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NCO'S

Theory, Policy and Doctrine in the evolution, of the NCO's

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Abstract

NCO history is important and should be a part of the NCO training. History of lost battles and failed military leaders will show how the NCO Corp evolved from theory, policy and doctrine. The lack of historical knowledge about the failure, success, is to know the enemy, and understand counterinsurgencies. NCOs learn a great deal from the recent military history, compare conflicts, battles and paralleled lessons. I will focus on the Philippine Insurrection, how it compares and parallels in today's conflicts, duties and responsibilities. Past conflicts show why the NCOs and Officers should have a working knowledge of history that can teach us all on how to analyze, ask the right questions and not make the same mistakes.

NCO History evolved through theory, doctrine, and policy, to help the future leaders to understand from the failure and success of the past and on today's battlefield.

Question is should Military History be a part of the NCOES training?

All NCOs should have a working knowledge of history and be part of the military training and education. There are some people who will dispute and think history has no part in the leadership training, but we will argue that history has important values and there are many examples of military leaders that have retained lessons learned from past history of their adversaries.

Many comparisons can be made from the past, starting with the beginning of NCO Corp in the year of 1775 when the Continental Army was born. During that era there were few standards or any systematic roles for the NCO, until General Friedrich Von Steuben standardized them with his famous Blue Book which was the first book on theory, training, and doctrine to train the NCOs and Soldiers. During the Revolutionary War, duties of the NCOs by Von Steuben standards were to close the gaps and encourage the Soldiers to silence and fire as rapidly and true.

As the NCOs continued to evolve from the many past conflicts, there was no written doctrine to capture lessons learned or any insight gained fighting the unconventional wars. Facing insurgents and irregulars in the assortment of wars over saw the American experience from Indian Wars and the Philippine Insurrection of (1899–1902) of parallel lessons learned on today's operations. American forces saw history repeat its self when engaged in counterinsurgency warfare during the Vietnam War (1964–1973) and in various Central American nations.

Today, modern operations that could be classified as "small wars" such as Operation JUST CAUSE in Panama in 1989 and humanitarian peacekeeping operations in Haiti, Somalia, and the former Yugoslavia has some parallelism on today's conflicts.

Much of the experiences in the Philippine Insurrection are based on past experiences of the Mexican and Civil Wars. NCOs had to learn from their own experiences as small unit leaders in a widely dispersed area and filter their experiences down to the Soldiers.

From these conflicts the NCOs roles started changing in leadership style, tactics in fighting irregular warfare with guerrillas trying to understand the people cultures and international laws. From each past conflict, the NCOs had to relearn the lesson from the past so they could understand on how to apply it to their present situation.

One example; is LTG Hal Moore (RET) in his 1992 book," We were Soldiers Once and Young" in the Ia Drang Valley in 1965 Vietnam War. LTG Moore studied historical data of his adversary tactics and the geographical area before his battalion was sent to Vietnam. Moore's battalion of 450 Soldiers fought off NVA regular, in an irregular warfare, of hit and run tactics, and ambushes for thirty-four days.

Another example of a leader, who learned from past history, is John J. Pershing who returned back to the Philippines to serve as military governor in 1909 to 1913 of Moros Province, who's population adopted the Islamic religion. Lesson learned from his first tour Pershing had to learn about the culture, religion, and language. He believed to pacify the indigenous people is by treating them as human beings, respecting their cultures, winning the populaces and leaders.

From these past conflicts up until the Philippine Insurrection the Army only fought in a conventional warfare, during that era when the army had to deal with the guerrillas and insurgents they found this type of warfare to be an annoyance, harassment and a sideshow the real war was fought by regular units on the battlefield.

Some people will argue that this type of history is not a necessity for the professional Soldiers.

During the pacification phase such as the reconstruction of the south, the military was culturally ignorant of the southern people's way of life and was not concerned of the outcome of decisions made by the leaders. The north wanted the southern people to be like them in their image this helped fuel the guerrilla warfare which made the reconstruction phase unsuccessful. The U.S government tried to pacify the Indian, Mexican and Spanish and proved to be unsuccessful in that time frame. The military did not consider the culture or belief of these people as they tried to make them into America's image.

The Army training was fought on conventional warfare as it began its tactical and organizational changes in the military on open battle formations. From these changes the combat leadership role for the NCOs increased, as a small unit leader that troops relied heavily on their knowledge and abilities.

As new technology came in and reshaped the Army during the Civil War, (i.e. the railroad, telegraph communications, steamships, balloons) impacted the NCOs rank structure and benefits. From all the past conflicts to include the Indian Campaign, the NCO role has changed to more increased responsibilities (i.e. Small unit leader in the western front, and during the reconstruction in the south they were administrators, police to help deter or quell violence).

As the changing Army environment the NCOs responsibilities increased taking greater care in the daily lives of their troops by training, inspecting, and ensuring the cleanliness and health were met.

This provided the Officers and NCOs with experiences that aided them as military administrators, small unit leaders, and cultural awareness, the lesson learned from the Indian Campaigns provided experience that was applicable in the Philippines fighting in an unconventional warfare.

From these past conflicts there were no international guidelines to follow until General Order 100 was established in 1862; this order gave some direction for doctrine in the Philippines on how to deal with guerrillas and to protect the noncombatants. This order became the foundation for the Hague Conventions in 1899 and 1907.

From these experiences, the Army had to adapt to such unorthodox measures in conducting irregular warfare against opponents who fought in accordance with their cultural norms. In the process the NCOs and Soldiers technical, tactical ability played a critical role in developing the west, south and Philippine country. In Transportation, communication systems, conducting surveys and promoting education, and stimulating economic growth.

These experiences have shown that history may not be the same, but it does repeat itself such as in the decision making process in current operations. Programs were enacted to feed the poor, promote sanitation and support public institutions.

When the guerrilla forces saw how the US Military was trying to protect and win the populace, by isolating the people from the insurgents they began to disrupt supply lines, and ambush patrols.

In 1898, the US declared war on Spain to liberate Cuban and the Philippine people from the harsh colonial masters and to restore a degree of stability in a country and region that was deemed critical to the US strategic and economic interests.

From that decision it inaugurated a new era in US history, from that point on down to the present day, US forces would be engaged overseas on a continuous basis.

The US military defeated the Spanish in a conventional warfare and the in postwar. Washington imposed military government to clean up and refashion Cuba political, economic, social standards in America's image.

America refused to recognize the Philippine leaders and slated the country to become a U.S colony; this triggered the Philippine War in 1899, this can be compared with Iraq and Afghanistan. The Moro's adopted Islamic religion the Filipino natives practiced the rite of juramentado, an interpretation of jihad that is similar in today's suicide terrorists.

Maj. Gen Peter W. Chiarelli article winning the Peace the Requirement for Full Spectrum Operations in 2004-2005 in Iraq and Afghanistan stated in the article for the last 3 decades he has been preparing the training model to win the nation's wars on the plain of Europe or the deserts of the Middle East. MG. Chiarelli studied the historical data then applied lesson learned and did not underestimate the enemy; he repeated the concept of the past, what Pershing, Allen and Bullard did in the Philippines. He negotiated with the officials and isolated the people of the city from the insurgents, conducted civil affairs operations, trained and employed Iraqi security forces. Chiarelli stated in his article that success in Iraq and Afghanistan will require more than combat operation, to win, we must achieve a political, economic, and military victory.

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From his statement it shows he studied the past history, tangible evidence shows that military history is a valuable asset for the professional Soldiers. He believes that all leaders continue to go through more leadership, and cultural awareness training.

FM 3-06 discusses historical data i.e. cultures, warfare, geographical history on the planner use of the lesson learned and apply them to the challenge at hand.

Cultural awareness, fighting guerrillas and insurgents, is not a new concept, More than 100 years ago during a similar counterinsurgency mission conducted by Captain John J. Pershing, used a form of cultural awareness he called diplomacy.

Officers by the name of Maj. Henry T. Allen and Maj. Robert L. Bullard also practiced cultural awareness and to fight against the guerrillas, the emphasis was on cultural understanding, language, and religion to win the populace. They worked with the people by establishing schools, improving sanitation, building roads, provided medical assistance and conducted civil affair operations. They negotiated with the village chiefs to combat against the guerrillas, by employing training scouts and native units as security forces to keep the peace in the village.

As the conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan continues, cultural awareness training is a very important concept for the military and public. To win over the local population the Soldiers has to understand the culture, language in which they fight. Cultural awareness training gives the NCOs and Soldiers the understanding and appreciation they bring to the fight. Knowledge and competencies in culture awareness can influence the mission, and avoid mistakes that can have far-reaching consequences.

Conclusion

The NCOs and Officers learned from the historical data, similarities and experience from the Philippine Insurrection, the theories used to help develop policy, doctrines to understand the cultures and to pacify the indigenous people in the Philippines. The same practices are found to be used in today's conflict.

To study history varies in our profession and is critical in our daily operation, as well as on the battlefield. The NCOs can learn and benefit since being the small unit leader and having direct contact with the Soldiers in a widely dispersed area on the battlefield. There are similarities from the past and in today's conflicts, in Iraq and Afghanistan, that is to understand culture, counterinsurgencies, and to master the challenges of full spectrum operations on the battlefield. The NCOs need to continue to grow, learn and to maintain doctrinal currency and relevancy. Maintaining currency and relevancy means collecting, assessing, analyzing, sharing, integrating into training, educating the observations, insights, lessons learned, and TTPs during training exercises and operational deployments.

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