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PROBLEMS OF FAMILIES OF ARMY COMBAT CASUALTIES

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A Proposal

Submitted to the Department of the Army
Office of the Surgeon General

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DRAFT OF A PROPOSAL TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

Subject: Problems of Families of Army Combat Casualties

I. Abstract

This research will assess the nature and significance of the adjustment problems faced by families, particularly, next-of-kin of prisoners of war and of those who are killed or missing in action. The study will identify and examine the supporting services provided by the Department of the Army and civilian agencies in assisting the adjustment of next-of-kin and families and identify potentially useful modifications of and supplements to such services.

II. Background

The adjustment problems faced by next-of-kin of prisoners of war, and of those killed or missing in action have received little attention. Only rarely do their concerns come to the attention of the public, and when they do, they are often a source of embarrassment to the various military establishments.¹ And yet the nature and extent of these problems and their possible amelioration is something which a modern military establishment cannot ignore. If the military establishment turns its back on the families of those men who are captives, or who have died in battle, or are missing, its reputation in the eyes of the public is likely to suffer. But more important, such a posture can have a deleterious effect upon the morale of its fighting men who are concerned about the welfare

¹See for example, "Red Tape, Indifference Snarl POW's Families," The Evening Star, August 24, 1966, Washington, D. C.

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of their families and what will happen to them if they are killed or become captives. The morale of prisoners of war and of those in combat can also suffer if they receive mail from their next-of-kin detailing economic and psychological problems brought about in part from their absence and from lack of support from the military. Maintenance of high morale is an essential task of military commanders. But while the needs of next-of-kin are somewhat tangential to the major mission of the military services, adequate provision for these needs is a morale-enhancing factor. It is evident also that the larger community believes that providing for the welfare of next-of-kin is an important ancillary task of the armed forces, for it has authorized the military establishment to provide an increasing number of welfare services for these dependents.

The military establishment, by law and by regard for its own effectiveness, must concern itself with the next-of-kin. The most direct expression of these responsibilities was enunciated by the Commander in Chief in the promulgation of the Code of Conduct when he said,

No American prisoner of war will be forgotten by the United States. Every available means will be employed by our government to establish contact with, to support and to obtain the release of all our prisoners of war. Furthermore, the laws of the United States provide for the support and care of dependents of members of the armed forces including those who become prisoners of war. I assure dependents of such prisoners that these laws will continue to provide for their welfare.²

In general, the military establishment has had responsibility to provide services for the next-of-kin and dependents of those soldiers who

²Statement of the President of the United States on promulgating the Code of Conduct for Members of the Armed Forces of the United States, Executive Order 10631, August 17, 1955. Press Release, August 17, 1955, The White House (Lowry Air Force Base, Denver, Colorado).

are heads of households--the family of procreation. But the military cannot overlook the family of the unmarried soldier--the family of orientation. These soldiers are frequently young and not yet mature enough to have established psychological independence from their parents in spite of the fact that they are away from home. And the parents, on their part, are all too frequently unwilling to permit their sons to establish this psychological independence even if they wish to do so. Consequently, such parents have protective attitudes toward their offspring which makes them readily anxious and perturbed and their reactions are often reflected in problems for the son and for military agencies. These difficulties can be exacerbated by the limited or nonexistent communication between the military establishment and members of the soldier's family of orientation.

But in addition to the enhancement of morale, the military establishment must be concerned with the next-of-kin for another reason, and that is the possible attempted exploitation of next-of-kin of these three classes of soldiers mentioned above by foreign and domestic propagandists for purposes of international politics, the subversion of armed forces or civilian morale, or simply the arrogation of the public sympathy attached to these persons for ulterior personal or political purposes. Families of prisoners of war and detainees have been the subjects of notorious, ulteriorly-motivated exploitation during the entire cold war period.

III. Approach

It is proposed therefore, that a study be done to explore (1) the kinds of stresses and strains which face the next-of-kin of prisoners of war and of those killed in action or missing in action and (2) their

adaptation or adjustment to these facts. It is known in a general way that the prolonged absence of the soldier-head of the household from his family leads to a profound disturbance in the structure of the family.³ The removal of the husband or father disturbs the delicate balance of the family because the customary roles and relationships have been drastically altered. The remaining members must create new patterns of relationships which normally lead in time to a new state of equilibrium. It is during this initial phase--following the removal of the head of the household--that the family is most vulnerable. And then, if the head of the household returns, the new equilibrium is disturbed, and once again the family seeks to establish a new pattern, but frequently, the experience of the head of the household as a prisoner of war, or as a man in combat and the experience of the wife as a relatively independent person create serious adjustment problems. It is anticipated that the differences in family structure and functioning should appear as between families where the head of the household is missing, is a prisoner of war or is killed in action. This is anticipated because of the finality of the category "killed in action" as against the indeterminacy of the categories "missing in action" and "prisoner of war."

The proposed study should also examine the kinds of services which the armed forces provide to these next-of-kin, the utilization rate of these services by next-of-kin, and their perceptions and evaluation of such services. In addition, an inventory should be made of the kinds of services presently available to next-of-kin by civilian agencies such

³ Adam Curle, "Transitional Communities and Social Reconnection-- A Follow-Up Study of the Civil Resettlement of British Prisoners of War," Part I and II, Human Relations, 1 (1947), 47-69; 240-288.

as the American Red Cross, the Veterans Administration, various veterans organizations, and so forth.

IV. Outline of Work to be Done

1. An historical survey will be made of social welfare programs--both military and civilian--which are available to the next-of-kin.

2. A literature review will be undertaken to determine what work has been done on the adjustment problems of families of war casualties. Attention will be given to work done in military settings as well as in environments containing comparable stresses.

3. Personal interviews will be conducted with matched groups of next-of-kin of (a) prisoners of war, (b) men killed in action, (c) men listed as missing in action; and control groups of (d) men serving in combat in Viet Nam, and (e) men in Zone-of-Interior combat units where families of married soldiers are intact.

4. Plans will be made for the possible event of an exchange of prisoners so that interviews can be obtained with next-of-kin to determine what changes occur and what, if any, problems develop following return of the absent partners.

V. Statement of Work

Phase I: Problem delineation.--The project staff will become thoroughly acquainted with available information concerning the planned and contemplated programs of the Department of the Army in family services. In addition, they will familiarize themselves with the contributions which civilian agencies make to these services.

Additional attention will be centered upon the organization for and the communication process that exists between the Army and next-of-kin

and especially those communications which tend to establish and shape the perceptions of families and next-of-kin regarding family services.

On the basis of the information thus collected, the study will systematically specify variables and conditions which will be the object of further study. This delineation of problems will involve review of pertinent documents, conferences with Army officials and other service personnel, and coordination with appropriate agencies within the Army.

Phase 2: The literature review.--A systematic and critical review will be conducted of relevant scientific literature pertinent to the stresses which are imposed upon the families and next-of-kin in situations (a) where the heads of the households are involved in potentially life-threatening work, such as test pilots, astronauts, race-car drivers, and coal miners, for example; or (b) where they are subject to prolonged absence of either a determinate or indeterminate nature as in the case of seamen, or fishermen, or those who are confined in institutions such as prisons or mental hospitals. Particular attention will be paid to the way these families cope with the uncertainties in their lives, the extent to which these families receive support from other relatives, friendship groups, or from the more formal institutions in the community.

The material to be covered will include studies from the fields of psychology, social psychology, sociology, medicine, and social work. Full use will be made of the Defense Documentation Center, the National Library of Medicine, the Library of Congress and other applicable sources of scientific information. The delineation of problems performed under Phase 1 will be further refined.

Phase 3: Field visits and interviews.--On or about the fourth month the project staff will begin to interview the next-of-kin and other

members of the families of (a) all soldiers classified as missing, captured or interned, (b) a matched population of soldiers killed in action in the fighting in Viet Nam, (c) a matched group of soldiers currently serving in combat units in Viet Nam, and (d) servicemen presently stationed within the continental limits of the United States. The groups will be matched for age, marital status, service specialty, date of casualty or time in theatre, component, and rank. Because of the present small number of cases involved, however, it may not be possible to match perfectly, but every attempt will be made to maximize the matching process.

Because of the sensitive nature of the kind of information to be sought, the interviewers will take every care to avoid offense to the sensibilities of the respondents. If in the course of the interviewing, unresolved family problems emerge, the interviewers will refer these problem cases to the appropriate military offices. The precise number of interviews cannot be specified at this time, primarily because of the changing number of persons classified as missing, captured, or interned. The Department of Defense Release on casualties, dated 15 October 1966, indicated that this number was 36. As the time draws nearer for the actual field work, precise specification of the number of interviews will be made. The interviews would be designed to describe the roles and relationships within the family units before separation, to determine what if any changes have occurred within the family units following separation; to ascertain the strengths and weaknesses of the postseparation families; to ascertain the support given to the family units by other relatives and friends, as well as by the military; to assess the availability of military services to the families, and the utilization of such services by the families, and their evaluation of such services.

During this phase of the research which is presumed to continue for approximately one year, various working papers will be prepared which will explore subjects of concern to the Surgeon General of the Army and to other offices within the Army. These papers will summarize the implications of various findings for possible use in modifying programs designed to provide services to families of missing personnel and prisoners of war.

Phase 4: Interviews with repatriated prisoners of war and their families.--It is anticipated that some of the 36 soldiers now listed as missing or captured plus any additions will on cessation of hostilities be repatriated and returned to Army control. Standby plans (see Biderman, A. D. 'Anticipatory Studies and Stand-By Research,' page 278 in Social Indicators, MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1966) will be available for interviewing the prisoners, with a focus upon their experiences in captivity, and for interviewing the next-of-kin after a suitable passage of time to determine the nature and extent of family adjustment problems. Execution of Phase 4 will be dependent upon its feasibility from the military point of view, and the compatibility of the task with uncompleted phases of the research.

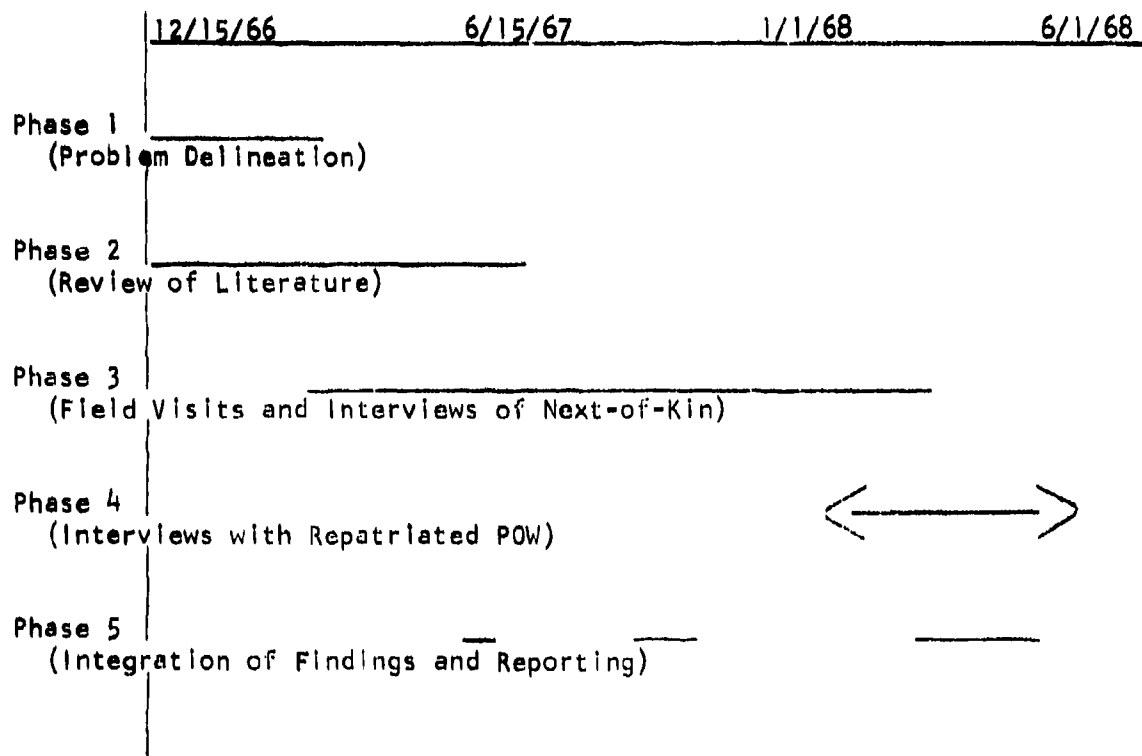
Furthermore, as a result of the field work, it may become desirable to interview an additional group of next-of-kin of married men who have completed their tour of duty in Viet Nam to explore anticipated family adjustment problems following return to the family of the absent partner.

Phase 5: Integration of findings and final report.--The final report will integrate various working papers compiled in prior research into a document which reviews the general problems of family service for

missing personnel, which will contain specific recommendations for change or modification where indicated and which will identify those areas where additional specific scientific inquiry may be profitable.

In addition to the various working papers and reports, the research team will hold periodic meetings with the project monitor and representatives of other staff agencies with an interest and responsibility in the general area of family services. Such meetings should assure an informal exchange of observations relevant to policy, training, and the provision of informational materials.

PROJECTED WORK PLAN



VI. Biographic Information

Albert D. Biderman.--Sociologist, social-psychologist. Senior Research Associate, Bureau of Social Science Research, 1957 to date. Currently is principal investigator of a research study in behavioral science knowledge and aerospace power, and is also conducting a study involving the impact and incidence of crime. Has done a variety of research on prisoner-of-war behavior. Experience also includes five years in-service experience in Air Force intelligence and personnel training research programs, and four years of university research and teaching in sociology. A.B., New York University; M.A., Ph.D., sociology, University of Chicago.

Elisabeth T. Crawford.--Political Scientist. Research Analyst 1964-65; Research Associate 1965 to date, Bureau of Social Science Research. Previous experience includes one year as research assistant for the Legislative Reference Service in the Parliament of Sweden, two years as research analyst at Hudson Institute, Harmon-on-Hudson, New York. Experience in the following areas of research: political sociology, strategy and arms control, civil defense, study of the utilization of social science research in international and military policy. Fil.kand. (B.A.) and Fil.lic. (Ph.D.), University of Stockholm, Sweden; Certificat d'Etudes Politiques, Institut d'Etudes Politiques, University of Paris.

Samuel M. Meyers.--Sociologist. Adjunct Associate at the Bureau of Social Science Research. Experience includes several areas of research: Organizational studies of hospitals; studies in the growth and development of medical care centers; criminological studies involving postrelease performance of felons and incidence of victimization. He has been a member of the Governor's Committee on Mental Health Planning, State of Oklahoma, and was Consultant on Surveys to the Department of Public Health, State of Oklahoma. He has had eight years of teaching experience in the Departments of Psychiatry and Preventive Medicine and Public Health at the Medical Center, University of Oklahoma. M.A., sociology, University of Chicago.

James L. Monroe.--Operations Analyst. Adjunct Associate at the Bureau of Social Science Research, 1963 to date. Staff Consultant on Studies for the Air Force Office of Scientific Research. Formerly President of Human Development Corporation of New York, Executive Director of the Human Ecology Fund of New York 1957-62. Member of the Board, African Research Foundation; Institute of Applied Psychiatry; and Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center Foundation. Recorder, Air Force Advisory Committee on Prisoners of War 1963 to present as Colonel, USAFR. Wayland College (liberal arts), Texas Tech. (mechanical engineering), University of Michigan (research administration), University of Maryland (international relations).

Adrienne W. Weir.--Research Analyst in problems of the psychology of communications. Currently engaged in research for the President's Crime Commission concerned with public attitudes toward authority. Boston University School of Public Communications, formerly associated with New England Consultants, Inc. where research centered on Recruitment and Selection of Engineers.

VII. Selected Publications

Biderman, A. D., "Internment and Custody" in International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences. New York: Macmillan. In Preparation.

_____, "Life and Death in Extreme Captivity Situations," a paper presented at the Conference on Psychological Stress, New York University, Toronto, Canada, 1965. (Mimeographed.)

_____, Monroe, J. L., et al, "Problems in Utilization of Behavioral Science Knowledge to Meet Aerospace Needs." Current research sponsored by Air Force Office of Scientific Research, BSSR, 1964-1965 (AFOSR-365).

_____, "Captivity Lore and Behavior in Captivity" in M. Greenblatt, G. Grosser and H. Wechsler (eds.), The Threat of Impending Disaster: Contributions to the Psychology of Stress. Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1964.

_____, "Sequels to a Military Career: The Retired Military Professional" in Morris Janowitz (ed.), The New Military: Changing Patterns of Organization. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964.

_____, "Chinese 'Thought Reform' as a Source of Perspectives Toward Western Correctional Practices," a paper read before the First International Congress of Social Psychiatry, London, August, 1964.

_____, March to Calumny. New York: Macmillan, 1963.

_____, and Zimmer, Herbert (eds.), The Manipulation of Human Behavior. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1961.

_____, Heller, B. S. and Epstein, P., A Selected Bibliography on Captivity Behavior. Washington: Air Force Office of Scientific Research, 1961 (AFOSR-49-638-727).

Crawford, Elisabeth T., Biderman, A. D., The Social Role of the Social Sciences: Policy-Oriented Research in International and Military Affairs. New York: John Wiley & Sons, forthcoming.

Meyers, Samuel M., and Biderman, Albert D. (eds.), The Communist Soldier in the Korean War: Studies of Tradition, Ideology, Authority, and Organization. (In process.)

_____, and Shurley, Jay T., "Formal Social Structure and Behavior in a Psychiatry Service," Transactions of the Sixth Research Conference on Cooperative Chemotherapy Studies in Psychiatry and Research Approaches to Mental Illness, March 27-29, 1961. Washington, D. C.: Veterans Administration, 1961.

_____, The Social Sciences in International and Military Policy: An Analytic Bibliography, BSSR, October, 1965.

VIII. Estimated Costs

1. Direct Costs

A. Personal Services

Study Director - Biderman - 13 wks.	\$ 4,850
Research Associates - Meyers - 78 wks.	21,325
Monroe - 13 wks.	5,930
Crawford - 9 wks.	
Research Analysts -	8,985
Weir - 18 wks.	
Interviewers - 35 wks.	
Data Collection & Processing Personnel -	2,610
Lyerly - 2 wks.	
Jones - 2 wks.	
Goldstein - 5 wks.	
Stat. clerk and coders - 7 wks.	
Technical typists - 35 wks.	4,200
Project Secretary - 78 wks.	8,580
Fringe benefits	14,970

\$ 71,450

B. Other

Consultants - 10 days @ \$75	\$ 5,250
McIntyre - 18 wks. @ \$250	
Telephone -	635
Postage -	475
Printing and reproduction -	1,900
Machine processing -	850
Supplies	150
Travel - 10 trips @ \$200	9,330
360 man-days @ \$16 (2.5 days/ interview, 144 interviews) Admin. and local travel - \$1,000; Consultant travel - \$570	

\$ 18,590

2. Indirect Costs

Overhead (provisional rate 53% of I.A.) 37,870

Total Costs \$127,910

3. Fee

10,740

Grand Total \$138,650