

ATTITUDES TOWARD
NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICERS

The relationship of leadership to morale makes it important to study attitudes of soldiers toward their noncommissioned officers.

The data reported here are from two surveys:

Attitudes toward the selection of noncoms were learned from a study of a representative cross-section of white enlisted men in all arms and services in the United States in February, 1943.

Material on the evaluation of noncom abilities comes from a survey of company grade officers of six Infantry divisions and a representative cross-section of the enlisted men in the same divisions. This survey was made in April and May, 1943.



PROMOTION . . . AS THE
SOLDIERS SEE IT

A high percentage of enlisted men--3 out of 5--say that the noncoms they know are about as good as could have been picked from their outfits.

Privates are almost as favorable on this point as are non-coms.

Two-thirds of those who approve the selection of non-coms or are doubtful on this point say that noncoms win their stripes through ability.

Many of the men who do not believe their noncoms were well chosen believe that bootlicking is the main way to get promotion.

* * *

Two men out of every five think methods of selecting non-coms can be improved. The most frequent concrete suggestion is to require examinations before promotion.

Well educated men are the most often critical of promotion methods--in spite of the fact that the well educated have the best chance for promotion (See page 29).

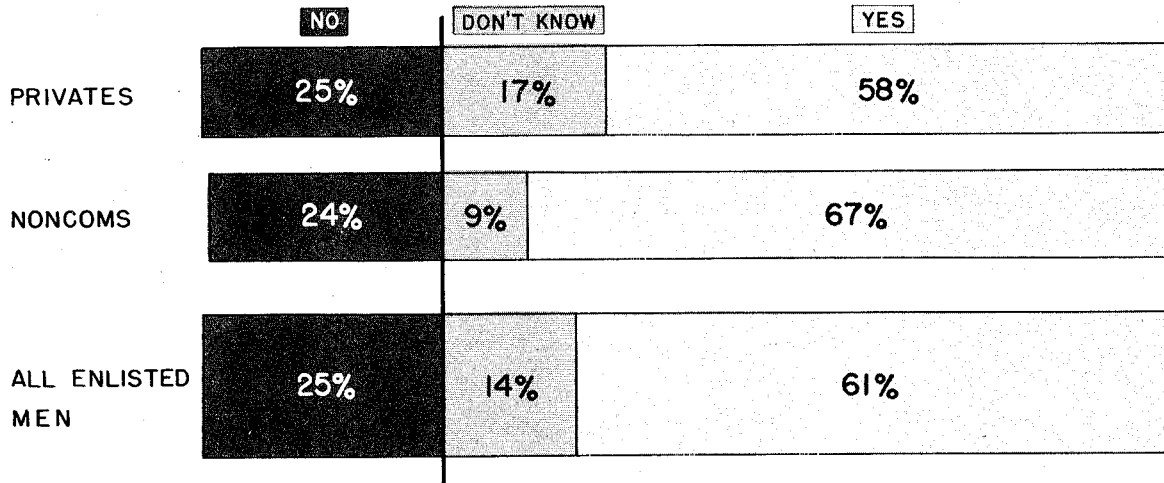
Privates with long service are more critical of promotion methods than are new recruits. Even among noncoms, there is slightly less respect for promotion methods as service lengthens.



MOST MEN APPROVE CHOICE OF NONCOMS

QUESTION: . . . "Do you think your noncoms are about as good as any that could have been picked from your outfit?"

PERCENTAGE ANSWERING

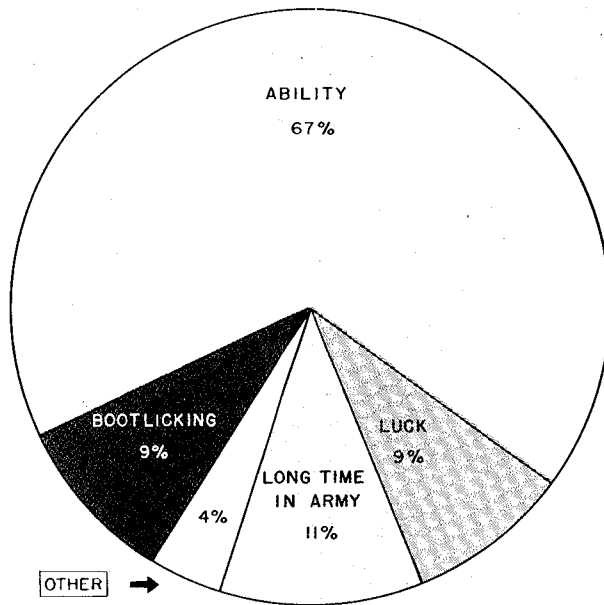
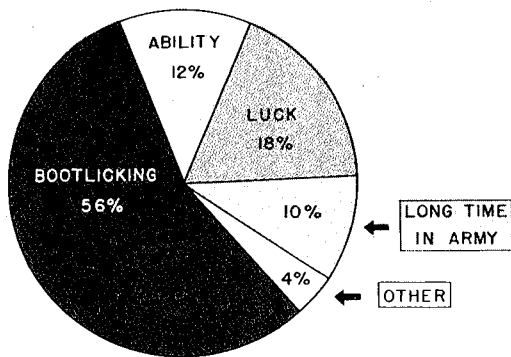


The 25% who answered "NO" and the 75% who answered "YES" or "DONT KNOW" were asked

...."HOW DO YOU THINK MOST OF THE NONCOMS YOU KNOW WERE SELECTED FOR THEIR JOBS?"

THOSE WHO ANSWERED "NO" SAID . .

THOSE WHO ANSWERED "YES" OR "DON'T KNOW" SAID . .



WHAT MAKES A GOOD NONCOM?

Officers and Enlisted Men Disagree on The Importance of Various Abilities

Some of the criticism of the choice of noncoms may arise because officers and men honestly disagree on the relative importance of specific abilities which noncoms need.

This situation was observed in six Infantry divisions studied in April and May, 1943. The principal findings of this study are charted on the opposite page.

Most officers believe that the two most important abilities a noncom needs are the ability to carry out orders promptly and accurately and the ability to think for himself.

Privates put a much greater stress on the noncom's abilities to help and advise the men under him, to explain things clearly, and to gain the personal liking of the men under him.

Noncoms' ratings of these abilities fall between those of the officers and those of the privates.

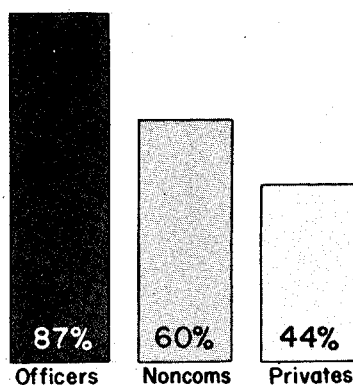
The personal abilities are stressed most by privates who have been in the Army only a short time. This fact may be interpreted in several ways. It may indicate merely that rookies have naive ideas of the role of noncoms. It may, however, indicate that cadremen picked to train recruits should have somewhat different abilities than those needed by noncoms in veteran outfits.



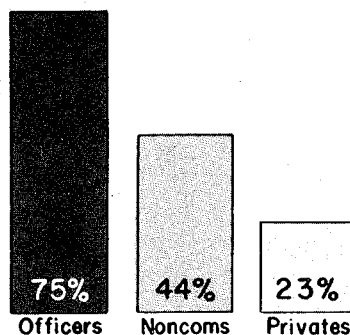
IMPERSONAL ABILITIES are stressed by OFFICERS

Percentage rating each ability first or second in importance

ABILITY TO CARRY
OUT ORDERS PROMPTLY
AND ACCURATELY



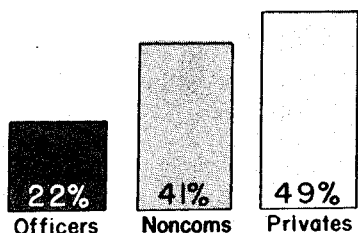
ABILITY TO THINK
FOR HIMSELF



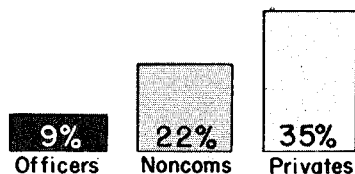
PERSONAL ABILITIES seem important to PRIVATES

Percentage rating each ability first or second in importance

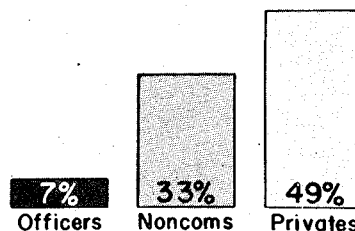
ABILITY TO HELP
AND ADVISE
THE MEN



ABILITY TO EXPLAIN
THINGS CLEARLY
TO THE MEN



ABILITY TO GAIN
PERSONAL LIKING
OF THE MEN



From a Special Study of Officers and Enlisted Men in Six Infantry Divisions