



Once used mainly by infantry soldiers, hooah has spread throughout the Army.

# Hooah!

*No matter how you spell it, hooah has become the all-purpose expression of choice for many soldiers.*

Story by Sgt. Audrey Brunson

**Y**OU can hear it echoing from the hallowed halls of Fort Benning, Ga.'s Infantry Center to the ranges at Fort Lewis, Wash. It is uttered at award ceremonies, bellowed from formations, and repeated before, during and after training missions.

Visit just about any Army office building, sports field, dining facility, gymnasium or academy and you will probably hear someone exclaim "HOOAH!"

No matter how one might spell the word — with or without a hyphen, a U instead of two Os, and so on — the word is still an expression of high morale, strength and confidence. And, when powered by an overwhelmingly proud, and usually loud, tone of voice, hooah seems to stomp out any possibility of being bound by the written word.

Sgt. Audrey Brunson is a staff writer for the Pentagon, the Military District of Washington newspaper.

"It's an affirmation that I fully agree with and support the idea or intent expressed by the person to whom I make that response," said Maj. Gen. F.A. Gordon, Military District of Washington commander. "It applies not only to the letter of what was said, but to the spirit of what was said."

Army Chief of Staff Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan has his interpretation. "I don't know how exactly to spell it, but I know what it means," Sullivan said. "It means we have broken the mold. We are battle focused. Hooah says 'Look at me. I'm a warrior. I'm ready. Sergeants trained me to standard. I serve America every day, all the way.'"

The modern hooah, primarily associated with but not restricted to the infantry, originated with the Second Dragoons in Florida as "hough" in 1841. In an attempt to end the war with the Seminoles, a meeting was arranged with the Indian Chief Coacoochee. After the meeting, there was a banquet.

Garrison officers made a variety of toasts, including "Here's to luck" and "The old grudge" before drinking. Coacoochee asked Gopher John, an interpreter, the meaning of the officers' toasts. Gopher John responded, "It means, 'How d'ye do.'"

The chief then lifted his cup above his head and exclaimed in a deep, guttural voice, "hough."

And so the expression was born. It has since achieved high popularity — having lasted for more than 150 years, through the American Civil War, two world wars, the Korean conflict, the Vietnam war, Operation Just Cause in Grenada and the Persian Gulf war.

And the expression continually grows in popularity. Once heard mainly from infantry soldiers, hooah has spread throughout the rest of the Army. Soldiers will continue to acknowledge a mission to be accomplished, a job well done, victory at a sporting event or any occasion imaginable with hooah. □

June 95

SOLDIERS

## HISTORY NOTES

### "HOOAH" (HOO-A)

"HOOAH" the familiar army sentiment which roughly means "cando" or "good job", has its origins around 1841 with the Second Dragoons in Florida. In an attempt to end the war with the seminoles, a meeting was arranged with Chief Coacoochee. After the meeting a banquet was held. Officers of the garrison made a variety of toasts, such as "here's to luck!", and "the old grudge", before drinking.

Coacoochee asked Gopher John, an interpreter, the meaning of what was said. The interpreter explained that "it means, How d'ye do!", whereupon the chief, with great dignity, lifted his cup and, elevating it over his head, exclaimed in deep, guttural, and triumphant voice, "Hooah."

SOURCE: Stephen J. Allie, Director, Frontier Army Museum

**FORT JACKSON MUSEUM**

The "Salute to the Union," commemorative of the Declaration of Independence and consisting of one gun for each State, is fired at noon on July 4 at every post provided with suitable artillery. The salute at present consists of 46 guns.

**Dough Boy.** The following versions are given of the derivation of the expression "Dough Boy" as meaning "Infantryman":

1 In olden times, when Infantrymen used to clean their white trimmings with pipe-clay, if caught in the rain the whitening would run, forming a kind of dough—hence the sobriquet "dough boy."

2 The tramp of Infantry marching in mud sounds as if their shoes were being worked and pressed in "dough."

3 From "Adobe" (mud) then "Dobie"—the idea being infantrymen are the soldiers who have to march in the mud; hence the expressions used in the sixties and early seventies in referring to Infantrymen as "Dobie crushers," "Dobie makers" and "Mud crushers."

4 However, Infantrymen think they are called "Dough boys" because they are always "kneaded" (needed)!

(Probably loyal Infantrymen think this for the same reason that good Artillerymen say Artillerymen are called "Wagon soldiers" because they are the ones who always "deliver the goods.")

**How.** The expression "How," used by Army men in drinking, is equivalent to the expressions "Here's to your health," "My best regards," etc.

Some think it is merely the Indian corruption of "How d'ye do?"—the usual salutation of the white man, abbreviated by the Indian into "How," and taken up and used by officers and soldiers who in the early days of frontier service were thrown in constant contact with the Indians.

However, on the other hand, there are others who believe the expression is derived from the Indian language direct. Colonel H. L. Scott, Superintendent of the U. S. Military Academy, and a recognized authority on the Indian language, says:

"The word has been widely used by the Indians of many tribes having different spoken languages. The earliest reference is from Alexander McKenzie (discoverer of the McKenzie River), 1789, speaking of the Cree Indians, p. 71: He then sits down and the whole company declare their approbation and thanks by uttering the word 'ho.' The next reference is found in Bradbury's *Travels in the Interior of North America*, 1809-1811. This book has been reprinted

in *Early Western Travels*, edited by Reuben Goldthwaite, vol. V., 116: Whenever their performance (Ricarses, Mandans, Gros Ventres of the Missouri singing) ceased the termination was extremely abrupt by pronouncing the word 'how' in a quick elevated tone. Consult also Alice Fletcher's *Indian Songs*. *Century Magazine*, vol. XXV, p. 421, and *Archaeological and Ethnological papers*, Peabody Museum, No. 5.

"Governor I. I. Stevens in *Pac. R. R. Report*, vol. 12, part 1, p. 75, 1853, Among the Assiniboinnes—"My remarks seemed to make a very favorable impression and were received with every mark of respect. Their approbation was shown as each paragraph was interpreted by the ejaculation 'how'—a common word answering every purpose of salutation, approval, concurrence.

"Dr. Washington Matthews in his able monograph on the Hidatsa Indians, written probably about 1868, has, p. 147, 'H-a-o,' a word used to denote approbation, gratification, agreement, assent—a greeting. It is common to many Indian languages. It is usually written 'how' by travelers, the same as the English word 'how.' It is difficult to determine the best mode of spelling. Mr. Riggs in his Dakota dictionary writes it 'hao' and 'ho,' both of which forms are used here also, although the Tdatsas rarely say 'ho.' I have heard it myself with the above signification used among the Indians of the Southern Plains—sometimes with the form 'ehow,' 'ehow'—'thanks,' among the Kiowas, Comanches, Kiowa, Apaches, Caddos, Wichitas and Delawares, Southern Cheyennes and Arapahoes in Oklahoma.

"The above references show the use of the word on the plains from the Saskatchewan River to the Rio Grande, from 1789 at least until the present day. The following from Colonel Rodenbough's book *From Everglade to Canon with the 2nd Dragoons*, p. 55, is an account of the origin of the use of the word how in the Army:

"Coacoochee, a chief of the Seminoles in Florida, was invited to meet Col. Worth at Fort Cummings near Big Cypress Swamp in Florida, March 5, 1841. Coacoochee came to the meeting and for certain reasons was treated with great consideration. . . . On this occasion originated the expression 'Hough,' which as an army sentiment, has been uttered by countless lips from the Gulf of Mexico to the St. Lawrence, from the Atlantic to the Pacific; and even the banqueting halls of foreign lands have not been strangers to the little word, so full of joyous memories to the American soldiers, although few know when, how, or where it was coined.

"Coacoochee, observing that the officers of the garrison used certain expressions, such as 'Here's luck!' 'The Old Grudge!' etc., before drinking, asked Gopher John, a negro interpreter, what they said. John was puzzled but finally explained by saying, 'It means, How D'ye do!' Whereupon the chief with great dignity lifted his cup, and, elevating it above his head, exclaimed in a deep guttural and triumphant voice, 'Hough!'

"The word was at once adopted by the officers of the Infantry and Second Dragoons, and its use has spread rapidly through the whole Army.

"**"Sounding Off" at Parade and Guard Mount.** At parade and at guard mount when the adjutant gives the command, "Sound off," it is customary for the band to play three chords or flourishes, called "THE THREE CHEERS," before beginning to play the march and marching up and down in front of the command. After the band has returned to its place and finished playing the march, the "THREE CHEERS" are again sounded.

This practice comes from the following custom that obtained during the Crusades:

Soldiers that had been selected to go on the Crusades were often formed in line with troops not so selected. The band would march past and countermarch only in front of soldiers designated for Crusade service, thus signaling out and dedicating to the cause these particular men. It is very probable that the assembled populace did considerable cheering during this part of the ceremony and it is quite likely that "THE THREE CHEERS" are symbolical of that cheering.

**Parades and Reviews** originated in the days of feudalism when rulers, as a suggestive display of their strength, were wont to parade their soldiers in the presence of other rulers.

**The Practice of Hoisting The Flag to the Peak of the Flag-Staff before Lowering it to and from Half-Staff** comes from the Navy, where the flag is invariably saluted when hoisted and also before being lowered. The saluting position of the flag is at the peak of the flag-staff—hence the flag must be raised to that position before it can be saluted upon being placed at half-staff or lowered therefrom.

**Significance of Our Insignia of Rank.** The second lieutenant stands on the level ground, looking up to his superiors at varying altitudes above him. He begins to climb toward the top, his first step



# Noncommissioned Officers' Manual

By CAPTAIN JAMES A. MOSS  
*24th U. S. Infantry*

(PRINTED APRIL, 1913.)

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