

The Master-Gunner Warrant Officer

by Alex Turkatte

As near-peer adversaries rise again throughout the Eastern European and Indo-Asia Pacific theaters, the masters of mounted warfare must be prepared to defeat enemy ground forces and maintain land dominance.¹

Armor and infantry master gunners within armored brigade combat teams (ABCTs) and Stryker brigade combat teams (SBCTs) have earned the respect of leaders for their technical and tactical knowledge and experience, but the Armor Branch is seeking even more ways to win the fight. Therefore the Armor Branch proposes to develop the master-gunner warrant officer (MGWO) concept, which this article reviews.

The MGWO

As discussed in a 2009 Army War College proposal for maneuver-operations warrant officers and noncommissioned officers (NCOs),² the MGWO would be the subject-matter expert (SME) who brings operational experience and technical expertise to the battalion- and brigade-level S-3 tactical-operations center. The MGWO provides the link between platform systems and commanders. As the resident SME, the MGWO serves as the organization's trainer on platform gunnery operations.

The billpayer positions required as trade to create warrant-officer positions would come from the existing master-gunner positions at battalion level and above. Figure 1 provides the proposal to use the sergeant first class military-occupation specialty (MOS) 19K K8 (or A8) master-gunner positions as the billpayer option for the ABCT combined-arms battalions and the cavalry squadron. The SFC 19D R8 would be used as the billpayer option for the SBCT.

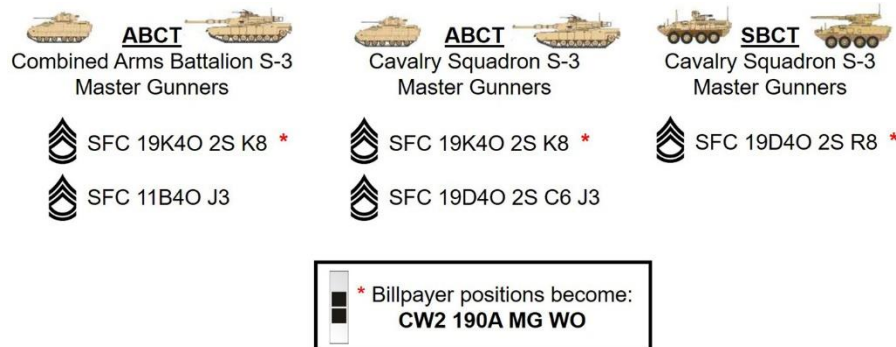


Figure 1. Battalion- or squadron-level master gunners.

Other options include only placing MGWO at the brigade level and above to allow NCO development at battalion level and below.

Requirements

There are requirements to establish and professionally develop an MGWO. The initial feeder into the warrant-officer program would come from NCO master gunners already serving at company and troop level. Minimum prerequisites would be:

- Must hold MOS 19D, 19K or 11B;
- Must be staff sergeant or above;
- Must be a graduate of any of the platform-specific master-gunner courses and hold the additional-skill identifier (ASI) A8 (M1A1 Abrams), K8 (M1A2 Systems Enhancement Program Abrams), J3 (M2/M3 Bradley) or R8 (Stryker);
- Must have a minimum of 24 months' experience assigned as master gunner, documented on an NCO Evaluation Report;
- Must be an Advanced Leader's Course (ALC) graduate documented on a Department of the Army (DA) Form 1059;

- Must have a minimum 110 General Technical score; and
- Must be fully deployable.

Like all warrant-officer MOSs (WOMOSs), NCOs must successfully apply and be accepted through the U.S. Army Recruiting Command’s warrant-officer selection board. Warrant-officer selection boards are held about seven times per year, with most WOMOS applications considered two or three times per year.

MOSs impacted

There are currently three WOMOS available for which Career-Management Field (CMF) 19 NCOs may apply.³ These include warrant officers from the Field Artillery, Aviation and Ordnance Branches:

- Rotary-wing aviator (MOS 153A) is open to applications from Soldiers of all MOS;
- Field-artillery technician (MOS 131A) (previously field-artillery-targeting warrant officer) is open to 19D NCOs; and
- Armament-systems maintainer (MOS 913A) is open to NCOs who hold the master-gunner ASIs of A8, J3 and K8.



131A – Field Artillery Technician

Open to 19D, 11B, 11C and CMF13 NCOs



153A – Rotary Wing Aviator

Open to all MOS



913A – Armament Systems Maintainer

Open to AR, IN, EN, FA NCOs with ASI: A8, J3, K8

Figure 2. Current WOMOSs available to CMF 19 NCOs.

The 913A Ordnance Branch warrant officer is the most interesting since it specifically recruits combat-arms master-gunner NCOs to become weapon-systems maintenance officers working in support battalions and sustainment brigades. Even if the increased paygrade is appealing, Ordnance Branch maintenance duties may detract from recruiting efforts. Also, MOS 913A converts to a 915E Senior Automotive Maintenance Warrant Officer upon promotion to chief warrant officer four.

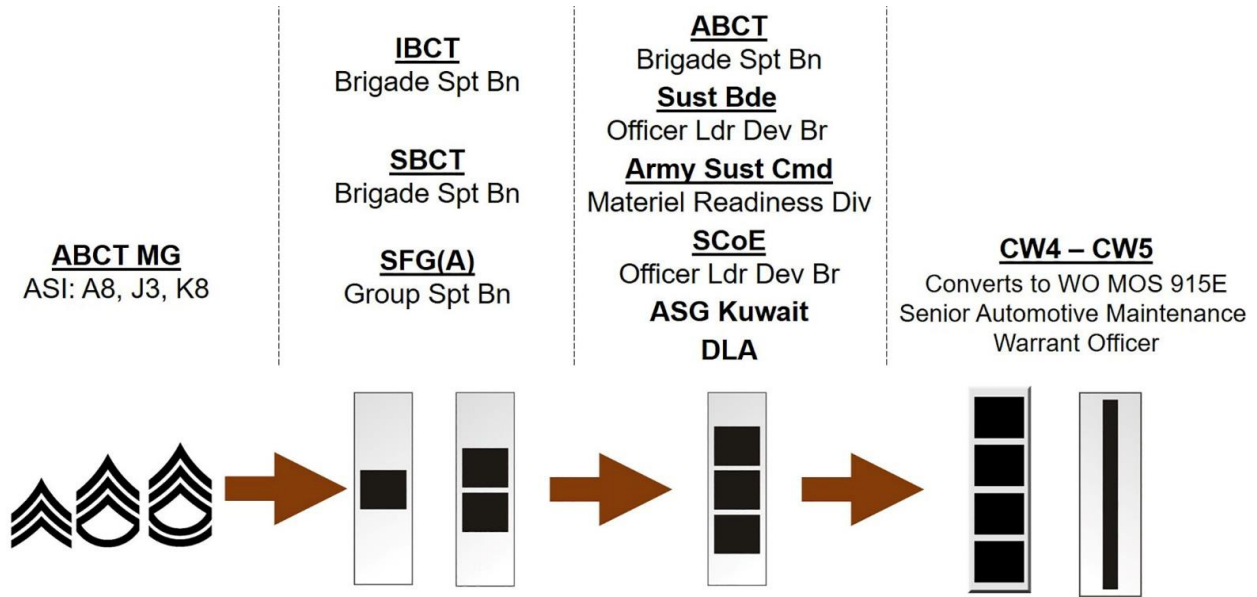


Figure 3. MOS 913A warrant officer, warrant officer one through chief warrant officer three positions, according to DA Pamphlet 600-3.

For the 190A MGWO program, selected NCOs would be scheduled to attend Warrant Officer Candidate School (WOCS) at Fort Rucker, AL. Graduation would result in accession as a warrant officer one, with follow-on mandatory WOMOS training at a basic course taught at Fort Benning, GA. Even though the Soldier would already be a graduate of a platform-specific master-gunner course, the Warrant Officer Basic Course (WOBC) would provide more training on the requirements a warrant officer would encounter upon first assignment to an ABCT or SBCT. WOBC could also include training found in other functional courses such as Battle Staff and the Mission-Command Digital Master-Gunner Course.

Years of Service	4-10yrs <u>Enlisted</u>	0-6yrs <u>WO</u>	6-11yrs <u>WO</u>	11-16yrs <u>WO</u>	16-30yrs <u>WO</u>
Grade of Rank					
Institutional Training	ALC Ft Benning, GA MG Ft Benning, GA	WOCS Ft Rucker, AL WOBC Ft Benning, GA	WOAC Ft Benning, GA	WOILE Ft Rucker, AL	WOSSE Ft Rucker, AL
Operational Assignments	Company / Troop Master Gunner	Battalion / Squadron Master Gunner	Brigade / Regiment Master Gunner	Division / Corps Master Gunner	ACOM / School Master Gunner

Figure 4. Draft 190A MGWO career map.

While the pros and cons of a new WOMOS are debated, by implementing the MGWO, the Army will further commit to land dominance and the mastery of mounted-maneuver warfare.

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Notes

¹The Army Vision, https://www.army.mil/e2/downloads/rv7/vision/the_army_vision.pdf.

²Dr. John A. Bonin, "Maneuver Operations [Warrant Officer] and NCO," U.S. Army War College.

³U.S. Army warrant officer recruiting MOS information Webpage as of June 13, 2018, http://www.usarec.army.mil/hq/warrant/Wogeninfo_mos.shtml.

Acronym Quick-Scan

ABCT – armored brigade combat team

ACOM – Army command

ALC – Advanced Leader's Course

ASG – area support group

ASI – additional-skill identifier

CMF – career-management field

DA – Department of the Army

DLA – Defense Logistics Agency

IBCT – infantry brigade combat team

MG – master gunner

MGWO – master-gunner warrant officer

MOS – military-occupation specialty

NCO – noncommissioned officer

SBCT – Stryker brigade combat team

SCOE – Support Center of Excellence

SFG – Special Forces group

SME – subject-matter expert

WOAC – Warrant Officer Advanced Course

WOBC - Warrant Officer Basic Course

WOCS – Warrant Officer Candidate School

WOILE – Warrant Officer Intermediate Leader Course

WOMOS – warrant-officer military-occupation specialty

WOSSE – Warrant Officer Senior Staff Education