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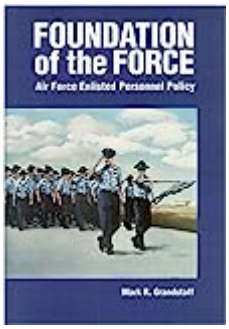

Mark R. Grandstaff. *Foundation of the Force: Air Force Enlisted Personnel Policy, 1907-1956.* Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1997. xii + 299 pp. $26.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-16-049041-5.

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Mark Grandstaff's study of U.S. Air Force personnel policy is significant in two ways. First, his work is one of the few to take Air Force history beyond air power strategy, airplane technology, and hagiography. The institutional history of the Air Force lags well behind that of the other armed forces, in part no doubt because of its recent origins. Nonetheless, historians have focused too exclusively on the quest for institutional independence, premised on the purported exclusive efficacy of air power. That key issue, in turn, has led to a stress on heroic air power advocates who struggled to shape the Army Air Corps (AAC), Army Air Force (AAF), and finally the U.S. Air Force (USAF). The quest for an independent service devoted to air power in turn leads to detailed discussions on the development and acquisition of aircraft able to execute strategic air power. In consequence, Air Force history has yet to find historians who adopt a broad institutional view of the service, as have, for example, Russell F. Weigley and Edward M. Coffman for the Army, Peter Karsten and Kenneth J. Hagan for the Navy, and Allan R. Millett on the Marine Corps. Grandstaff follows the paths charted by the latter historians in demonstrating how the Air Force functioned in its efforts to recruit, train, and retain qualified enlisted personnel capable of sustaining an increasingly complex and technological military system.

In addition, *Foundation of the Force* offers a major contribution to the nearly blank sheet of post-1945 armed forces institutional history. The history of the armed forces in the Cold War era is on one level largely an account of inter-service rivalry over roles and missions, a contest tightly coupled with bitter budgetary battles within the newly established Department of Defense. How to fight the Cold War and who got what within grand global strategy makes up much of current post-1945 military history. On the other hand, the "hot" wars of the so-called Cold War era–Korea and Vietnam–understandably have attracted much historical attention. Other than the battles along the Potomac and the fighting in Asia, however, historians have only sporadically examined the institutional experience of the armed services either collectively or individually. This study of evolving Air Force personnel policy informs us of a major general trend in military affairs after 1945.

Cold War military policy required military forces unlike anything in the American past. Gone were the days when the nation could rely on small naval and ground professional cadres around which mass wartime forces could be built. The Cold War necessitated the maintenance of large standing forces, partly manned by draftees but also staffed by intelligent, well-trained noncommissioned officers willing to accept a military service career.

Military leaders faced two challenges in creating substantial active forces capable of executing deterrence. First, they had to overcome the nation's traditional suspicion of large professional military forces maintained in peace. To convince America's youth and their parents that military service would not destroy the morals of their children, the armed forces had to change both how they related to the public at large and how they functioned internally. This they accomplished in part by emphasizing the communist threat to the nation and by "democratizing" military service through such reforms as the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Internally, the services reformed their personnel policies. Following the lead to military sociologists, notably Morris Janowitz and Charles Moskos, Grandstaff contends that military service after 1945 underwent a significant "civilianization" marked especially by the convergence of military occupational and personnel polices with those practiced in civilian business and industry. The services had to offer young Americans a job with distinct career patterns within an amenable work setting if they were to attract and retain people able to operate and maintain increasingly complex technical military equipment. Cold War soldiers, sailors, and airmen were decidedly different from the ne'er-do-wells and misfits that populate the pre-World War II army depicted in James Jones's fine novel, *From Here to Eternity*.

Grandstaff uses the Air Force experience to illustrate the evolution of personnel policy. Although major changes in policy did not come until the late 1940s, he makes clear that its broad outlines took shape within the USAF from its origins in the early twentieth century to the end of World War II. The Air Force pioneered in personnel policies that created an occupational structure that would attract and keep technically skilled noncommissioned officers (NCOS). It sought to establish a system that "assured a career and 'great way of life' " (p. 3). An informal system existed from before World War I through 1945, but after the Second World War the Air Force embraced a personnel system based on an industrial system "steeped in the bureaucratic rationalism and technological form" present in much of civil life by 1920 (p. 2). The essence of Air Force personnel policy was to reward occupational skill over longevity of service or military discipline. From 1907 onward, the air service recognized technical skills by granting more rapid promotion, higher pay, and larger re-enlistment bonuses to its technicians than to longer serving soldiers. The policy expanded rapidly during World War II as the AAF inducted hundreds of thousands of the brightest draftees and non-combat enlisted specialties grew exponentially.

With the onset of the Cold War, the other armed services, especially the Navy, faced the problem of recruiting and retaining essential NCO technicians. The demand was so great that the Congress and the Department of Defense implemented a variety of laws and regulations between 1947 and 1956 to build a reliable noncommissioned technical corps. Increased pay, promotion by examination within military specialties, improved housing for single and married personnel, medical benefits for dependents, and attractive retirement provisions were all available by 1956. The emphasis on military "job benefits," Grandstaff observes, illustrates the convergence of military with civilian employment practices.

Two introductory chapters discuss evolving personnel policy from 1907 through 1945. Thereafter, Grandstaff examines in detail the development of Air Force personnel policy and management between 1945 and 1956. In this period, the service convinced millions of American youth that the Air Force offered the best opportunity in which to perform one's obligatory military duty and make a rewarding career as well. To ensure the latter, the USAF implemented its Airman Career Program in 1950. Modeled on civilian employment practice, the program provided a bureaucratic method of overseeing and managing noncommissioned officers careers, coordinating training, promotion, pay, and responsibility. One problem remained in meeting the needs of career NCOs. The majority of Air Force noncoms were technicians with few military responsibilities. As aircraft systems became more and more sophisticated, fewer and fewer enlisted men had direct combat roles. Senior NCOs complained about their lack of status and military responsibility. The Air Force responded in 1952 by restricting noncommissioned officer rank to only the top three enlisted pay grades. NCOs were given specific military responsibilities in addition to their occupational duties. The advent of noncommissioned officer schools in the 1950s led to a growing military professionalism with the NCO corps, Grandstaff argues, that contributed significantly to the image of and attraction to an enlisted career in the Air Force.

Foundation of the Force makes important contributions to the understanding of the American military experience in the twentieth century generally and particularly for the early years of the Cold War. It illustrates a major long-term development in military affairs, evident from the mid-nineteenth century: the increasing managerial and technical nature of warfare that required

new styles of officership and placed new demands on noncommissioned officers. As Grandstaff makes clear, the burgeoning air service of the early twentieth century first demonstrated how these new requirements would reshape military service. It would continue to do so into the 1950s.

The author has drawn on an impressive array of sources to make his case. Air Force records held by the National Archives and the Center for Air Force History form the backbone of research. Their size and extent perhaps suggest why historians have been reluctant to tackle post-1945 institutional military history. Manuscript research in the Library of Congress and two presidential libraries add depth. Another significant source Grandstaff utilized was a survey of ten thousand former enlisted men, six thousand of whom returned questionnaires. Sociological studies and scholarly works on the development of modern personnel management policy provide a theoretical background. In sum, the evidence and conclusions in this work are based on solid, first-rate research.

Some problems, none of major significance, attend the book. Of least import but mildly irritating nonetheless are the seeming irrelevance of many of the book's illustrations. Anyone familiar with Air Force history will know that many photographs in the book are of airplanes. How these are meant to illustrate the development of personnel policy quite escapes this reader. One suspects that the author had little to do with the selection and placement of the photographs. Grandstaff's writing style flags at times. Personnel policy is a crucial issue but does not lend itself to scintillating reading. Finally, the author's emphasis towards the end of the book that the Air Force's senior noncommissioned officer corps was evolving into a profession fails to convince fully. The argument comes rather late in the story, and it gets bogged down in a sociological discussion of what is a profession and whether senior NCOs were professionals by the late 1950s. These small complaints, however, hardly detract from this valuable study. The airmen of the 1950s were decidedly different from the sergeants of the Old Army and the petty officers of the Old Navy. Noncoms in the air service differed from their service counterparts from the very start, as Grandstaff makes clear, and their evolution proved a harbinger of what military service came to be for a majority of noncommissioned officers during the second half of the twentieth century.

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