

1957

A comparative study of the foreman in industry and the noncommissioned officer in the Air Force as communication and public relations sources.

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

School of Public Relations and Communications

Thesis

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE FOREMAN IN
INDUSTRY AND THE NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER
IN THE AIR FORCE AS COMMUNICATIONS AND
PUBLIC RELATIONS SOURCES

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Science

19587

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Author's Note	1
Introduction	ii
<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE FOREMAN	1
The Widening Gap	3
Management Recognizes The Problem	4
The Problem--How Management Handled It	5
II. THE FOREMAN IN MANAGEMENT	10
The Foreman's Changing Role	10
Problems Of The Foreman	12
The Foreman As A Communicator	16
Direct Communications	18
Believing The Foreman	21
III. THE DYNAMICS OF FOREMANSHIP	25
Selecting The Foreman	25
Training The Foreman	26
Evaluating The Foreman	33
Communicating To The Foreman	36
Characteristics of Methods Employed	37
Foremen and Unions	39
Foreman Prestige	42
Coordinating The Program	44
IV. THE NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER AND HISTORY	46
Prior to World War II	46
The Effects of World War II	51
V. THE NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER AS A LEADER	58
The Changing Picture	58
The NCO vs. The Specialist	60
Training For Leadership	63
Selling Middle Command	66
Evaluating Training	68
The Problem of Middle Command	73

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>Page</u>
VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	75
Selection of Supervisors	76
Training The Supervisor	77
Other Help Given The Supervisor	78
The Treatment Of The Two Supervisors	80
Goals of Both	81
BIBLIOGRAPHY	83

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The information for the first part of this study, dealing with the foreman in civilian industry, was gathered from interviews with public relations men connected with industry in the Boston area, letters, brochures, pamphlets, training manuals and programs of companies that have evidenced a high degree of interest in effectively utilizing their foremen as public relations sources, and from magazine articles and books dealing with the subject of the foreman in management.

Generally speaking, the same method of investigation was used in obtaining information dealing with the Noncommissioned officer in the Air Force. However, there is one important difference that should be noted. Some of the information contained in this thesis comes from the author's own experiences and observations based on nine years of active duty with the United States Air Force.

Boston, Massachusetts
August, 1957

INTRODUCTION

Orders may originate in the office of the chairman of the board's office or come from the headquarters of the commanding general. They may be initiated in the plant manager's office or come from the wing commander's office. Regardless of where they come from they eventually must get down to the people who run a lathe or work on a jet engine. In both industry and in the Air Force orders and commands follow some sort of a chain of command. The final link in that chain, the man who gives the order to the man who is to do the job, is a supervisor, be he called a foreman or a noncommissioned officer.

Being in daily face to face contact with the great mass of people who make up the working, productive force of industry or the Air Force, this supervisor is in a position to do much more than merely transmit orders. Because of familiarity, confidence is born. Because of the authority vested in him, praise or punishment usually is initiated by him. Because he is in some mysterious way still "one of the boys," trust and kinship is felt for him. Because of all of this what he says and how he says it, often has more impact on those directly under his supervision than anything the highly distant "boss" could say. True, he may not have the authority that the "boss" has, but his daily dealings with his men puts what he says and does on a much more personal basis and on a level they can understand.

It is because of this intimate relationship that there is such a great potential for this first line supervisor to act as a communicator and a public relations agent. With the proper information afforded him he understands the goals of the company or the mission of his outfit. Because he comes closer to being "one of us" what he says is more generally believed and understood. Because of his social proximity to the men he, in turn, can feed back to management or higher command what it is the men feel and want.

Public relations has as many definitions as there are practitioners in the field. If it can mean a basis for friendly understanding on the part of the public with whom you are dealing, then this first line supervisor in both industry and the Air Force is potentially the most important person in any internal public relations program. He understands his public and they understand him. Perhaps he is not conscious of his role, or perhaps he doesn't understand fully how to fulfill his role. That is where management, with the aid of the public relations department, could and should step in and help. However, he should be guided, not directed, toward a realization and fulfillment of his role of a communicator and public relations agent.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE FOREMAN

During the days of the Pharaohs the relationship between the foreman, or overseer, and the worker, generally a slave, was treated quite simply. The worker, or slave, did what he was told or else the foreman, or overseer, would lay a whip across his back or possibly drive his spear through him. The solution to any misunderstandings were simple, direct, and often brutal.

During the Middle Ages the lot of the serf was not much improved. He worked for a landlord who in turn had his overseers supervising the serf during his sun-up to sun-down work day. Although some of the life and death authority may have been removed from the overseer, basically his word was law to the serf.

It is very well to be amazed at this archaic relationship. However, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a mere five decades ago, this foreman-worker situation had changed very little in the five thousand years since the Pharaohs ruled. True, the foreman did not possess life or death powers over the worker in a physical sense, but he was the boss and not above knocking the worker around a bit to

impress him with this fact. He hired, fired, and very often decided what the worker should be paid.¹ It still was a direct and simple solution to the problem.

So many ills of modern society are blamed on the industrial revolution that it seems a little unfair to add to the indictments. However, in reviewing the growth of industry in this country it must be noted that industry did not gain momentum until a few years before the Civil War and it wasn't until 1900 that industrial workers in the United States outnumbered farm laborers and farmers.²

In the early days of industry in this country the boss and his men frequently met to talk things over and iron out difficulties. In this environment ideas and information could be exchanged freely. Of course this is not to imply that there were no serious problems. At the turn of the century the management-worker situation was not a healthy relationship. This was the era of the sweatshop. Long hours, unbelievably bad working conditions, low pay, and no employee benefits other than the paycheck prevailed. Human relations as we know it simply did not exist. Under such circumstances, channels of communications had far less significance than they do now.

As technological advancements were made, and competition increased, less and less attention was paid to the worker. He was merely an extension of the machine. As Christy Borth said in his book, True Steel, "until 1900 industry had not progressed far into the conservation of human effort. To waste labor was considered no waste at all."³

In time it became apparent that if one company used machines and another didn't, the one using the machines had a great competitive advantage over the non-mechanized company. However, when both companies used machines, success depended on other factors. Time and motion studies were inaugurated and engineers such as Frederick Taylor attempted to bring the technology that had produced the machines to bear upon the problem of productivity. In light of his background it is not strange that Taylor's answer to the problem of productivity was more efficient motion on the part of the worker, and a "fair days work" for which management would pay the worker a "fair day's pay." The belief at the time was all the worker was interested in was high pay.⁴

The Widening Gap

From the turn of the century until the beginning of World War I labor showed signs of increasing unrest. However, it was World War I with its speeded-up production and the generally unstable psychological atmosphere of the war years, that produced a rash of strikes that management could not ignore. Prior to the 1900's the factory worker had been unorganized and management could afford to ignore him. Then, prior to 1900 the ratio of subservient immigrant workers to the total working force was high and could easily be controlled. By World War I the labor force had swelled in numbers, and was needed badly by this country. Also by World War I the immigrant worker was no longer in the majority.⁵ The working man was raising his voice

in protest and management found that it was not only unprepared to listen, but reluctant to change when they did listen.

Some employers did make an attempt to resolve the problem of worker discontentment but lack of experience in human relations, early post World War I labor shortages, and a militant union expansion made these efforts seem futile. The rapid growth of industry had created a management group whose social distance from their workers was tremendous. Formerly the boss was a skilled technician, working with his men. The growth of huge concerns continually widened the gap between the management group and the worker. As the gap of common experiences and background widened, communication became increasingly difficult. Management soon realized the necessity for more effective communication with the workers. Clear channels of communications needed to be established. This was no easy task.⁶

Management Recognizes The Problem

Whatever else may be said about American top management, never let it be said that they are not a highly intelligent group. True, at times they may be accused of being shortsighted, or perhaps resistant to change, but once they recognized the problem of the dissatisfied worker they attempted to try and solve the problem of communicating with the worker. During the twenties and thirties greater strides were made toward understanding workers than possibly during the preceding history of man working for man. Such studies

as were conducted at the Hawthorne works of Western Electric, produced some surprising results and formalized other beliefs that had either been suspected or guessed at intuitively. It was from the Hawthorne study that Roethlisberger concluded that what the worker wants even more than a fat pay envelope is job satisfaction, acceptance by fellow workers, and to be treated as an individual.⁷ In less than two decades the pendulum had swung from the philosophy of Taylor, who believed that the worker's main desire was money, to Mayo and Roethlisberger who espoused the cause of treating the worker as a human being. Industry didn't have a new problem in human relations, it had always existed, it was just that management finally recognized that the problem did indeed exist and was at last trying to do something about it.

The Problem--How Management Handled It

So far it has appeared that management generally had ignored the worker completely other than giving him his weekly paycheck. This, of course, was not the case. Some of the more notable exceptions to this implication are General Electric and Western Electric which have had certain employment benefit plans for over forty years. DuPont, Esso Standard Oil, and International Harvester, just to mention a few, have had training programs dating back to the twenties.⁸ It is true that these programs developed largely out of a desire to have more efficient production, altruism was not a strong point in management, but these programs are notable in that they

existed in an era when formal training programs were largely unknown.

From 1900 until the present industry was also expanding at a tremendous rate. The old simple relationships no longer existed. The problems of simply managing became staggering. Whereas the foreman had formerly done the hiring, firing, disciplining, and been active in determining how much a worker was to get for a day's work, this arrangement was no longer feasible. So here we have three factors that helped push the first line supervisor, the foreman, into an increasingly less important role:

1. The rise of the unions as bargaining agents for the workers.
2. The ever increasing complexity of industry and its organization.
3. Management's rejection of complete authoritarian control.

In facing up to these situations management took a unilateral course of action. Personnel departments were organized to take care of hiring and firing. Rates for various job positions were decided upon by collective bargaining. Discipline became more standardized by formal methods of employee control. Organizationally determined policies and procedures further tended to replace the supervisor's freedom of judgment and action. Instead of a figure of authority and power the foreman was gradually put in the position of being a figurehead. Although he was still held accountable as being

the head of his particular group of workers, he had little real power to influence the situation in which he found himself.⁹ Through centralized control, the foreman was bypassed. He became the "forgotten man."

I wish to emphasize that this situation of the foreman being the "forgotten man" was not universal, nor was it an unusual situation. The industrial-worker milieu was in a state of flux. The old traditional relationships no longer applied and new relationships were being formulated. Management was searching for new and better ways of satisfying the wants of the workers and for a while the role that the foreman was to play was largely ignored. In many cases management in its effort to communicate, attempted to communicate without really understanding why or what it was that they were trying to communicate. In a sense it had become fashionable to speak of the company's communication program. Programs were set up without realizing that each individual company had its individual problem and that communications programs could not be set up in production-line fashion.¹⁰

It wasn't too long before management realized that there was something missing. Taking stock of the situation revealed that while top management was attempting to communicate, very little real communication was going on. To the average worker the plant superintendent, the president, and other top management is unreal. He finds it difficult to understand, to accept, and to believe that which is not quite real to him. He knows the foreman. He sees him every day. To the worker,

the foreman is the company. The answer of how to communicate with the worker seemed to lie in this temporarily forgotten man--the foreman.¹¹

In order for us to examine how well management has succeeded in effectively utilizing the foreman as an important communicator and internal public relations agent, we will first have to understand the role of the foreman, past, present, and future; what some of his problems are, just what management is doing to communicate with the workers, both with and without the aid of the foreman, and just what the average worker and foremen think of their relationship to management and to each other.

With an understanding of some of the human relations problems, which are certainly public relations problems, we will attempt to analyze what steps are being taken to, (1) Increase management's use of the foreman as a communicator, (2) Improve the foreman's ability to act as a communicator and public relations center.

FOOTNOTES

1. United States Civil Service Commission, Training The Supervisor, (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, Sept. 1956), p. 5.
2. Raymond W. Peters, Communications Within Industry (New York: Harper Bros., 1950), p. 5.
3. Ibid., p. 7.
4. Frederick Taylor, The Principles Of Scientific Management (New York: Harper, 1919), p. 10.
5. Peters, op. cit., p. 9.
6. Peters, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
7. Peters, op. cit., pp. 122-123.
8. United States Civil Service Commission, Training The Supervisor (Washington: Government Printing Office, Sept. 1956), p. 5.
9. John W. Kenney, "Effective Communications Must Communicate" (Speech before the 19th Annual Tennessee Industrial Personnel Conference, Memphis, Tenn., April 5th, 1956).
10. William H. Whyte, "Is Anybody Listening?", Fortune (September, 1950), pp. 78-79.

CHAPTER II

THE FOREMAN IN MANAGEMENT

The Foreman's Changing Role

Management had not been totally ignorant of the foreman during the rapid development of human relations in industry during the hectic era between World War I and World War II, it was just that he had been momentarily by-passed. During the thirties industry saw violent worker unrest in the forms of the picket line, the sit-down strike, the boycott, and the emergence of a strong union front. During this period management's attention was directed toward dealing with the strong new unions and a more or less frantic attempt to communicate with the workers themselves.¹

While the management-worker relationship was gradually being modified over the years, it is also important to note how the function of the foreman had been modified during the same period. First of all, the complexity of modern industry has changed the old personal contact that existed between the foreman and the worker. More and more the foreman is forced to act as a quarterback instead of a figure of power. Instead of giving orders, he often is placed in the position of cajoling the workers to cooperate.

Secondly, the workers are more aware of their strength. Because there is a ready market for his skill he works largely because of the satisfaction he derives from his work. Therefore, the foreman is put in the position of having to stimulate a work climate that will make the worker want to produce.

The third factor is the increase in the number of contacts that a foreman has every day. No longer does he see only his immediate subordinates and superior. He is forced to deal with his subordinates, his superior(s), technicians, staff people, other foremen, and the ever present union.²

Management states categorically that the foreman is part of management. The American Management Association says that "management" means getting things done through the efforts of others.³ Using this as a definition, management came to the conclusion that they had been neglecting to use the foreman in a very important managerial role; that of a communicator of top-level management's thinking and as an internal public relations man. After all, the foreman was the part of management who dealt directly with the worker, so why not use him as a face to face representative of management? However, telling a person that he is part of management and getting him to feel that he is are two entirely different things. Most foremen are not interested in the theoretical question as to whether they are or are not part of management. They are more interested in the actual facts; how much responsibility, how much authority? It is from these actual facts that the conditions under which they must operate are largely determined.⁴

It is interesting to note how foremen feel about their position in management by looking at some statistics derived from a poll taken by Elmo Roper for Esso Standard Oil, a company that is generally regarded as having excellent employee relations. Mr. Roper reports that among the supervisors interviewed in this company's New York office, 46% of the supervisors felt that the company did not think of them as part of management.⁵ Of course this is only one company and so I certainly won't say that such feelings are universal. However, it is significant that such a high percentage of first line supervisors in a progressive company expressed this opinion. From this information I do not think it would be presumptuous to say that many foremen do not consider themselves part of management. The actual numbers involved is not too important. The fact management has not sold the foremen on this basic management concept is indicative of the failure on management's part to communicate.

Problems Of The Foreman

Perhaps one of the major problems of the foreman is the fact that industry has increased at such a dizzy pace since 1900. The statement has been made many times that America is technologically years ahead of its ability to cope psychologically with the problems that have arisen from this amazing technological advance. Whereas in 1900 the United States produced about \$75 billion in goods and services (equated to the value of the 1956 dollar), in 1956 it produced about

\$406 billions.⁶ This growth, coupled with the changes in management-worker relationships already mentioned, created a number of problems for the foreman.

As industry increased in size more supervisors were needed. Often men were promoted to the position of foreman without really having the ability to handle the job. Normally his promotion is based on technical competence plus an estimate of leadership potential. All too often this "estimate" is more in the realm of a wild guess. After he has been promoted, and displayed his shortcomings, there are two courses of action. He can either learn by trial and error, fumbling all the while, or he can receive formal training from management. Actually neither of these ex post facto techniques are desirable. It would be easier on the man being considered for promotion, the men who would serve under him, and on management to initiate his training before he was actually promoted and assumed his new duties.⁷

In order to combat this deficiency of knowing how to handle people, management has taken definite steps. There is more attention given to the selection of men who are to fill the position of foreman. Management, realizing the importance of the foreman in the communications process, knows that trust in the source is a prerequisite to belief. If a man is promoted from the assembly line, which is usually the case, and he is not respected and trusted, promoting him to foreman will not automatically gain him confidence from his fellow workers. Communication is difficult enough when the workers have

confidence in the source, but when the confidence level is low, communications is nearly nonexistent.⁸

Although foremen may be considered part of management by management, they are only one step from being a worker. The average foreman is aware of this fact. One of the major complaints voiced by general foremen and superintendents is the inability of the newer foremen to identify themselves with management. This isn't too difficult to understand when the fact that they may be returned to the line at any time is considered. Because of this instability foremen are hesitant to "pick on anyone" on the line. While top management may think they are communicating with their foremen, middle management, the general foreman and the superintendent, are faced with production schedules and discourage questions from their foremen and generally adopt the attitude, "Produce or we will find someone who can." This only adds to the basic insecurity that eats at the foreman.

The foreman's job is difficult at best. This statement does not refer to the actual work, or the normal problems associated with his job, but to the feelings of loyalty that he has toward management and to the workers. The difficulty of his position is quite often further magnified by the nature of the organization under which they must operate. Guy B. Arthur conducted a survey of foremen for the American Management Association and found that 54% of the foremen surveyed were plagued with an absence of definite lines of authority, and 70% have more than one boss.¹⁰ Such an arrangement results

in confusion and further adds to the sense of insecurity of the foremen.

Management normally has little difficulty in commuting downward to their foremen. There are any number of methods that management can employ such as meetings with the general foreman, newsletters, directives, and so forth. However, there is a very real problem of communicating upward. In almost every book covering industrial communications, mention is made of the fact that industrial communications is a two-way street. However, it was discovered during the research for this paper that this two-way street was often a one-way street. This fact was brought out in a number of interviews with personnel people. In fact one director of plant and community relations in the Boston area said,

All of the material we put out from this office is useless unless we know what the man on the line thinks. Surveys can give us a clue, but we would prefer to hear from the plant directly in a continuous flow rather than from a survey which is more or less a spot check.

The facts seem to indicate that there often is a serious gap in the upward communications program. The gap is created when the foreman is discouraged from communicating to his immediate superior. In a survey conducted at one of the large oil companies on the East coast, 53% of the foremen said they did not feel free to present their grievances to their supervisors.¹¹ This situation is not unique. With many companies that are proud of their "open door" policy upward communications is virtually nonexistent because the "open door"

is actually a closed door. The right of the foreman to make suggestions, air grievances, and to get explanations often simply does not exist. All of the emphasis is on communicating downward. All too often management is talking when it should be listening.¹²

The Foreman As A Communicator

It has often been said that the foreman is in the middle, being neither management nor worker. He has also been accused of having to be two faced. When you examine how he is forced to deal with management and his subordinates, this accusation of being two faced is not difficult to understand. Management all too often has the tendency when trying to communicate with the worker of using what Roethlisberger calls "the language of efficiency."¹² Roethlisberger has invented this term to describe the cold factual type of managerial jargon that is so often used when trying to communicate with subordinate groups. Inherent in this type of language is the cold, formal, and highly impersonal phraseology. It is not conducive to understanding other than purely factual material. In the meantime, the bottom of the organization is trying to communicate upwards with terms couched in sentiment and feeling, often in the form of minor gripes that top management fails to understand. The crux of the whole matter is the social distance between the two groups. As a result of this social distance the same symbols do not have the same referents for the two groups. Consequently neither understands the other very well. The supervisor is therefore

placed in the unhappy position of enforcing this language of efficiency, although he knows that at times it will tend to demoralize his subordinates, and at the same time trying to communicate upwards the feelings and desires of his subordinates. It is not enough that management use the foreman to transmit information from the top to the bottom in order that the people at the bottom understand the objectives of management. Indeed, it is equally important that management use the foreman to transmit information from bottom to top so that management understands and appreciates the behavior of the people at the bottom.¹³

It is in this particular role of a communicator that the foreman often experiences his most difficult and perplexing problems. As we shall see shortly, great strides have been taken to keep the foreman better informed as to exactly what his responsibilities are and exactly what degree of authority he has. Also we shall examine the progress made in training and informing the foreman. All of these steps that management have taken, by and large, are making the job of the foreman not only easier, but the foreman himself has become a more efficient person and serves both the worker and management better because of these steps. When dealing with tangibles the foreman of today has the benefit of staff and technical help at his beck and call. However, when dealing with the intangibles of human nature the experts aren't as available, and when they are, they don't always agree.

For many years now management has felt that what they had to say to the workers was infinitely more important than what the workers had to say to management. The majority of the funds expended went toward all forms of communications media--newspapers, magazines, advertisements, and posters. Public Relation budgets were increased and the public relations departments pressed to greater activities in telling management's story.¹⁴ All of this activity is reminiscent of the early attempts to communicate with the workers just to be communicating. Again it must be stressed that it is important that management listen before talking. By doing this it can aim its communicative efforts instead of blindly issuing reams and reams of material that the workers may or may not be interested in. Indeed, by talking before it has determined the sentiments of the workers it may tend to alienate them when it is trying to win their favor. Management must accept the fact that what they have to say may not always be more important than what the workers have to say. Communicating across the gap of social distance between top management and the average man on the line is difficult at best, there is no need to make it more difficult by doing all of the talking and none of the listening.¹⁵

Direct Communications

It has just been mentioned that management has increased the amounts of money spent on communications programs with the workers in the last few years. Although at first glance

any communication may appear to be better than none, there are certain problems that have emerged to plague both management and the foremen. In communicating directly with the worker through the bulletin board, the newspaper, employee letter, and the like there is a very good likelihood that the normal lines of communication may be circumvented and leave the foreman in the position of finding out information at the same time the worker is informed. This has the adverse effect of lowering the prestige of the foreman and certainly he doesn't feel much like part of management when this happens. Another important side effect of this direct communications is that the worker's confidence in their foreman can easily be shaken. If a change in policy, a new operating procedure, or plans to have an open house is announced through the plant newspaper or the bulletin board without first informing the foreman, workers coming to him for additional information or clarification are going to discover that he knows no more about it than they do. Such answers as, "I don't know any more than you do." Or, "It's news to me," reduces the confidence level of the workers in their foreman. The immediate effect of such a happening probably won't be apparent, but it is a bit difficult to expect the workers to have confidence in distant, unreal top management when they have none in the man they see everyday, their foreman.¹⁵

Another devastating effect of an all out attempt to communicate with the worker might be called the "backfire effect." Management in its concern for communicating with

the worker may overdo the job. Everytime the worker turns around he is being given another announcement. The bulletin board, the public address system, pay envelope inserts, personal letters from the president, all add up to a deluge of paper that may result in "cellulose indigestion." He is bombarded with so much information that he rebels and either refuses to read what is presented to him or reads it and ignores what he reads.¹⁶

This "backfire effect" is more dangerous than it appears on the surface. The implications are much more serious than merely having the communicative efforts of management wasted. If the employee doesn't read information from management, or reads it and discounts it, he will get his information from some other source. Furthermore, there is much evidence that workers do not believe not because they don't know, but because there is a tendency for the workers to be against management, per se. Possibly because of their increased social awareness, their increased mobility, and the feeling of strength as a result of increased unionization, a feeling of hostility, or at least suspicion, of management's motives exists among workers. It is impossible to combat this feeling by simply putting out fancier plant papers, technicolored movies, or multi-colored posters. Confidence in management must be built not only by actions of management, but by a more careful screening of information given to the workers so that they feel that the information is important and has been given careful consideration. Attention to how this

information is transmitted must also be considered. Workers all too often have the feeling that the mass production methods of bulletin boards, posters, and so on show very little care on the part of management. If management doesn't think the information is important enough to warrant care and consideration, why should the worker?

Believing The Foreman

Because management thinks of the foreman as part of management, and also because workers and foremen alike feel that the foreman is either part of, or closely connected to, management, this feeling of hostility of the workers toward management is especially serious. Because of this feeling of hostility and lack of confidence toward management, and consequently the foreman to a lesser degree, the utilization of the foreman as a communications center can be seriously hampered because source credibility and confidence are important in acceptance. In a survey conducted by the American Management Association, and reported in their special report 181 of their General Management Series, what the worker thought of American management was both startling and paradoxical. It was found that 40% of the workers thought that management was doing an excellent job of running business and an additional 42% conceded management did a good job. So we have 82% of the workers expressing a relatively high degree of satisfaction and confidence in management as managers. However, when asked how well they thought management understood and treated the employees,

i.e., fair share of the profits, fair promotion system, and fair treatment of the unions, the results were less than flattering. On the average, only 45% of the employees felt that management treated them fairly and understood them. In addition to these unflattering figures, when asked which had done the most to advance their standards of living, the following figures represented a serious failure in the communications efforts of management.

Union Leaders-----	47%
Business Leaders-----	18%
Government Leaders-----	18%
All three-----	5%
No Opinion-----	12% ¹⁷

This lack of confidence represents a very real barrier in the communicative process. Management has displayed remarkable intelligence and skill in researching the market for their products. American advertising is a wonder to the rest of the world in the success it has achieved. Yet, all too often it has neglected to do any thorough research within the walls of their own plants to determine how their workers think and what they want. They attempt to communicate without first defining what their market is really like. The foreman is like a salesman, but a salesman whose company has done an ineffective market research job. Because of this he is quite often aware of what he must sell, but the buyer's resistance is too great.¹⁸

The problems that have been listed which confront both management and the foreman are not intended to be taken as historical problems, but rather contemporary problems that are being met everyday in the industrial field. Although these problems are complex and ever changing, they are not insurmountable. The very fact that top management is aware that internal communications problems exist would be a step in the right direction. However, management is more than merely aware of these problems, they are trying to do something about them. Such organizations as the American Management Association, The Foremen's Institute, The Institute For Industrial Studies, and other groups that are seriously studying the problems of industry, are daily contributing to the understanding of the worker-management relation and the problems associated with such relations. In addition to these private groups, colleges and universities throughout the nation are spending more and more time trying to solve some of these problems.

In the next portion of this thesis we shall investigate some of the programs that are being taken to make the foreman a more effective member of the management group and also discover how management is attempting to utilize the foreman as a communications and public relations center.

FOOTNOTES

1. Robert Dubin, Human Relations In Administration (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1956), pp. 44-46 and 52-53.
2. United States Civil Service Commission, Training The Supervisor (Washington: Government Printing Office, Sept., 1956), p. 6.
3. American Management Association, The Foreman's Basic Reading Kit (New York: The Association, 1944), p. 3.
4. Ernest Dale, The Development of the Foreman in Management (New York: American Management Association, 1945), pp. 16-17.
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6. Ralph J. Cordiner, New Frontiers For Professional Managers (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956), p. 9.
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CHAPTER III

THE DYNAMICS OF FOREMANSHIP

Taking things in their logical sequence let us examine how management has changed their concept of who will make a good foreman and how they are selected. As was mentioned in the brief history of industrial practices through the years at the beginning of this study, foremen were formerly selected on the basis of two criteria: technical competence and ability to keep the men in line. Technical competence is still weighted heavily in the selection of foremen, for their main function is production. However, mere production is no longer the basic criteria. As E. B. Roberts, Assistant to the Vice-President of Westinghouse, says, "The foreman's task is not merely to get things done, but to get them done harmoniously."¹ This means that first of all the foreman must inform his workers. If he is to inform his workers it follows that the foreman himself must be better informed. He must not only understand what is to be done, he must possess the ability to impart this information to his subordinates.

Selecting The Foreman

More scientific methods are now generally employed by

most companies in the initial selection of foreman than merely determining who is a good technician and who in the shop can "handle" the men. It is not felt that a detailed discussion of supervisory selection is germane to a public relations study. However, some particularly good articles on trends in supervisory selection may be found in the general management series of the American Management Association. The very fact that management is taking more care in the selection of its supervisors is good communications and public relations practice in itself for it shows the workers that management is interested enough to select the best qualified men for supervisory positions. This concern on the part of management of selecting the best qualified men for supervisory positions makes the workers feel that management is treating them "right."²

Training The Foreman

Although improved techniques of foreman selection are important, it is in the field of foreman training that the most visible signs of progress in utilizing the foreman as a communications center have been made. Management has come to recognize the fact that the foreman does not ordinarily enter into his position possessing the skills and knowledge necessary to cope with the complex requirements of his job. True, he may be, quite competent technically but as we have seen, management is interested in more than technical competence in the present day foreman. To be able to manage men, to

foster a spirit of cooperation, to be able to communicate takes additional training.

Esso Standard Oil is an example of a company that has realized that foreman training in the human relations field is necessary in order for the foreman to effectively cope with the complex demands of his position in modern industry. Esso has established a main training center at their Elizabeth, New Jersey plant where courses in human relations are offered to their new supervisors. These courses are offered in addition to the training courses offered at their local plants. These courses are typical of those offered by many companies as a realization of the importance of two way communications.³

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Teamwork of Management | 7. Developing Desirable Worker Attitudes |
| 2. Tools of Management | 8. Dealing with Union Representatives |
| 3. Giving Orders | 9. Employee Ratings |
| 4. Inducting New Employees | Handling Job Relations |
| 5. Planning and Leading Meetings | |
| 6. How to Talk to Workers | |

In viewing these courses, it must be understood that although these represent those offered by a particular company, they are not unique for they represent the general philosophy of management today. In order to bolster this statement, let us examine a statement contained in a manual put out by General Electric.

If the communication program is to be successful in developing mutual trust, respect, confidence, understanding and loyalty throughout the unit, it must employ media capable of transmitting not only information, but also feeling. The results we seek are more emotional than logical, and the manner in which the information is presented is, therefore, of equal importance with the nature of the information.⁴

The very fact that such a statement in a manual issued by one of the largest corporations in the United States does not elicit so much as a raised eyebrow is an effective commentary on how management's thinking has changed in the last twenty years.

Management has also graduated from the "do it yourself" school of communications. As we have seen in the early days of the awakening of management to the human relations problems, many false steps were taken and many companies initiated communications programs just to be communicating. As an example of how management today makes use of specialists in the field of human relations, communications, and public relations in training their managers all the way from the foreman on up, let us examine the program that International Harvester has developed to establish criteria for training their managers.

During World War II International Harvester, as almost every other industrial organization, experienced a tremendous growth, accompanied by the usual growing pains. During the press of national emergency many shortcomings had to be overlooked; "make do" was the motto, not only at International Harvester but in industry at large. However, after the war reorganizing and taking stock was the order of the day.

Late in 1945 three major steps were taken by International Harvester. They set up a central school in Chicago for managerial training, thereby consolidating the many varied and scattered schools and programs. They acquired buildings to house this central school. The third step was unique and

has since been followed by many industrial concerns. International Harvester entered into a five year working agreement with the University of Chicago whereby the facilities of the University were available to the company in order to help establish educational objectives, develop educational methods, and to measure the achievements of the program.⁵

Significant as the step to establish such a school to train its managerial staff is, perhaps the really important factor is to be found in the evaluation as to why certain human relation courses should be taught to management at all levels--including the foreman. A committee of foremen, working in conjunction with the Education and Training division of International Harvester, drew up a list of more than fifty problems that can and frequently do confront foremen during the course of a day. Rather than design a course to treat each problem so that the foremen would have ready-made "company answers" for each situation, the committee decided that what the foremen needed was some basic information that would help him solve each problem as it arose. Accordingly the fifty odd problems were broken down into four basic areas:

Personal Development. This includes effective speaking, letter writing, planning and organizing, and logical thinking.

Human Relations. Human behavior, industrial relations, the foreman as a member of management.

Economics. The competitive system, laws of economics, Harvester's financial structure.

Company Operations. Policy development and application,

supply and inventory, product distribution, employee information program.⁶

One highly interesting aspect of this training program was that the trainees were often unable to perceive their own weak areas and consequently could see little need for the training. Here the judgment of the people at the next highest level and the next lowest level aided considerably in spotlighting the weak areas of the person concerned. Whereas neither the idea of cooperating with a university or using subordinate levels to help evaluate superiors is considered new today, it is important to realize that management was concerned enough to establish such programs that are taken for granted today.

Perhaps the second most frequently heard word in human relations today is participation; communications has been heard so often that it easily wins as number one. But, participation is important and is being used to make employees feel that they are a part of the training and communications programs rather than merely being subjected to them.

At International Harvester committees of trainees evaluate, suggest changes, and define needs of the training programs in which they participate. Many managers in the past have felt that they knew what was best for their employees. It has been discovered that supervisors often have a real desire to learn and know from experience where they are weak. By listening to their ideas and expressions of wants, the training and education division of a company can often obtain

valuable information to guide them in establishing a training program. Such procedures are a far cry from the "Training Staff Meeting" as reported in Dubin's book.⁷

General Electric, also keenly aware of the problems of a new supervisor, have instituted, among their many other continuing training periods for all supervisors, the so-called supervisors' "Vestibule Course." This is roughly a forty hour course that was designed specifically for the new, or about to be, foreman. Roughly the same type of courses as mentioned in the discussion of International Harvester's program are given, i.e., basic company procedures, union relations, and human relations. Although it is difficult to imagine that all of the questions of the new foreman would be answered by such a course (it is not intended to do this) such a course certainly aids in getting the new foreman started on the right foot and is invaluable as a motivational tool for management.

Training programs are varied, as they should be. Each company is different, each has different problems, and therefore each should have a training program geared to best serve their own specific needs. The one really encouraging factor, especially to a person in public relations, is the attention given by all of the programs to human relations.

Actual training programs are but one segment of what might be called the "new look" in industry's treatment of the foreman. One of the most important and most used type of intra-management communications is the foreman's conference.

Let it be understood that there are many different names and varying procedures followed in this type of meeting, but the ends are the same in each case, to inform the foreman.

In a survey conducted by the American Management Association, almost 80% of the companies replying stated that they held regular meetings with their foremen. It was felt that certain specific advantages were gained because of these meetings.

1. Improved Job Efficiency: (of the foremen)

Foremen get information sooner and get it straight from top management, thus eliminating several steps in the transmission process. This not only speeds up the process but also eliminates the filtering effect that characterizes many step transmission of information. Also in a meeting questions can be asked to clear up any mis-understandings.

2. Improved Employee Relations: By going to meetings themselves they get used to meetings and are more prone to hold meetings among their subordinates. By having these information conferences they gain first-hand information that they in turn can impart to the worker during their monthly meetings. The information disseminated by the foremen has two advantages, it is accurate and employees appreciate hearing first hand information from management through their foreman (increasing his prestige).

3. Better Intramanagement Understanding: Although the meetings are designed specifically to discuss and impart information, the meetings allow different levels of management

to meet and become better acquainted with one another's problems.

4. Improved and Uniform Reception: Because the foremen are all together and hear the news and questions pertaining to it, effective reception and uniformity of reception is enhanced.⁸

It is all very well for management to communicate with the foremen, but if the transmission stops there and does not reach the workers, the effort has largely been wasted. There is evidence that there is still much to be desired in the foreman as a communicator.

Evaluating The Foreman

In a poll taken by Opinion Research Corporation in 1952 of a random sample of 655 employees at three International Harvester plants, it was found that the foreman was not communicating as well as he might. One of the questions asked was, "Does your foreman ever pass on information about the company?" In plant A, 37% said yes. In plant B, 41% said yes. In plant C, 52% said yes. These figures are not at all flattering but become even less so when the information that the foremen were credited with giving was discovered to be largely of the on-the-job-routine nature.⁹ A follow-up study was made to discover why this situation existed and it was found that it apparently stemmed from the fact that foremen were reluctant to initiate discussion on their own. Two major reasons were given for this failure to initiate

communications. The foremen didn't completely understand the necessity of communicating, and secondly was the lack of knowledge of how to initiate discussion. It is because of this lack of confidence in initiating discussions and the generally low communications effectiveness of foremen that so much emphasis is placed on such subjects as public speaking, conference leader techniques, and other group dynamic subjects in the training courses for foremen.

The duPont Company was also aware of this failure of the foreman to communicate. Now they train their foremen in discussion techniques. The idea is that these men have the basic qualifications for communicating together, all they need is a little help. They have, generally speaking, the same background, the same job experiences, and are around each other all day long. This certainly is a good basis for starting communications. The results of this experiment have been most gratifying. Reports show that as the result of such training the foremen find that their regular meetings are far more efficient and productive of useful ideas. It has also been noted that the esprit de corps seems to be favorably influenced by this spirit of participating in a meeting rather than attending a meeting.

One other important feature of this discussion type meeting is the opportunity for instantaneous feedback, especially after the meetings have been going on for a while and the natural reserve of the participants is broken down. This feedback is more complete and faster than that experienced

with written communications and it helps reduce the "snowfall of paper."

At one time it was thought that in order to inform your employees, all you had to do was tell your supervisors and the information would automatically be transmitted down the line to the worker. There are a variety of reasons why this isn't necessarily so. Perhaps the most common reason is that foremen are not inherently good communicators. Communications is an art, and foremen like most people don't know too much about it. Also, there are foremen who believe that knowledge is power and refuse to tell their workers any more than they need to know in order to perform their job. Of course there are those who are "too busy" to inform the worker. When management starts to consider how well their foremen communicate, as well as how well they run the technical end of the business, then, and only then, will the foreman truly become the most important link in the communication chain. This is no far fetched hope. As an example, General Electric has what is called a Periodic Performance Appraisal For Management Personnel. In this extensive appraisal booklet, some fifteen pages counting the instructions, the very first section deals with, "Responsibility for Personnel" and listed below are the questions. I do not believe it unfair to say that these questions would not have been used say ten or fifteen years ago.

How Well Does He:

1. Instill "team spirit" in his organization?
2. Exercise firm (and fair) leadership

3. Appraise and develop subordinates for promotion from within
4. Exercise discipline
5. Interpret and apply fair compensation policies
6. Work through his people to accomplish objectives
7. Maintain two-way communications through his organization
8. Back up the decisions of his people
9. Stimulate his people to think for themselves
10. Let his people know what is expected of them
11. Inspire, in the minds of his people, confidence in his leadership, and his ability to succeed in spite of difficulties.

Management is aware that face to face communication is far superior to any written communication. It is because of this realization that so much emphasis is placed on first, training and informing the foreman and secondly, getting the foreman to hold meetings with his subordinates. These two major steps may be called "Integrating and Motivating the Management Team," as it is at General Electric, or "Work Smarter Program" as it is called at Johns-Manville, or any number of other "trade" names. What they are called is unimportant. It is important that management is trying to reduce statistics that show that foremen not only don't initiate discussion in many cases, but they actually discourage discussion and suggestions.

Communicating To The Foreman

We have seen how management today takes more care in selecting and training their foremen. The program certainly doesn't stop there. Efforts to keep the foremen informed and motivated have been just as herculian as in selecting and training.

Raymond Peters conducted a survey in an attempt to discover what types of intramanagement communications were most frequently used.¹⁰ These are the results based on twenty-two companies answering:

Method	% using
Chain of Command meetings	100
Foremen conferences	96
Bulletins and newsletters	68
Personal letters	68
Supervisors manuals	50
Counseling	27

Characteristics of Methods Employed

Chain of Command Meetings: Department heads hold meetings with their subordinates who in turn hold meetings with their immediate subordinates and so on down the line. Although this is essentially a "face-to-face" meeting information may become distorted because of the several levels between the initiating level and the final recipient.

Foremen Conference: These may be held on a vertical or horizontal basis. This type of meeting provides for a variety of subjects that can be discussed allowing foremen to be exposed to other department heads so they may become aware of problems other than their own. This type of meeting is conducive to participation and quick undistorted two-way communication. However, if not conducted properly there is a possibility of the foremen "freezing-up" if there is too much "brass" present.

Bulletins and Newsletters: This leads to the personal touch and makes the foreman feel he is truly part of management.

Unless there is some method of follow-up there is little feedback and as a result very little two-way communication.

Personal Letters: Roughly the same as the bulletin and newsletter technique.

Supervisor's Manuals: There is probably a wider range of possibilities with this method than any other. A well thought out, well written manual can be a tremendous success whereas a poor one can be of little or no help.

Counseling: This is a relatively new, and as yet, not too frequently used method of helping the foreman. Foremen are just as susceptible to problems as any worker, perhaps more so considering the pressure under which they must work. If conducted properly by fully competent people, this can be a very successful tool in helping the foreman solve his personal problems, problems that may affect his ability to function as a supervisor.

In emphasizing the personal face-to-face contact type of communications, the permanent written aids to the foremen should not be overlooked. Many companies that spend a great deal of money on educational programs have overlooked an excellent means of communications by neglecting to have a foreman's manual. A well written, carefully thought out manual can do much to help the foreman perform his day to day tasks. Such information as responsibilities, rate setting, grievance procedure, discipline practices, seniority system, vacation policies, and other more or less routine matters, if written clearly and concisely and contained in a personal manual, can

afford a ready reference for questions asked the foreman. By being able to answer the questions of his subordinates without having to run to the general foreman for answers, the foreman not only speeds up the flow of information, but the employee's confidence in him is raised, thus enhancing the foreman as an information source with high credibility.

Foremen And Unions

To the average foreman there are two very important people he must deal with quite frequently; his immediate superior and the union steward. In the past the foreman was pretty much ignored when a new contract was being negotiated between the company and the union. By ignoring the foreman the company left him pretty much to his own devices if he wanted to find out anything about the conditions that were going to govern the worker-management situation during the life of the contract. Since he is the first line supervisor who is going to have to deal with the union member (the worker on the line) this is a serious oversight. In a poll conducted by Elmo Roper at a large East coast company 63% of the foremen expressed the opinion that they were insufficiently informed about collective bargaining.¹¹ Since management claims that the foreman is part of management, he should be treated as part of management. The foreman should be consulted before the contract is signed and receive elaboration on any points on which he may be confused or insufficiently informed. The foreman is the person who is going to have to live with any contract that is

signed, tell him what he is going to have to live with.¹²

In almost any management magazine you will find an article dealing with some phase of union relationship. There is almost a phobia among top management about explaining the "American free enterprise system" to the rank and file worker. One very good article describing this phobia can be found in the 1950 summer issue of Fortune by William H. Whyte called, "Is Anybody Listening?" The basic issue seems to be however, that unions sometimes do make certain claims that management feels obligated to answer or management may want to explain its own actions and motives to the worker. Mr. Whyte calls this competition for the worker's loyalty "The Big Sell." By informing the foreman fully about the motives and objectives of the company, management includes the foreman as a basic part of management and assures itself that the foreman will be able to present the views of management in a clear and undistorted manner to the worker. One example of this is the weekly newsletter issued to the foremen at International Harvester. Company plans, reasons for certain actions, and objectives are included in this newsletter to the foremen. The foremen not only get their information first hand, and before the workers do, but they in turn are able to answer questions and disseminate information that might very possibly stop rumors before they can develop into sources of trouble. Such actions on management's part as including foremen in on collective bargaining and informing foremen quickly and completely, is an important step in the communications function

that the foreman is playing with increasing importance in the everyday industrial picture.

The basic pattern for a successful communications program is flexibility. It was mentioned before that communications programs cannot be successfully mass produced, and it bears repeating. It follows that although the foreman is an important link in the communications process, there are other methods of communicating with the worker. However, it must be understood that by communicating directly with the workers caution should be exercised so that the foreman is not flagrantly circumvented and thereby placed in an embarrassing position.

Companies today are spending more and more on employee publications, informational literature, and opinion polls. Employee meetings of all kinds are on the increase. The advantages are obvious, the pitfalls not so obvious. The advantages are quick transmission of information to large groups of people and uniformity of information. However, such methods, particularly group meetings, do have certain disadvantages. Mass meetings cost money in terms of lost production time and if they are not handled skillfully more damage than good can be accomplished and in all types of direct communication there is the chance of by-passing the proper lines of communication. You must never lose sight of the feelings, morale, and proper utilization of the people between top management and the line.

One answer to this problem has been found and successfully utilized by a number of companies. A committee of union representatives, people from personnel, foremen, and office supervisors inform top management what kind of information the workers want. Specific problems, rumors, or general company objectives are just a few of the possible topics suggested. Management then arranges meetings with selected participants from all levels in the company. The particular subjects are discussed and a question and answer period follows. Minutes from the meetings are then sent out to the homes of all of the workers.¹³

Foreman Prestige

Earlier we discussed whether or not the foreman was part of management. We discovered that management almost without exception has declared that the foreman is part of management. However, we have also discovered that there is still considerable doubt in a good many foremen's minds as to whether they actually are part of management. The old cliché, "Actions speak louder than words," might very properly be applied in the foreman's case. If management is going to use the foreman as part of management he should also be treated as part of management. Such actions are just as real communications and public relations as any manual, publication, or personal letter from the president. If by actions management can align the foreman with management he will not only be an abler communicator, he will be a more willing one.

Since the foreman is supposed to be part of management provide him with signs of office. A private telephone, paid in the same manner as other managers and at a rate commensurate with his position. He should not have to punch a time clock, unless the rest of the management does. Give him a desk, even if he doesn't use it much it is a sign of his position. Such outward physical signs are just as important in communicating with the foreman as the foreman's manual, conferences, bulletins, and visits to other departments. The ground must be plowed before the seed can be planted.

One of the more important aspects of communicating with the foreman has only been touched on in this paper. How to improve relations and establish effective upward communications with the foreman's immediate supervisor? The big mass of managers called middle management constitute the largest number and greatest span in levels of authority. If this group of people is not sold on an idea, going either up or down, the idea or plan is doomed. This group is the "filter" through which communications both up and down must pass. More attention should be paid to the relationship of the foremen to this group. To think that the foreman is the most important single link between top management and the worker is correct unless this nebulous middle group is considered as a single group. If they are, they then become more important. If the foreman is treated more like a member of management the relationship is certain to improve. Understanding and trust are the first prerequisites to communications and good internal public relations.

Coordinating The Program

If utilizing the foreman as a communicator and public relations agent is a valid function of his position, and there is little reason to doubt that it is, help in the form of formal training is, of course, necessary. But coordination with the public relations department is also an important factor. External public relations is just one function of any company's public relations program. As has been demonstrated management is vitally concerned with internal communications and public relations. In order to have an integrated internal public relations program the public relations department should aid in the formal training of the foreman by helping to determine course content and it should also enlist the help of the foreman in furthering programs initiated within the company. After all, it is from the foreman that the worker gets a great deal of his information. By listening to the foreman the public relations department can more readily determine the sentiments of the worker and adjust their program to conform to the prevailing situation. By telling the foreman the purpose of the program the foreman is in a better position to help the public relations department put their program across.

If the foreman is to communicate he must have something to communicate. If he is to be management's public relations link with the worker he must know what to do in order to help implement the program.

FOOTNOTES

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8. Dale, op. cit., pp. 62-63.
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CHAPTER IV

THE NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER AND HISTORY

Prior To World War II

Certainly the oldest profession, ribald remarks notwithstanding, is that of the soldier. It is unfortunate, but true, that men in their relations with other men have seen fit to settle their differences, both real and imagined, by the use of arms. The soldier throughout history has either been on the top of the social scale, or on the bottom, depending on the prevailing social system from which he sprang.

In our western civilization the military system has been a faithful extension of the social system behind it. From the serf-landlord relationship came the officer-soldier relationship. The officer was the rich, strong, and educated person who was accustomed to being served. The soldier was the serf; poor, ignorant, and weak, used to serving. The social servitude in civilian life was no different in the military life. Indeed, in the army the serf was often better off, for in the army he had a fair chance of being fed and clothed, something that he wasn't so sure of in the landlord-serf relationship.

In European countries there is a background of landlord-serf relationship and regardless of the present republican, democratic, or parliamentary form of government there is a history of the serving and those served. The United States has had no such background of an aristocracy and yet here we find a contradiction. The very basis for our military thinking, until quite recently, followed the conventional landlord-serf relationship. Discipline and custom dictated that even in the military system of the United States the officer was to be served and the enlisted man was to serve. Therefore we have the paradox of a nation that never had a ruling class developing a military system that was completely foreign to the social system surrounding it.

Actually there were many reasons for this paradox. When our armed forces were first formed during revolutionary days the ways and manners of foreign armies were slavishly copied and consequently there developed, through custom as much as anything, a military system that had its foundations in Europe, not America.

Then we have what might be termed a double paradox. Historically the United States has never been a militaristically inclined nation and consequently, except for times of national emergencies, our armed forces have been quite small. This very smallness created a clannish attitude among those in the service and because of this clannish attitude those who served in the military were anxious to emulate what they considered the best of the older and larger armies of Europe. Furthermore,

this standing armed force was called upon to act as a cadre for the training of civilians who were pressed into service during times of national crises and since strict obedience and discipline are necessary under combat conditions, this cadre maintained a rigid discipline system at all times.

The noncommissioned officer (NCO) has always played an important role in the armed forces. However, before continuing the discussion of the NCO perhaps it would be best to define just what a NCO is. According to the United States Air Force's concept, a NCO is one of the top three enlisted grades (corresponding to the old ranks of staff sergeant, technical sergeant, and master sergeant). Prior to this definition the NCO was anyone with the rank of corporal through master sergeant. The reason that the NCO has always played such an important role is he is the link between the officer and the enlisted man. The reason for his existence comes about because the officer finds it impossible to effectively handle the large number of enlisted men under his command. Today we know this concept as the span of control. By breaking the large mass of enlisted men into smaller groups, and establishing a hierarchy through which control can be exerted, the officer can maintain control. This hierarchy consists of a group of leaders termed noncommissioned officers.

In armies characterized by strict military discipline not only is the officer treated with ram-rod military courtesy, so is the NCO. Examples of this can be found in our own times.

The German army, largely as a result of the Prussian influence, was a very militaristic and authoritarian organization. In the German army the NCO rated a call to attention when he entered a room in which there were subordinates of his, and when a private addressed a sergeant in the German army he addressed him as Herr Sergeant. Along with the respect the German NCO received there were many privileges and other special treatments to enhance his prestige and more firmly establish his visible authority.

The NCO in the United States has never been treated so nearly like an officer as has his German counterpart. However, in times past he has been a very powerful person in the military ranks. Along with the obvious badges of rank, such as chevrons and higher pay, the NCO often had special mess halls, relief from the more menial details, special living quarters, and a great deal of latitude in direct discipline. Except for serious offenses, the officer in charge expected his NCO to handle whatever disciplinary problems as might arise as he saw fit. Indeed, the concept of the tough old first sergeant was not evolved from pure fiction.

The general acceptance of the NCO as a person of prestige and power among the armed forces is perhaps easier to understand when the pre-World War II army is more closely examined. By in large the military, both officer and enlisted corps, was composed of professionals. The man who had less than ten years of service was considered a "rookie." All in all the pre-World War II army was a pretty static organization.

Promotions came slowly and competition for the few vacancies was keen. When a man was promoted he had had time to demonstrate his ability and in the eyes of his peers had "earned" his promotion. He was a known quantity, not only in the eyes of his officers, but in the eyes of his comrades in the enlisted ranks as well.

Human relations in this army were no especial problem because, as in industry, they simply weren't recognized as problems. You either conformed and complied or suffered the consequences. Normally speaking this conforming and complying was more or less expected because the men in the service were there of their own volition. Finally, much of the discipline and many of the special privileges were grouped under the heading of RHIP; rank has its privileges. This was the accepted philosophy and if it wasn't generally accepted it made little difference because it was accepted by those officers and NCO's who determined that it would be the prevailing philosophy.

As was pointed out in our discussion of the foreman, saying that a man, by virtue of his position, has certain responsibilities and commensurate authority, and actually investing him with these responsibilities and authorities are two different things. The pre-World War II NCO had plenty of "paper" responsibility and authority and an equal amount of "real" responsibility and authority. Because he had been promoted slowly and demonstrated his ability, and the technological requirements were relatively simple, his commanding

officer unhesitatingly delegated a great many responsibilities and a great deal of authority to his NCO.

So we have the pre-World War II NCO existing in a very homogeneous group, with fairly simple technological problems in comparison with today's, with a great deal of authority, and a tremendous amount of prestige because of rules and regulations (legal prestige) and earned prestige because of his job knowledge and the confidence expressed in him by his officers. What happened to this situation during, and immediately following World War II, shall now be examined.

The Effects of World War II

Between September 1939 and May 1945, the Army expanded from its static peace time strength of 200,000 to more than 8,000,000. This forty-fold increase in strength was accomplished by the induction of civilians. Civilians, who by in large, were unused to, and objected to the restrictions that Army life imposed on them. They came from every walk of life and had every conceivable type of background. This alone would have posed vast problems, but the situation was further complicated by the fact that at the same time this tremendous expansion was going on technological advances in the making of war were growing by leaps and bounds. Because of these factors new positions of responsibility were created and had to be filled without hesitation. Because of the number of positions to be filled, the increased complexity of modern warfare, and the pressing need to get the job done, the emphasis

in training people to fill these positions had to be placed on the technological level. No longer could a man receive long courses in the various aspects of leadership. Trained men were needed immediately to fill the ever increasing number of new positions and as a result instruction in leadership fell by the wayside. A report to the Secretary of War presents this serious situation quite concisely:

In most instances poor leadership resulted from the thrusting into positions of authority, men who were inherently unqualified or were inadequately trained as leaders. This was brought about by the rapid expansion called for by the national emergency. There were errors in selection. Orientation and indoctrination were inadequate. Training was abbreviated. All of this resulted in failure to emphasize the importance of morale, efficient personnel management and responsibilities.²

So far we have seen how World War II destroyed the homogeneity of the Army by mass induction of civilians with widely divergent backgrounds who were inducted if not against their will, at least with serious reservations about the Army. Secondly the gradual promotion system whereby a man was trained thoroughly and slowly in the skills of leadership had been destroyed because of the pressing demands of the war. Thirdly, because of the complexity of modern warfare there emerged the highly skilled technical NCO whose main claim to his rank was his ability to accomplish a technical task. All three of these innovations in the Army helped to bring about the loss of prestige to the NCO. But perhaps the most serious blow to the NCO corps came about because delegated authority to the NCO was gradually decreased to the point where initiative,

interest, and a sense of responsibility was all but snuffed out. Because of the rapid expansion of the Army, demands for leaders increased. In many cases the demands far outstripped the supply--or at least the supply system couldn't produce them fast enough--the result was that men were often forced into jobs that they were either unprepared to or incapable of handling. When it became apparent that wrong decisions were being made at lower echelons, it became necessary to centralize control by means of rules and regulations that provided a ready made "school solution" for many problems that would confront the lower echelons. More and more supervision of lower levels decreased the delegated powers of lower unit commanders who in turn decreased the authority of their NCO's. Because many officers and NCO's were marginal in the performance of their jobs, because of lack of training or ability, the NCO ceased to be the strong connecting link between the officer corps and the enlisted corps. As this centralization increased there was more and more officer supervision and in many fields officers simply took over functions that had formerly been accomplished by NCO's.

Under the guise of war time security communications to the enlisted personnel was held to a minimum. Quite often there was justification in this lack of information being disseminated. However, because of the top-heavy centralization of control, information was often not given out because it was felt that the men simply did not need it. Also the communications channels had been badly disrupted by the rapid increase

in the size of the military establishment. This is not to say that efforts to inform the men were not made. On the contrary in some respects more information was given to the enlisted man than prior to World War II. However, the way in which this information was disseminated, mass lectures often by officers and movies such as, "Why We Fight" made under the direction of higher echelons, circumvented the old channels of communications. Details of training and leadership that had formerly been handled by the NCO was now mass produced and the NCO more frequently than not heard information for the first time along with the troops serving under him.

During the war there arose a new breed of enlisted man called the technician. He was highly trained to perform specialized technological tasks and as his proficiency increased he was advanced in rank. These specialists presented problems that are still confronting our military leaders. The question arose as to whether or not these specialists were really NCO's in the sense that they were the enlisted leaders. In more cases than not they held their rank not because of any particular leadership qualities they possessed, but as a recognition of proficiency in their field. The same held true for the officer corps, especially among those who held flying ratings. The net result was that because of the tremendous need for these people openings were more frequent than in the line organization and so not infrequently a specialist outranked the non-specialist NCO who was supposedly the top noncommissioned officer in the organization. Such circumstances did not have

to be common to further undermine the morale and prestige of the NCO.

Almost without exception the problems mentioned were magnified in the Army Air Corps. Before the war the Air Corps had been an insignificant part of the Army. During and after the war the Army Air Force emerged as a major part of the Army. The Army Air Force had no history of its own to fall back on, the expansion in numbers had been more rapid than any other branch of service, and the technological advancements staggering. Because of the technological basis of the Air Force it became top heavy with ranking technicians. In bomber squadrons men were often promoted to technical or even master sergeants whose main claim to their rank was they had survived twenty-five or fifty combat missions and knew how to fire a machine gun. In the "old Army" the NCO was something of a rarity. In the Air Force of 1945 the private was a rarity. Applying the adage of familiarity breeds contempt, much prestige for the NCO was destroyed just because there were so many NCO's. In addition to their numbers, the premium had been transferred from leadership qualities to technological proficiency.

With the end of the war in 1945 a tremendous demobilization program was started, but the military was not to return to the static easy-going situation of 1939. Modern warfare increased in complexity even after the fighting stopped and instead of retreating to its own shores as it had at the end of the first World War, the military forces of the United States

assumed greater responsibilities for maintaining world peace than had any military force in history.

With the cessation of hostilities the common objective of defeating the enemy vanished. This common objective had been a mighty cohesive force that had made up for many of the ills that accompanied the rapid expansion and changing complex of the military. The United States Air Force, which had emerged as a separate service, found it had many of the same problems confronting it as had the other services. With the cohesive force of a common enemy gone, the peace time Air Force discovered that the quality of its NCO's left much to be desired. While there was still a need for highly trained specialists who had to be compensated for their skills in the form of rank, which meant more money, the Air Force discovered that it needed highly trained NCO's to administer, direct, and above all, lead the enlisted men.

FOOTNOTES

1. Military Air Transport Service's Noncommissioned Officer's Academy Manual, "Air Force Leadership," (Orlando, Florida: 1957), p. 19.
2. Ibid., p. 3.

CHAPTER V

THE NONCOMMISSIONED OFFICER AS A LEADER

The Changing Picture

The serious problem of deficiencies in leadership, esprit-de-corps, sense of responsibility, and supervision of personnel was recognized by the Air Staff and major air commands. These deficiencies were attributed to the rapid expansion of the Air Force during World War II, followed by the rapid demobilization at the end of the war. The opportunity to select and train leaders during these years was negligible. The Air Force found that many of the recognized leaders had no professional experience, and often no training, as military leaders.¹

The problem of what to do confronted Air Force leaders. There was little desire to return to the pre-war situation even if it had been possible. The post war Air Force was roughly five times larger than the Army of 1939. Bases were spread all over the world instead of a few isolated camps mostly in the United States. The mobility of personnel was much higher than it had been prior to the war. The mission of the Air Force was different than the static mission of the Army in 1939. The complexity of the modern Air Force could

hardly be compared to the pre-war situation. Finally there was the problem of the great bulk of the people in the Air Force who were in service for one tour of duty in order to satisfy their military obligation only, with no basis for common understanding as had existed in the Army prior to World War II.

The problem of adequately trained NCO's existed in a dollar and cents context as well as a human relations one, although they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The Air Force in dealing with one aspect of the problem felt certain that the other would either be solved, or at least mitigated somewhat. In the peace-time era of 1945-1950 the Air Force was faced with ever increasing responsibilities and ever decreasing appropriations. In order to fulfill the obligations of the Air Force mission, and stay within the budget, better management and better utilization of resources had to be realized. Accordingly military management courses were established in order to re-emphasize and teach the principles of supervision and management. Although these schools undoubtedly did much to alleviate some of the problems that faced the Air Force as far as managing men and resources, it was felt by Air Force commanders that something more than was offered by these courses was needed. Although these courses offered much needed help in the techniques of management, there was little emphasis in military leadership.

One of the aspects of military life that seems to confound the uninitiated is the dependence placed upon rules

and regulations. To the casual civilian observer it often appears that rules and regulations become ends in themselves in the military. Such is not the intent of the issuance of regulations. Civilian industry often operates under a comparable set of organizational rules but because it is in the familiar context of "free enterprise" these regulatory rules of civilian industry are accepted with little thought to the impact they have on the organizing of industry. However, the Air Force discovered that you cannot legislate prestige or leadership. Air Force Regulation 39-6 establishes policy relative to the responsibilities of the NCO. It also establishes policy to delegate to the NCO all authority necessary to exercise leadership and to provide advantages and prestige commensurate with the responsibilities that are supposed to be delegated under the same regulation. However, the NCO cannot participate effectively in the management of the Air Force unless he is placed in a position which will permit full exercise of his capabilities. In other words you cannot legislate leadership or prestige, they must be earned and people must be given the opportunity to earn these desired qualities.

The NCO vs. The Specialist

When discussing the problems of the Air Force in regard to the NCO one must inevitably return to the problem of the specialist. This is a problem that is the basis for a thesis in itself. Although it is necessary to examine this

problem, it shall be examined only to the extent that the problem itself is understood. No attempt to solve this problem is intended.

Because of the technological complexity of today's Air Force many highly trained technicians are needed. In order to reward technical competence an airman technician is advanced in rank (and pay scale) as his competence increases and as openings occur. These technicians very often have very little real supervisory function. More times than not they work by themselves or direct the technical work of a very few subordinate technicians. Possibly because it was recognized that these people would not exercise supervisory control to any great degree, or possibly because of the immediate need of trained technicians, these people are often lacking in anything that might be called training or experience in true command line capacity. Yet they have the rank of noncommissioned officers. Such a situation not only makes for very many ranking enlisted men, it reduces the possibility for recognition and prestige of the true supervisory NCO. This factor of too many NCO's was rated as the number one cause for the lack of authority, responsibility, and prestige of the NCO in a study conducted by the Air Command and Staff School of the Air Force.² To cite one example of the number of NCO's, that is first three graders, in relation to the number of NCO's who actually had supervisory requirements, it was determined in the Strategic Air Command that of 37,900 first three graders authorized, only 9,000 were actually in

a supervisory capacity.³ It is not beyond reason to assume that this figure is representative of the entire Air Force. Furthermore, it was determined that as of 31 October 1953 that roughly 30% of the total Air Force strength fell into the category of the first three pay grades, or NCO grades. It is difficult to visualize a requirement for an NCO supervisor for every two airmen in the Air Force. Although the average airman may not be aware of the actual figures, he too realizes the situation is slightly ludicrous when he sees so many NCO's in the mess hall, in formations, or what is more important, when supposed NCO's are given the same general treatment as the basic airman receives, except at the pay table. Such a situation certainly is not very conducive to the raising of the prestige of the NCO.

This factor of prestige is important for two reasons. If a man is not proud of what he is doing, if his prestige is low in the eyes of his contemporaries, he will not perform well and, what is equally important to the retention program of the Air Force, he may elect to "change jobs" by getting out of the Air Force. The Air Force wants to minimize the loss of trained personnel because of the high cost of training competent personnel and because this constant turnover seriously interferes with the mission of the Air Force.

The second reason is one that was discussed in the section dealing with the foreman; source credibility. This matter of prestige implies that this abstract quality is something akin to confidence and respect felt by one person

for another. If the enlisted man has no respect or confidence in his NCO he is less likely to put much credence in the information that the NCO transmits to him. This lack of confidence in an information source is especially important in the military where rumor can do even more to disrupt morale and discipline than it can in civilian industry. Of course the supreme test is in actual war time where lack of confidence can have serious effects in the carrying out of orders issued by NCO's.

Training For Leadership

It was not too long after the war that the commanders of the Air Force realized that NCO corps was seriously lacking in the leadership qualities that lead to effective utilization of the NCO and in prestige that was needed by the first line supervisor of the Air Force. The management courses that had been established certainly increased the technical efficiency of the NCO in the handling of his job according to good management precepts, and these courses had a definite place in the training of NCO's, but it was felt that a course which emphasized the human relations concept and helped establish leadership qualities was needed by the NCO.

At various times almost every base throughout the Air Force had established some sort of a "leadership" course. Most of these had been of short duration and were largely ineffective for a number of reasons; lack of a carefully thought out curriculum, lack of competent instructors, lack

of subordinate unit cooperation, and a general lack of interest. It was felt that a more carefully thought out plan, with complete backing at all levels, would do a great deal to re-establish the NCO as a leader.

It was felt by top echelon commanders that the establishing of a NCO Academy (NCOA) would properly fall in the purview of the Air University at Maxwell AFB, Alabama and accordingly the Air University instituted an extensive staff study in order to determine what type of program would be most suited to accomplishing the goals desired by the Air Force.

Because of the comprehensive nature of such a study a good deal of time was consumed in background study and the problems associated with a plan of such magnitude also took their toll in time. The then commander of the Strategic Air Command, (SAC) General Curtis LeMay, felt that the need was pressing enough that he ordered in January 1954, after preliminary staff research, that the commander of each numbered Air Force in the Strategic Air Command, establish a NCOA within their respective commands with a target date of March 1, 1954.

These commanders were not operating altogether in the dark. A prototype of what they felt was needed existed in the NCOA at West Drayton (United Kingdom) under the operational control of the Seventh Air Division (SAC). This NCOA had begun operation in November 1952 on the proverbial shoestring and yet had achieved a very satisfactory record. Aimed at training the "top" NCO supervisor, this school, with only

a staff of two officers, seven instructors, and five airmen, had a training rate of 700 students per year. The curriculum was based on 162 hours of instruction and lasted four weeks. The initial phase of establishing a NCOA within each Air Force within SAC was based largely on the curriculum and methods employed at the NCOA in the Seventh Air Division. A general breakdown of the curriculum was as follows:

Personnel Management-----	40 hours
Leadership and Command-----	40 hours
General Subjects-----	51 hours
Miscellaneous-----	31 hours

As experience was gained this curriculum in the NCOA's conducted by SAC was expanded to the following (the curriculum quoted is that used by the Eighth Air Force NCOA, Westover AFB, Massachusetts. However, it is representative of the curriculum used by most existing NCOA's):

Leadership	26 hours
Military Management	16 hours
Classification & OJT	10 hours
Problem Solving	7 hours
Military Instructor Training	10 hours
Effective Expression	29 hours
World Situation	14 hours
History & Organization of the Air Force	6 hours
Base Defense and Security	10 hours
Military Justice	7 hours
Safety Supervision	3 hours
Drill and Command	50 hours
Physical Education	15 hours
Special Briefings	6 hours
Guest Speakers	5 hours
Commandant's Time	<u>36 hours</u>
Total	250 hours

The net intent of the whole program, which lasts six weeks, is to give leadership training, to give the NCO an understanding of the human relations problems that he may

encounter, to teach the NCO how to express himself and how to communicate more clearly, to give him an insight into why and how the Air Force operates, and to re-emphasize certain purely military aspects of his job. Throughout the whole course the NCO is indoctrinated with the idea of the responsibility he possesses by virtue of his position as a leader of men and the prestige that will be his if he fulfills these responsibilities.

While SAC was establishing their NCOA's, the Air Command and Staff study for a centralized NCOA was continuing. Although the Air University had much experience in the officer training field in their Squadron Officer School, Field Officer course, and the Air War College, there was little basis for the establishment of a NCOA. In delving into the problem it soon became apparent that the major stumbling block to the establishment of a central NCOA would be the number of students that would have to be handled. With some 200,000 plus NCO's in the Air Force, training this number of people in an acceptable manner and in an acceptable period of time appeared to be impossible.

Selling Middle Command

Because the need for improving the operational function of the NCO was so universally accepted in the Air Force very little active opposition existed among top commanders, and the NCO's themselves generally recognized the benefits they would derive from such a program. Unfortunately cooperation and understanding was not always so universal at intermediate

echelons of command. Some of this lack of cooperation can be attributed to poor communication in the "selling" of the idea to these intermediate commanders, generally at wing or squadron level, and some can be attributed to the fact that by filling quotas with their top NCO's the effectiveness of the unit was hampered somewhat while these top NCO's were attending the NCOA's. Then too there were cases where genuine misunderstanding took place. The assistant training officer of one of the NCOA's operated by SAC reported that at the beginning of their operation they would occasionally get an NCO who obviously did not measure up to the standards set by the Air Force. Upon interviewing the sub-standard NCO's unit commander it was discovered that the commander had sent the NCO to the academy to get "straightened out." The NCO's that fell into this category were immediately sent back to their organizations and the misinformed unit commander was advised that the purpose of the academy was not that of a correctional institution.

It was determined at the very inception of the NCOA that the top NCO's would be trained first for two reasons. Because they were in top supervisory positions it was felt that the need was most imperative in these sensitive areas. By training the top NCO's it was felt that not only would they be in the best position to transmit the results of their training to their subordinates, but their absence would allow the second in line to become familiar with their jobs.

Evaluating Training

Most NCOA's have incorporated in their operational plans a method of follow-up to evaluate their training programs and to see what the NCO's themselves think of the program six months and a year after graduation. Unfortunately too little effort has been expended in this area. Due to the fact that people get transferred, new unit commanders take over, and the multitude of other problems peculiar to the Air Force, these programs have either been inconclusive or have broken down altogether. It is felt that this is a serious mistake. Without any form of feedback other than casual observation it is felt that any real evaluation of the effectiveness of the NCOA is bound to be seriously hampered. The very people who are teaching the importance of communications are failing to utilize one of the most important tools of communication.

As a result of the NCOA's there have been established on many bases NCOA Graduate Associations. This is an excellent example of upward communications in the Air Force. While the organization, function, and scope of each Association varies, the ones existing in the Eighth Air Force (SAC) have standardized by-laws and the minutes of the meetings at each base are sent to Headquarters, Eighth Air Force. At Eighth Air Force Headquarters a Master Sergeant, who is the Secretary-Treasurer of the Association, has free access to the Commander of the Eighth Air Force, Maj. Gen. Walter C. Sweeney, and he is free to visit various bases within the

command if there is a problem and help the council solve their problems.

One of the main functions of the Association as it exists in the Eighth Air Force is to help in the selection of prospective candidates for the NCOA. By including top ranking NCO's on such selection boards a commander not only evidences confidence in his NCO's, but such visible confidence raises the morale of the NCO's and also raises his prestige in the eyes of his subordinates.

One of the best ways to communicate is by actions. The very fact that the Air Force within its various commands has established these highly specialized academies to help and train the NCO has communicated to the NCO and airman alike the concern it feels for the NCO. The manner in which the schools have been conducted and the high caliber of instruction has established the academy as a prestige item in the eyes of the enlisted corps. Of course the Air Force hopes to accomplish many things with these academies. Training the NCO to be a more effective leader is, of course, not the least of these goals. However, by training the NCO so that he may act as a better leader there is also the hope that the younger airmen will be influenced by the improved leadership and also see the opportunities offered him by an Air Force career. By training the NCO in leadership and other human relations techniques there is a better possibility that the NCO will become someone who the young airman will respect and try to emulate. This is also good internal public relations.

Other Communication Problems Of The NCO

All too often commanders are too aloof from their men. This is not to imply that squadron commanders should sit around and "shoot the breeze" with the boys in the orderly room. In the first place he is too busy and in the second place such familiarity does not help military discipline. However, he should not be so aloof that he is unknown. To anyone who has been in the service the omnipresent bulletin board is all too well known. In fact commanders place entirely too much emphasis on this particular method of communicating. Not only is the bulletin board cold and impersonal, so are the messages. In the first section reference was made to the language of efficiency.⁴ For some reason official informational messages that are supposed to communicate are written in such obscure jargon that often the average enlisted man is forced to either hazard a guess at what the information is supposed to be, a highly dangerous procedure, or retreat to the orderly room and ask the first sergeant what the bulletin means. If the NCO doesn't know exactly what the message means, communications has broken down and the NCO's prestige has taken a drop in the eyes of the airman. Too much dependence on directives and messages obviates the importance of the face to face contact.

The conference method so successfully employed by industry should be given wider use in the Air Force. By such methods better understanding of the task to be accomplished could very possibly be obtained, and what is equally important,

the why of the reason for accomplishing the task. It is no longer feasible to tell airmen, "do what you are told and don't ask questions." To do this is to ignore the wealth of human relations information that has been built up over the last quarter of a century. By ignoring the human element the problems of NCO prestige, morale, and retention of skilled personnel in the Air Force will only be aggravated.

One line of thinking that still persists in the Air Force that could stand careful scrutiny is the idea that because it is a military organization that certain practices that have been highly successful in industry could not be applied in the Air Force. The Air Force today is a far cry from the Army of World War I where the NCO was primarily a combat leader. In the complex modern Air Force productivity is more often the criteria of success than the ability to lead men in combat. Of course the NCO should possess certain combative skills, but the concept of the NCO as a leader whose men will follow him up over a hill in a mass charge should be discarded. The operation of the great mass of the Air Force becomes more and more like a huge industry everyday. Since it is so nearly like an industry, why not treat it as such?

The NCO of today's Air Force is asked to be both a manager like his civilian counterpart and yet he is expected to maintain an aura of the military. The net result is not impossible, but it is difficult. The NCO should get as much help as can possibly be afforded him. Possibly the greatest

help that can be given him, other than the formal training offered by the NCOA, is to keep him informed. Unfortunately this is not always done. Like his civilian counterpart, the foreman, the NCO is told that he is a part of "management" and yet he is too often treated like one of the "indians" instead of a "chief." It is an all too common experience to see master and technical sergeants standing in formation and getting "the word" from the squadron or wing commander. If these leaders are informed at the same time and in the same manner as the enlisted man to whom will the enlisted man turn to have his questions asked? There is only one solution. If the NCO is to be considered as a part of the "management team" and act as part of that team, he must be treated as an integral part of that team.

The concept of the NCO as a leader is, of course, an important one. However, because of his direct dealings with the enlisted men he also becomes an important source of information for his commanding officer. Surveys, although they have their special use, never can surplant the direct, instantaneous feedback that occurs when one man talks to another. The NCO is the logical person to transmit information both up and down the chain of command. Unfortunately the Air Force has all too often made the same mistake that civilian management has made in thinking that what comes from the top is always more important than what comes from the bottom of the organization. With this basic concept firmly entrenched, saying that communications is a two way street is to be less than truthful.

The Problem Of Middle Command

As in industry the success or failure of any program depends on the section called middle management. Brilliant conceptualizing at the top becomes useless if middle management is adversely or lethargically inclined toward the program. The squadron commander who sent one of his less desirable NCO's to the NCOA to get "straightened out" is a good example of middle management mis-using a good program so that its intent is completely circumvented. While the NCO is being trained in the techniques of human relations it might be a good idea to re-examine the middle management of the Air Force to see that they too understand these problems of dealing with humans. It is noted with considerable interest that the curriculum of the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs emphasizes human relations to the extent that nearly 50% of the curriculum is devoted to the field of human relations.

Utilizing the NCO effectively in the role that is traditionally and rightfully his implies two things. He must be trained so that he understands the requirements of his job so he can fulfill these requirements and his superior also must understand the role of the NCO so that he will be allowed to fulfill these requirements. Neither of these steps are simple. It will take a great deal of training, research, and above all, patience. The problem has been recognized, an important step in any public relations program, and the first step has been taken.

FOOTNOTES

1. Officer's Briefing to the Noncommissioned Officer's Academy (orientation), (Westover Air Force Base, Mass.), p. 2.
2. Air Command and Staff Study of the Noncommissioned Officer's Academy (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: 1954), p. 10.
3. Ibid., p. 10.
4. F. J. Roethlisberger, Management and Morale (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: 1947), p. 63.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although there are many striking similarities in comparing the foreman and the NCO, in fairness one important difference should be pointed out. There is a necessity for obedience to command in the military that simply does not exist in the same degree in civilian industry. However, it is not felt that this should not seriously interfere with a program of communications and internal public relations, utilizing the NCO as an integral part of such a program, if this peculiarity is recognized. Both positions involve the supervision of other men and both positions are in the penumbra of management. It is important to effectively utilize these two positions in order to get things done and done harmoniously. Although both civilian management and the military offer fringe benefits that make it economically undesirable for the worker to change jobs, the economic picture of our nation is such that changing jobs is simpler now than it has ever been. It is felt that by using the foreman and the NCO as communicators and agents of internal public relations that more efficient and harmonious relations between management and the worker can be achieved.

Selection of Supervisors

Industry has discovered that mere technical skill, although important, should not and cannot be the sole basis for selecting a man for a supervisory position. Accordingly various rating systems have been devised whereby the prospective supervisors forecast capabilities can be analyzed. This rating system might be referred to as the forecast "growth potential" of the man about to be moved into the ranks of management. The realization that the foreman is not just a "straw boss" but a person who must deal effectively with other humans so as to engineer harmonious cooperation has made the selection of the foreman extremely important in civilian industry. This is not to say that all foremen in every civilian concern is so carefully selected, but this is the trend.

The selection of noncommissioned officers in the Air Force has followed the trend toward more care in the selection of new NCO's. Technical skill is still considered as paramount along with "time-in-grade" (comparable to seniority). When a man is considered for promotion in the Air Force a promotion board meets and qualities of the man other than the basic qualifications dictated by regulation are discussed. This is not too dissimilar to the evaluation of prospective foremen by general foremen. Unfortunately these discussions can be highly subjective; civilian industry by utilizing scientific tests to aid in the selection of their foremen have outstripped the Air Force in this category. In all too many cases men have been promoted to the NCO ranks by merely getting so

much time-in-grade that they "have to" be promoted. Such a system is less than satisfactory.

Training The Supervisor

Examples of how industry gives formal training courses to the prospective supervisor, to the new supervisor, to help him over the rough "breaking-in" period, and refresher courses to the older supervisors have been given. All of these courses stress human relations, communicating with the worker, and engineering the consent of the workers. Generally speaking technical training and humanized managerial training is a continuing thing in civilian industry.

The training of the NCO in the Air Force does not have such a formal setting, and again the emphasis is largely devoted to the technical aspect of the job. The two main formal courses offered to the NCO supervisor are the Supervisor's Management course and the NCOA. Although a good proportion of the course content of the NCOA is devoted to the human relations field, very little emphasis is placed on the human aspect of management.

The training of the young NCO is left pretty much to chance. Although the results of the NCOA apparently have been quite satisfactory, this training is designed for the noncommissioned officer in charge (NCOIC)--the top NCO's in the Air Force. It is true that these trained men are supposed to indoctrinate their subordinate NCO's with information they have received at the NCOA, but this can hardly be compared to actually attending the academy.

Part of the study conducted by the Air Command and Staff at Maxwell Air Force Base in 1954 discussed whether the new NCO or the top NCO's should first attend the NCO Academy. It was felt by this group that the top NCO's should attend the school first, and such has been the policies of the individual command's academies. This leaves the new NCO to shift for himself. It is felt that a short course, standardized and conducted at base level, similar to the "Vestibule" courses conducted by General Electric might prove to be of great help to the new NCO.

Mention has been made that the NCO Academies have "apparently" been successful. A vigorous follow-up program would determine how effectively the training given to these men is being utilized by their commanders and also give a better basis for revising course content. Feedback is lacking and needs to be injected into this otherwise excellent training program.

Other Help Given The Supervisor

Other than careful selection and training of the supervisor, the two biggest factors in the effectiveness of the supervisor, both civilian and military, in the area of communications and public relations is the cooperation of middle management and for management to do more listening and less talking.

As this paper has attempted to point out, all of the attempts of top level management and commanders to establish

good internal communications and public relations through well trained supervisors can be brought to a virtual standstill if middle management is not sold on the programs and techniques taught to the supervisors. Unfortunately there is much evidence that in many instances middle management is less helpful than it might be. During the course of the research phase of this thesis a public relations director for a large New England company pointed out that all of the training given to their supervisors seemed to be having practically no results in one of their departments. Careful study of the situation proved that the general foreman was an "old timer" who thought that all of this "public relations stuff" was a lot of "bunk." Similar instances of the middle management block was discovered when interviewing the director of one of the NCO Academies conducted by the Air Force. He told of a master sergeant, who had been one of their outstanding students, who upon the return to his squadron was told by his squadron commander, "Well, you've had a nice six weeks vacation. Now let's get back to work." Such an attitude on the part of middle management is demoralizing and very effective in destroying internal public relations or any urge to communicate upward.

The "Two-way street" of communications in the Air Force is less of a reality than in civilian industry, although in both cases there is much to be desired. In both cases the supervisor is relegated in all too many cases to being an instrument of communications downward only. There is much to indicate that top management still believes implicitly that

what they have to say is infinitely more important than what the worker or the airman has to say. Consequently management often talks in the dark because they have not paused to listen to what those on the bottom have to say. Without any feedback on which to base their communications programs, management often makes serious mistakes in dealing with the worker.

In communicating with the worker industry seemingly makes better use of their foremen than the Air Force does of its NCO's. This may be because civilian industry has had a considerable start on the Air Force in training their supervisors in public relations and communications techniques. There is evidence that confidence in the ability of the NCO's has contributed to this situation. However, the Air Force still relies to a great extent on the direct, or command, type of communications in the form of the bulletin board, mass meetings, and commander's call for imparting information. This type of communications by-passes the NCO completely.

The Treatment Of The Two Supervisors

As a result of World War II and the de-militarizing of the military that was popular immediately after the war, the NCO came to be treated less and less as part of "management." Although he has not progressed back to the point he held before the war, steps leading in this direction have been taken. Confidence in the NCO must be given by the commanders and earned by the NCO. One cannot precede the other, they are simultaneous.

The foreman on the other hand has been told over and over again that he is part of management. However, the figures

quoted in this study indicate that the foreman is not convinced. However he is, on the whole, actually treated more as a part of management. There are many reasons for this. The physical distinction of uniform is more evident in the Air Force than is commonly found in industry. The "social caste" of the pre-war Army, while generally not found in the Air Force still manages to exist in modified forms, and management is actually "forced" to use every public relations and communications tool at its command in the highly competitive labor field. With the tremendous loss of highly trained men every year, the Air Force is also being forced to compete for people. Because of this competition and the necessity for highly economical operations due to limited budgets, the Air Force is beginning to make important strides towards more effective use of their personnel in both the technological and human relations fields.

Goals of Both

Other than the more material objectives of modern industry such as jobs, products, return on capital, and wages, industry is interested in the harmonious cooperation between management and the worker. From the viewpoint of management this tends to produce a healthy working background which in turn helps to increase the material resultants.

There is no question as to what the object of the Air Force is: national security. Although it may seem a little strange to speak of this as a product, that is exactly what

it is. As a result of this endeavor jobs are provided, wages are paid, and, in a sense, the peace of mind might be compared to the return on the capital invested. Up until recently a soldier has been looked upon as something apart from the "ordinary" person. He was different and as such the rules of "normal" society didn't always apply to him. It is doubtful if this was ever a valid stand. Certainly it is most difficult to defend such a position today. Harmonious cooperation is another term for morale, a term with which the soldier has long been familiar. A century or two ago if a soldier had a little food, a fire, a little rum, and a stout pair of shoes his morale was reasonably high. Today's soldier is accustomed to more and wants more. The service life is more complex, he is more complex, and dealing with him is more complex. It is evident that the Air Force has been dealing with the modern airman in a manner that leaves something to be desired. It is estimated that every year roughly 80% of the highly trained specialists in the Air Force have to be replaced. They simply are not staying in the service. This is the major internal problems of the Air Force today. It is not suggested that good communications and internal public relations will solve the problem. In such a complex problem there is no touchstone, no one answer. However, by taking advantage of the knowledge gained by scientists and industry in the human use of human beings, and by utilizing the tools they have, the foreman, the noncommissioned officer, as communicators and internal public relations people, it is felt that a step in the right direction will have been taken.

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