

INFORMATION PAPER

AAMH-HDS
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SUBJECT: The Evolution of the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army (OAA), 1985-2014.

1. **Purpose:** To consider the changes in the OAA from 1985 to 2014.

2. **Facts:**

a. As of January 1985 the Administrative Assistant (AA) was directly responsible to the Secretary of the Army and authorized to act for him and other principal officers of the Department of the Army (DA) "in an extensive variety of matters consistent with delegations, precedents, and known attitudes." The AASA was responsible for providing "management processes and administrative services" for HQDA, supervising control of general use Army space in the National Capitol Region (NCR), acting as the Army employment coordinator for the Washington, D.C., commuting region, operating the Defense Telephone Service-Washington and the Defense Supply Service-Washington, and administering the HQDA Welfare and Recreation Fund. In addition, he provided administrative, logistical, and financial support for any agencies for which the Secretary of Defense designated the Secretary of the Army as the executive agent. General Order 15, issued later in the same year, gave a more detailed accounting of his specific responsibilities, for example, "implementing policies affecting the Pentagon Motor Pool," but all fell within the more general guidelines of the old order, General Order 17 of 5 September 1979, which they superseded. Computers were not specifically mentioned in either order just as earlier general orders had not mentioned typewriters which they were replacing. Everyone recognized that they fell within the AA's purview of administrative services. The striking thing about the next twenty years was how little the broad functional responsibilities of the AA changed.

b. In practice, most of the AA's efforts to provide management and administrative support were directed to the Army Secretariat because an officer with parallel responsibilities, The Adjutant General (TAG), provided these services to The Army Staff and initiated policies in these areas for the Army in the field.

c. The passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 made a major change in the organization of the OAA. With respect to the Military Departments, the Goldwater-Nichols legislation sought to strengthen the role of the service secretaries by increasing the size of the military secretariats relative to the military staffs and to reduce "the excessive span of control" of the service chiefs. The legislation led to the disestablishment of The Adjutant

General and its primary field operating agency (FOA) the TAG Center, which transferred some of its functions to the OAA. For example, the Environmental Support Group, a subordinate agency of the TAG Center, became a FOA of the OAA. By default, OAA now provided administrative support for the entire headquarters, because administrative responsibilities previously exercised by the Office of the Chief of Staff, Army (OCSA) also passed to the AA at this time. In essence, the AA became responsible for base operations for HQDA with no other entity available to help share the load. The AASA became known as the Commander of the HQDA MACOM (minus). Along this line, before 1986 the Director of Management Support Services in the OAA had provided computer support only for the secretariat. Afterward, AASA performed IT for the entire headquarters—the Army Staff as well as the Army Secretariat. A remnant of the TAG, largely confined to military personnel record keeping functions, moved to the U.S. Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM).

d. Immediately following the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols legislation in 1986, the Department of the Army transferred the Armed Forces Courier Service, for which the OAA had heretofore provided administrative and logistical support, to the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD).

e. In Fiscal Year (FY) 1989, as a result of the lessening of tension with the Soviet Union, the Department of the Army instituted Project QUICKSILVER to plan for a 25 percent reduction of TO&E units. The following year it initiated Project VANGUARD to reduce TDA elements by the same amount. The Vanguard final report indicated general appreciation for the activities of the OAA, recommended no reorganization within the OAA, requested no more than a 20 percent decrease in any of its subordinate elements, and suggested that certain key activities should not take any reductions. The report came out in the midst of the Gulf War Crisis, and this circumstance undoubtedly influenced the rather conservative approach taken by the report's authors.

f. The end of the Gulf War brought an effort with the Shannon-Reimer HQDA Transformation Study “to design a headquarters organization for the Army of the future.” Following the recommendations of the study, Secretary of the Army Michael P. W. Stone authorized a Director of Information Management in Information Management Support Center (IMCEN) in the OAA charged with streamlining the measures required for the effective collection, storage, access, use and disposal of knowledge at HQDA and its supporting elements. Stone hoped that this initiative would lead over time to the development of a more efficient and consolidated computer support structure for the headquarters. At the same time he created a field operating agency to be the Directorate of Information Management (DOIM) for HQDA and transferred the appropriate functions from the Management Support Services (MSS) to the new organization. Finally, in an attempt to more sharply define OAA's functional responsibilities, he made the AA responsible for all manpower surveys for all organizations that it

supported and transferred the White House liaison function to the Office of the Chief of Legislative Liaison.

g. In FY 1994 the Environmental Support Group (also referred to as the Agent Orange Persian Gulf War Syndrome office) located at Fort Belvoir was moved from the OAA to the U.S. Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM).

h. In October 1994 Secretary of the Army Togo West moved two executive agent functions from the OAA to the Military District of Washington (MDW). Because both functions, the Mexican-American Defense Commission and the Latin American Defense Commission, were situated on Fort McNair—the location of Headquarters, MDW—administrative convenience appears to have been the determining factor in the change.

i. In FY 1996 the U.S. Army Publications and Printing Command was transferred to the OAA from the U.S. Army Information Systems Command, which was being disestablished. Until 1986 publications and printing had been a TAG function.

j. In FY 1997 a report by a HQDA Redesign Task Force resulted in a small 10 percent reduction of personnel in the OAA and its FOAs. In addition, the report recommended and HQDA realigned executive agent support for the U.S. Military Postal Service Agency from Army Personnel Command to the OAA. Until 1986 TAG had supplied executive agent support for this agency.

k. On 1 January 1997 the Secretary of the Army transferred the Single Agency Manager for Pentagon Information Technology Services from U.S. Army Signal Command, a subordinate element of U.S. Forces Command, to HQDA as a Joint and Department of Defense activity of the OAA. The plan was to create a joint agency for Pentagon visual information services, but difficulties arose with the other services. A year later the Secretary removed the U.S. Army Visual Information Center (USAVIC) from under the Single Agency Manager and placed it under the OAA. It reported directly to the Deputy AA. In 1996 the direct reports to the AASA were the Dir HRMD, Dir EEO, Dir Policy & Plans and the Chaplin. All others reported to the DAASA.

l. The Network Infrastructure Services Agency, a former TAG Center and Information Systems Command element, joined the OAA in FY 1998. The agency was responsible for wiring and cabling in the Pentagon—all the “behind the wall” work associated with computers.

m. During the summer and fall of 2001, Secretary of the Army Thomas E. White’s Realignment Task Force (RTF) examined all HQDA functions with the objective of eliminating duplication and streamlining staff operations by integrating the Army Secretariat and Staff to the extent feasible by law. In the process White hoped to achieve substantial efficiencies in both time and

resources. By the end of fiscal year 2002, following plans developed by the RTF and approved by the Secretary, the OAA had transferred the Civilian Personnel Management Intelligence System (CPMIS) mission to the U.S. Army Intelligence Center at Fort Huachuca; had shifted the accounting function for the Defense Telecommunication Service-Washington (DTS-W) to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service; had increased the contractor mix at DTS-W, the Network Infrastructure Support Agency-Pentagon (NISA-P), and the Defense Contracting Command-Washington (DCC-A); and had outsourced the Self Service Supply Centers, the Military Personnel Service Center (MPSC), and the U.S. Army Publishing Agency warehousing function. In addition OAA transferred the Executive Correspondence Control and the Correspondence Analysis and Processing functions to the Director of the Army Staff. This move permitted the centralization of those functions, which had been divided between the Army Staff and the Army Secretariat. Subsequently, it transferred the Pentagon Carpentry Shop to OSD. The effort to transfer the Army Executive Dining Facility to OSD was blocked when OSD decided not to consolidate the dining facilities. However, the OSD and service executive dining facilities negotiated memoranda of understanding to prevent overlap and to ensure that there was no duplication of functions.

n. Following the RTF review, the Administrative Assistant reorganized his office along functional lines. He grouped all the activities into three areas, referred to as "pillars," each under a deputy: the Services and Operations Agency; the Resources and Programs Agency; and the Information Technology Agency. At the top a small office consisting of the AA and a few assistants provided guidance. The three pillar organization went into effect in October 2003 when the deputies received operational control of the entities in their areas. The new structure became official in October 2004.

o. On 1 March 2004, the OAA received operational control of the U.S. Army Priority Air Transport Command (USAPATC), formerly known as U.S. Army Operational Support Airlift. USAPATC is a good example of how the Army leadership may use OAA as a holding agency while it decides the best location for a function. In 1991 it was assigned to the Military District of Washington (MDW) and provided air transport for senior Active Army leadership. The National Guard Bureau (NGB) maintained a similar agency to provide the same service for its senior officers. The Secretary of the Army decided to consolidate the two agencies to obtain cost and manpower savings and the NGB agreed to sponsor the combined organization. Eventually, NGB found the expense of ferrying both Active and Reserve Component leaders too financially onerous and requested relief, which led to the agency's transfer to OAA.

p. Two additional FOAs joined the OAA in delayed transfers triggered by the RTF. The Institute of Heraldry, which provides heraldic services to the armed forces and other governmental agencies, including the Executive Office of the President, joined in October 2004. The OAA received operational control of the

Records Management and Declassification Agency (RMDA), another former TAG Center FOA, beginning 1 October 2005. Both were originally part of the TAG Center. Around this 2004 time, the Agent Orange Persian Gulf War syndrome office transferred back to OAA and in to RMDA.

r. Effective 1 September 2005, U.S. Army Priority Air Transport Detachment, together with its sub-elements, the Pacific Flight Detachment and the European Regional Flight Detachment were removed from the OAA's U.S. Army Services and Operations Agency and realigned under the operational and administrative control of MDW. OAA retained, by direction of the Secretary, the authority to validate, schedule and provide policy oversight of the administrative use of USAPAT aircraft and designation of those assets as Service Secretary Controlled Aircraft (SSCA).

s. In 2006 DOD established the Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Organization and designated the Secretary of the Army as the DOD executive agent for it. In turn, the secretary assigned this responsibility to the AA. Support provided by the OAA included the management of civilian and military personnel programs; providing an operating budget; managing administrative functions; legal support; the creation, maintenance, and disposition of documents.

t. The internal review function was transferred from OAA to the Office, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management and Comptroller) on 1 Oct 2006.

u. In March 2007, the U.S. Army Center of Military History (CMH) moved from under the auspices of the Director of the Army Staff to the OAA. At the same time the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Installations and Environment received operational control of the National Museum of the U.S. Army project. These changes evolved from a series of Army headquarters reorganization studies completed during the winter of 2005–06 with the aim of streamlining the Army Staff and the Secretariat and making their component offices leaner and more tightly focused organizations. The addition of CMH added a fourth pillar to the OAA's functions-based organizational concept. That same year CMH assumed supervision of museums on Forces Command installations.

v. In October 2007, the Services and Operations Agency was redesignated as the U.S. Army Headquarters Services (AHS), a field operating agency under the OAA.

w. The Pentagon Library and Conference Center was transferred to OSD on 1 Oct 2007. The employees were not transferred until 6 Jan 2008 so as to protect them from being negatively affected by the National Security Personnel System pay pool process. Pentagon US Postal responsibilities also transferred to OSD around same time.

x. In 2010, the Civilian Aides to the Secretary of the Army Program Office was realigned under the AA from the central office of the Secretary. The AA would now exercise authority, direction and control over all functions and personnel of the CASA Program Office while keeping the Secretary of the Army fully informed on a recurring basis.

y. In 2010, pursuant to DOD Directive 5101.1 (DOD Executive Agent), the Secretary of the Army designated the AA as the Army's focal point to coordinate all matters regarding the establishment of new, the identification of existing, and the control and evaluation of DOD executive agent responsibilities and support arrangements assigned to the Secretary of the Army. The OAA also was directed to maintain a list of the Secretary's assigned DOD executive agent responsibilities, functions and authorities.

z. In 2011, the Secretary of the Army recognized that having decentralized control over Army conferences led to inconsistent implementation. Therefore, he tasked the AA to provide centralized management of the Army conference program and expanded its oversight from a HQDA-centric focus to an Army-wide mission. This decision was implemented by publication of Army Directive 2011-20, which provided thorough guidance for hosting and attending conferences. Continued emphasis by OSD on managing conference matters led, in October 2012, to the "conference team," formerly part of the Special Programs Office, becoming the Army Conference Management Directorate, with an increase in personnel and an expansion of responsibilities.

aa. In 2012 the Security and Safety Directorate in AHS was redesignated the Directorate of Mission Assurance in support of the emerging Army Protection Program. That same year the AA signed a memorandum designating the directorate as the Office of Primary Responsibility to implement the HQDA Protection Program.

bb. In March 2012 ITA completed a major realignment. To improve customer satisfaction, the agency streamlined communications, centralized functions, and improved processes and collaboration by reorganizing from 10 directorates to 6 functional directorates. The organizational and operational changes were designed to create an efficient and flexible organization that facilitates the delivery of an unparalleled customer experience and positions the agency for continuous improvement in a rapidly changing environment.

cc. In May 2012, DOD directed each of the services to create a civil liberties program. In response an Army Civil Liberties Program was established to draft Army policy; develop training mechanisms for senior leadership, managers/supervisors, and the workforce; establish complaint procedures, and report quarterly to the Defense Privacy and Civil Liberties Division. The Deputy AA was

designated as the Army Chief Civil Liberties Officer and in March 2013 an Army Civil Liberties Point of Contact was named to draft policies and procedures.

dd. In 2013, under pressure from Congress to address the problem of missing and incomplete official Army records from operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Secretary of the Army directed CMH to collect and assess for completeness the operational records of these wars. Although maintenance of operational records is not a CMH function, the office had earlier determined that there was an inadequate effort by units to retain valuable operational records, and it had encouraged field historians and military history detachments to collect these records and forward them to CMH. By 2013 CMH had accumulated nearly seventy terabytes of records, and thus held a baseline collection. The decision was made to use that baseline to build an Army operational records collection. The secretary directed all Army Commands, Army Service Component Commands and Direct Reporting Units to consolidate a copy of all respective subordinate unit records for Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn, and transfer them, regardless of medium, to CMH.

3. Conclusion.

a. The last thirty years have witnessed a general stability in the functional responsibilities of the OAA, with the notable exception of the transfer of CMH from the Army Staff to the Secretariat. At the same time, however, an almost explosive growth in the number of the OAA's employees and subordinate agencies has occurred. (While the OAA has seen a significant growth in its personnel strength, one qualification is in order. One of the practices that the OAA consistently followed with entities that were transferred to it was to consolidate fragmented offices, streamline them, and then contract out functions. Because there was no method in place to measure full time equivalent contractor man years, the full extent of the OAA's domain is unclear.)

b. The underlying cause of this apparent paradox was a fundamental change in the Department of the Army's basic authorizing legislation. The Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986 not only vastly increased the size of the Army Secretariat, to which the OAA had always provided base operations support, but also led the Army leadership to disestablish the TAG, which in turn forced the AA to assume support responsibilities for the Army Staff and its FOAs previously provided by the TAG. As computers became more sophisticated and provided more services, they also required a more complex support structure. OAA's responsibilities in this area evolved as the technology did from its traditional management support services, first codified by Secretary Stone in 1993.

c. At the same time the Army Secretariat and the Army Staff were under almost constant pressure to downsize and become more efficient. This led to continuous efforts to adopt efficient methods of operating pioneered in the private sector. One of these called for organizations to focus on their core missions and

cut extraneous agencies. Many of these divested offices performed essential functions for the Army; they could not be abolished. The OAA became a favored holding area for them. None of the major reports on Army reorganization prepared during this period have focused on how such transfers would make the OAA a more efficient and effective agency. They concentrated instead on the efficiencies gained by the losing organizations. Some of these agencies involved, such as USAPAT (US Army Priority Airlift Transport detachment) when they were under NGB, OAA or now in MDW., remained only a short time and then moved on. But others stayed. Most were former TAG or computer Information Systems Command organizations. Although the way they accumulated suggests blind chance, the fact that those that remained in the OAA could fit into three traditional AA functional areas—the post-RTF “three pillars” concept of services and operations, resources and programs, and information technology—indicates a measure of intelligent design on the part of the OAA leadership over a long span of years. The Center of Military History was a significant exception to this trend. The need to create a fourth “pillar” in the OAA organizational concept after its transfer suggests that removing CMH from the Army Staff, rather than making the OAA more efficient or augmenting the mission performance of OAA, was the primary reason for the move.

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