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CIVILIAN PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION
IN THE AAF
1939 — 1945

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*Prepared by the USAF
Historical Division,
Air University
1952*

0467047

7-575-51

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE 1952		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-1952 to 00-00-1952	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Civilian Personnel for the AAF, 1939-1945				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Air Force Historical Reserch Agency (AFHRA),600 Chennault Circle,Maxwell AFB,AL,36112-6424				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 98	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

1939-1945

The original of this monograph and the documents from which it was written are in the USAF Historical Division, Archives Branch, Bldg. 914, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

0457647

AHS-68

AIR HISTORICAL STUDIES: NO. 58

CIVILIAN PERSONNEL FOR THE AAF:

1939-1945

USAF Historical Division
Research Studies Institute
Air University, 1952

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F O R E W O R D

This monograph relates the story of expansion of the civilian force in the Army Air Forces during the years 1939-1945, with special emphasis on problems of administration, recruiting, and training. The present study began life in two parts, "Civil Personnel Study" by Miss Jean E. Clifford and "Civilian Personnel Administration in the AAF, 1939-1945" by Mrs. C. E. Schultz. The whole of Miss Clifford's study has now been consolidated with the first chapter of Mrs. Schultz's work to form the first chapter of this monograph. The rest of this monograph follows Mrs. Schultz's study.

Like other Historical Division studies, this history is subject to revision, and additional information or suggested corrections will be welcomed.

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Chapter I

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATION FOR CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

During the 20 years of truce between the first two world wars, most people in the United States were sure that all that was necessary to avoid war was to mind their own business and to keep their military appropriations low. While the military power of the United States was thus languishing, it did not take much of a staff to administer the civilians employed by the Air Corps, and it was hard to detect inefficient administrative procedures when there were so few people to administer. When the Air Service organized as the Air Corps in 1926, all problems of civilian personnel were assigned to the office of the Chief Clerk.¹ Though the Chief Clerk's office was shifted from one part of the hierarchy to another,* it kept its control of civilian personnel until November 1940. From 1935 to 1940 the office of the Chief Clerk consisted of the Chief, and Assistant Chief, and about 20 clerical employees. Though the Office was charged with all aspects of civilian personnel administration, the official jargon did not hide the fact that it was really not much more than a mail and record room. But, since the total civilian strength of the Air Corps in 1940 was only 8,000, the Chief Clerk could muddle through his functions without too much difficulty.²

In 1939 the Congress of the United States began to sense the imminence

* Late in 1935 the office of the Chief Clerk was moved from the Office of the Assistant Chief of the Air Corps to the Office of the Executive (Organization Chart, 13 Nov. 1935). When the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps was reorganized in January 1937, an Executive Division was established; the chief of this division, under the thumb of the Assistant Chief of the Air Corps, was made responsible for civilian personnel. It was to the Chief of the Executive Division that the Chief Clerk reported (OCAC Memo 10-10, 2 Jan. 1937).

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of war and granted the authority and the money to increase the strength of the various services. With the expansion of the aviation program, it was obvious that something had to be done to provide for efficient administration of the great influx of civilian employees--an influx that eventually reached a total of 422,000 people.³ On 23 November 1940 the office of the Chief Clerk began to lose its authority. At that time a new Civilian Personnel Section was set up within the Miscellaneous Division; though the Chief Clerk was also moved to the Miscellaneous Division and continued to have some power, many of his functions were taken over by the new section.⁴ After a fleeting stay within the Miscellaneous Division, the Civilian Personnel Section was made a part of the Personnel Division on 6 February 1941. Nineteen days later the Office of the Chief of the Air Corps (OCAC) was again reorganized, and the Civilian Personnel Section was boosted to divisional status, the old Personnel Division being changed to Military Personnel.⁵ The Chief Clerk lost most of his remaining functions, though he kept his title and did a few routing jobs until he retired in 1943.

This reorganization was the first real attempt to define the duties and responsibilities of civilian personnel administration and to organize a division according to its function. Though there was an expansion of the staff of the Division, never was there sufficient personnel for all sections. By August 1941 85 civilians had been hired, distributed as follows: 6 in the Office of the Director of Personnel; 9 in the Classification, Planning and Surveys Section; 16 in Training and Placement; 50 in Appointment Records; and 2 each in Personnel Relations and Investigations.⁶ Not until June 1942 was sufficient office space provided for some of the sections which had been in existence since April 1941.

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The reorganization of the Air Corps of 20 June 1941 had had little effect on the Civilian Personnel Division. This reorganization had created the Office of the Chief of the Army Air Forces and the Air Staff. Personnel policy had been assigned to AC/AS Personnel,⁷ who had been put in charge of both military and civilian personnel. The Civilian Personnel Division continued to be part of the OCAC until December 1941, when another reorganization of the AAF placed both the Civilian and the Military Personnel divisions under an Assistant for Personnel and Training Services in the OCAC.⁸

The organization of the Air Corps was again scrambled in March 1942. At this time the AAF was established as one of the three main components of the Army on an equal status with the Army Ground Forces and the Services of Supply.⁹ The Civilian Personnel Division became a part of the Directorate of Personnel which combined the military and civilian personnel functions of OCAC, some functions of the Air Staff, and some of the Air Adjutant General. The Division, which had retained the same internal structure since April 1941, also underwent some changes. Four new sections were established: Field Personnel Services, Departmental Personnel Services, Personnel Standards, and Personnel Requirements. The old Investigations Section was abolished and Training and Placement were split to form two distinct sections. Although it was recognized that military and civilian personnel could not be handled by identical methods, the two had been brought together so as to provide for coordination in replacing men in uniform with civilians. It also allowed more direct access to higher authority and decreased the number of officials reporting directly to the Commanding General of the AAF.¹⁰

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A year later the cards were shuffled again: the draftsman who drew the organizational charts were kept busy if no one else was. It had been found that the directorates established in 1942 were unduly cumbersome, adding only another echelon in the chain of command. In 1943 the Civilian Personnel Division left the defunct Directorate of Personnel to show up as a part of AC/AS Personnel. Within the Division the Field Personnel Services and the Departmental Personnel Services sections, set up the year before, died an unlamented death. A Time and Payroll Branch was created. In October of the same year the Office of the Chief of the Division was enlarged to make room for a Deputy Chief and an Executive to assist in administration. This organization remained unchanged until May 1945 when a change of wage policy made it expedient to combine administration and classification activities.¹¹ In October 1943 there was also established a branch for auditing--an important function which had been done sloppily by the other agencies.¹² Except for transferring the Retirement Branch from Washington to Atlanta in April 1945, the Civilian Personnel Division had no further changes in organization until after the end of the war.

At about the same time as the reorganization of March 1943, a distinction was made between over-all personnel management and personnel administration. Within the AAF, control and planning were assigned to Management Control, which was responsible for "organizational, procedural and manpower utilization studies"¹³ for determining the complement of personnel necessary to perform assigned responsibilities; and for conducting surveys and investigations to unearth and correct jurisdictional conflicts, duplication of effort, and improper and inefficient administrative or procedural processes.¹⁴ The Civilian Personnel Division, on the other hand, was given the administrative function of setting up of the mechanics

* The Civilian Personnel Division did retain its responsibility for programs and plans effecting recruiting, placement, employee relations, and training.

and effecting the operation of policies and programs established by 1) Civil Service Commission, 2) Office of the Secretary of War, and 3) Management Control. To provide coordination between these various agencies the Secretary of War established a Council on Civilian Personnel, which included representatives from the AAF, the ASF, the General Staff, the Civil Service Commission, and the OSW.¹⁵ The Council had working committees for various aspects of civilian personnel administration, on each of which the AAF was represented and was thereby able to have its say in shaping general War Department civilian personnel policy and procedures to be administered by the AAF civilian personnel organization.¹⁶ In addition to effecting the plans and policies of these agencies, the Division served as an operating agency for Headquarters AAF employees, and served in a staff relationship to the continental commands and air forces.¹⁷

Decentralization of Authority

Whether the various reorganizations of the Air Corps and the Civilian Personnel Division did much to increase their operating efficiency cannot easily be determined. But it is certain that without the concomitant decentralization of personnel administration and simplification of methods and procedures, the expansion of the AAF could hardly have been accomplished. Even before the great inundation of new personnel, it was seen that the old system of processing personnel transactions was outdated.¹⁸ Prior to decentralization, which began early in 1940, all recommendations by field establishments and Headquarters agencies for personnel transactions had to be submitted to higher authority through OCAC. Each recommendation needed approval of either the Office of the Secretary of War or the Civil Service Commission--frequently both of these agencies had to approve

personnel actions. When a request for personnel reached the Chief Clerk of the OCAC, after traveling through channels, it was investigated, and the Chief Clerk made his recommendations to the Chief of the Air Corps, who, since he had no authority to effect such recommendations, sent it up to the Office of the Secretary of War. This excess of red tape meant that the hiring of a draftsman at a depot in Podunk Center, Idaho, had to await the approval of higher authority. No appointment, promotion, change in status, assignment, reassignment, separation, or transfer could be effected until the request traveled up to the War Department or Civil Service Commission and then slid back down to the requesting agency.

The first step toward decentralization came in the spring of 1940 when the OSW delegated to OCAC the authority to make appointments at salaries of \$2600 and under, subject to confirmation after appointment by the Secretary of War.¹⁹ This ruling was applicable to those employees appointed under the Classification Act of 1923, as amended,²⁰ "To non-educational positions, and to those mechanical trades positions excepted from competitive examination by Schedules A of the Civil Service rules"²¹ Following the Air Corps policy of decentralization to field commanders of every authority,²² the Chief of the Air Corps redelegated his authority to the commanding officers of field stations and the Chief of the Materiel Command. Commanding officers in the field were also given authority to get Civil Service approval directly from the manager of the Civil Service District in which the activity was located instead of having to send to Washington.²³

While those in the Civilian Personnel Division were trying to prod higher authority into granting more decentralization, they undertook other schemes to ease the burden that had been placed on the field offices. This

was done partly by increasing the staff within the OCAC so that field requests could be handled more quickly and partly by eliminating red tape and paper work.²⁴ Another time-saver was the Manual of Standard Field Classification Sheets, which appeared in August 1941 and which contained a full description of each type of job common to the field services, correctly classified and listed numerically. Consequently, any officer in the field who wished to make an appointment merely informed Headquarters of the number of appointments desired and the classification number of each position as it appeared in the manual.²⁵ Headquarters could then dispatch the request to the War Department. Though this manual did speed procurement, it also created a great deal more work for the Headquarters. Like other stop-gaps, it created problems as it solved others.

Steps had been taken early in 1941 to provide more satisfactory solutions to the problems of administering civilian personnel. A committee which had been appointed to study existing policies and personnel methods reported on 7 February 1941. It recommended that 1) the rules and regulations established by the Civil Service Commission and the Secretary of War be changed so as to remove hindrances from the operation of all War Department agencies; 2) all resources of all agencies concerned with personnel be placed at the disposal of the various branches within the War Department; and 3) the Civil Service Commission and the Office of the Secretary of War "assign personnel and delegate authority . . . to this personnel in such a manner as to insure . . . that final decisions . . . be made in the bureau personnel offices"²⁶ for the departmental service and at all major operating establishments for the field services. The committee also made

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a few specific recommendations for simplification of existing procedures governing promotions and reassignment, classification, transfer, and recruitment. It was suggested that the Civil Service Commission grant prior authority to the War Department to effect personnel transactions subject to post audit by the Commission and that the Commission station representatives in the offices of War Department agencies and at all major field establishments endowed with authority to give prior approval for the Commission. It was further proposed that the persons comprising the service groups to be set up by the Civilian Personnel Division at major installations be given authority to review all departmental and field personnel actions and approve them in the name of the Secretary of War without reference to the central office.²⁷

The Civil Service Commission acted quickly on the Committee's recommendations. By granting the War Department authority to give prior approval for the promotion and reassignment of employees "who have had training or experience in the occupational areas of the position to be filled,"²⁸ the Commission gave various officials in charge of promotion and reassignment power to use their own discretion in making proper assignments. To make sure that its policy and standards would be upheld, the Civil Service Commission reserved the right of post-audit and stipulated that "persons promoted or reassigned under this authority would not be eligible for transfer to any other federal agency or department without further tests of fitness as may be deemed necessary."²⁹

The Civil Service Commission also gave up some of its authority to control procurement of personnel by allowing the War Department to appoint

qualified persons when the Commission did not have qualified eligibles on its registers, or when such eligibles could not be available for duty at the time needed. Formerly, the War Department had been obliged to choose from the first three persons appearing on the Civil Service Commission's eligible list whenever an appointment was needed. Now, after consulting the Civil Service registers, the War Department could proceed with its own recruiting, though the Civil Service Commission again reserved the right of post-audit.³⁰ Relaxing of recruiting procedure had become absolutely necessary. The demand for qualified employees so far exceeded the supply that the Commission not only had to amend the recruiting process, but was also in time forced to lower its qualification standards and to modify its system of competitive examination. People who were employed under these relaxed requirements were given War Service Appointments which were, like the draft, for the duration of the war plus six months. Those employed after March 1942 were, therefore, not considered as part of the permanent classified Civil Service.³¹

Along with other self-denials, the Civil Service Commission gave up some of its authority over transfer and classification. The War Department was given authority to approve the transfer of classified employees within the War Department from "the field service to the departmental service and from the departmental service to the field without prior authority of the Civil Service Commission."³² War Department agencies did have to submit requests for such transfers to the Commission within 30 days after the transfer had been effected. No transfer, however, which involved a change in type of position could be made until the employee had completed 30 days service; transfers not involving a different type of position could be

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made "any time after probational appointment."³² Classification, which had long been a bottleneck, was speeded when the Civil Service Commission assigned one representative to each of the large bureaus of the War Department to handle all classification and "to have complete and final authority for the approval of the classification of departmental positions."³³

To simplify personnel procedures further, Civil Service representatives were stationed in the War Department and given authority to approve all appointments with the exception of the reinstatement of former Civil Service employees. Pending the approval of such reinstatements, the liaison officers could authorize temporary appointments. Transfers from other government agencies also had to be approved by the Commission itself. Finally, the Civil Service Commission planned to make similar provisions for the field service.³⁴

Though the Civil Service Commission thus responded promptly to the recommendations of the committee, the wheels of the War Department moved more slowly. It was not until 16 May 1941 that the War Department made any response to the Committee's report--its second timid move toward simplifying the procedures for administering civilian personnel. At that time the War Department established Civilian Personnel Field Offices at designated Air Corps depots to which appointments could be submitted for confirmation.³⁵ Coincident with the creation of these personnel field offices, the War Department delegated them authority to take final action on appointments, promotions, changes of status, transfers, and separations of all civilian employees positions with salaries up to and including \$5,000 a year.³⁶

Although the new ruling extended the authority of the War

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Department Personnel Field Offices considerably, the various Air Corps establishments had gained no authority to take action on any personnel action except for temporary and probational appointments--both of which were subject to later confirmation by the Civilian Personnel Field Offices and the Civil Service agency established at the Air Depot. The effect of the new directive was merely to simplify procedure: branch offices could now approve actions that formerly had to get the sanction of the War Department. Decentralization of authority was further limited by the exceptions imposed by the directive. Besides positions paying more than \$5,000, several types of transfers, all reinstatements and separations for cause still had to be approved in Washington. The authority of the Civilian Personnel Field Offices was further limited to intrabureau (Air Corps) transfers and interbureau transfers which involved no cost to the government and for which a release had been secured from the employee's original bureau.

Since most of the personnel actions that took place at that time did fall within the province of the Personnel Field Offices, this delegation of authority by the War Department served to expedite many personnel actions and to simplify routine jobs both in the field and at Headquarters. And though the ruling primarily affected the field offices, the staff at Headquarters benefited indirectly by the reduction of their paper work. Unfortunately, these benefits were almost imperceptible when further expansion of civilian personnel was necessary.

The persons concerned with civilian personnel administration considered this timid action by the Secretary of War with impatience and began a campaign for real delegation of authority.³⁷ General Stratemyer lined up with the malcontents and, citing the urgency of dispensing with all

unnecessary steps in the processing and management of civilian personnel, recommended that the Secretary of War give authority to the Chief of the Air Corps, with power to redelegate the authority to activities under his control, to effect all personnel transactions under his jurisdiction.³⁸

The War Department's immediate reply was disappointing: procedures were further simplified with no substantial change in established lines of authority or responsibility.

These simplifications, contained in War Department Order "N" of 23 December 1941, did parallel the action taken earlier by the Civil Service Commission in two respects: the War Department waived the right of prior approval of some personnel transactions, and it appointed special representatives to give prior approval of classification for the War Department. In relinquishing the right of prior approval, the Secretary of War authorized the heads of bureaus to deal directly with the Civil Service Commission. Classification of employees became easier when representatives of the OSW were assigned to assist in the preparation of job sheets and to give the prior approval for the War Department without reference to the central office.³⁹ Order "N" also gave the heads of the various bureaus the power to effect a few personnel actions, subject to confirmation later by the personnel office of the OSW. The Air Corps was thus authorized to make personnel actions that did not result in changes in salary: suspensions, some reclassifications, reassignments, transfers, and demotions. Other actions still had to be processed by the OSW. The OSW also had to approve of all travel for changes of permanent duty station.⁴⁰ A few months following the issuance of Order "N," however, legislative action was taken to remove the restriction on travel orders.⁴¹ Besides simplifying procedure,

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Order "N" revoked the right of the Personnel Field Offices to take action on appointments, changes in status, and some types of separations of ungraded employees, and directed that all policies and procedures relative to rates of compensation for ungraded employees be specified by the Secretary of War. The salary range on which the Field Offices could take action was reduced to \$4600, the minimum salary for P-5 and CAF-12 positions.⁴² Finally discharge with prejudice and discharge in the interest of national defense had to be approved by the OSW.⁴³

Reaction to Order "N" was varied, but most of the responsible Air Corps officials did not think much of it. The Chief of the Personnel Division, OGAC summed up Air Corps opinion when he said that the new order was "merely an appeasement and retaliatory action" in that it granted "no additional authorities or privileges," further restricted personnel administration in the field, and actually evaded the issue of speeding up the process of personnel administration.⁴⁴

Whether the War Department was moved to action by criticism cannot be determined, but in July 1942, Order "N" was revised by Order "I." Under this order, Departmental Service Units were set up within the civilian personnel office of each of the War Department agencies which handled a large volume of personnel actions. Representatives from the OSW were assigned to these units and given authority to give prior approval in the name of the Secretary of War for appointments, changes in status (whether or not there was a change in salary), transfers, suspensions for disciplinary reasons, discharges, and meritorious promotions. These representatives were also permitted to effect resignations, terminations of temporary employees,

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furloughs, and administrative within-grade promotions, provided the approval of the Secretary of War was obtained as soon as possible after the date upon which the personnel action had become effective.⁴⁵

Though this series of orders helped alleviate the pressure of civilian personnel administration, none of the measures taken were radical enough to get to the heart of the problem. There still remained too many steps in the procurement and management of civilians--particularly the necessity of referring each transaction to representatives from the OSW for approval. Not until 13 August 1942 did the Secretary of War relinquish enough authority to be effective. At this time the War Department yielded to the various pressures that had been at work for some time and delegated authority to the commanding generals of the AAF, the AGF, and the SOS to act on all personnel transactions in the field services. The commanding generals in turn redelegated this authority to the commanding officers of the lowest practicable operating echelons in the field.⁴⁶

Under War Department Order "M" the commanding generals of the three main components of the Army were empowered "to take final action on personnel transactions in the field service except on separations with prejudice."⁴⁷ Other personnel transactions had to be exempted from this authorization because of prior restrictions imposed by legislation or by the Civil Service Commission: the Secretary of War obviously could not delegate authority which he did not possess. Field officers still could not: 1) discharge an employee from the classified civil service who was guilty of conduct damaging to the public interest and/or defense of the United States; 2) transfer personnel between departmental and field services; 3) appoint friendly aliens and special consultants; 4) make

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in-grade promotions in recognition of especially meritorious services.⁴⁸

The field services were also limited in their freedom by their subjection to audit and inspection by the Civilian Personnel Division of the OSW and to "a few judicious controls" by the Civilian Personnel Division of the AAF--controls imposed to "insure the maintenance of uniform standards."⁴⁹

While the field activities of the AAF were now relatively free to conduct their business unimpeded by the necessity of referring each step to Washington, the departmental services in Washington could enjoy no such autonomy. Existing legislation vested appointive power in the heads of the executive department and prohibited delegation to subordinate officials of this power unless they were in the field service.⁵⁰ After efforts to secure legislation permitting delegation of authority for employing of civilians in all parts of the War Department had failed,⁵¹ the same end was gained when the Secretary of War delegated powers of appointing and promoting to the commanding generals.⁵²

Decentralization of authority had served to increase efficiency throughout the War Department; at the station level, centralization was needed. It was not uncommon to find as many as six civilian personnel offices serving the various segments of an air base. Through these offices came directives from the War Department, the AAF, the SOS, the Quartermaster General, the Chief of Engineers, the Chief of Ordnance and the Surgeon General concerning sick leaves, annual leaves, and other matters. When these were not confusing or downright contradictory, there was at best much duplication of effort and multiplication of the problems of record keeping.⁵³ A proposal by the AAF that all personnel at an installation be handled by one central office was agreed to by the SOS, although SOS personnel would be processed

by the AAF. Obstinate opposition arose within the AAF itself, especially from the Air Service Command where it was believed that such a consolidation would not be efficient.⁵⁴ In spite of this opposition, official arrangements for consolidation were made in the spring of 1943.⁵⁵ There was some delay in completing the centralization because of misunderstanding, procrastination, and sheer obstinacy, but it was eventually accomplished.⁵⁶

One great aid to the whole problem of administering civilian personnel was the Secretary of War's Council on Civilian Personnel, established in June 1942, to effect satisfactory coordination between the Office of the Secretary of War, the Civil Service Commission, and the War Department agencies.⁵⁷ The Council was composed of the civilian personnel heads of the AAF, AGF, SOS, the General Staff, the War Department, the Civil Service Commission, the Budget Office of the War Department, and the War Department representative on the War Manpower Commission. It was with the assistance of this Council that the Civilian Personnel Division, acting for the Commanding General of the AAF, began to supplement established rules by prescribing specific simplified procedures for each type of personnel transaction and by eliminating duplication. One of the greatest advances made under this authority was the establishment of a standard 201 file throughout the AAF.⁵⁸ Heretofore, several 201 files were kept for each civilian employee: whenever an employee was transferred from one station to another, the station from which he was being transferred had to submit to the new station a summary of the employee's official record to go into a new 201 file. The new procedure established the practice of keeping only one 201 file, which was transferred with the employee when he was moved to a new station. This procedure, begun in the

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AAF, was later taken up by the ASF and finally by the whole War Department.⁵⁹ When decentralization of authority had begun it had not mattered too much that the 201 files varied with different organizations. But when the station personnel offices were consolidated so as to provide only one personnel office to serve all branches of the Army at a particular post, it was essential that administrative procedures be standardized.

Further to simplify the problem of decentralized control, the AAF prescribed in October 1942 a set of procedures for processing personnel transactions which were exempt from the authorizations given the field offices under Orders "M" such as separations with prejudice. Two standard forms were authorized: CP-56 for requesting personnel actions which required the approval of the Secretary of War and AC-CP-50 for reporting final action. Form CP-56 was to be submitted in triplicate to the Civilian Personnel Division, Headquarters AAF, and then forwarded to the Secretary of War for approval. When the initiating station received the Secretary of War's stamped endorsement, it would complete the action and issue Form AC-CP-50, prepared in quadruplicate and distributed to the employee, Headquarters AAF (which transmitted it to the Civil Service Commission), the station's payroll office, and the station's 201 file.⁶⁰ This procedure was unchanged until December 1943 except for the amendment of 7 June 1943 which discontinued the sending of AC-CP-50 to Headquarters AAF.⁶¹

The consolidation of field personnel offices raised another problem that had not been particularly pressing until that time. Under Orders "M" of August 1942, the War Department had retained the right to formulate general policies, but it had authorized the heads of the three components of the Army to supplement these policies with rules for promoting good administration.

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As a result, there was considerable variation in administrative practices, especially between the AAF and the ASF. Each office, furthermore, was flooded with instructions from the War Department, the Civil Service Commission, the three Army Headquarters, and the various commands and air forces. To each directive was attached a different interpretation.⁶² To remedy situation the War Department restricted the issuing of supplementary instructions, prohibited the reproduction of directives, and centralized the distribution of War Department and Civil Service publications.⁶³

Further progress in expediting personnel actions came with the elimination of ten or fifteen copies of the form used,⁶⁴ and in the publication of a Manual of Standard Field Classification Sheets describing duties common to field establishments of the AAF. Using this manual, personnel officers could make appointments by referring to a number identifying the particular description of duties instead of drawing up for Headquarters a new description of duties for each appointment.⁶⁵ Another bottleneck was removed when the War and Navy Department, after six months of lobbying, secured legislation which permitted the Secretary of War to delegate authority to commanding generals of field installations to change permanent duty stations of civilians at government expense. When hundreds of employees were needed for the activation of a depot or sub-depot, much time was saved.⁶⁶

While simplified procedures were being worked out to speed civilian personnel administration, further efforts were made to decentralize authority. In May 1943 the Secretary of War delegated authority and responsibility for civilian personnel administration to the commanding generals of theaters of operation, overseas departments, base commands, and forces, and to defense commands.⁶⁷ Similar authority was later given

to the commanding generals of defense commands within the continental United States and to those commanding officers employing civilians who were not under the immediate jurisdiction of the Commanding Generals, AAF, AGF, and ASF.⁶⁸ To assist the commanders now given control of civilian personnel, an Overseas Branch was created within the Civilian Personnel Division of the OSW.⁶⁹ The commanding generals were directed to submit all requests for assistance, whether it was for interpretation of administrative procedures or for additional personnel, to the Overseas Branch rather than to the headquarters offices of the various forces. The Overseas Branch also exercised supervisory control over these stations by sending representatives to insure compliance with all existing regulations which were formulated by the War Department, the Civil Service Commission, the Comptroller General, and Congress. In a sense, the Overseas Branch was a second Personnel Division: it performed almost the same functions for personnel overseas as the Civilian Personnel Division did for those within the United States.

The efforts to standardize and improve efficiency went on unabated. Until July 1943 no statistical report was required from AAF installations beyond a simple statement of the total number of employees and the payroll at the end of each month.⁷⁰ But in July a standard reporting system was instituted to provide uniform information on the status of civilian employees as well as summary data for control and planning purposes.⁷¹ This system was revised in November 1944 to increase flexibility, and to provide designations which could be used for comparative purposes in the replacement of military personnel. The first report under this system was made in January 1945, and still more comprehensive reports were called

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for a few months later.⁷² Standardization problems had also been attacked by the Manpower Division, which had developed a form which summarized the manning tables and permitted comparisons of the number of people used in various activities on different bases. Thus it was possible to reorganize many bases and to eliminate many administrative units. A beginning was also made in developing standard ratios between the various sections of permanent party personnel.⁷³

Throughout all of these actions which decentralized authority and standardized forms and procedures, one of the principal functions of the Civilian Personnel Division of Headquarters IAF was an advisory and consulting service for the field offices. A small staff was available to visit fields to help solve personnel problems.⁷⁴ Care was taken that these visits did not resemble official inspections--that was the province of the OSW. The OSW did make inspections to check on compliance with policies and regulations, but it also used its inspection to survey civilian personnel administration for more devices for standardization and simplification.⁷⁵ In the spring of 1944 a War Department Civilian Personnel Procedures Committee was named to study means of reducing civilian personnel forms and simplifying procedures.⁷⁶ This committee worked for a year on operating procedures and produced a manual of standard operating procedures which was published in the summer of 1945.⁷⁷ After publication, the manual was sent to civilian personnel offices of War Department installations, but by this time, the end of the war in Europe had precipitated the entire civilian administrative organization into the new problems of reduction in force, so that the new procedures could be used only at installations not scheduled for inactivation.

Another manual for the improvement of personnel administration was prepared in 1945 by the Civilian Personnel Division. The aim was to

establish standard techniques and forms for use in the examinations of the civilian personnel program at all echelons. Such examinations were intended to afford a means of determining the degree to which installations were carrying out their responsibilities and to serve as a basis for comparisons of programs between installations and commands.⁷⁸

Payroll administration was one of the headaches that needed relief. During the early days of expansion the most immediate problem was the simple, but backbreaking, one of meeting payrolls promptly. Because there were no adequate auditing facilities, there was little pressure to be either accurate or efficient.⁷⁹ By the autumn of 1943, however, with an audit by the General Accounting Office threatening and with much evidence of poor fiscal administration, the Budget and Fiscal Office of the AAF undertook an audit. This audit, conducted in the first quarter of 1944, brought to light appalling conditions: 80 per cent of all installations were out of balance. It was obvious that a recurrent check on payroll offices was needed, and steps were taken to get accuracy. Results were very good: by January 1945 only 10 per cent were out of balance, and accuracy improved thereafter.⁸⁰ Once accuracy had been achieved, it was necessary to increase efficiency in order to reduce administration costs. During the spring of 1945 surveys were made for standardizing procedures for offices of different sizes. Recommendations were made for improving the 16 different activities involved in payroll procedure.⁸¹ The objective of the surveys was to produce eight standard operating procedures. Though the project was not scheduled for completion before the end of 1945,

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as⁸² can be seen in the following table:

	Cost per AAF employee	Overtime hours of p/r	Manpower ratio
1st Quarter	\$18.95	106,176	1-109
2d Quarter	17.87	52,109	1-118

Toward the end of 1944 the Civilian Personnel Division was able to turn its attention from the more pressing problems which had originally faced it to more general improvement of personnel administration. The AAF and the Civil Service Commission jointly began a program of personnel management. Beginning in September 1944 a quarterly report was submitted by all field stations, giving information such as the steps taken to improve the utilization of manpower, the dollar savings, and the number of employees reassigned.⁸³ The information contained in these reports was summarized for the Civil Service Commission in reports on the utilization of manpower. In addition, the reports of the Civilian Personnel Division described the efforts of Headquarters AAF to achieve better use of manpower and personnel management. The last report of 1944 dealt with personnel management: it attained its objectives best when it studied the mission and organization of each unit, understood its needs, and obtained the maximum productive work hours from each individual.⁸⁴ The program for better personnel management even got its own propaganda organ: the Personnel Management Digest, launched in February 1945. According to the banner printed in each issue of the Digest five things were necessary for good utilization of manpower: the right man in the right job, the will to work, essential tasks, training, and availability for duty. This listing outlines the

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basic functions of civilian personnel administration in the AAF from 1940 to 1945: recruiting, placement, classification, training, and supplying of adequate incentives to create employee satisfaction and efficiency.

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Chapter II

RECRUITING AND PLACEMENT

The problem of securing personnel to perform the multitude of tasks confronting the various activities of the AAF was part of the larger problem of manning the entire machinery of war. To find adequate personnel for both government and industry in the face of the keen competition for the available labor supply, the government was forced to set up controls which could channel labor into areas with the most pressing need and highest priority. These controls were administered by the War Manpower Commission (WMC) which maintained offices in conjunction with the local offices of the United States' Employment Service (USES). In carrying out this major activity the WMC was authorized to estimate the labor pool in each community, to determine what employment was essential, and to establish priorities among the competitors for labor.¹ On the estimate of the community labor pool by the local USES office depended not only the privilege of hiring outside the area, but also the decision of the Washington headquarters of the WMC to authorize the building of emergency housing for areas swamped by an influx of labor. Local USES offices thus had almost autocratic power of the labor supply, and at times they could severely affect military plans. Procuring of personnel for Air Service Command depots, for instance, was hard hit when several USES offices judged depot activity to be servicing rather than production, and

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therefore gave it a relatively low priority.² At all times the WMC could control the allocation of labor to the government.

The actual recruiting of labor for the government service was the function of the Civil Service Commission. The involved machinery of the CSC did well enough in peacetime, but even before the war began the need for speeding recruiting had resulted in modifications of usual procedures: some of these changes were the result of the decentralization of administrative authority described in Chapter I; others were simply relaxation of CSC regulations. In February 1941, when CSC representatives were stationed in War Department field establishments so as to reduce the time spent in processing personnel already acquired, the War Department got authority from the CSC to do their own recruiting whenever the Commission did not have qualified eligibles. The fixed Civil Service job qualifications were also modified to permit the War Department to promote and reassign employees who were already trained.³ As a further concession to pressing needs, the Commission dropped its experience requirements for airplane mechanics in October 1941 in order to facilitate recruiting for ASC depots.^{*4}

* The greatest demand for labor in the AAF came from the ASC, whose employees accounted for more than half of the total number of civilians working for the AAF. About 75 per cent of these were the skilled workers engaged in maintenance and supply. (Statistics on Civilian Personnel, Personnel Distribution, in files of Personnel Standards Branch, Civilian Personnel Div., AAF).

Perhaps the most important changes in the civil service system came in March 1942 with the relaxation⁵ of the regulations governing appointments. These War Service regulations provided for two types of appointment, indefinite and temporary, under conditions which were less stringent than those of peacetime. Normally, CSC regulations prohibited the employment of more than two members of one family, but in February 1942 it was provided that temporary War Service appointments could be made without regard to this limitation.⁶ Appointment of persons with physical handicaps was also permitted under War Service regulations,⁷ and the restrictions against part-time employment were relaxed to permit temporary War Service appointments of part-time employees, especially in critical categories, when full-time personnel were not available.⁸ Furthermore, to make permanent Civil Service employees in non-war agencies available for jobs in critical agencies, provision was made for their transfer without loss of any rights or privileges.⁹

Though these regulations of the Civil Service Commission helped ease personnel shortages, they did not solve the problem, and some AAF installations took matters in their own hands by surreptitiously recruiting employees. The CSC could not allow its facilities to be bypassed; direct recruiting and publicity and promotion campaigns were soon prohibited.¹⁰ Every AAF activity had to work through the commission and the USES in securing personnel. The formal procedure consisted of requesting the desired number of employees from the CSC, which then publicized the needs, interviewed applicants, and referred those cleared

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and qualified to the AAF personnel office. As the labor market got tighter, there were few applicants who responded to the stereotyped CSC advertising, and more positive measures had to be taken. This usually took the form of a joint recruiting agreement under which representatives of both the commission and the installation would seek potential employees.

Many of the persons responsible for securing personnel, including Headquarters AAF, were dissatisfied with the Civil Service Commission's regulations. They felt that the restraint on AAF recruiting propaganda imposed an unnecessary hardship because the CSC did not have sufficient funds to initiate effective campaigns.¹¹ But if the restraints and hindrances were irritating to AAF agencies, there were many occasions when the Commission representatives went further than necessary to locate sources of workers. On the whole, the civil service machinery was adaptable to wartime needs.¹²

Even if CSC machinery were faultless, further headaches were bound to plague personnel authorities. In the early days of the war most agencies responsible for recruiting labor--both government and industry--resorted to labor piracy to ease their shortages. At a very early date an order went forth from the OCAC calling for an end of proselyting among its offices,¹³ and shortly thereafter hiring by one AAF agency of persons directly or indirectly employed by another AAF agency was proscribed.¹⁴ But the AAF could not prevent outside agencies from pirating its employees; nor did the AAF hesitate to return the compliment. The CAA complained to the Assistant Secretary

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of War for Air that various AAF offices were subverting CAA employees;¹⁵ many civil contract schools complained that the Ferry Command and other agencies were robbing their staffs.¹⁶ The AAF complained loudly about piracy, for it was usually at a disadvantage in the scramble for employees. Most war industries could pay much higher wages than the Air Force, which was bound by the relatively inflexible Civil Service wage scales.¹⁷ A stern tone could be and was taken in reproaching the various companies who were most flagrant in stealing AAF employees,¹⁸ but since the War Manpower Commission had given the Air Service Command low priority, there was no way to prevent persons trained by the AAF from transferring to better paying, higher priority jobs.¹⁹

Industry was not the only competitor for AAF personnel. The Navy recruiting program also made heavy inroads into the ranks of pilots trained as instructors in the army pilot training program. Many of these civilian instructors, wanting to serve in uniform, were attracted by Navy commissions when they were not eligible for commissions in the AAF.²⁰ So heavy were the losses suffered in the pilot training program that the Secretary of War finally had to make an agreement with the Secretary of the Navy under which no civilian employee of either service would be commissioned, enlisted, or given a letter-directed assignment except by prior agreement with the services in which he was employed.²¹

Labor piracy was obviously inadequate for providing the personnel needed in both government and industry: employees might be shifted to one agency to meet shortages there, but this was bound to create

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shortages elsewhere. In the face of the lack of adequate manpower, recruiting agencies were forced to find and develop untapped sources of labor, for by the latter half of 1942 the known labor supply had been exhausted. By far the most fruitful of these sources was female labor. Women had long been used in administrative and clerical positions, but their employment in industrial positions had not been tried except in isolated instances. Plans to employ women were projected in January 1942, but it took several months before opposition in many quarters and especially among shop men was overcome so that they could be employed in any sizeable quantity. By September 1942 there were 58,125 women working for the AAF, and by the end of the year it was apparent that female labor was either a necessary evil or a godsend.²² Hiring of women in all possible occupations then became the established policy of the War Department and the government. By June 1943 the AAF had hired 151,016 women, and from that time on they amounted to about 45 per cent of the total civilian strength.²³

While women were much the largest group of new employees to enter industrial employment during the war, other groups, previously excluded, were used to advantage. The age limits were extended to include both minors and people of retirement age.²⁴ The War Department hired men with prison records, and the Military Appropriation Act of 1944 revoked restrictions on the hiring of aliens.²⁵ A potential source of labor long unexploited was the pool of about 16 million physically handicapped persons.²⁶ Slowly the reluctance to

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hire the handicapped was overcome by pressure groups who recognized the growing need for labor and the success of the few handicapped who had already been tried.²⁷ In a comparative study of handicapped and able-bodied personnel by the Medical Division of the CSC, the handicapped compared very well, showing a much lower turnover-rate and good productivity. The accident rate among the handicapped was somewhat higher than among the able-bodied, but contrary to expectations, the percentage requiring and receiving special consideration was low.²⁸

Several conditions intensified the difficulties of securing clerical personnel at Washington. The departmental services had a low priority rating which tended to lead potential employees into jobs with higher ratings.²⁹ Furthermore, the crowded living conditions in wartime Washington repelled many workers, though AAF civilian personnel headquarters constantly sought to make living in Washington seem more pleasant.³⁰ By the middle of 1943 the difficulty of getting clerical help was so great that it was thought to affect general operations. Since the usual sources of labor were consistently dry, a plan was devised for supply Headquarters through the major continental commands on a monthly quota basis.³¹ Everything possible to make transferring to Washington attractive to clerical employees in the field was offered. Their transportation to Washington was paid, persons were assigned to meet newcomers, a per diem allowance was paid during travel to Washington, temporary living quarters were provided, and many other services were designed to make them happy.³² Reasonably enough, some

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of the field stations were none too willing to send their experienced workers to Washington; some stations, compelled to cooperate with Headquarters, resorted to obstructionary tactics by using the levy as a convenient means of getting rid of their poorest workers.³³ The draft of clerical workers was further rendered ineffective by the many employees who took advantage of the transfer to make a tourist's visit to Washington with most expenses paid--though measures were eventually taken to insure a minimum tenure of six months.³⁴ Though the field levy was thus obstructed and once had its legality questioned, the plan was continued as long as recruits were needed.³⁵

Meanwhile, every possible means of getting employees was explored. Agencies reducing their forces were visited by AAF representatives seeking employees. High schools in the vicinity of Washington were visited for interviews with students. Military personnel were urged to send their wives to investigate employment in the AAF.³⁶ These and other means of recruiting yielded only a few employees. The commands required constant prodding,³⁷ since the field levy had to be depended on to produce personnel to alleviate the chronic shortages in Headquarters. The last measure taken was to hire eight permanently stationed recruiters, whose only job was to recruit for Headquarters.³⁸

Acquiring personnel was just one task of the procurement officers of the AAF: they also were given the responsibility for keeping the total number of AAF civilian employees under the ceilings established by authorities. Until the latter part of 1942 the AAF had concentrated only on getting as many employees as they could gather together. As

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workers flooded into Washington, the keepers of the national budget and those responsible for efficient personnel operations in the War Department both became alarmed.³⁹ In 1943, therefore, emphasis shifted from increasing the total number of employees to improving the efficiency of those already at work. One approach to the more efficient utilization of manpower was through the establishment of control agencies for setting up employment ceilings.⁴⁰ The federal Bureau of the Budget was responsible for determining the total personnel requirements of the government,⁴¹ and in January 1943 the War Department Manpower Board assumed responsibility for deciding the needs of War Department components.⁴² The Manpower Division of the Office of Management Control was the AAF Headquarters office responsible for determining, in collaboration with the WDMB, the AAF civilian personnel ceilings. A Manpower Board in each command echelon estimated requirements for that echelon.⁴³ The WDMB made continuous surveys at installations, usually shaving down the requests from below. The total War Department estimates were then forwarded to the Bureau of the Budget for final action, and were then accepted by the Chief of Staff.⁴⁴

One of the AAF's objections to the WDMB control system was that it conflicted with the policy of replacing military with civilian personnel wherever the work permitted. Therefore, AAF officers insisted that planning had to be based on consideration of total personnel needs, and that civilian personnel could not be thought of separately.⁴⁵ Employment of AAF personnel beyond the number allotted by WDMB was assumed to reduce the number of military personnel. But since the

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number of replacements varied from station to station, and statistics were never gathered, the explanation was not considered satisfactory.⁴⁶ the necessity of adhering to the authorized totals was reiterated.

Civilian allotments for the AAF were made by WDMB on a quarterly basis, to be reallocated among the various commands. Ceilings were not applied to all components of the AAF at one time, but were established for various commands at different times over several months. The first order from the Manpower Division froze the number of civilians employed by the Air Service Command at the number employed on 31 August 1943: 298,000 out of the AAF total of about 345,000. In the five months preceding the freeze order, despite energetic recruiting efforts, the total had remained almost static.⁴⁷ Though the freeze order was met with cries of protest and predictions of disaster, it was really something of a blessing. The order made the procurement problem less acute simply because it made it smaller. It proved, furthermore, that the problem had been exaggerated; the command managed to meet the workloads without the increase previously thought essential. The order also made it imperative to use personnel efficiently.⁴⁸

For a year after the freeze ASC employment fluctuated only a little, but in August 1944 another WDMB directive asked a cut of 30,000 for the following three months. The order had been preceded by protests from ASC and Headquarters AAF and was followed by more protests through General Knudsen. As a result, the civilian complement for the ASC was cut by only 10,000.⁴⁹

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While employment in the largest segment of the AAF leveled off and declined after August 1943, employment for the AAF as a whole continued to expand for another 14 months. This expansion came in the smaller commands which did not feel the pinch of the manpower control system as keenly as the ASC. Officers from Headquarters AAF occasionally found stations which were not aware of the ceiling system, since they were not affected by it.⁵⁰ In the last year of the war the WDME authorization was consistently far greater than actual strength figures.*

Headquarters AAF did not come under a ceiling until the end of October 1944. Here, the ceiling was not established as of a certain date, but employment for each month was limited by the number of civilians actually on the rolls on the last day of the previous month. The peak of employment in Headquarters had been reached in the spring of 1943 with 4,700 employees, and employment had shortly thereafter sunk to about 4,000, where it remained until the freeze order. It was felt that the ceiling arrangement would work a hardship on the Civilian Personnel Division in planning an effective recruiting program;⁵¹ but by that time recruiting for Headquarters had become almost entirely a matter of taxing the field stations so that the incoming personnel could be controlled rather easily.

* For example, in October 1944 the AAF was authorized a force of 435,796 when its actual strength was 422,157; in January 1945, of 421,365 authorized, 404,489 were employed; and in June 1945, when the AAF was authorized 410,831, it employed 393,896. (Quarterly Reports of Manpower Division, Jan.-Mar., Apr.-June 1945; Statistics in Personnel Standards Branch).

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A closely related activity of the WDMB investigators was the establishments of yardsticks to determine the proper manning of various military and civilian activities. Here again there was dissatisfaction. In the Board's estimates of staffing of civilian personnel offices, there was some question as to which functions of administration were included. Discussions of the subject among representatives of the AAF, ASF, AGF, and the Board failed to clarify the question, but the Board's decision was put into effect.⁵²

Personnel ceilings and the general scarcity of labor reemphasized the necessity for careful selection and placement. Correct initial assignment was the first step, and an important one, in placement; but the follow-up steps were no less important, since initial placement rested on scanty information. Though careful interviews and placement testing could eliminate some of the difficulties of initial placement, they could not eliminate them. Applicants who had reached the stage of the interview already had taken and passed one of the Civil Service Commission tests and had been classified; the CSC objected strongly to any kind of testing which usurped its function of selection; it did, however, grant the AAF the right to develop and apply tests for placement and other post-appointment functions.⁵³

The Air Service Command was the most enterprising of AAF establishments in developing a placement testing program. A Placement Testing Unit was established in Headquarters ASC in March 1942 to expedite more effective placement; it was this testing program about which the Civil Service Commission complained.⁵⁴ Several of the smaller

commands developed their own placement testing, one of the most elaborate of which was at San Bernardino where unassigned employees were given both a written aptitude test and a series of four-hour "experiences" in the aircraft mechanic's specialties. Placement was then made on the basis of aptitude, performance, and choice. It was a slow and expensive system, but it brought excellent results, and under less pressure than existed during the war it was expected to prove more practical than the less thorough programs.⁵⁵ It remained for the Headquarters Unit to standardize and develop a comprehensive scheme which was adaptable for more general use through the ASC. The plan was ready by February 1943 and was received with enthusiasm.

Two manuals were written for the ASC program, one dealing with the use of tests for placing clerical personnel, the other for placing in mechanical positions. For placement in a mechanical job, the ASC pioneered with a manual which used four tests to measure aptitude. The weighted scores of these tests were then put in tabular form to compare the applicant's ability with the requirements of the job.⁵⁶ The results of the testing program were useful, but the information disclosed by the tests still had to be simplified. Simplification was accomplished through a non-technical report to supervisors and a form which assisted in the practical use of the test results.⁵⁷ Testing for initial placement was so urgently needed in the early years of the war that very little time could be devoted to measuring the skill required by a job. Once the aptitude program was in operation, attention was turned to job information testing.⁵⁸

The AAF and the War Department did not develop a systematic

internal placement program until relatively late in the war. The actual or imagined idleness of persons being paid by the nation inspired criticism quickly, and studies in utilization were undertaken in 1942.⁵⁹ The earliest directive on a placement program, however, did not go out from the Civilian Personnel Division until July 1944, and the War Department did not state its policy until February of the following year.⁶⁰ The directive contained the fundamentals which were developed in more detail during the next year. This placement program was based on five desiderata, the first of which entailed checking the progress of employees about to complete the one year trial period which every government employee must undergo. In this check, the placement advisor cooperated with each supervisor to insure effective operation and to eliminate unsatisfactory employees. It was essential to discover misfits early, for removals after the trial period often entailed much correspondence between congressmen, Headquarters AAF, the field station, and even the President. The second part of the program was to check on employees who had not been promoted as rapidly as might have been expected. The third was the follow-up interview: no matter how much care was exercised in initial placing, only performance on the job could show weaknesses in the employee, the supervisor, or the job situation. Such interviews were conducted from 30 to 60 days after the employee had been placed. An elaborate system of making inventories of skills comprised the fourth phase of the placement program. With the hope of using employees' skills to better advantage and of pro-

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viding a reference file for inside recruiting, the Civilian Personnel Division worked out a plan for keeping a record of skills and abilities of all employees. Since it has long been the policy of the Civil Service Commission and the War Department to regard promotions and transfers as a phase of recruiting (on the assumption that the supply of personnel for positions requiring little training was much larger than for higher grades), accurate knowledge of skills and experience offered possibilities for recruiting from below and for alleviating the difficulty of filling positions when shortages became acute.⁶¹ The initial implementation of this policy resulted in the development of a form which was too complex for practical use by all supervisors, so that the position of Utilization Technician was created to aid operating officials in interpreting the inventories; to refine the plan the elaborate job-family issuances of the War Manpower Commission were used.⁶² A few trials with the revised plan indicated that its use simplified moving employees from one job to another, but the plan was not available throughout the AAF until the middle of September 1945. The fifth aspect of the placement program called for investigation of reasons for low efficiency ratings. This check was to be made for all ratings below the top two, for it was believed that a low rating might indicate many conditions besides incompetency which could be corrected if they were discovered.

The original directive of July 1944 was reissued a year later as the first of a series dealing with placement and utilization of civilians. By that time every major command had reported some progress in the use

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of the program, and in some cases had made elaborations and innovations. It was hoped that the program would facilitate the transition to postwar activities of the AAF.⁶³

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Chapter III

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT

Hiring of employees is complicated in any business, but in the government it becomes a major operation, the responsibility for which rests with the Civil Service Commission. Until 1940 the CSC had authority over classification and allocation in the departmental services only; at that time the President was authorized, upon recommendation of the CSC, to extend the jurisdiction of the Commission to the field service.^{*1} Within the War Department the Secretary of War was responsible for classification. He, in turn, delegated his authority--in the AAF, to the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces. In August 1942 the commanding general reassigned his authority over jobs covered by the "Manual of Standard Field Classification Sheets" to the field services. Though this delegation of authority was subject to the general restrictions of the Classification Act of 1923, which applied only to positions in the departmental services, the act's principles were subsequently extended to the field.²

The civil service acts had recognized four types of position: 1) graded positions, which were subject to the act; 2) ungraded positions, which were not subject to the act; 3) classified positions which were occupied by persons subject to civil service appointment procedures; and 4) unclassified positions which were not subject to civil service appointment procedures. Graded positions included professional, sub-professional, clerical-administrative-fiscal, crafts-protective-custodial,

* The authority of the President to extend the jurisdiction of the CSC to the field service was never exercised.

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of staffing AAF installations.⁵

The authority delegated to field activities was intended to be exercised within the realm of the Secretary of War as limited by these restrictions. But the competition for labor and the lack of familiarity at field stations with the procedures encouraged a tendency to over-classify jobs in the effort to attract labor. This tendency was the constant concern of AAF Headquarters after the initial delegation of authority, since it was apparent that the agencies with final authority over the allocation of manpower were aware of the situation. The CSC and the WMC both sought to keep classification in the field in line with established standards. A WMC directive in September 1942 provided that if the CSC believed that field classifications would impede effective utilization of manpower, standards for proper classification at the field stations should be prepared.⁶

Before the end of the year the AAF Director of Personnel deplored the failure to understand the classification system and warned the commanding generals not to authorize misclassification. He reaffirmed the principle of equal pay for equal work and pointed out that classification was determined only by the duties actually assigned.⁷ This admonition did not, however, end misclassification. The following June the Civilian Personnel Division tried to prevent the establishment of graded positions not covered by the Manual of Standard Field Classification Sheets.⁸ This action was followed by a letter over the

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and clerical-mechanical services, each of which was divided into grades. At the time the Secretary of War delegated his authority to the field, the heads of executive departments, rather than the CSC, controlled classification, and it was the prerogative of the secretary to determine whether jobs were graded or ungraded. In the War Department about half of the hired help were ungraded-skilled tradesmen, machine operators, laborers, consultants, and technical experts. About 40 per cent of graded personnel were in the clerical-administrative-fiscal service.³

To simplify the handling in the field of graded positions, the War Department in 1941 issues a Manual of Standard Field Classification Sheets.* Here, too, jobs were classified in a series based on degrees of skill, such as helper, junior, journeyman, senior, assistant foreman, and foreman. The basic principle of the classification was to give equal pay for equal work, and this applied to the allocation of ungraded positions. The act had fixed the pay scales and had linked each with a definite zone of difficulty and responsibility. Later statutes raised the pay levels, changed the rates of existing scales, and interpolated additional grades.⁴ But since these matters all fell within the province of congressional action and could be altered only by legislation, the pay scales of the classification act were not as fluid as in private industry. This inflexibility increased the difficulty

* Until 1944 ungraded field positions were approved by AAF Headquarters; at that time a "Supplement of Approved Job Descriptions for Ungraded Positions" was issued to expedite hiring in the field.

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signature of General Arnold insisting that misclassification cease.⁹

When the OSW audited a number of installations, Headquarters AAF feared that the authority for classification would be withdrawn or more stringent controls established in the field.¹⁰ The situation did not improve noticeably, and the warnings continued.¹¹

While much of the incorrect classification resulted from a lack of knowledge of job specifications or oversight, the system itself was partly at fault. The job specifications often were not specific enough, and the classification officer had to choose the job description that seemed most nearly appropriate; moreover, the Manual of Standard Field Classification Sheets had been compiled in 1941 with only a limited number of jobs. Though it was gradually enlarged to cover new jobs at AAF stations, in every such process there is a lag between the need and the accomplishment, and the manual remained outdated. Training Command experience, moreover, had shown that few jobs in the AAF were sufficiently similar to warrant a particular standard position number. This meant that the standard classifications were grossly inadequate.¹²

To aid in correcting misconceptions regarding classification, greater emphasis was placed on instruction in this function. A movie was developed by ATSC for training officials and supervisory personnel. Classification analysts were stationed at many field installations so that they could point out misclassifications.¹³ Surveys were conducted frequently, and position control systems were

developed to aid in obtaining proper classification.¹⁴

The reaction to the prevalence of misclassification was not the withdrawal of the delegated authority; instead it caused increased participation by the Civil Service Commission in the classification of positions in the field service. The Commission in 1943 developed standard field specifications which cut across departmental lines.¹⁵ These were specifically meant to establish standards for classifying field positions and to audit the positions at stations. The Commission at once began by going to installations and requesting the information. Such lack of respect for channels brought objections from both the AAF and the OSW.¹⁶ More official procedures were followed thereafter by the Commission, with continued definite limitation of the independence of the field in the classification of positions.

The problem of job evaluation was separate from that of pay determination although the two were closely related and general provision for both was made in the Classification Act of 1923 and its amendments. The amount of pay to be received was automatically dependent upon classification and was a conversion of the job evaluation. The pay plan for graded employees set up in 1923 first provided for a base rate for each class of position. These rates had been adjusted upward from time to time since 1923. A general raise averaging 15.9 per cent was made in the summer of 1945, and another was pending in the unsettled months after the war.¹⁷

Within each class of position a pay scale designed to reward efficiency was initiated by the Ranspeck Act of 1940 to provide

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greater flexibility in the system. These pay raises consisted of \$60 or \$100 increases which were granted automatically every 18 months, providing all conditions were met.¹⁸ Another modification of the pay plan followed the enactment of the War Overtime Pay Act of 1943 under which all graded employees received a 21.6 per cent increase on the first \$2,900 of base pay for a 20 per cent increase in the work week.¹⁹ This act expired at the end of June 1945 and was succeeded by the Federal Employees Pay Act of 1945 which provided for overtime compensation of time and one half (less for employees earning more than \$2,980 per annum) for hours in excess of 40, as well as for the aforementioned increase of 16 per cent in base pay rates.

While the determination of salaries for graded personnel in the AAF was nearly automatic and the administration of the pay plan was routine, the problem of fixing wage rates for ungraded personnel was more complicated. It underwent a series of changes before a satisfactory plan was devised and put into operation. The first plan for paying ungraded personnel was put into operation in January 1942 with the establishment of pay scales for the mechanical trades.²⁰ These schedules were nation-wide, providing for the payment of the same rates for like positions throughout the country and making no provision for the variations in wage levels in different areas. Six rate grades, corresponding to the six primary series of jobs, were established, each with a minimum rate and five additional steps in each grade. Stations could hire at the minimum step or at the second or third step on their own discretion, although subject to War Labor

Board restrictions, until the summer of 1945, at which time they were required to get approval of AAF Headquarters before hiring above the minimum pay step.²¹ In-grade increases by step rates were originally permissible at 60 to 90 day intervals, but in November 1943 this provision was rescinded and a six-month period substituted.²²

Although there were many advantages in administering the country-wide plan, several disadvantages were immediately apparent. In some areas the scale of the AAF was above, in some equal to prevailing pay; but in many areas industrial wages were higher than those established by the AAF schedules, putting the installations at a competitive disadvantage. The Services of Supply, with personnel at many of the Air Service Command installations, operated on wage rates prevailing in each locality, thus throwing the wages at a specific installation out of balance.

A further complication developed in October 1942, when the President vested authority and responsibility for approving all wage rates in the War Labor Board.²³ The WLB in turn delegated the responsibility for salary adjustments of civilians to the Secretary of War, who exercised this function through the War Department Wage Administration Agency.²⁴ Adjustments had been possible before, but the necessity of appealing to a higher authority made the system unsatisfactory. Relief in some cases could have been gained through higher step raises within the schedules, but in spite of a WLB opinion favoring this procedure, the War Department Agency insisted on adherence to the established system.²⁵

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When conditions at many installations became more critical, and when the final decision of the War Department Agency eliminated the possibility of relief under the existing AAF method, a new policy was initiated in 1943. This wage plan was based on local wage rates.²⁶ The principal advantage of this plan was that it allowed the AAF to compete with industry and other governmental establishments in recruiting and retaining labor. Hiring rate adjustments were possible under the plan, and new positions could be established tentatively with relative ease. Greater flexibility was provided with the expansion of the six pay grades to thirty-four or more under the locality plan.

There were, on the contrary, valid objections and disadvantages to localized wage adjustments. In addition to complicating the administration of wages, it was anticipated that the relation between graded and ungraded personnel in the field would be upset. Although the Air Service Command was the largest employer of ungraded personnel in the AAF and was therefore in a position to benefit most from the institution of locality wage rates, some ASC installations opposed the plan.²⁷ The most telling objection came from the ASC's Maintenance Division which, stating that all of its key personnel except foremen, assistant foremen, and senior mechanics were graded, asserted that the adjusted locality wage plan would put the graded employees at a disadvantage when compared with other workers.²⁸

The work of adopting locality wage rates throughout the AAF was shared by the AAF stations, the Civilian Personnel Division at

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Headquarters AAF, and the War Department Wage Administration Agency. It was the responsibility of the field installations to make assignments and to draw up individual position gradings. These data were then submitted to the Civilian Personnel Division for review. The Division was not organized to take care of administering the locality plan, and a reorganization combining wage administration with classification was projected early in 1944 and formally embodied in the AAF reorganization of May 1945.²⁹ The Classification and Wage Administration Branch could advise, coordinate, and assist stations in drawing up assignments, but final approval rested with the War Department Agency. Similarly, requests for adjustments in wages were submitted by stations to AAF Headquarters, which decided whether the request were legitimate and forwarded it to the War Department Agency.

The establishment of the locality wage rate plan throughout the entire AAF could not be accomplished immediately. It was necessary to draw up a priority list of stations according to their needs. Each area was surveyed by the War Department Agency in preparation for setting up the locality rates. The work was expedited by using the results of a wage survey made by the ASF, but at best it was a time-consuming process. Furthermore, the adjustment never was finished, for the wage rates were not static. In areas such as Detroit, the Agency made as many as three surveys in one year.³⁰ By the middle of 1944 the plan had been installed at about 50 stations, and a year

later two-thirds of all ungraded employees were covered by it.³¹ All plans for conversion had been submitted to Headquarters AAF by September 1945, but the processing was incomplete.³²

The results of the conversion were generally satisfactory. Headquarters AAF reported that most stations which had adopted the plan felt that it had strengthened the personnel program by reducing turnover, aiding recruiting, and helping in more effective use of manpower by better placement.³³ The effect on wages varied from area to area. In highly competitive regions such as the Pacific Coast, there was a considerable increase in pay. Where AAF wages had been higher than prevailing pay rates, no reductions were made under the locality plan.³⁴

The pressure of war brought changes in the work hours and leave regulations as well as in classification and wage administration. Congress had established a 40-hour, 5-day week for federal employees in 1934 and this was in effect for the first war year.³⁵ By that time labor had become so scarce that new employees could not be obtained to fill the requirements of government, and a longer work week was adopted as a means of increasing the hours available to the government. By a joint resolution Congress established a six-day week for government service.³⁶ This remained in effect until the end of the Japanese war in August 1945, when the 40-hour week was restored.³⁷

Provision for the extent and kind of leave granted to federal employees also was made by Congress. Although no change was made in the total leave to which an employee was entitled, restrictions were

placed on the amount which could be taken in any one year, and in the disposal of the balance remaining at the end of a year. A basic allotment of 26 days of annual leave and of 15 days sick leave had been made in 1936, and at that time the leave that could be accrued was limited to 60 days.³⁸ In June 1942, however, the War Department limited the taking of leave to five consecutive working days.³⁹ These restrictions were liberalized for persons who requested leave for purposes other than vacations.⁴⁰ After the work week had been extended, leave of six days plus travel time was permitted.⁴¹ Since the long work week and brief vacation proved both unpopular and uneconomical in production, the policy was liberalized to provide for a maximum of 12 consecutive days of leave.⁴²

When the amount of leave taken in one year was limited, it was necessary to arrange for unused leave. Accordingly, the limit of accumulation was extended from 60 to 90 days.⁴³ And to protect leave rights it was provided that requested leave had to be granted at least in the amount which would otherwise be forfeited because of the limitations on accumulated leave.⁴⁴ With the end of the war and the relaxation of pressure, leave regulations were restored to prewar standards.

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Chapter IV

TRAINING

Before World War II the responsibility for becoming qualified for a job requiring a skill was left entirely to the individual. Privately owned and operated trade and vocational schools were available, as well as city and state institutions. In the days of plentiful labor it was simple to hire only those fully qualified. Neither industry nor government was interested in training: that was the concern of the worker. In those days a War Department installation had only to request a mechanic from the Civil Service Commission; the Commission then consulted its register, selected the top man, processed him, and sent him to the installation. But by 1941, with the CSC registers cleared of eligibles and the demand for skilled labor growing greater every day, it was apparent that the employer, whether private or governmental, must assume responsibility for training.

Recognizing these facts, the Secretary of War appointed an investigator to study the situation, with a view to formulating a policy and a program for War Department civilian training. The investigation disclosed a general lack of knowledge in the War Department about the labor market and a conviction that the Department had no responsibility for training civilians. Moreover, the War Department had no organization for administering a training program.¹ As a result of this report the Secretary of War issued a memorandum

setting forth a specific policy on civilian training.² This directive provided authority and set up objectives, responsibilities, and procedures which formed the basis for the vast training program undertaken by the AAF.³ The training gradually took shape in the next two years. The earliest official pronouncement of AAF policy came in September 1943 with the delineation of responsibility for training civilians.⁴ The Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Personnel was designated to coordinate the planning, development, and administration of training, while other echelons planned and conducted programs of their own.

This directive was expanded six months later in the first comprehensive statement of AAF training policy. Here, in addition to the definition of the responsibility of all echelons, the mission, scope, and facilities of the program were outlined in detail.⁵ The program was designed to conserve manpower by increasing the productive capacity of civilian employees, to permit the employment of potentially qualified persons, to reduce waste, and to reduce accidents. To accomplish this mission the directive outlined the scope, location, and method of training. Headquarters AAF was to control the availability of training facilities and to arrange with private organizations when other facilities did not exist.

By the time this official policy was announced, many phases of training had been conceived and put into operation. The statement was largely a recognition of the accomplishments of the lower echelons, which had had to meet this problem in 1941. As each of

the four air depots which comprised the field activities of the Air Corps faced the problem of instructing civilians, beginning in February 1941, training departments were set up, and each of the four experimented with a different phase of the problem.⁶ The greatest need in the AAF was for trained airplane mechanics for the Air Service Command. Even when the labor supply was ample, such mechanics had to be trained because there were very few individuals who had the skills needed for the work. At the different installations where civilians were employed before the war, various types of apprenticeship training had been used, usually covering a period of four years, for all-around maintenance men. That program was⁷ impracticable when thousands had to be taught quickly.

Anticipating the need for training workers for defense industry, Congress appropriated money for vocational education of defense workers in June 1940.⁸ This act provided for free vocational instruction in essential industry, such as aircraft or shipbuilding. Not only financial aid but cooperation from established schools and experienced vocational school administrators were made available. The air depots of the AAF were clearly eligible, but not until mid-1941 did any of them avail themselves of these facilities. The neglect was due to a lack of knowledge, as well as to the hope of the depot administrators that the schools would be a source of workers.⁹ In this hope they were disappointed, because experience showed that depot workers had to be trained specifically for depot work unless more time was to be lost in additional training.

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Under the vocational program, arrangements were made with the Director for Vocational Training to take over public or tax-exempt schools either completely or in part for depot training, or to set up schools where none were available.¹⁰ The arrangements varied in detail, but in general it was the responsibility of state officials to supply direction and supervision, to furnish training facilities, and to maintain all records. The depots supplied students, decided the curriculum, and aided in supplying facilities and instructional materials where the schools ran into difficulties.¹¹ Training in these schools was almost exclusively for basic maintenance. Advanced training generally was done at the depots where scarce and recently developed equipment was available. Supply training also could be done more efficiently at the stations where actual equipment could be used.¹²

The advantages of using schools already staffed with experienced personnel, and to some extent equipped for training were obvious, but there were also several drawbacks to the plan. Close coordination between the depot, the state, and the school was necessary, but often lacking. The depots, furthermore, had difficulty in supplying the schools with the equipment they needed but could not obtain, for the depots themselves frequently could not acquire the same tools in sufficient quantity for their own needs. And it became increasingly difficult to keep the schools supplied with students. Many of these difficulties were solved as the program developed, and by 1943 32 schools were cooperating, with enrollments ranging from 200 to

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2,000.¹³ When the program was stabilized in 1944, 100 schools were receiving equipment for the courses.¹⁴

Some of the basic weaknesses of the vocational defense training program were overcome with the initiation of the mechanic learner plan in 1941.¹⁵ Under an act to expedite the national defense, it was possible to pay wages while the trainees received instruction without having to maintain the fiction that they were doing productive work. The positions of Student trainee at \$365 and of Junior Mechanic Learner at \$660 a year were authorized by the War Department. By February 1942 an almost uniform program was in operation at the depots of the ASC.¹⁶ The ability to pay students at the schools afforded the depots advantages. It put them in a competitive position for recruiting, and it gave the depots a means of control over the schools. The vocational defense training program continued to operate until the federal funds were cut off in 1945.¹⁷

Paying trainees made another type of school accessible for AAF purposes. These were private vocational schools which made contracts to train students in return for a specified tuition. The schools were financed entirely by AAF funds. The students were supplied on a quota basis and after graduation were returned to the depots.¹⁸ The contract schools were not used in large numbers, but they served a useful purpose in providing training in a wide variety of fields in addition to the mechanical trades.¹⁹ The schools were selected on the basis of their qualifications and their proximity to recruiting areas. It was inevitable that schools not selected

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for contracts with the AAF frequently complained, but valuable training was given, and many of the schools operated throughout the entire war. The demand for off-reservation training gradually dwindled, but there was always a need for these schools; and after the vocational defense training program closed, the contract schools supplied the entire need.²⁰

Another type of training which fulfilled a special function was done in factory schools. These were set up at the plants and were primarily for the instruction of employees, but occasionally AAF personnel, military as well as civilian, were sent to them for training in the maintenance of equipment. This training was authorized in March 1942 so that AAF personnel could become familiar with new types of equipment. The program proved to be a success.²¹

The off-reservation schools served their most important function during 1941 when there was a dire need for ready-made training facilities. Most training was for depots and was chiefly basic maintenance and supply, but some was for foremen and instructors.²² To handle functions for which the schools were not suited, the training departments at AAF installations set up instruction on military reservations. At first the post schools confined their activities to supplementing the pre-service training of the off-reservation schools, but as their facilities expanded, more and more pre-service training was performed on the post. During the latter part of 1942 there was a marked trend towards closing off-post schools and the expansion of station schools. By the last quarter of 1943

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there was little pre-service training away from the post, and the courses which initially had covered 12 weeks were limited to 6.²³

In the last year of the war the number of man-hours spent in pre-service training steadily declined. By August 1945, only one-fifth as much training was being done as in July 1944, when 1,075,000 hours had been spend on instruction.²⁴

Pre-service training declined in importance for several reasons. The freezing of the number of civilian personnel in late 1943 automatically eliminated the necessity of mass training for rapid expansion, and on-the-job training became more practical, economical, and efficient. The chief problem thereafter was to raise each worker to his peak of efficiency, and to achieve this the chief emphasis was placed on up-grade on-the-job training.²⁵ Up-grade training might fit an employee for a more responsible position, or teach him a new job. It might retrain him when there was no use for his particular skills, or teach him an entirely new skill. By the end of 1944 the bulk of training was up-grade on-the-job: from July 1944 until July 1945 the total number of man-hours devoted to such training almost tripled. In the peak month it amounted to 1,750,000 hours.²⁶

While most on-the-job training after 1943 was for up-grading, an increasing amount of pre-service training was conducted that way. This was more practicable as the number of employees requiring initial training declined, and as assembly line production methods came into wider use.²⁷ Pre-service training on the job was much more

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economical than that in off-reservation schools, and by January 1945 most new workers were being trained in this manner. Thus the cycle had run its course from the prewar individual training in shops, to the mass instruction in class rooms, and finally back to individual training in the production area.

The cutting of complements, plus the dependence of on-the-job training on it, gave an impetus to supervisor training. The training of supervisors originated in the Air Service Command in 1941, almost as soon as its civilian force had begun to expand. Since experienced supervisors were not available, the only way to get good supervisors was through such training.²⁸ While the ASC was evolving its program, the War Manpower Commission was developing a supervisor training program for industry. This was the Training Within Industry (TWI) program which consisted of three 10-hour courses called Job Methods Training, Job Relations Training, and Job Instructor Training.²⁹ In November 1943 the TWI program was incorporated into the ASC program which included an additional 22 hours in basic management techniques.³⁰ From 1942 to 1944 the other components of the AAF used either the ASC course or the shorter WMC course, in the latter case drawing on the staff and facilities of nearby TWI district offices.³¹ In August of 1944, however, the TWI program budget was cut, eliminating funds for printing training literature.³² As a consequence the ASC supervisor training course became the official system for the AAF.³³

The approved AAF program consisted of two parts: the basic

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52-hour course covering supervision, and follow-up conferences. All employees responsible for the work of five or more civilians took a 30-hour course adapted to the needs of the particular group, while additional training was given in supplementary courses. By the end of 1944, 40,000 civilian employees had taken this training course, with benefits apparent in all echelons.⁵⁴

In addition to this instruction of supervisors and the follow-up conferences, a series of institutes was held for training directors of supervisor programs. The earliest of these took place in the summer of 1944 when representatives of all AAF commands and air forces met at Wright Field. These directors were responsible for the instruction of supervisor trainers within their commands.³⁵ This was followed by similar institutes at frequent intervals at different command headquarters of the AAF so that improvements in methods could be available to all.

Further coordination was achieved when Headquarters AAF established civilian training field liaison offices. The United States was divided into three areas, each with a liaison office. The liaison offices enabled Headquarters to carry out policies for evaluating civilian training programs while providing more expeditious assistance in field training. Headquarters also was a clearing house for the training materials.³⁶ Another improvement in supervision and personnel management was a training course in "Management and Supervision" for top supervisory personnel of the AAF.³⁷ The first of these courses began in February 1945 and continued four months, but the end of the

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war came before this training could be evaluated.³⁸

In the last quarter of 1944 another type of training, designed for civilian personnel officers and covering all phases of administration was developed. Each course lasted a month and was attended by approximately 75 officers drawn from all commands and air forces. Attendance was limited at first to officers with experience in personnel matters. When those had finished, inexperienced officers were trained, permitting the curriculum to be suited to the experience level of the classes. Instructors were drawn from personnel administrators who had specialized knowledge and experience.³⁹ A still more intensive training program in civilian personnel administration was under consideration in the spring of 1945. Accommodations for 120 officers for 5 months had been surveyed and arrangements were being made to install the course when peace canceled the plans.⁴⁰

Although it was difficult to measure the accomplishments of the AAF training programs, there were many indications that the money and time devoted to them were well spent, although one investigator regarded these activities as "just a frill."⁴¹ From outside came flattering requests from industrial concerns for outlines and materials used in the courses.⁴² The most gratifying reports were those which came from all echelons of marked improvement in relationships between officials, supervisors, and employees, and of ability to absorb an increased work load without a proportionate increase in personnel.⁴³

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Chapter V

STABILIZATION OF PERSONNEL

Foremost among the problems of personnel management in the AAF was the high turnover rate, which can be illustrated by a few statistics. For the Air Forces as a whole the average annual turnover was estimated at between 70 and 80 per cent.¹ There was little difference in the rate in the field and at Headquarters. San Bernardino, for example reported the turnover for 1943 to be between 80 and 81 per cent.² In Headquarters the rate increased steadily, although with fluctuations, from 1942 to 1945. In September 1942 the monthly turnover was 3.7 per cent, and by December 1944 it had mounted to 10.04 per cent. Frequently, the separations equaled or even exceeded the number of appointments. In September 1944, for example, Ogden Air Depot reported 418 more separations than appointments.³ Besides the additional burden on the administrative machinery and the consequent reduction in efficiency, the high turnover rate necessitated keeping more employees on hand than would otherwise have been necessary.

Several reasons have already been suggested for the high turnover in the war years. First, there was the heavy drain of the draft. In many areas wages were unsatisfactory in the AAF because of the nation-wide schedules in effect for many months. Workers did not look upon employment in the AAF as having security; others thought

of the AAF only as a place to make quick money and then leave. In the later months of the war, many employees thought that Germany was all but defeated, and resigned to take jobs which promised more stability. The relatively low priority on most AAF employment made possible transfer to jobs with higher priority without the penalties attached to transfers from essential industry. The high turnover was not confined to any one level, but was widely scattered. The highest rate was in the low skills and the extremely high skills.⁴ The extensive training program of the AAF aggravated this situation. Individuals were brought into the AAF untrained and were paid a modest wage while gaining a skill. Then with this skill the men were eligible for jobs in a higher paying industry. One official characterized the AAF as training ground for industry and estimated that it had trained more people than any other agency in the world.⁵

The sites selected for AAF installations frequently caused separations. Many sites were in areas either overcrowded with war industry or isolated; this resulted in a housing problem which it was impossible to solve to the satisfaction of all workers. Some installations were built at inconvenient locations where transportation was difficult, if not impossible. Many workers were lost during the months consumed in the effort to provide satisfactory housing and living conditions. At Headquarters AAF the dissatisfaction was rife: crowded housing, poor transportation, and the high cost of living in Washington caused many to pack up and leave. The more Headquarters tried to paint a rosy picture in order to get new employees, the

greater the dissatisfaction with reality. Nor were separations confined to new and inexperienced personnel; many older and experienced workers also gave up the ghost.⁶ Since the WMC directed that an employee could be released by the CSC for service in essential industry and guaranteed reemployment rights at the conclusion of the war, older permanent Civil Service employees were not restrained from leaving Washington by the general manpower regulations.⁷

The Civilian Personnel Division fought the problem of turnover by coercion and persuasion. Under the WMC rulings, the AAF could place restrictions on the movement of personnel: a statement of availability had to be obtained before an employee could transfer from one job to another, or from one agency or industry to another. Responsibility for issuing such statements had been delegated to the AAF and to local personnel offices.⁸ As the labor market became tighter, the AAF imposed the most stringent limitations and permitted transfers only under the most pressing circumstances.⁹ The penalty imposed when a statement of availability was not granted was a waiting period during which other work could not be secured. At first this was set at 90 days, but the time was shortened to 30 days as the WMC tried to make labor available for essential industries.¹⁰ This was another instance in which the AAF with its relatively low priority rating was at a disadvantage. The waiting period finally was extended to 60 days,¹¹ and limited control of transient employment was likewise gained. Penalties were imposed in the first few months of the war on individuals who left the AAF or other federal employment

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before serving a minimum of six months,¹² but this provision was revoked before the close of 1942.¹³ Not until two years later did the AAF get authority to insure a minimum tenure of six months in the case of employees whose transportation had been paid to Washington.¹⁴

More important than these measures was the program to reduce turnover through improvement of employee morale. This involved the development of an employee relations program designed to improve individual duty assignment, supervision, training, living conditions, and environment. To effect this program, it was agreed that Headquarters must adopt a clearly defined employee relations policy and program and that the staff to administer the program must be improved.¹⁵ At the same time the importance of instilling enthusiasm for the AAF and the job was stressed as a part of morale building. But it is just as easy to command enthusiasm as it is to order happiness; simple fiat seldom works. But through more personal attention to each worker, through indoctrination in the contribution of the job to the total war effort, and through exaggerating the glamour of the AAF, some enthusiasm could be developed.¹⁶

The placement program attacked the problem of employee fitness for his duties. The responsibility for counteracting dissatisfaction rested with the supervisor, since through him the day-by-day contact was made. Therefore the improvement of supervision was undertaken, to include a series of conferences of supervisors in Headquarters AAF with the Commanding General, The Chief of Air Staff, and AC/AS Personnel. These conferences were expected to give supervisors a

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feeling of being a real part of Headquarters which they in turn would transmit to their workers. Other lectures for supervisory personnel were given by authorities on personnel relations to show the importance and principles of worker leadership and its obligations. Once a month division chiefs met with new employees to explain the purpose of work and the organization in relation to major activities of the AAF.¹⁷ Whether such conferences and lectures achieved much cannot be determined. To strengthen the appeal a handbook was projected to explain in popular terms the mission of the AAF and its major components. A model had been developed at Wright Field, and AAF Headquarters made arrangements to borrow the¹⁸ author.

Efforts were made to provide satisfactory housing, both in Washington and at field installations. Provision for initial billeting was made through temporary rooms in government dormitories. After July 1944 a permanent staff was maintained at Union Station and at the Pentagon in Washington to help employees find quarters.¹⁹ In the field, civilian personnel officers were instructed to assist in obtaining adequate housing. This included keeping lists of rooms and houses for rent, making canvasses to discover housing, cooperating closely with housing authorities and real estate groups, and seeking to improve housing through publicity.²⁰ The problem in many cases was far beyond solution by the personnel representatives.

Causes of separations were learned through an interview before the official separation of an employee. The emphasis in this exit

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interview changed to an effort to persuade the employee not to separate. In most cases the employee had already given due consideration to resigning, but persuasion met with reasonable success and resulted in the retention of 11 per cent of those interviewed.²¹

Closely related to the turnover problem was that of absenteeism. In January 1943 the Director of Civilian Personnel and Training of the War Department described absenteeism as one of the greatest single factors hindering efficient manpower utilization, and blamed it with lengthening the war, while increasing the cost and losses. He recommended steps to measure absenteeism in individual establishments, to study the reasons given for absences in order to determine the causes, and to lower the rates.²² The OSW had surveyed the types, causes, and remedies in some industries and governmental agencies. The principal causes of voluntary absenteeism were lack of interest in a particular job, failure to connect the job with the war effort, increased earnings enabling the worker to "lay off," lack of regular attendance habits, lack of dependence on the job, and a dissatisfaction with basic policies. Among the causes of involuntary absenteeism were idleness and accidents, long hours, housing shortages, transportation difficulties, shopping requirements, and medical and legal services.

While there was general concern about absenteeism, and agreement that steps should be taken to counteract it, investigation within the AAF disclosed that the rate was considerably below the amount authorized by law. Legally, an employee was entitled to over 25 hours of combined sick and annual leave per month, but the figures

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for the first half of 1944 ranged between 17.5 and 19.9 hours per month, and figures for the next year were also within bounds. The problem then was to cut down the hours of absence as far as possible.²³

The abuse of sick leave privileges was attacked by emphasizing the responsibility of employees to their country and by urging conformity to the spirit of regulations. Coercion and restraints could not be imposed beyond those laid down by law, but ways of discouraging abuse were suggested. For example, the stations were advised to send a nurse to call on sick employees at their homes in order to spy on malingerers. Honesty could also be forced by requiring absentees to report to a medical examiner before returning to duty.²⁴ Sometimes the field installations initiated their own devices for stimulating honesty. The Material Command issued a number of colorful posters seeking to reduce absenteeism and promote safety,²⁵ and the ATSC developed a program for "Presenteeism" embodying emphasis on the advantages accruing from a high percentage of employees being at their jobs consistently.²⁶

Many of the causes of absenteeism duplicated those of turnover, and at times whether a worker absented himself or left for another job depended on the degree of dissatisfaction or urgency. Many of the measures to combat high turnover--the placement program, housing and transportation, the campaign to instill pride in the connection with the AAF--automatically attacked certain causes of absenteeism. Other parts of the employee relations program assailed the problem from different angles, aiming to increase productivity and satisfaction.

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One phase of the program was designed to improve working conditions, safety, and health. To reduce the number of hours lost because of accidents and injuries, a campaign was inaugurated in 1943.²⁷ Its success was apparent after a year's trial, showing a decrease of 53 per cent in disabilities and 59 per cent in fatalities.²⁸ Where accidents were sustained by AAF civilian employees, they were given medical treatment and compensated according to seriousness under the United States Employees' Compensation Act. Civilian personnel officers were instructed to expedite such claims.²⁹ Civilian personnel officers were also given information concerning group health and hospitalization.³⁰

Especially after the influx of women into the AAF, field installations improved lighting, ventilation, and hygienic facilities, and provided nursing services. Recreation programs were organized at many installations, sometimes with the aid of the Recreation Division of the Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services.³¹ Personnel officers also aided in establishing child-care services to facilitate the employment of mothers of young children. Employee associations were encouraged, to provide both recreation and services. One of the most popular of these was the credit union, which provided a repository for savings and offered financial aid at reasonable interest.³²

Another part of the employee relations program was the orientation interview. The interviews were with groups just before entering on duty, when the counselor informed the employees of conditions of

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employment and rules, regulations, rights, and privileges, and helped create a feeling of welcome and responsibility.³³ The interview acquainted the new employees with the counseling services and led to many return visits to discuss problems varying from dissatisfaction to participation in theater groups.³⁴ The services furnished information and an outlet for emotions, which without a release might have resulted in separation. To handle serious complaints, a grievance procedure was established to provide adjustment.³⁵ Before this procedure was established, employees frequently had written directly to the Commanding General, the Secretary of War, the President, or other officials who forwarded the letters to the Civilian Personnel Division, where more time was consumed. Use of the grievance procedure resulted in more expeditious and more satisfactory handling of complaints.³⁶

To stimulate efficiency and productivity and to provide for employee participation in management, a series of cash awards for employee suggestions was initiated in 1943.³⁷ Local committees considered the suggestions and forwarded the best to the OSW for final evaluation. The value of the program was shown after a year's trial when the following cumulative tabulation was made:³⁸

No. of suggestions received	No. of suggestions adopted	Awards paid	Estimated savings
30,973	2,748	\$89,354	\$6,955, 033

Another tangible reward for employees was the meritorious within-grade salary increase. Provision for these increases had been

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made by Congress in 1941,³⁹ but as the pressure to increase individual productivity and to utilize manpower increased, the salary advancements were used specifically to encourage employees to cooperate and eliminate non-essential work. One-step advancements could be granted and such salary advancements did not affect the periodic within-grade salary advancements based on tenure. A War Department Board on Civilian Awards was established to pass on all such recommendations.⁴⁰ Increases were initiated by the supervisors, some of whom caused dissatisfaction by putting the recommendations on a personal basis. It was soon apparent that some standard of judgment was desirable so as to base increases on merit, and therefore a service rating program for civilians was devised and put into operation in 1944.⁴¹ With the approaching end of the war in 1945, the rating system gained significance as a basis for retaining the most efficient employees when a reduction in force became necessary.⁴²

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G L O S S A R Y

AAF	Army Air Forces
AGF	Army Ground Forces
ASF	Army Service Forces
ATSC	Air Technical Service Command
CAA	Civil Aeronautics Authority
CSC	Civil Service Commission
OCAC	Office, Chief of the Air Corps
OSW	Office, Secretary of War
SOS	Services of Supply
TWI	Training Within Industry
USES	United States Employment Service
WLB	War Labor Board
WMC	War Manpower Commission
WDMD	War Department Manpower Board

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FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

1. Organization Chart, Air Corps, 26 Nov. 1926.
2. Statistics on civilian personnel strength in Personnel Standards Branch, Civilian Personnel Div.
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BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The basic legal authorities for all employment in the federal government have been found in the Statutes at Large. Within this authority, the official publications of the Civil Service Commission, the War Department, the Army Air Forces, and the Army Service Forces provide at the various echelons the regulations and policies governing employment. The Headquarters Staff files have also been searched; particularly important are the files of AC/AS Personnel and AC/AS Intelligence. The authors of this study have also interviewed the men chiefly responsible for civilian personnel in the AAF.

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A P P E N D I X

CLASSIFICATION ACT OF 1923 AND ITS AMENDMENTS:

Classification Act of March 4, 1923 (42 Stat. 1488) established the first uniform system of position classification in the Federal Government, based on the principle of "equal pay for equal work." Succceding acts of Congress have amended the pay scales of the original act and have extended its coverage.

PERTINENT PROVISIONS OF CLASSIFICATION STATUTES:

The Classification Act of 1923 formulated a plan for the classification of positions in the departmental service and provided uniform compensation schedules for such positions to assure "equal pay for equal work." Section 4 of the Classification Act states in part:

" . . . the head of each department shall allocate all positions in his department in the District of Columbia to their appropriate grades . . . and shall fix the rate of compensation of each employee thereunder, in accordance with the rules prescribed . . . herein. Such allocations shall be reviewed and may be revised by the Board [Board referred to was Personnel Classification Board, now known as the Civil Service Commission] and shall become final upon approval by said board.

Welch Act of 1928 (45 Stat. 785) amended the pay scales of the original classification act and provided (sec. 3) as follows:

The heads of the several executive departments and independent establishments are authorized to adjust the compensation of certain civilian positions in the field services . . . to correspond, as far as may be practicable, to the rates established by this act for positions in the departmental services in the District of Columbia.

Brookhart Act of 1930 (46 Stat. 1033) authorized and directed the heads of departments to adjust salaries of positions in the field service to

correspond with pay scales of classification act as amended. Section 2 of the Brookhart Salary Act (which directed such pay adjustments) is regarded as mandatory in its application. Subsequent decisions of the Comptroller General practically have required that departments apply the principles of classification to the field as well as to the departmental service. (14 Comp. Gen. 183,392; 15 Comp. Gen. 154).

RAMSPECT ACT - Title II of Ramspect Act of 1940 (54 Stat. 1211)

"authorized the President to make adjustments in the Federal classification plan." This act did not change the classification system, but merely authorized the President to make any of the following adjustments upon recommendations of the Civil Service Commission.

1. To extend the jurisdiction of the Commission over classification to the field service.
2. To establish a pay differential for positions under the act, not to exceed 25 per cent of the minimum rate of the grade to which the position is allocated. Such differential must be based on the hazards of the occupations, isolation of the position, or locations of posts outside the continental limits of the United States.
3. To except from the pay scales of the Classification Act, as amended, positions paid from combined Federal and State funds, positions filled by inmates, students or patients of Government institutions; positions outside the continental limits of the United States paid at native rates; and emergency and seasonal nonrecurring positions. This act merely vested these powers in the President. To become effective it depends on the issuance of Executive Orders/.

Some of the Executive Orders which have been issued to interpret these provisions are: Executive Orders: 8743, 8744, 8833, 8955, and 9230.

Act of August 1, 1942 (56 Stat. 733) Sec. II, Bull. 44, WD 1942.

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