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THE ARMY INDUSTRIAL COLLEGE
Washington, D C

Course 1935-1936

PERSONNEL FOR PROCUREMENT

by

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January 8, 1936.

AIC 123 (1/17/36) 9

PERSONNEL FOR PROCUREMENT

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The term "Personnel for Procurement," as commonly understood in planning comprises the officers and civilian employees needed for the O A S W , for the procurement districts, for the arsenals, loading plants, factories, and other field procurement agencies of the S A S , and for those parts of the War Department offices in Washington which have procurement responsibility

In discussing the subject, I propose to treat in some detail matters relating to personnel for the O A S W and to speak only in general terms of the problem as it applies to the S A S . Pointing out to an audience such as this the importance of suitable personnel for the obtaining of munitions in war would be redundancy

For the War organization of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of War, 57 regular army and 150 reserve officers are authorized, and, as specified by the National Defense Act, they must be from branches having procurement functions. The number of civilian employees required is now being calculated, and will amount to about 350. Twenty-seven of those regular army officers, and twenty of the reservists are slated for temporary duty with the Army and Navy Munitions Board, the character and duration of that duty will be discussed in a lecture by the Secretary of the Munitions Board some time later.

There are now assigned to the Assistant Secretary's Office forty-nine reserve officers, most of whom are commissioned in the Specialist Reserve, of which I shall speak again, the remainder are from the supply branches. The regular officers in the Current Procurement and Planning Branches number 19, while the civilians total 23. It is apparent that considerable expansion is contemplated.

An essential step in preparing plans for expansion is to define what personnel is wanted, accordingly, that work is now being carried on as a part of the process of revision of our mobilization plan. For convenience, the job specifications for civilian personnel take the form of civil service designations, although there may be some doubt as to the adequacy of civil service methods of recruitment. Since all the positions for the office are covered by those specifications, the task is one of time, rather than complexity.

Job specifications are also being prepared for the reserve officers, and that, as may be inferred, is rather more of a problem than looking through a civil service directory. The work necessitates formulation of a separate specification for nearly every officer, although a few can be devised to cover more than one individual. The intention is to indicate the work the man is expected to do, and the attainments in civil life which should fit him for it. So far, it appears less easy to picture the war time activities of some of the positions than to describe business experience which should provide suitable background.

Detailed plans for recruiting emergency officers to bring the office up to authorized strength have not been made, but a section of the mobilization plan is to be devoted to the subject. Technical and trade associations of various kinds are likely to be valuable media for the discovery of suitable prospects, after we complete the job specifications, we may send out representative examples to secretaries of some of those bodies to get their comments, and to ascertain the degree of difficulty in finding men of the caliber needed. Admittedly, job specifications will not insure selection of the right men, but they should narrow down the field. Another means of locating prospective officers is the keeping of a list of names of men who are well enough acquainted with certain industries to recommend desirable candidates. The Commodities Division has such a file now, and the Construction Division is building one up. Needless to say, all reserve officers on our roster have specific war assignments. The only exception is General Hugh Johnson.

The situation with regard to obtaining additional regular army officers is much more definite. As required by Mobilization Regulations 1-8, two types of mobilization slates are required to be made up for each War Department agency as well as for troop units.

The permanent slate is intended to indicate the peacetime office or duty from which each war time position is to be filled, while the temporary slate shows the M-day post of each officer by name, and is revised annually.

It is scarcely practicable to make up a permanent slate for the War organization of the O.A.S.W. because of the degree of expansion of that office itself and because of its relationship to the Army and Navy Munitions Board.

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As I stated before, there are 19 officers in the Current Procurement and Planning Branches, whereas the key positions, including the Munitions Board, number more than that. Furthermore, personalities are involved, under existing regulations the additional officers needed are to be drawn from the staff, faculty, and incoming class of the A.I.C. No attempt has been made recently to draw up a permanent slate for the office, nor is it likely that it will be done in the near future.

However, the temporary slate can be and is made up. It shows with few exceptions the exact position of each officer, for example, a certain student in this audience is assigned as chief of the personnel section in the Administration Division. Members of this class who are not on the O.A.S. or Munitions Board slates are supposed to have been reported to their chiefs for branch assignments.

In making up the temporary slate, the prospective initial war time rank of each officer is taken into consideration insofar as practicable. In that connection I shall read part of a recent confidential AGO letter concerning M-day promotions, as it may be that some of you are not familiar with its contents.

Drawing on the incoming class of the A.I.C. for additional officers for the O.A.S. and the Army and Navy Munitions Board has disadvantages which will occur to you, although such procedure should be very convenient from an administrative standpoint. In order to arrive at an estimate of the potential effects of that policy, a study is now being conducted to ascertain the amount and character of the supply, procurement, and procurement planning experience which has been represented by each incoming class for several years back. A correlated project is a record showing the duty performed by each army graduate of the college subsequent to his graduation.

Proper training of the reserve officers assigned to the Assistant Secretary's Office is difficult for a number of reasons, chief of which is the perennial lack of money. During the fiscal year 1936, nine of those officers will have had a two week tour of active duty in the Planning Branch, those nine constituting less than 20% of the total on the roster. Past performance has been better than that although the interval between training periods, which averages 3 3/4 years, cannot be viewed with enthusiasm.

Another difficulty is mileage, our officers are widely scattered, several being on the west coast, with an average distance between Washington and their homes of nearly 800 miles.

Still another difficulty is lack of suitable inactive duty training to fill in the gaps between the infrequent tours of active duty. Only four extension courses for officers of the specialist reserve have been prepared - Military Discipline, Courtesies, and Customs of the Service, Commercial Law and Contracts, Organization of the Branch to Which Assigned, and Industrial Mobilization - and these are supposed to be completed within the two years following the date of commission.

In theory of course, the every day occupation of the reservist who is slated for procurement duty represents the bulk of the training he needs, nevertheless, if he could give occasional attention at home to the problems confronting his particular assignment his basic knowledge would probably be of greater value. That the framing of suitable courses for home study would involve much labor by members of the Planning Branch is patent, because of the variety of subjects to be covered, if for no other reason.

The active duty training which has been given reserve officers in the Planning Branch has gone through a process of evolution, as has nearly everything else connected with procurement planning. During the first few years, the officers were usually called in individually at their own convenience, and given reading courses or special problems. Most of them came in the fall, but nearly every month saw one or more on duty here. After 1927 there was a tendency to concentrate them into two or more classes a year, although a few continued to come at other times.

Along with development of the class idea came problems and reports patterned to a certain extent after those of the A I C, and out of that procedure grew a basic and an advanced course. That scheme of instruction was put into effect in 1930, the basic course covering historical matters, then current plans relating to war procurement, while the advanced course dealt with industrial mobilization. The idea was that officers assigned to the O. A. S. W. would take both courses, that as many as possible of the branch officers would take the basic course, and that a few of those would be brought back again to take the advanced course. In this way, progressive training was to be afforded. In 1933 the two courses were combined into one.

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Under the training policy now in effect, two classes per year are formed, one in the fall and one in the early spring. Instruction consists of lectures covering the activities of the Planning Branch, Current Procurement Branch, and Army and Navy Munitions Board, together with assigned collateral reading. Three or four days are free for individual study according to inclination, with written reports summing up the results of their study left to the option of the trainees. On the last day, officers who are not assigned to the Assistant Secretary's Office are turned over to their own branches for what little instruction may be given them in that limited time. The Supply Arms and Services are invited to send officers to those classes, and all do so, their total for this year (f y '36) amounting to about 23.

It is interesting to note that the first reserve officer trained in the Planning Branch was Brigadier General S E Wolfe, F D , in 1923. The record continues as follows

F Y	1923	1	
	1924	14	
	1925	23	
	1926	36	
	1927	46	
	1928	75	O A S W & S A S
	1929	49	
	1930	59	Reserve Officers
	1931	72	
	1932	77	
	1933	42	
	1934	15	
	1935	43	

This makes a total of 542 attendances, but it represents fewer officers, as many are included more than once. The number of individuals who have been trained is probably equal to the number of regular army graduates of the A I C. (About 420, June 1936)

Related to the problem of peacetime instruction for reserve officers already on the rolls is the question of training for officers newly commissioned shortly before or after May day. Just what that training should be is not easy to decide, nor is there anything in mobilization regulations covering the matter. Certainly a civilian commissioned and placed on duty in the War Department should be given enough instruction to enable him to function as an officer, and for that reason preparation of a training annex to the O A S W mobilization plan is on our list of objectives.

Turning now to personnel for the S A S. procurement activities, it is possible to state the requirements only approximately, because reorganizations under the 1933 General Mobilization Plan are in progress. Considering civilian personnel first, close to 100,000 will be required. A large proportion of these are to^{be} accounted for by demands of the arsenals, loading plants, and factories of the Ordnance Department, Chemical Warfare Service, and the Quartermaster Corps. This represents an expansion of at least ten or twelve times, since the number of civilian employees now engaged on procurement duty or manufacturing is somewhere around 7,000. With regard to civilians, not many definite plans have been made - perhaps rightly so considering that planning personnel, which by law cannot be increased beyond the numbers employed on that duty in 1929, is very much occupied with materiel plans. Since industrial deferment for men drafted under selective service system will be covered later in the course, I shall make no comment on that aspect of the problem.

The best estimate I can give for officer requirements is that there will be needed about 275 from the regular army and in the vicinity of 5,000 from the reserve, with nearly half of the latter desired by the Ordnance Department. Even though these figures are not exact they show that the bulk of the work must fall to reserve officers, who constitute some 94% of the total, and of whom about 2,700 are now enrolled.

Citing the number of reserve officers now scheduled for procurement tasks brings up a fundamental policy with regard to those assignments. It is given as follows in paragraph 1c, A R 140-39: "The chiefs of supply arms and services, insofar as practicable, will assign to procurement activities reserve officers commissioned in those arms and services. Positions in the procurement organizations which cannot be filled by such officers, or by civilians, may be filled by the appointment of officers in the specialist reserve, provided that not to exceed 60% of the aggregate (including specialists) peace-time procurement objective of officer personnel assigned to procurement activities of each supply arm and service be so filled."

The thought prompting that proviso was that many very able and desirable men would not assume the obligations of a reserve officer in time of peace, but would accept commissions in the event of war. Leaving 40% of the vacancies unfilled would provide places for them.

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Further restriction has been placed on filling vacancies by suspension of all original appointments and all promotions in the specialist reserve for an indefinite period. Because such action would appear to impede the progress of procurement planning, because the chief source of reserve officers for the O. A. S. W. is the specialist section of the reserve corps, and for the reason that about one-fourth of the S. A. S. procurement officers are in that category, it may be worth while to review briefly a few points in its history.

The idea of specialist officers had its genesis in the World War, as is well illustrated by a letter which I came upon in going over the 201 file of one of our officers. Dated May 21, 1918, it read as follows: "In transmitting the commission herewith the Secretary of War directs that you be advised that this commission is issued for service on statistical duty solely, that you will not be assigned to any other duty or to command of troops, and that upon your being relieved from the duty contemplated by this appointment and your services being no longer required during the war, you will be discharged from the service." (Major Spurgeon Bell, National Army)

The next reference I found is an A. G. O. letter dated April, 1921, which establishes, among others, a section in the reserves to be known as the Specialists Officers Reserve Corps, with grades from 2nd lieutenant to colonel, inclusive. To quote the letter "In this section will be commissioned those persons qualified and required for duty as officers in time of war, the duties being such as do not pertain to any other section of the O. R. C." One is tempted to speculate on whether the word "Specialist" really meant "Miscellaneous" at that time.

The next official document was A. R. 140-39 of June 15, 1925, which contained one paragraph giving the minimum ages for appointment in the specialist reserve, and providing that applicants for appointment or promotion must have demonstrated their ability to function in the specialty and in the grade for which the appointment or promotion was to be made.

Later on, in 1926 and 1927, efforts were made to prescribe the qualifications for the various grades, and at least one rather voluminous draft was prepared, giving the proposed qualifications in considerable detail. However, they were not promulgated.

Then, in 1931, a revision of the regulation was published, defining specialist reserve officers as those needed for industrial mobilization who were not appointed in other sections of the reserve corps, and whose appointments were specifically approved by the Secretary or Assistant Secretary of War. The text went on to repeat what had been contained in the 1925 version, and added a paragraph stating that the A. S. W. would prescribe the training of specialists assigned to his office, while branch chiefs would do likewise.

Finally, A. R. 140-39 was revised again in 1933, defining somewhat more clearly the attributes of a specialist, as follows (par. 1b) "The specialist reserve includes not only officers highly specialized in some technical profession but also those whose demonstrated ability and experience in civil life make it especially desirable that they be commissioned for specific duties in the procurement organizations of the supply arms or services, or for duties in connection with industrial mobilization".

Perhaps the most significant characteristics of the specialist section was that original appointments could be made above the grade of 2nd lieutenant - a procedure which, barring a few exceptions, was peculiar to that part of the reserve corps alone. That proviso made it possible to commission prominent and able men for procurement assignments, who because of their ages could not accept appointments as 2nd lieutenants, or would not do it because of high standing and attainments in their own communities.

While the bulk of the men so commissioned were of the type desired and had genuine interest in their assignments, subsequent events showed that a few of them regarded the position as only a sinecure. Furthermore, some appointments were made without very definite ideas as to the part to be filled, and to make matters worse, plans and schemes of organization kept on changing.

For those reasons the ban on appointments and promotions was put into effect, and at the same time the S. A. S. were directed to submit job specifications for the positions which could not be filled by officers of the branch, but only by specialists. Many specifications are yet to be submitted, and the ban is still in force. In the meantime the number of specialists has been dwindling, and now amounts to about 640.

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The foregoing remarks about job specifications may have created the impression that the Assistant Secretary is prone to interfere in branch personnel affairs, but such is not the case. The current attitude is to allow a maximum of freedom and no attempt is being made to compel uniformity of policy with regard to schemes for manning the various echelons. As your committee No. 6 will discover, there is considerable dissimilarity, the Quartermaster General intends to have regular army officers head his nine procurement zones, while the Chief of Ordnance plans to have a reserve officer or prominent civilian in charge of each of his fourteen or fifteen districts, similarly, some 60% of the Ordnance officers in procurement districts will act as army inspectors of ordnance, while the Signal Corps percentage for parallel duty amounts to about 27%

In a like manner, training of reserve officers assigned to procurement duty is left to the branch chief concerned, he divides his money between procurement, field, and other training as he sees fit. The only way the A S W enters into the procedure is to invite the branch chief to send as many officers as practicable to the Planning Branch for one or more tours of active duty.

To examine the relationship still further, the branch chief is free to shift his reserve officers from procurement to other assignments, and vice versa as he wishes, so long as he does not exceed the 60% limit I mentioned previously, and so long as the specialists are given procurement work only.

I hope what I have said has served to outline the situation as it now exists, and since I shall be glad to answer such questions as I can, I shall not attempt to make a summary.

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