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Research Paper

**History Of The NCO
In The American Army
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HISTORY OF THE NCO IN THE AMERICAN ARMY 1925-1945

Following the end of World War I, on November 11, 1918, the American Army quickly decayed and lapsed into a state of disarray due to drastic reductions in the force. These reductions were emplaced, not only for cost reduction but also resulted from the regulations at that time.

In this research paper we will follow the rebuilding of the NCO program from 1925 thru the end of World War II in 1945. We will discuss Weaponry, training, duties, heroes, formations, and discipline.

WEAPONRY:

The weaponry of the U.S. Army went thru a significant change during this time period. The chemical weapons that were used in World War I brought heavy losses to the US Army, mostly due to ignorance and preparedness on the part of the leaders from the US Army and the US Citizens. The NCOs of that time period had the task of changing the mind set their superiors as well as educating their soldiers.

1. A required change in tactics was brought about with the production of the M-1 Garand on July 21, 1935. The new rifle was plagued by production problems during the first few years but was able to be produced at the rate 600 per day by 1941. The Garand gave the American Infantry a tremendous firepower advantage over the Axis troop, who still carried bolt-action rifles. The M1 Garand remained the principal service rifle of the US Army until 1957.

2. The Colt M911 was the standard-issue side arm for the US Army from 1911 to 1985 and was widely used in World War I, World 2, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. This pistol was the weapon of choice for close

combat.

3. Machine Guns are categorized as heavy or light and used on the battlefield for a specific use. Light machine guns are usually designed to be carried by an individual soldier and are often chambered for a smaller caliber shell. The term "heavy" is used because of its large caliber and is less mobile than its counterparts.

4. During the 1925-1945 time period, artillery was the single most destructive force on the battlefield. The US Army began to return to maneuver tactics after World War 1. The switch from the 75mm howitzer to the 105 mm howitzer gave the military more fire power and maneuverability, thus enabling them to better support the ground troops.

TRAINING:

The term training refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies as a result of the teaching of vocational or practical skills. The NCOs of the 1925-1945 era were not only responsible for the training, welfare of the soldiers, but were hindered by the lack of a structured, overall, standardized training program. The best trainers were often the oldest and most seasoned soldiers that relied heavily on their experiences. Finally in 1940, the war department developed the Replacement Training System which consisted of an eight week training period, standardizing training Army wide.

DUTIES

On 5 May 1778, the appointment of the first successful Inspector General was obtained by Friedrich Von Steubon with the rank of Major General. Steubon is credited with teaching the Continental Army the essentials of military drill, discipline, and the standardization of the duties of the NCO. One of Steubon's beliefs was that Sergeants and Corporals were expected to instruct soldiers in matters of training, neatness, behavior, sanitation, and discipline.

Discipline of the soldiers was one of the biggest challenges during the time period of 1925-1945. The combination of the draft, the depression, and the downsizing of the army were all contributors of this dilemma. Once again, the NCOs were the ones who bore the blunt of the responsibility, and once again the NCOs had to "**Be, Know, Do**".

HEROES:

The explanation of a hero is best described as a central personage in any remarkable action or event. There were many soldiers between the first and second World War that gave it there all but were just not recognized for their efforts. Their sacrifices were just as great as the recipients of the different awards and their gallantry will always be honored. The highest United States Military award is the Congressional Medal of Honor. This award is for individual gallantry. It is the second oldest military award of any kind and the oldest combat decoration. This Army Medal of Honor was signed into law on 12 July, 1862. The first person to be awarded this medal was Private Jacob Perratt during the Civil War. The only women to receive this medal was Mary Edwards Walker, for actions in the Civil War also. During the Second World War, Audie Murphy was not only awarded the Medal of Honor but was awarded 32 additional US medals, 5 medals from France, and one from Belgium. Murphy became the most decorated United States combat soldier in history and the best known hero of modern history.

FORMATIONS:

During the 1925-1945 era, the Army endured major changes. As always, the NCO had the responsibility to initiate those changes but always making sure the average soldier was tended to. The four basic formations were Army Groups, Field Armies, Army Corps, and Army Divisions during this time. There were four Army Groups, thirteen Field Armies, eighteen Corps, five Airborne Divisions, sixteen Armored Divisions, two Cavalry Divisions, and sixty nine Infantry Divisions. Activation and deactivation were common and was triggered by a "as needed basis".

DISCIPLINE:

The ability to behave and work in a controlled manner is the definition of Discipline. Within the time frame of 1925-1945 the military suffered greatly from the lack of this. The enforcement of discipline was the one biggest headaches of the NCO and even continues to be a major issue today. The military social climate of that era had lapsed into a state of nonconformity because of economic and poor decision making from leadership. However, as World War Two started to intensify; there was a sharp increase in discipline. With the influx of better funding brought about better living condition and better equipment, however, it was the contributions of pride, courage, and unity by the NCO that made it happen.

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