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NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS
FEB., MAY 1944

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INDEX SHEET SYNOPSIS

Directive (Limeo) 17 May 1944 Memorandum No. W 615-44

from: War Department

EXCESS GRADES RESULTING FROM RECLASSIFICATION TO LIMITED ASSIGNMENT

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Circular)

No. 70)

NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS

WAR DEPARTMENT,

Washington 25, D. C., 16 February 1944

1. The commander who lacks the moral courage and the professional skill to develop and maintain a thoroughly competent corps of noncommissioned officers throughout his command thereby demonstrates his inability to assume the responsibility of leadership in combat. Such a commander forfeits the confidence and respect of his subordinates. He destroys the morale of his organization. He will surely fail in battle. It has been clearly demonstrated in this war, as in past wars, that noncommissioned officers are the backbone of the Army. Success in combat depends upon the character and qualifications of the noncommissioned officers commanding small units. They must be outstanding leaders with a high sense of duty and a strong will. They must be resourceful and willing to assume responsibility. In order to insure that our noncommissioned officers are equal to the tasks that lie ahead of them, commanders of all echelons will give their personal attention to improving the quality and prestige of these noncommissioned officers who exercise command responsibility. 3052

2. In order that the desired results may be attained, special attention will be given to the following points:

a. The careful initial selection of noncommissioned officer material and a system of promotions that will be recognized as sound and just by all concerned. A vacancy in a grade is preferable to an incompetent incumbent. X

b. The operation of appropriate noncommissioned officer schools. Perfection in administrative details and superior instruction at all times are essential to worthy noncommissioned officer schools. The effects of schools with a lower standard will be positively detrimental. The best officers in the command should be assigned to duty with the schools. Commanders of all echelons must exercise continuous and active interest. Where practicable, noncommissioned officers attending schools should be relieved from other duties and should be quartered and messed together at some distance from their places of normal duty. C/M

c. The prompt removal of noncommissioned officers who fail to attain or maintain acceptable standards. The noncommissioned officer is handicapped who entered the service with the privates of his organization, whose service with them has been continuous, and whose training has not been more extensive than theirs. In many cases potentially efficient noncommissioned officers who are not doing acceptable work in their present organization may be saved by sending them to school, and on completion of the school course, transferring them to another unit. Noncommissioned officers who are reduced should, in general, be transferred immediately to another unit.

d. The enhancement of the advantages and prestige of the noncommissioned officer grades. Extended privileges, additional liberties, separate quarters, messes, and recreational rooms and facilities making possible superior personal appearance may be included with appropriate measures to enhance the popularity and prestige of noncommissioned officer grades.

e. The public recognition through news releases, orders, and other appropriate means of the accomplishments and importance of the noncommissioned officers.

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f. The delegation to noncommissioned officers of all authority that is rightfully theirs and the creation of increased opportunity for the noncommissioned officers to exercise command and initiative. Especially in organizations with a commissioned overstrength, there has been a tendency to permit the surplus officers to usurp the authority of the noncommissioned officers. This practice must be discontinued. In general, officers must deal with enlisted men through the appropriate noncommissioned officers. The competent commander will create innumerable situations in which his noncommissioned officers are required to exercise initiative and leadership.

g. The consultation with appropriate noncommissioned officers in planning the implementation of directives. The prestige of a noncommissioned officer is materially raised if he invariably has information in advance of its dissemination to the command as a whole, and if his recommendations are sought by his commander.

h. The avoidance of embarrassment of noncommissioned officers in the presence of their subordinates. The training, correction, and disciplining of noncommissioned officers should be so conducted as to protect them from degrading embarrassment in the presence of their subordinates.

i. The thorough indoctrination of every noncommissioned officer with the importance and responsibility of his grade and position.

(A. G. 221 (15 Feb 44).)

By order of the Secretary of War:

G. C. MARSHALL,
Chief of Staff.

OFFICIAL:

J. A. ULIO,
Major General,
The Adjutant General.

Reproduced, Hq Peninsular Base Section,
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