

CAREER MANAGEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

BY

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INTRODUCTION

PERSONNEL practices which have been empirically followed for years are often renamed and represented in a surprise introduction as new. Rather than being condemned, this practice should be applauded for its utility. A function that is but vaguely defined lacks organizational clarity and may operate without that general awareness which assures full acceptance and use. When the considered pursuit of an effort is operative its full impact is likely to be felt in the field of application.

Career Management, as it is practised in the Surgeon General's Office, United States Army, illustrates this view. It can be shown that Career Management and guidance were practised in training and assigning officers long before this personnel administration principle was defined in exact wording.

Ashburn's history of the Army Medical Department states that "In 1877, Captain A. C. Girard, Assistant Surgeon, after a trip to Europe, came back thoroughly convinced of the value of Lister's Antiseptic Method—he sent to the Surgeon General a full description of the technic and results."¹ As early as 1862 an Army Medical school for the instruction of "Medical Cadets" was recommended by the Surgeon General. This recommendation was finally followed by authorizing legislation in 1893. Of a distinctly Career Management nature, however, is a letter from The Surgeon General to a hospital commander

¹ Ashburn, P.M., A History of the Medical Department of the United States Army, Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1929, p. 135.

concerning the assignment of an officer to a new duty. This letter was found in the subject officer's file:

January 13, 1919.

FROM: The Surgeon General of the Army.

TO: The Commanding Officer,
U.S. Army General Hospital No. 3,
Colonia, New Jersey.

SUBJECT: Assignments.

1. Some weeks ago the Department arranged to send a number of medical officers, regular army, to the Mayo Clinic for a course of instruction. These officers are now being assigned to General Hospitals for duty with the object of giving them an opportunity to continue their surgical instruction and to improve themselves in surgical technique.

2. No consideration of expediency should be allowed to interfere with this object and such regular officers should not be given administrative duty. Neither should they be permitted to displace the present Chiefs of Surgical Service at the various hospitals even though they hold a higher grade in the Medical Department than the officers now serving as such.

3. Lieut.-Colonel Charles L. Gandy is the officer who has been selected for assignment to U.S. Army General Hospital No. 3, Colonia, New Jersey.

By direction of the Surgeon General:

R. B. MILLER,
Colonel, Medical Corps, U.S.A.

A study of the careers of retired Army Medical Department Officers, now holding positions of prominence in the Medical world, shows that many were carefully patterned. This patterning was accomplished before career guidance for Medical Department Officers became the function of a Career Management Branch and before the practice had been crystallized in a Department of the Army publication.

The symbolization of personnel department aims creates an impulse toward more general adoption. Effective personnel administration cannot reside in the policy expression of high level bureau or in the thinking of a department head. To be effective its spirit must permeate all ramifications of a supervisory structure.

The pivotal Branch of the Personnel Division, the Career Management Branch, is set up to assure these enlightened personnel practices at all supervisory levels. In its organization and total functioning mechanisms have been developed which tie supervisory levels together in a composite recognition of applicable career patterns. Serious changes in policy arising out of a variable interpretation at the several levels of management are less likely to occur under such organization.

THE CAREER MANAGEMENT FUNCTION

The guiding conception of career patterning for all military personnel was developed by the Army General Staff with a group of units representing the several arms and services operated centrally to control training and duty assignments patterned in relation to demonstrated ability.

Under this central function overall plans were developed to be applied to officers of all arms and services. The military career was visualized as falling into four periods: Junior Officer Period, Command and Staff Period, Field Grade Phase and a Final Career Management Period.

The Junior Officer Period encompasses the first seven years of Army service. During these years the young officer is afforded an opportunity to develop leadership and Army know-how. He learns to gauge the physical and mental qualities of the soldier and learns the psychology of human relations and wise management. He finishes during this period, the basic and advanced courses of his branch and may attend applicable courses in civilian institutions. He is rotated in the various troop command and staff assignments and gains a well-rounded experience and seasoning.

The Command and Staff Phase covers the second seven years of the officer's career. During this period he is given command assignments, duty with Reserve units in training and staff or technical duty. At this time he evolves the specific area of his interest. He may attend the Command and General Staff College, the Armed Forces Staff College or university courses which contribute to his field of major interest.

The Field Grade Phase of his career is that between the fifteenth and twenty-first years of service. Here his career assumes clear definition and his assignments are to more responsible positions. He may complete the top level military schools, such as the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and the National War College or he may accomplish other studies at university level. This group of officers have established themselves as possessing outstanding ability and are given assignments in which their maturity and experience is utilized and their prestige is in keeping with their grade.

The Final Career Management Period involves that especially effective group who have had outstanding records in the preliminary career phases and are prepared for high level leadership posts under conditions of either peace or war. This group is afforded opportunity for testing and training in the all-important qualifications of troop command and high level staff work and a final opportunity is open to them to check their knowledge of the possibilities of Army material.

To recapitulate, the Army utilizes a group of Military specialty schools to provide training to its officers. It uses civilian schools and universities in accomplishing officer training in fields not covered by military training installations. If the officer demonstrates ability he may look forward to a patterned career in which assignments and training opportunities follow his interest and help him to achieve that breadth and competence necessary to significant accomplishment in the service of his country.

CAREER PATTERNS

In pursuit of the aims set by this development, a career pattern has been worked out and is outlined schematically for each of the arms and services.

The planning of these patterns utilizes the Service schools peculiar to the arm or Service as well as those schools mentioned in the section above. These latter are open to the qualified officer regardless of arm or service.

In this way career guidance through the phases outlined above is supplemented by training in Service schools which offer basic, intermediate and advanced work in the military subdivisions of Infantry, Artillery, Medical, etc. Each Service has developed its own schools with well-established age and tenure stipulations for course eligibility. Career Management is aimed at assuring at all levels of supervision a cognizance of this ordered and progressive military career. Commanders are responsible for appropriate assignment and training progression.

The principles outlined here have been applied to the development of career patterns for Enlisted grades and Warrant Officers as well as for commissioned personnel. The discussion here is limited to commissioned officer career guidance.

MEDICAL DEPARTMENT CAREER PATTERNS

A detailed career pattern has been devised for each Corps within the Medical Department. The Corps represented are: Medical, Dental, Veterinary, Nurses, Medical Service and Women's Medical Specialists.

Medical Corps.—The pattern for the Medical Corps recognizes three functional types of physicians in the Army service: the Staff Officer, the Medical Command and Management Officer and the Professional Specialist.

All medical officers enter the service as First Lieutenants. Four years of medical school work is credited for rank purposes. During the first three years of Army service officers serve in field medical units, hospitals, and in dispensaries—located either at home or overseas. In these years they completed the basic Medical Field Service School course and may compete for residency training in Army General hospitals. Basic science courses at Universities or at the Army Medical Department Research and Graduate School are available.

The second three years will see the progression through the residency and practice years leading to Board certification for the specialist group. Officers will attend the advanced course in the Medical Field Service School during this or the following period.

The career beyond the sixth year of service phases into the period of specialization. Here Board certification is completed by the specialist. An officer in the Staff group may attend a university course in Public Health or in Personnel Administration, or serve as instructor in a Service school or with a Reserve unit. The Command Officer may take university work in hospital or business administration. The Command and Staff group start on their attendance to the successively higher levels of the Army General Service Schools.

Appropriate assignment is interlarded with these training years. For the professional specialist the assignment is that of assistant chief of service in a general hospital, or chief in a smaller hospital. For the Medical Command

and Management officer assignment as an Executive Officer or Commanding Officer of a supply or hospital installation brings him to the assumption of increasing levels of responsibility.

The Staff Officer will serve as Group or Division Surgeon, on an Army Surgeon's staff, or as a Service school department head.

From the seventeenth year of service to retirement, the officer serves the definitive period of his career where he is afforded the opportunity to demonstrate his eligibility for positions of highest responsibility within the Medical Department of the Army. He will here serve as Army, Command or Theatre Surgeon, command a general hospital or other major medical installation or activity, or serve as a consultant or chief of Professional service in his specialty field, the particular assignment depending on his previous career direction.

Dental Corps.—The Dental Corps officer career pattern approximates that of the medical officer. In addition to the specialty fields of Oral Surgery, Prosthodontia, Peridontia and Orthodontia there are career fields in Research and Development and as a Staff officer. The dental officer receives a constructive credit of three years for his work in dental school and enters the Service as a First Lieutenant. He may attend the same Army General Service Schools and the Medical Branch Schools open to the medical officer.

Veterinary Corps.—In addition to administrative and staff assignments the Veterinary officer career may be patterned as Meat Food Inspector, Dairy and Poultry Products Inspector, Laboratory officer or in the Animal Service. Two years of constructive service is credited the veterinary officer for professional education previous to commissioning. He may progress through the Army General Service Schools and attend the branch schools. He may take advanced specialized training at a civilian university or Research Foundation.

Medical Service Corps.—This Corps includes officers specially trained in the allied medical fields. The Corps has given the Medical Department the use of officers for duties once included in the work of the medical officer and the development of such a group has been most valuable in enabling a clear definition of what is Medical and what is allied to Medicine. The division of duties thus accomplished has done much to establish professional patterns in both Medical and Medical Service Corps which are logically delimited and professionally satisfying.

The Medical Service Corps includes in its four sub-fields approximately twenty well defined and separate career areas. Under Pharmacy, Supply and Administration are grouped qualified pharmacists, and business and administrative personnel of a very diverse nature. The Sanitary Engineering section is reserved for university graduates qualified in this field. The Optometry section contains the officers who are graduates of a four-year optometry course and certified for practice in one of the forty-eight States. The Allied Science section includes officers who hold university degrees and whose experience qualifies them in the fields of Bacteriology, Serology, Biochemistry, Entomology

and Nutrition. Others are qualified as Psychiatric Social Workers and Clinical Psychologists.

Officers of this Corps rotate through the Army General Service Schools and may hold assignments in Staff and Command positions or as instructors in Service Schools or with Reserve units.

Nurse Corps.—The Nurse Corps officer may follow a career patterned in a professional or administrative way and schools, both military and civilian, are utilized to provide specialized training in the direction of interest and ability.

Women's Medical Specialist Corps.—This Corps commissions Dietitians, Physical Therapists and Occupational Therapist Technicians. The same opportunities for career development are offered here as in the other Corps of the Medical Department.

SCHOOLS USED IN MEDICAL CAREER PLANNING

Career guidance in the Army Medical Department has evolved slowly and in the process taken unto its use the facilities of certain teaching institutions. The Medical Field Service School is basic to this educational hierarchy. At the outset of an officer's career he spends six to nine months at this school and studies the organization and function of field and stationary medical installations. He learns the special problems of field sanitation, military hygiene and the care and rehabilitation of the sick and injured.

An advance course in similar subjects is given during his third to ninth year of service.

The Army Medical Department Research and Graduate School located at the Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C., provides basic science training in various specialty programmes and is an accessory to the residency training programme. Residencies in all the specialties are given in Army General Hospitals to career medical officers entering the professional specialist group.

Army General Service Schools provide concurrent training in the purely Army aspect of the officer's career. They are:

The Command and Staff College provides instruction in modern methods applied to Personnel, Intelligence, Tactics and Logistics. Methods calculated to effect full utilization and co-ordination of Armed Forces units are taught.

The Armed Forces Staff College trains selected officers of the several Services in joint operations, the material of such operations and the staff technique employed.

Industrial College of the Armed Forces trains officers in procurement planning, procurement and mobilization of the national economy. International economics is studied and methods of achieving rapport with educational, scientific and industrial groups emphasized.

The National War College prepares selected officers to perform joint staff duties in the highest echelons of the Armed Forces.

The extent to which university facilities are utilized is indicated by this

partial list of courses given in twenty colleges and universities and open to Medical Department officers during the current year.

Courses open to Medical Corps officers include those in Allergy, Anæsthesia, Aviation Physiology, Cardiology, Children's Orthopædics, Dermatology, Internal Medicine, Orthopædic Surgery, Personnel Administration, Hospital Administration, Public Health, Radiology. Courses are usually either a school year or a calendar year in length.

Open to Dental Corps officers are Anæsthesia, Oral Surgery, Peridontia.

To Veterinary Corps officers courses are offered in Bacteriology and Virology.

Open to Medical Service Corps officers are studies in Physical Reconditioning, Bacteriology and Virology, Entomology, Business Administration, Parasitology.

For the Army Nurse Corps officers courses are offered in Nursing Education, and in Psychiatric Nursing.

Courses for the Women's Medical Specialist Corps include Physical Therapy in Infantile Paralysis, Institutional Management, Nutrition and Occupational Therapy in Psychiatry.

SUMMARY

(1) Projected estimates of scientific talent needed by the Medical Department United States Army provide indices for formulating officer training plans.

(2) School and duty training opportunities consistent with these estimates are established into which selected officers are channelled.

(3) A clearly defined Career Management function operates to impose career guidance responsibility at all levels of supervision and leads to the patterning of an officer's career in the direction of his interest and demonstrated ability.