

**QUIET SERVICE: A HISTORY OF THE FUNCTIONS OF THE
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY OF
THE ARMY
1789-1988**



Terrence J. Gough
Chief, Staff Support Branch, Research and Analysis Division,
U.S. Army Center of Military History

Ask any serious student of twentieth-century American history the names of the men who ran the War Department during the two world wars, and the response will be immediate: Newton D. Baker and Henry L. Stimson. But how many historians—even military specialists -- know who managed the enormous administrative load with which these tremendously busy wartime secretaries had to deal? How many, for that matter, can identify even the position title of the person responsible for ensuring that the secretary's office did not bog down helplessly in administrative detail? The answer to these questions -- "Very, very few" -- is indicative of a general neglect of federal administrative history. But the answer also reflects a tradition of unobtrusive, dedicated service on the part of those who held the office of what is today known as Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army.

The Continental Congress, in providing on 17 January 1782 for the administration of the War Department under the Articles of Confederation, authorized the Secretary at War to appoint an assistant, a secretary, and two clerks. This authorization was designed to meet Secretary at War Benjamin Lincoln's request for an assistant secretary, a secretary to serve as chief clerk, and two other clerks. The empowering resolution mandated that when the Secretary at War was absent, his Assistant was to transact all departmental business "as shall be assigned to him by the said Secretary." In effect, the Assistant was an Assistant Secretary at War, and the secretary to the Secretary at War held a position approximately equivalent to that of a chief clerk.¹

A modest title as used today; "clerk" historically carried a weightier connotation. Rooted in Latin, the word in Old English referred to a cleric. Since the clergy in the Middle Ages were among the very few who could read and write, they were virtually the sole practitioners of scholarship. "Clerk" thus became almost synonymous with "scholar," particularly in the sense of someone who by virtue of his learning was able to conduct written interchanges and keep accounts. By the days of the early American republic, centuries later, the position of supervisory, or chief, clerk still bore considerable responsibility for the management of daily administrative affairs.²

When on 7 August 1789 the First Congress established the Department of War under the Constitution, the legislators provided specifically for only two positions within the department. The "principal officer," the "Secretary for the Department of War," would appoint "an inferior officer . . . to be employed . . . as he shall deem proper." This second officer would "be called the Chief Clerk in the Department of War". The legislation stipulated that whenever the Secretary "shall be removed from office by the President of the United States, or in any other case of vacancy," the Chief Clerk would "have the charge and custody of all records, books and papers, appertaining to the said department."³

Quickly the volume of records, books, and papers grew as the small War

Department staff tackled the various duties that Congress placed on the Secretary of War. To meet challenges of Indian uprisings and a tax revolt, the Secretary had to superintend the raising, equipping, and maintaining of an effective fighting force. In addition to other responsibilities in Indian affairs, he was involved in matters of supply, personnel, pay, recruiting, and intelligence. He had to deal with a heavy load of patronage requests from former officers who wanted jobs in the administration of President George Washington. Since the U.S. Navy until 1798 was too tiny to warrant a separate department, the Secretary of War also shouldered the administration of the sister service. It was the Chief Clerk's job to keep in order all the papers and details that these myriad functions generated. A busy cabinet officer in this period relied heavily on his chief clerk to bring to bear administrative skills that were not in large supply in the mostly agrarian society of the late eighteenth century.⁴

If the Secretary of War was away from Washington, he could continue to direct affairs through correspondence with his Chief Clerk. For example, on at least two occasions, from August to October 1809 and from August to September 1810, Secretary William Eustis found it necessary to be out of the city for an extended period. During these times the Chief Clerk, John Smith, mailed important incoming letters to Eustis, who directed Smith to write replies and take various other substantive actions.⁵

When a cabinet Officer's position fell vacant, the President normally appointed another cabinet member to act in the departed man's place as an additional duty. A change in that procedure came in 1809, when for the first time the War Department's administrative officer became Acting Secretary of War. On 17 February of that year, President Thomas Jefferson appointed Chief Clerk Smith to succeed, ad interim, departing Secretary Henry Dearborn until the advent of the Madison Administration and the new Secretary, Eustis, the next month. Seven years later, President James Madison designated Chief Clerk George Graham as Acting Secretary when William H. Crawford moved from the Secretary of War's portfolio to that of Secretary of State. Graham served in the temporary position from October 1816 to October 1817, while President James Monroe conducted the search for a new Secretary that culminated with the appointment of John C. Calhoun. Upon the resignation of Secretary of War John H. Eaton in the first administration of Andrew Jackson, the President on 20 June 1831 named Chief Clerk Philip G. Randolph as Secretary ad interim. Randolph held the position for a month, during which time a permanent successor to him as Chief Clerk took office. On 12 September 1841, after the resignation of Secretary of War John Bell, President John Tyler appointed Chief Clerk Albert M. Lea as Acting Secretary. Lea headed the department until John C. Spencer received the permanent assignment on 12 October 1841. For one day, 23-24 July 1850, during the administration of President Millard Fillmore, Chief Clerk Samuel J. Anderson served as Acting Secretary between the secretaryship of George W. Crawford and

the ad interim tenure of Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott. Anderson was the last Chief Clerk to hold the higher position.⁶

That several presidents entrusted an acting cabinet post to the department's Chief Clerk suggests the importance of the latter officer. Certainly, former Secretary of War John Armstrong's rather dyspeptic description of the position as that of "a mere quill driver" was not only ungenerous but also inaccurate. Armstrong, in fact, offered this appraisal to a man whose future service as Chief Clerk would strongly contradict such a negative assessment. Christopher Van Deventer, having consulted Armstrong about the Chief Clerk's position, nevertheless accepted Secretary Calhoun's proffer of it in December 1817. Van Deventer went on to become, in the judgment of the most thorough student of Calhoun's secretaryship, "one of the Secretary's closest confidants and also . . . one of his Military advisors."⁷

By Calhoun's time, the volume of business in the Secretary's office was sufficient for the employment of about twenty clerks, all of them under Van Deventer's immediate direction. Most of these men (the government customarily did not employ women as office workers until later in the nineteenth century) worked on subject matter in which they had developed expertise through experience. The senior clerks, particularly, became versed in specialized laws, regulations, and precedents related to War Department affairs. Daily office routine involved correspondence, record keeping, and handling accounts and claims of former soldiers.⁸

The gradual, modest enlargement of the Secretary's staff could not keep pace with all the matters of substantive detail that his responsibilities encompassed. Between 1812 and mid-century, Congress created various subordinate units within the War Department to relieve the Secretary's office of the burden of specific functions. Congressionally mandated entities included the Adjutant General's Department, the Ordnance Department, the Quartermaster's Department, the Pay Department, and the Engineer Department. The War Department itself established an Office of Indian Affairs in 1824 and, within the Secretary's office, a Commissioner of Pensions in 1833. In 1849, powers theretofore exercised by the Secretary over the commissioners of Indian affairs and pensions passed to the newly created Department of the Interior. These changes reduced the range of responsibilities of the Chief Clerk. The Civil War, which furthered this trend, saw the establishment of the office of the Chief Signal Officer, the Bureau of Military Justice (forerunner of the Judge Advocate General's Department), the office of the Commissary General of Prisoners, the Provost Marshal General's Bureau, and the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands. Such functional decentralization allowed the Office of the Secretary to concentrate on matters of broad policy and general administration.⁹

To the Chief Clerk fell the essential but often unheralded task of general

administration. All manner of things came under this rubric. When Congress in 1864 required of cabinet department heads written requisitions for all printing, binding, and procurement of blank books from the Superintendent of Public Documents, it became Chief Clerk John Potts's duty to carry out the requirement. Concern for fire safety the next year dictated that he purchase fenders for War Department fireplaces and leather hose for fire plugs. A decade later, in his capacity as superintendent of the War Department building, Chief Clerk Henry T. Crosby directed that no work order for the building be made without first being countersigned by him. By the authorization of Secretary of War William W. Belknap, Crosby also in 1875 assumed charge of the compilation of the records, both Union and Confederate, of the War of the Rebellion.¹⁰

Belknap's tenure demonstrates how the Secretary could use the Chief Clerk as a medium to exert his authority over subordinates throughout the department. In November 1870, Belknap directed that as of the end of that year, all officers under his immediate direction were to cease keeping record books and were to turn over all such books to Chief Clerk Potts. Crosby, who succeeded Potts in July 1872, was responsible for dunning Department bureau chiefs for overdue reports to Congress. Apparently disturbed by some earlier incident, the Secretary in April 1875 forbade War Department employees from giving out any information in regard to payment of settlements due to individuals, except upon the direction of him or Crosby.¹¹

Belknap made clear that in his temporary absence, the Chief Clerk enjoyed much of the power, if not the title, of Acting Secretary of War. In March 1873, Belknap reiterated to the bureau chiefs an order that they send to Crosby all papers for the Secretary's action; he specified that this directive applied when he was temporarily absent. That July he directed that since all papers submitted to his office went through Crosby or, in that official's absence, the Acting Chief Clerk, orders given by Crosby or his substitute would be considered official. Within a year, Congress gave this directive the sanction of law. An act of 4 March 1874 provided that "when, from illness or other cause, the Secretary of War is temporarily absent from the War Department, he may authorize the chief clerk of the Department to sign requisitions upon the Treasury Department, and other papers requiring the signature of said Secretary; the same, when signed by the chief clerk during such temporary absence, to be of the same force and effect as if signed by the Secretary of War himself." Crosby had the authority to designate one of his subordinates as Acting Chief Clerk and to empower him to issue orders in the Secretary's name.¹²

Subsequent Secretaries demonstrated in various ways their reliance on the Chief Clerk. George W. McCrary, Secretary under President Rutherford B. Hayes, reserved one hour each day for business with Crosby (whose service of nearly ten years spanned six secretaryships). When Secretary Redfield Proctor assumed office in 1889, he relocated the office of Chief Clerk John Tweedale next to his

own. Proctor's biographer notes that "unlike the Secretary, the chief clerk did not change with the political administrations and hence represented continuity with the past and a valuable source of knowledge about the nuts and bolts of departmental matters." Over almost seventeen years, Tweedale served seven Secretaries of War.¹³

Until near the end of the nineteenth century, the Chief Clerk carried out all his duties as a political appointee who served at the pleasure of the Secretary of War. Of the twenty-three Chief Clerks up to November 1861, only John Stagg, Jr. (1790-97), John Smith (1805-11), Daniel Parker (1812-14, 1841- 46), Christopher Van Deventer (1817-27), and Archibald Campbell (1846-49, 1853-57), had tenures of more than four years. Beginning with John Potts during the Civil War, there were only three Chief Clerks over the next thirty-seven years even though the position did not come under the competitive civil service until May 1896. The longevity in the position of Potts (1861- 72), Crosby (1872-82), and Tweedale (1882-99) demonstrates how important to the Secretary the Chief Clerk's experience and expertise had become.¹⁴

What was true of the Secretaries also seems to have been true of the Assistant Secretaries. Three Assistant Secretary positions had been established in 1861-62 to cope with the administrative avalanche of the Civil War. A return to normality brought the abolition of these Assistant Secretaryships in 1866, but by 1890 the volume of War Department business had increased enough to warrant the reestablishment of one assistant secretary's position. This official was to "perform such duties . . . as shall be prescribed by the Secretary or may be required by law." Chief Clerk John C. Scofield, who began his duties in March 1899, so gained the confidence of Assistant Secretary George D. Meiklejohn that by November of that year Scofield was opening and making the initial reply to confidential and personal correspondence addressed to Meiklejohn.¹⁵

In Scofield's official papers there appears a description of the duties of the Chief Clerk. Undated but written (apparently by Scofield) about 1899, this document includes a statement of the Secretary's authority, as provided in the act of 1874, to have the Chief Clerk sign official documents in his absence. The paper also declares that the Chief Clerk has charge of all the clerks and other employees in the office of the Secretary of War and is the custodian of and is responsible for the safe keeping of all the books, papers, and property in the Department. He receives all communications from the several bureaus of the War Department addressed to the Secretary of War and which may require his action; receives and distributes the official mail and is the medium of communication between the Secretary of War and the officers of the Department and all other persons.

Being the "medium of communication" gave Scofield influence. It is apparent from his correspondence, for example, that he was able to aid officers in obtaining assignments that they desired.¹⁶

Within the Office of the Secretary of War, the Chief Clerk's responsibility for "all the clerks and other employees" was one that he always had held. His charge in this area ran the gamut from assignment, regulation, pay, and promotion to grievances, transfer, and dismissal. An act of 29 August 1890 authorized and directed him to administer oaths of office to employees upon their appointment or promotion. With the Civil Service Act of 1883 came new personnel procedures that increased considerably the Chief Clerk's work. Relief came on 22 November 1898, when Assistant Secretary of War Meiklejohn established under his own aegis the Appointment Division. Headed by the Appointment Clerk under the Chief Clerk's supervision, the new entity was to take care of all matters that affected the Department's civilian personnel. Activities of the Appointment Division included handling all relevant official mail; receiving all position applications, both written and oral; keeping eligibility registers for the employment of the department's non-civil service labor force; preparing necessary papers pertaining to employment actions; keeping records of employees' official status and personal history; preparing actions on all cases of leave of absence in the Secretary's office and those in the bureaus requiring the Secretary's action; corresponding with the Civil Service Commission, including reporting changes in employees' status; preparing quarterly reports of changes in the roster of departmental employees for the information of the Auditor of the War Department; preparing payrolls for the Office of the Secretary; preparing annual estimates of appropriations for the office's employees; and compiling the War Department Register and that part of the Official Register of the United States covering the War Department.¹⁷

Similarly, by the 1880s the Chief Clerk oversaw the work of a Disbursing Division, which a disbursing clerk supervised. From the early part of the nineteenth century, the disbursing agent or clerk had issued pay to civilian employees. He also was responsible for making payments from the various appropriations intended for the maintenance of the civil establishment of the War Department, the Disbursing Division's sole function after the Appointment Division took over payrolls. In the late nineteenth century, the items that these annual appropriations covered included office supplies, building rents, furniture, repairs, travel expenses of Quartermaster agents, compilation and publication of The Official Records of the War of the Rebellion, purchase and engraving of Medals of Honor, marking of graves of Union and Confederate soldiers, and maintenance of national military battlefield parks.¹⁸

In May 1900, Secretary of War Elihu Root issued orders listing the "classes of business" for which the Secretary, the Assistant Secretary, and the Chief Clerk individually were responsible. Besides the supervision of personnel, disbursement, and mail, the Chief Clerk had charge of a variety of other matters "under the immediate direction of the Secretary and the Assistant Secretary of War." Army and War Department job printing and advertising, and War Department printing and binding, fell in his bailiwick. He was responsible for

requisitions for, and routine business pertaining to, militia supplies and supplies for War Department offices. He supervised the answering of routine calls for information from Department records and saw to the publication of decisions and precedents. Supervision of "inventory and inspection" reports was part of his domain. In regard to the Office of the Secretary's duties in the administration of customs and other civil affairs in Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippine Islands, the Chief Clerk was responsible for routine matters of auditing and accounting, for printing and binding, and for calls for publications and correspondence on ordinary and routine matters. Finally, he handled "all other matters of a purely routine character not involving questions of policy nor establishing precedents, and not requiring the personal action of the Secretary of War or the Assistant Secretary of War under the foregoing assignments."¹⁹

Secretary Root, in January 1902, designated the Chief Clerk as "the head of the office of the Secretary of War." In that capacity he was "charged with the administrative action required by law to be taken in connection with the settlement of disbursing officers' accounts that do not relate to the different staff corps of the Army."²⁰

During the new century's first decade and beyond, Chief Clerk Scofield devoted a good deal of time to the supervision of U.S. Government exhibits, a duty that apparently came under the heading of "other matters of a purely routine character." He served as the War Department's representative on the U.S. Government Board of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, held in St. Louis from May to December 1904 to commemorate the centennial of the purchase of the Louisiana Territory from France. Scofield was deeply involved in the expenditures for, and staffing and preparation of, War Department exhibits for the exposition. From design and construction through shipment and installation, the Chief Clerk monitored closely the exhibits' progress. Almost on the heels of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition came the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition in Portland, Oregon, from June to October 1905. Again, Scofield was the War Department's representative on the government's exposition board. From October 1906 to December 1908 he worked with the Isthmian Canal Commission on the clearing of land for the Commission's exhibit in Panama. He represented the War Department on the U.S. Government Board for the Jamestown Tercentennial Exposition, held from April to November 1907, and had charge of the Puerto Rican section of the government's exhibit. For the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition in Seattle, June to October 1909, he was the War Department's representative. Scofield was in charge of the entire U.S. Government exhibit at the Insular Fair held in San Juan, Puerto Rico, during December 1911.²¹

More or less continuously immersed in exhibit activities, Scofield nonetheless found time in 1906 and 1907 to serve as a member of a subcommittee of the Keep Commission. Appointed by President Theodore

Roosevelt in June 1905, this five-member panel of subcabinet officials (none of them from the War Department) was charged with recommending administrative improvements in the federal government. Scofield's subgroup dealt with personnel issues, including salaries, promotions, reductions, dismissals, hours of labor, and sick and personal leave. Previously, Congress had taken the initiative in seeking changes in governmental administration. But the legislature's aim had been primarily to achieve economies in individual agencies. The Keep Commission was the first indication that the executive would assume the lead in administrative improvements, and that reformers would take a broader view of administration beyond the particular practices of individual agencies. Although the commission moved only tentatively toward this wider scope, it "marks the cusp," in one commentator's evaluation, "between traditional, congressional approaches to administrative reform and modern, presidential approaches."²²

This period also saw the first alteration in the Chief Clerk's title, a sign of the evolution of the term "clerk" toward its more narrow modern meaning. An act of 22 May 1908 designated the War Department's second-oldest civilian position as that of "assistant and chief clerk." The term "assistant," in contemporary parlance, more accurately reflected the considerable responsibilities that the position entailed.²³

In May 1913, Secretary of War Lindley M. Garrison in the newly installed administration of President Woodrow Wilson issued orders that withdrew some of the Assistant and Chief Clerk's duties and added others. Gone were the responsibilities of 1900 relating to militia supply and insular affairs. Additional duties under the new mandate included supervision of the War Department telephone and telegraph service and authentication of bureau chiefs' signatures (formerly a function of the Assistant Secretary). Whereas Secretary Root's charge had specified that the Chief Clerk's direct responsibilities for personnel and civil service matters pertained only to "clerical personnel of the office of the Secretary of War," Garrison's orders added supervision of "appointments, promotions, and transfers in the civil service and other matters affecting the civil force of the War Department, the Army departments at large, or field service of the War Department." These broader responsibilities previously had been the province of the Assistant Secretary, with the Assistant and Chief Clerk overseeing them under his direction. Now the Assistant and Chief Clerk were responsible directly to the Secretary for their performance.²⁴

Thus had the realm of the Assistant and Chief Clerk been shaped when on 9 March 1916 Newton D. Baker arrived at the War Department to be sworn in as Secretary of War. Ready with typewritten oath forms was one of Scofield's clerks, J.B. Randolph. Ever since his enlistment as a soldier during the Civil War, Randolph had worked at the Department. "No one," a biographer of Baker remarks, "had taken more steps on the tiled floors in the high corridors of the old

State, War, and Navy Building than Mr. Randolph."²⁵ With the aid of the rich institutional memory and administrative experience of Randolph, his colleagues, and their supervisor, John Scofield, Secretary Baker led the Department through the first of the world wars.

After more than thirty years' service as Assistant and Chief Clerk -- a tenure unequaled before or since--Scofield was succeeded in January 1931 by John W. Martyn. In announcing the appointment, Secretary of War Patrick J. Hurley described Martyn's position as that of "Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of War." Hurley declared that "in addition to other responsibilities the Administrative Assistant is charged with the duties heretofore assigned to the Assistant and Chief Clerk." The Secretary did not define the "other responsibilities."²⁶

Officially eliminated, the hoary title of Chief Clerk persisted in the Department's Congressional relations. Not until 1942 did the Congressional Directory change the title of Martyn's subordinate from Assistant Chief Clerk to Assistant Administrative Assistant. After billing Martyn under his position's new title for a couple of years, the Directory began listing him as Administrative Assistant and Chief Clerk. Both the Directory and the United States Government Organization Manual continued using this appellation until 1952. A student of the history of the Chief Clerk's office speculates that "the traditional title may have been reassuring to Congressmen, who had been used to dealing with chief clerks in all of the departments as major sources of information about departmental affairs."²⁷

With the beginning of World War II, the volume of business in the Office of the Secretary increased enormously. Directly after taking the oath as Secretary on 9 July 1940, Henry L. Stimson told John Martyn that he did not want to become involved in detail. Having served a previous tour as Secretary of War from 1911 to 1913, and as Secretary of State from 1929 to 1933, Stimson was a seasoned administrator who believed in delegating authority and saving his energies for the larger problems. Martyn, charged with the routing of all official mail within the office, consequently sent as much as possible to the Secretary's assistants.²⁸

As the office's chief executive officer, Martyn supervised several operating elements that performed the functions for which the Administrative Assistant had become responsible over the years. The Coordination and Records Division kept the central files of the Office of the Secretary and recorded the flow of policy papers in the office. Internal personnel matters of the Secretary's office were the responsibility of the Office of the Personnel Manager. Civilian employees of the War Department in Washington received first-aid treatment from the Civilian Medical Division. Major functions of the Administrative Assistant's office were the expenditure of contingent funds and the procurement of general supplies and services for the Department. The Procurement and Accounting Division performed these duties, besides controlling departmental forms and accounting methods and

overseeing printing done for the Department by the Government Printing Office, The Adjutant General's Office, and contract printers.

The largest area of responsibility for the Administrative Assistant was the formulation, through the Civilian Personnel Division in the Secretary's office, of overall policies and procedures relating to the Department's civilian employees. As early as October 1939, the Civilian Personnel Division had begun cooperating with the General Staff on mobilization plans for the number and types of civilian employees that the Department would need in wartime. The departmental reorganization of March 1942 shifted many of the division's functions to the three major commands -- Army Ground Forces, Services of Supply (later Army Service Forces), and Army Air Forces. But the division retained general policy supervision over the recruiting, training, classification, promotion, transfer, and administration of all civilian employees in Department headquarters and in field establishments and installations. In addition to heading the Civilian Personnel Division, the civilian Director of Personnel and Training served as Chairman of the Secretary of War's Council on Civilian Personnel, represented the War Department on the interdepartmental Council of Personnel Administration, and directed the work of the War Department Civilian Personnel Procedures Committee.²⁹

With the abolition of the Army Service Forces after the war, the Administrative Assistant regained that agency's civilian personnel functions. These functions included preliminary training of civilian employees and labor relations.³⁰

In July 1947 the National Security Act created the National Military Establishment, consisting of the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Departments of the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force. The act designated the Department of War as the Department of the Army, changed the Secretary's title accordingly, and left changes in the titles of other officers in the Department to the determination of the Secretary. Secretary of War Kenneth C. Royall thus became the first Secretary of the Army. He chose to retain for Martyn's position the title of Administrative Assistant, so that Martyn became the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army.³¹

A major change in the functions of the Administrative Assistant came a little more than a year after the beginning of the Korean War. In August 1951, Secretary of the Army Frank Pace, Jr., transferred the Civilian Personnel Division from his immediate office to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs). Apparently, this shift was an effort to achieve maximum wartime efficiency by concentrating all manpower policy in a single office. As of 1957, however, Martyn still supervised "centralized aspects of civilian personnel administration for Headquarters, Department of the Army."³²

The Army regulation of 1957 that thus described the Administrative Assistant's personnel function spelled out the rest of his duties. He acted for the

Secretary "in an extensive variety of day-to-day matters, when consistent with known attitudes of the Secretary, oral delegations, or precedents of long standing." Specifically, he handled policy matters relating to administrative services by and for Headquarters, Department of the Army; supervised the control of general-purpose space in the Washington area; and oversaw operations of the Defense Telephone Service and the Defense Supply Service in Washington. In accordance with policy direction from the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower, Personnel, and Reserve Forces), he administered the Department's civilian personnel security program. As Employment Policy Officer, he was charged with assuring the Department's conformity with federal policy in that area. He also acted for the Secretary on employee grievances that arose within the Department. His traditional supervisory responsibilities for the administration of personnel, correspondence and records, and for general management activities within the Secretary's office remained.³³

A 1961 revision of this regulation sharpened these last responsibilities somewhat by requiring "effective administration . . . including comprehensive management programs" and "coordination of Secretarial level actions." Also, the revision added a requirement that the Administrative Assistant conduct studies and analyses as directed. In 1963 the responsibility for centralized aspects of civilian personnel administration was changed to "employment coordination for the Washington, D.C. Commuting Area," and the references to grievances and the Administrative Assistant's role as Employment Policy Officer were dropped. Two years later, the Administrative Assistant acquired the duty of administering the Department of the Army Committee Management Program. The 1968 revision of the regulation added security as an element of his responsibility for administration of the Secretary's office. In 1972, he became the Department's point of contact for the Federal Executive Boards; he also took on policy responsibility for administration of the Headquarters, Department of the Army Welfare Fund and Recreation Program. Although the 1975 revision did not alter the substance of the Administrative Assistant's duties, it did add the Under Secretary and other principal officials of the Secretary's office as persons to whom he would be responsive and for whom he would act when authorized.³⁴

Additional roles in the 1978 regulation reflected changes in management emphases, the law, and technology. The Administrative Assistant now acted for the Secretary in providing administrative management services to organizations and activities for which the Secretary was administrative or executive agent, and to agencies and activities assigned to receive such support on the basis of efficiency and economy of operations. He administered for the Office of the Secretary, and for the activities that it supported and serviced, matters concerning the Freedom of Information and Privacy acts. He was charged with providing continuity of operations planning for Headquarters, Department of the Army. His responsibility to provide effective administration of the Secretary's office now included

comprehensive resource and general management programs, budgeting, organizational review and coordination, and automatic data processing service support. Further, he provided staff assistance, on a management consultant basis, to key officials on projects involving general management, administration, and management practices, techniques, and methodology; conducted administrative, management, and organizational studies as directed; and provided and monitored management improvement activities, services, and information. (The 1981 regulation deleted the management improvement function.)³⁵

In more than a century, there has been virtually no substantive change in the legislation that authorizes the Administrative Assistant's position. As in 1789, he is appointed by the Secretary; he performs duties that the Secretary considers appropriate; and, when the post of Secretary is vacant, he "has charge and custody of all records, books, and papers of the Department of the Army." As in the act of 1874, the Secretary may authorize him to sign papers in the Secretary's absence, with the Administrative Assistant's signature having the same effect as the Secretary's.³⁶ This legislative continuity suggests the efficacy of the Administrative Assistant's two-hundred-year-old position.

In the 1978 regulation, the Administrative Assistant was described for the first time as a senior career official. The rendering of the description was tardy. By rank within the civil service, the Administrative Assistant long had been a senior official. That only six persons (excluding one interim appointee) have occupied the position in the twentieth century demonstrates that career civil service has been a hallmark of the men who have held the post. John Martyn left the position in 1960, bringing to a close a tenure of twenty-nine years. Three of his successors, James C. Cook (1961-65), John G. Connell, Jr. (1965-79), and Milton H. Hamilton (1980-present) have each served more than the length of a single presidential administration.³⁷

Acting as the Secretary's right hand, the Administrative Assistant and his predecessor, the Chief Clerk, have carried on for two hundred years the often quotidian but nonetheless vital business of an important government department. Theirs has been a service quiet but essential.

NOTES

¹ The Continental Congress in 1776 had established a Board of War and Ordnance, succeeded the following year by a new Board of War. On 7 February 1781 Congress created a War Department to be headed by a Secretary at War--a title with origins in the reign of Charles II of England. Harry M. Ward, The Department of War, 1781-1795 (n.p.: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1962), 2-12.

² "Clerk," Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford: Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1933), 2:492-93; Leonard D. White, The Federalists: A Study in Administrative History, 1789-1801 (New York: Macmillan, 1948), 309.

³ Act of 7 Aug. 1789, 1 Stat. 49.

⁴ Ward, Department of War, 13-188; White, Federalists, 314.

⁵ Letters Received by Chief Clerk of the War Department John Smith from Secretary of War William Eustis, Aug. 1809-Sept. 1810, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, Record Group (RG) 107, National Archives.

⁶ Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1971 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1971), 13-18; Russell F. Weigley, History of the United States Army (New York: Macmillan Co., 1967), 133; Appendix 2, "List of the Chief Clerks of the War Department," Inventory of the Records of the Office of the Secretary of War, RG 107; Robert M. Merryman, A Hero Nonetheless: Albert Miller Lea, 1808-1891 (Lake Mills, Iowa: Graphic Publishing Co., 1983), 89. Madison appointed Eustis on 7 March 1809, but Eustis did not enter upon his duties until 8 April. Similarly, Calhoun received his appointment on 8 October 1817, but did not assume his duties until 10 December. Presumably, Smith and Graham, respectively, continued to perform the duties of Secretary during these two intervening periods. In February 1868, President Andrew Johnson wanted Chief Clerk John Potts to accept appointment as Secretary ad interim as part of Johnson's effort to oust Secretary Edwin M. Stanton. Potts refused. Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 580-81.

⁷ Roger J. Spiller, "John C. Calhoun as Secretary of War, 1817-1825" (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University, 1977), 80-82. In giving his opinion of the Chief Clerk's position, Armstrong had in mind primarily the degree of opportunity that it offered for advancement to a higher post. Daniel Parker, who had been Chief Clerk during Armstrong's secretaryship, January 1813-September 1814, had gone on to become Adjutant and Inspector General of the Army. Armstrong cautioned Van Deventer that such an advancement for a Chief Clerk was "a rare instance." "Considering the strategic position which Van Deventer held in relation to Calhoun and his work as Secretary of War," Spiller notes, "it is surprising that none of Calhoun's biographers have taken much notice of the clerk, or, indeed, used his papers," which are "quite important to an understanding of this period of Calhoun's official life and politics."

⁸ Leonard D. White, The Jeffersonians: A Study in Administrative History. 1801-1829 (New York: Macmillan, 1951), 234; idem, The Jacksonians: A Study in Administrative History. 1829-1861 (New York: Free Press, 1954), 548. On the federal government's employment of women in the nineteenth century, see Cindy Sondik Aron, *Ladies and Gentlemen of the Civil Service: Middle-Class Workers in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁹ Introduction, Inventory, RG 107, National Archives.

¹⁰ War Department Circular, "Printing and Binding Requisitions," 28 Mar. 1864; J.A. Harden to Potts, 4 July 1865; War Department Circular, Crosby, 6 July 1875; and Belknap to Crosby, 3 May 1875, all in Correspondence File, Originals of Old War Department Circulars, 1862-1894, RG 107.

¹¹ Circular, Edmund Schriver, Inspector General, 18 Nov. 1870; Crosby to chiefs of bureau of War Department, 21 Jan. 1873; and War Department Orders, Belknap, 14 Apr. 1875, all in Correspondence File, Originals of Old War Department Circulars, 1862- 1894, RG 107; Appendix 2, Inventory, RG 107.

¹² War Department Circular, Belknap, 26 Mar. 1873; War Department Circular, Belknap, 18 July 1873; and War Department Circular, Crosby, 25 Sept. 1875, all in Correspondence File, Originals of Old War Department Circulars, 1862-1894, RG 107; Act of 4 Mar. 1874, 18 Stat. 19.

¹³ War Department Circular, Crosby, 26 Mar. 1879, Correspondence File, Originals of Old War Department Circulars, 1862-1894, RG 107; Chester Winston Bowie, "Redfield Proctor: A Biography" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1980), 165; Appendix 2, Inventory, RG 107. Until the reestablishment of the position of Assistant Secretary of War in 1890, Proctor usually appointed Lt. Gen. John M. Schofield, the Commanding General of the Army, to head the War Department in Proctor's temporary absence. If Schofield was out of Washington, Proctor customarily chose one of the bureau chiefs to act in the Secretary's stead. Once, however, in July 1889, Proctor named Tweedale to act for him. Some of the bureau chiefs, who apparently had come to expect to take precedence over the Chief Clerk, resented this move. As a result of their "growling," Proctor a week later designated one of them to the temporary post. In relating this incident, Bowie refers to Proctor's temporary appointment of Tweedale a mistake. "Just why he named the chief clerk to be Acting Secretary in the first place is unclear," the biographer states, "but it seems likely that he was distracted by the grave illness of his son, the reason for his absence from the capital in the first place." Bowie,

"Redfield Proctor," 275, n. 11. Bowie's puzzlement reflects the general dearth of knowledge in the historical profession about the inner workings of the War Department over the course of its existence.

¹⁴ Appendix 2, Inventory, RG 107; Edwin H. Steiner, "History of War Department's Chief Clerks/Administrative Assistants to the Secretary of the Army," Department of the Army, September 1978, copy in Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army, 3-4.

¹⁵ Typescript, Troyer S. Anderson, "History of the Office of the Under Secretary of War (1914-1941)," Office of the Under Secretary of War, 1947, copy in Center of Military History; Benjamin P. Thomas and Harold M. Hyman, Stanton: The Life and Times of Lincoln's Secretary of War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 152-53; Bowie, "Redfield Proctor," 181-82; quotation from Act of 5 Mar. 1890 (26 Stat. 17); Scofield to Maj. Tasker H. Bliss, 7 Nov. 1899, Press Copies of Letters and Memorandums Sent by the Chief Clerk of the War Department, Mar. 1899-Dec. 1915, RG 107.

¹⁶ "Department Duties," n.d., file Notes on Organization of the War Department, Working Papers of John Scofield, Chief Clerk of the War Department, 1899-1913, RG 107. For Scofield's influence, see Edmund Barry to Scofield, 8 Sept. 1899, and other correspondence in Letters Received by John C. Scofield, Chief Clerk of the War Department, 1899 and 1902-03, RG 107.

¹⁷ "Records of the Appointment Division, 1812-1913," Inventory, RG 107; Steiner, "History of War Department's Chief Clerks/Administrative Assistants to the Secretary of the Army," 5.

¹⁸ "Records of the Disbursing Office," Inventory, RG 107.

¹⁹ War Department Orders, 8 May 1900, copy in Center of Military History; Guide to the National Archives of the United States (Washington: National Archives and Records Service, General Services Administration, 1974), 413.

²⁰ War Department Circular B, 17 Jan. 1902, copy in Center of Military History.

²¹ "Correspondence Relating to Expositions and Exhibits, 1913-18," "Press Copies of Letters and Endorsements Sent, Aug. 1902-Dec. 1906," "Press Copies

of Letters, Telegrams, and Endorsements Sent, Sept. 1904-May 1906," "Correspondence of John C. Scofield Relating to the Isthmian Canal Commission Exhibit, Oct. 1906-Dec. 1908," "Press Copies of Letters, Telegrams, and Endorsements Sent, Feb. 1906-Mar. 1909," "Press Copies of Letters, Telegrams, and Endorsements Sent, Aug. 1908-Sept. 1910," and "Correspondence, Oct. 1911-May 1912," all in Inventory, RG 107; H. Stephen Helton, comp., Preliminary Inventory of the Records of United States Participation in International Conferences, Commissions, and Expositions (Record Group 43) (Washington: National Archives, 1955), 128-30.

²² Minutes of Meetings, Subcommittee on Personnel, Keep Commission, Working Papers of John Scofield, Chief Clerk of the War Department, RG 107; Oscar Kraines, "The President Versus Congress: The Keep Commission, 1905-1909," Western Political Quarterly 23 (Mar. 1970): 5-54; Leonard D. White, The Republican Era: A Study in Administrative History, 1869-1901 (New York: Macmillan, 1958), 92; Peri E. Arnold, Making the Managerial Presidency: Comprehensive Reorganization Planning, 1905- 1980 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), 24-26 (quotation, 26).

²³ Act of 22 May 1908 (35 Stat. 21 3).

²⁴ War Department Orders, 12 May 1913, copy in file 150D2A, Administrative Precedent File ("Frech File"), Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s-1917, Record Group 94, National Archives; War Department Orders, 8 May 1900.

²⁵ Frederick Palmer, Newton D. Baker: America at War (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1931), 1:1-9.

²⁶ War Department Circular A, 2 Jan. 1931, copy in Center of Military History.

²⁷ Steiner, "History of War Department's Chief Clerks/Administrative Assistants to the Secretary of the Army," 4; Congressional Directory, 77th Congress., 2d ed. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1942), 329; *ibid.*, 78th Cong., 1st sess., 1st ed. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1942), 330.

²⁸ Typescript, Theodore Wyckoff, "The Office of Secretary of War under Henry L. Stimson, 1940-1945," July 1960, copy in Center of Military History, chap. III, pp. 4-5; typescript, R.A. Winnacker, "The Office of the Secretary of War under Henry L. Stimson," n.d., copy in Center of Military History, pa1~t 1, p. 4.

²⁹ Federal Records of World War II, Vol. II, Military Agencies (Washington: National Archives, 1951), 77-80.

³⁰ Andrew Birtle, "Lineage and Functions of the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs), 1941-1988", Staff Support Branch, Center of Military History, 1988, 4-5; Federal Records of World War II, Vol. II, Military Agencies, 266-310.

³¹ National Security Act of 1947, printed in Alice C. Cole et al, eds., The Department of Defense: Documents on Establishment and Organization, 1944-1978 (Washington: Office of the Secretary of Defense, Historical Office, 1978), 40-41; United States Government Manual, 1948 (Revised through June 30, 1948) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1948), 145. As noted above, the Manual rendered the title as Administrative Assistant and Chief Clerk.

³² Birtle, "Office of the Assistant Secretary," 7-8; Army Regulations (AR) No. 10-5, Organization and Functions, Department of the Army, 22 May 1957.

³³ AR 10-5, 22 May 1957.

³⁴ AR 10-5, 5 May 1961; AR 10-5, 2 Jan. 1963; AR 10-5, 19 May 1965; AR 10-5, 31 July 1968; AR 10-5, 6 June 1972; AR 10-5, Apr. 1975.

³⁵ AR 10-5, 1 Nov. 1978; AR 10-5, 1 Dec. 1980.

³⁶ 1G U.S.C. sec. 3018 (Supp. IV 1986).

³⁷ AR 10-5, 1 Nov. 1978; Appendix 2, Inventory, RG 107; Steiner, "History of War Department's Chief Clerks/Administrative Assistants to the Secretary of the Army," Tab A.