

ARMY SERVICE FORCES

SIGNAL SECURITY AGENCY

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

SPSIR-1

29 January 1945

MEMORANDUM For Major James H. Frier, Jr.

Subject: Personnel Problems

1. The most important difficulties which I have experienced in personnel management at this post can be put into two main headings:

- a. Job allocations
- b. Personal qualifications

2. It is my strong opinion that the difficulties experienced with these two items account for by far the greater part of personnel problems. My discussion of them is, of course, based almost wholly on my experience in I & L Branch but I am sufficiently acquainted with other branches to know that the problems there are substantially the same.

*Civilian
dissatisfac-
tion, and
resignations*

JOB ALLOCATIONS

So As compared with other branches on this post, our branch has relatively high allocations so that our problems in this regard are not suppressing as they are elsewhere. Nevertheless, there are a number of jobs which are, in my opinion, under-allocated and which my best efforts have not been able to change. Examples of these are principally in Information and Bulletin, although they occur in individual instances in all sections. The grade of the allocation depends on the judgment made of the job by a job analyst from Personnel Branch who is employed to assign both monetary rate and service (CAF, SP, etc.) in accordance with the nature and the difficulty of the job done.

As in most cases involving judgment, it is difficult to say categorically that a given allocation is incorrect. It remains my opinion, however, in opposition to that of Personnel Branch, that a number of our jobs should call for a different service, or higher rate of pay, or both. So much for allocation within the branch and within the post.

In comparison with other agencies, however, a more obvious defect in local allocations is at once apparent. Comparisons are most easily made with MIS. It is an unquestioned fact, attested to by Lt. Derby, Lt. Parks, and Miss Gosnell (the I & L Branch analyst) that jobs substantially similar to jobs existing in Bulletin and Information are at G-2 rated much higher in pay and in a different service than the jobs here (P-2, 3 and 4 compared with CAF-4, 5, and 6). I have never been

able to have anything done in this branch on the basis of these comparisons; yet it is admitted by all, the jobs are similar. The reason for this great discrepancy lies in a totally different attitude toward the work being taken by MIS. It is my opinion that on this post Personnel Branch adheres with relatively great rigidity to what it believes the requirements of Civil Service in this matter, whereas the allocations adopted by MIS reflect a recognition not only of the war crisis in which its people are working but also of the unique type of work which is done, namely, dealing with intelligence of vital importance to our armies in the field. Nothing comprehended in peace time Civil Service rules contemplates work of this nature, which does not exist on such a scale or ~~is~~ such a vital instrument of warfare during peace time.

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I believe that if this can be done by MIS it can and most certainly should be done at this post, which is an essential part of the intelligence process guided by MIS.

PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS

In this branch qualifications have proved infinitely more discouraging than allocations. A great many jobs in the branch, relatively speaking, have been allocated at grades higher than those possessed by the incumbents. In far too many cases it has proved impossible to promote these incumbents to the grades and pay rates to which they are entitled, by reason of Civil Service qualifications.

It does not matter that the person concerned is doing excellent work or that he is fulfilling a vital function; the only matters taken into consideration when he is considered for promotion are qualifications--again set down in peace time--and most rigorously adhered to by Personnel Branch and the Civil Service representatives with whom they must work.

One example is the case of Miss Bertha Atkinson, whose ~~Civil~~ ^{efficiency} ~~Service~~ rating has at all times been very good. She has been 19 months in this post as an SP-5--10 months in B-2, 9 months in Information Section of I & L Branch. Her rating is SP-5. The allocation of her job is CAF-5, one step higher in pay. She deals with information, collecting and disseminating for the needs of cryptanalysts and translators. Her experience before she came to this post included 21 years of teaching--2 in grade school, 19 in high school. Civil Service qualification rules regard teaching as clerical rather than professional experience. It therefore seemed clear that Miss Atkinson could be promoted on a clerical without any difficulty. She was accordingly recommended for promotion on 17 August 1944. She has not yet been promoted although I, and many other people, have done our best to secure the promotion. The reason is, we are told, that although teaching is clerical experience, it is not "specialized" clerical experience which

would qualify her for a raise as an information clerk. This is plainly outrageous. I wish to emphasize that the case of Miss Atkinson, though extreme, is only an example of what happens with three out of four, or perhaps four out of five promotions submitted by this branch.

For another example, many people doing information clerk jobs comparable to Miss Atkinson's are young college graduates without experience. In order to qualify for a raise we are told that they must have 14 months of specialized clerical experience, which means that they must work 14 months in the Information Section in order to get one raise and an additional 14 months to get another. Personnel Branch has consistently refused to allocate these jobs ~~as~~ in SP Series, or P Series, as clerical information aides, or information clerks, cryptographic, any of which would have permitted quicker promotion. Here again, of course, is a tie-up with allocation. The real point, however, is that no matter what the allocation, rules such as these are continually enforced with rigidity.

I believe that there can be nothing more destructive to civilian morale than a feeling among the civilian personnel that they are doing the assigned job well, are entitled to promotion, have been recommended for promotion, and then are refused promotion for utterly asinine reasons.

Another example that comes to mind is in Miss Ward's Shipping Section where one of the girls is taking Spanish at night in order to qualify under Civil Service rules for a raise on the job she does in an excellent fashion. Spanish has no more relation to her job than a knowledge of home economics. I understand that the rules I have mentioned as examples are Civil Service rules. That seems to me unimportant. If the rules are wrong they must be changed or evaded so that we can do our job.

The comparison with MIS again immediately springs to mind. Miss Gosnell has told me that Major McCluney of MIS informed her that no similar troubles with qualifications were experienced there. In other words, a means for doing the job exists in qualifications as well as in allocations. Personnel officers on this post have, in my opinion, remained frightened of the written rules, unimaginative and unaggressive. I personally do not know the precise way in which these things can be done but I am convinced that they can be done.

Another example is the set-up of Lt. Delpit's outfit in Detroit which he mentioned to you. There, as he said, promotions and qualifications were handled by a committee of section heads without recourse to rigid Civil Service rules and with the approval of Civil Service representatives.

This unit was very much smaller than Arlington Hall and, in my opinion, must have done work of much less importance. I do not understand why we cannot do something similar.

Very sorry it was so long!



This remark was addressed to Mrs Duncan, but I'm sorry for you too

E. G. Howard

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