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Introduction

Noncommissioned Officers' (NCO) limited influence in the beginning towards training, education, and upholding standards in the United States Army resulted in the disappointments in early combat action. This taught the following leaders to learn from previous mistakes. The building of the Noncommissioned Officer Education System formed the foundation that empowers NCO Corps and will continue to be victorious in combat. This argumentative essay will concentrate on the following topics: factors that have led to the escalating empowerment of the United States Army NCO, critical reasons and consequences of the move in responsibility downward the chain of command and how the United States Army has focused and primed for the empowerment of the NCO by forming the Noncommissioned Officer Education System. To understand how the accomplishment of the Noncommissioned Officer Education System enhanced the abilities of NCOs in the United States Army, we must learn the failures in past conflicts. The lessons learned from the NCO involvement in the earlier conflicts will demonstrate how the shortfall of training and formal institutional education was the primary factor why the United State Army's performance was the way it was in earlier conflicts.

Kasserine Pass

In the beginning of 1943, the Allied forces moves to attack the Axis powers in the region of Africa as the first major battle of World War II. The unrestricted landing of allied forces in the African region was the beginning of the attack. Field Marshal Rommel, the Axis commander commenced the assault against the American lines on February 19, 1943. The United States Army was unable to hold their positions during this attack because their unpreparedness and the untrained American Soldier. The

combat veterans of the German Panzer and Tiger tanks were easily able to demolish the unproven Americans. Some American Soldiers during the battle fell back rather than to fight the Germans. The German Army was so far forward that the Americans were unable to call for artillery support. Only 48 hours into the battle, the 1st Armored Division was combat ineffective and two of the three combat brigades were out of the fight. The American Army retreated and abandoned their equipment all over the battlefield. The Germans now were able to continue their attack due to the retreat of American Soldiers at Kasserine Pass. The failure at Kasserine lied on the leadership of commissioned officers and NCOs of the United States Army. The major reason was due to the unpreparedness of the leaders of the 1st Armored Division. Lieutenant General Lloyd Fredendall, the II Corps commander was relieved for inadequacy leadership in combat. His units lacked training and equipment to fight effectively against the German forces. Commissioned officers were the principal trainers during this time in history whereas the NCO executed orders when received from their superior commissioned officers. The responsibilities and formal training of the professional NCO Corps did not exist during World War II. The NCO of today's Army is more focused on leading Soldiers, training, and will advise their officers in their units with any shortfalls that arise.

Task Force Smith

History records that Task Force Smith fight against the North Korean military as an example of military mistakes. Named from their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Charles B. Smith, the battalion of soldiers was called Task Force Smith. On short notice, they move from their location in Japan to Korea. Their mission was to slowdown the North Korean gains until more troops had arrived. The battle was fought 57 years ago on

July 5, 1950. With what they had, the soldiers fought as best they could and should not be looked down upon as an example of poor trained and disciplined soldiers. On the contrary, they were great NCOs and Soldiers who fought well in defense of freedom for America. It is important to examine the morale and psychology of the NCOs of Task Force Smith during that time. The Soldiers that composed of Task Force Smith were from 1st Battalion, 21st Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. The 24th Infantry Division's location was on the island of Japan. Their primary focus was conducting peacekeeping operations. The priority of the military at the time was on occupation and reconstruction duties in Japan and not collective unit training. The NCOs and Soldiers were living a soft life that included personal shoeshine boys and flirting with numerous prostitutes. Many of the Soldiers in the Army that NCOs were dealing with were not old enough to have fought in World War II. They were young teenagers during World War II and grew up believing the United States, especially the military was invincible. The young NCOs had no idea what real combat was like. The NCOs of 1-21 Infantry, 24th Infantry Division were not alone and unique example of untrained NCOs at the time. The Army was filled with untrained, but highly patriotic youths. Those youths were brought up to believe America and its military were the best in the world without regard or appreciation for the realities of hard work and training to stay the best. The NCOs received no formal training and had little impact on leading Soldiers. The NCO does not influence what tough and realistic training their Soldiers need or received. The NCOs executed from the direction and guidance that their officer provided without having the opportunity to impact their decision.

The events of the Kasserine Pass and Task Force Smith relating with the NCO's lack of involvement of leadership and training Soldiers helped the creation of Noncommissioned Officer Education System. As a leadership school, the Army established the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy in July 1972 at Fort Bliss, Texas. Its curriculum focuses on increasing the student's knowledge regardless of their Military Occupational Specialty. The technique that Sergeants Major Academy uses is the small group participation technique. This technique involves 16 students per classroom which allows them to learn from each other's experiences from different perspectives and different Military Occupational Specialties. The United States Army looked towards the Sergeant Majors to form other leadership and training opportunities for junior Sergeants. Sergeants Major Academy was responsible in developing the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (ANCOC) in 1981. The course focuses on the common core elements. The five common core elements are leadership, communication, training management, professional skills, and military studies. Courses like Primary Leadership Development Course (PLDC), Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (BNCOC), First Sergeant Course (FSC), and Battle Staff Noncommissioned Officer Course (BSNCOC) effectively educate and arm the enlisted Leaders with tools that lead the American Soldier successfully.

Conclusion

The United States Army continued not to use the NCO's education and abilities during previous conflicts in history that ended in numerous failures. That is the main reason why the United States Army experienced losses in earlier combat actions. From the time when the implementation of Noncommissioned Officer Education System, the

United States Army has not lost a fight against any type of enemies. I believe the enforcement of Army standards and the execution of training of the American Soldier is the NCO's responsibility. NCOs of all ranks make decisions in the heat of battles and must have the training, education, and the respect of commissioned officers to complete their two basic responsibilities. NCOs live by the Creed of the Noncommissioned Officer that states the two basic responsibilities are the accomplishment of the mission and the welfare of Soldiers. When the United States Army has disciplined, trained, and equipped Soldiers to fight wars our country will not lose any battle that we may face.

References

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