

30 October 1953

MEMORANDUM FOR: THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
(MANPOWER AND PERSONNEL)
U.S. Dept. of Defense

SUBJECT: Final Report - Ad Hoc Committee on the Future of Military Service as a Career that will Attract and Retain Capable Career Personnel.

1. BACKGROUND

On 20 February 1953 the Joint Chiefs of Staff forwarded a memorandum to the Secretary of Defense stating that they had become increasingly concerned about the growing lack of confidence among Armed Forces personnel in military service as a worthwhile and respected career. They were particularly concerned over implications on this situation as they would affect the future proficiency of the military services.

On 30 April 1953 this same concern was expressed by the President in his message to the Congress (Reorganization Plan No. 6 of 1953). The President affirmed he had directed the Secretary of Defense to study the problem.

Responsive to these requirements, Rear Admiral J. P. Womble, Jr., U.S.N., Major General R. N. Young, U.S.A., Rear Admiral M. E. Arnold, U.S.N., Major General M. J. Lee, U.S.A.F. and Brigadier General N. H. Nelson, U.S.M.C. were appointed as a committee to study the problem and recommend corrective action, as required. An interim report of progress was submitted on 16 July 1953 and work continued. This constitutes the final report of the committee.

2. DELINEATION OF THE PROBLEM

Publicity which attended work of the committee generated hundreds of letters from active and retired military personnel as well as from the general public. The committee examined these letters, together with voluminous evidence procured from the military departments, and concluded that military service as a career that will attract and hold capable and ambitious personnel had deteriorated alarmingly in comparison with other fields of skilled endeavor.

It must be clearly established that this report deals with professional career officers (including long-term reserve officers) and noncommissioned officers of the regular forces. This is the "hard core" which ultimately determines the military virtue of our Armed Forces. So long as the unstable international political situation required some form of military service from virtually every eligible young man in this country, there will be no dearth of numbers, who, for personal advantage, temporarily desire to affiliate themselves with this hard core. Such persons were excluded from this study.

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The problem was thus resolved to be: Why has military service lost much of its attractiveness as a lifetime career for inherently capable personnel and what corrective measures are necessary?

3. DISCUSSION OF RESPONSIBLE FACTORS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

a. WORLD COMMITMENTS AND THE NATIONAL ATTITUDE

(1) World Commitments have Burdened Personnel with Instability and Abnormal Hardship.

The attainment of a satisfactory defense posture against the unrelenting advance of communism has necessitated the continued maintenance of our Armed Forces at an unprecedented peace-time size.

It has been necessary to deploy a major portion of these forces throughout many areas of the world varying widely in climatic and general living conditions. The continuing necessity to provide personnel support for these oversea forces, and to insure maintenance of their combat effectiveness by means of rotation, has burdened career personnel with instability and abnormal hardship. The continuing practice of stationing large forces in oversea areas without family living accommodations has brought about increasingly frequent periods of lengthy family separations. These disruptions of family life have appreciably increased living costs, multiplied personal problems, strained marital relations, and, in many instances, destroyed families. There are not sufficient numbers of able men who will willingly accept a career which prohibits or destroys normal family life.

(2) Public Respect for Constituted Authority has Declined.

There is ample evidence of a lack of understanding on the part of the people concerning the necessity for implementing our present national military policy. It appears that a portion of this unfavorable attitude stems from the recent conduct of hostilities in Korea. Certainly these hostilities were conducted without the degree of public support afforded to two preceding world-wide conflicts. Continued operation of Selective Service is equally distasteful. Until the public is made to understand and accept a public responsibility of military service, the situation is not likely to improve.

There exists an unwholesome amount of irresponsible criticism of the implementation of our national military policies. The more vociferous of critics aim their slanderous attacks at our military leaders whom they refer to derogatorily, collectively and repeatedly as "the brass". More recently "the brass" has been extended to connote all career military officers as a class.

The committee cautions that the continued degradation of career military officers, as a class, can eventually do irreparable damage to our ability to attract and retain capable personnel. Able and conscientious men will not indefinitely continue in a profession dishonored by public criticism.

b. MILITARY AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP HAS DECLINED
(The following subjects affect the respective services in varying degrees).

(1) There has been a Dilution of Military Authority and Leadership.

The tremendous increase in inexperienced personnel within our Armed Forces subsequent to the outbreak of hostilities in Korea resulted in a dilution of career experienced authority and leadership. This dilution has been further accentuated by losses of experienced personnel who no longer find military service an attractive and satisfying career. Unless this trend can be reversed, the inevitable result must be mediocrity in the conduct of military affairs.

(2) The Dilution of Authority and Leadership led to Reduced Distinction Between Ranks.

The dilution of experienced personnel necessitated increasingly centralized authority and control. Commissioned and noncommissioned command authority and consequently prestige were diminished accordingly. The trend has been toward over-supervision. Personnel are no longer inclined to accept responsibilities commensurate with their rank primarily because they lack authority to adequately and fully discharge these responsibilities.

Service leaders must accept full responsibility for yielding to popular and political pressure to adopt policies which served to further diminish the distinction between ranks. Certain post-war "reforms", designed primarily to force officers and enlisted men into a common social pattern, served only to reduce pride in service, inhibit effective discipline, reduce incentive and ultimately encourage personnel to leave the service.

(3) Discipline Requires Emphasis if Military Authority is to be Reestablished.

The committee unanimously concludes that professional standards have been permitted to deteriorate through lack of effective disciplinary control. The adoption of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, with its unwieldy legal procedure, has made the effective administration of military discipline within the Armed Forces more difficult. An officer's word is no longer recognized as his bond. Fortright determination to correct these conditions is essential if the integrity of military leaders is to be reestablished in the opinion of the public, thus enhancing the profession of arms.

(4) Esprit has been Inhibited to the Detriment of Effective Leadership.

The continuous influx and egress of personnel in the Armed Forces is conducive to adoption of personnel policies which deal with individuals on a mass-production basis. Such procedures may produce dollar economy, but assuredly destroy unit and individual identity and with it, esprit. Collective pride in organization and mission can come about only when it is possible for all individuals to permanently identify themselves with a particular mission and military organization. Frequent reassignment and excessive interchange of command inhibit this identification. Too frequently, an attempt has been made to restore the damage thus done by the hasty adoption of individual morale-stimulating panaceas. More fundamental corrective measures are essential.

(5) Technocracy has been Over-emphasized to the Detriment of Command Ability.

The services must overcome the dilution of military authority and leadership by adjusting promotion criteria. A premium must be placed on command and leadership abilities. Accompanying an increase in technocracy within the services, there has been an ever-increasing demand for technical abilities. As a result, many now achieve promotion to responsible positions never placing themselves in a situation where their leadership and command abilities are tested. It must be clearly established that military command and technical astuteness are two separate and distinct fields of endeavor. Both are essential, but career personnel must be reassured that leadership ability will be recognized in promotion procedures.

(6) A Reduction of Professional Standards Makes Military Service Less Attractive.

The committee counsels that a further lowering of professional standards will not serve to lend attractiveness to a military career. On the contrary, resultant mediocrity will engender further dissatisfaction thus encouraging others to leave the service. Inadequate national preparedness will assuredly result.

The military departments must adopt policies to restore the prestige and authority of officers and noncommissioned officers by increasing their authority and responsibility, demoting the incompetents, eliminating over-supervision and placing a premium on leadership and command abilities.

Those who betray their trust, are incompetent, or bring discredit on military service must be ruthlessly eliminated.

c. INCREASED COMPETITION WITH INDUSTRY FOR GOOD MEN

(1) Take-home Pay has not Kept Pace with the Cost of Living.

It is a matter of major concern that career military personnel can no longer cope with the increased costs of living. Relief is essential. Civilian employment is at an all time high and pay is lucrative, particularly for the skills taught within the services.

Increases in service pay have neither approximated the increase in the cost of living nor increases afforded organized labor or even increases afforded civilian public servants. At the same time, there has been an alarming decrease in compensatory benefits. The result of these two trends has been to place military personnel in the incompatible position of being unable to live even modestly and adequately provide for their families.

The committee concludes that unless career service personnel are assured of sufficient take-home pay and compensatory benefits, to enable them to maintain a satisfactory standard of living and properly provide for their families, they will neither adopt nor continue in the Armed Forces as a career, regardless of the strength of any other motives.

The committee recognizes the enormity of the problem facing the current administration in attempting to stem the rise of public debt and balance the national budget. Despite these obstacles, the committee urges that the present administration provide some relief by increasing service pay. The committee is convinced such action would do much to stem the present tendency to leave military service for the more lucrative pay in private industry.

(2) Traditional Compensatory Benefits have been Emasculated.

It is impossible to assess in terms of dollars the morale value of compensatory benefits. The committee forthrightly urges the abandonment of the present policy of reducing compensatory benefits traditionally utilized by the services to supplement take-home pay. Pressure groups of business interests have emasculated many of these benefits. They have been the continuous targets of Congressional economy attacks. They have been exploited by the services themselves to provide nonappropriated funds for morale and welfare activities. First things must come first. These benefits must be restored in full and complete effectiveness as an adjunct to service pay. This is a cheap budgetary price to pay and an absolute minimum essential if sufficient career personnel are to be retained within the services.

(3) Retirement Must be Made More Attractive.

The past twenty years have seen a remarkable advancement in the retirement plans of industry. The advantage previously enjoyed by the military in this area has rapidly disappeared. Retired personnel must be more adequately recompensed for a lifetime devoted to the preservation of our way of life. The present economic situation of many of our retired service personnel reflects discredit on our government. The committee concludes retired personnel must participate in any pay readjustments afforded the military services.

(4) Insufficient Provision for Families.

The committee is convinced that, to date, sufficient effort has not been expended to secure adequate provision for families. Inadequate housing and exorbitant rents can and must be corrected. Additional provision must be made for the education of children. Additional means must be provided whereby career military personnel may more adequately provide for their families in the event of their death or disablement. All of these actions are essential if the services are to compete with civilian industry for capable personnel.

(5) Inducements to Leave the Service.

Attractiveness of a service career must outweigh inducements to leave the service. We must acknowledge the great savings involved in continuous service by providing most of the benefits afforded to personnel on separation from the service. There appears to be little justification for denying to the veteran who remains in the service the advantages accorded the veteran who voluntarily separates himself from the service. At present, personnel must forego thousands of dollars in benefits to remain in service.

(6) The Armed Services Must be Able to Compete with Industry.

The advent of modern weapons in our Armed Forces has brought about an increasing technocracy accompanied by an overwhelming demand for skilled technicians in all trades. Because of our inability to hold career personnel in highly technical positions, the Armed Forces are forced to give costly training to thousands of personnel who immediately leave the service for the more lucrative awards available in industry. One of the greatest savings to be made in our national defense efforts lies in enhancing the ability of the Armed Forces to compete with industry to retain highly skilled technical personnel. The committee therefore contends that no additional cost is involved in additional recompense for career personnel since, over a period of time, such costs are more than offset by decreased costs of training, recruitment and separation.

d. POSITIVE DANGER EXISTS THAT BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS
TRANSCEND COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS

(1) Large Forces at Low Costs are not Enough.

The enormous cost inherent in the maintenance of defense forces of an adequate size has resulted in an alarming drain on our national treasure. The committee therefore recognizes that foremost consideration must be given to securing the maximum defense per dollar cost.

However, the committee admonishes that the adequacy of our national defense posture lies not alone in maintaining the largest possible number of people under arms at lowest possible dollar cost, but equally in the military virtue of those Armed Forces as exemplified by the professional competency, esprit and training of their career personnel — this is the combat effectiveness which must be achieved at whatever cost. There must be a hard core of expert career personnel capable of rapid expansion in the event of total mobilization.

The committee concludes that in furtherance of cost consciousness there exists positive danger that budgetary considerations will be permitted to transcend the attainment of this combat effectiveness. The Korean emergency proved conclusively the inadvisability of such policies.

(2) Fiscal Decisions must be Made by Those Responsible for Military Effectiveness.

Costs incident to the pay and maintenance of personnel loom large in the national military budget. Such items are easily identifiable and readily present themselves as targets for hasty ill-considered reductions. There has been a tendency for fiscal decisions to be taken without due regard to their impact on personnel and combat effectiveness. Preparedness is measured in numbers of ships, planes, tanks, guns — and people. The committee notes with alarm that many such decisions are made within the military departments based on recommendations of junior civilian advisors and from without the military departments by committees, bureaus, and agencies, none of whom are charged with the military defense of our nation, or capable of evaluating our combat effectiveness. The committee concludes such decisions must be more carefully supervised and examined by senior civilian and military leaders. In the event fiscal decisions affecting personnel are made from without the military departments, some system must be devised to insure the responsible agency accepts full responsibility for the ensuing results.

The committee counsels that a continued failure to judiciously apply budgetary reductions effecting personnel will ultimately dissipate the military virtue of our Armed Forces as represented in our career military personnel. It is exceedingly important that responsibility for such an event be sufficiently determined in advance.

e. For itemized problems and recommended actions, see Appendix I.

4. CONCLUSIONS

a. The committee concurs in the appraisal of the Joint Chiefs of Staff that military service has lost much of its attractiveness as a career.

b. Unless the present trend of career personnel leaving the service can be reversed, most serious consequences to the national defense effort will result.

c. Responsibility for the present state of affairs must be shared between the military departments, Congress and many other governmental bureaus and agencies.

d. Corrective measures are entirely within national capabilities, but require the support of the President and Congress.

e. Alternatives involving a substantial extension of the compulsory active service period or a lesser degree of combat effectiveness are unacceptable since they will assuredly result in inadequate national military preparedness.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

a. That the recommendations contained in this report and Appendix I be approved for implementation without delay.

b. That responsibility for implementing action be assigned as indicated in Appendix I.

c. That the final report of the committee be approved and forwarded to the Secretary of Defense.

d. That, since the implementation of the detailed recommendations of this report will require nation-wide support, upon approval, it be released for publication in its entirety.

e. That the committee be continued in an advisory capacity to insure necessary corrective action.

FOR THE COMMITTEE:

Incl
Appendix I

/s/ J. P. Womble, Jr.
/t/ J. P. WOMBLE, Jr.
Rear Admiral, U.S.N.
Chairman

I

II

III

WHAT'S WRONG

HOW TO CORRECT

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE - BY WHOM

INCREASED COMPETITION WITH INDUSTRY FOR GOOD MEN (Cont'd)

Less savings from post exchanges and ships stores.

- (1) Restore price differential.
- (2) Decentralize to installation commanders.

- (1) House Armed Services Comtee recognizes need and has defended retention.
- (2) Revise Armed Forces Exchange Regulations to require decentralization and restore price differential.

Less savings from commissaries.

- (1) Oppose pressure groups of retail merchants.
- (2) Adopt DOD position no civilian facility can compare in price and quality, therefore, none should be closed.
- (3) Protest strongly to Congress.

- (1) DOD now securing report preparatory to decision on closing.
- (2) Sec Def announce forthrightly that no commissaries will be closed since this would in fact constitute a substantial reduction in service pay.

Less reimbursement for movement of household goods.

- (1) Oppose all riders on appropriations acts.

- (1) DOD impress Congress with the harm inherent in duplication of control represented by rider-type legislation.

Less reimbursement for cost of travel.

- (1) Increase JTR rates to maximum provided by Section 303(h), Career Compensation Act.
- (2) Seek legislation for a dislocation allowance.

- (1) DM will sponsor legislation to provide dislocation allowance.
- (2) Direct Joint Travel Comtee to revise travel allowances upward to maximum provided by law and reflect rank differential.

Retirement Less Attractive

Civilian employment restricted.

- (1) Eliminate dual office and dual compensation restrictions.

- (1) HR 4723 reported favorably to BOB. Will raise dual compensation limit to \$6250 and eliminate restrictions on employment of service personnel.
- (2) CSC preparing legislation to eliminate restrictions on dual employment for all government agencies.

Disability retirement benefits have been reduced.

- (1) Restore 75% disability pay.
- (2) Make changes elective.
- (3) Separate from VA criteria.

- (1) DOD sponsor legislation to separate officer disability retirement from VA criteria and restore 75% disability pay.

Voluntary retirement has been restricted.

- (1) Eliminate abuses.
- (2) Restore the normal functioning existing voluntary retirement legislation.

- (1) Some relaxation accomplished in 1954.
- (2) Cong, DOD recognize that a condition of Cold War will obtain for a protracted period and voluntary retirement legislation must be revised to meet this situation.

Retired pay has not kept pace with cost of living increases.

- (1) Assure retired pay be included in any active duty cost of living increase.
- (2) Exempt retired pay from income tax.

- (1) DOD sponsor legislation for cost of living increase.

Insufficient Provision for Families

Survivor benefits are discriminatory and inadequate.

- (1) Improve adequacy.
- (2) Equalize between Regular and Reserve personnel.

- (1) Contingency Options Act for retired personnel now law.
- (2) JOD 83-13 (Active Duty Survivor Benefits Bill).
- (3) JOD 83-39 will equalize benefits. Ready for 1954 Program.

Inadequate provision for dependent education.

- (1) Permanent legislation required to insure funding.
- (2) Oppose reductions by rider.

- (1) DOD sponsor legislation as a basis for adequate funds for dependent education.

Inadequate family housing.

- (1) Oppose restrictions on acquisition and construction.
- (2) Change policy of opposite government-owned housing.
- (3) Reduce rentals on where housing.
- (4) Insure purchase loans through GI Bill.

- (1) Annual increments of services long-term family housing programs be included in DOD budget submissions.
- (2) JOD, M11 Depts acquaint the Congress with the inadequacies and expense of where-type housing.

Cash Inducements to Leave Service

Eligible for generous veterans benefits on discharge.

- (1) Provide benefits for people remaining in service at least equal to those provided veterans in the Veterans Readjustment Act.

- (1) JOD 83-89, And carried over from 1953 to 1954. BOB rejected 5 July.
- (2) DOD reopen this issue and provide at least equal inducements to personnel who remain in the service.
- (3) Impress Congress with the fact that bonus-type legislation is an inducement for personnel to leave the service.

BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO TRANSCEND COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS

There is a tendency for fiscal decisions to be taken without due regard for their impact on personnel and combat effectiveness.

- (1) No fiscal policy should be established without full evaluation of its effect on morale and effectiveness of military personnel.

- (1) In effecting budget reduction, BOB and DOD should allow service departments to exercise judgment as to areas best susceptible to reductions with least calculated risk.
- (2) The impact on fiscal decisions affecting combat readiness by junior advisors in positions of influence, but without responsibility for military effectiveness, should be most carefully evaluated.

APPENDIX I

I

II

III

WHAT'S WRONG

HOW TO CORRECT

WHAT SHOULD BE DONE - BY WHOM

WORLD COMMITMENTS AND NATIONAL ATTITUDE

World Commitments Have Burdened Personnel with Instability and Abnormal Hardship, Particularly Lengthy Family Separations

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Planners and policy makers include in studies full discussion of impact on personnel. (2) All assigned missions be reviewed and less essential be eliminated. (3) Services restudy deployments and develop plans to improve permanency. (4) Allow concurrent travel when practicable. (5) Provide adequate housing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Planners at all echelons constantly weigh effects of commitments on personnel. (2) Mil Depts take appropriate measures to insure maximum stability. (3) Keep adequate rotation base in U.S. at all cost. |
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Public Respect for Constituted Authority Has Declined.

Irresponsible criticism of implementation of national military policy.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Fortnight publicized rebuttal. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) DOD - Publicize national military policy and rebut unjustified criticism. |
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Slandorous attacks and criticism of military leaders.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Military enforce discipline, conduct and performance of duty to make criticism unwarranted. (2) Coordinate info media in fortnight rebuttal for unwarranted criticism. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Mil Depts raise standards of performance and enforce discipline. (2) Mil Depts develop and adopt a program to produce immediate and coordinated rebuttal with maximum national publicity sanctioned by DOD. |
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MILITARY AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP HAS DECLINED

Dilution in Ranks by Inexperienced Personnel

Distinction between ranks reduced.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Increase emphasis on command responsibility and restore officer and NCO command authority. (2) Widen gap of pay and authority. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Mil Depts - Make assignment of work, responsibility, and privileges commensurate with rank. |
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Discipline requires emphasis.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Revise UCMJ to meet problems peculiar to the services. (2) Do not tolerate incompetency. (3) Accept full responsibility for service policies, thus restoring discipline, incentive and morale. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) BOB forward proposed Executive Order increasing severity of punishment for absence offenses to the President. (2) DOD complete study and review of UCMJ. (3) DOD, Mil Depts - Decentralize authority and delegate authority as well as responsibility. Examine current regulations and directives to eliminate restrictions on commanders prerogatives. |
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Esprit Inhibited.

- (1) Demonstrate loyalty down as well as up.
- (2) Publicize military leaders' efforts before Congress.
- (3) Avoid hasty expedients to solve morale problems.
- (4) More attention to personal assignment problems.
- (5) Promote unit identification.
- (6) Resist ill-advised "reforms".
- (7) Eliminate over-supervision.

- (1) M1 Depts - Stress physical conditioning and combat readiness as the real means to develop a battle-worthy team and reduce emphasis on USO and other dubious morale aids.
- (2) M1 Depts - Treat personnel as individuals - not so many MOS numbers. Encourage a feeling of identification with the unit and promote pride of service.
- (3) M1 Depts - Require high standards of performance and make discipline more stringent to achieve this result.
- (4) DOD, M1 Depts - Reduce use of expensive civilian survey teams and advisory committees and use military command channels to secure information on military matters.

Technocracy over-emphasized to detriment of command ability.

- (1) Emphasize command and leadership.
- (2) Distinguish between technical and command fields of endeavor.

- (1) M1 Depts - Study methods to distinguish between command and technical responsibilities.
- (2) Army and Marine Corps preparing plans to distinguish by separate insignia.
- (3) Army and Marine Corps radically reduce number of MOS's.

INCREASED COMPETITION WITH INDUSTRY FOR GOOD MEN

Insufficient Take-Home Pay

Base pay has not kept pace with cost of living.

- (1) Press for increase.
- (2) Inform the command.

- (1) DOD - Press for cost of living increase.
- (2) DOD 83-223 to increase cadets and midshipmen pay should be supported.
- (3) DOD sponsor continuing information program to advise service members of status of pay increase.

Incentive-hazardous duty pay threatened.

- (1) Implement Strauss Commission recommendations in this area.

- (1) DOD Ad Hoc Committees now working.
- (2) DA preparing legislation to increase combat pay.
- (3) DAF preparing legislation to convert flight pay to 8 base pay.

Sea and foreign duty pay threatened or lost.

- (1) Reject Strauss Commission recommendations and continue for enlist and restore to officers.

- (1) DOD adopt position that this is a pay reduction unacceptable for enlisted men.
- (2) DOD recognize that officers have been discriminated against in this matter and seek restoration of this pay to officers.

Traditional Compensatory Benefits (which were considered in Hook Comte Report as Part of Service Pay) have been reduced.

Less medical and dental care.

- (1) Declaration of policy Congress.
- (2) Uniform service implementation.
- (3) Subsidized service from civilian source.
- (4) Budgetary provision.

- (1) DOD (HQM) now reviewing Koolten Commission report.
- (2) DOD seek permanent legislation assuring dependents' medical care.