

Tony Williams

Student Number

SGM NRC Class 34

October 19, 2007

Non-Commission Officer in America 1945 – Present

Throughout history the Non-Commission Officer (NCO) has played an indispensable role in the readiness of the United States Army. The NCO Corps have contributed input in the development of lighter more efficient weapons, assumed more duties and responsibilities past due to transformation, led the way in training the force and placed emphasis on advance education, and the NCO Corps had many soldiers who have performed above and beyond the call of duty in acts of heroism past and present. These are just a few contributions the NCO Corps has made to the United States Army over the past 60 years and each will be discussed in greater detail. Let it be known that the tradition and dedication to duty is why the NCO Corps is considered the back bone of the Army and has stood the test of time conflict after conflict.

The NCO Corps over the last few years has made many contributions in the development of lighter more efficient weapons. First and foremost the weapons used today are better than those of previous years. The basic weapons in 1945 were the M-1 rifle. It was the standard weapon for the NCO Corps and the US Infantry soldier in World War II. The United States entered into World War II as the only country with a Semi-Automatic Rifle as standard issue for its troops. The M1 was gas operated, self-loading shoulder weapon and it was heavy. The total weapon weight with bayonet attached was over 11 pounds. The NCO criticisms of the M1 were its weight, limited ammunition supply, the fact that single rounds could not be pushed

in (eight round clips, or nothing). Also, the spent clip was automatically ejected after the last round was fired, making a distinctive sound, which could be fatal in quarter or sniper operations. The M1 was a robust weapon, but the NCO Corps requested something lighter, faster firing, and more controllable. Based on the input from the NCO Corps after World War II, the Army began to search for a lightweight replacement for the M1. In 1957, based on the information received from NCOs and the soldiers in the field, the Army selected the M14 rifle. Even with that new issue for the Army, the NCO Corps was always trying to improve their main hand to hand combat weapon. The M14 was the standard service rifle until it was replaced in 1966 by the 5.56mm M16A1 rifle. The M16 was lighter and could fire more rounds. It had the capability to hold a 20 or 30 round clip. It became the table of organization issue rifle during the Vietnam War for the NCO and his soldier. Although it has had many modifications, the M16 is still the standard issue weapon to date. The NCO Corps and superiors want to make the Army a more lethal and agile force. The NCO Corps primary goal is to improve the individual soldier performance, and increase the ability to survive. The advance technology in weapons development is a great start to making the NCOs and his soldier lighter, more lethal and more agile.

The Non-Commissioned Officer's duties have changed significantly over the last 60 years due to the transformation of the Army. The NCO Corps primary objective is to take care of soldiers and accomplishment of the mission. That requires that our voices are heard through the chain of command. From World War II through the Vietnam War, NCO duties were not multi task as they are today. A wide variety of military occupations existed back then. You concentrated on just that military occupation specialty you were trained in. Due to the

transformation of the Army, the NCO and their soldiers have assumed a multitude of additional duties. They consist of guarding air, bridges, and national monument or areas the federal government considered high risk. In addition to that, the military is getting smaller by drawing down, plus the war on terrorism, which has led to the NCO duties to be increased even more. This has created greater demand upon the NCO Corps and impacted the NCOs roles, duties and responsibilities way beyond what the NCO was subject to years ago. Although there is large reduction in forces, and the demands stated above are critical to the freedom we have today, the NCO Corps is committed to value, and loyalties that we cherish as soldiers. The NCO Corps will continue to maintain the highest standard of tradition and commitments to the Army vision.

The Non-Commissioned Officers train our forces. The NCO Corps must train to stay technically and tactically proficient and ready for war. While American troops fought in the war in the Philippines, other units were being formed in the United States. The Army used NCOs active duty prior to America's entry in the war as trainers for troops earmarked for duty overseas, in the expandable Army concept. NCOs conducted all training. The major problem was that the rapid expansion of the Army led to a decrease in experienced men in the Non-Commissioned Officer ranks. If a man showed potential, he was promoted, with privates becoming corporals, and corporals, sergeants. In post-World War II era, there were two programs, which affected NCOs. They were Career Guidance Plan and professional schools for NCOs. The technical ratings were dropped and emphasis was placed on service-wide standards for NCO selection and training. As a result of the continued growth of technology, a new emphasis on education and training began. The first course attended was the Leadership

Development Course, which emphasizes how to lead, train, the duties, responsibilities and authorities of NCOs. Emphasis on NCO education increased to the point that by 1959 over 180,000 soldiers attended NCO academies located in the continental United States. In addition to NCO academies, the army encouraged enlisted soldiers to advance their education by other means in hope that additional training would help in obtaining and retaining NCOs. At this point the NCO ranks were corporal, sergeant, staff sergeant, sergeant first class, master sergeant, and sergeant major. Today the NCO retains the duties and responsibilities given to him by United States Army to challenge the mind and lead the way into the 21st century.

NCO heroes pass and present are being made every day. During military conflicts over the years we have witnessed heroic deeds by many Non-Commissioned Officers. Even though we are best trained and most advanced in the world, war is ugly and lives are lost in the heat of battle. Some have passed on, but some live to tell their heroic stories. For example, World War II witnessed a heroic deed by Staff Sergeant Charles W. Shea at Monte Damian a Non-Commissioned Officers in Italy. On 12 May 1944, he encountered heavy machine gun fire as his company advanced. He hurled a grenade into the first of these, capturing four enemy soldiers; moved to the second and forced the two-man crew to surrender. He then moved to the third. Coming under fire, he rushed that position and killed its three defenders. With this, Shea's unit continued to advance. Near Surang-ni, 1953 during the Korean War, Sergeant Ola L. Mize led the defense of "Outpost Harry " learning of a wounded soldier in an outlying listening post, during an artillery barrage, Mize moved to rescue the soldier. Returning to the main position with the soldier, Mize rallied the troops into an effective defense as the enemy attacked in

force. At dawn, Mize formed the survivors into a unit and successfully led a counter attack, which cleared the enemy from the outpost, by Patricia Rhodes.

There were many outstanding acts of heroism during the Vietnam War; one of the most outstanding was that of Sergeant First Class Eugene Ashley. During the initial stages of the defense of Camp Lang Vei, Ashley supported the camp with high explosives and illumination mortar rounds. He organized a small assault force composed of local friendly forces. Wounded by machine gun fire, Ashley continued on, finally directing air strikes on his own position to clear the enemy. As with years gone by, today the dangers of our wars and conflicts have come to be more deadly. This is mainly due to the uncertainties of who the enemies really are, yet NCOs are performing heroic acts constantly with praise from their superior and the American public. Fighting this different global war on terrorism has and will produce more as this conflict continues.

From the past to present you can see how NCOs must feel about their accomplishments to the advancement of the United States Army the most effective and efficient ground force in the world. The Non-Commissioned Officer Corps exists to prove purpose when establishing priorities, explain the importance of missions, and focus our soldiers on the task assigned by superiors. The NCO Corps must continually remain in touch with the soldiers in order to know if the unit is able to function efficiently and remain disciplined during any conflict or battle. It is necessary to provide tough realistic training to develop them into a cohesive team. The NCO Corps objective is to ensure that our unit is at all times fully prepared to enter into combat and get the job done with honor. NCOs feel about their subordinates much as parents feel about their children. The NCO's duty is to take care of soldiers every need. We make sure they have

the most advance weapon possible. NCOs guide them, teach them, discipline them, respect them, agonize over their problems and even love them. Although the NCO Corps has seen an increase in duties and responsibilities, we make sure that realistic training for our soldiers is as close to actual war is humanly possible. The NCO has put new emphasis on the soldiers to strive for higher education. The NCO Corps stresses that higher education is key to success in the military today. NCOs make sure that our superiors hear us when there are changes we feel are needed, or if safety is a concern. The NCO Corps demands to be the best equipped soldiers in the world today. The NCO Corps honor those NCOs who have gone before us and praises those involved in a heroic acts that lived to share it with the NCO Corp. The NCO Corps is the backbone of the Army.

Work Site

[The Center for Advanced Studies of the U.S. Army Noncommissioned Officer \(United States\)](#)

[A Short History of the NCO \(United States\)](#)

[History of noncommissioned officers \(United States\)](#)

[Educating Noncommissioned Officers: The history \(United States\)](#)

<http://www.ncohistory.com/Quotebooks/Leadership/Quotebook1.pdf>

http://www.armystudyguide.com/content/army_board_study_guide_topics/nco_history/history-of-the-nco-creed.shtml