

The NCO Journal

Summer 95

A Quarterly Forum for Professional Development



1775

1995

The NCO Creed

*No one is more professional than I.
I am a Noncommissioned Officer, a leader of soldiers.
As a Noncommissioned Officer, I realize that
I am a member of a time-honored corps, which is
known as "The Backbone of the Army."*

*I am proud of the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers and will
at all times conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the Corps,
the Military Service and my country regardless of the situation
in which I find myself. I will not use my grade or position to
attain pleasure, profit or personal safety.*

*Competence is my watch-word. My
two basic responsibilities will al-
ways be uppermost in my mind—ac-
complishment of my mission and
the welfare of my soldiers. I will
strive to remain tactically and tech-
nically proficient. I am aware of my
role as a Noncommissioned Officer.*

*I will fulfill my responsibilities in-
herent in that role. All soldiers are
entitled to outstanding leadership; I
will provide that leadership. I know
my soldiers and I will always place
their needs above my own. I will
communicate consistently with my
soldiers and never leave them unin-
formed. I will be fair and impartial
when recommending both rewards
and punishment.*

*Officers of my unit will have maxi-
mum time to accomplish their du-
ties; they will not have to accom-
plish mine. I will earn their respect
and confidence as well as that of
my soldiers. I will be loyal to those
with whom I serve; seniors, peers
and subordinates alike. I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action
in the absence of orders. I will not compromise my integrity, nor my moral
courage. I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are
professionals, Noncommissioned Officers, leaders!*



The NCO Journal

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Our mission is to provide a forum for the open exchange of ideas and information, to support training, education and development of the NCO Corps and to foster a closer bond among its members.

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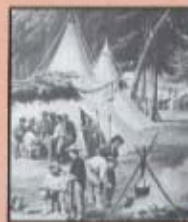
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On the Covers

Front: Cover by CSM (Ret.) Gary Boggs. **Inside front:** Design by SFC Gabe Vega.
Inside Back: Art by Lee Teter, courtesy of Vietnam Veterans of America.

“ In a...way, the time and tide of human life are blessings because together they wash away the grief and difficulties of life. But time and tide can also obscure the bitter lessons of the past, and condemn us to repeat our earlier mistakes if we do not learn from them. This can be a national as well as personal tragedy. We often neglect or overlook the lessons of history. ”

—GEN (Ret.) John A. Wickham Jr.

The Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer (printed on the inside front cover) begins with: “No one is more professional than I. I am a Non-commissioned Officer, a leader of soldiers. As a Non-commissioned Officer I am a member of a time-honored corps, which is known as “The Backbone of the Army.”

As members of a “time-honored corps,” we have the responsibility to read and learn as much as we can about our NCO traditions and history. It is history that helps us learn who we are as a nation and as a people.

This edition of your professional development journal is a one-of-a-kind, condensed version of NCO Corps history designed to help the NCO Corps rediscover its roots. Obviously there aren't enough pages to go in-depth on the 200-plus years of Corps history. This issue of *The NCO Journal* is a teaser, if you will, to interest our NCO readers in learning more about their Corps' early beginnings and traditions.

The 1990 version of FM 22-100, page 1, states: “Studying military history can give you insight into what combat has been like for past leaders and troops and help you relate the leadership challenges of the past to those of today.”

That reason alone tells us that we need to embrace our NCO lineage and learn valuable lessons from those NCOs who have gone before us. We should also realize that every day we spend or have spent in the Army is part of our Corps' history. Many of us have valuable experiences and knowledge that needs to be recorded. Imagine if our predecessors hadn't recorded their experiences, this edition of your journal would have been even more difficult to compile. 1SG Vance Marchbanks, a Buffalo Soldier, knew the value of writing his legacy. Read about him on page 19. His memoirs are kept at the Ft. Huachuca Museum.

Former Army Chief of Staff GEN John A. Wickham said, “the most successful soldiers have looked to the profession's past for clues to the present and future.”

We hope you'll find in this special 48-page edition, bits of history to clue you in on the Corps' past, present and future. Several NCOs, officers and historians took the time to give you, as much as possible, accurate, yet brief articles on the NCO's beginnings in Europe, through trying times of fighting our nation's battles right here in America, to our fights for freedom elsewhere in the world. Some articles tell about changes in rank structure, pay, responsibility, troublesome times as well as victories for the Corps.

If we've done our job, we've piqued your interest on all or some aspects of NCO history. To increase that interest refer to pages 46 and 47, for a thorough listing of books for and about NCOs and their history.

Many people need to be thanked for their professionalism, diligence and the hard work that went into this special edition of *The NCO Journal*.

COL Fredrick E. Van Horn, Publisher, and Commandant, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy: His vision and interest in NCOs of the past, present and future led to this special edition. This is his last hoorah as our publisher. He is moving on to whatever retirement brings. Sir, thank you for your undying support of this publication and its staff and for your caring attitude and commitment to the NCO Corps. We will miss you.”

Dr. Robert Bouilly, USASMA historian, helped us make sure we got the facts as correct as possible. Thanks, Dr. B., for your many hours of diligent editing and research.

Larry Arms, curator for The Museum of the Non-commissioned Officer, USASMA, for his articles and for helping us find photos and artwork which accompany many of the articles herein.

Linda Gaunt, USASMA librarian, for her thorough section on books for and about NCOs.

To all those whose articles are printed in this edition—thanks for your interest in and support of our “time-honored” past. ■

“**Make a difference. The time each of us is ‘in charge’ is short. By leaving things better than they were, you will be making history in the Army.**”

—GEN (Ret.) John A. Wickham Jr.



I used another of GEN Wickham's quotes here because I found it fitting as my way of saying good-bye. I'm leaving this position as editor-in-chief to move on to serve as SMA McKinney's public affairs advisor.

Another chance to “make a difference.” I can only leave here feeling as good as I do because I was in charge for three years and I know I'm leaving things better than they were when I arrived.

However, I'm not so conceited to think that I was able to do this without help from many other people.

In my parting I need to say thank you to my boss, COL Van Horn. He has been the best mentor, editor, publisher and officer I have ever worked for in my 20-year Army career. Sir, I'll miss your insight, candor and leadership. Thanks for your confidence in me and my staff and for your loyalty and dedication to the NCO Corps.

To my managing editor, Jim Collins, I can only say a thousand thanks for hanging in there, especially on my ‘worst’ days. I believe that Jim and I put the word ‘team’ in teamwork. Thanks for keeping your sense of humor, Jim.

To the soldiers on my immediate staff and the entire USASMA staff I must say thanks for all the support provided. They know who they are and what they've done.

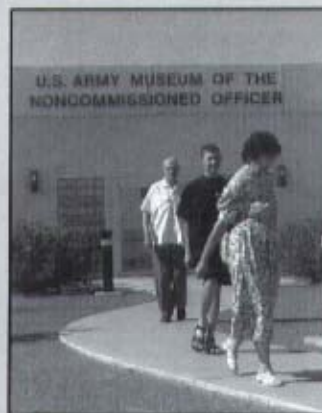
And last, but not least, to the Journal's readers, the entire NCO Corps. Without you this publication wouldn't exist. Thanks for supporting us with the articles, art, photos and ideas which helped improve your publication. Please continue to support it. You need this publication and it needs your continued support.

Thanks again for the support. I'll say good-bye and leave you with one last ‘Hoster-ism.’

Change is the thing that most affects us in our Army lives. As we come in and go out on assignments, it's difficult, even as NCOs, to know what tools to take to each new job and, then, what to leave behind when it's time to go.

In my comings and goings, I found the only tools I needed were courage, candor, competence, commitment and caring. And, then, in leaving, I'm confident in knowing I've set good examples for using these tools.

Brande L. Hoster



The Museum of the Noncommissioned Officer, a part of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, is the only museum in the world dedicated solely to the American Army NCO. It is located on Biggs Field at Ft. Bliss, in El Paso, TX.

In its two wings, built entirely with private donations, visitors may view constantly changing, colorful displays and exhibits detailing the NCO Corps from its beginnings in 1775 to the present.

The museum is also a repository for the NCO Oral History Program. The personal accounts of NCOs from WWI to the present, will provide future historians detailed information about each period of the Army through the eyes of the NCO. The museum also maintains a library that includes letters, diaries and other documents dating from the 18th century, along with original photographs from the Civil War period.

The NCO Museum Association is a private organization that provides assistance to the Museum and its programs. For more information, call (915) 568-8646 or write to the Association at P.O. Box 8041, Ft. Bliss, TX 79908-0041. ■

The European Roots

Sergeants' Legacy

Dates to Renaissance

Compiled by MSG Tom Fuller

Sergeant'sar-jentlfr. Latin *servient, serviens, to serve*. Was used initially to designate petty or lesser officers, generally of the crown, who served in such capacities as royal falconer, huntsman or tailor.

The modern sergeants Americans have come to love or hate carry the same legacy as their predecessors from the times of the late Renaissance in Western Europe to the period of modern warfare.

The rudimentary origins of the sergeant rank are found within feudalism, the military keystone of which was the armored and mounted knight. These knights, landholders who performed military obligations in return for land tenancy, made up the warrior class of medieval Europe. Sergeants ranked just below the knight in the hierarchy and held sergeancies or lesser grants of land for which they owed military service obligations.

By the end of the 13th century the service obligations attached to sergeancy became monetary payments in lieu of service and the rank fell into disuse.

As a purely military title or rank, "sergeant" didn't reappear until the mid-15th century when the aristocratic tradition of feudal warfare began to dissolve into larger and less elite formations composed mainly of commoners—foot soldiers armed with bows and pikes.

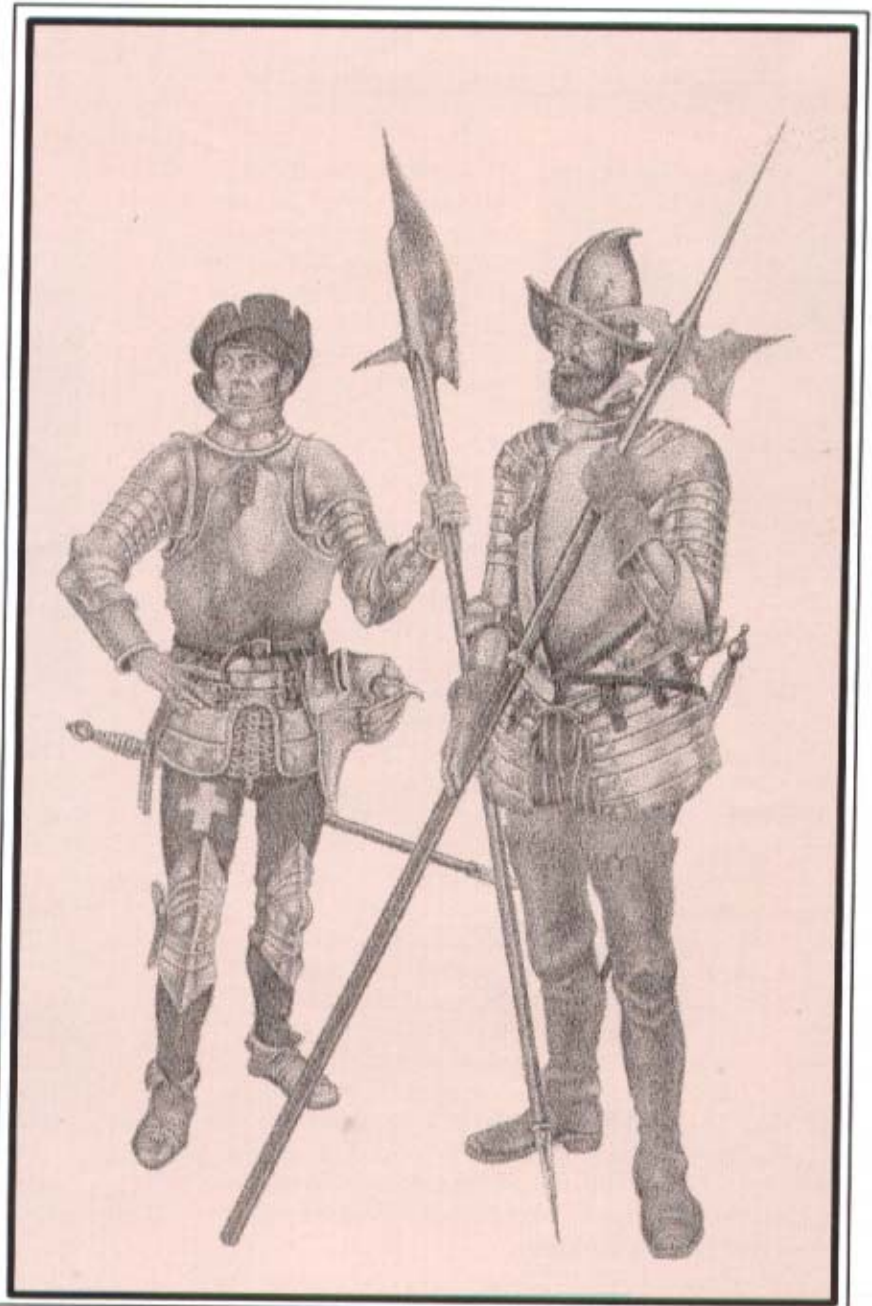
Instead of wandering about the battlefield looking for a worthy opponent as did the aristocratic knight, each soldier now had to keep his place in ranks and fight according to a carefully rehearsed battle drill, conducted by older, more experienced men—predecessors of the sergeants and corporals of the *Landsknechte* or mercenary foot soldiers highly regarded by

the rulers of 15th- and 16th-century Europe.

Sixteenth-century military commentators made no general distinction between commissioned and Noncommissioned officers. From corporal to colonel all were described as officers of a company, battalion or regiment. A captain or colonel, however, generally was hired or 'commissioned' by a prince or by the ruling council of a city or state. He, in turn, appointed subordinates to assist him.

The practice of distinguishing between commissioned and Noncommissioned officers gradually developed over the 17th century.

Western Europe experienced a revolution in astronomy, mathematics and physics from the mid-15th century to the end of the 18th century. This scientific revolution changed



Western viewpoints and laid the groundwork for the development of modern science. However, the concurrent revolution in military arts and sciences wasn't that well known.

By the end of the 17th century modern warfare replaced the chivalric pattern of combat—heavily armed knight and horse—with well-structured and organized standing armies fighting according to clearly defined and logical principles.

Systematic discipline, stimulated by drill training became an essential tool for sergeants and corporals, while the commanding officer administered military law.

Important elements in this time of change were the development of an elaborate rank structure, the lengthening of the chain of command and the delineation of the status and role of each officer in that chain.

Sergeants, charged with instructing and drilling the troops, were also found in the French Army as early as 1485. When Francis I reorganized his army in 1543, he formed 500-man companies or bands, as they were sometimes known. A captain commanded a company with a lieutenant as assistant, an ensign who carried the colors, one sergeant, five corporals, a fifer and a drummer. Thus reorganized, the French army became a model for other countries, notably the Netherlands and England. The ranks of sergeant and corporal thereafter became permanent parts of the formal military structure.

The great turning point in military ranks and organization, however, occurred through the influence of Maurice of Nassau, Prince of Orange, military commander of the forces of the Estates of the Netherlands (1585-1625). He enjoyed the important advantage of having access to the wealth of the Dutch merchants in providing prompt and generous pay for his troops.

Prince Maurice also saw the sergeant and his corporal assistants as drillmasters. Daily drill of the troops “practiced year-round when on garrison duty and occupying spare time when on campaign and in the field,” characterized Maurice’s training principles. Drilled by sergeants and corporals, his troops could execute quickly and smoothly those marches and countermarches that increased battle effectiveness.

Parade ground commands, such as “right face,” “left face,” and “halt,” familiar to all soldiers today, had their origin with Prince Maurice. His training and organizational precepts, based on earlier Italian, Spanish and French practices, enjoyed wide circulation during his lifetime through the writings of a succession of professional soldiers.

Their writings clearly detailed the duties and functions of every officer in the military hierarchy, and it's to them that we turn to describe the developing role and status of the sergeants and corporals during the 16th and 17th centuries.

The idea of a more humane attitude on the part of officers (including sergeants and corporals) toward their men started to emerge. According to John Smythe, a professional soldier with wide experience, the ideal standard for everyone in authority—from the general to the corporal—was:

“...to winne [sic] the love of their soldiers by taking great care of their health and safeties, as also by action in their own persons, venturing their lives in all actions

against the enemy [sic] amongst them, and therewith all accompanying of them in sickness and health, or wounds received, as of their own children.”

This almost family-like relationship between officers and men applied especially to the sergeant and the corporal, who were closest to the ordinary soldiers.

The role of the sergeant as linchpin of the company was further underscored by the importance given the chief disciplinarian of the unit. Robert Barret, another contemporary (1598), wrote:

“...in him consisteth the principal parts of the observation of military discipline....” So vital was the sergeant's role, Barret averred, that a skillful sergeant “...must read and write, be well trained in martiall [sic] matters, yea and of soe [sic] great importance that more tolerable it were that all other officers of the company and the capitaine [sic] himself to be rawe [sic] men of little experience, but the sargentde [sic] not so....”

The sergeant was also to instruct “the Drummes and Phifes their several sounds, as to how to sound a call, [to] a Troupe, [for] a march swift or slow, an alarm, a charge or a retreat.”

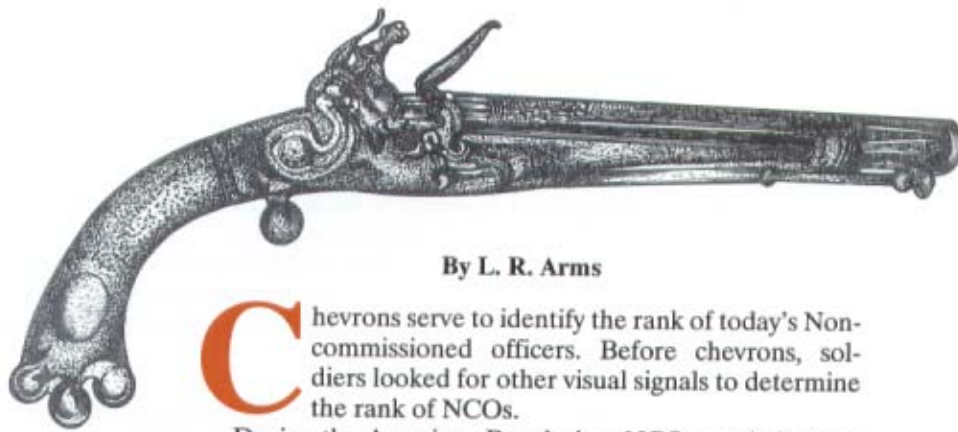
The sergeant also had the responsibility to appoint “those which shall work in the trenches,” meaning he had a role as unit peacemaker and disciplinarian and had to apprehend any offenders.

He also posted the watch or saw to it that the corporals did so properly. He gave the corporals “his opinions in placing the sentinels...and gave them the Word (password) with all circumspection and secrecies, as was delivered to him by the Sergeant Major.”

The sergeant was the company's main liaison with regimental headquarters through his daily contacts with the regimental sergeant major. Barret wrote that the sergeant “ought to carrie [sic] great respect unto the Sergeant Major,” carry out his orders with alacrity, spend as much time in his presence as possible and earn promotion by listening carefully to his instructions and by following his example.

That NCO, the Army sergeant, is “the backbone of the Army” Rudyard Kipling wrote about (1896) in the poem, “The Eathen.” Those “muscles and sinews of the corps”—those military professionals charged by the 17th century soldier Sir John Smythe “...to winne the love of their soldiers by taking great care of their health and safeties...as of their own children....”—those are the soldiers who continue to serve in the 20th century and on into the 21st under similar guidelines and roles of their military forbears. ■

Fuller, Public Affairs NCOIC at USASMA, based this article on material from Guardians of the Republic, a history of the NCO Corps, written by Dr. Ernest F. Fisher Jr., and published in 1994 by Ballantine Books.



Before Chevrons...

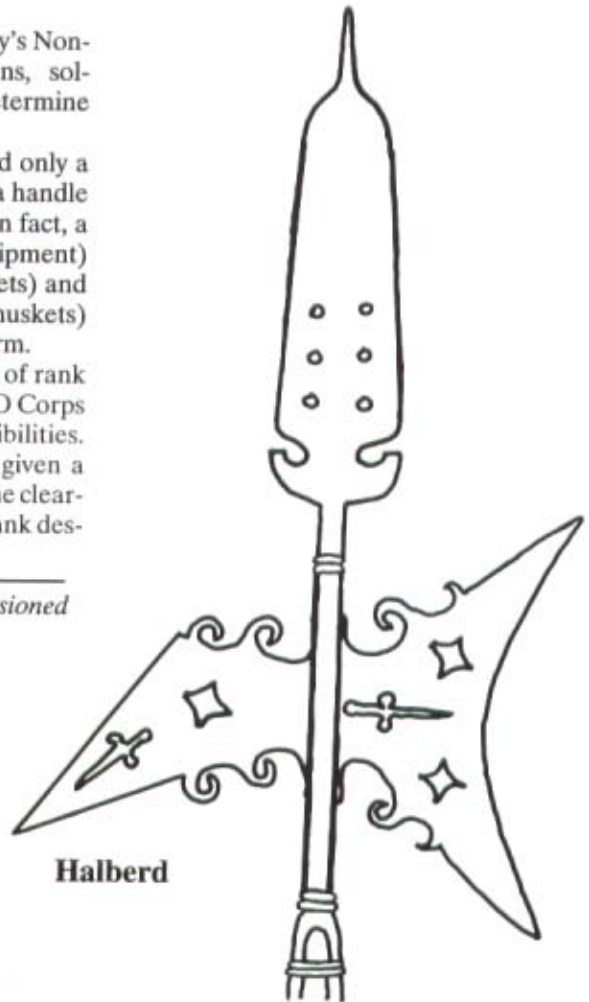
By L. R. Arms

Chevrons serve to identify the rank of today's Non-commissioned officers. Before chevrons, soldiers looked for other visual signals to determine the rank of NCOs.

During the American Revolution, NCOs carried only a halberd (typically a battle ax and pike mounted on a handle about six feet long) or sword to signify their rank. In fact, a variety of visual systems (items of clothing or equipment) were adopted—from colored shoulder pads (epaulets) and aiguillettes to types of weapons (halberds, swords, muskets) to colored sashes—before chevrons became the norm.

From 1779 to 1856, NCO insignias or indicators of rank changed a number of times due to growth in the NCO Corps and the need to clarify NCO duties and responsibilities. Epaulets gave way to chevrons and the NCO was given a unique device to display rank. The NCO ranks became clearly differentiated from each other and the specialist rank designation began to emerge. ■

Arms is the curator of The Museum of the Noncommissioned Officer at Biggs Field, Ft. Bliss, TX.

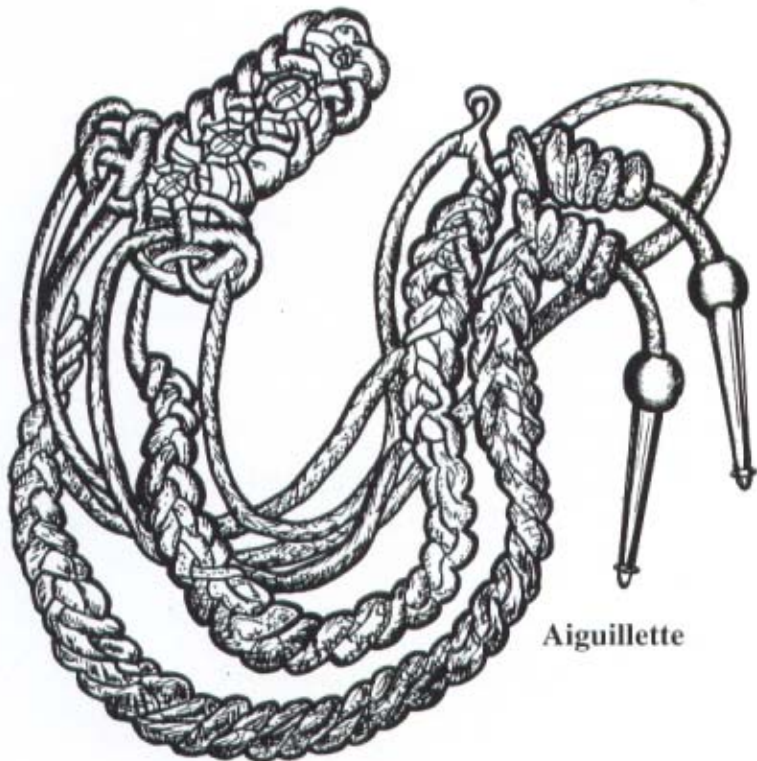


Halberd



Musket

Identifying NCO Rank



Aiguillette

Epaulet



Chevron



Corporals

Where NCO Leadership

Begins

Corporal chevrons consisted of two stripes, worn point down from 1847 to 1902

By SSG David Abrams

Talk to most corporals today about pulling rank and they might tell you they're like half-powered Supermen: faster than a speeding specialist, but not able to leap tall sergeants in a single bound. The modern corporal inhabits a kind of "no man's land" in the Noncommissioned officer chain: no longer a private, but not quite a sergeant. While the hard stripes are still hardening, so are these new NCOs.

Time was, however, when the Big "C" was *the Man* to all those privates in his squad and under his supervision. With more recognized authority, the corporal was the one-man buffer zone between the legendary Private Snuffys and Sergeant Rocks. He was the spout at the bottom of the funnel—in line units, nearly all junior enlisted soldiers channeled their grievances through the guy with two stripes on his collar. Just as the rest of the Army has transitioned from Old to New, the "taproots" of the NCO tree have also grown.

To find some of the first corporals, we have to turn back several pages in the military history books. The English adopted the rank of corporal from the French who, in turn, got it from either the Italians or the Spanish. The term *caporale* is of Italian origin; *il cabo de esquadra*, or "chief of the squad," comes from the Spanish. Corporals had been a permanent part of the military structure in the French Army since the mid-1500s where, along with sergeants, they taught daily drill in marches and countermarches. Later in that century, corporals began to appear in the ranks of the English county militia where they commanded 25-man squads.

According to Johann von Wallhausen, a professional soldier of the early 17th century, the corporal was like a *hausvater* ("father of the family") to his men, maintaining peace and friendship with his soldiers and ensuring all soldiers in the squad had ammunition and rations. In his book *Guardians of the Republic*, Ernest F. Fisher Jr. says the 17th-century corporal "became a sort of middle class in the command structure of all Western armies, both professional and militia."

In America's early years, corporals occupied similar roles in the military middle class, working as the first-line NCOs in the Continental Army. In 1813, William Duane's *Handbook for Infantry* noted that corporals were to keep duty and detail rosters, help train recruits in the manual of arms and show them how to care for arms and ammunition. At tattoo, both sergeants and corporals called the roll and posted guard.

In the era surrounding the War of 1812, the lines of author-

ity between junior NCOs started to blur, with sergeants frequently assuming the role of squad leader, making corporals assistant squad leaders. At the time, sergeants were given the monthly salary of \$11, while corporals pocketed \$10.

Fifty years later, GEN Silas Casey's *Infantry Tactics* changed the tactical formation of Army units and gave control of the squad back to the corporal. During the Civil War, corporals served as color guards—one of the most dangerous positions on the battlefield.

In World War I, corporals often found themselves in command of their platoons after the commanders and platoon sergeants had been killed or gravely injured. For their demonstrated bravery and leadership, several corporals received Medals of Honor, including Alvin York who was with the 82nd Division when he charged an enemy gun position and took more than 120 enemy soldiers prisoner. Another contemporary corporal of York's, Frank Dillman of the 7th Division, found himself the senior NCO in his unit and later boasted, "I felt pretty important with a whole platoon on my hands."

Several decades later, during World War II, the eight-man squad increased to a 12-man squad and the squad leader was elevated to the rank of sergeant, with corporals once again serving as second fiddle in the squad structure.

These years also saw a steady inflation in the NCO ranks. In December 1941, only 20 percent of the enlisted ranks were NCOs; but by June 1945, that proportion had swelled to nearly 50 percent. In time, the power of corporals in line units lessened, even though the corporal was, in theory and by tradition, a combat leader. With so many privates receiving promotions in the European and Pacific theaters, it was a case of "corporal overload."

During both the Korean and Vietnam conflicts, the corporal found himself thrust to the front of the battle. Terrain and tactics dictated that most battles be fought through small-unit operations. As squad leaders, corporals guided their men through the treacherous battlefields.

Today, corporals may not always leap over tall sergeants in a single bound, but throughout history, the Army has needed corporals who have taken the first step up the NCO staircase of rank. Both war and peace have proved the importance of junior NCOs—the ones who tend their squads as fathers (and mothers) tend their children. ■

Abrams is senior journalist for The NCO Journal.

Establishing the NCO Tradition

By Dr. Robert H. Bouilly

The American Noncommissioned officer tradition began with the creation of the Continental Army in 1775 at the beginning of the American Revolution. Before 1775 there was no permanent standing Army that could be called American. The colonies had developed militias in the face of military emergencies. However, their effectiveness was so limited that Great Britain had to import British regular troops to fight the French from 1754 to 1763 in what has often been called the French and Indian War.

The militias provided rudimentary military training for the colonists. No match for trained European regular troops, the militias fared better as they provided a defense against Indians on the frontier. They depended heavily on Noncommissioned officers, as did contemporary European standing armies, but the role of a militia NCO in the colonies was broader than in Europe.

The huge social distance between the aristocratic officer corps and NCOs strictly limited the lives and prerogatives of a European NCO. The NCO's primary responsibility was to maintain the linear fighting lines of the day in the face of appalling casualties.

In the colonies, an entire town formed a militia company. The company broke down into squads—each headed by an NCO who was often elected to his post. Because of the fluid nature of Indian fighting, colonial militia NCOs had more opportunity to exercise initiative than did their European counterparts. So, the distinctive American dependence on small unit leadership by NCOs had its roots in these colonial militias.

Throughout the Revolutionary War, short enlistment periods saddled the Continental Army with a tenuous existence. The strength of George Washington's army rose and fell in wide fluctuations, virtually by the season. Washington had little faith that his army could directly confront British regular troops alone and sought instead to maintain his army intact through an avoidance of battles with major elements of the British forces. His victories at Princeton and Trenton, for example, came against only portions of the British force. Even at the decisive campaign at Yorktown, he successfully confronted the main British force only when he had substantial French help.

He understood that a major weakness of his army was its leadership—both commissioned and noncommissioned. Many of Washington's problems were solved with the arrival in 1778 of Baron Frederick von Steuben, who had been hired to help train the Continental Army [see "Continental Army," pages 10-11].

Von Steuben standardized the duties and responsibilities of NCOs in his *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States*, published in 1779. The regulations, also known as the Blue Book, aided the NCO's

growth as an instructor of soldiers. It stressed NCO responsibilities of the men in garrison and in the field. The Blue Book also directed the company's senior or first sergeant to keep a company descriptive book that listed the name, age, height, place of birth and prior occupation of every enlisted man in the unit. Such books, in one form or another, were used into the early 1900s.

In battle, NCOs were responsible for closing the gaps in the battle lines caused by casualties. They were to "encourage men to silence and to fire rapidly and true." This emphasis on accurate fire may seem common today, but in the Revolutionary War, it marked a new emphasis on the NCO's battlefield role.

Consequently, American NCOs became responsible for aimed volley fire, while the British volleys remained untargeted. This emphasis on aiming by the whole force, rather than merely

pointing the musket in the general direction of the enemy, made Americans the unique infantrymen of the day. To help Americans engage the Brit-



ish soldiers, Steuben also emphasized bayonet training. Under his tutelage, the Continental Army learned precision, high-speed maneuvering and flexibility on the battlefield.

NCOs also were trained to protect officers. On the battlefield, the sergeant became the "covering sergeant" who stood in the second rank immediately behind the company officer and was responsible for protecting him. He did not fire in volleys but reserved his fire to defend his captain or lieutenant.

A corporal assumed a similar guard function to protect the ensign who carried the colors. In time, the color sergeant assumed that position with an expanded guard of corporals. Each of these covering NCOs could take over for line officers in combat if the need arose.

The Blue Book established the principle that the NCO was selected by, and responsible to, the company commander upon approval of the battalion or regimental commander. This provision locked an NCO into one regiment for his entire career. Transfer in grade from one regiment to another was virtually impossible. The stripes remained with the regiment at the expense of NCO professional development.

Despite its warts, a distinctive American tradition of NCO leadership had been established and was in place for the Army of a new nation. ■

Bouilly is the NCO historian for the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Ft. Bliss, TX.

The Continental Army

The choice of Noncommissioned officers is also an object of the greatest importance. The order and discipline of a regiment depends so much upon their behavior, that too much care cannot be taken in preferring none to that trust but those who by their merit and good conduct are entitled to it.

—Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States (1782)

By SSG David Abrams

From the beginning, all was not well with the Continental Army. Regiments were plagued by supply shortages and soldiers constantly complained about problems with pay and uniforms. When the Army was formed in 1775, most soldiers were clothed in buckskin, homespun or British uniforms left over from the earlier colonial wars. As late as July of that year, there was no standard Army-wide uniform, making it difficult to distinguish officers from NCOs and privates. As a temporary solution, Washington decreed that a strip of red cloth be sewn on the right shoulders of sergeants' uniforms. Corporals were to wear green strips of cloth on the left shoulder. It wasn't until 1782 that NCO uniforms changed to epaulets sewn on each shoulder for sergeants and on the right shoulder for corporals.

In October 1775, Washington established military pay for NCOs. Sergeants received 48 shillings per month; corporals, 44; and privates, 40. Though it's difficult to get a precise modern comparison due to the fluctuating inflation of the Revolutionary period, this equates to about eight dollars a month for the Continental NCOs. Sergeants major and quartermaster sergeants received an extra dollar as compensation for their added responsibilities. Out of this paltry salary, soldiers were also expected to purchase their own clothing and weapons.

Although the goal of Congress was to raise a force of more than 70,000 men, the peak strength of the Continental Army was 34,000 in 1777. By 1783, an estimated 232,000 soldiers had served in the Army at one time or another. Though the tables of organizations fluctuated depending on the availability of personnel, Washington nonetheless managed to establish a core of NCO leadership among the ranks.

Washington started with the raw material he inherited from the state militias. The militias had been in place in American colonies for many years, formed primarily for military emergencies.

The militias offered rudimentary military training for the colonists and depended on NCOs to provide small unit leadership. In the colonies, entire towns formed militia companies which were broken down into squads, each headed by an NCO who was usually elected to the position. It was common practice for some regi-

mental and company officers to practice nepotism by giving their sons or younger brothers NCO rank in the militia as a steppingstone to commissioned status. NCO grades in the militia varied in number from unit to unit and from region to region. In addition, there was no provision for NCOs on battalion or regimental staffs.

When Washington took command of the Continental Army in 1775, he tried to reform the militia units by standardizing their organization throughout the Army and imposing what he saw as the stricter standards of the British military system. Washington's standardized military units caused a significant increase in NCOs, whose role was to instill the stricter standards of conduct. During the remainder of the Revolutionary War's first year, Washington and his staff developed a standard table of organization, adding a noncommissioned element to each battalion and regimental staff, including a sergeant major, a quartermaster sergeant, a drum major and a fife major. By war's end, the following NCO ranks were in place: sergeant major, quartermaster sergeant, first sergeant, sergeant and corporal. Washington gave each regiment a headquarters staff and eight companies. In turn, each company had eight NCOs—four sergeants and four corporals as well as two musicians and 76 privates.

The commander-in-chief held high standards for his NCOs. He expected them to be diligent in their duty. He wrote, "Those who are found to be the least remiss will be punished. They are also to answer for the misbehavior of the men under their command."

Washington demanded the same strict disciplinary measures he'd observed among the British regulars. Consider the case of SGT James Finley, who was found guilty by court-martial for speaking disrespectfully of the Continental Army and drinking [to] GEN Gage's [a British commander] health. Finley was sentenced to be deprived of his arms and accouterments, put in a horse cart, with a rope around his neck and drummed out of the Army—just for raising a glass to the enemy.

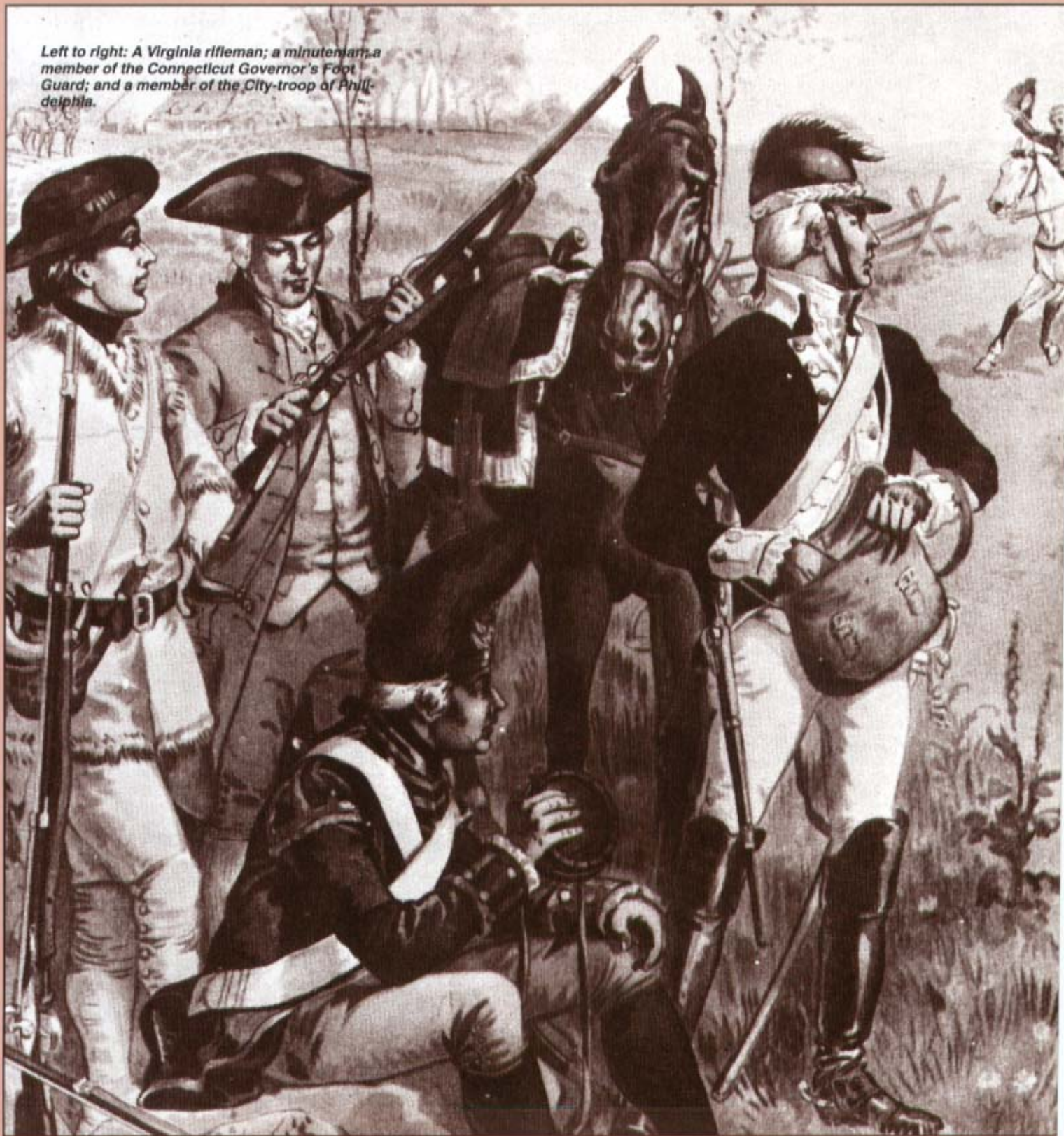
It wasn't long before Washington realized he had larger problems than ill-phrased toasts to deal with among the NCO Corps. In the winter of 1777-78, his army faced its darkest hours. "These are the times that try men's souls," wrote Thomas Paine after paying a visit to the Continental Army encampment at Valley Forge, PA, where both enlisted soldiers and officers often went for days without food and marched through the snow in shoes (if they were lucky enough to have shoes) with paper-thin soles. Morale hit rock-bottom among the troops who had joined to fight for independence from Great Britain. Until then, the Continental Army's main strategy was to avoid conflicts with the British redcoats, rather than actively engage the enemy.

In his book *The Winter Soldiers*, Richard M. Ketchum describes the Continental Army as a far remove from the leg-

end it would become. It was tired and hungry and ragged, fearful not about the distant future but about what the next 24 hours might produce. The army was sullen with the knowledge that it had been badly beaten every time it had gone into battle and forced to retreat after every engagement.

Disorder ran rampant among the ranks of freedom fighters as officers regularly fraternized with privates. Problems with enlistments also abounded. Most soldiers who'd signed up on short-term enlistments of three to six months were ready to quit the Army and go back to the farms they'd come

Left to right: A Virginia rifleman; a minuteman; a member of the Connecticut Governor's Foot Guard; and a member of the City-troop of Philadelphia.



from. Ammunition was running low and the soldiers smooth-bore muskets performed erratically because of poor maintenance. They had a maximum effective range of about 90 yards. On the average, infantrymen were able to load and fire only three rounds per minute. Lead and powder were in such short supply that in 1776 Benjamin Franklin actually advocated the use of bows and arrows by the Army.

However, perhaps Washington's greatest concern was the state of battle readiness.

During the winter of 1777-78, training in combat arms—which had never been more than haphazard—continued to languish. Continental soldiers may have been united by the cause for independence, but their manual of arms couldn't have been more diverse. Most were used to the rustic training of the militia's once-a-week drill on the village green. Each handled his weapon in a different way and there was little uniformity or discipline while marching in formation.

Help came from a most improbable source in the form of Baron Friedrich Wilhelm von Steuben. The adjutant in the Prussian Army came to Valley Forge as the newly-appointed inspector general of the Army on Washington's staff. Washington soon gave him the thankless task of teaching leadership to his dispirited men. The choleric foreigner who spoke little English brought with him an intimate knowledge of Prussian army regulations and traditions which he merged with the British military's way of thinking and then combined that with the tactical experience of the Continental soldiers.

In camp, Steuben emphasized maintenance of weapons. On the battlefield, NCOs were responsible for closing gaps in the battle lines caused by casualties. Officers maneuvered the units, but it was up to the NCOs to maneuver the men. When enemy fire, usually at ranges of less than 200 yards, tore holes in the ranks, it was the NCOs who prevented the military formations from deteriorating into mobs of confusion. According to Steuben, sergeants were to keep the greatest silence in the ranks, see that the men load well and quick, and take good aim. This emphasis on accurate fire marked a turning point in the NCOs' battlefield role. While British volleys remained untargeted, Americans were unique in aiming their muskets, conserving both ammunition and lives.

The result, in the words of an officer observing drill and ceremony at Valley Forge in the spring of 1778, was... "an army which grows stronger every day... There is a spirit of discipline among the troops that is better than numbers... [There is a] regularity and exactness with which they march and perform their maneuvers."

In June 1778 the Continental Army demonstrated its battle readiness at the Battle of Monmouth Court House where the rank and file stood toe to toe with their British counterparts. This was the new American Army.

Steuben's transformation of a model company at Valley Forge from ragtag farm boys and frontier sharpshooters to a strictly regimented military force was the basis for the forma-

tion of the backbone of the Army. The months of drill at Valley Forge under Steuben's close supervision gave Washington a newly disciplined force. Throughout the ages, Steuben has won the admiration of historians. In *From Lexington to Liberty*, Bruce Lancaster writes, "A new American Army was born on the bleak plateau of Valley Forge."

The War for Independence ended with the signing of the Treaty of Paris on Sept. 20, 1783. Most members of the Continental Congress believed the Army had been created only to fight the war and, now that the conflict was over, a standing military force was no longer needed. On Oct. 18, 1784, Congress disbanded the Continental Army. Lessons learned in shaping the NCO Corps—as raw and rough as it was in its infancy—remained on the books, especially in the pages of Steuben's Blue Book. In the coming years, military commanders would come to depend on the NCO Corps to provide solid leadership, born on the parade fields of Valley Forge and the battle lines of Monmouth Court House. ■

Abrams is senior journalist for The NCO Journal.

Two NCO Leaders

There are several examples of NCOs performing heroically on the battlefield. SGT Ezra Lee distinguished himself in 1776 by attempting the first submarine attack in the history of warfare. Slipping through the waters of New York Harbor in a one-man water-tight vessel, Lee tried to pierce the bottoms of British ships. Unfortunately, the powder charges he released weren't strong enough to pierce the copper bottoms of the warships. Nonetheless, this daring NCO proved underwater warfare was possible.

Another NCO who performed above and beyond the call of duty was SGT Elijah Churchill, a 32-year-old carpenter who in 1780 led an attack against Fort Saint George, a British storehouse. Churchill and his 16 men braved a freezing storm and journeyed by whaleboat for four hours before landing behind enemy lines and eventually burning 300 tons of hay, destroying the fort, torching a British schooner and returning to American lines with 50 prisoners.

For his exemplary leadership, Churchill received the Badge of Military Merit, established by Washington in 1782 and given to enlisted men who distinguished themselves in battle. This was America's first military decoration (and the second oldest in the world, after Russia's Cross of St. George) and would



eventually be replaced by the Medal of Honor.

Today's Army Wives Fare Much Better

The Army of the 90s doesn't have a corner on the market when it comes to pay and family matters. These issues go as far back as the 1870s and 1880s when Army life was hard and pay poor as Congress continually made cuts to save money.

The common soldier found it hard to support himself, let alone provide for a family. Regulations adopted in the 1860s sought to limit the number of married men in the Army. (One such regulation required special permission from the Adjutant General's Office before a married man could enlist in the Army.)

Another regulation required enlisted men who wished to marry to obtain permission from their company commander. Only if the company commander agreed could the enlisted man marry and be granted those special considerations denied unmarried men—considerations such as post housing and dependent rations. Otherwise, the marriage had to be kept secret or the enlisted man faced the charge of insubordination. One commander went so far as to recommend that any enlisted man who married without permission would be punished the same as a deserter.

Many company commanders felt that only those soldiers ranking above sergeant could afford a wife and household. When NCOs were granted approval to marry they received quarters inside the post, if they were available. If quarters were not available then the NCO had to secure housing outside the post.

Living conditions were tough for all wives, but the enlisted wife always seemed to get the worst of it. If enlisted housing was available it was cramped, dreary and inadequately heated or ventilated. Sometimes these quarters were small cabins out beyond the company barracks and other times tents served as the quarters for the married troops and their laundress wives.

The married NCO ate his meals at home instead of at the company mess. Meals were simple, consisting of beans, bacon, beef and hardtack. Eggs, sugar and other staples were priced too high for the frontier NCO's wife. She had to be creative and develop a variety of meals from a minimum of ingredients.

In addition to serving as servants or laundry women, NCO wives, known as "campfollowers," filled vital roles as nurses and midwives at frontier posts. These women often meant the difference between life and death for their patients.

"Mrs. Duffy gazed with compassion at the young soldier as he was carried into her barrack room at Ft. McIntosh.

While ferrying rations to the frontier force along the Ohio River, he had fallen into the icy water. His frozen legs and feet badly needed medical attention. Mrs. Duffy's room (which she shared with her sergeant major husband and another corporal) was the only hospital quarters available. The patient survived, due almost entirely to the nursing of Mrs. Duffy and the wife of COL Josiah Harmar, perhaps the first American regular army wives to appear in military records," according to COL R. Ernest DuPuy, in *The Compact History of the United States Army* (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1963), page 48.

These campfollowers also were not afraid to take up arms when their husbands fell wounded or dead. An account as written in the book *Campfollowing: A History of the Military Wife*, describes one such incident.

Mary Ludwig Hays (better known as Molly Pitcher, a name common to many of the women who carried water to the men in battle) actually assisted her enlisted husband, artilleryman John Hays, in firing his cannon. In fact, she fired the last cannon shot prior to the fall of Ft. Clinton in 1777. Later, Mary, her pregnancy far advanced, accompanied Hays to Monmouth, NJ, where she carried water to the soldiers in battle. When her husband collapsed, either from a bullet wound or heat exhaustion, Molly is said to have "singlehandedly sponged, loaded, aimed and fired the cannon in addition to nursing her husband."

Most of the Army wives didn't dwell on the hardships and dangers that went along with campfollowing. They were interested in keeping the family together. They also knew that they brought comfort and cheer to the men.

On December 20, 1889, the assistant surgeon at Ft. Robinson, NE, wrote a lengthy letter against the expulsion of families from military reservations, which he felt would cause much hardship and suffering to the women and children

and discontent among their husbands: "...Marriage undoubtedly increases the steadiness and reliability of the soldier, as it does in the case of other men...It is a very rare occurrence for a married man to desert...The married soldier loses fewer days from sickness than his single comrade..."

Whether she should stay or go as a campfollower or because of her lack of official status, the Army wife suffered through all the hardships. She stayed from the beginning of the westward expansion and continues that tradition even in the Army of the 90s. While her status has improved greatly, along with the Army's benefits for married soldiers, the Army wife continues to care for her soldier husband, gives birth to their children and maintains the military family lifestyle even through all the PCS moves and deployments. She's come a long way. ■

[Learn more about women and their campfollowing experiences by reading Campfollowing: A History of the Military Wife, by Betty Sowers Alt and Bonnie Domrose Stone, Praeger Publishers, New York, NY, 1991, 164 pages.]

"You know it takes something special in a woman to live in a situation where she knows time and time again that she and the children are number two."

Maureen Mylander, quoting a general in *The Generals*

Era of Frontier Conflicts

1795-1890



By SSG David Abrams

With the Revolutionary War over and the Continental Army demobilized, debate raged in Congress over whether to maintain a standing regular national Army or to rely on state militias of relatively untrained soldiers.

Americans, however, had already settled the issue. As Manifest Destiny called, pioneers pushed west into the wilderness of what was later Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana—areas of the fledgling nation populated with marauding Indians and offering little in the way of supply outposts. America's new frontier needed Army troops to keep law and order for the new settlers and, in turn, Noncommissioned officers to keep law and order among the troops.

Soon after the last shot of the War for Independence was fired, Congress turned to GEN George Washington for his recommendation of the Army's future. Though he advocated the use of a militia, Washington conceded that regular troops were also indispensably necessary.

In April 1785, Congress settled the military issue by resolving that, in addition to a larger militia force, "it is necessary that a body of troops consisting of 700 officers, Noncommissioned officers and privates be raised for the term of three years....for the protection of the northwest frontiers, to defend the settlers on the land belonging to the United States from the depredations of the Indians....and for guarding the public stores."

Though the NCO's role had been broadly defined by Baron von Steuben seven years earlier in the Blue Book, status

and prestige still remained relatively low for those who wore the stripes. Under monthly pay scales established by Congress in 1785, sergeants made only one dollar more than corporals and only two more than privates.

During this period, soldiers were as poorly trained as they were paid. Attempts were made to raise a more professional force, particularly in the NCO Corps. In December 1792, Washington appointed Revolutionary War hero GEN "Mad" Anthony Wayne to command the new Legion of the United States, which combined all combat arms under one command with an actual strength of about 1,500. Wayne set high standards for the troops garrisoned in Pennsylvania, requiring drills straight out of the Blue Book and seeing to it that all soldiers were properly clothed and fed. Wayne treated NCOs with greater respect than normal. He usually disciplined NCOs with written admonishments and reductions in rank rather than with corporal punishments like floggings or even the severing of ears.

Later, the Army's ranking officer, BG James Wilkinson, attempted to maintain order among the troops at remote frontier outposts by drilling the men daily from 5 to 7 a.m., 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 4 to 6 p.m. Under the supervision of officers carrying the Blue Book, NCOs spent the workday training in tactics.

Off the parade grounds, frontier soldiers enjoyed a variety of leisurely pursuits. Contrary to stereotyped images, not all garrisoned troops spent their down-time drinking, brawling and playing cards. NCOs read books, wrote letters, tended gardens and formed drama groups that performed plays for

culture-starved audiences at the remote military forts.

Professionally, NCOs continued to advance. In the era surrounding the War of 1812, new military bibles gradually replaced the Blue Book: William Duane's *Handbook for Infantry: Containing the First Principles of Military Discipline* published in 1813 and GEN Winfield Scott's *Rules and Regulations for the Field Exercise and Maneuvers of Infantry of 1814*.

Duane's *Handbook* emphasized the administrative role of the NCO, stating that the order and good conduct of the company depended on NCOs who should be selected from among the most orderly and best qualified men. Within the company, each sergeant was in charge of a squad, seeing to the cleanliness of his men and their uniforms, arms and quarters. NCOs closely monitored the activity of the soldiers with five roll calls per day. Each morning, the sergeant prepared two copies of the morning report and gave them to the first sergeant who then kept one and passed the other to the company commander. Sergeants also prepared weekly reports on the condition of men and equipment for the regimental sergeant major.

Duane, like Steuben before him, was reluctant to give NCOs a large role in tactical training. Drill instruction remained in the hands of officers. NCOs, Duane wrote, seldom know more than to imitate what they have seen or heard of, and teach [the tactical principles] mechanically. In combat, however, NCOs continued the Revolutionary War tradition of keeping order among the men in ranks.

Based on Napoleonic tradition, Scott's *Rules* also placed battle discipline in the hands of the NCO. As Ernest F. Fisher, Jr. notes in *Guardians of the Republic*, "When units marched into battle, they moved from column onto line and maneuvered on the field of battle in rigid conformity....The senior noncommissioned officers played key roles in making these often intricate maneuvers move in an orderly fashion. Orders were given by the commanding officers, but it was the noncommissioned officer who saw to it that the ranks remained steady and the files closed up."

In 1821, Scott issued the Army's first published general regulations which established the method of appointing NCOs, their uniforms and their place in the chain of command.

At this time, the authorized strength of the Army was only about 6,000 soldiers, spread thin over the ever-increasing territory of the West (what is now the Midwest). As officers relied on NCOs to keep a watchful eye on enlisted soldiers, the ranks of sergeant major, quartermaster sergeant, sergeant and corporal earned more social prestige.

Among America's largely illiterate population, educated persons recruited into the Army were almost certain to be promoted to staff NCO ranks. Appointment of both company and regimental NCOs was in the hands of the regimental commander. However, in the case of company NCOs, regimental commanders generally gave a stamp of approval to the company commander's recommendation.

Unfortunately, NCO career opportunities were still severely more limited than those of commissioned officers.

From 1835 to World War II, no NCO or private could be transferred in grade from one regiment to another without the previous authority of the general in chief of the Army—essentially locking the NCO into his regiment for an entire military career. (One of the few exceptions to this rule was the ordnance sergeant.)

Consequently, to protect their grade, senior NCOs had little choice but to remain with the same unit throughout their military careers, Fisher writes, adding, that these men often became almost legendary figures in their respective regiments as generations of officers came and went, while the old sergeants stayed on as seemingly indestructible fixtures, held in awe by both officers and enlisted men.

Changes in military lifestyle also affected NCOs during the early part of the 19th century. In 1801, a measure was adopted requiring soldiers to wear their hair short—a move that didn't sit well with many officers and senior NCOs. One old sergeant reportedly insisted that when he died he wanted his shorn pigtail to protrude from his coffin as one last act of defiance.

With the national temperance movement in full swing in 1832, Congress proposed to replace the long-standing Army ration of liquor with a cash allowance. This was designed to reduce disciplinary problems associated with 'the devil rum.' Though President Andrew Jackson officially decreed that coffee and sugar were to be substituted for the allowance of rum, whiskey or brandy, it wasn't until the Civil War that coffee completely replaced liquor in the soldier's mess kit.

Though NCOs would put their bravery and leadership skills to the test in the Mexican War in the mid-1800s, it was in policing the frontier where they really earned their military pay (scant as it was). By the time the Plains Indians were finally subdued in 1890, the Army had fought 24 military operations officially tagged as wars, campaigns or expeditions and had engaged in nearly 1,000 armed clashes with hostile bands of Indians. To illustrate the enormity of this task, Fisher reports that the Army's 11,000 men in 1859 were stationed in 130 garrisons over three million square miles from the Canadian border to west Texas. Tactically, this scattershot dispersal meant combat took the form of small-unit operations calling for the skilled leadership of NCOs.

One of the most successful examples of this frontier conflict took place in Texas in January of 1858 when 1SG John W. Spangler, commanding a detachment of regular and state troops, encountered a war party of Comanches along a tributary of the Red River. In the battle that followed, the cavalrymen killed 14 Indians, wounded several more and captured three. In addition, the soldiers corralled 45 of the Comanche's horses. All this without a single death or serious injury to anyone under Spangler's command.

Experiences like this shaped the NCO Corps and prepared it for the upcoming trials of the Civil War. For the young nation in the 1800s, the sergeant stripes were vital to the mission of policing the frontier and protecting the Westward settlers. ■

Abrams is senior journalist for The NCO Journal.

Volunteer Regiments typify

Civil War NCOs

By Dr. John Wands Sacca

Unlike the earlier Mexican War, the Civil War was largely fought and won by volunteers. Thus, Noncommissioned officers of the volunteer regiments best typified the NCO of this era.

By war's end, the ratio of volunteers to Army regulars would be almost 45-to-1. About 10 percent of these soldiers would see service as NCOs.

Though both regular and volunteer regiments had similar organizations (10 companies per regiment), there were major differences. Volunteers signed up for one to three years, regulars for five years. Most volunteers weren't fond of military life and some even deserted the Army when they tired of the blood and bullets.

Another difference between volunteers and regulars was the cash bounties (some as large as \$500) offered by the states to volunteers. The regular Army could never hope to match this type of payment to its soldiers. Soldiers of the volunteer companies sometimes chose their own officers and first sergeants.

Soldiers in volunteer units were typically a close-knit group since they were generally recruited from the same community. As a result, in the first years of the war, volunteer NCOs were often younger and more inexperienced than their regular Army counterparts.

1SG William Abbot, who served with Co G, 70th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, was one of these "babes in arms." At 16, he was the youngest NCO in his company when he was elected first sergeant by his comrades.

Many boys lied about their age to enlist. One such lad of 13 was made a sergeant on the Chickamauga battlefield in 1863 for conspicuous bravery.

As the first volunteer units disbanded and the NCOs mustered out, seasoned campaigners would often re-enlist in newly raised state regiments, forming a cadre of NCOs as experienced as those found in the regular Army.

The enlisted volunteers were proud and independent men who believed themselves the equal of any of their NCOs, most of whom were their hometown neighbors. NCOs found themselves in the uncomfortable position of being middlemen between commissioned officers and the privates. They

were frequently invited to strip off their chevrons and fight. "It is the meanest position in which a man can be placed, that of Noncommissioned officer," complained a corporal of the 11th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry in 1865. "In our company, every man is smarter, knows more and thinks himself a better man than those under whom he is placed."

Volunteers would not tolerate the stiff discipline of the Regular Army. NCOs who committed a breach of discipline were punished by being reduced to the ranks. Captains soon learned to place stripes on the sleeves of men who were respected by their soldiers, rather than feared by them.

Many officers offered to resign in the course of the war, some smitten with what was called "cannon fever." Countless others died in action or were discharged for disability. Into this void stepped the company sergeants as the authority of their officers settled, out of necessity, upon their shoulders. Many proven NCOs, especially first sergeants, received commissions in the last years of the war.

To learn their jobs, NCOs hit the books on Army tactics and regulations, especially GEN Silas Casey's *Infantry Tactics*, published in 1862. The NCO's instruction included endless drill in the school of the soldier.

The monotony of camp life was broken by picket duty. While it could be dangerous and often trying for the NCOs in charge, this duty was an essential part of their tactical education. Patrolling the pickets taught NCOs vigilance, independent judgment, prompt action in emergencies and strict discipline. If the enemy began to advance, NCOs would quickly transform the pickets into a skirmish line under their command.

Although railroads increased mobility and logistical support, and telegraph lines sped communication, Civil War field armies moved, communicated and fought much like armies in the Napoleonic wars more than 50 years earlier. Despite the introduction of the rifled musket and the use of field entrenchments, linear battle formations remained the tactical doctrine of the day. In battle, the four sergeants in each infantry company performed the tactical roles of line closer and guide.

Leading by example, they encouraged the men to hold their ranks rather than turn and run, as nature and good sense might dictate. A second sergeant recalled his duty as left general guide at Fredericksburg in 1863:



“ Our lieutenant colonel halted us, ordered the men to lie down and then called for guides on line. That meant that I and the other two guides, one on the right and one in the centre, were to stand up and take position by which the regiment could align itself. I sprang to my feet, soon caught the line from the others and there we stood while the regiment crawled up and dressed by us....The air was full of wild shrieks of grape[shot] and shrapnel; the ringing shells were bursting all about with maddening and stuning [sic] detonations. I remember, as I stood there for those few moments I seemed indeed to have lost all sense of fear, and yet I wondered whether I was actually myself and whether my head was really on or off my shoulders. ”

Sixteen African-American soldiers received the Medal of Honor during the Civil War, all but three of whom were NCOs. SGM Christian A. Fleetwood, a native of Baltimore serving with the 4th U.S. Colored Infantry, was inducted into the Union Army as a free citizen in 1861. Within two years, he was appointed sergeant major. At Chafins Farm, VA, dur-

ing the Petersburg Campaign in 1864, he seized the colors after two other bearers had been shot down, and carried them throughout the battle. For his valiant action, he was awarded the Medal of Honor.

The custodians of the regimental and national flags were the color sergeants, usually the most respected NCOs in each regiment. These NCOs often did not fare much better than the battle-stained flags they carried. Shot through until they resembled sieves, the standards were the visible heart and soul of each regiment.

Carrying the colors was critical in battle because it was often the only way in which a commander could tell where his unit was on the field. Scores of color sergeants and corporals of the color guards were killed or maimed as they placed themselves and their standards to the fore in battle.

Not all Civil War NCOs were men. SGT Kady Brownell served with her husband, an orderly (first) sergeant, in both the 1st and 5th Rhode Island Infantry. She was a color bearer on the march and a nurse in the field. In one action, she saved her comrades from friendly fire by running to their front with her colors.

The coolness of such NCOs was equal to their courage. A sergeant of the 6th Maine was once surrounded inside a redoubt and called out that he was surrendering. But upon seeing men of his command tumble over the parapet, he yelled, “I take it back!” and grabbed the company colors and joined the fight.

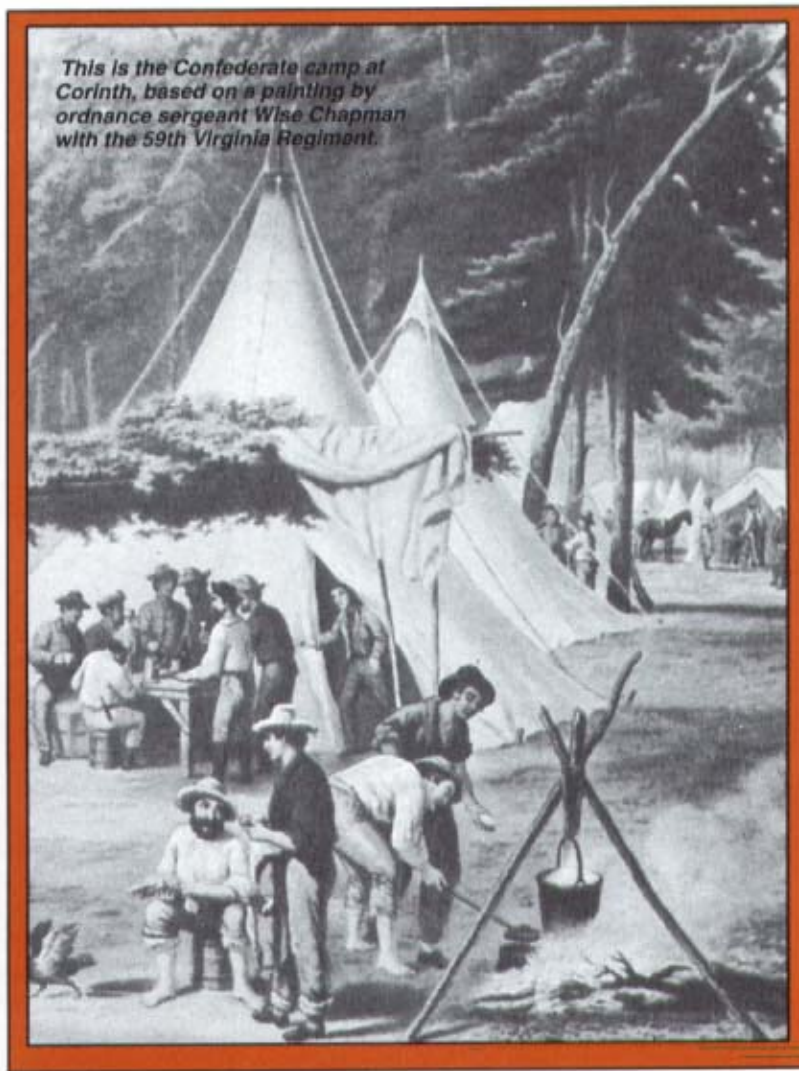
GEN William T. Sherman once wrote, “We have good corporals and sergeants...and these are far more important than good generals.”

With the war’s end, the Army lost many of its veteran NCOs. Yet it would be the country’s gain for those same leaders would help rebuild the nation. ISG Consider Heath Willet, 44th New York Infantry, exemplified their strength of character. He wrote home during a lull in the Battle of Fredericksburg: “I remain as true and firm in battle as I hope to be in the battle of life.” ■

Sacca, who served in Vietnam and did a five-year stint as a first sergeant, teaches world history at Albany High School, Albany, NY.



A Union Army sergeant and his officer lead the way after a river crossing.



This is the Confederate camp at Corinth, based on a painting by ordnance sergeant Wise Chapman with the 59th Virginia Regiment.

Opening the West...

Buffalo Soldiers Play Key Role

By James P. Finley

The story of black Americans fighting under their nation's flag is older than the flag itself. First introduced as slaves by the British early in the 17th century, blacks served alongside their white

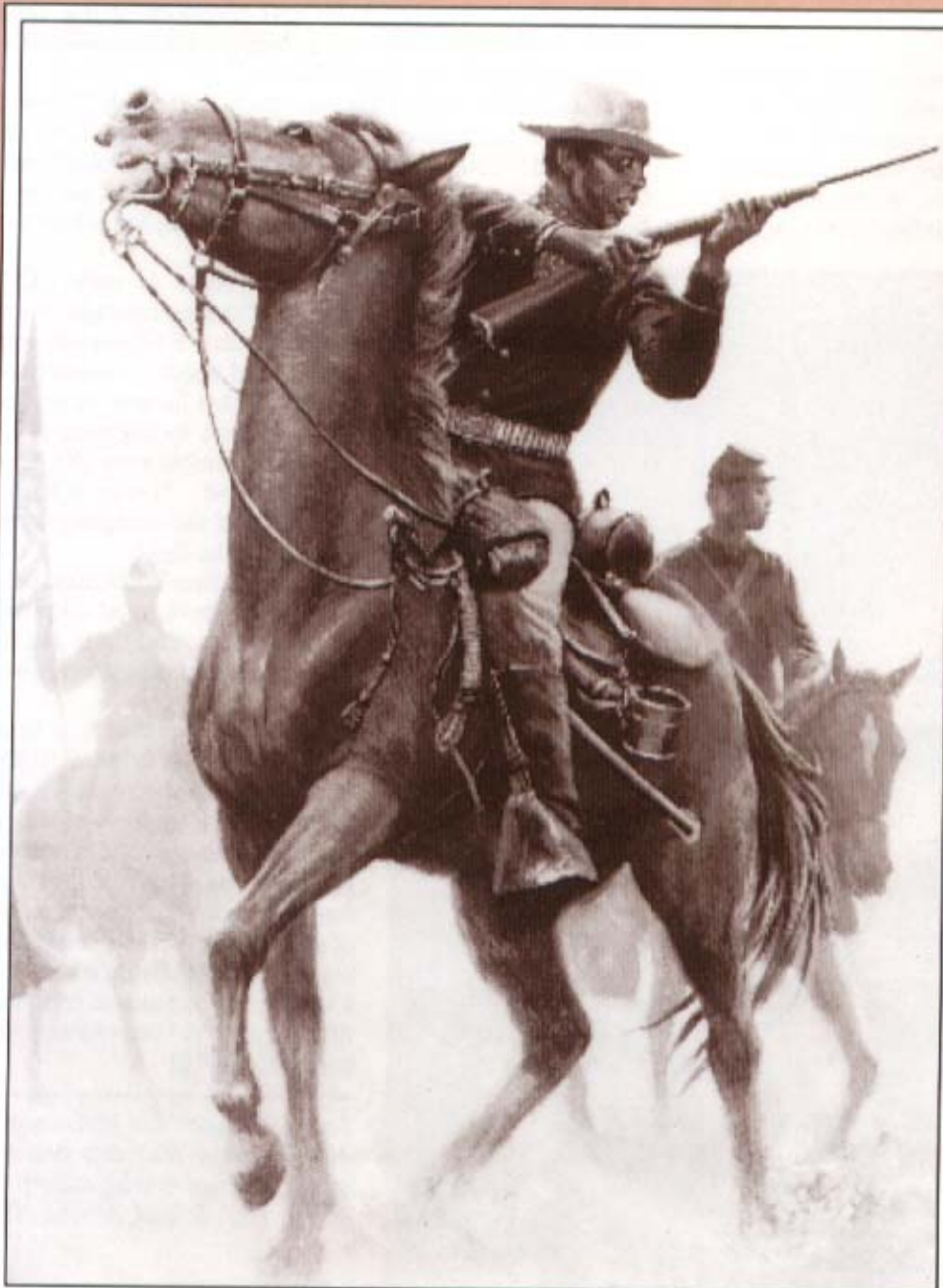
masters in the first colonial militias organized to defend against Indian attacks.

By the time of the American Revolution, some freed slaves took a stand for independence along with the white colonists. A freedman named Crispus Attucks was among those 11 Americans gunned down in the Boston massacre of March 5, 1770, when they defied the British soldiery. When the war broke out, blacks like Peter Salem and Salem Poore were in the thick of the fighting. Salem was credited with shooting the British commander at Bunker Hill and Poore was cited for gallantry. A number of other blacks were serving in New England militia units in 1775, but when the Continental Army was officially formed in that year, Congress bowed to the insistence of the Southern slave holders and ex-

cluded blacks, free or slave, from service. These regulations were soon overridden by the necessities of the desperate fighting and the need for manpower. Black veterans were retained and new recruits were accepted. In all, approximately 5,000 blacks served in the American Revolutionary War.

In the Civil War, black troops made up 12 percent of the Union Army, adding to its number 178,892 men, of which 7,000 were NCOs. They manned 120 infantry regiments, 12 heavy artillery regiments, 10 light artillery batteries, and seven cavalry regiments. More than one-third gave their lives. There were NCOs like SGT William H. Carney of the 54th Massachusetts, who, though severely wounded, carried the regimental colors to the breastworks at the battle of Charleston, SC. After the Civil War—where their military abilities were unquestionably established—blacks were accepted into the regular Army.

In 1866, the Army formed six black regular Army regiments. They were the 38th, 39th, 40th and 41st Infantry and the 9th and 10th Cavalry. Three years later, as part of a reduction in the size of the Army, the 38th and the 41st combined to form the 24th Infantry, and the 39th and the 40th made up the 25th Infantry. The post-Civil War Army combined 10 regiments of cavalry and 25 regiments of infantry, a number that would be unchanged until the turn of the century. Four of these 35 combat arms regiments consisted of African-Americans. Officerred by whites,



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these regiments went on to justify the belief by black leaders that men of their race could contribute mightily to the nation's defense.

The 24th Infantry Regiment participated in the 1875 expedition against hostile Kiowas and Comanches in the Department of Texas. One of the engagements of this campaign saw a Lieutenant John Bullis and three Seminole-Negro Indian scouts attack a 25-man war party on the Pecos River. SGT John Ward, PVT Pompey Factor and Trumpeter Isaac Payne received the Medal of Honor for their exceptional bravery in this encounter.

The 25th Infantry Regiment spent its first 10 years in Texas building and repairing military posts, roads and telegraph lines; performing escort and guard duty; marching and counter-marching from post to post and scouting for Indians. In 1880, the regiment was at Ft. Missoula, MT. It participated in the Pine Ridge Campaign of 1890-91, the last stand of the Sioux, and quelled civil disorders in Missoula during the Northern Pacific Railroad strike in 1894.

1SG Vance Marchbanks: *A Buffalo Soldier NCO*

Students of American history easily recognize names like Frederick Douglass, Booker T. Washington and Mary McLeod Bethune. These men and women spoke out for the African-American cause at a time when they most needed leaders.

So did Vance Hunter Marchbanks, a trooper in the Buffalo Soldier regiment. He wrote a manuscript entitled "Forty Years in the Army," which, thanks to his son, has survived to relate his military experiences, most of which were as an NCO in the 10th Cavalry at Ft. Huachuca.

Marchbanks' actual Army service was 43 years, nine months and 13 days by his own reckoning. He enlisted for the first time in 1895 and spent most of his Army career at Fort Huachuca. In World War II he was commissioned a captain and after the war he rejoined the Regular Army at his old rank of first sergeant. His reminiscences are in manuscript form in the Ft. Huachuca Museum files.

His service spans the period from the Spanish-American War to the beginning of World War II. He was in a position to witness nearly half a century of the history of one of the Army's most renowned regiments and pass on an NCO's perspective.

In talking about the lessons of Army life, he says, "If they only taught one to shoot a gun I would say the Army is not worthwhile. But one is taught citizenship, discipline, the power of organization, personal hygiene, and many other useful trades in the Army and Navy which prepares one for useful citizenship in any community." In 1927, while he served at Ft. Huachuca, he was asked to speak to a convention of Sunday School teachers at McNary, AZ. The subject of his speech was to be "Reminiscences of a Trooper at Fort Apache in 1900." After briefly talking on those experiences,

In 1890, the Battle of Wounded Knee Creek, the last major fight of the Indian Wars, pitted the U.S. 7th Cavalry against Big Foot's Sioux. The 9th Cavalry Regiment also took part in this campaign and played a dramatic part in the Battle of Clay Creek Mission. Over 1,800 Sioux under Little Wound and Two Strike had encircled the battle-weary 7th. The situation looked grave until the 9th Cavalry arrived on the field and drove off the Indian force with an attack on their rear. For conspicuous gallantry displayed on this occasion, CPL William O. Wilson, Troop I, 9th Cavalry, was granted the Medal of Honor.

The 10th Cavalry Regiment is probably the most renowned of the black regiments. At its inception, the commander, COL Benjamin H. Grierson, sought to fill the ranks only with men of the highest quality. Orders went out to recruit none but "superior men...who would do credit to the regiment." The 10th's record in several Indian War campaigns attests to the fact that

Marchbanks spoke about patriotism, the contributions of the "colored soldier" to the nation and about racial injustice. He felt he had duties beyond the battlefield.

"While the primary object of the soldier is to prepare for war, he realizes very seriously that the new patriotism has other duties than those of armed conflict; duties less splendid, but no less brave, requiring a bravery of a greater order than...shown upon a hundred battlefields of our World War.

"...The colored soldier fought bravely in the Revolutionary War, the Civil War, the Spanish-American War and the World War. But the Negro will not be given justice through the valor and bravery he displays in the war. It will be through the cooperative efforts of every member of the Negro Race intelligently pleading his case before the public...if you want equal rights in this country...write on your banner so that every political trimmer can read it so that...no matter how short-sighted he may be he can read it, 'We Never Forget, We Never Forget, We Never Forget.'"

First Sergeant Vance Marchbanks was a believer in the instructive power of history and quoted Patrick Henry, "We have no way of judging the future except by the past." He was extremely knowledgeable about the history of black Americans serving their country and felt the compulsion to transcribe his own military experience so that his life might become a part of the flow of history.

Marchbanks' writings about his Army experiences have done much to illuminate the soldier's life at a time when America was largely estranged from its tiny standing Army. He becomes a part of the Buffalo Soldier tradition about which he felt so strongly and his sincere written record enables succeeding generations of American NCOs to join him in his invocation: "We Never Forget." ■



Grierson achieved his goal. In 1886, the so-called Buffalo Soldiers tracked Geronimo's renegades in the Pinito Mountains of Mexico and several months later ran down the last Apache holdout—Chief Mangas and his band.

Plains Indians gave the nickname "Buffalo Soldiers" to the men of the 10th Cavalry. Indians likened their hair to that of the buffalo. Over the years this name has been extended by veterans to include soldiers of all the original black regiments.

Raw recruits made up a large portion of enlisted strength of the four new regiments. To stiffen the mix, the Army sought NCOs who had seen service during the war with black volunteer units. The experience of these Civil War veterans would be indispensable in the hard work of training that lay ahead, but they did not always receive the credit. Lieutenant Grote Hutcheson, adjutant of the 9th Cavalry, wrote 20 years after his regiment's organization that the officers undertook most of the arduous drill of the unit's 885 new troopers. He said, "The men knew nothing, and the Noncommissioned officers but little more. From the very circumstances of their preceding life it could not be otherwise. They had no independence, no self-reliance, not a thought except for the present, and were filled with superstition. To make soldiers of such material was, at that time, considered more of an experiment than a fixed principle. The government depended upon the officers of those early days to solve the problem of the colored soldier...For some years [the NCOs], from lack of education, were such only in name, and the process of molding them into a responsible and self-reliant class was a slow one." Troop officers were in fact squad commanders, and it took both time and patience to teach the men how to care for themselves.

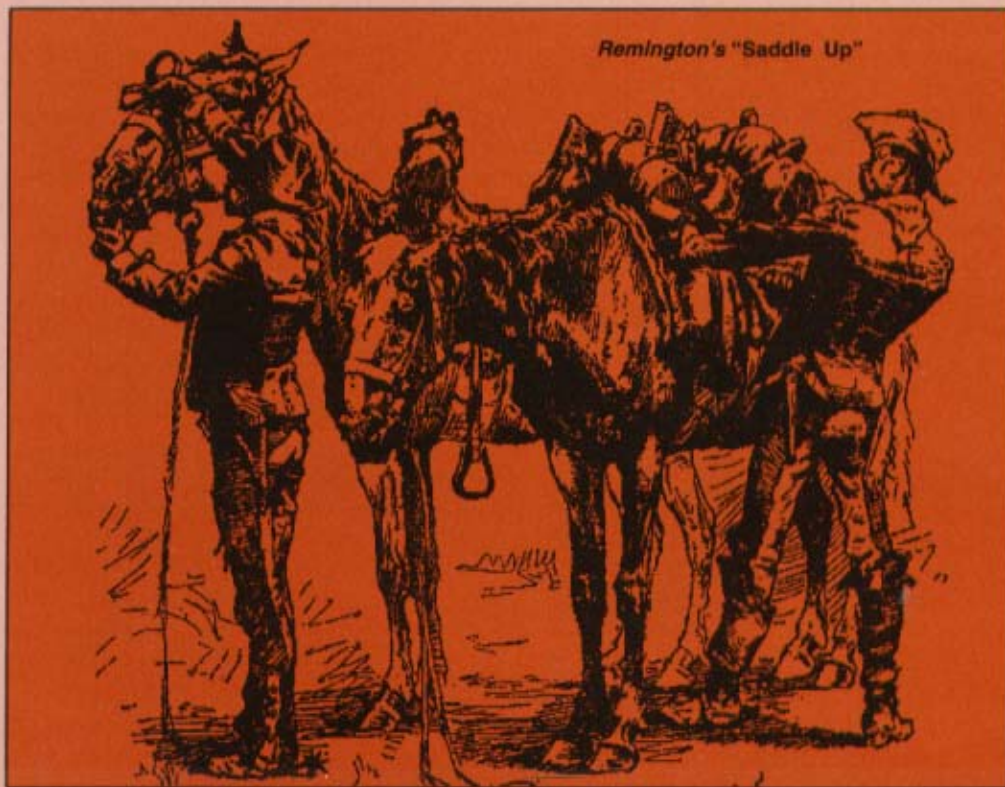
Many white officers did not wish to serve in black regiments, fearing it would hurt their careers or simply because they carried a bias against black troops. One such officer was CPT F.W. Benteen who wrote that, "In 1866 I could have gone into the 10th U.S. Cavalry as a major, but I preferred a captaincy in the Seventh. Fate, however, after being a captain 17 years—'threw' me into an organization of cavalry anyhow; and being well off in this world's goods, and feeling it was not proper to remain with a race of troops that I could take no interest in—and this on account of their 'low down,' rascally character, ...there seemed nothing left for me to do but... [retire]." And retire he did.

The service of the African-American NCO was not only measured by medals granted, a rare occurrence in the 19th-century Army. Some men achieved legendary status without ever being awarded a medal. 1SG Shelving Shropshire was one of the original members of C Company from its early days at Ft. Leavenworth. His bravery was noted in orders after the action at the Wichita Agency in August 1874. But he was better remembered for his actions in camp at Galesteo, NM, after a second lieutenant killed two men of the troop for little apparent reason. A mutiny seemed imminent when Shropshire stepped in and coolly disarmed the lieutenant. He then turned the lieutenant over to the guard to await court-martial.

Despite the low opinion of some officers, the African-American regiments played a key role in opening the American West and in all America's wars to follow. They quickly proved themselves on the plains of Texas, in the Apache strongholds of New Mexico and Arizona, and in the Sioux country of Montana and the Dakotas. Eighteen Buffalo soldiers received the Medal of Honor during the Indian campaigns—16 cavalrymen and two infantrymen. Fourteen of these men were NCOs at the time of the action for which they were cited. They began a tradition for NCOs in these black regiments.

■

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Here are the Scots, the Swedes and Germans, Irish and French, along with the Yankee and the man of many blends from the mid-West and the North woods. These are not the machine-made soldiers of Europe, but products of the time and hour.

During the 1800s...Immigrants Flood The Army

By L. R. Arms

In 1802 the United States restricted the enlistment of foreigners in the Army. As the years passed, recruiters often ignored the restrictions. In times of peril, such as the War of 1812, the restrictions were ignored altogether.

The Army offered little appeal to American citizens in times of peace and prosperity. On the frontier, soldiers lived an isolated life full of hardships and ordeals. Hard-pressed recruiters often turned to immigrants and ignored the restrictions on recruiting them.

Before 1825, non-native enlistees made up approximately 27 percent of the Army. In the mid 1800s, thousands fled hard times in Europe and the proportion of foreign troops in the regular Army rose to 47 percent. Half were Irish, with most of the rest being Germans.

Many immigrants saw the Army as a way of bettering themselves. Others used the Army as a means of traveling to the western frontiers in search of adventure and opportunity. Still others sought the security a career in the Army offered because they weren't always welcome as civilians.

When the Civil War erupted and many officers resigned their commissions, it was the NCO who proved to be the stalwarts of the Army. Because many of these NCOs were of foreign birth, they remained loyal to the Union Army. They had no stake in the slavery issue.

How did these foreigners view themselves in their Union uniforms? SGT Fergus Elliott said, "I do not forget that I am a true born Englishman...but while I am in America I will

fight for America, and if England was to interfere on the rebel's side, I could fight them as well as the rebels...."

Since many immigrants came from ethnic communities in America, volunteer units often consisted of a single ethnic element. A group of Swedish immigrants from Galesburg, IL, for example, formed a company in which all the NCOs were Swedish.

Usually, ethnic units had ethnic NCOs, but in some instances the ethnic designation of the regiment didn't apply to NCOs. In one company of the nominally all-Irish Corcoran Legion all sergeants and seven of the eight corporals were German. The eighth corporal was from France. None was Irish.

Many volunteer units included immigrant NCOs who had received military training in Europe. These soldiers, trained in the Prussian, French, Swiss and other European armies, provided volunteer units with the experience they needed to build a fighting force.

Soldiers from Germany, Ireland, England, Canada, Scotland, France, Norway, India and other countries served bravely and honorably. Many received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

These soldiers saw the Army as a way to adapt to American society, to better themselves and receive the acceptance of other Americans. In a land of immigrants, the foreign NCO proved a valuable resource for the Army from the early 1800s to the dawn of the 20th century. ■

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the Army initiated research into the causes of tropical fevers. It also improved field hygiene and sanitation for both the Army and the occupied territories. The responsibility for enforcing the new regulations fell upon the hard-working NCOs.

The Army went further and added a cook with the rank of corporal to the roll of each company.

From then on, a more healthy U.S. Army was never again to suffer massive casualties from disease and improperly prepared meals.

The fight against Philippine guerrillas from 1899-1902, and in 1900 the expedition against the Boxer insurgents in China, were mostly small-unit actions that again tested the mettle of small unit commanders. During those deadly little battles and skirmishes, it was the war-hardened NCOs who formed the military backbone around which the inexperienced troops could rally and defeat their opponents.

As the fighting eased, shortly after the turn of the century, the Army faced new challenges from a rapidly evolving technology. The development of telephones, electrical innovations and the internal combustion engine meant that many new skills had to be taught and a cadre of specialists had to be developed to keep the Army up to date.

Keeping those new NCO specialists with their highly mar-

ketable skills needed in a fast industrializing and urbanizing society became increasingly difficult. Industrial wages had increased while Army pay had remained unchanged since 1870. The Army saw too many of its highly trained and disciplined NCOs lured away from the service by high-paying civilian jobs.

The situation became so grave that in 1907 Secretary of War, later to be president, William Howard Taft reported to Congress: "Once competent NCOs are secured—their retention as long as physically fit for their duties works for efficiency, provided that a reasonable flow of promotions be maintained. Just as in the old Army no cause contributed more to the standard reached than the high class of NCOs developed, so now no cause has contributed more toward demoralization than the inability under existing conditions to secure qualified men for these grades, or to retain them when secured..."

"The Noncommissioned officers are men who in civilian life would be skilled workmen, foremen, chief clerks and subordinate officers. If the Army cannot offer them inducement equal to those that civil institutions are glad to offer it cannot hope to secure or retain them."

Recognizing the absolute necessity for keeping experienced NCOs in the ranks, the Congress set Army pay with the Appropriations Bill of 1908. While it still didn't bring Army pay up to civilian standards, the increases were large enough to satisfy most of the hard-core NCOs. And it was these hardened, experienced men who, two decades later, would mold a mass of untrained civilians into an Army that would go into combat in France in 1917 and 1918 and defeat the Kaiser's army. ■

Meed, who served as an NCO in WWII, holds a master's degree in history. The El Paso-based freelance writer is the author of a number of history books on the Southwest.



Noncommissioned officers...

Technicians and Leaders

By Dr. John Wands Sacca

What will the future bring in military technology? And how will this new technology affect technical and leadership training in the Army? Pundits predict "dune buggies" armed with "smart" weapons; "fire-and-forget" anti-armor and anti-personnel weapons; and space-based, guaranteed squad- and soldier-level communications.

Due to the disparity between the projected labor pool and such sophisticated technology, it's been suggested that the challenge of the future will be to prevent "technological illiteracy." That Noncommissioned officers are not mere technicians, but *leaders*, is often overlooked in such an analysis. A strong NCO Corps will both train and lead the soldiers who deal with these new and complex technologies.

For years the Army sponsored NCO service schools to train specialists and NCO academies organized to instill traditional military and leadership skills. The first professional instruction for NCOs came in 1889 with the creation of company- and troop-level schools. The next serious attempt came in 1949 when the U.S. Army Constabulary Brigade opened an NCO Academy in Germany. By 1963, 11 academies were operating in the U.S. and several more overseas.

With the all-volunteer Army came the Enlisted Personnel

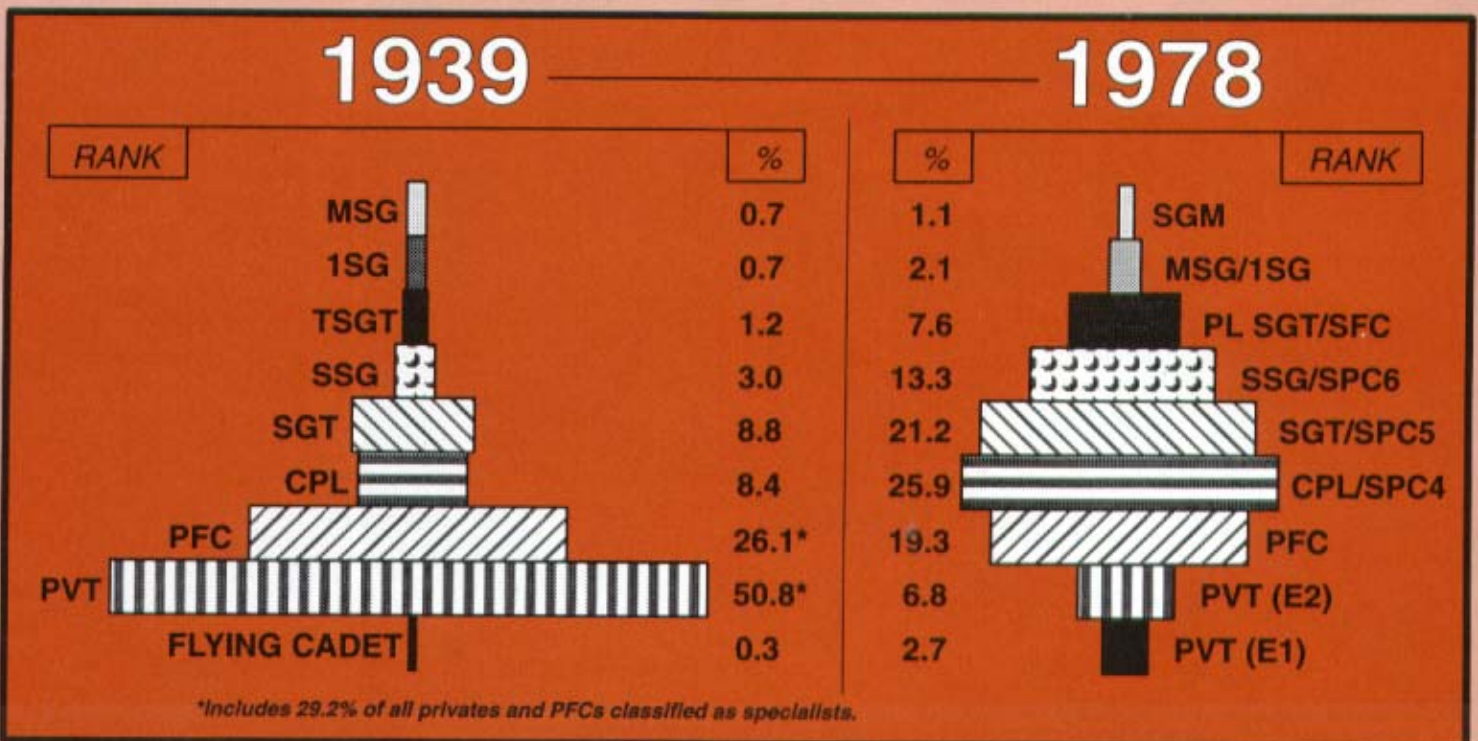
Management System (EPMS), and an increasingly professional system of NCO education, culminating in the Sergeants Major Academy. Prerequisites for promotion today aim at a balance between military occupational specialty (MOS) and professional military training.

The Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) provides both technical and leadership skills. But, NCOES doesn't provide both leadership and technical training at all levels. The technical training comes in the basic and advanced courses. The top-level Sergeants Major Course, however, reflects the Army's subordination of technical skills to lower ranks by ignoring technical skill development.

As is often the case, the past plays prologue to the present and future. Between the Civil War and the Spanish-American War, the number of soldiers engaged in a technical occupational specialty increased only from about six to 13 percent. The coast artillery, engineer and signal corps introduced most of these specialties. By 1908, electrician sergeants in these corps were the highest paid NCOs in the Army.

The modern military specialist system as we know it originated during World War I. Its unprecedented mobilization and the requirements for overseas deployment created a military "market" for new technologies. The internal combustion engine replaced the sturdy Army mule, ushering in mechanized warfare. A fledgling Army Air Corps took flight and the tank corps supplemented the horse cavalry. The military radio revolutionized communications. Chemical warfare began with the introduction of poison gas. Older branches, such as quartermaster and ordnance, mushroomed.

In contrast to earlier mobilizations, the combat soldier of WWI was in a numerical minority. Only about 40 percent of enlisted soldiers were in line-combat positions, compared to 93 percent during the Civil War. And behind the "man with the gun," were new support units of all types, manned by sol-





diers performing duties which paralleled 700-plus occupations found in the civilian economy.

The Army responded to the increased need for technically trained personnel by recognizing technical specialists in two different ways. The first was to pay specialists more money—a tacit recognition that the Army competes with the civilian economy for labor and must provide competitive rates of pay to do so. The second form of recognition was to bestow higher rank on personnel with special skills, technical or otherwise.

In earlier, less specialized days, there was a close correlation between skills, pay and rank. The trouble came when the increasing number of technical personnel required payment beyond what the Army was willing to pay for leadership skills. The Army balked at providing these technicians with rank commensurate with their pay. Pay and rank increasingly became separated.

In 1920, the Army agreed to pay technicians more than it would pay NCOs in leadership positions but gave the NCOs in leadership positions higher rank. In WWII the Army further elaborated the technical rank structure by adopting a system of occupational classification of jobs. Each classification covered soldiers who would perform a specific MOS. In this classification system, the Army classified about 26 percent of all enlisted personnel skills as technical, scientific or mechanical, while administrative/clerical occupations jumped to almost 15 percent—up 10 percent from the previous world war.

Before WWII the military hierarchy by rank resembled a pyramid, with the most predominant rank being that of private. [See table]. The number of enlisted personnel dropped

off progressively at each higher rank in the pyramid. By 1939, almost 77 percent of all enlisted soldiers were privates or privates first class, while NCOs comprised only 22 percent of the enlisted ranks.

When the Army reestablished the separate specialist-NCO rank structures in 1955 it again subordinated the technical rank structure to the leadership rank structure—much as it had done in 1920. A specialist could obtain a specialist-7 ranking at best. This was nominally equivalent to an E-7 rank, but a lowly E-4 corporal could command the specialist-7.

Between 1965 and 1978, the Army reversed itself and placed “hard” stripes back on the sleeves of senior NCOs, but retained specialist ranks from grades four through six. The rank structure now came to resemble a diamond, widening in the middle as a plurality of enlisted soldiers moved to the ranks of corporal/specialist fourth class and sergeant/specialist fifth class. In 1978 the Army lowered the top obtainable technical rank to specialist-6 and further lowered it in 1985 to the single specialist rank of specialist-4.

The rapid increase in technical skills continues to present both NCOs and the Army with a dilemma as to the relative importance of occupational versus leadership values. Is the NCO a technician or a leader? In today's Army, NCOs must remain flexible enough to assume both roles. ■

Sacca, who served in Vietnam and did a five-year stint as a first sergeant, teaches world history at Albany High School, Albany, NY.



Soldiers train on the Browning .30 caliber machine gun at the State Military Reservation, Virginia Beach, VA, in 1931.

any more than they do today. They became what we now call "Operations Other Than War," or OOTW. There was still training for combat, of course—remember the old Roman proverb, "In peace, prepare for war." But a great deal of work was done in providing support to civil authorities, things which, by the nature of their organization, training, equipment and experience could be done better, quicker and more economically by the Army than by any other existing group.

Programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), for instance. President Franklin D. Roosevelt was responsible for helping to create the CCC as a national work force to restore people's confidence and provide jobs for millions of unemployed. But who could manage and direct such a vast operation? The Army, of course.

The CCC was, as the name says, made up of civilians, but a large number of them were ex-servicemen, out of work and glad to get back to regular meals, a place to live and some productive work to rebuild their self-respect. Remember, although there have always been lazy loafers throughout history, most of these were good men down on their luck. They wanted to work and provide for their families.

Hundreds of Army Reserve officers were called to active duty (my father among them) along with thousands of old-time sergeants and corporals—to organize, train and oversee the daily work of these laborers. And what work they did!

They planted forests. They built dams for flood control, battled forest fires, laid out and constructed roads and bridges. Every kind of natural conservation project you can think of and a lot you can't, was performed under the direction of the Brown Shoe Army.

What kind of men were they? Mostly, they were strong, proud men having a rough run. They came from city slums, from country farms, from north and south, east and west.

They were black and white and yellow and brown and all

shades and shapes and sizes in between. Some had never seen a live cow. For their direction and management they needed, and had, good leaders.

My father's company in upstate New York was, I suppose, a typical group. They couldn't use military rank, so there were equivalent titles such as "foreman," for first sergeant, "section leader," for corporal, and so forth. Since so many of them had served in the Army, they understood and readily adapted to the platoon and company-type organization. And since they were not subject to Army regulations or military law, they could be disciplined in the common way.

Officers and NCOs had to use effective leadership techniques—psychology, setting the example, demonstrating their fitness to be leaders—for these men to accept them as such. Dad's old first sergeant, Danny Zecca, a man born and raised in the toughest ward in Brooklyn, would walk into the nearest bar, after working hours, pick out the biggest fellow in the place, order him to put up his hands and then knock him out with one punch. The word instantly got back to the CCC camp and he had no trouble with his new draft of recruits. Illegal? I guess. Effective? *You bet!*

We couldn't possibly do such things today, of course. It's a court-martial offense to raise a hand against a soldier. But the men who lived in those times understood and respected the courage, determination and professional competence of the Danny Zeccas who helped run this civilian army.

Meanwhile, the Army kept on doing the things it had always done in peacetime: the Army Air Corps, forerunner of the U.S. Air Force, participated in some famous flights, including a four-plane, round-the-world record; there was relief in natural disasters and control of civil disturbances.

Soldiers trained with wooden rifles; trucks with big signs reading "TANK," were used to represent nonexistent modern armor; mortar crews dropped make-believe shells down stovepipes...

In all of this, the world kept changing and not for the better. The 1930s saw the rise of the fascist dictatorships of Hitler and Mussolini, both of whom began to build fearsome fighting machines. Hitler in particular announced his intention of overturning the treaty ending WWI and reclaiming Germany's former glory. In the Far East, Japanese armies marched into China, bent on conquest.

And how stood the Brown Shoe Army? In 1937, very close to the outbreak of hostilities, they were about 140,000-strong, a trifle below the military might of Rumania. Soldiers trained with wooden rifles; trucks with big signs reading "TANK," were used

to represent nonexistent modern armor; mortar crews dropped make-believe shells down stovepipes; National Guard aviators dropped five-pound sacks of flour from observation planes (Guardsmen were deemed unfit to fly real fighters like the Curtiss P-40) to simulate bombing runs.

The Brown Shoe Army passed its most severe test with flying colors, growing in four years to eight million, fighting in every corner of the globe and whipping utterly and decisively the country's worst enemies. The Old Army NCOs had done their work well. Many hundreds were commissioned, led companies, battalions, even armies (GEN Walter Krueger of the Sixth Army had been a first sergeant) in combat.

So, young soldiers, you may well thank your stars that there were such men to fight your country's wars. The Brown Shoes left us a splendid legacy and you enjoy many of the benefits of their sacrifice—the sweat and tears in the long, dry years, the blood in the fires of battle. Such things as the GI Bill, veteran's mortgages and any number of marvelous gifts of a thankful Republic are yours to use. Remember who bought them for you and never forget them.

And though you do not stand in the same brown shoes, you march in time—to the same traditions—in boots of a different color. ■

Raymond is a retired sergeant first class, Virginia National Guard.

Congress Passes Draft Law, Activates National Guard

In September 1940, Congress accomplished two things when it passed the first peacetime draft law in American history. It provided for a draft and authorized nationalization of the National Guard. The act stipulated that the draftees would serve on active duty for 12 months. Similarly, it activated the Guard for 12 months—this at a time when many people opposed preparations for war. The short active-duty time in the bill for both the draftees and the Guard reflects this hesitancy to begin mobilization.

In the following months the international situation continued to deteriorate. Within half a year it was obvious that the American preparedness movement would be seriously crippled if both the draftees and the Guardsmen went home when their year of service was up.

The fight to extend the service obligation of these soldiers during the summer of 1941 was both intense and close. The extension of the draft passed the House of Representatives by a single vote, 203-202. The National Guard got extended for the duration, but the draftees got extended for only another 18 months. Later they would receive more final word that they were in for "the duration."

To the military who lived through this period, the vote to extend the service of the draftees during the summer of 1941 was crucial. ■

The Lean, Lean Years of the Depression Army

By COL (Ret.) John M. Collins

As topkick Anthony Warden so trenchantly put it, "This is G Company, of which I am first sergeant. I run this company. Holmes is the C.O., but he is like the rest of the officer class: a dumb bastard that signs papers and rides horses an' wears spurs an' gets stinking drunk up at the stinking Officers' Club. I'm the guy that runs this company...Holmes would strangle on his own spit if I wasn't here to swab out his throat for him."

James Jones' crusty first sergeant in *From Here to Eternity* may not have scored a bull's-eye, but he wasn't far off the mark. More than three decades later, grizzled war dogs with hashmarks halfway to their chins still reminisce nostalgically about the "Old Army" between the world wars, when NCO Corps reigned supreme.

What was it like in the "Old Army?"

First and foremost, the Army of 1939 was professional. Every man was a regular, every man a volunteer. Rear-rank privates made up half the enlisted ranks in those days. Privates first class accounted for another quarter and, believe me, any rocket who made PFC on his first three-year hitch was viewed with suspicion by protagonists and peers alike.

Noncoms were exclusively troop leaders, whether line or staff, a hard-core elite, set apart from their fellow men. In every rifle company, artillery battery or cavalry troop, the basic fighting units, the first sergeant had three chevrons up and two rockers down framing his coveted diamond. In 1939, there were seven enlisted grades, from master sergeant to private. Since then, the system has been wrenched upside down and inside out on numerous separate occasions. Washboard-knuckled buck sergeants, the scourge of barracks and field, ruled platoons in despotic grandeur and corporals held sway over squads.

Tinkers, tinkerers and assorted wizards passing by drew pay for bizarre specialties but their sleeves were bare of stripes. Those were reserved for NCOs, the poor man's feudal barons.

Promotions were permanent and hard to come by. Rigorous examinations commonly sifted out social climbers, particularly among the top three grades (although skullduggery was fairly common). Dullards who failed to pass the test were afforded a full year to contemplate the error of their ways before they could try again. First sergeants normally were exempt from exams. Because of their hand-in-glove relationship with company commanders, they universally were elevated on the Great Man's say.

Military service was more than a profession in 1939; it was a way of life and togetherness was the theme.

It was largely monastic, within the narrow confines of the post. Intercourse with civilian communities was frequently limited to just that: the cyclical payday binge on the wrong side of the tracks, followed by a boisterous, company-sized raid on the nearest sporting house.

Except for a handful of hoary-headed NCOs, men in the ranks were single. First-term enlistment was categorically denied those unfortunates with wives, children up to age 21 or other family members of any kind. Wedded bliss was no bar to re-enlistment for first-three-graders, and benevolent commanders infrequently might bestow that perquisite on favored sergeants in grade 4, but all others were destined to be bachelors 'til Kingdom Come.

Once in, enlisted men were rooted in concrete. Transfers required almost a dispensation from the Pope, and for NCOs the cost was dear. Regulations were very clear: "The transfer of a noncommissioned officer from one organization to another," even across the company street, "carries with it reduction to the grade of private." Rare exceptions were made in the interest of service.

Since prospects of rebounding to greater glory were treacherous and fraught with unknown peril, fortune-hunters, misfits and malcontents thought twice before leaving the frying pan for the fire. Continuity and tradition thrived in this atmosphere with all the accompanying rights and privileges.

Like it or not, most noncoms were married to their men, for richer or for poorer, for better or for worse, in sickness and in health. They knew those men like the backs of their hands, their fortes and foibles, their families and friends. They were on tap around the clock, ministering to basic needs, maintaining good order and discipline, tutoring the awkward squad, cracking heads as required and generally keeping a sensitive thumb on the unit pulse—a full seven days a week. Any good corporal could spot a potential AWOL from 150 paces with the naked eye, and he could field strip a goldbrick without breaking stride.

With all this regimentation, there still was room for a surprising volume of flair and individuality not enjoyed today. Mess sergeants did their own marketing in that halcyon era before the advent of Army-wide master menus. The variation was astounding, delightful or dreary, depending on the taste buds of the chefs, who ran the range from steak-and-potato lovers to eccentrics who doted on chocolate-covered grasshoppers and monkey navels *flambeau*. Unavoidably, there were unimaginative clods who ladled out slum and beans six days a week, with cold cuts Sunday night, and connivers who served short rations and blew their savings on bathtub gin.

Enlisted men hardly ever saw an officer, unless the fat was in the fire. From the enlisted soldiers' point of view, wearers of stars and bars were around for just three things: to set policy and standards, to make command decisions and, in the broadest sense of the word, to supervise. Noncoms ran the show at troop level.

Most of the Army's ills could be traced to money—or rather, the lack of it. A U.S. public, ignorant of peacetime requirements for national defense, remained apathetic, almost inert, in the face of mounting crises abroad. Minuscule appropriations for military purposes were made grudgingly, even during the prosperous 1920s. After the stock market crashed, chronic government deficits discouraged anything beyond bare-bones maintenance of the modest military establishments so reluctantly tolerated. There simply wasn't enough cash around to entice high-caliber people consistently, or to mold the manpower on hand.

What men were on tap weren't always the best. A sizable residue of muddle-headed noncommissioned veterans had been treading water in the military manpower pool since the Great War. The Army had also policed up at least its fair share of street sweepings and military vegetables during the black days of the Depression when millions were unemployed and one out of every six men, women and children in the United States was riding relief rolls. Fugitives from bread lines and charity soup kitchens won their spurs along with the rest in those dog-eat-dog days when a loud mouth and a sneak left hook might rate just as high as a degree from MIT and more hoodlums were wearing chevrons in 1939 than the Army's leaders would care to admit.

The "Old Army" died almost unnoticed at 2:15 on a Tuesday afternoon and was laid to rest by a host of khaki-clad amateurs. On 27 August 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, by executive decree, federalized the National Guard; its lead increments were inducted on 16 September, the same day he signed the nation's first peace-time Selective Service Act. The Army was inundated with civilians in uniform. An era had come to an end.

The "Old Army" served its purpose well. With the advent of World War II, the pot boiled over like unattended tapioca.

Between 1939 and 1945, the Army inflated 40-fold, from 187,000 to more than eight million. The accession rate crested at 3 1/2 million men during 270 incredible days in 1942-43—more than 514,000

in one month, more than triple the "Old Army" total enlisted strength.

The "Old Army," of course, provided the cadre for this awesome force. Officers like Eisenhower and Mark W. Clark who were relatively obscure, shot from field-grade ranks to four or five stars. Pre-war noncoms took their places, with remarkable success considering the circumstances. No such feat had ever been undertaken before and none has been attempted since.

The modern volunteer Army was the first direct lineal descendant of the draftless "Old Army" (discounting a brief period in 1948). It has no resemblance to the prototype. ■

Collins is currently a Congressional Research Office staffer and author of numerous books. He wrote this article for Army, which appeared first in January 1972.

of squads” to “frequently requires lieutenants to drill squads”
Sergeants now primary trainers of soldier skills



it to be put in execution; causes them to learn the trumpet signals, and be able to recognize them at once when sounded; to secure uniformity, he also practices them in giving commands.

In the school of the soldier (called the School of the Squad in this work), the captain frequently requires the lieutenants to drill squads, as well as superintend several squads instructed by non-commissioned officers.

1893

Extract from “Annual Report of the Secretary of War”

The sergeant major as assistant to the adjutant

The duties of sergeant-major comprise the supervision of all the clerical work, post and regimental, the preparation of the numerous and intricate papers... the entering of all communications passing through the offices, the proof-reading from the regimental press, the care of the books, accounts... in fact all the complicated work, for which the adjutant is responsible to his colonel, passes through the sergeant major’s hands....

Duties entailed everything except training

1941

Extract from FM 21-100, Soldiers’ Handbook, July 23, 1941

First sergeant as Chief Clerk

51.b. The first sergeant corresponds to the executive or chief clerk, in a civilian office. He handles all the administrative details of the company and publishes the orders of the commander.

1942

Extract from AR 245-5, Companies—General Provisions

No comments dealing with training

3.b. *Noncommissioned officers*—Noncommissioned officers will be carefully instructed in their duties as such.

4. *Squad Leaders*—Squad leaders will be held responsible—

Goes on to list ten areas of responsibility dealing with soldier and equipment cleanliness and accountability.

1945

Extract from change 1 AR 245-5, Companies—General Provisions

First mention to use NCOs command and initiative
First mention of NCOs in planning

3.b. *Noncommissioned officers*.

(2)(f) The delegation to the noncommissioned officers of all authority that is rightfully theirs and the creation of increased opportunity for the noncommissioned officer to exercise command and initiative.

(2)(g) The consultation with appropriate noncommissioned officers in planning the implementation of directives.

1954

Extract from AR 615-15, Separation of Noncommissioned Officers From Specialists

NCO professionalism

First mention of NCOs’ recommendations and training

25. *Enhancement of noncommissioned officers*

...instill the desire in the noncommissioned officer to assume added responsibility and...attain the desired results of a competent noncommissioned officer corps, special attention will be given to the following points:

a. Careful selection of noncommissioned officers.

b. Training of noncommissioned officers in their duties and responsibilities.

c. Prompt removal of noncommissioned officers who fail to attain or maintain the acceptable standards of leadership.

26. *Authority of the noncommissioned officer*

...avoid usurping the authority of the noncommissioned officer as to do so will undermine the prestige upon which his effectiveness is dependent.

c. [Seek] recommendations of noncommissioned officers relative to troop welfare... assignment, reassignment, promotions, privileges, discipline, **training** and supply... to emphasize the responsibilities of the noncommissioned officer....

1967

Extract from AR 600-20, Army Command Policies and Procedures

No mention of training. Sergeant major a key staff member

Section IV. *Enlisted Aspects of Command*

25.b. Sergeant Major. This is the position title that designates the senior enlisted position on the staffs of various commanders. In keeping with the trust, confidence, responsibility, and authority bestowed upon this function, the sergeant major should be considered as a key staff member.

First sergeant as a company administrator... Training is an officer's responsibility

No mention of NCO training responsibility

*NCOs as trainers
NCOs can make recommendations on enlisted training*

No mention of NCO leadership

Separation of officer and NCO business and no tie-in to organization

Senior NCO link to training not addressed

Advisor to the commander on training

In 20 years, first sergeant goes from company administrator to principle trainer

Senior NCOs involved in planning training



25.c. *First Sergeant.* ... It is normal for company commanders to use the noncommissioned officer channels for the conduct of many routine activities, particularly in garrison.... He [first sergeant] conducts routine company administration and company operations as directed by the company commander... The functions of the first sergeant do not include responsibilities which cannot be delegated by the company commander or which properly belong to the executive officer or platoon leaders.

25.c. *Section, squad, and team leaders.* ...Platoon leaders hold their subordinate leaders responsible

(1) For personal appearance and cleanliness.

(2) That all Government property issued to members of their units is properly maintained and accounted for at all times and that discrepancies are reported promptly.

(3) That, while in a duty status, they be ready at all times to report the location and activity of all individuals of the unit...

(4) That the unit is prepared to function in its primary mission role.

25.h. *Miscellaneous NCO responsibilities, prerogatives and privileges:*

(2) Be employed as *training* instructors to the maximum degree practicable.

(3) Make recommendations relative to unit mission accomplishment and troop welfare. NCO recommendations have traditionally been of immeasurable assistance to the commanding officer on such matters as assignment, reassignment, promotion, privileges, discipline, *training*, unit funds, community affairs, and supply.

1980 Extract from AR 350-17, *Noncommissioned Officer Development Program*

5.i. *The Commanders of battalions and equivalent organizations—*

(1) Are responsible for developing NCOs which are responsive to the needs of their unit and the aspirations and development of their junior leaders.

(3) Insure that there is, throughout their units, a clear identification of those tasks that are noncommissioned officer business.

6.e. NCO communication linked at battalion levels and higher should be established. Their purpose is to consider, but not limited to, problems and recommendations related to improvements in the development of QOL (Quality of Life) of all NCOs and enlisted personnel. They also serve to provide recommendations to commanders on topics which affect enlisted personnel.

1988 Extract from AR 600-20, *Army Command Policies and Procedures*

3-2 *Noncommissioned Officer Support Channel*

3-2a. ...NCO support channel will assist the chain of command in accomplishing the following.

(3) *Training* of enlisted soldiers in their MOS as well as in the basic skills and attributes of a soldier.

(7) Teaching the soldiers the mission of the unit and developing individual training programs to support the mission.

(9) Administering and monitoring the NCO professional development program and other unit *training* programs.

3-2.b(2) *Command Sergeant Major.* This position title designates the senior NCO of the command at battalion or higher levels. He or she carries out policies and standards, and advises the commander on the performance, *training*, appearance, and conduct of enlisted personnel.

3-2.b(3) *First Sergeant.* The position of first sergeant designates the senior NCO at company level. The first sergeant's principal duty is the individual *training* of enlisted members of the unit.

3-2.b(5) *Section, squad and team leaders.* These direct leaders are the NCOs responsible at these echelons.

Extract from FM 25-100, *Training the Force*

1-9, The CSM and NCO leaders must select the specific individual tasks, which support each collective task, to be trained during the same period. NCOs have the primary role in *training* and developing individual soldier skills.

Officers at every level remain responsible for *training* to established standards dur-

NCOs responsible for conducting individual training



1990

ing both individual and collective training.

4-3, 4. NCOs are responsible for conducting individual *training* to standard and must be able to explain how individual *training* relates to collective mission essential tasks.

Extract from FM 25-100, *Battle Focused Training*

3-5, 6. The key is to train the trainer so he can train his soldiers. This requires the NCO to identify essential soldier and small-unit and team tasks (drills) that support the unit METL and then

- to assess strengths and weaknesses
- to formulate a plan to correct deficiencies and sustain strengths
- to execute the training to standard

4-2. *Roles in Executing Training...Senior NCOs ensure—*

- Prerequisite *training* is completed so that soldiers' time is not wasted.
- Leaders are trained and prepared to train their sections, squads, teams or crews.

They train the trainers.

Know their units' and soldiers' *training* needs and, based on that assessment, plan appropriate time to train to standard.

- Ensure training is conducted to standard.
- Before presenting training to the soldier, *trainers must prepare for the training.*

Senior NCOs responsible for training the trainer

1991 Extract from AR 350-17, *Noncommissioned Officer Development Program*

4.g. *Commanders of battalions, separate companies, and equivalent organizations will—*

- (1) Be responsible to develop and implement an effective NCODP.
- (2) Ensure the program supports the unit mission and enhances development of noncommissioned officers.

(3) Ensure that the program has stated objectives with measurable and reachable standards.

4.h. *Command sergeants major (CSMs) first sergeants, or senior NCOs of battalions, separate companies, or equivalent organizations will—*

- (2) Implement the commander's directives and guidance on the unit's NCODP.
- (3) Be responsible for content, pertinence, and implementation of the unit's NCODP.

5.b. As with all leader *training*, the NCODP is a command responsibility. The program reflects command priorities and expectations for leader development, jointly determined by commanders and their senior NCOs.

Senior NCOs responsible for training NCOs

1993 AR 350-41, *Training in Units*

2-32 *Battalion-level and company level commanders*

2-32.a. Assign primary responsibility for collective training to officers and primary responsibility for soldier *training* to NCOs. NCOs will also train most sections, squads, teams and crews.

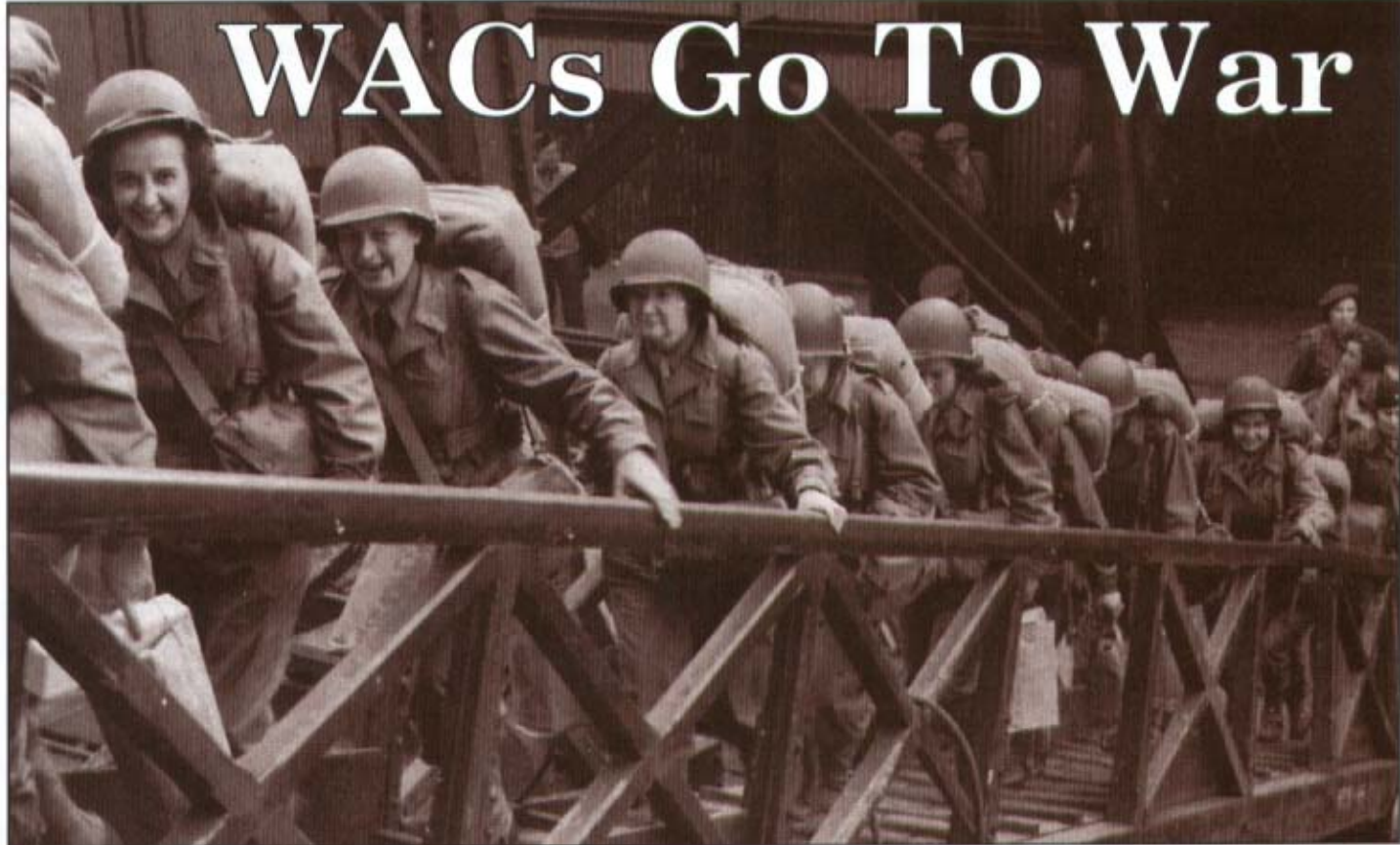
Primary responsibility for individual and small-unit training rests with the NCO



Our Army and the NCO Corps have come a long way since the initial guidance of not allowing NCOs to conduct individual training. Today we are responsible for individual training of soldiers through the collective training of sections, squads, teams and crews. The Army leadership now trusts us with what used to be considered "officers' business." It's up to the NCO Corps to uphold that trust and responsibility. Our soldiers' lives and our nation depend on it. ■

Rush was the 1st Army command sergeant major, Ft. Meade, MD, when he wrote this article.

WACs Go To War



By Heike Hasenauer

The idea of uniformed women wearing helmets, carrying weapons, crawling in the mud and barking commands didn't sit well with politicians and most military officials in 1941—until the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

Then, what seemed to be an idiotic image quickly became a plausible plan. The prospect of women filling critical support roles to free up more men for combat became extremely attractive to War Department planners, and Congress established the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) on May 14, 1942.

The Army's goal was to enlist 25,000 women, ages 21 to 45, for noncombat duty. In February 1945 it surpassed the goal, and Secretary of War Henry Stimson set a new target—150,000 WAACs. By the end of the war almost 139,000 had enlisted—just short of Stimson's goal.

Training began with the enrollment of 440 women at the newly created, six-week WAAC Officer Candidate School at Fort Des Moines, IA, in July 1942. Thereafter, 150 prospective officers entered OCS every two weeks.

Simultaneously, a four-week basic training program for some 125 enlisted women was conducted that included training in military skills like map reading, military customs and courtesy, drill and ceremony, and first aid, said retired SGM Grace Mueller, who underwent enlisted basic in October 1942.

As the first WAAC training center, Des Moines was special, said Mueller, who only a day before she left her home in Indiana told her parents she'd enlisted. She was among the first dozen Indiana women to do so.

"We were guinea pigs, of course," said Mueller, who had worked as a payroll clerk in a furniture factory. "But we were treated like celebrities. Reporters from the local Des Moines paper were always coming out to interview and photograph us." The Chamber of Commerce even printed up "Des Moines—Home of the WAAC" postcards.

Most WAACs didn't join for the money, Mueller said. Until Nov. 1, 1942, female basic trainees pocketed \$21 a month. Thereafter, the pay was \$50, same as the men's.

"Because we were an 'older' corps then—21 to 45—most of the women had a year or two of college or had worked several years after high school," she added.

Enlisted WAACs averaged 24 years of age and 60 percent were high school graduates compared to their officer candidate peers who were 40 percent college grads and had an average age of 30.

Mueller, who retired in 1973 after nearly 30 years' service, said "I never intended to make the Army a career. All of us were in for the duration of the war, plus six months.

"We never thought about being anybody important or making history, although we certainly felt what we did was important," she remembered.

From basic, Mueller had attended the four-week adminis-



Far Left: WACs board a troopship in England en route to France in 1944. A World War II-era WAC cleans her mess kit near Normandy.

tration school conducted in a downtown Des Moines hotel, and her first duty assignment landed her with the first WAAC company that served at Fort Sheridan, IL.

From there, she returned to Des Moines for OCS and served on the home front as an officer for the rest of the war. She got out in 1946, then re-enlisted in 1947. But, because there just wasn't a need for personnel officers after the war, she returned as an E-6, one notch below the highest enlisted grade at the time, because she had more than a 90-day break in service.

"The best job I ever had was as an instructor of basic trainees at Fort McClellan from 1963 to 1964," she recalled. "There was so much camaraderie among the women. They were all so eager to learn about the Army and to serve their country."

COL Elizabeth Branch, who had been among the first OCS candidates at Fort Des Moines, echoed those sentiments.

"WAACs were so proud of serving their country. *Esprit de corps* really characterized the WAAC," she said.

When President Roosevelt established the Women's Army Corps on July 1, 1943—granting women the same ranks as men by removing former titles of 1st officer, 2nd leader and auxiliaries, expanding the enlistment age from 20 to 29 and authorizing the same pay and benefits as those received by men—over 60,000 women had enlisted. By that time, additional training centers operated at Ft. Oglethorpe,

GA, Fort Devens, MA and Camp Ruston, LA.

But even with the dramatic move toward equal military rights, the WACs continued to be treated differently, Branch said. Because fraternization became a grave concern, only women continued to command WAC units and socializing between enlisted and officer was strictly forbidden. Marriage was actually discouraged in Europe where, when soldiers married, one spouse was quickly shipped elsewhere.

In the Southwest Pacific Area and China-Burma-India Theater, marriage was forbidden unless the woman was pregnant, and if she was, she was immediately discharged.

Additionally, in order to receive pay for dependents, a WAC had to prove that a child or family member was dependent upon her for support; male soldiers with dependents automatically received extra money.

"WACs required separate housing. They couldn't be assigned as cooks, waitresses or janitors or be associated with frivolous non-military duties," said retired COL Bettie Morden, who enlisted in the WAAC in 1942 and served throughout WWII.

As the Army changed through the years so did the WAC. Perhaps the greatest change came in October 1978, when the Army dissolved the WAC in order to fully integrate women throughout the Regular Army.

The move brought a whole new array of opportunities for women. Every career field and MOS (except combat arms) opened to them.

That change actually began earlier in 1972, when Congress anticipated the end of the draft and launched an intensive recruiting campaign to enlist more women for a truly all-volunteer Army.

WAC strength grew from 13,269 in June 1972 to nearly 53,000 in September 1978. In 1972 WACs became eligible to participate in ROTC; defensive weapons training for women began; and mandatory discharges for pregnancy ended. Then, in July 1976, the U.S. Military Academy opened its doors to women for the first time in history.

Today, women in the Army boast a proud heritage of faithful service. Alongside their male counterparts women helped shape history in Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf and Operations Other Than War (OOTW) missions such as those in Somalia and Haiti. Women numbered 26,000 in the Persian Gulf War and four died in combat.

In 1973, women in the Army (excluding medical officers) comprised 1.6 percent of the total force. Today they constitute about 12 percent of the Army's strength and their contributions to the defense of the nation have similarly increased. ■

Hasenauer wrote this article for the May 1992 issue of Soldiers. It was re-edited and reprinted with her permission. She is a photojournalist for the magazine.

"...you have a debt and a date. A debt to democracy, a date with destiny..."

Oveta Culp Hobby, first WAC director

When the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps began in 1942, there were no women NCOs. But, month by month, as women graduated from basic and advanced individual training, the leadership ability in some rose to the top and they were assigned to lead and train others.

Women became platoon sergeants, supply sergeants and first sergeants. In their duty sections, they supervised enlisted men and women and were praised for their organizational skills, their attention to duty and their loyalty and reliability. Within six months, women NCOs had replaced all the male NCOs at the WAAC training centers.

By the end of WWII, WAC NCOs worldwide deservedly earned promotions to the highest enlisted grades (E-1, -2 and -3 in those days). Those heroic WWII NCOs were in large part responsible for the Corps' achieving Regular Army status in 1948. Since then, women NCOs have served faithfully and diligently in MOS after MOS, through every war and national crisis in which our nation has been involved.



The Army soon realized its women soldiers were capable of becoming more than typists.

The Army added two NCO grades in 1959—E-8, master sergeant or first sergeant and E-9, sergeant major. Carolyn H. James was the first WAC promoted to master sergeant and in 1960 she was the first to be promoted to sergeant major. Later, in 1968, when the Army Chief of Staff created the position of command ser-

geant major to serve as enlisted assistant to commanders at battalion level and above, Yzetta L. Nelson, assigned to the WAC Training Battalion, Ft. McClellan, was the first WAC sergeant major to be appointed to hold that position and wear the CSM rank [see page 45].

In 1972, WACs began participating in NCOES that provided progressive training at service schools and NCO academies at all skill levels. Both DA and major commanders scheduled enlisted soldiers for resident, extension and OJT courses from primary technical courses to the Sergeants Major Course. The first WACs to graduate from USASMA at Ft. Bliss, TX, were MSG Betty J. Benson (Class 1); MSGs Helen I. Johnston (Class 3) and Dorothy J. Rechel (Class 3). All three later became command sergeants major. ■

[Editor's Note: For a more in-depth study of the WAAC and WAC read COL (Ret.) Betty J. Morden's book The Women's Army Corps, 1945-1978, CMH Pub 30-14, 1989.]

Career management

Rise of a Pro

By Dr. Robert Bouilly

In modern mythology we are tempted to look back at the old "Brown Shoe" Army with admiration and perhaps longing. The Army wore brown shoes until 1958 but most people associate the term with the interwar Army of about 1920 to 1940. It was small and poor. Yet it possessed a long-term cadre of officers and NCOs who worked well together. The Army was efficient and everyone knew his role. To use the words of a much later Army chief of staff, GEN Carl E. Vuono, the officers 'commanded' and the NCOs 'ran' the Army.

The trouble with this mythology was that the small interwar Army was not the Army which fought World War II. Sure, those officers and NCOs were still there. It's just that they were swallowed up by the massive influx of civilians-turned-soldiers during the war. There weren't enough old-time NCOs to go around.

Hastily devised training programs produced more NCOs primarily trained to fight rather than lead soldiers in garrison duty. The small number of divisions fielded in World War II (89) meant there was little chance for divisions to leave the fighting for extended periods to train. The attrition of infantry soldiers was particularly high. A common evaluation of the Army by the end of the war was that the NCO Corps was not particularly good.

Rapid demobilization after the war only made the situation worse. A point system determined who could go home first. In effect, more experienced soldiers and NCOs tended to have the highest number of points and left quickly. Occupation units in Europe quickly found themselves stripped of the leadership expertise which had carried them through the war. Their solution was to establish training schools for both NCOs and officers.

The war had hardly ended, for example, before the 88th Inf Div established perhaps the first NCO academy on Lido Island in Venice, Italy, late in 1945. The Constabulary Brigade in Germany did much the same with its academy, first at Sondhofen in 1947 and then at Munich in 1949. These schools sprang from a deeply ingrained belief in American society that education and training represented progress.

These schools were also the answer to an immediate problem. European units could not wait years for the maturing of junior leaders through on-the-job training as had been the case in the interwar Brown Shoe army. They had to have competent leaders quickly. The Army came to believe that leadership could be taught to NCOs much as it had been taught to officers for many years.

The NCO academy movement grew over time. By 1959, about 18,000 NCOs were graduating each year from 17 academies in the states besides those being trained in the 7th

and NCOES foretell...

Professional NCO Corps

Army in Europe and a scattering of other places. Curricula varied. The length of training varied also. In time the Army attempted to standardize the training through the promulgation of regulations in 1957 and again in 1964.

The Air Force paid the Army the highest form of compliment by copying elements of its academy system as GEN Curtis LeMay introduced NCO academy training in the mid-1950s to the Air Force.

Despite the lack of uniformity in the academies, leadership training predominated. Discipline was a mainstay. Most NCO academy graduates have vivid memories of their training—the student battalions, the rigid inspections which prompted such practices as gluing school supplies to boards at the bottom of desk drawers so everything would be in good order. Students learned to inspect! They learned leadership in a garrison setting. The academies helped professionalize the NCO Corps by developing and refining both NCO leadership skills and standards.

Another factor in the professionalization of the NCO Corps was career management. During World War II, the Army adopted a system of classifying military jobs. It adopted the military occupational specialty (MOS) system, which codified what skills were needed to do a particular job. MOS classification helped define the necessary skills needed in a job and helped acquire those skills.

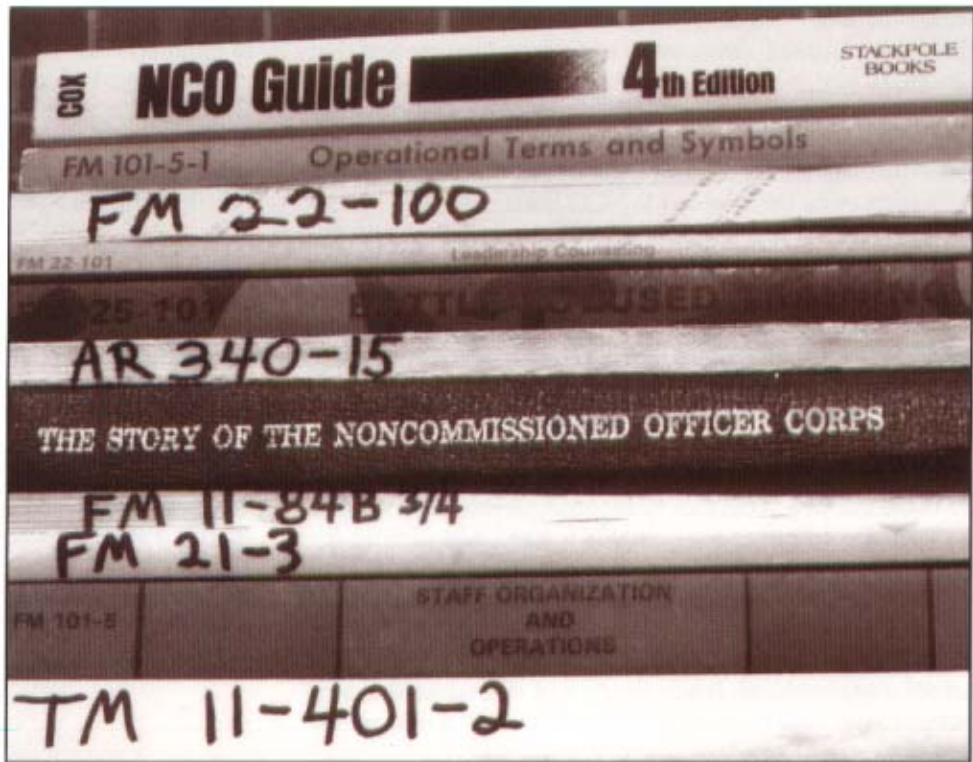
But, the Army needed more than a classification system to establish careers for NCOs. It needed to provide mobility for soldiers. NCOs needed upward mobility (in rank) while they continued to practice their MOS specialty. They also needed, like officers, to move from unit to unit while retaining their rank. NCOs needed to work in career fields. Eventually, the post-WWII Army provided both.

Progress toward creation of career fields was hesitant. In 1948, the Army announced the creation of a career management system. By 1949, tests were given in a limited number of MOSes to determine qualified NCOs for promotion. Then came the Korean War. It overwhelmed the career management system and killed it. After the war the Army didn't pick up where it had left off. Enlisted soldier career management was dead and would remain so until after the

Vietnam War. Mobility for NCOs from unit to unit while retaining their rank began in small measure before WWII. Forward positioning of Army elements in the Philippines over extended periods began at the turn of the century. Manning these units raised the issue. Could the Army expect to send units to a country outside the continental United States for indefinite periods—perhaps 20 or more years at a time—a career or more? If the Army were to maintain such long-term foreign presence, would it rotate units or individuals? If it rotated individuals such as NCOs whose rank depended on their staying with the unit, was it fair to rotate these soldiers? If unfair, would soldiers vote with their feet and leave the Army? Ultimately, the Army sought to rotate individuals but made provision for them to retain their rank as they moved from the Philippines to stateside units.

World War II sent many more soldiers overseas—but only for a matter of a few years. It was a temporary situation, an emergency. But the Cold War changed all that. By 1949, it was quite evident that occupation forces in Europe could not go home any time soon. The Philippine experience was being repeated on a massive scale.

The Army, like it or not, was becoming forward-based. Massive numbers of officers and enlisted would have to be rotated through units in Europe and eventually Korea. This could only be accommodated by allowing NCOs to carry their rank with them as they rotated in and out of the forward units.



The Vietnam War presented some of the same problems that appeared in WWII. Massive U.S. involvement in Vietnam began in late 1965 and continued into 1970. Both wars took a heavy toll on the officer and NCO Corps. Both wars tended to exhaust the leadership pool provided by the pre-war army. New leadership had to be trained and put into the field quickly. In Vietnam the 12-month rotation policy, combined with the 25-month stabilization tour quickly went through the pool of NCOs available for rotation to Vietnam.

The Army needed to be find a way to develop small-unit combat leaders within the two-year tour of duty provided by the draft law at that time. The Continental Army Command (CONARC) provided a solution as it developed the Skill Development Base (SDB) Program in 1967. The SDB Program sought to enhance the skills of specialists and NCOs in about 75 MOSs. In practice, most of the program consisted of the Noncommissioned Officer Candidate Course (NCOCC).

The NCOCC graduates were better known by the slightly derogatory moniker as "Shake and Bake" NCOs. These soldiers went directly from Advanced Infantry Training (AIT) to combat leader training in service schools at Forts Benning, Bliss, Knox and Sill. Instruction started in the classroom and continued with field training. Most students also got some on-the-job training in TOE units. All were trained within a year. They received an NCO commission as an E-5 or E-6; went to Vietnam and had a year left in their military obligation to serve as small-unit leaders.

Over four-and-a-half years the NCOCC Program produced about 33,000 NCOs. They did well in their limited role. Like the WWII NCO, they needed additional training in garrison duty leadership when they returned.

The Army came out of the Vietnam conflict somewhat the worse for wear. Winning would have helped, but the U.S. didn't win. Instead, there was a widespread perception that the NCO Corps was especially in need of reconstruction. Again, as had happened in WWII, the clear distinction in duties between officers and NCOs had become blurred in practice. Too many junior officers tended to both 'command' and 'run' their units. Deficiencies in NCO leadership skills had allowed officers to take over many NCO prerogatives and duties. The ideal represented by the myth of the "Brown Shoe" Army no longer represented practice.

A number of senior officers in the late 1960s and early 1970s had been impressed by NCOs who were products of the NCO academies and the Shake and Bake Program. Army Chief of Staff GEN William Westmoreland, his special assistant, GEN (ret.) Bruce C. Clarke and the commanding general of CONARC, Ralph E. Haines, Jr., all sought to continue these training programs to reconstruct the NCO Corps.

The idea of education for NCOs had been around for years—at least since 1955. As early as 1963 the Department of the Army first considered a proposal for establishing a senior NCO "college." This proposal came from the Ft. Dix NCO Council and had the backing of nearly all of the service school commandants. It was the first of several similar proposals to die over the next few years for want of money and qualified instructors.

Gradually, the proposals broadened to include several levels of NCO education and training. Progress toward establishing such a system came in early 1971 when Westmoreland, as Army Chief of Staff, gave CONARC the go-ahead to establish a system of basic and advanced NCO education. He withheld approval for a senior level of instruction but promised to reconsider its approval at a later date.

Westmoreland probably deferred a decision on the senior school because he knew the commanding general of CONARC at the time, James K. Woolnough, was not in favor of education for "super" NCO grades. Woolnough believed that high-grade NCOs, like general officers, needed no further schooling. His successor was GEN Ralph E. Haines, Jr., who was a champion of the NCOCC, and he saw to it that a senior NCO academy at Ft. Bliss, TX, was established on his watch. At much the same time, Westmoreland heeded the advice of GEN Bruce C. Clarke and directed the revival of the NCO academy system, which had dwindled to almost nothing during the war in Vietnam.

The Army called the new, three-tiered educational structure the Noncommissioned Officer Educational System (NCOES). The first formal classes started in May 1971, and early basic courses were very similar to the shake-and-bake course they supplanted. The system is still with us today. At its peak in 1992, about 90,000 students graduated. It has been credited widely with providing the glue for victory in Desert Shield/Desert Storm.

There's a larger aspect to professionalization of the NCO Corps as well. NCOES is just one part of it. The larger part is the Enlisted Personnel Management System (EPMS), which also rose out of the post-Vietnam reconstruction effort. A truly professional corps requires career management. Officers have had it for many years. Since they were relatively few in number, their careers could be centrally managed.

The advent of computers made it come about for NCOs. Even with computers, assignment to schools at the lower levels of NCOES was only possible in the mid-1980s. It's no accident that the creation of an Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM) is a relatively recent phenomenon.

So here we are in 1995. Career management, along with progressive education and training, have professionalized the NCO Corps. Increasingly, the two have been linked together. One must attend and graduate from the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (ANCOC). In time, it seems likely that promotion for virtually all grades will be tied to attendance and graduation from some level of NCOES. Professionalism is upon us. ■

Bouilly is the historian for USASMA, Ft. Bliss, TX.



By Dr. John Wands Sacca

Although a soldier's cash pay was historically low, practically everyone in the Army, most of whom were single, was provided in-kind benefits of free food, uniforms and accommodations—the proverbial three hots and a cot.

The U.S. Army's present system of basic pay grades and allowances, tax advantages, special pay and fringe benefits is a legacy of the small, relatively unskilled cadre-type force that characterized the Army before World War II.

In the 1800s, the Army pay came only every two or three months. Payday was known as the day the eagle flew. During at least one period in the mid-1870s, soldiers didn't get paid at all because Congress failed to pass any appropriations legislation. When Congress finally passed an appropriations bill in November 1877, the Army had to cut special orders for paymasters to make torturous treks across the Western states to pay troops. There were fewer paymasters than posts, so each had to visit as many as five forts in succession before every-

one got paid. Cold weather slowed several paymasters as they struggled to reach remote Army posts.

Later, as the country industrialized, senior NCOs could earn more than triple their military pay as superintendents and foremen in private industry. Post NCOs—such as hospital stewards, ordnance, quartermaster and commissary sergeants—could more than double their Army pay. A line corporal might quadruple his pay. Still, the prospect of a retirement pension after 30 years kept many men in uniform.

Growth in the size, composition and technology of the Army from World War II through the Cold War led to pay increases comparable with federal civilian pay. Fringe benefits, the principle incentives to NCOs, increased dramatically.

With the modern, all-volunteer force in the early 1970s, equalization of military and civilian pay became the goal. Today, the Army competes with the civilian sector in the labor market. ■

Sacca, who served in Vietnam and did a five-year stint as a first sergeant, teaches world history at Albany High School, NY.

Some military pay milestones

1790: The Army re-organized with the following monthly pay for enlisted soldiers: sergeants major and quartermaster sergeants, \$7; sergeants and musicians, \$6; corporals, \$5; and privates, \$3.

1833: The position of company first sergeant received special recognition with pay of \$15 per month.

1851: The Soldiers Home was established in Washington, DC and financed through fines, stoppages, forfeitures and a 12-1/2-cent deduction from monthly pay.

1854: Introduction of longevity bonuses or fogies—periodic increases in basic pay based on years served—starting with the first year of re-enlistment.

1861: Pay for NCOs during the Civil War increased, but purchasing power dropped due the loss in value of the currency paid to them.

1866: Extra duty pay was offered to soldiers detailed for more than 10 consecutive days in the quartermaster and commissary departments.

1872: A savings deposit system with the paymaster was established at 4 percent interest.

The pay of hospital stewards (\$45) exceeded that of a line NCO for the first time. The pay of privates decreased from \$16 to \$13. A first sergeant's monthly pay of \$22 was not quite 19 percent of a lieutenant's \$116.67.

1885: A pension at three-quarters pay was finally offered to 30-year veterans.

1896: The paymaster general reported that for the first time in its existence Army personnel had been paid monthly throughout the year.

1907: Soldiers received a pay raise for the first time in nearly two decades.

1922: Master sergeants and first sergeants were given six and four times, respectively, the base pay of privates. No further pay increases were given until 1942.

1941–1944: Overseas pay (20 percent of base pay) and combat pay (not to exceed \$50), to include flying, gliding and parachuting, was first given.

1945: Voluntary retirement was permitted after 20 years of service.

1957: Military personnel were fully covered under the social security system.

1958: Proficiency pay was reintroduced for enlisted personnel designated as possessing special proficiency in a military skill. Super grades E-8 and E-9 were created.

1971: Legislation increased pay for NCOs and enlisted soldiers in the wake of a move from the draft to an all-volunteer force.

Challenge: "Live the Creed!"

for the board because they're too busy taking care of soldiers are the very types of leaders the club boards should be selecting.

There is a popular undercurrent running among some soldiers that suggests boards focus only on those who serve in combat arms units, that being assigned in the support career field is somehow a disadvantage. This is NOT the acceptable standard and definitely not the intent. The SAMC and SMC boards are tools for commanders to identify NCOs who do more than just read the Creed of the NCO—they live and breathe the words all day, every day.

Club boards should not be run the same way as NCO of the Quarter boards because they're not the same. The SAMC and SMC boards should get right to the heart and soul of the NCO, to those characteristics of leading by exam-

ple. The questions asked should focus on how NCOs train soldiers with available resources, how NCOs support the chain of command and how NCOs instill discipline in their soldiers.

It's easy to identify a Sergeant Audie Murphy or Sergeant Morales NCO, even in a room filled with NCOs. You won't spot it in the medals, badges or nameplates. You can only see it through the pride, bearing and character each individual displays as he or she takes the words of the NCO Creed to heart. ■

Gayton is command sergeant major of Forces Command (FORSCOM), Fort McPherson, GA, and a member of the SAMC. Wetzig is operations sergeant, Womack Army Medical Center, Ft. Bragg, NC, and a member of the SAMC and SMC.

Murphy was to see and experience battle as few have, first in Sicily, then Italy, France and Germany. There was no thrill of adventure, no dreams of glory, only harrowing memories of friends who died in battle—memories that would haunt him for the rest of his life.

"The Sicilian campaign has taken the vinegar out of my spirit. I have seen war as it actually is, and I do not like it," he says in his book, *To Hell and Back*. In Sicily he kills his first enemy soldier.

In France with the Allied advance, he says: "The Germans react strangely to the situation. In one instance twenty thousand of them surrender to a single American platoon. Yet often we encounter handfuls of men who fight like wildcats to slow our offensive."

At one house-to-house search for snipers, he finds himself face-to-face with "...a terrible looking creature with a Tommy gun. His face is black; his eyes are red and glaring. I give him a burst and see the flash of his own gun, which is followed by the sound of shattering glass."

Murphy has fired at himself in a mirror. His buddy remarks as he doubles with laughter: "That's the first time I ever saw a Texan beat himself to the draw."

He refused a commission a number of times because it meant having to leave his unit and because he felt his limited formal education would hamper his ability to lead his unit. He

accepted a commission only after he received a waiver that allowed him to stay with his company, along with a promise of administrative help.

His battlefield exploits are legendary. In a little less than two years of service in the Army, he has killed, wounded or captured 240 enemy soldiers. His medals and citations number 33, including the Distinguished Service Cross, two Silver Stars, the Legion of Merit, three Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars. Fifty years ago, on June 2, 1945, he was awarded the military's highest award, the Medal of Honor.

In his own mind he is not a hero, for he says, "I do not believe in heroics. The great man of the war to me was the little fellow who did what was asked of him and paid whatever price that action cost." And Murphy not only did what was asked of him, he never asked any of his soldiers to do anything he wasn't willing to do.

When looking beyond the medals, one sees an NCO and officer who always put his soldiers first and who always led by example. In that respect, he stands taller than life in the minds and hearts of those who served with him, those who knew his story, and all those soldiers who aspire to

be all they can be. ■

Collins is managing editor of The NCO Journal.



By L. R. Arms

TOP

Throughout American history, military leaders have viewed the first sergeant as the key to the development of a good company. The order and discipline of the troops, their care and well-being, have always been the focal point of the first sergeant's job.

During the American Revolution in 1779, Inspector General Frederick Von Steuben set forth the duties of the first sergeant in his *Regulations for the Order and Discipline of Troops of the United States*. Von Steuben instructed all first sergeants to "...be intimately acquainted with the character of every soldier of the company" and to "impress upon their minds the indispensable necessity of the strictest obedience....."

He further instructed first sergeants to maintain a company book. The company book contained the "name and description of every non-commissioned officer and soldier; his trade and occupation, the place of his birth and usual residence; where, when and for what term he was inlisted (sic); the bounty paid him, the arms, ammunition, accoutrements, clothing and necessaries delivered him, with their marks and numbers, and the times when delivered; also copies of returns, furloughs, discharges, and every casualty that happens in the company." The company book was the precursor of our modern records system.

Von Steuben viewed the first sergeant's duty in a company of soldiers as similar to the role of the adjutant at the regimental level.

The first sergeant was the senior NCO at the company level. The company commander chose the first sergeant and could dismiss him at will.

In tactical formations, the first sergeant stood directly behind the company commander. This held true for the better part of a century while companies fought in lines.

There are few clues as to changes in the duties of first sergeants after the Revolution. The 1830 *Abstract of Infantry Tactics*, for example, stated little about what the first sergeant should do. It did point out that "when promotions take place among the noncommissioned officers, the first sergeant will be required to instruct the new sergeants and corporals."

During the late 1800s and early 1900s the number of NCO ranks grew as technical innovations led to a proliferation of NCO ranks at the regimental level. The first sergeant retained his position, just above the sergeant, but a great number of NCO ranks were placed above him. This diminished the prestige of the first sergeant. Still, the first sergeant remained the senior NCO of a company.

Moss' *Noncommissioned Officer's Manual* of 1909, reflected the beginning of a revival in prestige for first sergeants. Moss devoted an entire chapter to the first sergeant's duties, listing records, reports, files and books to be kept—14 in all. The chapter begins with the statement: "It has been said that the Captain is the proprietor of the company and the First Sergeant is the foreman."

Moss' snapshot of a first sergeant's day included: "Taking reveille roll call; entering the names of sick on the Sick Re-

port, and sending the report and the sick to the hospital by a noncommissioned officer (generally the Noncommissioned Officer in Charge of Quarters); making out the morning report and the passes, getting the Company Commander to sign them and then taking them to post headquarters; forming and inspecting the guard detail and then marching it to guard mount; repairing to post headquarters at First Sergeants' Call to receive the Morning Report, the guard and fatigue details for the next day and such orders and communications as there may be for the Company Commander; making out details for the next day and making the proper entries in the Duty Roster; publishing to the company at retreat the guard and fatigue details for the following day and posting same on the company bulletin board; forming the company and calling the roll for all drills, ceremonies and other formations; exercising supervision over the official correspondence of the company, and preparing for the signature of the Company Commander all the reports and returns that are to be rendered the next day, and the discharges and final statements of men to be discharged the following day." This busy day was average for a first sergeant.

In 1920, after the First World War, NCO ranks underwent a dramatic restructuring. The Army discontinued all ranks indicating position, except that of the first sergeant. It introduced the rank of staff sergeant as an intermediate rank between the sergeant and the first sergeant. This restructuring increased the prestige of the first sergeant and placed him near the top of all NCO ranks. Now, the first sergeant equaled a technical sergeant in rank. Only the master sergeant outranked him.

On 16 June 1942, the Pay Readjustment Act established a new enlisted grade system, making the first sergeant equal to the master sergeant. The first sergeant and master sergeant shared honors as the senior NCOs of their day. Company commanders still appointed and dismissed first sergeants, but first sergeants now equaled a battalion or regimental sergeant major in rank. In addition, the greater number of NCOs in the company also added to the first sergeant's prestige. The new regulations stated that the first sergeant was to be chosen from first line sergeants, not the supply, mess, or motor sergeants. The regulations made it clear that the first sergeant would be chosen for his ability to lead men.

This emphasis on leadership in subsequent regulations continued in Army Regulation 600-201, dated 20 June 1956, which established the NCO as an enlisted commander of troops. It set principles and criteria for the identification, development and recognition of the prerogatives and privileges to be accorded NCOs. A soldier's promotion was now recognized Army-wide, not just in his regiment. The custom that the "stripes stayed with the unit" passed into oblivion. For the first time, the company commander lost his ability to appoint and dismiss first sergeants on his or her own initiative.

The 1950s NCO handbook described the first sergeant's role as the maintainer of continuity. The first sergeant was expected to remain with the unit while officers came and went with regularity. He was also the company's "First Soldier" and one of the men.

A decade later on the eve of Vietnam, the NCO guidebook stated that the first sergeant "issues his orders through the platoon sergeants and others in the chain of command. He does not deal directly with the men in platoons except in emergencies." This was a change for first sergeants.

There were several reasons for distancing the first sergeant from his men. While the basic nature of the first sergeant's duties changed little with time, the structure of the company and the requirements to administer the company grew. The first sergeant became further removed from his men by the introduction of the new ranks of sergeant first class and staff sergeant. Until the late 1950s the first sergeant trained new corporals and sergeants. With the creation of the new staff sergeant and sergeant first class ranks, NCOs holding these new ranks could conduct the training.

The first sergeant no longer had the time to train junior NCOs. There were so many more of them than there used to be. From 1812 to 1939, the NCO Corps never comprised more than 23 percent of enlisted men. From 1939 to 1966, the percentage of NCOs grew until it was nearly 78 percent,

greatly increasing the number of NCOs in a company.

Seeing the need to formalize instruction for first sergeants, the Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) opened the U.S. Army First Sergeant Course at the Sergeants Major Academy in 1981. In 1983, a second First Sergeant Course opened in Europe, though it eventually closed in 1989 as part of the drawdown. The First Sergeant Course is designed to train sergeants first class and master sergeants in the duties of the first sergeant position. The course of instruction brought a heightened degree of professionalism to first sergeant duties not previously available.

The first sergeant position, although constant in nature, has grown consistently in prestige since the days of Von Steuben.

Always, the first sergeant has been the key to a good company. Von Steuben expressed that importance when he instructed the company first sergeant to "consider the importance of his office; that the discipline of the company, the conduct of the men, their exactness in obeying orders, and the regularity of their manners, will in great measure depend on his vigilance." ■

Arms is the curator of the Museum of the Noncommissioned Officer, Ft. Bliss, TX.

◆ The Diamond ◆

By Dr. Robert Bouilly

How do you tell who's a first sergeant? Easy. Look for the soldier with a chevron that has a hollow diamond in the center. These days the hollow yellow diamond is surmounted by three stripes above and three rockers below. Its pretty much the same in the Marine Corps except that the diamond is a solid olive drab on a red background.

Where did the diamond come from? Tough question. The 1847 Army uniform regulation decreed for the first time that first sergeants would be identified through the wearing of a hollow diamond along with rank chevrons. Ever since, the hollow diamond has been the mark of the Army first sergeant. In times past the diamond has been different colors depending on the branch of the wearer. Sometimes the diamond has been big, sometimes rather small, but always hollow. The only exception has come with the adoption of subdued pin-ons beginning in 1981. These metal insignia are so small that the diamond is solid and, of course, black as is the whole pin-on.

We don't know why the Army uniform designers chose the hollow diamond in 1847. No one sat down and wrote out a memo saying 'we chose the hollow diamond because....' We can only guess now and your guess will be as good as the next person's.

We do know that American uniform designers tended to copy current European military fashion in the first half of the 19th century—particularly the English. By the time of the

Napoleonic Wars (1800-1815) some British units had taken to showing rank designation through the use of chevrons.

This still doesn't explain the diamond. Perhaps the diamond came from the waistcoat of previous uniforms. In the Revolutionary War the long coats had a tieback system near the knee which allowed the wearer to pull back the front of the coat and fasten it to the back so marching would be easier. General Washington decreed that the reinforcements for this hook and eye system would be a red heart. (They really did pay this kind of attention to each little detail.) The British uniform was similar, and some diamond-shaped reinforcements are known.

Anyway, styles changed and the long coat of the Army uniform became more abbreviated so that there was no real need for a tie-back system for marching. Still, the uniform retained a stylized representation of the tieback on what would be called today the tail of the coat. The patch now appeared to pull up the bottom of the tail. Captain John Wool's 1813 uniform has survived and it has a diamond patch on each tail.

Styles changed again and the Army uniform did away with tails altogether in 1833. There were no diamonds anywhere on the uniform. However, in 1847 the designers brought back the diamond as the device indicating the first sergeant. Why? We don't know. Why a hollow diamond? Again we don't know. Perhaps the uniform designers were nostalgic about the diamond from the uniforms they had worn in their younger days. Whatever the reason, the hollow diamond has been around a long time now and has served the NCO Corps well. Chances are that it will remain for some time to come. ■

Bouilly is the historian for USASMA, Ft. Bliss, TX.

SMA's Role Evolves, Grows

By SSG David Abrams

On July 11, 1966, Noncommissioned officers finally got an official voice among the Army's senior leadership in Washington, DC. When SGM William O. Wooldridge was sworn in as the Army's first sergeant major, he was stepping into a role which would give enlisted soldiers a direct pipeline of communication to the Army chief of staff's office for the first time.

Unofficially, the SMA's role has been to be the voice of the enlisted soldier; on paper (General Orders Number 29), his job is to serve as the senior enlisted assistant and advisor to the chief of staff. At the time, the tenure of the office was set at two years (later, it would change to three years).

The SMA was originally part of the CSA's personal staff, not the Army staff. In his instructions to Wooldridge, GEN Harold K. Johnson said, "You will report directly to me and there will be no one between your desk and mine. When you need to see me, you will use the private entrance to my office. The only other person who uses that entrance is the Secretary of the Army."

That hip-pocket relationship would later change during the second SMA's term when the office was placed directly under the supervision of the secretary of the general staff. Though some members of the staff never wholeheartedly approved the idea of an NCO near the top of the Pentagon pyramid, the Office of the CSA continued to support the position, which continued to give increased status and prestige to NCOs around the world.

In a letter to the 1st Infantry Division, Johnson wrote, "The newly designated position of SMA has no precedent in the Army. It marks a new high in recognizing the importance of our NCOs."

The Army was not the first of the services to create a top enlisted position. The Marine Corps had had its sergeant major for nine years before Wooldridge assumed his Pentagon desk. The Navy and Air Force followed with their senior enlisted men within one year after the Army.

To select the first SMA, Johnson solicited nominations from each of the Army's major commands, describing the position and asking commanders to send him the names of who they considered the best qualified command sergeant major under their command. Of all the names that crossed Johnson's desk, only one was then on duty in Vietnam, a 25-year Army veteran named William O. Wooldridge, serving in the jungles with the 1st ID.

Soon after taking office, Wooldridge was called into Johnson's office, where he received a set of instructions which said, in part, the SMA would advise the CSA on all matters pertaining primarily to enlisted personnel: including, but not limited to, morale, welfare, training, clothing, insignia, equipment, pay and allowances, customs and courtesies of service,

enlistment and reenlistment, discipline and promotion policies.

Starting with Wooldridge, each of the SMAs accompanied the CSA on official command visits, as well as traveling thousands of miles on their own to meet with everyone from privates to command sergeants major, giving ear to the voice of the NCO at the lowest level possible. In his first year, Wooldridge logged more than 142,000 miles, visiting 19 installations and making three separate trips to Vietnam. His office averaged 300 letters, 50 visitors and 250 phone calls per month.

A typical day may have included an appearance before the House Armed Services Committee, an office ceremony, a local trip to address an organization or troop unit and by the end of the day be en route to Vietnam or Europe, Wooldridge later reflected.

Each of the NCOs approaching the Army's top NCO position have done so with a mixture of optimism and enthusiasm.

"Now I would have the opportunity to do more for the soldiers than I had ever been able to do before," said George Dunaway, the second SMA, soon after arriving in Washington, D.C., from the 101st Airborne Division in Vietnam. "Now I would be in a position to change some of the things I had disliked and had heard so many complaints about. This was an honor and I vowed not to let the soldiers down."

During Dunaway's term, the SMA selection process changed to a screening board which reviewed nominations from the MACOMs. Final selection was based on a clean record—no letters of reprimand, Article 15s or summary courts-martial—and a personal interview with the CSA.

"Over the years, the prestige of the SMA has grown in the eyes of enlisted soldiers. After being selected as SMA, I returned to Vietnam to complete my tour prior to taking office," said Silas L. Copeland, the third SMA. "As I visited with troops throughout Vietnam, I became increasingly aware of the importance, the admiration and trust that troops especially there in the field, placed on the individual occupying the position of SMA. To me, this was gratifying, and it also energized me to represent them more effectively."

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the job has been to have direct access to top level Pentagon officials. William Bainbridge, the fifth SMA, recalled he often used the open-door policy. "While I was SMA, I always spoke my piece, and I think that they (the chiefs of staff with whom he served) not only respected me for that, they expected me to speak up. If I hadn't, I wouldn't have been doing my job as their chief adviser on enlisted affairs and I'd have been letting the troops down.

"I believed in visiting troop units all over the globe," Bainbridge continued, "particularly small units in remote locations, to let them know somebody back at the Pentagon cared about them."

While Bainbridge was in office, the status of the office once again changed. As Ernest F. Fisher Jr. notes in his NCO history, *Guardians of the Republic*, "The SMA, no longer under the supervision of the SGS, became a full-fledged member of the CSA's staff... This made it certain that any action or development that impacted on enlisted personnel from a policy standpoint would be routinely coordinated with the SMA. His opinion is now considered essential before an action is sent on to the CSA...."

Over the years, the SMAs have directly influenced decisions on a number of enlisted issues. A partial list includes: creating and hosting the first Command Sergeants Major Conference in Washington, D.C., in 1966; making a relatively bump-free transition to an all-volunteer force in the early 1970s; enforcing draft registration; establishing the first

sergeant and sergeants major courses at Ft. Bliss, TX; linking NCO school attendance to promotion; and fine-tuning the former Skills Qualification Test as an evaluation tool.

Though SMAs have had to deal with the big picture to get enlisted issues resolved, none of them ever forgot the reason they were in Washington, D.C., in the first place: looking out for the individual NCO. In an interview with *Soldiers* soon after he became the fourth SMA, Leon Van Autreve said, "As for the nuts and bolts operation, we're doing the same thing as NCOs that we've done most of our lives—dealing with people. The only difference is there are so many more people involved." ■

Abrams is senior journalist for The NCO Journal.

CSMs — They must be much more than figureheads...

From the day in 1967 when the rank of command sergeant major was established to provide an additional career goal for the Army's most experienced service Non-commissioned officers, the search was on for top sergeants who stood head and shoulders above their peers.

In a letter to major command commanders, Army Chief of Staff GEN Harold K. Johnson wrote:

"If we are to have a strong CSM chain, individuals selected for these key positions must be much more than mere figureheads and administrative specialists. They must be vigorous, broadly experienced and dedicated professionals who are more at home in the field with troops than at a desk in a major headquarters. They should be people who seek opportunities to get out among the troop units and who can see the problems that exist at the grass roots. Their selflessness, personal integrity and moral courage must be unassailable."

Fortunately, there were plenty of good candidates. A Department of the Army level selection board screened hundreds of names submitted by MACOM commanders in three different iterations during 1967 and 1968.

One of the first CSMs to be selected was SGM Theodore Dobol, a World War II veteran of the 1st Infantry Division.

Within its first year of creation, a new insignia was approved for the rank—a chevron with a wreath surrounding the sergeant major star.

While the NCO Corps continued to redefine itself in the

years following the Vietnam conflict, the CSM program expanded to include Reserve Component sergeants major in 1974.

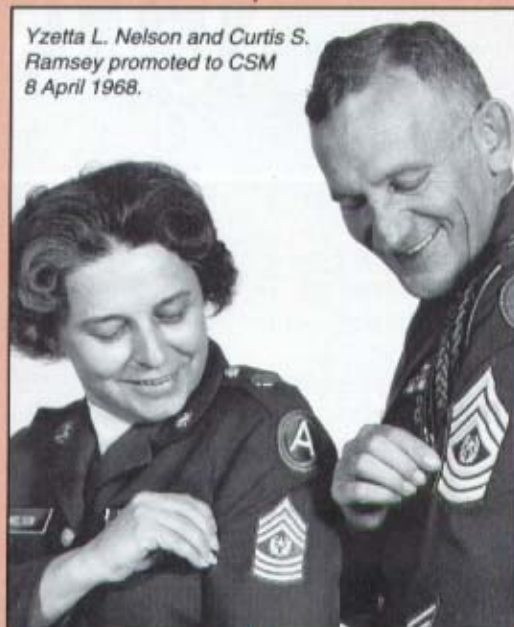
As with most new programs, it took a while to get everyone throughout the Army on an equal footing when it came to knowing how to use CSMs. In his book, *Guardians of the Republic*, Ernest F. Fisher writes: "The duties of the CSM had often been determined more by the perception of individual commanders than by approved and widely understood Army doctrine... Lines of authority between CSMs and first sergeants were variously understood and practiced from unit to unit."

One thing everyone agreed on was that the CSM should be the epitome of the Corps. At a 1975 Training and Doctrine Command conference, U.S. Commander-in-Chief GEN George S. Blanchard said, "The CSM must reflect the image of the NCO Corps and demand that his fellow NCOs do the same."

A 1976 letter from the academic faculty of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point stated that the "...CSM should be regarded as a role model and goal for NCOs...As a coding and filtering agent, acting almost as a

translator between the officer and enlisted soldier...he filters, interprets and passes on information from the commander along a path parallel to the channels of command." ■

Yzetta L. Nelson and Curtis S. Ramsey promoted to CSM
8 April 1968.



By Linda Gaunt

Finding biographies and histories about Non-commissioned officers has been a difficult task until recent years. Publishers weren't interested in the stories of NCOs. And NCOs weren't writing their own stories. This situation is beginning to change. NCOs are realizing the need to tell their own stories and publishers have discovered a new market for books about NCOs.

Reading the stories of the experiences of NCOs can help you in your professional development. These stories also can provide you with lessons learned, both the how-to and how-done. These stories can tell you about survival, about winning, even about losing. Above all, these stories can help you take pride in the NCO Corps and its accomplishments.

You can begin with some general histories of the NCO Corps. Just published in 1994 is Ernest F. Fisher's *GUARDIANS OF THE REPUBLIC* (Ballantine Books). Dr. Fisher traces the evolution of the status and duties of the NCO from before the American Revolution through Vietnam and its aftermath. The Center for Military History's *THE STORY OF THE NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER CORPS: THE BACKBONE OF THE ARMY* (Washington, DC, 1989) is a good general overview. It has a good selected bibliography of books on the history of the NCO Corps. A popular short treatment of the NCO Corps is *A SHORT HISTORY OF THE NCO* (1989) by L. R. Arms and is published by the NCO Museum at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Ft. Bliss, TX.

For an overall history of the Army with good coverage of the NCO Corps, you can read Russell Weigley's *HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY*, enl. ed. (Indiana University Press, 1984) or *UNCOMMON VALOR: THE EXCITING STORY OF THE ARMY* (Rand McNally, 1964), James Merrill, editor. Edward Coffman's *THE OLD ARMY: A PORTRAIT OF THE AMERICAN ARMY IN PEACETIME, 1784-1898* (Oxford, 1986) is a good study of military life when the Army was not at war and includes good descriptions of how NCOs lived and worked. William Emerson's *CHEVRONS* (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983) is the guide to the history of NCO rank insignia.

Reading about NCO leadership, military ethics, and NCO duties and responsibilities is also a way to enhance your professional development. Some good examples are *THE NCO GUIDE*, 4th ed., revised by Frank Cox (Stackpole, 1992); Roger H. Nye's *THE CHALLENGE OF COMMAND* (Avery, 1986); Robert Taylor and Wm. Rosenbach, editors, *MILITARY LEADERSHIP: IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE*, 2nd ed. (Pergamon-Brassey, 1989); and *THE PARAMETERS OF MILITARY ETHICS* (Pergamon-Brassey, 1989), Lloyd Matheus and Dale Brown, editors.

Books about American wars are very numerous but not all are interested in portraying the NCO. There are a few needles in the haystack, however. For the American Revolu-

tion, I would suggest Robert K. Wright's *THE CONTINENTAL ARMY* (Washington, DC, 1983); Don Higginbotham's *THE WAR OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE: MILITARY ATTITUDES, POLICIES, AND PRACTICE, 1763-1789* (Macmillan, 1971); and that first bible for the drill sergeant, Von Steuben's *REGULATIONS FOR THE ORDER AND DISCIPLINE OF THE TROOPS OF THE UNITED STATES* (Dover, 1985).

It can be said that the Civil War was the first literate war America fought. Diaries and letters of soldiers are still being published every year. The classic studies of the common soldier, North or South, are Bell Irvin Wiley's *THE LIFE OF*

JOHNNY REB (Doubleday, 1971) and *THE LIFE OF BILLY YANK* (Doubleday, 1971). A follow-up study is James I. Robertson's *SOLDIERS BLUE AND GRAY* (University of South Carolina Press, 1988). Two examples of personal accounts are Frederick Pettit's *INFANTRYMAN PETTIT* (Avon, 1990) and Elisha Hunt Rhodes' *ALL FOR THE UNION* (Orion, 1985).

World War I has not seen as many books about NCOs as the Civil War. However, the standard is *SERGEANT YORK: HIS OWN LIFE AND WAR DIARY* (Doubleday, 1928), edited by Tom Skeyhill. A recent biography of SGT York is David D. Lee's *SERGEANT YORK: AN AMERICAN HERO* (University of Kentucky, 1985). Another book by an NCO is Albert M. Ettinger's *A DOUGHBOY WITH*

THE FIGHTING 69th (White Mane, 1992).

Books about NCOs in World War II are also numerous. Suggested reading would be Audie Murphy's *TO HELL AND BACK* (TAB, 1988), Edwin P. Hoyt's oral history *THE GI'S WAR: THE STORY OF AMERICAN SOLDIERS IN EUROPE IN WORLD WAR II* (McGraw-Hill, 1988), and Edward F. Murphy's *HEROES OF WORLD WAR II* (Presidio, 1990).

Books about NCOs in the Korean War are few. One of the best is Edward F. Murphy's *KOREAN WAR HEROES* (Presidio, 1992). Perhaps the best overall history of the Korean War and one which does cover the NCO is T. R. Fehrenbach's *THIS KIND OF WAR* (Macmillan, 1963). [Several subsequent paperback editions exist.]

More and more, personal accounts of the Vietnam War are being published. Among the best by NCOs are USASMA graduate and Medal of Honor winner Franklin D. Miller's *REFLECTIONS OF A WARRIOR* (Presidio, 1991), Charles Gadd's *LINE DOGGIE: FOOT SOLDIER IN VIETNAM* (Presidio, 1987) and Timothy S. Lowry's *AND BRAVE MEN, TOO: THE UNFORGETTABLE STORIES OF THOSE WHO WERE AWARDED THE CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR IN VIETNAM* (Crown, 1985).

BOOKS

For And About NCOs

The overall story of the black soldier in the US Army is best represented by Jack D. Foner's *BLACKS AND THE MILITARY IN AMERICAN HISTORY* (Praeger, 1974) and Irvin H. Lee's *NEGRO MEDAL OF HONOR MEN* (Dodd, Mead, 1967). For the Civil War, I would suggest Luis F. Emilio's *A BRAVE BLACK REGIMENT*, 3rd ed. (Ayer, 1969); Thomas Wentworth Higginson's *ARMY LIFE IN A BLACK REGIMENT* (Corner House, 1984); and James Henry Gooding's *ON THE ALTAR OF FREEDOM: A BLACK SOLDIER'S CIVIL WAR LETTERS FROM THE FRONT* (University of Massachusetts Press, 1991).

The number of books about the 9th and 10th Cavalries is also growing. William H. Leckies' *THE BUFFALO SOLDIERS: A NARRATIVE OF THE NEGRO CAVALRY IN THE WEST* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1967) and *THE BLACK MILITARY EXPERIENCE IN THE AMERICAN WEST* (Liveright, 1971) are among the best. Blacks in World War II are represented by Lou Potter's *THE LIBERATORS: FIGHTING ON TWO FRONTS IN WORLD WAR II* (Harcourt, 1992), Thomas S. Arnold's *BUFFALO SOLDIERS: THE 92nd INFANTRY DIVISION AND REINFORCEMENTS IN WORLD WAR II, 1942-1954* (Sunflower University Press, 1990), and *THE INVISIBLE SOLDIER: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE BLACK SOLDIER IN WORLD WAR II*, an oral history. The story of blacks in the Vietnamese Conflict is best discussed in Wallace Terry's *BLOODS: AN ORAL HISTORY OF THE VIETNAM WAR BY BLACK VETERANS* (Random House, 1984), with oral histories of 12 black NCOs.

There are very few books about women as enlisted soldiers or NCOs. The best overall history is Bettie J. Morden's history of the Women's Army Corps, *THE WOMEN'S ARMY CORPS, 1945-1978* (Washington, DC, 1990). Other histories about women in the military are Jeanne Holm's *WOMEN IN THE MILITARY: UNFINISHED REVOLUTION*, rev. ed. (Presidio, 1992) and Judith Hicks Stiehm's *ARMS AND THE ENLISTED WOMAN* (Temple University Press, 1989). Betty Sowers Alt and Bonnie Stone chronicle the experiences of other women associated with the military in their *CAMP-FOLLOWING, A HISTORY OF THE MILITARY WIFE* (Praeger, 1991).

For the Hispanic soldier, I would recommend *THE THREE WARS OF ROY BENAVIDEZ* (Corona, 1986) by Roy Benavidez and a companion biography, *THE LAST MEDAL OF HONOR* (Swan, 1990) by Pete Billac.

A forthcoming book to look for is *TOP SERGEANT* (Ballantine, 1995) by SMA (Ret.) William Bainbridge.

This essay merely suggests a starter reading list. There are many books available that contain information about NCOs. Often, though, the problem is that the books have no indexes or other means to guide to that information. Always ask your nearest librarian for help to find materials about NCOs.

If you want to read any of these books, go to your nearest post library and/or school library. If you don't find a copy of the book there, then ask the librarian to get it for you through interlibrary loan. ■

Gaunt is a librarian at the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy's Learning Resource Center, Biggs Field, Ft. Bliss, TX.

The Sergeants Major of the Army

By Mark Gillespie, Glen Hawkins, Michael Kelly and Preston Pierce

At the highest levels of the Army, the Sergeant Major of the Army represents the enlisted soldier. But, he's only done so since 1966, when the position was first established.

Before that time, the Army staff had no one designated to represent the enlisted soldier's view.

The Sergeants Major of the Army is a newly published book on the history of the office and the nine men who have served there. It's a must read for **ALL** NCOs.

Center for Military History, Pub 70-63
1995, 180 pages (HB), \$29.00

TOP SERGEANT

THE LIFE AND TIMES
OF SERGEANT MAJOR
OF THE ARMY

WILLIAM G. BAINBRIDGE

By SMA William G. Bainbridge
(U.S. Army, Retired)
and Dan Cragg
Foreword by General Bernard W. Rogers
(U.S. Army, Retired)

Ballantine Books, New York, NY
1995, 368 pages + 8-page insert (HB), \$23.00

New CSA and SMA Take the Helm



CSA GEN Dennis J. Reimer

GEN Dennis J. Reimer has been appointed the Army's new chief of staff. Reimer is coming from an assignment in Atlanta, GA, where he served as the commanding general for U.S. Army Forces Command since April 1993. Before that, he was the vice chief of staff, U.S. Army, in the Pentagon, Washington, DC.

Reimer was commissioned a second lieutenant in the field artillery and awarded a bachelor of science degree from the U.S. Military Academy in 1962. He holds a master of science degree in public administration from Shippensburg State College, PA. Born in 1939, he is a native of Medford, OK.

Reimer has commanded units from company to division and served in numerous staff positions. His commands include an infantry company at Ft. Benning, GA, an artillery battalion at Ft. Carson, CO, the division artillery for the 8th Inf Div in Europe, the corps artillery at Ft. Sill, OK, and the 4th Inf Div at Ft. Carson.

During his 30-plus years of service, he has also served in a variety of joint and combined assignments. They include two combat tours in Vietnam, one as an advisor to a battalion of the South Vietnamese Army, the other as an executive officer for an artillery battalion in the 9th Inf Div.

He also served in Korea as the chief of staff, Combined Field Army and assistant chief of staff, Operations and Training, Republic of Korea/U.S. Combined Forces Command.

Additionally, he has served two other tours at the Pentagon, one as an aide-de-camp to the chief of staff, U.S. Army, and one as the deputy chief of staff for Operations and Plans for the Army.

The general has received numerous awards for his peacetime and combat service, to include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Distinguished Service Medal, two Legions of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, six awards of the Bronze Star Medal, one with "V" Device for valor, the Purple Heart and the Combat Infantryman Badge. He also wears the Parachutist Badge and the Ranger Tab.

He is married to the former Mary Jo Powers. They have a daughter, Anne Marie, and a son, Michael. ■

CSM Gene C. McKinney has been chosen as the 10th sergeant major of the Army by new Chief of Staff GEN Dennis J. Reimer. He comes to his new assignment from the position of command sergeant major for the U.S. Army Europe and 7th Army in Heidelberg, Germany.

McKinney was born in Monticello, FL. He entered the Army in August 1968 and attended basic and advanced individual training at Ft. Knox, KY. He holds an associate of applied science degree in general management from El Paso Community College and a bachelor of science degree in management and human relations with Park College.

His military education includes Airborne Training, Parachute Pack, Maintenance and Airdrop Course (honor graduate), 11D NCO Basic Course, Dragon Weapon Systems Course, M60A1/A3 Master Gunner Course, Armor Advance Course (honor graduate), U.S. Army First Sergeant Course and U.S. Army Sergeants Major Course, Class 31.

Before his assignment at USAREUR, McKinney served as command sergeant major, 1st Arm Div. Other key assignments include: CSM, 8th Inf Div (Mechanized), Bad Kreuznach, Germany; 1st Bde, 1st Arm Div, Vilseck, Germany; 173rd Airborne Bde, Vietnam; 612th Quartermaster, Ft. Bragg, NC; 1st Bn, 58th Mechanized Inf, 197th Bde, Ft. Benning, GA; 3rd Squadron, 12th Cav Reg, Buedingen, Germany; and 2nd Armored Cav Reg, Bamberg, Germany.

McKinney has held every key NCO position from squad and section leader, platoon sergeant, aviation and ground squadron command sergeant major, brigade and division command sergeant major.

Awards and decorations he has received are: Bronze Star Medal (OLC), Meritorious Service Medal (3OLC), Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Good Conduct Medal (7th Award), National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, NCO Professional Development Ribbon (with 4), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Ribbon, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Combat Infantryman Badge and Parachutist Badge.

He is married to the former Wilhemina Hall of Tallahassee, FL. They have one child, Zuberi, 16, a junior at Heidelberg High School, Germany. ■

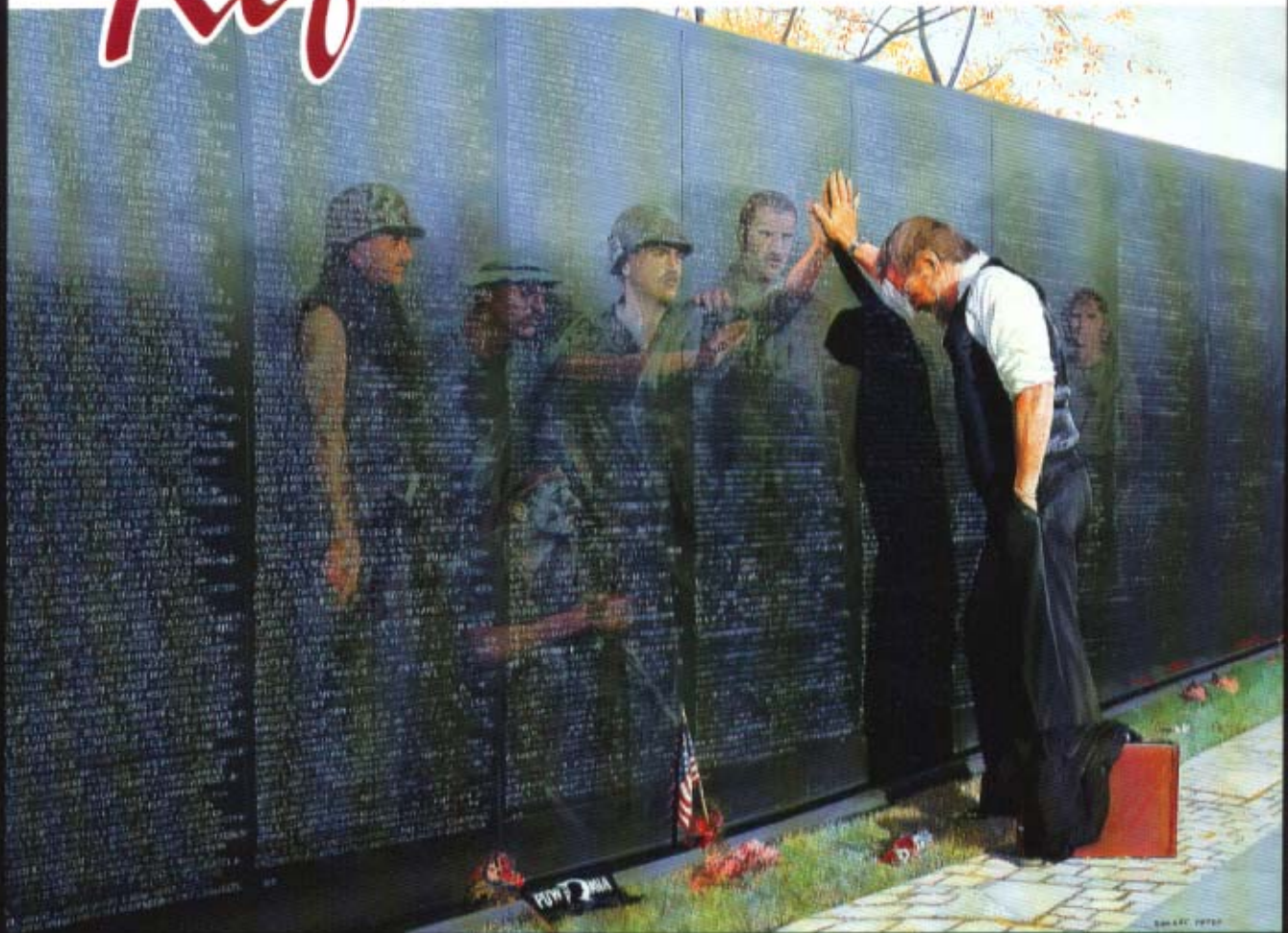


SMA Gene C. McKinney

Reflections

by Lee Teter

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July 1959, the first official American casualty of the war in Vietnam was reported. Sixteen years later, in May 1975, all American servicemen had been withdrawn from involvement in Southeast Asia. However, the story has never ended. It has been 26 years since I boarded an aircraft to leave that country, but it has always been on my mind, just below the surface reminding me of another time, another life.

I suppose it's the same for the American people because they cannot let it rest. I can hardly remember a week in the last quarter of a century when Vietnam wasn't mentioned in the news.

America has been involved in several conflicts since that time long ago, but America always remembers "The Nam." I have no regrets about my service to my country, even my Vietnam service. I look at every man that served there as my brother and every man that died there as a hero. I look at everyone who protested that war as a friend for we all helped to give birth to a new America.

Keep the faith.

— CSM (Ret.) Gary Boggs



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