

Legislation Affecting Scientists in the Armed Forces

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TWO BILLS HAVE BEEN INTRODUCED into the 80th Congress which, if passed, would have widespread effects upon the status and effectiveness of scientific personnel in the Armed Services. These indicate the necessity for closer scrutiny of Service scientific programs by civilian scientific groups.

During World War II no lesson was driven home more forcibly than the importance of scientists in national defense. Large numbers of scientific personnel were utilized in research, selection, operations, and training. It may be assumed that the Armed Services will continue to conduct research in peacetime and to enlist the assistance of civilian groups.

Although there may be differences of opinion as to the amount or type of research which should be performed within the Armed Services, there is no question as to the importance of at least some scientific personnel in these Services. First, such personnel is required to perform whatever research the Services will do. Second, it is required in establishing policies at high levels, as exemplified by the Joint Research and Development Board. This group is especially important and calls for men with a great appreciation of the scientific point of view not only to insure adequate exploitation of scientific advances but also to establish and carry out necessary over-all research plans. This includes planning for and supporting research within the Armed Services themselves as well as in civilian institutions where Service-sponsored projects are undertaken. A third purpose is to review continuously research results from civilian laboratories to discern those which may be of importance in promoting national defense, at the same time serving as a bridge across the gap which usually exists in peacetime between military personnel and civilian scientists.

The organizational structure, magnificent facilities, and a potentially ideal environment for research are now in existence within the Armed Services. However, it must be recognized that the entire scientific program of these Services is potentially impotent without competent scientific personnel. The responsibility for the success of this program rests on the shoulders of both the Armed Services and the entire group of scientists in the United States. If a scientist possesses a skill which can be utilized in national defense, it is inevitable that

he will be called upon as soon as even a potential emergency appears. Although he may not be placed in uniform, he will, nevertheless, have a very tangible connection with the military effort. The civilian scientist should insist that there be a sound research structure within the Armed Services not only because of his interests in national defense but also because of a more selfish interest—assurance of his maximal utilization in the capacity for which he is best suited in the event of an emergency. The importance of this cannot be overemphasized.

The mobilization of science in World War II began in 1940 with the establishment of the National Defense Research Committee. During the war a large number of scientists found themselves either in the Armed Services or working under OSRD contracts. With the cessation of hostilities, it was logical for this mobilization to be reduced. However, the number of scientists who left the Armed Services was entirely out of proportion to the decreased requirements—so many left as to seriously hamper military research efforts. The situation is summarized in the following statement taken from the history of the Armored Force Research Laboratory, published shortly after V-J Day.

The fact that not one of the members of the laboratory staff was interested in staying in the peacetime Army or continuing to do research under the Army is silent testimony which has a self-evident interpretation. Unless the Army is able to attract personnel of a high type, its program of research will die in infancy. This is true whether the program is set up within the Army or carried on by civilian scientists under the auspices of the Army (*i.e.* Civil Service).

This experience was not limited to one laboratory, and nowhere is it more applicable than to the facilities and personnel of the Medical Departments of the Services.

Under the aegis of the Medical Department, biological scientists made great contributions to the solution of problems arising as a result of scientific advancements which increased tremendously the performance of weapons and machines without concomitant increases in human capabilities.

The success of the various activities staffed by scientific personnel, including the Service research laboratories, the Aviation Psychology, Aviation Physiology, and other programs, brought to the Medical Departments the realization of the necessity for continuing these functions. This realization has led to the

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introduction into Congress of the two above-mentioned bills which bear directly upon the problem of the status of the biological scientist in the Armed Forces. These bills, pertinent sections of which follow, have been referred to the Senate Committee on Armed Services.

S. 334

A bill to establish the Medical Associated Sciences Corps in the Medical Department of the Navy, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That there is hereby established the Medical Associated Sciences Corps which shall be a constituent part of the Medical Department of the Navy and which shall consist of not more than two hundred and five officers of the grade of medical associated scientist. Officers of the grade of medical associated scientist shall have the rank of captain, commander, lieutenant commander, lieutenant, or lieutenant (junior grade), and such officers shall be part of the authorized strength of the various corps of the Medical Department as now exist or may hereafter be established.

SEC. 2. Medical associated scientists shall be staff officers and shall be subject to all provisions of law now existing or hereafter enacted relating to the advancement in rank and retirement of officers of the Medical Corps. No officer of the Medical Associated Sciences Corps shall be entitled to command in the line or any other staff corps of the Navy, nor shall any officer suffer reduction in pay or allowances by reason of appointment in accordance with this Act.

SEC. 3. All appointments to the grade of medical associated scientist shall be made by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, and shall be from male citizens of the United States who shall have received a doctorate degree in such sciences related to medicine that the Secretary of the Navy shall determine.

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SEC. 5. All appointments to the grade of medical associated scientist, except those provided for in section 4 of this Act, shall be with the rank of lieutenant (junior grade) from male citizens of the United States between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-two years. No person shall be appointed pursuant hereto until he shall have established his mental, moral, physical, and professional qualifications to the satisfaction of the Secretary of the Navy.

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S. 504

A bill to revise the Medical Department of the Army, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "Army Medical Department Act of 1947."

TITLE I

Medical Service Corps

SEC. 101. Effective the date of enactment of this Act, there is established in the Medical Department of the Regular Army

the Medical Service Corps, which shall consist of the Pharmacy Section, the Medical Allied Science Section, the Optometry Section, and such other sections as may be deemed necessary by the Secretary of War, and which shall perform such services as may be prescribed by the Secretary of War. The authorized strength of the Medical Service Corps, Regular Army, shall be such strength as may from time to time be prescribed by the Secretary of War. The Medical Service Corps, Regular Army, shall consist of officers in the grades of second lieutenant to colonel, inclusive: *Provided*, That the number of colonels on active duty in the Medical Service Corps, Regular Army, shall at no time exceed 2 per centum of the authorized Regular Army officer strength of such corps.

SEC. 102. (a) From the officers commissioned in the Medical Service Corps, Regular Army, in the permanent grade of major or above, the Secretary of War shall appoint the Chief of the Medical Service Corps who shall serve as such Chief during his pleasure, and who, if commissioned in permanent grade below colonel shall, without vacation of his permanent grade, have the temporary rank, pay, and allowances of a colonel while so serving, and who, while so serving, shall be superior in rank to all other colonels in the corps.

(b) From the officers commissioned in the Medical Service Corps, Regular Army, the Secretary of War shall appoint such assistant chiefs, who shall be chiefs of sections, and who shall be consultants to the Surgeon General in activities relative to that specific section.

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SEC. 103. Except as provided in Public Law 281, Seventy-ninth Congress, approved December 28, 1945, as amended, and except as hereinafter provided for transfer thereto, original appointments in the Medical Service Corps, Regular Army, shall be made only in the grade of second lieutenant from citizens of the United States between the ages of twenty-one and thirty years, who possess such physical and other qualifications as may be prescribed by the Secretary of War.

SEC. 104. Effective from date of enactment of this Act, commissioned officers of the Medical Service Corps, Regular Army, shall be promoted to the grades of first lieutenant, captain, major, and lieutenant colonel as now or hereafter prescribed for promotion of promotion-list officers to such grades, respectively. Promotion to the grade of colonel shall be by selection under regulations prescribed by the Secretary of War from officers in the grade of lieutenant colonel with at least one year's service in that grade.

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The bill then provides that Public Law 281, as amended, be further amended by inserting in lieu of paragraphs (c) and (d), Section 5, of the Act the following paragraph:

SEC. 105. "(c) Persons appointed in the Medical Service Corps shall be appointed in grades of second lieutenant, first lieutenant, captain, or major according to the periods of service with which they are credited in the same manner as set forth in paragraph (a) of this section for persons appointed in arms and services of the Regular Army, the officers of which are on the promotion list."

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SEC. 106. Officers of the Regular Army who, on the date of enactment of this Act, hold commissions in the Pharmacy Corps, are, effective the date of enactment of this Act, transferred in grade to the Medical Service Corps. Each such officer so transferred shall be reappointed in the Medical Service Corps in the permanent grade held by him at the time of such transfer; shall be credited for the purpose of determining eligibility for promotion, with continuous commissioned service on the active list of the Regular Army in the Medical Service Corps equal to the period of service credited to him for promotion purposes under existing provisions of law, and shall, subsequent to such transfer, be thereafter promoted in accordance with the promotion system set forth in section 104 of this title.

SEC. 107. (a) Effective the date of enactment of this Act, the Pharmacy Corps and the Medical Administrative Corps are abolished. The functions of the Medical Service Corps created by this Act shall include the duties and functions heretofore prescribed for the Pharmacy Corps and the Medical Administrative Corps.

(b) Effective the date of enactment of this Act, persons holding temporary appointments or commissions in the Army of the United States permanently assigned or detailed to the Medical Administrative Corps, the Pharmacy Corps, or the Sanitary Corps shall be automatically transferred and permanently assigned or detailed, as the case may be, to the Medical Service Corps, established by this Act, in the same temporary grade and rank held by them at such time.

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If competent scientists are to be induced to enter the Armed Services, it is essential that they be given rank and prestige commensurate with their training and abilities. If they are to be used effectively, it is essential that their activities be directed by men with similar backgrounds and points of view. In these respects the Navy Bill, S. 334, is at least a step in the right direction. On the other hand, it is difficult to imagine how the Army Bill, S. 504, could possibly have been worse. It provides for initial commissions one grade lower than for physicians in the Medical Corps. The name of the corps emphasizes its subordinate position in the Medical Department. No educational or other qualification is prescribed. The scientists are grouped with optometrists, pharmacists, administrators, and others of the most diverse backgrounds and points of view. The chief of the corps, responsible for the establishment of policies governing personnel, research, liaison, etc., might belong to any one of these groups.

One defect in both bills is the failure to provide a means for at least initially commissioning senior scien-

tific personnel at a rank commensurate with their abilities. It is this type of individual which is now most sorely needed. As written, the bills provide high-rank commissions only for those with previous military service. The Army Bill provides for rank no higher than that of major.

Another serious omission in both bills is the lack of provision for a reserve component. This is of especial importance to the civilian scientist, but it is also of great importance to plans of the Armed Services for the utilization of scientists in time of war. The Services have neglected to realize that a commissioned reserve scientific component will assist in stimulating and maintaining the interests of at least a small group of civilian scientists in Service problems.

Consideration should be given to including in both bills provisions for an integrated enlisted component in order to provide the necessary technicians and to avoid the constant loss and replacement of highly trained enlisted personnel which affected scientific programs so seriously during the war.

Lest individuals in the physical sciences feel that this is a problem solely for biological scientists, it should be pointed out that it is conceivable that similar legislation may be introduced to establish similar groups in other branches of the Armed Services. In addition, it is entirely possible that the attitude reflected in the Army Bill may be extended to the physical sciences. It is important, therefore, that *all* branches of science attempt to correct this situation in its incipency.

These bills, together with the imminence of unification of the Armed Forces and the partial recognition of the importance of the scientist as evidenced by the prominence of the Research and Development Board, bring forward the question of the establishment of an over-all Science Corps in the Armed Services. Conceivably, such a corps could consist of Physical Science and Biological Science Divisions, have cognizance of all research and scientific effort in the Armed Forces, and have representation at the highest and all other staff levels. If such a corps is believed to be desirable, efforts should be made by scientists as a whole to establish it in the near future.

The only means of correcting the present legislation is for scientists, especially those who are veterans of World War II, to protest directly to the Committee on Armed Services, U. S. Senate, against the objectionable provisions contained in S. 504.

