Museum of the Noncommissioned Officer

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE NCO

U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy

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U.S. Army Museum of the
Noncommissioned Officer

A Short History of the NCO

NCO Museum Staff Article
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Preface

The following is a short history of the U.S. Army Noncommissioned Officer. This work is produced in hope that it will prove useful to the wide variety of NCOs in the field and to visitors of the U.S. Army Museum of the Noncommissioned Officer, who seek additional information on NCO history.

The history is presented in a chronological manner and is based upon a variety of works listed at the end of the paper. Sources are noted throughout the paper in the folloing manner: (*von Steuben). It should be pointed out that two unpublished works in the museum's reference files were of great help; these works are the two Fisher Manuscripts noted in the Sources Consulted. Several oral histories and other works drawn from the museum's archives were used to give depth and provide the primary resources to the pamphlet.



L. R. ARMS
Director
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Introduction

The history of the United States Army and of the noncommissioned officer began in 1775, with the birth of the Continental Army. The American noncommissioned officer did not copy the British. He, like the American Army itself, blended traditions of the French, British, and Prussian armies into a uniquely American institution. As the years progressed, the American political system, disdain for the aristocracy, social attitudes, and the vast westward expanses further removed the U.S. Army noncommissioned officer from his European counterparts and created a truly American noncommissioned officer.

American Revolution

In the early days of the American Revolution, little standardization of NCO duties or responsibilities existed. In 1778, during the long, hard winter at Valley Forge, Inspector General Friedrich von Steuben standardized NCO duties and responsibilities in his Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States (printed in 1779). Among other things this work (commonly called the Blue Book) set down the duties and responsibilities for corporals, sergeants, first sergeants, quartermaster sergeants, and sergeants major, which were the NCO ranks of the period. It also emphasized the importance of selecting quality soldiers for NCO positions. (*von Steuben) This work served for 30 years as the primary regulations for the Army.

The duties of the noncommissioned officer, as set forth by von Steuben, were:

The Sergeant Major served as the assistant to the regimental adjutant. He kept rosters, formed details, and handled matters concerning the "interior management and discipline of the regiment." (*von Steuben)

The Quartermaster Sergeant assisted the regimental quartermaster, whose duties he assumed during the

quartermaster's absence. He also supervised the proper loading and transport of the regiment's baggage when on march. (*von Steuben)

The First Sergeant enforced discipline and encouraged duty among troops, maintained the duty roster, made morning report to the company commander, and kept the company descriptive book. This document listed the name, age, height, place of birth, and prior occupation of every enlisted man in the unit. (*von Steuben)

Sergeants and Corporals were expected to instruct recruits in all matters of military training, including the order of their behavior in regard to neatness and sanitation. Outbreaks of disturbances were to be punished. Listings of sick were to be forwarded to the First Sergeant.

In battle, NCOs were to close the gaps occasioned by casualties and encourage men to silence and to fire rapidly and true. (*von Steuben)

The development of a strong NCO Corps helped sustain the Continental Army through severe hardships to final victory. Von Steuben called the NCO the "backbone" of the Army and his regulations established the centerpiece for NCO duties and responsibilities from 1778 to the present.

During the early stages of the American Revolution, the typical Continental Army NCO wore an epaulet to signify his rank. Corporals wore green, and sergeants wore red epaulets. After 1779, sergeants wore two epaulets, while corporals retained a single epaulet. (*Emmerson)

From the American Revolution to World War II, the noncommissioned officer received his promotion from the regimental commander. Entire careers were often spent within one regiment. If a man was transferred from one regiment to the next he did not take his rank with him. No noncommissioned officer could be transferred in grade from one regiment to another without the permission of the General in Chief of the Army; this was rarely

done. Without permanent promotions of individuals, stripes stayed with the regiment.

Three NCOs received special recognition for acts of heroism during the American Revolution. These men, Sergeant Elijah Churchill, Sergeant William Brown, and Sergeant Daniel Bissell, were awarded the Badge of Military Merit, a purple heart with a floral border and the word "merit" inscribed across the center. This award was the precursor of the Medal of Honor introduced during the Civil War. (*Robles)

Sergeant William Brown's act of heroism occurred during the assault of Redoubt #10 at Yorktown. He led the advance party whose mission was so hazardous it was called the "forlorn hope." Charging with fixed bayonets, they ignored musket fire and grenades, leaped the barriers surrounding the redoubt, and in the ensuing struggle captured the position. (*Megehee)

The American victory at Yorktown secured independence for the nation. Independence meant the new nation would provide for its own defense. The nation was poor, and the cost of maintaining an army was a heavy burden. Many Americans, like Thomas Jefferson, opposed the maintenance of a peacetime Army on the grounds that it could be used against the people. The American government folowed a policy which reduced the number of troops in the Army to the bare minimum during times of peace, relying upon militia or volunteer troops to prevent uprisings and quell Indian disturbances.

During times of war the Army was enlarged, with the professional soldiers forming the basis for expansion. This policy endured to some extent until world commitments and the stationing of troops overseas in the 20th century required the nation to maintain a strong professional force.

The system of relying heavily on untrained militia units, raised on the spur of the moment, was severely tested during the Indian troubles on the Northwest Frontier in the 1790's. In 1790 and 1791 two militia units

were defeated by Indians in the Northwest (present-day Ohio and Indiana). The Army was enlarged from 800 to 1,500 men to quell the uprising. These troops, known as the "Legion," were trained, drilled, and formed into a well-disciplined group. In 1794 they marched against the Indians and defeated them in the Battle of Fallen Timbers. (*Matloff) The action showed the importance of training, drill, and discipline during pitched battles.

War of 1812

When the United States declared war on Britain on 18 June 1812, the total Army numbered 11,744 men. The real basis for defense of America lay in the militias of the states, totaling 694,000 men. (*Ferrell) Control of the militias centered in the states, and many would not fight outside the United States or even outside local boundaries.

In addition, the United States could not supply a large field Army. The largest number of fighting troops in the active militia and the Regular Army was 35,000 men in 1814. (*Ferrell)

To reduce the cost of maintaining an Army, units were often called to fight on short notice and sent home after the action. This met with mixed results as troops were often not trained. Some units raised in this manner fought gallantly, but others ran in panic at the first shot.

In 1813, the governor of Kentucky was called upon to raise 2,000 men for the invasion of Canada. Disregarding the limits placed on their numbers, the Kentuckians raised about 3,000 men and headed for the Northwest (present-day Michigan) to unite with 2,500 Army Regulars.

A large portion of the Kentucky volunteers—1,200—formed a mounted regiment. These troops dressed in leather hunting frocks and trousers and wore bright handkerchiefs. Each man carried a tomahawk, scalping knife, and long rifle. Though mounted, they were armed

with long rifles, instead of carbines or sabers, and were taught to charge straight into hostile fire. (*Mahon)

On the shore of Lake Erie they united their forces with the Regulars and a handful of men from Pennsylvania. They then marched forward to meet 900 British Regulars and a coalition of Indians, totaling 2,000 allied against them.

The Indian and British forces slowly retreated in front of the larger force until they reached a strong defensive position. With the river Thames, two swamps, and woods used to assist in the defense, the Indians and British Regulars waited for the hastily-formed invasion force, believing their more experienced forces would carry the day. (*Sugden)

The American forces reached the site and without hesitation the mounted Kentucky regiment charged straight at the British Regulars. The shock of the Kentuckians charging pell-mell crushed the British lines. Within minutes the mounted Kentucky regiment had ridden through the British lines and dismounted. They opened fire upon the rear of the British lines as the American Regulars and other Kentuckians opened fire to the front. The British panicked and fled, leaving the Indians to fend for themselves.

Turning upon the Indians who were hidden in the woods and swamps, the Americans pressed forward. The Indians resisted for a short while, but having seen their allies totally cleared from the field, they too began to flee. (*Mahon)

The troops from Kentucky, having accomplished what had been asked of them, returned home shortly after the Battle of the Thames. They had served a little over three months and fought only one major battle, but they had proven that the citizen-soldier can be a vital part of any war effort.

When the War of 1812 ended, greater emphasis was placed on American lands west of the Mississippi River.

The purchase of the Louisiana River system in 1803 had added a vast unexplored region to the United States. Prior to 1812 five expeditions for exploration of this land were launched. All expeditions were accompanied by enlisted men and NCOs.

Expansion Westward

The expedition of Captain Meriweather Lewis and Second Lieutenant William Clark is a good example of the typical Army expedition during this period. The expedition was composed of two officers, four NCOs, 23 privates, nine French or Indian interpreters, and Lewis' slave York. The expedition collected information on plant and animal life, topography, social customs among the Indians, and climate conditions. They encountered 50 different tribes, to many of whom they provided peace medals, trinkets, and goods in return for friendly relations. (*Jackson County) Several men of this expedition became traders and trappers in the years that followed and were instrumental in opening the fur trade on the Missouri. (*Time-Life Books)

The fur trade proved to be a highly lucrative business and the Indians' main source of acquiring guns, powder, tinware, steel traps, blankets, and other goods. The government sought to prevent Indian troubles by promoting government-sponsored trade. Friendly tribes sought the establishment of fur factories (small frontier forts) in their areas, often requiring this of the government in treaties or peace negotiations. To assist in controlling the fur trade and assure that friendly relations with Indian tribes were maintained, a small number of troops were stationed at each fur factory. These troops ensured that traders had proper licenses and confiscated all liquor brought into Indian areas. (*Jackson County)

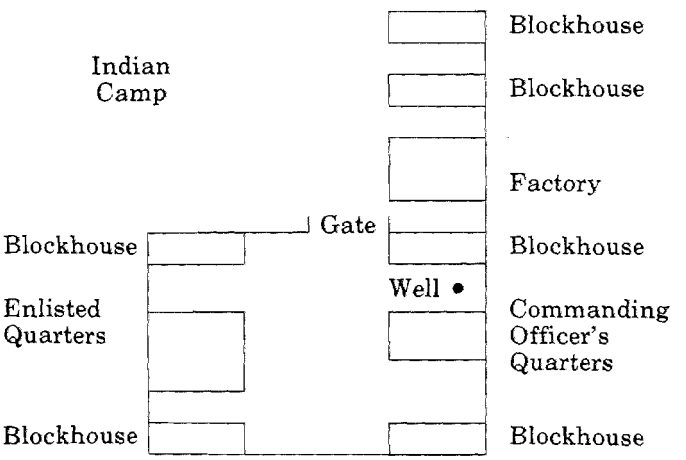
The small, isolated fur factories changed the environment of Army life, requiring NCOs to take greater care and responsibility in the daily lives of their troops. NCOs

ensured their men's cleanliness by inspections and closely monitored their activities with five roll calls per day.

Punishments for infractions were often harsh, with floggings and even the cutting off of ears being among the sentences. (*Talbot)

A typical fur factory, Fort Osage, had six two-story blockhouses, enlisted quarters, a four-floored factory, a well, and a two-story commanding officer's house. The factory and two of the blockhouses constituted the outer fort and were protected from one side only. The other buildings were enclosed in the inner fort, which had gates that could be closed in case of attack. (*Jackson County)

Fur Factory



Trade at the fur factory was operated by a government appointed civilian known as the factor. In addition to protecting the factor and his goods, soldiers were used by the factor to load and unload goods, build or repair the factory, and on occasion to beat and pack furs for shipment.

The factor and the soldier worked closely together. In 1820 the Army paymaster, paddling up the Missouri River, overturned his canoe. Pay for the soldiers at Fort

Osage, already long overdue, was lost. The factor at Fort Osage used the factory's cash profits to pay the soldiers of the fort, receiving a government voucher in return.

The factory system was abandoned in 1822. Soldiers continued to control the river traffic, ensuring that no liquor passed upstream, but trade reverted to private traders and trappers. (*Soldier and Trader on the Missouri)

1820's & 1830's

In 1821 the first reference to noncommissioned officer chevrons was made by the War Department. A General Order directed that sergeants major and quartermaster sergeants wear a worsted chevron on each arm above the elbow; sergeants and senior musicians, one on each arm below the elbow; and corporals, one on the right arm above the elbow. This practice was officially discontinued in 1829. (*Emmerson)

The first school for instruction was opened at Fort Monroe in 1824. This school instructed entire units, instead of individuals, in the use of artillery. Though suspended from time to time, it would be the precursor for modern technical training.

In 1825 the first attempt was made to establish a systematic method for noncommissioned officer selection. The appointment of regimental and company noncommissioned officers remained the prerogative of the regimental commander. Regimental commanders were expected to accept the company commander's recommendations for company NCOs unless there were overriding considerations. (*Fisher)

The Abstract of Infantry Tactics, published in 1829, provided instructions for training noncommissioned officers. The purpose of this instruction was to ensure that all NCOs possessed "an accurate knowledge of the exercise and use of their firelocks, of the manual exercise of the soldier, and of the firings and marchings."

Field officers and the adjutant were required to assemble noncommissioned officers frequently for both practical and theoretical instruction. Furthermore, field officers were to ensure that company officers provided proper instruction to their noncommissioned officers.

The sergeant major assisted in instructing sergeants and corporals of the regiment. Newly-promoted corporals and sergeants of the company received instruction from the first sergeant.

In 1832 Congress added to the ranks of noncommissioned officers, creating the Ordnance Sergeant. This was a specialized position, with the duties centering on receiving and preserving the ordnance, arms, ammunition, and other military stores of the post to which he was assigned. (*Fisher)

Daily rations during the 1830's included beef (1¼ pounds) or pork (¾ pounds); flour or bread (18 ounces); whiskey, rum, or other liquor (¼ pint); vinegar (4 quarts per 100 men); soap (4 pounds per 100 men); salt (two quarts per 100 men); and candles (1½ pounds per 100 men). The liquor ration was eliminated in 1832 and replaced with four pounds of coffee and eight pounds of sugar per 100 men.

The lack of vegetables in the daily ration often proved disastrous at frontier posts. During the winter months, scurvy struck posts and the only relief was to trade local Indians whiskey for vegetables. This trade, though illegal, saved more than one post from the ravages of scurvy. When coffee replaced whiskey, the Army had little to trade to attain the needed vegetables, as Indians would rarely trade vegetables for coffee. (For prevention of scurvy, beans were introduced into the daily ration in the 1840's.) (*Gamble)

Post gardens provided another source of nutrition outside the daily rations. In an effort to lower the cost of sustaining an Army, gardens were used to grow vegetables. Enlisted men planted, hoed, and watered the gardens as fatigue duty. At other posts, in addition to gardens,

herds of cattle were maintained. Many commanders and enlisted men disapproved of such duty, regarding it as unmilitary. (*Gamble)

Considered by many to be more military and assisting in supplementing the daily ration, hunting proved popular on the frontier. One commander went so far as to declare that the Army would save a great deal of money and train its troops if soldiers were organized into hunting parties, instead of spending endless hours on fatigue duty.

Leisure time for soldiers during this period was spent in a variety of pursuits. Card games, horse races, and billiards were common at frontier posts, though these activities were sometimes frowned upon. In contrast, reading, letter writing, and prayer groups received support throughout the Army. Post libraries were established at the moderate or larger size posts. Libraries contained books of fiction and nonfiction, journals, and newspapers. Enlisted men and officers were given either separate rooms or reading times. Drama groups were common, with both male and female characters played by the soldiers. The main dining room or other suitable location became the stage on which "Don Quixote," "Monsieur Touson," "The Village Lawyer," or other plays were performed. (*Gamble)

Theatrical performances were also provided at posts when showboats arrived. Most frontier Army posts during this period were located on a major waterway such as the Mississippi or Missouri River. Steamboats traveled these waterways transporting passengers, goods, and the mail. At times they were accompanied by theatrical groups. When the showboats arrived, everyone at the post would be treated to live theatrical performances. (*Gamble)

In the 1830's a policy of removing all Indians from east of the Mississippi River to new homes in the west began. This policy required additional frontier forts to be established and led to several bitter struggles with the Eastern tribes, the most fierce of which were known

as the Seminole Indian Wars. It also required the Army to assume a role as maintainers of peace between Eastern and Western tribes on the western frontier. (*Utley)

In addition to the garrison troops needed to maintain peace among the Indians, the opening of the Santa Fe trade trail in the 1820's created the need for mounted troops in the Army. In 1832, Congress created a battalion of mounted rangers. These were militia units, not part of the Regular Army, and proved expensive to maintain. Accordingly, in 1833 Congress created two dragoon regiments.

Daily life for dragoons while in garrison consisted of reveille at daybreak, stable call 15 minutes later, breakfast, guard mounting, and mounted drill. After mounted drill there was carbine drill on foot till 11:00 and then an hour of saber exercise. This was followed by dinner from 12:00 to 1:00. A 30-minute mounted drill before sunset and an hour-long stable call remained before supper. After supper the men cleaned their accoutrements and were then free for leisure pursuits. Taps was sounded at 9:00. (*Lowe)

Dragoons were considered elite troops. They were required to be native-born American citizens during a period when many soldiers were of foreign birth. To show that they were the elite forces, Dragoons reintroduced the chevron for use by NCOs in 1833. These chevrons were worn point down.

Immigration had a dramatic impact on the Army from 1840 onward. Many units were composed of large numbers of Irish and German immigrants. U.S. Grant estimated that over half the Army during this period consisted of men born in foreign countries. (*Grant) Many of these immigrants sought escape from the ethnic or religious persecution which was common in the United States during this period. Newspapers in the Northeast were filled with want ads stating "Irish need not apply." Immigrants who previously had been teachers, merchants, or even lawyers enlisted in the Army as a means of escaping persecution and incorporating into American society.

In 1840 an effort was made to give the NCO Corps greater prestige by adopting a distinctive sword. The model 1840 NCO sword remains the sword of the NCO Corps and is still used in special ceremonial occasions.

Mexican-American War

The annexation of Texas in 1845, and American desires for California, led to war with Mexico in 1846. The war, unpopular in some areas of the United States, was the first to require large numbers of troops outside the country's borders.

During the Mexican-American War, the United States raised 115,000 troops; 73,000 of these were volunteers. Volunteers were promised 160 acres of land upon completion of their enlistment. They were raised by local areas of particular states and elected their officers and NCOs by popular vote. This often led to a lack of discipline among the troops, but their spirit more than compensated for their lack of discipline. The volunteers, like the Regular Army, hardened in battle and by war's end proved an effective force. (*Smith & Judah)

One volunteer unit, the First Regiment Missouri Mounted Volunteers, achieved considerable acclaim. Composed of eight companies from different Missouri counties, the regiment totaled 856 men. They were farmers, businessmen, teachers, lawyers, and other elements of Missouri society.

The volunteers marched with the Army of the West, leaving Fort Leavenworth on 26 June 1846. Marching in detachments to ensure that enough forage and water would be found, they maintained a pace of 35 miles per day. In August they captured Santa Fe without a fight. They then turned southward, as the main Army marched west and engaged the Navajo. In November a treaty was signed with the Navajo, and the Missourians headed for El Paso.

On Christmas Day, as 450 Missourians rested just north of El Paso, a 1,200-man Mexican force charged the camp. The Missourians held fast and the Mexican forces retreated a short distance. Sixty Missourians gained their mounts and charged wildly, forcing the Mexican Army before them. Two days later the Missourians entered El Paso, where they spent the next two months.

The Missourians next headed for Chihuahua. Nearing the city they were met by a force four times their own. The Mexican soldiers waited in a narrow pass near the Sacramento River. The Missourians opened with a burst of artillery, and when the Mexican force fell back, the Missourians charged. By sunset the battle concluded with one Missourian dead and enemy losses totaling 300 dead, 500 wounded, and 40 prisoners.

After several more months and many miles of marching, the Missourians reached Matamoros; here they boarded ships and returned home via the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi River. They had covered 3,000 miles without ever being paid and seldom supplied. They had defeated two Mexican armies and the Navajo. They were farmers, teachers, and businessmen who served to expand their nation westward. (*Volunteer)

The Mexican-American War ended with the addition of vast territories by the United States. In the years that followed, a major portion of the Army's responsibilities centered around protecting the Oregon and California emigrant trails. The large area covered by these trails, and the small size of the Army, required operations to be carried out in small detachments. NCOs often led the small detachments sent out from frontier forts to discourage Indian attacks on settlers or other troubles.

1850's

In October 1849, a young Massachusetts farm boy named Percival Lowe joined the U.S. Army's Dragoons. Having read Fremont's Narrative of 1843-1844 and other

Army adventures, he felt that five years of life in the west could round out his education. Lowe was intelligent, well-educated, and strong, which made him an ideal soldier for the years ahead.

A few days after enlisting he was sent to Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, a school for mounted recruits. Lowe received training, drilling on foot and horseback, and practice with the saber. He also met "Big Mit," a tough Irishman with a crude disposition.

Several weeks after enlisting, Lowe sat eating chicken at a table in the mess hall. Big Mit, a six-feet two-inch giant weighing 225 pounds, decided he would finish off all the chicken on the table. He looked at Lowe, who sat silent, and sneered an insult. Lowe sprang to his feet, drew his saber, and beat Big Mit with it.

Luckily for Lowe and Big Mit, the saber was dull, and after a few days in the hospital, Big Mit began a long healing process. No action was taken against Lowe when he explained what had happened.

During the winter of 1849, Lowe and 75 men, including Big Mit, were sent to join B Troop, Second Dragoon Regiment, at Fort Leavenworth. Their trip was to have been by steamboat; however, the river was frozen solid above Portland, Missouri.

The men left the steamboat, hired a couple of wagons for their baggage, and began to walk. Big Mit, still not completely recovered from his beating, rode in one of the wagons. The journey was long, and the men had little money. The rougher crowd, like Big Mit, took to stealing others' heavy coats and selling them for money to buy whiskey. The men endured due to the assistance of Corporal Wood, who paid for their rations out of his own pocket, keeping vouchers to be reimbursed.

They arrived at Fort Leavenworth on Christmas Day and received bread, boiled pork, and coffee for their supper—a poor supper, but at least they were warm.

At Leavenworth, Lowe drilled on foot, horseback, and with the saber, awaiting spring to go to the field.

To supplement Army rations, he purchased vegetables from Missouri farmers.

Big Mit and his friends supplemented their daily rations by crossing the river to Whiskey Point or Rialto, where the wildlife and liquor flowed. Though this was against regulations, few cared, even if it meant spending some time in the guardhouse.

Sundays were inspection days. The men, their barracks, and gear would be inspected by their Troop Commander. One Saturday evening, Big Mit decided to trade his gear for Lowe's. When Lowe returned from supper he noticed the gear on his bunk was not the clean, sharp-looking equipment he had left. Looking around, Lowe found his rightful gear on Big Mit's bunk. He took his gear, leaving the soiled gear in its place.

When Big Mit returned from supper to find his old dirty gear laying on his bunk, he was furious. Grabbing a carbine, Big Mit charged towards Lowe. Lowe drew his saber and again beat Big Mit with all his might. Two officers of the guard separated the men. Big Mit was taken to the hospital for a month's stay. Lowe meanwhile explained his actions and was sent back to his unit. (*Lowe)

The two episodes with Big Mit had little effect on Lowe's career. His education, intelligence, and courage were more important.

During the next few months Lowe proved himself as a soldier. He learned quickly how to keep his horse in sound condition while campaigning. He also learned the ways of the Plains and the various Indian tribes that lived upon it. More than anything, however, he learned about the individual soldiers in his unit and how to lead them. He was promoted to corporal, then sergeant, and in June of 1851, a little over two years after he had enlisted, Lowe was made first sergeant of his company.

Two years after he made first sergeant in 1853, Lowe was sent to a Kansa Indian village to demand the return



Percival Lowe, B Company, 2d Dragoons, 1852.

of five horses stolen from the Army the previous spring. He went alone, except for an interpreter. He entered the Kansa camp with the interpreter and went to the house of the chief. Without a lot of introduction, Lowe told the chief that he had come to demand the return of the horses the Kansa had stolen from the Army. If this was not done, the Army would come to the camp and take the horses by force. The chief denied any knowledge of the stolen horses. Lowe stated that he knew that the Kansa had stolen the horses, and that if they were not returned to his camp by the time he reached it, the chief would be sorry. He then shook the chief's hand and left.

Reporting back to his commander without the horses, Lowe was told to assemble 20 men, return to the camp, and take the horses. Leaving their sabers in camp because of the noise created by the scabbards, the men took their revolvers and plenty of ammunition and headed for the Kansa camp.

First Sergeant Lowe and his men rode quietly into the Kansa camp and captured the chief as he ran out of his house. The village sprang to the alarm, with women, men, and children yelling. Several young men rushed out with guns and bows and arrows as if to give battle. The chief calmed them and went off peacefully with Lowe and his men.

By the time they reached their camp, three of the horses had been returned and promises had been received for the return of the others. This accomplished, the commander lectured the chief and then allowed him to return to his village.

Back in camp First Sergeant Lowe resumed his duties. Muster rolls were to be kept, the company library organized, and fatigue details set to work. Discipline, a major problem on the frontier, had to be maintained.

Lowe viewed whiskey as the major source of discipline problems for enlisted men. He talked with other noncommissioned officers about this and cautioned each

to give personal attention to his men to assure they were not drinking to excess. Sometimes drunk soldiers would be brought to Lowe, who would lock them in a store room until they sobered up. Offenders received extra duty as punishment.

Lowe and the noncommissioned officers of the company established the "company court-martial" (not recognized by Army regulations). This allowed the noncommissioned officers to enforce discipline for the breaking of minor regulations without lengthy proceedings. In the days before the summary court martial, it proved effective to discipline a man by the company court-martial and avoided ruining his career by bringing him before three officers of the regiment.

A problem as major as drunkenness was desertion. It was not uncommon for a man to desert to head west in search of gold or merely because he was tired of the military.

One deserter crossed the Missouri River from Fort Leavenworth to the town of Weston. He became a recruiter of deserters, encouraging men to desert in order to rob them, and then with friends turn them in for a reward.

Upon discovering this man's shanty, Lowe informed the company commander and a party was sent out to arrest the man. A lieutenant, Sergeant Peel, and a group of men rode to the shanty. They found another man and six women sitting at a table eating dinner. Sergeant Peel felt certain that the wanted man was hiding under his wife's big hoop skirt and told her so. He further stated that if he had to go under her skirts to capture the man he would. The lieutenant, not nearly as brave, told the sergeant to search no further. The lieutenant, Sergeant Peel, and the men left. A month later the man gave himself up and admitted he had been hidden under his wife's skirt when Sergeant Peel had searched his house. (*Lowe)

During this period the soldier's life consisted primarily of garrison duty or campaigning in the west. Campaigns

were meant to prevent or quell Indian uprisings, protect settlers or traders, and to generally extend governmental control over far-flung areas. They often lasted for months and covered hundreds of miles.

In 1858, a young man who went by the name "Utah" joined a group of recruits at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. He had joined the Army for a five-year enlistment to participate in the Mormon War. After training at Carlisle Barracks, Utah was sent to Fort Leavenworth to join the Dragoons.

Utah's unit began their march from Fort Leavenworth to Salt Lake City at a rate of 12 miles per day. Discipline was lax, desertion and drunkenness common. The lax discipline was combined with severe punishment for those who were caught. A stout bugler would flog the offending individual, drawing blood with every blow. Punishment for desertion ranged from 25 to 50 blows.

On the march, units followed rivers or streams when possible. This usually provided them with water for drinking and some wood for cooking. The cedar or cottonwood from these riverbeds was mixed up with buffalo chips (dried buffalo dung) to create a fire.

On many days, the total rations consisted of three hardtack biscuits and a piece of salt pork a day. At other times, rations were supplemented by wild game or fruit which the men encountered upon their journey.

There was time for hunting and other amusements during the day because the horses had to graze. Men played cards, wrote letters, hunted, or sought other pursuits.

During the march, the men often encountered emigrants and Indians. With both, they traded and exchanged information. With the Indian tribes, the Army tried to establish friendly relations. At a camp of the Sioux, Utah and other soldiers traded old uniforms and feathers for buffalo robes.

At night the Dragoons established a camp. Fifteen men, with their saddles, valises, blankets, rifles, sabers,

and accoutrements were stuffed inside a single tent. The tents, Utah stated, were not big enough to hold a good size double bed, and there was little comfort.

By the time Utah's unit arrived in Salt Lake City, the Mormon War had ended. The unit stayed in the area for some time, quartered in adobe buildings or tents. Finally the unit was sent out to help quell trouble with the Utes. Utah's diaries stop suddenly; it is not known if he met his death at the hands of the Utes or simply lost interest in keeping a journal.

The chevron went through a series of changes during the 1840-1860 period. In 1847 the chevron was worn in the inverted "V." A few years later, in the 1850's, it was turned point down in the "V." Epaulets were worn with the dress uniform, but not with the undress. The changes ended by the Civil War, settling in the "V" or point down. It remained in the "V" shape until the regulations of 1902. (*Emmerson)

During the 1850's major changes were made in U.S. Army weaponry. In ordnance, the percussion cap and rifled weapons were developed and refined. Weapons like the Sharps carbine and the Joslyn added greatly to firepower and accuracy.

Civil War

The Civil War marked a radical change in American warfare; it brought the total war to America. This war required a large number of draftees and the launching of massive campaigns. It would end in the trench warfare outside Petersburg, Virginia.

During the Civil War, noncommissioned officers led the lines of skirmishers which preceded and followed each major unit. Noncommissioned officers also carried the flags and regimental colors of their units. This deadly task was crucial to maintain regimental alignment and in order for commanders to define the locations of their units on the field.

As the war progressed, organizational and tactical changes led the Army to employ more open battle formations. These changes further enhanced the combat leadership role of the noncommissioned officer. (*Fisher)

The battle for Fredricksburg in 1862 proved one of the most costly in the war. The days were cold. Rain, mixed with snow, turned roads to mud. Prior to the battle, each soldier received rations for four days. Rations consisted of hardtack, meat, coffee, and 60 rounds of ammunition.

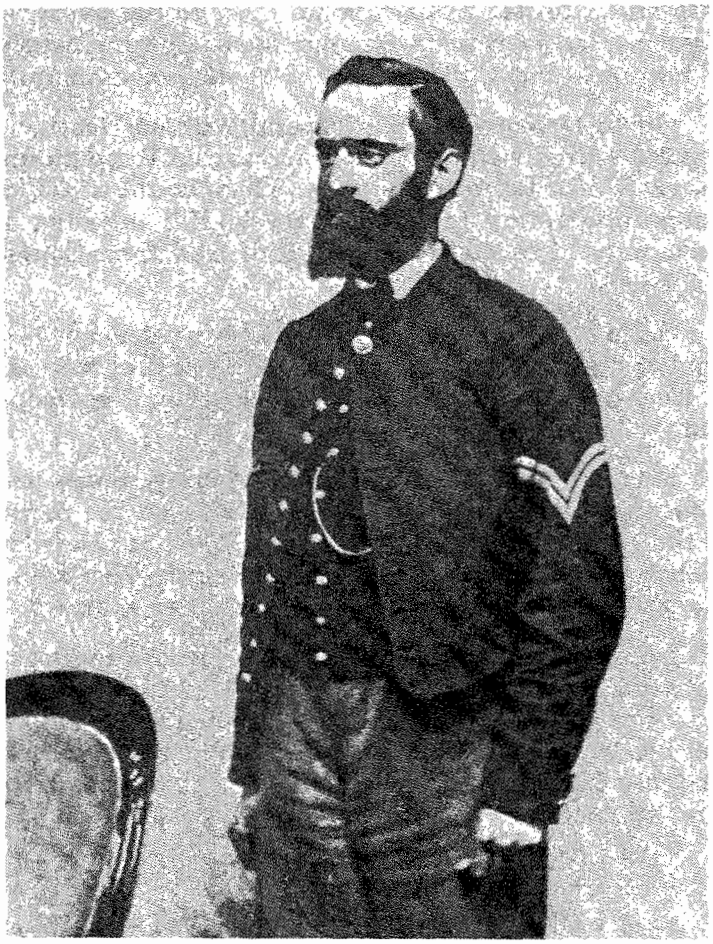
On 13 December 1862, Corporal William Heatley and Private Alfred Bellard looked across the Rappahannock River from Stafford Heights. They could see Union troops attempting to storm Marye's Hill in wave after wave only to be met with a wall of lead from Confederate troops.

Skirmishing continued until four o'clock on 14 December. At that point, a truce in the fighting was called to clear the dead from the field and allow the troops to rest.

Men began playing cards and singing. Some traded tobacco with Confederate soldiers. Early on the morning of the 15th, a fight was arranged between a Confederate soldier and a Union soldier from the Sixth Wisconsin. As the troops watched, the two men fought to a draw.

Union troops withdrew across the Rappahannock River north of Fredricksburg and established winter quarters. The quarters were made with pine log walls, four feet high, and a chimney on one side. Four buttoned shelter tents provided the top. Inside, bunks were made from pine sticks covered with spruce leaves. On Christmas the troops received a ration of dried apples and whiskey. (*Winter Campaign)

New forms of technology would start to shape the Army during the Civil War: railroads, telegraph communications, steamships, balloons, and other innovations. (*Matloff) These innovations would impact on noncommissioned officer rank structure and pay.



Corporal Henry Jagger, 1860.



Corporal with nine button frock coat, 1862.

Pay for U.S. troops during the Civil War varied according to branch and rank, with more technical fields receiving greater pay. As early as 1861, Army regulations stated the payscale as follows:

Cavalry

Sergeant Major	$21.00
Quartermaster Sergeant	21.00
Chief Bugler	21.00
First Sergeant	20.00
Sergeant	17.00
Corporal	14.00
Bugler	13.00
Farrier and Blacksmith	13.00
Private	13.00

Artillery and Infantry

Sergeant Major	$21.00
Quartermaster Sergeant	17.00
First Sergeant	20.00
Sergeant	17.00
Corporal	13.00
Artificer, Artillery	15.00
Private	13.00
Principal Musician	21.00
Musician	12.00

Ordnance

Master Armorer	$34.00
Master Carriage-Maker	34.00
Master Blacksmith	34.00
Artificer	17.00
Laborer	13.00

Sappers, Miners, and Pontoniers

Sergeant	$24.00
Corporal	20.00
Private First Class	17.00
Private Second Class	13.00
Musician	12.00

Hospital Stewards

First Class	$22.00
Second Class	20.00

The Civil War witnessed a continuation of the practice of incorporating different racial and ethnic groups into the Army by units. Blacks, Irishmen, Indians, and others formed racial or ethnic units. One Irish ethnic unit was composed of troops from New York City and known as the Irish Brigade. This unit distinguished itself at Fredricksburg: making six charges upon Confederate positions, it was reduced from 1,200 to 280 men. (*Wiley)

After the Civil War, ethnic units were largely discontinued. Troops were either discharged or incorporated into other units of the Army. Racial segregation, however, remained, with some units which were composed entirely of Black soldiers. These troops were among the most active on the frontier during the Indian Wars period. (*Berry)

In the post-Civil War era, the Artillery School at Fort Monroe reopened to train both officers and noncommissioned officers. In 1870 the Signal Corps established a school for training officers and noncommissioned officers. Because both the Artillery and the Signal Corps required men to have advanced technical knowledge in order to operate complex equipment and instruments, these schools were the first ones established. Efforts to provide advanced education for noncommissioned officers in other less technical fields, however, failed to attract supporters. It was felt experience and not the classroom was needed to make a good sergeant in the infantry and other fields.

Indian Wars

The Indian Wars of the 1870's-1890's saw the Army involved in a long series of engagements. These wars often consisted of numerous scattered skirmishes over wide areas, without any substantial battle being fought to determine the war's end. This type of war led to the further enhancement of the NCO's role as small unit leader. Often fighting in small detachments, troops relied heavily on the knowledge and abilities of NCOs. (*Fisher)

One of the many outstanding soldiers of this period was Sergeant Charles L. Thomas of the 11th Ohio Cavalry. Late in the summer of 1865, the right column of

the Powder River Expedition, containing 1,400 men, was lost. Unable to regain their lines and wandering hopelessly, the column began to despair.

Rescue missions were sent out; Sergeant Thomas, with two Pawnee scouts, was among them. After 24 hours, Thomas and the scouts were attacked by Sioux warriors and a running battle ensued. Near sundown, Thomas sighted the lost column. Spurring his horse, he cut a path through the Sioux, reaching the column.

He then rallied the men in the camp into a fighting formation and forced the Sioux to give way. Thomas pushed the troops onward for 150 miles to a supply camp. This prevented the destruction of the column, which would have been a major disaster for the Army. (*Thomas)

During the Indian Wars period, enlisted men lived in spartan barracks, with corporals and privates in one large room. Sergeants were separated from their men, in small cubicles of their own adjacent to the men's sleeping quarters. (*Fisher) This gave enlisted men a sense of comradeship, but allowed little privacy.

Black soldiers of this period were often referred to as Buffalo Soldiers. The units they served in were the 9th and 10th Cavalry and the 24th and 25th Infantry. These troops provided 20 years of continuous frontier service. They campaigned in the Southern Plains, in West Texas, in the Apache lands, and against the Sioux. (*Chappell)

One Black soldier, Sergeant George Jordan, won the Medal of Honor for actions during the campaign against the Apache leader Victorio. Sergeant Jordan led a 25-man unit to Tularosa, New Mexico, to stave off a coming attack. Standing firm against 200-300 Apaches, Sergeant Jordan and his men prevented the town's destruction. (*Chapell)

The soldier of this period spent much of his time engaged in manual labor. Soldiers in the west were called upon to build or repair housing and fortifications, repair roads and bridges, serve as blacksmiths or bakers, perform guard duty, and other tasks. It was a hard life,



Ordnance Sergeant, 25th Infantry, with NCO Sword, 1885.

pay was poor, and desertion was common. NCOs were fully tested in their abilities to maintain effective fighting units.

During the 1870's the Army discouraged enlisted men from marrying. Regulations limited the number of married enlisted men in the Army and required special permission to be obtained if a man in the Army wished to marry. Those men who did marry without permission could be charged with insubordination. They could not live in post housing or receive other entitlements. Still, nature proved stronger than Army desires or regulations. Marriages occurred and posts were transformed into communities. (*Stallard)

NCO wives had a hard life, often working as laundresses or maids. Their meals consisted of beans, bacon, beef, and hardtack, with eggs, sugar, or other staples being too high-priced for their budgets. Many lived in dugouts, sod huts, or adobe buildings. The luckier wives lived in wooden structures or stone buildings. (*Stallard)

1880's & 1890's

One of the more colorful NCOs of this period was Sergeant John T. O'Keefe of the Signal Corps. Stationed on top of Pikes Peak to observe and record the weather, O'Keefe led a lonely, dull life. In order to free himself for drinking binges, he often prepared the weather reports days in advance.

In addition to the fabricated weather reports, O'Keefe fabricated several very unusual stories. The eruption of Pikes Peak, O'Keefe reported, buried the town of Colorado Springs under a mountain of ash.

After the Pikes Peak volcano became dormant, O'Keefe reported an even stranger occurrence. He, his wife, and his child were attacked by ferocious rats. The wild varmits ate his child. His wife escaped the same fate when he wrapped her in zinc roofing. He placed stove pipes on his legs and battled the critters for hours. He was nearly spent when his wife lassoed him with a wire connected to a battery, which electrocuted the rats as they attempted to bite him.

Shortly after this last report O'Keefe was transferred. Never again did Pikes Peak erupt or wild mountain rats attack men in herds.

In contrast to the light-hearted O'Keefe, the noncommissioned officers of the Greely Expedition recorded the weather in one of the harshest climates in the world. In 1881 the U.S. Army Signal Corps sent an expedition to establish a meteorological station as far north as possible. The expedition consisted of three officers, eight noncommissioned officers, twelve enlisted men, two Eskimos, and one civilian photographer.

Venturing forth from southern Greenland, the expedition established a basecamp, Fort Conger, in the Hall Basin, by August. Using several dog sleds, a steam-driven launch, and two barks, they discovered new lands north of Greenland and established a record by reaching the farthest latitude north, at 83 degrees, 24 minutes North.

For three years the men continued to operate the meteorological station and explore the far north. By 1884 the men began to question if they would ever see home again. The expedition began to move south, using the steam-driven launch and two barks. Reaching Cape Sabin, they built a stone cabin and again waited; only 50 days of supplies remained. As the supplies dwindled, the men fell ill with scurvy. Drained by lack of nourishment and bitter cold, they began to slowly die. The cabin collapsed, and they were forced to take shelter in a tent.

In June 1884 sailors of the *Thetis*, a sealing ship, spotted the remnants of the expedition's camp. Ripping open the tent, which had collapsed, they found six survivors: Lt. Adolphus Greely, Sergeant David Brainhard, Sergeant J.R. Frederick, Hospital Steward Henry Biederbick, and two privates. (*Fisher) The men were unable to stand, their bodies resembling skeletons—eyes sunken deep in the sockets, jaws hanging freely, and joints swollen.

The expedition provided the scientific community with valuable information, discovered new lands, and established the record for latitude. To the men of the Expedition, however, it provided a cold, harsh, bitter memory.

In 1885 the first retirement system was established for enlisted men. The system allowed a man to retire after 30 years of service with three-quarters of his active duty pay and allowances. (*Fisher)

Barracks life in the 1890's was simple, with card games, dime novels, and other amusements filling idle time. Foot lockers contained personal possessions, along with military clothing and equipment.

Soldiers during this period maintained handbooks. The handbook contained a variety of information, including sections entitled: "Extracts from Army Regulations of 1895," "Examination of Enlisted Men for Promotion," "Take Care of Your Health," "Extracts from Articles of War," and others. In the back, there were three sections for the soldier to fill in: "Clothing Account," "Military Service," and "Last Will and Testament."

These handbooks were meant to be carried for a number of years and provided the soldier with an accurate record of the important events in his Army life.

William B. Cox, a typical soldier in H Company, 18th Infantry Regiment, recorded his dates of discharge and clothing received, but failed to write anything in his last will and testament. His clothing records for 1898 are as follows:

	$48.36	Yearly Clothing Allowance
2 Blouses #5	7.02	
1 Forage Cap	.57	
2 Cap Devices	.22	
1 GL Chevrons	00	
1 Coat Canvas	1.04	
6 Collars	.24	
1 Float	.84	
1 Leggings	.55	
1 DB Shirt	1.94	
2 M Shirts	.58	
1 Shoes	1.89	
6 Stockings	.36	
1 C Trousers	.94	
2 Trousers U	3.14	
	19.33	Total Carried Forward



NCOs and Privates of the Field Artillery, 1890.



NCOs and Privates cleaning their cloths and equipment, 1898.

Spanish-American War

When the United States declared war on Spain in April 1898, the U.S. Army consisted of approximately 26,000 men. Lacking the troops to conduct a war overseas, the War Department asked for volunteers. National Guard units, already formed, were allowed to volunteer and serve as units. In all, the United States raised 275,000 men to fight against Spain.

Using the Regular Army as the nucleus, the United States created a fighting force. Major problems for deployment of this force consisted of preparing and transporting this Army to various theaters of war. The troops needed to be equipped, trained, and supplied before engaging the enemy. The pace of preparation was extremely slow and months passed before any action could be taken. Some volunteer units never reached the front in time to see action.

In May 1898, the Fourth Illinois, a National Guard unit, assembled at Springfield to begin preparations for the fight. The unit was transported to Savannah, Georgia, for training. They drilled daily, wrote numerous letters, played baseball, studied Spanish, and stood guard.

As the Fourth Illinois prepared in Savannah, other troops captured Santiago and forced the surrender of the main Spanish force in Cuba.

The primary enemy for American troops in the occupation of Cuba was disease. Even before troops reached Cuba, diseases became commonplace. On 8 August, the first man of the Fourth Illinois, still in Savannah, died of typhoid. This disease, and malaria, would prove fatal to many before they could be transported to Cuba.

In early January 1899 the unit boarded the *Mobile* for Cuba. Most of the time on ship was spent sleeping, writing, or on guard duty. When the ship entered Havana Harbor, the band started playing patriotic songs and excitement filled the air.

The next day, amid heat and dust, the unit disembarked. Havana had narrow streets, grated windows,



Lieutenant and Sergeant Major, 1st Maine Infantry, 1899.

flower- and vine-covered villas, and pretty women. The men looked around their new surroundings in amazement.

They marched to a hill near the ocean and established camp. Other American volunteer units surrounded them. Hastily, they set up their tents and lay down to sleep. In the middle of the night, they awoke to a hard rain. Water rushed in beneath the tent floor, making sleep impossible. The lesson was quickly learned, and the next day the tents were properly erected to prevent further flooding.

Camp life consisted of daily drill, inspection, guard duty, work parties, and writing. Often different units, or Cubans and Americans, would play baseball. Less frequently, passes were given to allow the soldiers to visit Havana.

The unit spent some time in the field marching from one place to another. Along the way they were greeted warmly by the Cubans. The march was light, from 5 to 18 miles per day. There was time to visit sugar mills and other places of interest.

Finally, in April 1899, the unit was sent back to the United States and then released from active duty. They received a hero's welcome and were treated to a banquet and a reception. (*Morgan)

In the years that followed the Spanish-American War, the United States would be required to defend her newly-won empire. The Philippine Insurrection, Boxer Rebellion, and other problems required the United States to station over one-third of the U.S. Army overseas. (*Matloff) The movement of the Army overseas and garrisoning of troops in these foreign lands required additional manpower and modernization of the Army.

Edward Whitehead, a member of the 46th Volunteer Infantry, fought in the Philippine Insurrection from 1899 to 1901. On the march, he carried a shelter tent, poncho, 30 rounds of ammunition, and a Krag-Jorgenson rifle. At first, they wore cork helmets, but these were found

unsuitable for tropical conditions, and they quickly adopted the campaign hat. Their uniforms were blue shirts and khaki trousers. On their arms they wore bands holding 20 rounds of ammunition. Around their waists were web belts with additional ammunition. (*Whitehead)

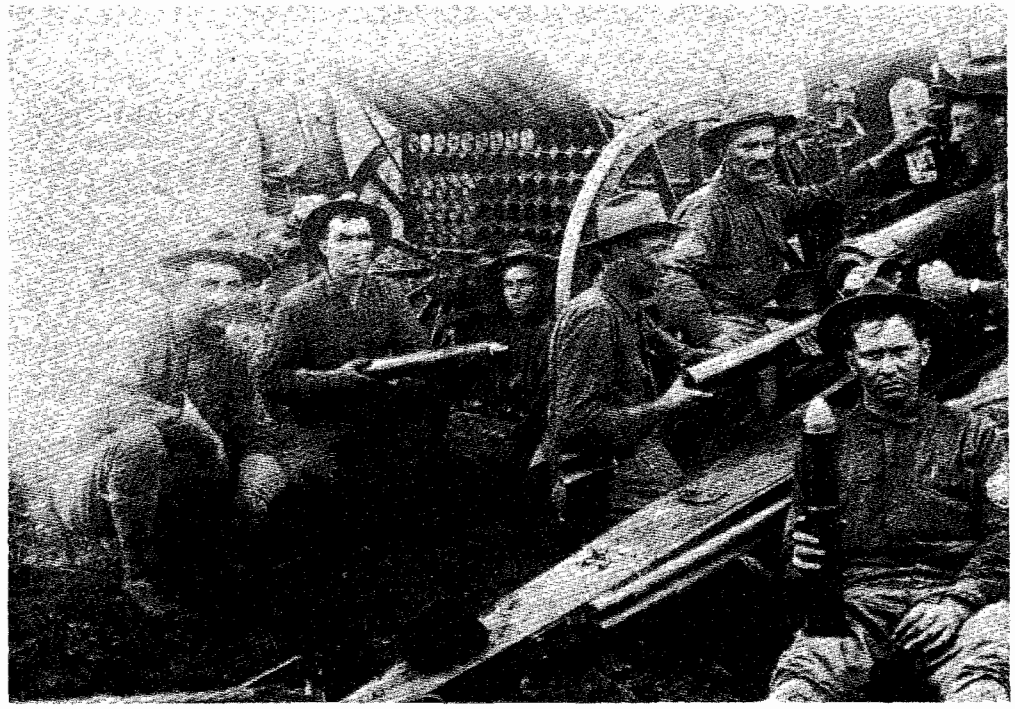
Modernization

The increase of technology which accompanied modernization greatly affected the NCO Corps during the last half of the 19th Century. The number of NCO ranks grew rapidly; each new advent of technology created another paygrade. The Army was forced to compete with industry for technical workers. In 1908 Congress approved a pay bill which rewarded those in technical fields in order to maintain their services. Combat soldiers were not so fortunate. (*Fisher) A Master Electrician in the Coast Artillery made $75-84 per month, while an Infantry Battalion Sergeant Major lived on $25-34 per month. The Infantry Battalion Sergeant Major made about the same as or less than a Sergeant of the Signal Corps ($34-43 per month). (*Emmerson)

The duties of the noncommissioned officer were clearly defined during this period. The five or six pages of instructions provided by von Steuben's Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States in 1778 grew to 417 pages when the Noncommissioned Officers Manual was written in 1909. The duties of the First Sergeant and Sergeant Major were covered in chapters of 15 and 54 pages respectively. These chapters included forms that should be filled out and maintained, a description of duties, what should and should not be done, customs of service, and things of special interest. (*Moss)

The Noncommissioned Officers Manual includes a 2½-page chapter on discipline. It stresses the role of punishment in achieving discipline. This role, the work

NCOs of Troop F, 7th Cavalry, 1908.



First Sergeant and Field Artillerymen at firing range, 1911.

states, is to prevent the commission of offenses and to reform the offender. (*Moss) Repeatedly in this section and others, it is stressed that treatment of lower grade personnel should be uniform, just, and in no way humiliating. (*Moss)

In 1902 the chevron was turned to what we would today call point up. It was also greatly reduced in size. Though many stories exist as to why the chevron's direction was changed, the most realistic is that it looked better. Clothing had become more form-fitting; indeed, the 10-inch chevron of the 1880's would have wrapped completely around the sleeve of a 1902 uniform.

In 1916 problems in Mexico became problems in the United States when Mexican revolutionaries attacked Columbus, New Mexico. A punitive expedition was sent to Mexico to punish the rebels. Though it failed to capture the rebels, it did prepare American troops for action in World War I.

World War I

World War I required the first massive training of men the United States had seen. NCOs trained four million men, one million of whom would be sent overseas. A typical training day started at six, with breakfast at seven o'clock. Training assembly began at eight, and the work day ended at four. Corporals were the primary trainers during this period, with lessons emphasizing weapons and daytime maneuvers. Twelve hours of training were devoted to proper use of the gas mask, with a trip to the gas chamber included. (*Brock & Case)

After viewing the differences in American and foreign NCO prestige, General Pershing suggested that special schools for sergeants and separate NCO messes should be established. The performance of noncommissioned officers in the American Expeditionary Force seemed to validate these changes. (*Fisher)

The First World War proved a brutal struggle, with technology coming to the forefront. Gas warfare was

introduced, the machine gun ended mounted charges, and airpower came of age. Victories were measured in yards gained per thousands of men lost. Though American forces saw limited action in comparison to British and French forces, it was the United States that tipped the balance of power in favor of the Allies.

The trenches were a complex system, interwoven and protected with layers of wire. The trenches not only protected the front line soldiers, but also connected the front and rear areas. They averaged seven to eight feet in depth, with firing steps to permit the soldiers to just barely look over the top. (*Case)

Not all the time was spent in the front line trench. Work was done in details to watch for enemy activity. The details were relieved every four hours by a new detail. Old houses or pup tents in the rear provided places to sleep. (*Case)

Near St. Etienne, a young corporal named Harold Turner, of Company F, 142nd Infantry, engaged enemy troops. Corporal Turner assisted in organizing a platoon of scouts, runners, and signal corpsmen. Serving as second in command, he led the troops forward under heavy fire.

Encountering a machine gun emplacement with four machine guns, Turner rushed forward with fixed bayonet. After a desperate struggle, he succeeded in capturing the position of four machine guns and 50 German soldiers, thus allowing the advance to continue.

Between World Wars

After World War I Congress reorganized the NCO ranks. Five NCO ranks were established: master sergeant, technical sergeant, staff sergeant, sergeant, and corporal. First sergeant became a position comparable in rank to the technical sergeant. There were 231 vocational skills that could add $3 to $35 to the soldier's monthly pay. (*Emmerson)

As the Army was drastically reduced during this period, enlisted men were often demoted, rather than promoted. The records of Alexander Loungeway, through 32 years of service, provide a good example of the typical enlisted man's career during this period. Joining the Army in 1908, Loungeway rose through the ranks and was promoted to first lieutenant during World War I. After the war he was reverted to a first sergeant, then he became a sergeant, then a corporal, and finally a private first class. He was promoted to corporal a year before he retired. (*Loungeway) All of his character references read "excellent."

These reductions resulted from two things. The first was that promotions were given by the regiment and could not be taken to a new regiment. If a man was transferred, or his unit disbanded, he went to the next unit as a private. It wasn't until 1940 that enlisted men could be transferred from unit to unit and retain their stripes.

Secondly, in 1922 the Army scheduled 1,600 noncommissioned officers for reductions. This was done to reduce the total force and save money. It caused severe hardships for many noncommissioned officers, especially those with families. (*Fisher)

Post-World War I budget reductions and then the Great Depression led to irregularities in pay: often the soldier received only half his pay, or half his pay in money and half in consumer goods or food. (*Case)

During the late 1930's technicians were created in grades 3, 4, and 5 (SSG, SGT, and CPL), with chevrons marked with a "T." This led to an increase in promotions among technical personnel. In 1948 the technician ranks were discontinued; they would be replaced by specialists in 1955. (*Emmerson)

The typical first sergeant of this period carried his administration files in his pocket—a black book. The book contained the names of everyone in the company and all kinds of information on them (AWOLs, work habits,



Corporal Jim Toomey, Machine Gun Troop, 3rd Cavalry, Fort Myer, Virginia, 1941.

promotions, and so forth). The book was passed on from first sergeant to first sergeant, staying with the company. It provided the company with a historical document. (*Wooldridge)

The first sergeant accompanied men on runs, the drill field, training, or the firing range. He was always at the forefront of everything the company did. (*Wooldridge)

World War II

With the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, the United States found itself at war. Japanese advances in the Pacific were so swift that American supply lines were quickly cut.

In the Philippines, hunger soon became the major problem for U.S. troops. On 6 January 1942, soldiers on Bataan had their food allotment cut in half. Fresh meat was nearly discontinued, and rice, fish, tomatoes, and canned meat became staple items.

As hunger became more widespread, it damaged morale and was seen as a problem almost as serious as enemy action. Rations were cut in February to 1,000 calories per day instead of the 4,000 or more needed by combat troops.

As the hunger grew, men became obsessed by food. They ate horses, iguanas, monkeys, crows, and carabao (water buffalo). Men had dreams that centered on fresh bread, plum butter, blackberry jelly, and pork and beans.

In April the Japanese intensified their attack, and the situation became hopeless. Literally starving, the American forces were becoming too weak to continue their valiant resistance. Night blindness, edema, dysentery, scurvy, and diarrhea—all caused by extreme malnutrition—further weakened them.

On 9 April 1942, U.S. forces bowed to the inevitable and surrendered American forces on Bataan to the Japanese. During the last week before the surrender, many units were completely without food for as much as 72 hours. (*RG 407; Rhodes)

While American troops fought in the Philippines, other units were being formed in the United States. The Army used NCOs on active duty prior to America's entry in the war as trainers for troops earmarked for duty overseas, in the expandable army concept.

Mobilization greatly increased the numbers of Army noncommissioned officers. Mobilization, combined with other factors, created a staggering growth in the percentage of noncommissioned officers to total forces. The proportion of noncommissioned officers in the Army increased from 20 percent of the enlisted ranks in 1941 to nearly 50 percent in 1945. This resulted in the lessening of prestige for many noncommissioned officer ranks.

Coupled with this growth in numbers, there was a change from an 8-man infantry squad to the 12-man squad, with the sergeant replacing the corporal as its leader. Thus, the rank of corporal came to mean very little, even though he was in theory and by tradition a combat leader. (*Fisher)

Basic training in World War II centered on hands-on experience instead of the classroom. All training was conducted by NCOs. After basic training, a soldier was sent to his unit where training continued. The major problem was that the rapid expansion of the Army led to a decrease in experienced men in the noncommissioned officer ranks. If a man showed potential, he was promoted, with privates becoming corporals, and corporals, sergeants. (*Van Autreve)

World War II witnessed a number of heroic deeds by noncommissioned officers. Such were the actions of Staff Sergeant Charles W. Shea at Monte Damiano, Italy. On 12 May 1944, Company F, 2d Battalion, 350th Infantry, 88th Division, encountered heavy machine gun fire as they advanced. Staff Sergeant Shea recognized that the advance of his unit depended upon taking the three machine gun positions, and advanced alone. He hurled a grenade into the first of these, capturing four enemy soldiers; moved to the second and forced the two-man crew to surrender. He then moved to the third. Coming

under fire, he rushed that position and killed its three defenders. With this, Shea's unit continued to advance.

Later in the war, Sergeant Harrison Summers showed the same type of raw courage, during the assault at Utah Beach on D-Day, 6 June 1944. Sergeant Summers, of the 502d Parachute Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, led an assault against German coastal fortifications. Sergeant Summers, with 12 men, moved against enemy positions. Encountering heavy fire, the 12 fell back, leaving Summers to advance alone. He ran to the first enemy position, kicked the door open, and with a rain of bullets killed all the enemy soldiers inside. He then moved down a row of stone buildings, clearing the enemy as he went. (*Fisher)

Fighting in the Pacific and Europe required large numbers of men. Millions of men enlisted and millions more were drafted. Still the Army suffered from manpower shortages. In 1942 the Army formally added women to its ranks. By 1945 over 90,000 women would be enlisted in the Army.

Women served in administrative, technical, motor vehicle, food, supply, communications, mechanical, and electrical positions during the war. After the war women continued to serve in a variety of roles in the Army. (*Treadwell)

Women in the Army, World War II

Number of Women

1942	11,222
1943	55,946
1944	84,586
1945	93,542

Enlisted Grade Level
Percentage by Rank

	Women	Men
MSG/1SG	0.6	1.5
Tech Sgt	0.6	2.9
Staff Sgt/Tec 3	3.5	8.1
Sgt/Tec 4	11.8	14.1
Cpl/Tec 5	19.6	21.0
Pvt 1st Class	25.4	28.1
Private	38.5	24.3



Tech-5 Pearlie Hargreaves, 1942,
General Eisenhower's driver in North Africa.

Women in the Army, World War II (continued)

Women's Occupations
Percentage as of September 1944

Administrative/Office	45
Technical/Professional	18
Motor Vehicle	9
Foods	9
Supply	8
Communications	5
Mechanical/Trade	4
Radio/Electrical	2

In 1945 Congress passed legislation entitling enlisted men with at least 20, and not more than 29, years of service, to be placed on the retired list. They thereupon drew 2½ percent of their average pay for the six months preceding retirement, multiplied by the number of years of active service. These men remained in the reserve until completion of 30 years of service. (*Fisher)

Post-World War II

In the post-World War II era, there were two programs which affected NCOs: a Career Guidance Plan and professional schools for NCOs. The technical ratings were dropped and emphasis was placed on service-wide standards for NCO selection and training. (*Fisher)

As a result of the continued growth of technology, a new emphasis on education began in the post-World War II era. This emphasis encouraged the young soldier to become better educated in order to advance.

On 17 December 1949 the first class enrolled in the 2d Constabulary Brigade's NCO school, located at Munich, Germany. Two years later, the U.S. Seventh Army took over the 2d Constabulary functions and the school became the Seventh Army Noncommissioned Officers Academy. Eight years later AR 350-90 established Army-wide standards for NCO academies. Emphasis on NCO education increased to the point that by 1959 over 180,000

soldiers would attend NCO academies located in the continental United States. (*Fisher)

In addition to NCO academies, the Army encouraged enlisted men to advance their education by other means. By 1952 the Army had developed the Army Education Program to allow soldiers to attain credits for academic education. This program provided a number of ways for the enlisted man to attain a high school or college diploma.

In 1950 an unprepared United States found it needed to commit large numbers of troops in a nation a half a world away. The attack of North Korea on America's ally, South Korea, stressed American responsibilities overseas. It was clear from this point forward that American commitments in Asia, Europe, and the Pacific would require a strong and combat-ready professional Army.

During Korea the noncommissioned officer emerged more prominently as a battle leader than he had in World War II. The deeply eroded hills, ridges, narrow valleys, and deep gorges forced many units to advance as squads. (*Fisher)

Korea was the first war the United States entered with an integrated Army. Black soldiers and white soldiers fought side-by-side on the battlefield against a common foe.

Near Surang-ni, Sergeant Ola L. Mize led the defense of "Outpost Harry." Learning of a wounded soldier in an outlying listening post, during an artillery barrage, Mize moved to rescue the soldier. Returning to the main position with the soldier, Mize rallied the troops into an effective defense as the enemy attacked in force. Knocked down three times with grenade or artillery blasts, Mize continued to lead his men.

With the enemy assault temporarily halted, Mize and several men moved from bunker to bunker clearing the enemy. Upon noticing a friendly machine gun position being overrun, he fought his way to their aid, killing ten

enemy soldiers and dispersing the rest. Securing a radio, he directed artillery fire upon the enemy's approach routes. At dawn, Mize formed the survivors into a unit and successfully led a counterattack which cleared the enemy from the outpost.

In 1958 two grades were added to the NCO ranks. It was stated that these grades, E-8 and E-9, would "provide for a better delineation of responsibilities in the enlisted structure." It was also hoped that additional grades would help in obtaining and retaining good NCOs. At this point the NCO ranks were corporal, sergeant, staff sergeant, sergeant first class, master sergeant, and sergeant major. (*Fisher)

Modern Era

In 1965 the first American ground troops were committed to Vietnam. The American policy of containment of Communism would be severely challenged in Vietnam. The Vietnamese Communists fought a long, drawn-out war, meant to wear down American forces. There were no clear battlelines and often it was hard to tell foe from friend. In 1973 a formal cease-fire signed by American and North Vietnamese delegations ended American troop commitments to the area.

Vietnam proved to be a junior leaders' war, with decentralized control. Much of the burden of combat leadership fell on the NCO. Needing large numbers of NCOs for combat, the Army created the Noncommissioned Officers Candidate Course. Three branches were established at Fort Benning, Fort Knox, and Fort Sill. After a 10-week course, the graduate was promoted to E-5; the top 5 percent to E-6. An additional 10 weeks of practice followed, and then the NCO was sent to Vietnam for combat. This program was received with mixed feelings from senior NCOs, many of whom felt it undermined the prestige of the NCO Corps. Few of these senior NCOs, however could say they actually knew an unqualified NCO from the NCO Candidate Course. (*Fisher)

There were many outstanding acts of heroism during the Vietnam War; one of the most outstanding was that of Sergeant First Class Eugene Ashley. During the initial stages of the defense of Camp Lang Vei, Ashley supported the camp with high explosives and illumination mortar rounds. Upon losing communication with the camp, he directed air strikes and artillery support.

He then organized a small assault force composed of local friendly forces. Five times, Ashley and his newly-formed unit attacked enemy positions, clearing the enemy and proceeding through boobytrapped bunkers. Wounded by machine gun fire, Ashley continued on, finally directing air strikes on his own position to clear the enemy. As the enemy retreated, he lapsed into unconsciousness. While being transported down the hill, an enemy artillery shell fatally wounded him. (*Recollections)

In 1966 Army Chief of Staff Harold K. Johnson chose Sergeant Major William O. Wooldridge as the first Sergeant Major of the Army. The SMA was to be an advisor and consultant to the Chief of Staff on enlisted matters. He would identify problems affecting enlisted personnel and recommend appropriate solutions. (*Wooldridge)

During the following year, General Johnson decided to establish the position of Command Sergeant Major. This position served as the commander's enlisted assistant to commanders at and above the battalion level. (*Wooldridge)

In the last half of FY 1971, the Army implemented the Noncommissioned Officer Education System. This progressive system is designed to educate NCOs on subjects and skills needed by them to enhance their performance and abilities. At first NCOES consisted of three levels of training: Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (to provide basic leadership skills and a knowledge of military subjects needed at the squad and team level), Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (to provide the student with advanced technical and leadership skills), and the Sergeants Major Academy (which

prepared senior NCOs to perform duties as sergeants major at the division and higher headquarters). (*USASMA AHR 72-73)

The Noncommissioned Officer Education System grew in the 70's and 80's and today includes the Primary Leadership Development Course (which emphasizes how to lead and train and the duties, responsibilities, and authorities of NCOs), in addition to the above-mentioned courses.

All NCOES courses have common cores written by the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy at Fort Bliss, Texas. The Academy also operates three senior NCO courses outside NCOES, which are designed to train NCOs for particular positions. These courses are the First Sergeant Course (a sister course is operated in Europe), the Operations and Intelligence Course, and the Personnel and Logistics Course. (*USASMA AHR 86)

The emphasis on NCO education was stressed in 1986 with the issuance of MILPO Message Number 86-65. This message established the Primary Leadership Development Course as a mandatory prerequisite for promotion to staff sergeant. This was the first time an NCOES course actually became mandatory for promotion. (*USASMA AHR 86)

In 1987 the Army's emphasis on NCO education was again clearly exampled by the completion of a new Sergeants Major Academy building. This 17.5 million dollar, 125,000 square foot structure allowed the Academy to expand course loads and number of courses.

As the Noncommissioned Officer Education System continues to grow, the NCO of today combines history and tradition with skill and ability to prepare for combat. He retains the duties and responsibilities given to him by von Steuben in 1778, and these have been built upon to produce the soldier of today.

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