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This is a confused essay. It does not stay within the time limits it sets. There are no notes citations. Text does not support the thesis.

World War II NCO Contributions

The time was 1925-1945^{9/}; our nation was going thru the Great Depression and on the brink of war. The worldwide efforts to defeat the Axis powers of Japan, Germany, and Italy over-shadowed "The Great Depression". The United States switched gears from peace to war. This mobilized the populace and numerous industrial sections. The European conflicts started to directly involve our Nation, developing the United States as a forerunner in military power and strength. Significant contributions occurred by the non-commissioned officers (NCOs) in the Army as we know them today. The American Army had the most changes to its entirety during this time frame, than during any other period. Many historians pitched their perspectives of the outcome of World War II (WWII). Some paint the picture of it being a huge failure while others claiming it a gigantic success. Nonetheless, the contributions made by the NCOs of the time were significant to where we are today. I will shed some light on the specific instances and the various contributions made during WWII with relation to: their formation and structural make up, duties performed, training composition, military discipline, the weaponry and equipment used, and lastly the heroes of the war.

impressive bib. 7 pp. text

awkward phrasing

Following the Great Depression, combat strength of the entire Army had dwindled down to the number of people ^{who} that could fit in Chicago's Soldiers Field Stadium. At this point, after WWI, morale was low and we were behind in training and technology. The US Congress passed the Selective Training and Service Act ^{date?} to gain strength in numbers. On the first day of the draft, 16,000,000 men registered. With the influx of possible soldiers, this became the first

introduction to the Army Reserves and the National Guard for the Army. The formation of these components required a logistical breakdown of the troops. During the WWII era, the troops were brokeⁿ down into three parts: divisional, non-divisional, and replacement. Divisional consisted of the troop predominantly made up of the cadre and veteran soldiers. Troops put into non-divisional came from various states to a Training Center. A thirteen-week period of training prepared them for combat readiness. Today many know it as "Boot Camp" or "Basic Training". The third tier represented the technicians and job trained individuals whose primary role was to fill in to produce quality combat units. Each unit, often initially confusing, can be divided in to three component parts: its specific number, type or specialty, and size. For example, an Army Group was the largest with 600,000 + men. A Corp of 75,000 men breaks down to a Division of 15,000 men. The Divisions split into a Battalion of 900 men, followed by platoons of 50 men. Every unit was assigned a Commander and his Command Staff, who regulate the unit's internal sections. The most important members of the unit were the NCOs. Often called the "Back Bone of the Army", these enlisted soldiers were the ones who trained to lead and took care of the soldiers. During WWII, the Army became NCO heavy due to the immense number of soldiers drafted for the war.

they used that term then.

Brigades?

The NCO Corp was created in 1778 and General Von Steuben wrote the "Blue Book" which was to serve as a tool to assist NCOs with their duties and responsibilities. Then in 1909, the "Blue Book" was revamped and called the "Noncommissioned Officers Manual". Instead of 5-6 pages it expanded to about 478 pages which meant the duties and responsibilities had increased. Per FM 100-1 (Army Field Manual), "Duty, means to fulfill your obligations. It is a behavior required by moral obligation demanded by custom or enjoined by feelings of rightness." If you talked to any soldier today or those during WWII, in times of crisis and

conflict, they felt that it was their duty to fulfill the mission. Before WWII, the image of the Army NCO wasn't always a sparkling one. To a great many people the term "NCO" suggested a tough-talking, rough-acting, pear-shaped individual whose mission in life appeared to be bellowing out orders to incoming recruits. The image of the WWII NCO was a work in progress, since the numbers in the military had diminished; the civilians and technicians such as doctor, engineer, and pilot were called upon for their expertise. Even though these NCOs were 'green' themselves, the duties and responsibilities still escalated. Once the NCO was assigned to a specific unit, they were obligated to give their trainees military occupational specialties (MOS) training and basic soldiering to prepare them in combat. They performed accountability and made sure each member was fit to fight physically and mentally. The mental well-being was looked after and 30% of draftees were rejected on psychiatric grounds. Those that weren't continued on and their NCO in charge dealt with developmental and career progression for each soldier. They would motivate and sometimes offer incentives for those soldiers who performed at a higher level. The incentives could be a vacation pass or possibly trying to get them one of the better mobilization sites. NCOs during this time could not legally punish soldiers, but they got around this by assigning special "duties". Digging a deep hole or painting an entire building is examples of these "duties". They had to plan day-to-day operations, which included maintaining reports for superiors and enforcing military performance standards. These numerous duties became overwhelming during the war due to the mass changeover of troops and the replacing of fallen brothers.

In 1971, Noncommissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) was developed mostly because of what happened during WWII and Vietnam. General William DePuy said, "NCOs' went into WWII with training 'just above ridiculous.'" The intent was there but the time to

develop and train NCOs' was not. The Noncommissioned Officer Manual revitalized the NCO Corp, which strengthened the overall efforts of success in the war. The war created some hard-learned lessons that advanced the way we do business today. The training that was received was called "Shake and Bake Training". At least, Americans received some training compared to other countries. Most of their training allowed them to survive and make it through the battle. The training never ended and it was more structured than ever before. Despite the inflated numbers of NCOs, the ratio of noncommissioned officers increased from 20% in 1941 to 50% in 1945. The fast growth caused less experienced soldiers. The Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) was developed when 1943 brought about a critical shortage in infantrymen. The US Secretary of War approved the program with hopes to keep the technically proficient soldiers in the military. With the anticipation of the lower draft age, the program worked with the Universities and Colleges to develop the soldiers and it paid for their college in the beginning, with the understanding that they are enlisted in the Army to serve their country. At the inception of this program, only 14% of the Army had some college education. These college soldiers received training for Engineering, Science and Mathematics, Language, and Field Immersion. Unfortunately, the program did not pan out as the Army had hoped but it did replace the ground troops. ASTP was cut in 1944 and many of the recruits missed the benefits they were promised and they were sent to the battlefields earlier than promised. When the ATSP soldiers were intermixed into the multiple units, their brainpower and extra training helped them to survive and act as leaders in the field. The other group of individuals that received training was women. Women entered into the military forces in 1942. They received training in supply, transportation, military intelligence and the medical field to name a few. The NCO would include the specific branch training, whether aviation, medical, combat service, etc to enhance

the soldier's skill level in the area. Training could have been better or worse, but the way I see it is it was what they could do for the time given.

Now along with training, the NCOs of WWII were the enforcers of discipline. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines discipline as; (a) training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character, (b) control gained by enforcing obedience or order, (c) orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior, (d) a rule or system or rules governing conduct or activity. The environment for NCOs during WWII had little to be desired. The one thing that they could make a difference in is upholding the discipline of their unit. They modeled the behavior and the military presence for their soldiers. Hard love allowed them to be tough, demanding, and set the standards high. In essence, the NCOs were the parents to the soldiers. They mentored, coached, and trained continually and were ready to take charge at a moment's notice. Many a time, their units lacked food, clothing, shelter, and any other basic needs. The NCO led them through those tough times, maintaining discipline and morale. This required constant communication of expectations, boundaries, and consequences. It was not about fairness, rather it was a matter of living or dying, and the NCO took care of soldiers.

“The American production, without which this war would have been lost.”- quoted by Joseph Stalin at a meeting of the Allied Leaders in 1943. The U.S. produced an overwhelming amount of military products. These products were used to supply the NCOs and Allied countries with the right tools to win the war. The average GI carried 84.3 pounds of supplies and weapons. Including the M-1 Garand rifle, which was the first standard army issued semi-automatic rifle. Four million were made and six million of the M-1 Carbine. The basic soldiering equipment, such as the helmet, bayonet, hand grenades, ammunition bandoleer, primed cord fuses, knife, and gas mask acted as weapons. In addition, the communal weaponry needed

to be transported by the unit. This consisted of the Browning automatic rifle with tripod, the heavy machine gun, and 60 or 81mm mortar or its base. The different Army branches attacked their enemies with a variety of amphibious, aerial, and mechanized weapons. The most common amphibious ones were the warships, armored tractor with 76mm cannon, the "Duck" which was a two and one half ton amphibious truck, and the amphibious landing units. The submarines, accompanied with torpedoes, worked in conjunction with the battleships, cruisers, and fleet ships in supporting the Army aviation units. Between the B-17, B-29, and B-50, the army secured the air. The B-17 was considered one of the faster planes and could support 10 - .50 caliber machine guns. The B-29 was used to hit precision targets in day and night and flew in tight, high-altitude formations. Lastly, the B-50 bomber, called "Lucky Lady II", was tested in March 1949. She flew non-stop for ninety-four hours and one minute while being refueled from air four times. "Lucky Lady II" flew 23, 452 miles and could drop the atomic bomb (A-bomb) from any spot on the earth at any time. These Boeing bombers dropped two A-bombs, each equivalent to 20,000 tons of TNT. The first A-bomb dropped was called "Little Boy" and weighed 9000 pounds with a length of 10 feet. Aside from the air and water weapons, the mechanized weapons served their purpose. The "Easy 8", known, as the M-4 Sherman tank developed by J. Walter Christie was the fastest tank. The M-4 improved the suspension and had a powerful 76mm cannon. This tank's engine used five Chrysler car engines on one common crankshaft. Whether fighting by land, air, or water, the NCOs utilized the old and new weapons to shift the war to their favor. "Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of the men who follow and the man who leads that gains the victory." – General George S. Patton.

These risk takers restored bravery in a rightful place of honor. In WWII, the US lost the largest number of soldiers than any of our other wars. There were so many heroes that it is

difficult to narrow down any of them, but four of the WWII heroes stood out. The first was a group of chaplains. It was 1943 when a torpedo struck an Army transport vessel (the Dorchester). On this vessel were four chaplains who had never once fired a shot. Their names were John P. Washington (Roman Catholic), Alexander D. Goode (Jewish), Clark V. Poling and George L. Fox (both Protestant). As they were going down, they selflessly gave their own life vest to save four soldiers. The next hero, one of the most famous, was Lt Audie Murphy, a seventeen years old Texan who redefined hero. In Holtzwihr, France, a large German force came to attack and he ordered his men to fall back. Lt [?] covered their retreat, called the Artillery in to his location. Five Combat medals were given out during WWII and Lt Murphy was the recipient of all five, including the Medal of Honor. Then there was Louis Zamperini, an Olympic track athlete, who became an aviator. His plane was shot down at sea and he drifted for 47 days on a raft until a Japanese patrol boat picked him up. He survived in a prison camp for two and one half years doing hard labor, receiving brutal treatment, and at 77 pounds near starvation was rescued by American troops. The final group of heroes would be the entire WWII Memorial and Freedom Wall decorated with the 400,000 plus soldiers who died protecting the United States of America.

As an NCO, The path has been paved for me and many others due to the contributions of our past NCOs. From the inception of our Army, there are many time periods that stand out and for me I look at the WWII era which showed great determination and persistence when the cards weren't in our favor. Coming out of the Great Depression, the pride and sheer will power to win was amazing, not to mention the camaraderie and discipline to accomplish the mission. NCOs have allowed our military forces to become stronger and powerful. We owe thanks to all our fellow NCOs who have sacrificed themselves for the livelihood of the country.

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