warrant Officer (CASWO). • Station Warrant Officer (SWO). • Master Aircrew (MAcr): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Master Signaller ○ Master Engineer ○ Master Air Electronics Operator ○ Master Air Loadmaster • Any other appointment on the establishment of a unit or station carrying the rank of warrant officer.

6.0 UK versus US Warrant Officer Military Rank System

This Section is mainly for interest, and to show the contrast between the current British system of warrant officers and the US-style which resembles the historical position of warrant officers.

Both warrant officer and Sergeant Major are ranks within the US Army military rank system (Table 12). This in contrast to the British Army, in which warrant officer is a rank and Sergeant Major (in modern terms) is an appointment for a warrant officer.

Table 12: Equivalence between US and UK military ranks

NATO Rank Codes	NCO Type	British Army Ranks	US Rank Codes	US Army NCO Ranks
N/A		No Equivalent Rank	W-5	Chief Warrant Officer (CW5)
			W-4	Chief Warrant Officer (CW4)
			W-3	Chief Warrant Officer (CW3)
			W-2	Chief Warrant Officer (CW2)
			W-1	Warrant Officer (WO1)
OR-9	WO	Warrant Officer Class One (Conductor) WO1 (Cdr)	E-9	Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA)
		WO1 (Regimental Sergeant Major)		Command Sergeant Major (CSM)
		WO1 (Other Appointments)		Sergeant Major (SGM)
OR-8		Warrant Officer Class Two (WO2)	E-8	First Sergeant (1SG) Master Sergeant (MSG)
OR-7	SNCO	Colour/Staff Sergeant (CSgt/SSgt)	E-7	Sergeant First Class (SFC)
OR-6		Sergeant (Sgt)	E-6	Staff Sergeant (SSG)
OR-5			E-5	Sergeant (SGT)
OR-4	JNCO	Corporal (Cpl)	E-4	Corporal (CPL) Specialist (SPC)
OR-3		Lance Corporal (LCpl)	E-3	Private First Class (PFC)
OR-2	N/A	Private (Class 1-3) (Pte)	E-2	Private (PV2)
OR-1		Private (Class 4) (Pte)	E-1	Private (PV1)

6.1 Points to Note About Table 12

1. W-1 to W-5 (bottom to top) are used for US warrant officers only; other countries use only regular officer ranks, do not have warrant officers, or warrant officers are considered as other ranks or enlisted rank.
2. The US ranks of warrant officer are held by single track career specialists (ranking between the highest enlisted rank and lowest commissioned officer rank) and have no NATO equivalent.
3. Some sources mistakenly describe UK warrant officers as senior NCOs (SNCOs), for example Wikipedia. Within the UK, warrant officers (class 1 and 2) are WOs, Staff Sergeants and Sergeants are SNCOs and Corporals and Lance Corporals are Junior NCOs (JNCOs).
4. A warrant officer in UK service is not comparable to the various grades of warrant officer in the US, although holding the Queen's warrant and with certain privileges similar to those of commissioned officers.

6.2 History of US Warrant Officers

If the reader is interested in discovering the, on/off, history of US warrant officers then look here: [<https://warrantofficerhistory.org/Hist of Army WO.htm>].

7.0 Useful Links, Documents, Legislation and References

7.1 Useful Links

- Geoffrey Mason, a retired Royal Navy Commander, has written (1992) a fairly comprehensive historical narrative on warrant officers in the Royal Navy: <http://www.naval-history.net/xGM-Pers-Warrant%20Rank.htm>
- Alternatively, the reader can visit <http://www.godfreydykes.info/THE%20ROYAL%20NAVY%20WARRANT%20OFFICER%20PART%20ONE.htm> which is another narrative site written by Godfrey Dykes, a Royal Navy warrant officer from September 1975 until July 1983.
- <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/mike.comerford/ORDNANCE/48.htm>
- <http://www.diggerhistory.info/pages-badges/rsm2.htm>
- <http://www.military-badges.co.uk/Army-Rank-WO.htm>
- <http://www.rlc-conductor.info/Ancient.htm>

7.2 Useful Documents & Legislation

Air Force Act 1955.

Armed Forces Act 2006 and Statutory Instruments.

Army Act 1955, as amended.

Army Commissioning Regulations (AC 13452).

Army General and Administrative Instructions (AGAI), Volumes 5 (Instruction No. 6), 44, 48, 49, 60, 562 & 67.

Army Pensions Warrant 1977, as amended.

Army Terms of Service Regulations 1992, as amended.

Dress Regulations Pamphlet No 1 (AC 60175).

Joint Service Publication (JSP) 760: Tri Service Regulations for Leave and Other Types of Absences.

Instruction Book (AB 592A).

Medical Documentation in the Army Medical Services 1995 (AC 61416).

Mental Health Act 1959.

Naval Discipline Act 1957.

Personnel Administration Manual (PAM) (AC 63791).

PULHHEEMS Administrative Pamphlet 2007 (AC 13371).

RAF Employment Policy.

Regulations and Administrative Instructions for the Regular Reserve and the Long Term Reserve (AC 60211).

Regulations for the Medical Services of the Army (AC 10910).

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Reserve Forces Act 1980 & 1996.

Testimonial (AF B 108X).

The Armed Forces (Discharge by Purchase) Regulations 1968.

Unit Documentation Manual (Soldiers) 1994 (AC 60136).

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