

# THE CARE AND CLEANING OF NCOs

## POLICIES AND PRACTICES

1939 - 1969

By

John M. Collins

DEDICATION

To Sergeant Major Paul T. Connolly  
and other non-commissioned troop leaders of the U.S. Army,  
who deserve better than they get  
from the policy-makers and practitioners who chart their course.



Frontispiece. Combat NCO, Belgium, 1945, Sergeant  
Joseph Holmes, Company C, 320th Infantry near  
Bastogne.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
DEDICATION . . . . .	ii
AUTHOR'S PREFACE . . . . .	iv
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS. . . . .	xi
LIST OF FIGURES. . . . .	xii
THE SETTING. . . . .	1

### PART I. ANCIENT HISTORY

Chapter		
1.	THE MYTHICAL GOLDEN AGE. . . . .	6
	The Cohesive Pattern of Military Life, Anno Domini 1939	
	Place of the Army in the National Scene	
	Obstacles to Fulfillment of Essential Tasks	
	Role of the NCO in Perspective	

### PART II. THE MIDDLE AGES

2.	TWILIGHT OF THE GODS . . . . .	24
	Classification/Assignment Policies Degrading NCO Corps	
	Preferential Treatment of Army Air Forces	
	Officer Candidate Schools Skim Cream	
	Impact of Army Specialized Training Program	
	Non-Commissioned Poverty in the Combat Arms	
	Organizational Changes Magnifying Personnel Deficiencies	
	Effect of Accelerated Promotions	
	Training Defects	
	Belated Enlisted Personnel Policy Changes in 1944	
	Outcome	
3.	THE AGE OF DARKNESS. . . . .	54

Democratization of the Army and Deteriorization of Discipline  
     Impact of the Coolittle Board  
     Advent of the Uniform Code of Military Justice  
     The National Frame of Mind  
 NCO Performance in Korea -- Strengths and Weaknesses  
 Organizational Imbalance as Applied to NCO's  
 Post-Korea Problems

PART III. MODERN TIMES

4.	LET THERE BE LIGHT . . . . .	80
	Recruiting and Retention Tactics in the late 1950's The Great Enlisted Renovation, 1957-58 Purpose and Performance of U.S. Army Recruiting Command Current Re-enlistment Trends	
5.	AS THE TWIG IS BENT. . . . .	94
	Basic Training Horror Story, 1956 Training Center Fumigation The Drill Sergeant Program -- Trials and Tribulations USCOMARC Leader Preparation Course NCO Academies -- Then and Now Present Trends of NCO Professional Education	
6.	THE TOP HEAVY TOTEM POLE . . . . .	123
	The Super Grade Program The Great Stripe Hassle Distortions in the Current Enlisted Grade Structure	
7.	THE COMICAL CHEVRON SWEEPSTAKES. . . . .	140
	Promotion Patterns Since 1956 Promotion Gimmicks in Response to the Vietnam War Cordiner's Views on Enlisted Pay Enlisted Pay Problems Today	

PART IV. THE ROAD AHEAD

8.	STONY PATH TO THE PROMISED LAND. . . . .	166
	Recruiting and Re-enlistment Azimuths	

Resurrection of Enlisted "Castes"  
Remuneration Based on Merit  
Refulgent Training for NCO's  
Advice for Commissioned Officers

Page

APPENDIX I. PRINCIPAL POLICY-MAKERS OF THE U.S. ARMY, 1939-1967. . . . .	183
APPENDIX II. TABLE OF COMPARATIVE ENLISTED GRADES, 1939-1967. .	184
APPENDIX III. SELECTED ABBREVIATIONS . . . . .	185
FOOTNOTES. . . . .	190
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . .	215
INDEX. . . . .	224

LIST OF FIGURES

	Figure	Page
	1. Enlisted Grade Structure, 30 June 1939 . . . . .	18
	2. Organization, Infantry Rifle Company, 1939 . . . . .	19
Table	3. Monthly Enlisted Pay Rates, 1939 . . . . .	21
Table	4. Cost of Living, 1939; Selected Items . . . . .	22
Table	5. Selected Civilian Union Wages, 1939. . . . .	22
Table	6. Enlisted Personnel Accessions During World War II. . . . .	48
	7. Enlisted Grade Structure, 31 May 1945. . . . .	49
Table	8. Officer Candidate School Graduates, World War II . . . . .	50
Table	9. Requirement and Replacement Rates, Military Specialists, January 1943 . . . . .	51
	10. Organization, Infantry Rifle Company, 1945 . . . . .	52
Table	11. Enlistment Rates, August-December 1945 . . . . .	74
Table	12. Comparison Between Article of War 104 (Pre-1949) and UCMJ Article 15 (1951). . . . .	75
	13. Organization, Infantry Rifle Company, 1950 . . . . .	76
	14. Enlisted Grade Structure, June 1952 Versus February 1958	78
	15. Sample Re-enlistment Handbill. . . . .	92
	16. Sample Recruiting Propaganda . . . . .	93
Table?	17. Schedule of Instruction, Basic Combat Training . . . . .	118
Table	18. Letter From CG, USARV to Army Chief of Staff . . . . .	119
Table	19. Drill Sergeant Status Report, 7 October 1966 . . . . .	120



	Figure	Page
<i>Table</i>	20. NCO Academy Mandatory Subjects . . . . .	121
"	21. Proposed NCO College Curriculum, Mandatory Subjects. . . . .	122
	22. NCO Precedence Today . . . . .	136
	23. Proposed Enlisted Insignia and Titles, 1 September 1965. . . . .	137
	24. Enlisted Grade Structure, 30 June 1966 . . . . .	138
<i>Table</i>	25. Percentage Comparison, NCO Grade Structure, 1939-1952- 1958-1966. . . . .	139
<i>Table</i>	26. Basic Criteria for Temporary Enlisted Promotions, Grades E-4 through E-9. . . . .	157
"	27. Unique Enlisted Promotion Criteria for Vietnam . . . . .	159
"	28. Trends in Enlisted Strength vs Time-in-Service. . . . .	160
"	29. Monthly Rates of Enlisted Basic Pay, 1956. . . . .	161
"	30. Cordiner's Proposal for Enlisted Basic Pay . . . . .	162
"	31. Monthly Rates of Enlisted Basic Pay, 1967. . . . .	163
	32. Non-Commissioned Hierarchy, According to St. John the Intrepid . . . . .	180
"	33. Enlightened Enlisted Pay Scales, Based on Merit. . . . .	182

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Photo	Page
Frontispiece. Combat NCO, Belgium, 1945. . . . .	iii
1. "Old Army" Rifle Squad Poses for Posterity . .	7a
2. Master Sergeant Curtis G. Culin, Modern Leonardo . . . . .	46a
3. Non-Commissioned Watchman in Korea . . . . .	70a
4. Recruiting Sergeant Charms Another Bird From the Trees. . . . .	88a
5. Fort Jackson Drill Sergeant Shows the Way. . .	103a
6. Sergeant Major of the Army, William O. Wooldridge . . . . .	132a
7. Professional NCO in the 1960's . . . . .	143a
8. First Soldier All the Way: First Sergeant Leonard A. Funk, jr. Receives the Medal of Honor. . . . .	159a

## PREFACE

Former Presidential Press Secretary Pierre Salinger, when challenged to a 50-mile hike, had the presence of mind to chortle, "I may be plucky, but I'm not stupid!"

The author, lacking such commendable self control, voluntarily joins the ranks of drunks, fools and Quixotic windmill jousts by attacking the Army's sacred cow, the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps.

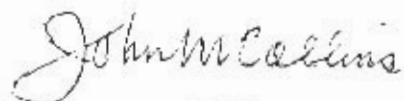
Actually, wrath falls not on NCO's, but on the policy-makers and practitioners who, willy-nilly, have actively aided and abetted the demise of enlisted leadership since the days of my long-lost youth, by essaying absurdities over and over until they finally congealed as doctrine. No matter whether the decline and fall is relative or absolute, the loss of responsibility and authority over the past 30 years is agonizingly real.

This critique began as a frontal assault in 1964, taking shape as a subjective, opinionated and abortive magazine article denouncing management ills and concocting half-formed corrections. Reluctantly, the manuscript was interred with full military honors early in 1965, but the basic idea lingered on.

Subsequent efforts by grand potentates and other great high moguls to shore up the damage made faltering progress, but nowhere was there evidence of a master plan.

Since almost nothing has been published on this subject, except in fragmented form, my treatise was pieced together like a patch-work quilt from wildly diverse sources, ranging from newspaper clippings to statistical abstracts. Much of the material is primary, including personal letters, memoranda, colloquies, working papers and official documents buried in musty, little-used files. Invaluable assistance was donated by military personnel and civilians alike in the National Archives and Federal Records Center; Department of the Army offices and operating commands, particularly Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (DCSPER) and Office of the Chief of Military History; and in Libraries of Congress, the National War College, Industrial College of the Armed Forces and the Pentagon.

The final product is far from being a definitive work, but if it is provocative, it serves its purpose well. It is my fondest hope that the views expressed herein may stimulate new thought among those in positions of power, and that the resultant ideas may be translated into action beneficial to Army NCO's.



John M. Collins  
Alexandria, Virginia  
March 1969

Any naive, country boy assumption that the conclusions and recommendations herein really might serve some useful official purpose were quickly and rudely dispelled.

First, a nearly-complete draft was submitted to Sergeant Major of the Army William O. Wooldridge, who was asked if he could see his way clear to contribute a two-page foreword -- not an indorsement, but a simple statement saying "when I was a young noncom, there were some problems; now that I am the senior NCO in the Army, this is what we are doing about them."

Further audience with this gentleman was not forthcoming. Telephonically, his Staff Sergeant assistant reported that SMG Wooldridge indeed had read the document twice, "with interest", but had been directed by Chief of Staff Harold Johnson to keep hands off. The draft was returned by mail. End of subject.

In conformance with Army Regulations, which stipulate that all formal public utterances by active duty members must first be cleared for security, accuracy and suitability, the Office for the Freedom of Information dispensed three copies of the final manuscript to ~~Deputy Chief of Staff~~ DCSPER ~~for Personnel (DCSPER)~~ on 23 March 1967 for beatification; a fourth draft found its way through the back door.

Enthusiasm at the "indian" level in some cases was high, but among those in authority, reaction almost universally was belligerent and defensive.

Colonel Charles L. Crain, DCSPER's Chief of Classification and Standards Division, conceded that "the conclusions and recommendations are certainly well thought out", and asked for a retention copy, despite "shock-



ing poor taste (and) crudities....not indicative of what we would expect from a Regular Army officer." After all, he reproved, "angry criticisms of policy and policy makers usually are not popular or acceptable....In its present form, (the book) would probably provoke only a feeling of anger, then disgust at the vulgarity, and finally questioning the competence and worth of the author." Perhaps, he opined, "it could be reoriented and purged."

Lieutenant General James K. Woolnough, then the DCSPER, was less charitable. Although neither security matters nor factual accuracy ever were in doubt, his official censure, repeated in full below, irretrievably slammed the door -- brooking no discussion, negotiation, rebuttal or appeal:

"1. DCSPER objects to publication of the attached manuscript at the present time.

2. Publication of this manuscript would tend to create controversy. Such controversy at a time when the Army is forced to defer consideration of some personnel policy areas due to personnel turbulence, Southeast Asia requirements and budgetary limitations, could only result in lowering morale.

3. It appears to DCSPER to be inconsistent with accepted ethical standards. The author has used the time and effort of other officers to write an article critical of his own Service.\* Its publication will necessarily require more time and effort in providing rebuttals to the questions which will be raised.

FOR THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR PERSONNEL:

Incl  
nc

DONALD R. WARD  
Colonel, GS  
Executive "

---

\* DCSPER graciously made certain files available to the author, thus aiding in research. Total time devoted by other officers, including discussion of findings, approximated 3-4 man-hours.

The DCSPER position was firm on 1 May 1967, and was forwarded to the Office for the Freedom of Information at that time. Despite repeated queries from the author, who was scheduled to depart for duty in Vietnam in mid-June 1967, neither DCSPER nor the information office apprised him of the rejection until 2 June. Reasons for this devious tactic are obscure, but by implication, it seemed calculated to obviate any unpleasant confrontations with an intractable officer who soon would be out of sight and out of mind.

Now, seven years after the original magazine article was bombed by DCSPER for "exceeding the bounds of propriety", this historical overlook of the Army NCO Corps finally is free for publication.

Incidentally, an equally illuminating dossier could be compiled concerning progress of the Officer Corps since 1939, in light of ever-increasing assumption of command responsibility by civilians, concentration of authority at higher and higher echelons, absorption of commissioned officers into the civilian community during off-duty hours, divergent assignment, training, promotion and retention policies for Regular Army officers versus Reserves on Extended Active Duty, the impact of specialization as opposed to generalization, fancifully inflated efficiency reports and a variety of other applicable factors. Haggard and hairless John Martin Collins is not the one to do this. He now lacks zeal and zest, and his flesh is weak. This absorbing task remains for one of a younger generation.

John M. Collins  
Colonel, USA (Ret)

WEST JACKRABBIT, Neb.  
14 MAY 1971

viic