

# The history of non commission officer ( nco )

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A non-commissioned officer is also known as an NCO or Noncom, is an enlisted member of an armed force. NCO is given authority by a commissioned officer. In general, the NCO corps includes all the grades of sergeant and, in some militaries, corporals and warrant officers and in naval some or all grades of petty officer. If we look at the history of NCO in United States, it began in 1775, with the birth of the Continental Army. As the years went by the American political system, disregard for the aristocracy, social attitudes, and the vast westward expanses further removed the U. S. Army noncommissioned officer from his European counterparts and created exclusively an American noncommissioned officer. During the early days of American Revolution, little standardization of NCO duties or responsibilities existed.

From the American Revolution to World War II, there were a lot of transformations that happened. For instance, the noncommissioned officer received his promotion from the regimental commander. Besides, entire careers were often spent within one regiment and if a man was transferred from one regiment to the next he did not take his rank with him. The General in Chief of the Army was always required to give permission to be transferred noncommissioned officer from one regiment to another which was rarely done.

In the year 1825 the first attempt was made to establish a systematic method for noncommissioned officer selection. The selection of regimental and company noncommissioned officers remained the privilege of the regimental commander. Regimental commanders were expected to accept

the company commander's recommendations for company NCOs unless there were overriding considerations.

During the last half of the 19th Century the increase of technology accompanied modernization greatly that affected the NCO Corps. Besides, the number of NCO ranks grew rapidly and each new introduction of technology created another pay grade. Though till the 19th century the duties of NCOs were not clearly defined, in the last half of the 19th Century the duties of the noncommissioned officer were clearly defined.

The five or six pages of instructions, provided by von Steuben's Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States in 1778 grew to 417 pages when the Noncommissioned Officers Manual was printed in 1909. Today as the Noncommissioned Officer Education System continues to grow, the history and tradition combines with skill and ability to prepare for battle. A NCO retains the duties and responsibilities given to him by von Steuben in 1778, and these have been built upon to produce the soldier of the present day (Arms n. pag, 1989).

A good NCO serves as administrative or training personnel and as advisors to the officer corps. Therefore they need to be faithful and ethically strong. Their most important function is as a link between the 'common soldier' and the (commissioned) officer. Senior NCOs are also often responsible for giving on-the-job training to the junior officers. Therefore a combination of knowledge, skills and attitude is essential for a NCO. Moral competence include five main components- the ability to recognize a moral dimension; The ability to define the moral dimension of a situation or dilemma and to

describe which values are at issue; The ability to communicate the judgement towards others effectively; The will to act upon one's decision; and To be accountable for one's actions (Verweij 28).

The Non-Commissioned Officer is considered as the backbone of the Armed Forces. The NCO is expected to be a commander, trainer and combat leader. He also serves as a role model for his team of soldiers. Therefore, a good NCO need to have strong moral values (Wortel and Schoenmakers n. pag, 2006). An NCO must lead by example and train his team of soldiers to a high level of proficiency and readiness in their team skills. Therefore it can be said that an NCO's job is to get things done without having to be told first by a commissioned officer.

## **Work Cited**

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