to represent nonexistent modern armor; mortar crews dropped make-believe shells down smokepots; National Guard officers stopped five-pound sacks of flour from observation planes (Guardians were deemed unfit to fly real fighters like the Curtiss P-40) to simulate bombing runs.

The Brown Shoe Army passed its most severe test with flying colors, growing in four years to eight million, fighting in every corner of the globe and whiping brutality and decisively the country's worst enemies. The Old Army NCOs had done their work well. Many hundreds were commissioned, led companies, battalions, even armies (GEN Walter Knieper of the Sixth Army had been a first sergeant) in combat.

So young soldiers, you may well thank your stars that there were such men to fight your country's wars. The Brown Shoe Army left us a splendid legacy and you enjoy many of the benefits of their sacrifice—the sweat and tears in the long, dry years, the blood in the fires of battle. Such things as the GI bill, veteran's mortgages and any number of marvelous gains of a thankful Republic are yours to have. Remember who bought them for you and never forget them.

And though you do not stand in the same brown shoes, you march in time—to the same traditions—in boots of a different color.

Raymond is a retired sergeant first class, Virginia National Guard.

**Congress Passes Draft Law, Activates National Guard**

In September 1940, Congress accomplished two things when it passed the first peacetime draft law in American history. It provided for a draft and authorized mobilization of the National Guard. The act stipulated that the draft would cease on active duty for 12 months. Similarly, it authorized the Guard for 12 months at a time when many people opposed preparations for war. The short active-duty time in the bill for the draft and the Guard reflects this hesitancy to begin mobilization.

In the following months, the international situation continued to deteriorate. Within a year, it was obvious that the American preparedness movement would be seriously crippled if both the draft and the Guard were not ready when their year of service was up.

The fight to extend the service obligation of these soldiers during the summer of 1941 was both intense and close. The extension of the draft passed the House of Representatives by a single vote, 203-202. The National Guard got extended for the duration, but the drafters got extended for only another 18 months. Later they would receive more final word that they were in for the duration.

To the military who lived through this period, the vote to extend the service of the draftsmen during the summer of 1941 was crucial.

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**The Lehn, Lehn Years of the Depression Army**

As topkick Anthony Wardan so trenchantly put it, this is G Company, of which I am first sergeant. I run this company. Holmes is the CO, but he is like the rest of the officer class: a dumb bastard that signs papers and ride horses and wears spurs and gets thinking drunk up at the Shadows Officers Club. I'm the guy that runs this company. Holmes would straight on his own ass if I wasn't there to work out his throat for him.

James Jones' company first sergeant in Practice From How to Formally may not have scored a hell of a shot, but he wouldn't fire off the mark. More than three decades later, grizzled war dogs with landmarks halfway to their chin's still remember nostalgically about the "Old Army," between the world wars, when NCO Corps reigned supreme.

What was it like in the Old Army? First and foremost, the Army of 1939 was professional. Every man was a regular, every man a volunteer. Rear-rank privateies made up half the enlisted ranks in those days. Privates first class accounted for another quarter and, believe me, any rocking who made FPC on his first three-year hitch was viewed with suspicion by protagonist and pecs alike.

Notables were essentially troop leaders, whether lie or staff, a hard-core elite, set apart from their fellow men. In every rifle company, artillery battery or cavalry troop, the basic fighting units, the first sergeant had three stripes up and two stripes down trimming his coveted diamond. In 1939, there were seven enlisted grades, from master sergeant to private. Since then, the system has been wrenches upside down and inside out on numerous separate occasions. Watch-bond-snatched back sergeants, the scourgé of barracks and field, ruled platoons in despoit grandeur and corporals held pay over squads.

Tinkers, tinkers and assorted wizards passing by three pay for bizarre specialties but their closest were twice twice. Those were reserved for NCOs, the poor man's feudal horrors.

Promotions were permanent and hard to come by. Egoistic examinations commonly afloat our a social climber, particularly among the top three grades (although skullcay was fairly common). Durlard who failed to pass the test were afforded a full year to contemplate the error of their ways before they could try again. First sergeants normally were exempt from exams. Because of their hand-in-glove relationship with company commanders, they universally were elevated to the Great Man's lap.
Most of the Army's ill could be traced to money—or rather, the lack of it. A U.S. public, ignorant of wartime requirements for national defense, remained apathetic, almost deaf, in the face of mounting crises abroad. America's appraisals for military purposes were made grudgingly, often during the propping 1920s. After the stock market crashed, chronic government deficits discouraged anything beyond bare-bones maintenance of the modest military establishments so reluctantly tolerated. There simply wasn't enough dough around to enlist high-caliber people consistently, or to mold the manpower on hand."

We have worn our spats now always the best. A sizable residue of muscle-headed noncommissioned veterans had been trekking water in the military manpower pool since the Great War. The Army had also pulled up at least its fair share of service swag and military vegetables during the slack days of the Depression when millions were unemployed and one out of every six men, women and children in the United States was riding relief rolls. Fugitives from bread lines and charity soup kitchens wore their spats along with the rest in those dog-eat-dog days when a loaf of bread and a week from book might rate just as high a degree from MIT and more hothouses were wearing chevrons in 1939 than the Army's heads would care to admit.

The "Old Army" died almost unattended at 2:15 on a Sunday afternoon and was laid to rest by a host of badge-laden amateurs. On 27 August 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, by executive decree, nationalized the General's local endorsements were indicted on 16 September, the same day he signed the nation's first peacetime Selective Service Act. The Army was translated without a civilian uniform. An end had come to an end.

The "Old Army" served bygone days well. With the advent of World War II, the post boiled over and was unattended. Between 1939 and 1945, the Army inflated 40,000,000, from 187,000 to more than eight million. The recession rate created at 1.3 million men during 270 incredible days in 1942—more than $1,000,000 in one month, more than tripled the "Old Army"'sباپلized strength.

The "Old Army," of course, provided the cadre for this awesome force. Officers like Blenklaw and Mark W. Clark who were relatively obscure, shot from field grade ranks to four of five stars. Pershing nonsense took their places, with remarkable success considering the circumstances. No such feat had ever been undertaken before and none has been attempted since.

The modern volunteer Army was the first direct lineal descendant of the disasters "Old Army" (disarming of a brief period in 1946). It has no resemblance to the prototype.  

Colling is currently a Congressional Research Office suffer and author of numerous books. He won the anti-Irony for Army, which appeared first in January 1923.