

Running head: THE THREE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS THAT HAVE LED TO THE
EVER INCREASING EMPOWERMENT OF THE AMERICAN NONCOMMISSIONED
OFFICER OVER TIME

The Three Most Important Factors

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18 March 2008

Outline

Thesis Statement:

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II. Body

A. Military Tactics Changed to small units of movement

1. Command and Control changed
2. NCOs now the decision makers and still the standard bearers.

B. A larger Force

1. More Soldiers and fewer officers.
2. Harder for the officer to train the increased number of Soldiers.
3. NCO had more experience and training.

C. An all volunteer Force which forced the Army to change in order to keep NCOs in.

1. The Army needed to change the NCO status in order to keep NCOs in
2. More pay and entitlements.
3. Better education
4. More wars to fight make it harder to keep NCOs in.

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Thesis Statement

Even though I don't feel that the noncommissioned officers (NCO) are getting the same level of education that its officers are receiving and there is still a huge gap between officer and enlisted pay even though the enlisted carries most of the burden. I believe that the increased empowerment of the NCO occurred from the following factors: change in military tactics, a larger force, and later an all volunteer force that helped to change the status of the NCO Corps. The NCO was initially treated as just one of the Soldiers. They were disciplined and trained in front of their Soldiers and also corrected in the same manner. There was no distinguishing between the NCO and Soldiers which also included pay. Just after the war of Independence the Army started transforming and changing its military tactics. These changes also changed the role of the NCO as well which required them to be able to act independently. As the years passed by the NCO role has increased, even to the point where a NCO can now be the commander of a unit.

Introduction:

The noncommissioned officer Corps has come a long way from its humble beginning in the early 1700s. Now there are NCOs at every level of government and at every commander right flank there is a command sergeant major. Every NCO has at least a high school diploma or GED and many have associate or bachelor's degrees. Some have their master's or even their doctoral degree. We are better trained, better equipped and have more experience than ever. Our NCO Corps is the envy of most other countries and it is why today we are the strongest Army in the World.

One of the factors that has helped empowered the NCO Corps is the Army military tactics transformation just after the War of Independence. The Army no longer stood in a linear formation where the commander could see everyone within their company and be able to make tactical formation changes as needed. Information was easily passed up and down the line from commander to platoon leaders and the commander could easily see their entire unit. The NCO was usually at the end of the rank standing ready to push back or reinforce the line as needed. The role of the NCOs was to keep the line straight and not allow Soldiers to retreat or cower away. The NCO motivated the Soldiers and enforced discipline but at this time the company was directed only by the commander and the NCO had no input or gave any direction for the formation.

The War of 1812 and the changing technology helped transformed the Army military tactics from linear formation to guerilla and smaller unit tactics. The rifle borrow changed the accuracy of the weapon, therefore the Army no longer had to stand 25 yards away for each other. Smaller units made it easier to maneuver but harder to control. But with smaller units the Army could do more things at once and this tactic changed started the full spectrum of operations that

we now use today. Full spectrum of operations changed how NCOs were going to be used in future battles. No longer was the commander able to stand in the middle of their formations and make commanding decisions to their entire unit with one loud voice. Now their units could be spread out over miles of territory and engage in several different missions at one time. They would have to rely on the NCOs to carry out their orders and be able to make timely decision to change the outcome of the battle. Up to this point the officers had been the ones, who trained the NCOs, but now this would be the second major battle that our Army had fought since its inception and NCOs were receiving more and more experience in combat and leading Soldiers under new operational guidance. Now with this new transformation of the NCO Corps given more leadership role in its unit mission, it wouldn't be as detrimental to the unit if the commander was killed because the NCO was skilled and trained enough to run the unit and complete the mission with very little guidance. This was a complete 180 from the way the NCOs fought in the 1700s and this transformation is how the NCOs become the heart and mind of our organization.

The second factor that helped to empower the NCO Corps was that we grew to a much larger force. At one time in World War I we had over a million men Army. We had more Soldiers then ever which created a problem for the officers because there were less of them, but they still held the responsibility to train their NCOs and Soldiers.

As advance technology changed so did the military tactics. As the technology changed, it changed the composite of the Army. A small more agile unit with new technology and equipment could do more than the older, larger force it replaced. But under the old traditions the officer was responsible for the training of their troops, not the NCOs. How would quality training be possible and if it did what would be the quality of the training with the burden of so

many men to train? Soldiers fighting in combat would need the most up-to-date training of maneuver tactics or other military strategies. Soldiers would need training on any new equipment and especially with instruction on how to implore it in future missions. This would be another pinnacle time in the changing or transformation of the NCO Corps. Once again the NCO would be called upon to become the trainer and from this transformation the NCO Corps would eventually be coined, "The Backbone of the Army." The Army now needed an NCO who could retain the information after receiving an operation order and be able to pass the information down to their Soldiers. These NCO were more educated than before and over the years were able to develop their new leadership role and take action in the absence of orders. The increased number of forces applied tremendous pressure on the officers to train and educate their Soldiers, so the officers had to turn to the only source that could help them stay lethal and relevant: The NCO Corps. This would cause the Army to establish the noncommissioned officer education system and enable the NCOES to what we use today.

The last and final factor which helped to empower the NCO Corps was the Army turning recruiting to an all volunteer force. Up onto the late 1970s the Army used the draft to attain and maintain its force. But now the Army would be responsible for the recruitment of new Soldiers and for maintaining its current Soldiers, therefore it would have to change its personnel tactics.

First the Army would have to change the status of the NCO and make it more respectable. The Army would have to try and retain its trained NCOs because it will be harder to replace them and lose all their experience. NCOs would have to be more professional than ever and they would have to be able to receive the most up-to-date training and they would have to get promoted in a timely fashion. This training would have to help them with their current jobs but also it needed to help them in future assignments at different levels of responsibilities.

The Army would have to pay its NCOs more money to compete with the civilian sector. In the beginning of the establishment of our Army the NCO barely was paid more than a private. It will have to offer incentives for MOS's that are short personnel and the Army would have to offer a re-enlistment bonus to retain selected skilled areas.

The Army would have to better educate its NCOs and encourage them to further their civilian education. Again the Army would have to compete with the civilian sector by offering NCOs scholarships and help with tuitions. Plus, they would have to offer specialized training to better make the NCO Corps more competent in their MOS and also train them on different skill levels. NCOs would need to be better trained; more educated and have more experience than ever. We the NCOs would have to lead from the front and always set the example for others to follow. In recent years the Army has been in many wars. These wars made it difficult for the Army to maintain and sustain its fighting force. Just in the past five years the Army has had a difficult time retaining its experienced NCO Corps. Now for the first time in the Army History, they are offering careerist NCOs longevity pay and bonuses and the Army has made retaining these NCOs a priority. The Army has realized that experience is priceless, especially during times of war where you can't afford to make a mistake.

All of these factors have helped empower the NCO Corps and the Corps will continue to be empowered as long as we continue to perform in the future like we have in the past. NCOs are crucial to any organization and they are respected for what they do. In many cases NCOs have replaced officers but in most cases the NCO enhances the officers and assists the unit.

Closing Argument

The noncommissioned officer is still to this day not as effectively trained as the officers. The officers attend better schools than NCOs and NCOs are not allowed training at their senior

level schools. Officers receive better training at each skill level. At most installation it is mandatory for officers to have professional reading assignments and most officers will have a lot of different duty positions that they will perform throughout their military career. These different duty positions help them be well rounded and these numerous positions provide them with a complete education and experience.

There is still a huge pay gap between NCOs and officers that just doesn't seem to close. Over the years the NCOs have taken on more leadership roles and responsibilities but they still do not receive the additional pay. But make no mistake it has gotten a lot better, but there is still definitely room for improvement.