

UTILIZATION OF MANPOWER IN THE ARMED FORCES

7 February 1947

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THE INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

Washington, D.C.

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THE INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE OF THE ARMED FORCES

PUBLICATION NUMBER I47-78

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GENERAL MCKINLEY:

Gentlemen, this morning we are due for a very interesting talk by Colonel Russell Skinner. I have just had an opportunity to talk with him over in my office and I find he has lived this subject. I know he is going to give you a lot of valuable information.

Colonel Skinner is an Infantry officer who has come up through the Infantry School, the Command and General Staff School, and was later detailed in the Inspector General's Department. However, his main interest seems to center around the fact that he has been a member of the War Department Manpower Board since 1943. I really believe he has lived the subject.

He will speak to you this morning on the utilization of manpower in the Armed Forces. I take great pleasure in introducing Colonel Russell Skinner.

(Applause)

COLONEL SKINNER:

As General McKinley stated, gentlemen, at the beginning of 1943 General Marshall appointed a board called the War Department Manpower Board for the control of personnel in the Zone of the Interior. This morning I intend to talk principally about the work of that board. If time permits, I shall also talk about some personnel policies that affected the requirements for personnel.

It can be seen from what I have just said that really the title of my talk is somewhat of misnomer because I shall not talk about the problem of utilizing manpower in the Armed Forces as a whole; only in the Army. I have a very excellent reason for not talking about the utilization of manpower in the Navy.

That reason is that I do not know anything about it. Nor will I talk about the utilization of personnel in all Army activities. I shall not talk about the utilization of manpower in field force units for instance. It seems to me that the requirement for personnel there is tied in with the decisions about the type of warfare that is to be conducted, and so forth, and that manpower requirements flow from that automatically.

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This zone of the interior personnel about which I talk exclusively is the personnel that is used to operate the zone of the interior establishments. ZI personnel engages in many missions,- the procurement of supplies and equipment, a certain amount of manufacture of supplies and equipment, the storage of that equipment,- the eventual movement of supplies and equipment to the posts in the United States where it is to be expended, or to ports of embarkation for expenditure overseas, and its transportation overseas to the ports on the other side.

ZI personnel also operates establishments for the training of individuals and, as can be readily imagined, with five hundred thousand recruits coming into the Army for many months during the war, the requirements for training establishments at that time were large.

ZI personnel also takes care of soldiers and officers considered, I will say, as human-beings; that is, this personnel aids in keeping them warm, providing them quarters, keeping them clothed, taking care of them when they are sick, providing amusement for them, and so on.

The efforts the WDMB have been making, whether successful or not, to control the utilization of this personnel were efforts along a line that had never been attempted before. The control of the determination of requirements for personnel in these many establishments on a scientific basis was an innovation in management, either military or civilian. I suppose the best way to start out talking about the system we eventually evolved is to talk about the way the ZI was operated in peacetime.

First of all, we had those same establishments in peacetime, if on a reduced scale. During peacetime the Armed Services went to Congress for money for civilians. They did not ordinarily put in for enough money for all the civilians they could have used in the zone of the interior establishments. Generally speaking, they put in only for civilians for jobs that were so specialized that it was hopeless to look to ordinary soldiers for their performance. So there would be money for two or three secretaries around the headquarters of a Corps Area, and a few technicians, such as plumbers and steamfitters around the posts, but that was all.

There was no attempt to supply the remaining needs for ZI personnel from the military--by assignment, that is. Take the Ordnance Department at an ordinary post. An ordnance sergeant would be assigned. He would supervise all ordnance matters there. But when a carload of ammunition came in, he would call on the troops at the post-- the field force units-- to send a detail over to unload the car. And when the troops wanted to expend the ammunition, the sergeant would oblige them to send a wagon around to get the ammunition and take it to the place where it was to be used.

Obviously, after the outbreak of war, it was not practical to

utilize the persons in the field force units in this manner. No longer did the men in the field force units have years of experience and they could not therefore be diverted from training from their unit. It was necessary to train them as rapidly as possible so that they could go overseas to perform the functions they were destined to perform. Immediately, therefore, the decision was made to provide a permanent compliment for the operation of the ZI establishments.

Throughout 1942, the Army hired civilians as fast as it could get them and put them in the ZI establishments wherever it was felt that they could be used. In addition, the Army was assigning military men to those tasks, mainly Limited Service.

Some idea of the immensity of those establishments can be gained when I tell you that on the first of January 1943, the number employed in the Z.I. establishments numbered almost three million people. I cannot tell you how many the Navy had. But three million in the Army alone is a tremendous number. It was obvious that it was a sufficiently large segment of the working population so that it had to be taken into account.

It was in realization of this fact that General Marshall decided to form The War Department Manpower Board to check on the use of this personnel and keep it within limits.

The decision to do this represented something of a change of front. During the course of 1942 the emphasis had been on getting enough people to do the job. Very little attention was paid to whether too many people were being employed. The old funds restrictions on the employment of civilians had, of course, completely disappeared. The Army was getting more money than it could spend. Nor was there at the time any dearth of military for Z.I. use. Obviously, a control system was required if the Z.I. was not going to absorb far more people than it should.

When it came to our work, when we got going, it was obvious to us that the first step was to find out what ZI activities were being carried on and how many people were being employed on them. So our first step was to secure a basic inventory, by activity. We had a bit of trouble with that. It was not as easy as we expected it to be. For one thing, in the Army the officers had never thought of personnel in terms of "operating" personnel and "other" personnel. When they began making their reports, they were inclined to show all the trainees at a training center as part of the training establishment. In our eyes the persons who operated the establishment were in the "operating" category; the persons receiving the training were "other", and should not have been considered except as workload. We had some trouble in getting that concept across.

Also, the Army had been accustomed to reporting personnel in terms of organization. Very often, when we would ask for a report on the

personnel employed on an activity, there would be a tendency to show merely the strength of some organization. That did not work in many cases because the organization shown as performing the job might be performing several others besides. Eventually, however, we got a list of the ZI activities that seemed satisfactory and eventually also we got the number of persons employed. That is--by the way-- when we learned that we had three million people in the zone of the interior activities.

Having gotten our basic inventory completed, we had to decide on a method of allotment of personnel. As I have said, there was no control at all on the hiring of civilians and the assignment of military personnel was not dictated by any very scientific criteria. Inasmuch as we hoped to determine how much personnel was required for a given amount of workload, we decided our allotment must be in terms of "total." We must make an allotment of so many people to perform the mission and disregard whether they were soldiers or civilians. To us, it seemed to make no difference.

So our allotment was set up on the basis of an allotment in total. It is true that later on we did break that allotment down into military and civilian. We even broke the military down into types--officers, warrant officers, and so on. But we did not do that except for purposes of administration. We had to determine how many civilians could be used--and how many of that number were available--to decide how many military had to be allotted. We never determined requirements in terms of the categories "Military" and "Civilian", except for this reason.

Initially, in determining what the commands should have, we just assumed that what they had was right and gave them all the people they were using. However, it was inherent in our mission not to accept the existing utilization of personnel as correct but, instead, to go into the field to try to determine what was really needed.

When it came to that, we felt we could do the thing in two different ways: We could either, ourselves, go out and examine the requirements of these activities and come to a decision and recommend that the Chief of Staff issue allotments accordingly; or we could examine the control measures being taken by the various commands and notify the Chief of Staff as to whether they were adequate and whether the matter of manpower control was being energetically pursued.

The main objection to going into the field was that it savored a little of getting into the interior workings of the commander's activities and sort of breathing down his neck. You could expect every commander to object to that. The reaction you could expect was along the lines of the reaction of General Somervell when he heard about this proposal. He said, "Huh! CGPU, eh?"

The other way was open to objection too because any commander is going to compute his needs in such a way as to be kind to himself. That was evidenced later in the war on a number of occasions. To illustrate specifically, a commander came in during 1944 for a hundred thousand more men for his activities than he was using at the time. After we had analyzed his requirements, we recommended that the Chief of Staff allot him ninety thousand less than he had. That is what he got. Now it is possible that that commander later fell down in performing his mission, but I do not believe you would ever get anyone in that command to confess that that was the case.

Eventually, the Board decided to go into the independent appraisal business. We did it reluctantly because we knew that as soon as we did the WDMB would become synonymous with SOB. That is the way it turned out. It was amusing how much they hated us around the Army, considering that all of us on the Board were elderly gentlemen with much of the milk of human kindness in our hearts and especially toward the ZI operators. We knew that they had a terribly difficult job and we leaned over backward to be fair to them. In fact, where there was any doubt we gave them more than we thought they actually needed. But that did not let us escape the reputation we got of being bad, bad boys, or perhaps I should say of being bad, bad old men.

Having decided on independent appraisals, we realized we had given ourselves a real job. Here were establishments of every kind, scattered all over the United States. They were so widespread that I don't suppose you could have gone into a movie-house in the country in 1943, 1944 or 1945 and not have found some ZI employee of the War Department.

Well, we concluded the first thing we needed to do was to determine a unit of work by means of which the work performed by each activity could be measured. That, in some cases, was quite easy. Take a hospital, for instance. Obviously, you can measure the work of a hospital by the number of patients. Obviously, also you can measure the work of a disciplinary barracks by the number of prisoners. When we were finally able to determine a satisfactory unit of work, we felt we had advanced far toward our goal. There remained however the job of determining how many people were required for the performance of a given number of units.

At first, in order to make this determination, we surveyed every activity of a type before we came to any conclusions. We felt that at the end of such an exhaustive survey we could be fairly confident that the ratios we developed would be right. For instance, we surveyed all general hospitals. We found that on the average, one man was required for every bed occupied and we adopted that ratio as reliable. Thereafter, if we could foresee that there were going to be sixty thousand patients in the General Hospital system in the United States, we allotted sixty thousand people to care for them. Naturally individual establishments required varying numbers, a greater or less number than that. But, you

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see, we were allotting to the agency that had all the activities of this type and we felt that we could leave it to the agency to make those adjustments.

In the case of other activities, it was almost impossible to obtain a good unit of work. Take a headquarters for example. That was an activity for which we never did develop a unit of work to satisfy us. We had to be satisfied with adopting an unsatisfactory unit of work and then applying it with due regard for its imperfections.

Let me be specific, to illustrate. In 1943 and 1944 the Ground Forces headquarters, had forty or fifty divisions to supervise in the United States. The Ground Forces were conducting maneuvers somewhere all the time, often two or three, in different parts of the country. That, of course, involved a lot of staff supervision. The AGF Headquarters were also giving general supervision to the replacement system, although it was directly handled by the Replacement and School Command. The replacement system had hundreds of thousands of trainees.

Later in the war, as the divisions went overseas and as the number of trainees decreased, while we did not take either one of those things as a set measure of the headquarters work, we did think the headquarters strength could be lowered. So when we would get reports--and by the way I may say that one feature of our system was the calling for reports of strength, monthly, by activity--we went over to see them and said, "You had fifteen hundred people in your headquarters in 1943 and 1944 when the situation was as it was. Now in 1945, the workload has gone down, most of your divisions have gone overseas and you have fewer than half the trainees you used to have. It would appear to us, on the basis of these admittedly unsatisfactory units of work, we should cut your allotment for headquarters from fifteen hundred to eleven hundred." You see, we would have to dicker with them on that kind of a basis. Fortunately for the success of our activity I think well over half in the ZI establishments could be measured by a pretty satisfactory unit of work. In the field of those activities, we weren't so bad off.

Having gotten the requirements one way or another for activities, by type--so much for this type of activity, so much for the other--we would add the requirements for all of the activities under a major command and we would allot to the major command what that command required for the operation of all the activities. We did not say that the personnel we had computed as necessary for an activity would be employed in that activity; we left that to the commander. We only used those computations to determine the total. After we got the total, he could use them anywhere he liked. Naturally if, over a period of months, we noticed from his reports that he was using a lot more people on an activity than we had computed he needed, we would go out and look at that activity again to see if our computations were in error. If they were in error, we would amend them upward.

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If, on the other hand, we found them to be pretty sound in the first place, we took this point of view, and my, oh my, how the commands hated us for taking it. We took the point of view that if, over a period of months, they had several thousand more people in an activity than we thought they needed, they must be taking them away from some other activity, and that was proof that that activity didn't need them either. We'd therefore cut their total by the excess in the overstaffed activity.

I would like to bring out this point. The strength of the ZI establishments when we got going, about the thirtieth of June, 1943, was four hundred twenty-five thousand more than it was on VE-Day; and there had not been a notable diminution in the workload during that period. True, it had changed in character. There were fewer posts in operation; but, on the other hand, there were a great many more injured being cared for in the General Hospitals. I do not believe that the ZI reduction of 425,000 was due to the Board. I do not claim that at all. But I do believe that the existence of the Board, the fact that we were watching all the while, had a salutary effect. At any rate whatever the cause, there was a reduction, anyhow. I'd like to make another point. Throughout the war and since we have never made reductions on prima facie evidence. We have accepted the obligation of proving that they were appropriate. That is why I say we were so kind-hearted and nice, in spite of the reputation we had. If there was any doubt about whose computations were right, we accepted those of the using agency.

Naturally, you will never get radical cuts that way; never! If you want to get large reductions you must simply make them; that is to say, cut arbitrarily.

However, in a case like that, a Board like the WDNB is useful. If, for instance, during the war the Chief of Staff had found it necessary to cut the ZI (for reasons aside from their needs) and had come up and said, "I've got to cut the ZI. Shall I cut all commands alike or shall I cut Air so much, Ordnance a lesser amount, and Chemical Warfare more?" In that case, I think we would have been in a position to recommend which ones were relatively fat. I will not tell you which ones I thought.
(Laughter)

I have already used up half an hour, but I will use five minutes more for another phase of this matter.

Coupled with our mission of determining whether the commands were using too many people on obviously necessary jobs, the Chief of Staff asked us to look into the necessity for all the different activities. He wanted us to find out whether there was any necessity at all for certain activities and if there were, whether they couldn't be reduced in scope. I have remarked that when we said, "You have too many plumbers, too many steamfitters, too many clerks, too many messengers". It got us into a lot of trouble with the commands. Imagine then how much trouble

we'd have got into if we had gone to them and said, "Your system of training establishments is all wrong. You should cut out your reception centers and send recruits direct to the training centers." I think you can readily understand that the major commanders, who did not get up there by being pushed around, wouldn't be likely to take kindly to any such suggestions. At the same time, it must be noted that certain commanders showed a tendency to operate in an unduly extravagant manner. Commanders, being human beings, more or less lock out for their own and let somebody else worry about the effect on the War Department as a whole. They haven't got an over-all point of view and you cannot expect them to have. For instance, wouldn't the Surgeon General be stupid if he did not try to get all the hospital beds he possibly could so that if another flu epidemic came along he would be set to handle it? Yet if all the personnel were to be assigned to the hospitals, there'd be nobody to fight.

So somebody up topside has got to adjudicate between commands and cut those back that get out of line. We did not think we were the people to do that. The General Staff agencies are set up for that very purpose. So what we did when we found that a command seemed to be getting too large a place in the sun was to notify the appropriate General Staff agency and set forth our reasons for thinking that the establishment was operating in a manner that unduly consumed personnel, or employed personnel without an adequate amount of return. Now I don't know how to say this, to prevent it sounding objectionable and I don't mean it that way, but, in general, the General Staff Sections didn't do anything about it. There were two reasons for that. One reason was that they were, under the terms of War Department organization, so undermanned that they simply could not make an evaluation of the worth of the Board's suggestions.

The other reason was that it was a policy of the Chief of Staff and of the Army to leave major commanders alone and let them run their own show. Of course, nobody can quarrel with that decision. However, it is equally true that you cannot let one man run away with everything. I must say it is my honest conviction that there was not enough control over those major commanders during the war. As a result, they were allowed to retain activities that used up personnel needlessly, or at least they were allowed to retain activities that used up personnel that could have been used more advantageously somewhere else. I won't say they were useless activities, but they were not strictly necessary. They were embroidery, in some cases.

I notice I have used up thirty-three minutes, Colonel Greer and General McKinley. I am going to talk about some of these personnel policies at the seminar this afternoon. Would you rather leave it until then? They all deal with those matters that you want to talk about this afternoon.

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LIEUT. COLONEL GREER:

Please wait until later, Colonel.

COLONEL SKINNER:

Then I am through, gentlemen. Thanks a lot.

(Applause)

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

I would like to ask the first question myself. Was the survey of the Quartermaster General's Office, for instance, here in Washington as to officer requirements, when the Inspector General came down, something instigated by your group, or was that a group within the Army itself?

COLONEL SKINNER:

Well, General McKinley, we looked at the Office of the Quartermaster General two or three times. But I don't know about this Inspector General's survey. It would not be for personnel requirements. I believe it must have been for other matters.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

It was for officer requirements.

COLONEL SKINNER:

Officer requirements in the Office of the QMG? It was made by the Inspector General?

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

It was.

COLONEL SKINNER:

General, I don't know.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

Colonel Ray was the one I came in contact with. That was an example of how kind-hearted you were because I know they came down there with the express purpose of cutting the office thirty-five percent; but I got a thirty-four percent increase out of it.

COLONEL SKINNER:

Oh, we ran into those smoothies all the time. (Laughter)

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A STUDENT OFFICER:

I want to ask what classes of people made these independent surveys? Were they eminently qualified, generally, to make such surveys? What were their qualifications? I am speaking of those people you had in your organization making these independent surveys.

COLONEL SKINNER:

Yes, sir. Well, they were all old men like me, and with virtues and the defects of a person like me. They had gotten rather mellow with the passage of time and were sympathetic with the man doing a job because they had all tried to run jobs themselves and knew that that was troublesome.

I think that is more important than being tough. The inspecting officers had the experience of many years behind them. I think when it came to inspecting such things as training establishments, station complements, disciplinary barracks, and hospitals--even hospitals-- they were pretty good. When they inspected the depots and arsenals and ports, they were not so good. The only reason that they did as well as they did do was that in every one of these highly-technical activities, when it all simmers down, about everyone turns out to be either a typist or a messenger. For example, right in this school there is a group teaching but the bulk of the people are clerks, typists, messengers, firemen, janitors, and so on.

So we looked at that type of personnel and let the technical personnel pretty much alone. We did not feel hesitant about taking away a file-clerk, someone in the motor pool, supply sergeants, mess sergeants, and all persons of that kind. Our inspecting officers were good there.

I said that generally, the inspectors were of the old gentlemen type but that was not entirely true. We did have an admixture of some people that, in civil life, were industrial-management people. We had maybe ten or twelve of those. We used them mostly for evolving what we called a yardstick, which I have not mentioned before. A yardstick for an activity was supposed to set down what each fact of the activity really needed to operate. Then our inspection teams would go out and use the yardsticks that the technical specialists evolved.

MR. PIERCE:

I wonder if you would elaborate on the development of the War Department Manpower Board inside the War Department and the request by Congress in Public Law, I think it was forty-seven or forty-nine--fifty-seven or fifty-nine--for all government agencies to report on utilization, through the Bureau of the Budget. Wasn't there spontaneous

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development inside of the War Department Manpower Board? Was it not related outside the request of the Congress at that time that there be manpower-utilization surveys carried out and reported to the Congress through the Bureau of the Budget?

COLONEL SKINNER:

As far as I know, sir, Congress was paying no attention to personnel requirements, civilian personnel requirements of the Armed Forces, at the time we came into being which was, as I told you, in December of 1942.

Now Public Law 49, somewhat later, did put a ceiling on certain types of employees and directed the agencies to scrutinize their needs very carefully. As far as I know the idea of the Board developed in General Marshall's own head, I'll tell you what I think brought it about. He had gone to the President, in connection with considering the needs of industry. It looked impossible to give us eight million two hundred thousand people for the Army, the number we had hoped to get. General Marshall agreed to cut five hundred thousand of the military off that. "But", he said to himself, "I'm not giving up any part of the Establishment." Then he said to himself, "Where can I get reductions?" Well the obvious place was around the country here.

Maybe that is the explanation for it. That is not a very good explanation; I did not answer it categorically, but the reason is I can't.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

I wanted to ask that question. Now the budget is the ceiling czar, isn't it, on personnel?

COLONEL SKINNER:

Yes, sir.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

They deal directly with you and you head up the War Department.

COLONEL SKINNER:

It's this way, General. The various agencies come in to the Budget Officer, War Department, with their estimates of requirements for money for the pay of civilians. That is scrutinized there and eventually the request, as originally presented or as modified, goes to the Bureau of the Budget. That contains a request for civilians.

Well our part in that is this: The Budget Officer, War Department, wherever there is an item involving personal services, pay of civilians,

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comes up, calls on us for an estimate of whether that estimate is in accordance with the real needs.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

That is now.

COLONEL SKINNER:

That is now; yes. It gets underway this year.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

That is now that money has taken a hold as the controlling element. There were years, towards the end of the war and just following the close of the war, when the ceiling on personnel was much more restrictive than the money. There was plenty of money.

COLONEL SKINNER:

Throughout this talk I have been speaking primarily about what is needed in wartime. At the present time we are of the opinion that civilian personnel ceilings should be removed because, as the President pointed out in his message to Congress, they constitute a second control. When you have two controls over the same commodity you have trouble gearing them together. We think that a civilian personnel control now, over and above the money control, is bad.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

In time of peace, the money is in control. It is an absolute control.

COLONEL SKINNER:

Yes, sir, it is an absolute control. There isn't any need for personnel ceilings.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

But, as I say, there were ceilings that came down on us when we had plenty of money and the emphasis was on better utilization of personnel. I wondered if the Budget, at that time, was active. They came into the picture, I don't know just when. They worked through you and along with you.

COLONEL SKINNER:

For a while, we didn't have any restriction on the employment of

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civilians, as I said. Then, after a while, Congress passed what was known as Public Law 49, later 106 and now 390, which states that graded civilians are under a ceiling and cannot exceed a certain number. That is over and above the money restriction. They are both on us now. It is indeed quite a task to coordinate the allotment of money and the allotment of personnel so that the one won't stop the other. Whichever one is the lowest, that one governs. It is bad, we think.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

I am trying to develop a few things. You were talking about units of work. The technical services did a great deal--

COLONEL SKINNER:

Yes, sir.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

And, to that extent, you did not have to concern yourself with them so much, did you?

COLONEL SKINNER:

No, sir. I had an eye on the clock and was rushing to get through here, so I did not go into these details. I did not give due credit when I said personnel went down four hundred twenty-five thousand. Perhaps I indirectly indicated we were the ones responsible. I do not mean that at all. The technical services were active, practically all of them, in evolving units of work by means of which they could measure the performance and then get a ratio of requirements. We, in many cases, took their computations, accepted them gratefully, and used them.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

I was getting to the point that there was a question originally asked about what kind of personnel you used for that. There was a great deal of technical personnel used at the lower levels, wasn't there?

COLONEL SKINNER:

Oh, much.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

There were management engineers, and all that sort of thing used to develop estimates.

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COLONEL SKINNER:

We had ten or twelve people, or twenty, around us in Washington. We had, maybe, eighty people out in the field. I think the number we had altogether was one hundred. Now you know one hundred people are not going to inspect three million people, scattered all over the United States, personally. We seized and grabbed from everybody we could. But we also did what we could on our own where we could and we had in most cases to compute requirements for ourselves.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

The thing particularly interests me because I was a budget man; I was a money man. When money lost its control, this other control went in, as far as personnel is concerned. The whole thing is in the area of management.

COLONEL SKINNER:

That's right.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

It is the same management-control technique with a different control riding in the saddle. It really is.

COLONEL SKINNER:

I would not have any criticism of the technical services' work at all, except to make the criticism that every human-being rates. Every human being is going to try to grab off a little reserve for an emergency. He will try to get a little bit more money than he sees he is going to need because he can't tell what might turn up. He will get a few more people, if possible, than he really needs because he can't tell what is going to come up. If he is any good at all as a boss, he will do that. Now our business was to take away that little comfortable cushion he was surrounding himself with for an emergency.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

I will make this remark on your arbitrary cut. You remember where you said you found in some places they had switched them around; well when you do that you merely make a challenge to the man to pad and fool you. Nobody ever cut me in the Bureau of the Budget that way that I didn't go back and get a few extra million the following year.

COLONEL SKINNER:

I do not, for one moment, want to claim we weren't fooled. We were fooled oftener than not.

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A STUDENT OFFICER:

We are talking generalities here. If you want to get down to practical applications of the restriction by budget or the restriction by numbers, I don't think we're getting our money's worth. When you restrict by budget, you wind up with more chiefs and very few Indians.

Our experience at Wright Field, when this manpower cut came, was that the higher-bracketed Civil Service employees were all so tied up in Civil Service rules and regulations we could not get rid of them. We had to rewrite job descriptions so they would stay on the job and we got rid of the others. So many of the ones that were on the job during the war proved to be more capable than the ones with twenty-five, or more, years experience. We would much rather hang on to the young ones.

COLONEL SKINNER:

There are infinite complications. Wright Field, especially, was a problem. That was an intricate place out there; very difficult, indeed. Incidentally, we are going out there before long.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

In your initial census, Colonel, of three million was there included the force that was used in the nature of contract labor that was being used around in the installations? In other words, when you set a ceiling, it did not preclude the chief of a technical service from going out and contracting for additional labor as he saw fit, did it?

COLONEL SKINNER:

That is correct.

However, to be honest, I do not believe that the technical services availed themselves of that very much; that is, they did not do it improperly at all. There are some contracting jobs, like stevedoring, for instance, I think, that are more economically done that way. I have not seen any efforts that would indicate there has been any undue resort to that. I hope there has not been because Monday we have to report to Senator Byrd whether or not that is true. He has asked that very question and he wants an answer.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

Did your board have the job of determining the essentiality of the activity as well as the essentiality of the personnel used?

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COLONEL SKINNER:

Yes, sir. You know, when I stopped here one minute before the hour and then started again? Well, that's when I was talking about that subject. (Laughter) Seriously, though, we reported to the General Staff agency concerned and they took such action as they saw fit, in the circumstances.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

Then it was not your job.

COLONEL SKINNER:

Yes, sir. It was our job to tell whether a job was essential, or not. If it were not considered essential, we were to report that fact to the proper General Staff agency, which we did. We made many of those reports, too. As I said, most of them were not acted on and perhaps most of them shouldn't have been. We only saw one side, you see; the General Staff had the overall point of view.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

The Gasser Board, is that the same organization?

COLONEL SKINNER:

Yes, sir. We went overseas to North Africa and to England and did the kind of job we do in this country. There it was, mainly a job of folding up. The Chief of Staff got concerned as to whether they were folding up as fast as possible. It was a different type survey, although along the same general lines. There, essentiality was the principal point. We went to Casablanca for instance and found that the depot there did not seem to be needed any longer so, we merely recommended that the depot should be closed. As a matter of fact, we recommended that the port be closed. Remember, we were mainly concerned with the essentiality of the establishments. That was in the foreground in the North African and U.K. surveys. As a result we had little occasion to examine to see whether activities were overstaffed.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

Would you care to state the percentum of service troops needed to maintain the combat force in being? I don't want included in that figure what is known in the War Department as combat service for the operation.

COLONEL SKINNER:

You mean not combat support, but the support one level farther back?

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A STUDENT OFFICER:

That's right.

COLONEL SKINNER:

There, again, I do not know the answer. I cannot give you an answer on that. However, I would like to talk it over with you this afternoon. If I could understand it a little more exactly, I might be prepared to answer that in two or three days.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

Excluding the combat service people.

COLONEL SKINNER:

You don't count them?

A STUDENT OFFICER:

Excluding them and going back to the third line, how much do you need? What is the percentum of your mobilized forces?

COLONEL SKINNER:

No, sir; I don't think I could answer that one ever.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

I would like to hear your comments on your idea of what it costs to maintain an establishment like the Service Forces during the war in comparison with an organization like we have today, where the activity is carried on by a General Staff section.

Do you think if the commanders had some sort of small working complement to help them do the housekeeping work, and so forth, it would be much cheaper?

COLONEL SKINNER:

That is a big subject. I have such violent convictions on that that I am afraid if I really got started you wouldn't get out of here in time for lunch.

Don't you gentlemen in the Navy have Shore Establishment people that run them absolutely, completely, wherever they are, regardless of the forces that use them?

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A STUDENT OFFICER:

Yes.

COLONEL SKINNER:

A sea outfit comes in there and uses the Establishment, but they are just guests at the hotel, so to speak. Isn't that right?

A STUDENT OFFICER:

Yes, sir. We have a District Headquarters.

COLONEL SKINNER:

That was what the Army did at these posts during the war. I like it and think it is good. It is better than the other.

Now that is just answering you in a word. It would take half an hour to go into all of the ramifications. But I think that system is okay.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

Is it more costly in personnel? How much more?

COLONEL SKINNER:

I think it is slightly more. It is more expensive in that your manpower unit in the place has to be maintained in addition to the headquarters, or base, or post, as the case may be.

There will be less personnel used from the general reserve units. Now that may or may not be bad. If the same man commands the people that commands the unit, he will take the soldiers out to whitewash trees; so your complement can be reduced in size. But, also, the training of the individual is reduced in scope.

One of the reasons why it seemed to me that it was such a good system was because the base commander was never going to get any help from the unit that was being served. That unit was there "for free", to do nothing but train and go about its own business.

Is that an answer?

A STUDENT OFFICER:

Yes, sir; thank you.

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A STUDENT OFFICER:

I was connected with the Navy's attempt to reduce the naval personnel.

COLONEL SKINNER:

You mean the manpower board that went around the country?

A STUDENT OFFICER:

No. I worked with the Chief of Naval Operations, in the office. I was wondering if you had the same trouble we had and that was the technical services and the General Staff continually adding functions to the people in the field without any idea of manpower and then giving out orders for a survey or an inspection that was necessary only once or twice, without ever cancelling that order, and having a function continue on for many years. I think that was where our personnel was used, by just ordinary surveys. It was not until we started reducing functions that we could save any personnel at all.

COLONEL SKINNER:

Oh, yes. That is the way it was. Everybody had his little private project that he wanted put across. Right now we are being pestered with that thing. We think this ceiling imposed by the terms of Public Law 390 is going to force us to let go about one-third of our graded civilians. So it seemed to us that the forehanded thing to do was to call on everybody to tell us what they could give us because, obviously, we have got to cut out something.

Before we did that, we felt the proper place at which to start was the General Staff because it imposes the burden. They are the only ones that can eliminate a function. There is no use telling an Army Area Commander not to run a disciplinary barracks when he is told to do so by the Provost Marshal.

So we would say to a General Staff Section, G-2, for example, "You've got these intelligence detachments. If we had to cut those, could you get along without them?" "No!" In each case we got the same answer. When we finally got through, everybody wanted everything.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

What machinery did you have for transferring overage from one area to another after you had made your initial survey?

COLONEL SKINNER:

We did not deal with bodies. We determined requirements. As soon

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as we discovered overages we notified the agencies that moved people about--those that handled people as people instead of as positions--and they would take steps to move them out. The practice in the Army, especially in A.S.F., was to move them to the nearest training center, where they would be reclassified and put in the replacement stream. It wasn't a bad system. I thought the A.S.F. had a good system.

There were thousands and thousands of "zombies" floating around all the time. The A.S.F. simply solved their problem by moving every zombie, as fast as he was discovered, to the nearest training center where he could be processed and something could be made to happen to him.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

What success did your survey teams have with the proper utilization of the POW's in the zone of the interior? Do you think they were properly used as far as their skills were concerned?

COLONEL SKINNER:

That was a headache. These prisoners of war came to the number of three hundred sixty thousand. The Army got the job of taking care of them. Unfortunately the Army did not get the use of them, entirely. They were supposed to bolster the civilian economy, especially that of agriculture. When the crops were to be harvested, they were supposed to be diverted, going here, there, and everywhere else, which kept us from using them on a full-time basis. The danger was, when an outfit got through a job, picking apples say, at Camp Devers, they might just be allowed to stay there idle until the next apple season came along. We were sorry we were not allowed to employ them on a permanent basis; then we could have gotten some good out of them.

I think, on the whole, where we had exclusive use of them and did not have to lend them to agriculture or the mining industry, or anything else, we did pretty well, especially in the case of the Italian service units. We organized those units mostly for the repair of motor vehicles and such tasks as that. They, I think, were very much better than the same number of civilians.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

They used them in the laundries in Hawaii.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

Colonel, I would like to have your comments on the reception centers and the people going into basic training.

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COLONEL SKINNER:

You are saying that because I mentioned that that was one thing we thought was wrong with the training establishment system.

After a man was inducted, he was sent immediately to a reception center. Only one thing was done there, of any importance, and that was decide which of the major commands he would go to, including Navy and Air. Of course he got, incidentally, some clothes, some immunization shots, and so on. But as soon as his classification was complete, his fate was decided right then and there on the basis of that necessarily perfunctory and sketchy classification.

We felt we should ship those people to basic training centers initially and give them the training common to every soldier, deciding the arm they were to go to only at the end of basic training.

I, personally, could see no reason in the world for those reception centers. Don't forget that personnel processing establishments in general--Oh, I hate that word "processing", but I have to use it all the time because I don't know any other--were gigantic users of personnel for overhead. Why it seemed to me that every time a soldier set his barracks-bag down somebody was trying either to put an entry in his service record or trying to discover whether or not he had hemorrhoids.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

Did you investigate the replacement depots?

COLONEL SKINNER:

Yes, sir. I am glad to answer that one but is that germane to our subject? It does not have anything to do with the proper utilization of manpower.

A STUDENT OFFICER:

Well, I certainly had that in mind.

COLONEL SKINNER:

Did you?

A STUDENT OFFICER:

Because we know that thousands upon thousands just rotted around there. They hung around those places for six weeks, eight weeks, or sometimes eleven weeks. We know some of our people left without permission. Some of them went AWOL--officers and enlisted men, alike-- to get back to their units.

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COLONEL SKINNER:

Yes they did. The replacement depot is one of those personnel processing establishments I was just talking about. We never worked out a scheme for moving people expeditiously from one place to another. I'll tell you why we couldn't.

You talk about a square peg in a round hole. Well, we had pegs of seven hundred different patterns; that is to say, seven hundred occupational specialist types. Each was a pipeline. Then, within that specialist category, the individual might be black or white, male or female, they might be master sergeants, tech sergeants, corporals or privates. Each of those was a fresh pipeline. Everybody wants specialist-trained people, and it is understandable. For example, if you are going to run a quartermaster truck company overseas, you would certainly like to get a man who knows how to repair trucks.

But I do not believe, administratively, it is possible to train the way we tried to train during the war. We got people so narrowly trained, that there was little chance of finding a hole for them. I know it is not administratively possible to divide soldiers into as many categories as we had divided them. For instance, we had categories like a laundry-machine repair man. Now if you are going to provide laundry-machine repair men, you are likely to have them in a pool for a long while before they are needed.

GENERAL MCKINLEY:

You have some idea now of what you are in for this afternoon.

Thank you very much, Colonel Skinner.

COLONEL SKINNER:

Yes, sir. It will be a lot of fun.

(Applause)

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