

It's Disappointing, When We Fail to Meet!

REGION DIRECTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

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Western Region Director

One of the things that is very disappointing to our Members is when a Chapter fails to have a meeting – regardless of the reason. This disappointment is also felt by the leadership of our Association.

When a chapter has a meeting many things accrue. Most importantly, new Members get a chance to meet current Members of the Chapter, and are able to connect to other Warrant Officers that can mentor them and help them get established within their command. Think back to when you were a newly appointed Warrant Officer, and were assigned to a new command. When you first got there, you felt like you were all alone. When you met other Warrant Officers it made you feel like you were not alone any more. Whether or not you needed their help, you knew there were supportive people there, if you needed them. Perhaps you took advantage of the cordial, less formal Chapter environment to develop mentoring relationships with caring senior Warrant Officers.

Chapter meetings provide the best opportunity for the Chapter leadership to get current information on their new (and existing) Members and to check their Members' membership expiration dates, to ensure their current status in our association. Never forget – in Washington, DC, we cannot count the voices of Warrant Officers whose Memberships are not current!

During your Chapter meetings, a lot of pertinent information is distributed to all members. Among other things, this might include the current status of personnel who might soon PCS (move, in a primary change of station), and identify any new personnel reporting into the different commands within the Chapter's area.

This is also a very good time to have guest speakers come to your meeting. These guests often provide valuable professional development and walk away with knowledge of what USAWOA Chapters and their Members are doing to help assigned Warrant Officers, their families, and the community in and around the Chapter area.

Please keep this in mind that although Chapter Presidents normally like to chair

meetings, this is **not** a mandatory requirement. Just as long as other Chapter officers are present at a meeting, it may be conducted in the absence of the President (if he or she is attending in-residence training, or on some other temporary duty [TDY] assignment). In fact, such a situation would give another member of chapter leadership the valuable experience of chairing a meeting.

A very big problem at some chapter-level organizations is a failure by the Chapter to maintain current proxies for their Members. A chapter should never conduct an official meeting, due to not having a sufficient quorum. Remember, the number of proxies should be reported on your chapter minutes. It does not look good when your minutes state “number of Proxies present: 0.” Technically, this tells us that you had 100% of your members present (thereby understating the true strength of the Chapter). I cannot say for sure, but I presume most Chapters in our Association (certainly with 20 or more Members) likely do not regularly conduct all meetings with 100% attendance! I hope that I am wrong, but failing maintenance of updated proxies this means that voices of absent Members are not being represented at meetings.

As a Chapter leader, it is embarrassing to your members when you do not ensure regular meetings are conducted (whether you are present or not).. I am not saying that you **must** have monthly meetings, although many Chapter do (and most that do are very active, productive Chapters). We only require that at least one meeting per quarter is conducted. Following an official meeting, we also require that minutes are submitted to USAWOA national headquarters, to the following email address: usawoamdb@verizon.net. Please submit **well-written** minutes that have been thoroughly staffed with – and voted-on – by your Chapter Members. Remember, timely submission of your meeting minutes ensure you get credit for the meeting that occurred, and are the way your Chapter receives Chapter rebates. **Thorough** minutes set you up for winning annual USAWOA awards.

Please remember that membership is the driving force of our Association – it strengthens both our national voice on Capitol Hill, and the vitality of our great Chapter organizations, within their communities. If you want your Members to stay, have meetings and be an active chapter. As most of you know, Warrant Officers are often shy when it comes to volunteering, but they will always step up and help when help is

needed. Normally you will not even need to ask...