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STAFF STUDY

THE CHARACTER GUIDANCE
PROGRAM

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SUBJECT: The Character Guidance Program

1. PROBLEM. - To determine the most effective approach in realizing the present objectives of the Character Guidance Program.
2. ASSUMPTIONS. - That the objectives of the program are not being reached.
3. FACTS BEARING ON THE PROBLEM. -
 - a. Generally, the Character Guidance Program is devised to assist the commander in promoting morale, a healthy moral and mental attitude on the part of personnel under his command and specifically, to develop in the individual a spirit of service, an awareness of individual moral responsibility and a recognition of obligations and opportunities inherent in the military service. (Annex A)
 - b. Regulations prescribe that character guidance instruction will consist of a minimum of seven hours during the period of basic training and two hours a month in units whenever the training situation permits as determined by the local commander. (Annex A)
4. DISCUSSION. -
 - a. The factors that underline the problem of conditioning army personnel to a healthy moral and mental attitude are psychological factors. The discrepancy between the wide scope of the program and the paucity of prescribed instruction makes the employment of educational techniques capable of maximum impact with minimum presentation essential. In no field does psychology, as an applied science, have as much application as it does in those educational processes required to meet such a situation. (Annex B)
 - b. While problems of morale have been pondered by military men for hundreds of years, they remain basically psychological problems. Psychologists can apply to these problems their technical know how and their ability to obtain information, which is now not available. (Annex B, Tab A)
5. CONCLUSIONS. -
 - a. That the factors that underline character guidance are problems in human behavior, therefore, psychological factors.
 - b. That any effective approach to the Character Guidance Program must be studied and scientific.

6. PUBLIC RELATION ASPECTS. -

- a. Proposed action is of current interest; its publication will not violate security and the release will have no adverse effect on troop or public relations. (Annex C)
- b. Recommend that information on proposed action be released to troops and the public.

7. ACTION RECOMMENDED. - That the Department of the Army Guidance Council adopt the techniques of applied psychology in the approach to the Character Guidance Program.

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ANNEXES: A - Army Regulations 15-120, 28 July 1950,
 Character Guidance
 B - Discussion
 C - Public Relation Aspects
 X - Bibliography

CONCURRENCES: (Omitted)
NONCONCURRENCES: (Omitted)
CONSIDERATION OF NONCONCURRENCES: (Omitted)
ANNEXES ADDED: (Omitted)
ACTION BY APPROVING AUTHORITY:

Date:

Approved (disapproved), including (excluding) exceptions.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES
CHARACTER GUIDANCE

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SECTION I

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CHARACTER GUIDANCE COUNCIL

1. Establishment.—The Department of the Army Character Guidance Council was established 3 August 1948.
2. Composition.—*a.* The following are designated as members of the Department of the Army Character Guidance Council:
 - (1) Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1 (Chairman).
 - (2) Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3.
 - (3) Chief of Chaplains.
 - (4) Chief of Information.
 - (5) The Adjutant General.
 - (6) The Inspector General.
 - (7) The Surgeon General.
 - (8) The Provost Marshal General.
 - (9) A representative, Office, Chief of Army Field Forces.
 - (10) A recorder, representative of The Adjutant General (without vote).
- b.* In case of unavoidable absence, any member listed above will designate his deputy or immediate subordinate to represent him at the council meeting.
- c.* The council may call upon other agencies of the Department of the Army as may be needed for technical advice and assistance in resolving special problems.

*These regulations supersede AR 15-120, 30 January 1950.
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SECTION III

CHARACTER GUIDANCE PROGRAM

8. **Purpose.**—The character guidance program has been devised to assist the commander in promoting a healthy moral and mental attitude on the part of the personnel under his command. Under this program the Army will endeavor to insure, so far as is possible under the conditions of military service, the continuance of the wholesome influence of the home, the family, and the community. The program is broad in its application, positive in its approach, and embraces all the activities of the soldier. It is designed to encourage the individual to develop moral responsibility and self-discipline.

9. **Objectives.**—*a.* Generally, the character guidance program is intended to develop high standards of personal conduct among members of the Army.

b. Specifically, the character guidance program aims to develop in the individual—

- (1) A spirit of service and a sense of pride in the proper performance of duty.
- (2) An awareness of individual moral responsibilities.
- (3) A recognition of the obligations and opportunities inherent in the military service.

10. **Responsibilities.**—Character guidance is a command responsibility, involving leadership, example, and the best possible program of supervised recreation. The ability to coordinate successfully all the means at his disposal to encourage high standards of personal conduct is a mark of an efficient commander.

11. **Implementation.**—In pursuit of the objectives of the character guidance program, commanders will—

a. Instill in military personnel an understanding of the purposes of the character guidance program and an appreciation of their part in it.

b. Take a personal interest in off-duty activities of military personnel and insure the availability of a well-rounded program of religious, educational, and recreational activities.

c. Cooperate with all agencies, civilian and military, which may contribute to the moral and social well-being of the soldier.

12. **Technical advisors.**—It is emphasized that the character guidance program is and must remain the responsibility of the commander. Certain staff officers, by virtue of their specific fields of responsibility, are particularly well qualified as advisors to the command and can be expected to contribute materially to the success of the program. Among these staff officers are the personnel officer, the chaplain, the special services officer, the surgeon, the troop information and education officer, the public information officer, the inspector general, and the provost marshal. Commanders are expected to call upon these staff officers for technical advice and assistance within their respective fields.

13. **Training.**—Each commander will insure that all personnel are reached by group instruction and by personal interview on all matters that promote the growth of character in basic and unit training. Programs will contain scheduled periods of instruction on basic precepts of citizenship and morality. This instruction will consist of a minimum of 7 hours during the period of basic training and 2 hours a month in units whenever the training situation permits



ANNEX B - Discussion

Approach to the Character Guidance Program

a. In determining the most effective approach to the Character Guidance Program the commander is confronted with its wide scope, curtailed instruction periods, and the complexity of coordination, the means at his disposal for its effective implementation.

b. A study of Army Regulation 15-120, 8 July 1950 will disclose the scope of the program, its purposes, objectives, implementation and the responsibility of the commander.

Means at the Commander's Disposal for Implementation

a. The means at the commander's disposal for its effective implementation are a skillful approach, the effective utilization of the abilities of his subordinates and morale services. Certain staff officers, primarily the Chaplain, by virtue of their specific fields can be of assistance. However, the company commander remains the mainstay of any unit program representing, as he does, the army grass roots. Many of today's company grade officers and non-commissioned officers are young and inexperienced in handling men. Problems that represent a crisis to the individual soldier are given only lip service by his superiors and there is no genuine interest in the welfare of the man. The soldier is rendered frustrated and desperate; a picture of character guidance in reverse. There is no conception on the part of the man's superiors of the fact that prevention of maladjustments of the soldier to army life lies primarily in their hands. They are also unaware that emotions directed initially towards an individual may be transferred to the entire group to which that individual belongs.

b. People who handle weapons spend considerable time studying the characteristics of those weapons. This is obviously necessary if the user desires maximum performance at peak efficiency. It is just as essential that those who handle men have a basic knowledge, at least, of the science of human behavior.

c. The morale services are provided to assist the commander in caring for the personal needs or welfare of his men as individuals. Services provided are: The Army Postal Service, The Army Exchange Service, the Chaplain's Service, Special Services, Rest and Leave Facilities, Welfare Services, Decorations and Awards, Troop Information and Education, and Public Information. Morale services, as such, contribute to fostering morale only to the extent of the skill of the commander in making them contribute to this purpose. (Tab C)

Psychological Factors

a. The factors that underline the problems of conditioning army personnel to a healthy moral and mental attitude are human factors, therefore, psychological factors.

b. The laws governing the educational techniques and processes of applied psychology have been time tested and proven capable of maximum impact with a modicum of presentation both in industry and in the armed services. It has been demonstrated that

ANNEX B - Discussion (Cont'd)

attitudes can be changed by proper educational programs and that any effective program must contain some of the psychological factors involved in handling and motivating men.

c. Experiments with attitude scales administered before and after troop exposure to scientifically prepared literature and motion pictures have shown clear evidence of radical changes in attitudes. Experiments have also shown that more effect was produced when the appeal was emotional than when it was rational. Tests also prove that if these emotions are directed initially toward an individual, they may be transferred to the entire group to which that individual belongs.

d. The psychological warfare branch of the armed services believes that in the event of an emergency, an appreciable contribution to the total effort can be made by deliberately influencing the attitudes of the enemy by the application of psychology to warfare. It can be assumed that the attitude of our own military personnel can be influenced in like manner.

Supporting Statistics

a. Statistics also support the assertion that the factors that underline the conditioning of army personnel to a healthy moral and mental attitude are psychological factors. Figures for the period 1942 - 1945 may be summarized roughly as follows: Of over 15,000,000 examined, 1,850,000, or 12%, were rejected for personality or mental disorders. This constituted 38% of all rejections for all causes. Of 12,000,000 men and women in the Army, there were approximately 1,000,000 admissions to hospitals for these same disorders. Over 6% of the total admissions for all reasons. Three to four times as many were seen and treated by psychiatrists without admission to hospitals. 545,000 were separated from the service for mental and personality disorders, or 49% of all medical discharges. Of all these cases, very few were psychotic or insane; 80% suffered from some type of psychoneurosis. It is also interesting to note that, of the total manpower the Army receives, 8% are mentally unable to absorb basic training. Also, that the "Third Army's AWOL rate for the quarter ending 31 March 1954 was 136 per thousand and that this rate represented the lowest rate since December 1951." (16-1)

b. The reason for these high psychoneurotic and AWOL rates is that Army life imposes certain restrictions on individuals. These restrictions give rise to conflicts and frustrations on the part of the soldier. This may lead to undesirable or even abnormal forms of behavior. When a soldier encounters this state of affairs, he becomes a liability to the Army. The psychoneurotic and AWOL casualty rates can be brought to a minimum by a guidance program scientifically designed to mitigate the impact of Army environmental stresses.

Psychologist Participating in Military Problems

a. There are over 2,000 psychologists participating in military problems; some are in uniform, some are government employees, and others are with civilian organizations and universities. More than 1,000 soldiers who had previously had some psychological training were given a special six months course on Personnel Psychology

ANNEX B - Discussion (Cont'd)

under the Army Specialized Training Program. None of these specialists are currently occupied in any phase of the Character Guidance Program.

b. If the psychologist is to serve his country, there is no more vital or needed field for his skill than the Army's Character Guidance Program.

TAB A, ANNEX B - Morale Defined

Morale is a mental and emotional state. This condition or state applies to military personnel as individuals or groups. Good morale is characterized by the spirit, confidence, satisfaction, enthusiasm, cooperation, and the initiative with which personnel perform any or all military tasks. The state of morale is identified through outward human behavior.

Maximum military performance and an awareness of individual moral responsibilities is attained only when the will or spirit of each individual to perform his assigned tasks is brought to its peak.

TAB B, ANNEX B - The Chaplain's Part in the Character Guidance Program

The Chaplain is charged with all matters pertaining to the religious and moral life of the soldier. He serves as a friend and counselor to all members of the command. He strives to promote religion, morals and morale. He interviews and advises recruits coming into the service in matters pertaining to morals and character, and counsels men who are in confinement or under arrest when requested to by the individual concerned or the commander. Regular visits are made to the sick in the hospital and to the men in confinement for such spiritual and welfare ministrations as he may be able to give.

While the Chaplain should not be assigned staff responsibility for the planning and supervision of the unit morale program, he should be consulted for advice and assistance.

ANNEX C - Public Information Check List

1. Will publication of the proposed action violate security?
No.
2. What adverse effects is the proposed action likely to produce?
None.
3. Will explanation within and outside the Army remove or minimize these effects?
Not applicable.
4. Will it be feasible and desirable to change the proposal without sacrifice of principle? (Care must be exercised to assure that basic principles are not sacrificed for the sole purpose of gaining favorable troop or public reaction.)
Not applicable.
5. Is the end sought worth the probable cost in terms of impact?
Yes.
6. Has full consideration of all factors involved led to the conviction that the proposal is correct and that the course of action should be recommended without hesitation?
Yes.
7. What are your recommendations as to the advisability of releasing information on the proposed action? Proposed action is of current interest; its publication will not violate security and the release will have no adverse effect on troop or public relations.

ANNEX X - Bibliography

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17. Report of Proceedings NCO Character Guidance Council, Fort Benning, Georgia SS L # 32
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