

CLASSIFICATION APPEAL DECISION
U.S. OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
CHICAGO OVERSIGHT DIVISION

INCUMBENT: **[Appellant]**

POSITION NUMBER: [#]

AGENCY CLASSIFICATION: Supervisory Military Personnel Specialist
GS-205-9

POSITION LOCATION: Department of Army
U.S. Army [Installation]
[Organization]

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL
MANAGEMENT DECISION: **GS-205-9**
Title according to agency discretion

OPM decision number: C-205-09-01

This appellate decision constitutes a certificate that is mandatory and binding on administrative, certifying, payroll, and accounting offices of the Government. It is the final administrative decision on the classification of the position, not subject to further appeal. It is subject to discretionary review only under the conditions and time limits specified in Part 511, Subpart F, of Title 5, U.S. Code of Federal Regulations.

/s/

FREDERICK J. BOLAND
CLASSIFICATION APPEALS OFFICER

March 27, 1997

DATE

DECISION TRANSMITTED TO:

Appellant

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Information Considered

- ▶ Appellant's letter of appeal, received April 19, 1996, and previous correspondence.
- ▶ Copy of the official description of the appellant's position and agency's evaluation statement.
- ▶ Copies of the appellant's subordinates' and supervisor's position descriptions.
- ▶ Copy of the appellant's performance standards.
- ▶ Copy of organization chart and statement of functions for the organization in which the appellant's position is located.
- ▶ Various and separate telephone discussions regarding the position's duties with the appellant, his supervisor, and the agency classifier.

Evaluation Criteria

- ▶ OPM series definition for the Military Personnel Management Series, GS-205, dated July 1971.
- ▶ OPM General Schedule Supervisory Guide, dated April 1993.
- ▶ OPM position classification standard for Personnel Management Series, GS-201, dated June 1966.

Introduction

The appellant contests his agency's decision in classifying his position. He is assigned to position number [#], classified as a Supervisory Military Personnel Specialist, GS-205-9, on November 25, 1995. The position is located in the [organizational location]. The appellant requests classification of his position at the GS-11 level. He feels his supervisory authorities, personal contacts, the complexity of the work he supervises, and his technical authority (Factors 3, 4, 5, and 6 under the General Schedule Supervisory Guide) warrant higher credit than his agency allowed. He also feels the proper title for his position should be Military Personnel Officer, based upon his belief that other positions, like his, bear this title even though they have responsibility for only a portion of the total personnel program.

These issues, except for the last, are addressed under the Grade Determination section of this decision. Position titles are normally prescribed by OPM classification standards. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is required by law to title and grade positions on the basis of their duties, responsibilities, and qualification requirements by comparison to the criteria specified in the appropriate classification standard or guide. Other methods of evaluation, such as comparison to other positions, are not permitted. Agencies are, however, required to apply classification standards and OPM decisions consistently. Should the appellant specifically identify a position similar to his

own but classified differently, his agency will either explain the differences between the positions or correct the inconsistency.

Job Information

As Chief of the Transition Branch, the appellant supervises an entirely civilian staff of about 14, which includes the following:

Number of Positions	Occupation	Series/Grade
2	Contact Representative	GS-962-6
1	Contact Representative	GS-962-5
1	Supervisory Mil. Per. Tech.	GS-204-8
2	Lead Mil. Per. Clerk	GS-204-5
8	Military Per. Clerk	GS-204-4

The [branch] annually processes approximately 15,000 enlisted soldiers and officers returning to civilian life from three major commands: Training and Doctrine, Forces, and Health Services (TRADOC, FORSCOM, and HSC). Transitions include retirements, release from active duty, and all separations covered in AR 635-100 (officers) and AR 635-200 (enlisted). The Branch processes the records of regular Army, Reserve, and National Guard military personnel returning to civilian life, verifies personnel and financial records information and discharge eligibility, and prepares final pay vouchers and discharge orders. It conducts briefings for personnel about to retire or separate, advises them regarding their entitlements as well as services and benefits available to them, explains procedural and regulatory requirements, and assists them in preparing letters, obtaining documents, contacting agencies, and submitting claims. Additionally, the Branch provides survivor benefits counseling to widows and widowers, counsels medical disability retirees, and provides referral assistance on medical treatment and Social Security and VA programs.

The appellant is one of four branch chiefs, ranging in grade from GS-8 through GS-11, who report to the Military Personnel Officer, GS-204-14, heading the Military Personnel Division. In addition to supervising a clerical and assistant staff, the appellant advises the Adjutant General (AG), command group, retiree councils, and civilian personnel on military retirement and separation programs. He develops and maintains liaison with officials of other Federal, State, and local government agencies, civic and public interest organizations, and related organizations to improve rapport and support for the Branch's programs.

He estimates that he spends about half his time directing the branch's retirement services, including his personal contacts to gain support for the retirement program, which encompasses a multi-state

area with an approximate population of 35,000 Army retirees and family members. He estimates the remainder of his time involves supervising Military Personnel work (about 15 percent) and overseeing the Transition Branch (about 35 percent).

Analysis and Findings

Series and Title Determination

The appellant supervises or performs work in several occupational series. He oversees Military Personnel Clerical and Technician, GS-204, work as well as Contact Representative, GS-962, work and provides technical guidance to subordinates in both areas. Additionally, he advises commanders regarding specialized personnel matters affecting military transition and retirement, which is work characteristic of the Military Personnel, GS-205, series. Such mixed occupational series work is classified in the dominant series.

The paramount requirement of the position is a thorough knowledge of the basic concepts, principles and theories of personnel management and the ability to adapt these to meet the unique organizational, staffing, management, and mission requirements of military organizations. Its reason for existence, organizational function, line of promotion, and typical recruitment source relate to the ability to advise management on military personnel matters, rather than to guide subordinates in the technical aspects of personnel procedures or to assist individuals in developing evidence of entitlement in order to obtain retirement benefits. Consequently, the Military Personnel, GS-205, series is the dominant work series.

The GS-205 standard does not prescribe an official title for positions. Accordingly, the agency may designate a title consistent with the criteria in Section III, H of the *Introduction to the Position Classification Standards*.

Grade Determination

The appellant's nonsupervisory and supervisory work must be evaluated separately because the same classification criteria do not apply to both. Only work requiring a substantial (at least 25 percent) amount of time is considered. The appellant's Military Specialist, GS-205, work presents a substantial time demand. He does not spend a substantial (at least 25 percent) amount of time personally performing Contract Specialist, GS-962, work, such as explaining legal and regulatory requirements to claimants and assisting them in the preparation of their claims. Like records processing, such work is performed by his subordinate staff. Consequently, the GS-962 standard cannot be applied to his work.

The *General Schedule Supervisory Guide* (GSSG) provides criteria for grading supervisory work in general (i.e., regardless of the type of work overseen) and is addressed first in this decision. The GS-205 standard is subsequently applied. The overall grade of the position is the higher level of either the appellant's supervisory or nonsupervisory work.

Supervisory Work

The GSSG may be used to evaluate the appellant's supervisory duties since they meet the guide's coverage criteria (i.e., the supervisory duties require the accomplishment of work through the combined technical and administrative direction of others, demand a substantial amount of time, and involve at least the minimum level of supervisory authority specified in Factor 3 of the guide).

The GSSG uses a point-factor evaluation approach. This requires a factor-by-factor analysis of the position in light of the guide. A position factor must be fully equivalent to the factor-level described in the guide to warrant credit at that level and the associated point value. If a position factor is not fully equivalent to the overall intent of a particular level described in the guide, a lower level and point value must be assigned.

Factor 1: Program Scope and Effect

This factor measures the general complexity, breadth, and impact of the program areas and work directed, including its organizational and geographic coverage. It also assesses the effect of the work both within and outside the immediate organization. All work for which the supervisor is both technically and administratively responsible, including work accomplished through subordinates or contractors, is considered. To receive credit for a given level, the separate criteria specified for both scope and effect must be met at that factor level.

Subfactor 1A: Scope

Scope addresses complexity and breadth of the program or work directed, including the geographic and organizational coverage within the agency structure. It has two elements: (a) the program (or program segment) directed and (b) the work directed, the products produced, or the services delivered. Scope includes the geographic and organizational coverage of the program or program segment.

Level 1-2 of the guide covers the direction of administrative, technical, complex clerical, or comparable work that has limited geographic coverage and supports most of the activities of a typical agency field office, a small to medium sized military installation, or comparable activities within agency program segments. Directing budget, supply, or payroll services that support a small military base is typical of this level.

Level 1-3 covers the direction of a program segment performing administrative, technical, or professional work where the program segment and work directed encompass a major metropolitan area, a state, or a small region of several states; or when most of an area's taxpayers or businesses are covered, coverage comparable to a small city. Providing complex administrative or professional services directly affecting a large or complex multi-mission military installation, or of an organization of similar magnitude, is also characteristic of this level.

The Transition Branch annually processes approximately 15,000 enlisted soldiers and officers returning to civilian life from three major commands. The Retirement Services Program encompasses a multi-state area with an approximate population of 35,000 Army retirees and family members. In

some respects, like geographical coverage, the program exceeds Level 1-2. However, the organizational breadth and complexity of the program are otherwise clearly unlike the work examples given for Level 1-3, which requires, among other things, that the work directed be complex administrative, technical, or professional work. As noted under Factor 5, the work most characteristic of the appellant's organization is higher level clerical and lower level technical work, rather than complex administrative or technical work.

We evaluate Scope at Level 1-2.

Subfactor 1B: Effect

Effect addresses impact of programs, products, or correctly performed work both within and outside the agency.

At Level 1-2, services support and significantly affect installation level, area office level, or field office operations and objectives, or are delivered to a moderate, local or limited population of clients or users comparable to a major portion of a small city or rural county. (Directing budget, supply, protective, or similar services for a small base without extensive research, testing, or similar missions meets this level.)

At Level 1-3, activities, functions, or services directly and significantly affect a wide range of agency activities, the work of other agencies, the operations of outside interests, or the general public. At the field activity level (involving large, complex, multi-mission organizations and/or very large serviced populations) the work directly involves or substantially impacts the provision of essential support services or products to numerous, varied, and complex technical, professional, or administrative functions.

The Transition Branch's work directly and significantly affects the economic well being of enlisted soldiers, officers, and retirees and their family members. The population involved, though spread over a multi-state area, is moderate in size, as at Level 1-2. The Transition Branch unquestionably provides an essential support service to the numerous and varied functions comprising the three commands it supports, as at Level 1-3. However, the support provided, essentially two personnel functions, is not equivalent to directing the many and varied functions that comprise the overall personnel program, as referenced in the illustrations for Level 1-3. Rather, it is a segment of the wider personnel support provided these commands and, therefore, significantly more limited in its effect.

We evaluate Effect at Level 1-2.

Work must meet both the scope and effect of the factor level to receive credit. The appellant's work meets Level 1-2 in both respects. Therefore, we evaluate Factor 1 at Level 1-2 and credit 350 points.

Factor 2: Organizational Setting

This factor covers the organizational situation of the supervisory position in relation to higher levels of management and credits the accountability of the position to higher levels of management.

Under this factor, if the position being classified reports directly to a Senior Executive, flag officer, or the equivalent, it receives Level 2-3 credit. If not, but the second-level supervisor of the position being classified is a Senior Executive, flag officer, or the equivalent, it receives Level 2-2 credit. An appellant reporting to more than one individual is considered to report to the individual who appraises his performance.

The appellant's performance ratings are given by his immediate supervisor, a GS-14 Military Personnel Officer, and reviewed by the Adjutant General, which is not a flag officer position and is held by a Lieutenant Colonel (military pay grade 0-5). Consequently, only the minimum credit level for this factor applies.

We evaluate this factor at Level 2-1 and credit 100 points.

Factor 3: Supervisory and Managerial Authority Exercised

This factor covers the delegated supervisory and managerial authorities exercised on a recurring basis.

The appellant states:

I do have the responsibility to review and approve serious disciplinary actions (e.g., suspensions) involving nonsupervisory and supervisory subordinates. Considering factor level 3-4b, I exercise final authority for the full range of personnel actions and organization design proposals recommended by subordinate supervisor. It states that this level may be credited even if formal clearance is required for a few actions, such as removals and incentive awards above set dollar levels.

Level 3-4 is the highest level of managerial authority recognized under the standard. The guide recognizes that top level managers with otherwise full personnel authority may still be restricted from exercising certain authorities that agency senior executives may reserve to themselves. The appellant's own authorities are considerably more restricted than top level managers', as noted below.

Level 3-2 provides three alternative sets of criteria. The third of these options (cited in paragraph 3-2c of the guide) specifies ten authorities and responsibilities characteristic of supervisors functioning at this Level. The appellant exercises nearly all these authorities and thereby meets Level 3-2.

Level 3-3 specifies two alternative sets of criteria. The first of these, Level 3-3a, essentially concerns managerial positions closely involved with high level program officials in the development of overall goals and objectives. Managers at this level typically direct the development of data to track program goals, secure legal opinions, prepare position papers or legislative proposals, and execute comparable activities. Though the appellant has input to some of these activities, he lacks significant responsibility in these areas. Such responsibilities belong to higher level positions than his own.

He claims, however, to have sufficient authority to fully satisfy Level 3-3b criteria, which describe 15 supervisory authorities that exceed in complexity and responsibility the ten depicted under paragraph 3-2c. Under this alternate provision, a position can be credited at Level 3-3b if, *in addition* to exercising all or nearly all the Level 3-2c authorities, it also exercises at least 8 of the 15 supervisory authorities specified at Level 3-3b. While the appellant exercises some of the Level 3-3b's authorities, he does not exercise the required majority. Eight that he does not significantly exercise are detailed below.

Authorities 1, 5, and 8 credit work *requiring* the use of *multiple* supervisors, team chiefs, or comparable personnel to direct, coordinate, or otherwise oversee work or provide similar oversight of contractors. The appellant claims authorities 1 and 5 based upon a subordinate GS-8 supervisor and two GS-5 leaders. The Transition Branch lacks highly complex operations, an unusual rate of change, extraordinary difficulties in training subordinates or assessing their work accomplishments, and similar attributes that would suggest its narrow span of control and multiple subordinate supervisors or leaders are required. Factor 3-3b credits the greater difficulty of supervision stemming from the need for subordinate supervisors or leaders to help ensure plans are carried out, policies understood, objectives accomplished, discipline maintained, etc. The appellant's office lacks the organizational complexity that might demonstrate such a need.

Under Authority 3, a supervisor ensures equity of both performance standards and rating techniques developed by subordinates. The appellant's subordinate supervisor, however, does not develop standards. Consequently, Authority 3 does not apply.

Authority 4 requires the direction of a program or major program segment with significant resources (e.g., one at a multimillion dollar level of annual resources). The appellant's branch does not command resources at this level.

Authority 10 involves approval of serious disciplinary actions against subordinates (e.g., suspensions). The appellant claims:

I do have the responsibility to review and approve serious disciplinary actions (e.g., suspensions) involving nonsupervisory and supervisory subordinates.

The appellant may recommend such actions but the authority to approve them is reserved to higher levels in the organization.

Authority 11 requires making decisions involving nonroutine, costly, or controversial training needs and requests involving subordinates. The appellant recommends normal training for his staff, but cannot authorize training that would be regarded as controversial for his staff members to attend, nonroutine for their line of work, or unduly costly for the subject matter.

Authority 12 involves determining whether contractor-performed work meets standards of adequacy needed to authorize payment. None of the Center's substantive, mission related work is contracted out; therefore, the appellant's technical review of work is limited to that performed by his own staff.

Given the above limitations on the position, the appellant cannot be credited with significantly and regularly exercising a majority of the authorities listed under Level 3-3b. Therefore, we evaluate this factor at Level 3-2c and credit 450 points.

Factor 4: Personal Contacts

This is a two-part factor that measures the nature and purpose of personal contacts related to supervisory and managerial responsibilities. The nature of contacts credited under Subfactor 4A and the purpose of contacts credited under Subfactor 4B must be based on the same contacts.

Subfactor 4A: Nature of Contacts

The appellant notes:

I have full responsibility for making contacts that will establish rapport with individuals in local communities. These contacts are used to promote and explore programs and benefits which will benefit widows and retirees. Example, I was instrumental in developing our present Widow Support Program. I assessed problems within this particular community along with the help of the Retiree Council and developed our very successful Widow Support Program. This position requires the ability to organize efforts of various agencies to focus on needs of retirees and widows. I consult with Command Group reference retiree needs and benefits for local retirees, responsible and chief consultant for the [installation] Retiree Council, member of the Retired Officer Association, member of Association of the United States Army and etc. I work independently in establishing relationships with these agencies, institutions, and organizations.

At Level 4A-2, contacts are with members of the business community, the general public, higher ranking managers, supervisors, or staff of program, administrative, or other work units and activities throughout the installation. These contacts sometimes require special preparation.

The appellant's typical outside contacts are with representatives of Federal and state veterans organizations, the [State] Job Service, the Retired Officers Association, the Noncommissioned Officers Association, and local radio and TV stations, which sometimes require special preparation on his part, as at Level 4A-2. His internal contacts are with staff of the commands supported.

Unlike Level 4A-3, his contacts do not often require extensive preparation of briefing materials or up-to-date technical familiarity with complex subject matter.

We evaluate this factor at Level 4A-2 and credit 50 points.

Subfactor 4B: Purpose of Contacts

The appellant believes his supervisory contacts warrant Level 4B-4 credit and states:

The purpose of these contacts are to justify, defend and explore potential for participation by organizations in providing services to retired and widowed personnel. I promote opportunities to spread information regarding the services and benefits through the media that will reach persons who need them. EXAMPLE. Participation in radio interviews and talk shows plus in 1996 my plans include a live TV talk show to promote services for retired military personnel . . . I influence, motivate, or persuade persons or groups to accept opinions or take actions related to advancing the fundamental goals and objectives of the transition program. EXAMPLE. I am meeting

with Command Group (Chief of Staff or the Commanding General) to persuade them to except this years recommendation for the annual Retiree Open House.

Although the appellant claims credit for Level 4B-4 for defending and justifying program aims, this particular level of work addresses the most difficult purposes that engage an agency. It is credited for example, when intense opposition to highly significant program issues must be overcome through highly skilled negotiation or leadership, such as when winning Congressional approval or influential public interest groups' endorsement of policies or programs they normally would oppose. In contrast, the purpose of the appellant's meeting with the Command Group was to request additional funding for the annual Retiree Open House, an event the Command Group supports, rather than opposes.

At Level 4B-2, the purpose of contacts is to ensure that information provided to outside parties is accurate and consistent; to plan and coordinate the work directed with that of others outside the subordinate organization; and/or to resolve differences of opinion among managers, supervisors, employees, contractors, or others.

At Level 4B-3, the purpose of contacts is to justify, defend, or negotiate in representing the project, program segment(s), or organizational unit(s) directed, in obtaining or committing resources, and in gaining compliance with established policies, regulations, or contracts. Contacts at this level typically involve active participation in conferences, meetings, hearings, or presentations involving problems or issues of considerable consequence or importance to the program or program segment(s) managed.

The appellant's outside contacts, like Level 4B-2, are to inform business leaders, retiree councils and hospital administrators of the Transition Branch's program objectives (such as putting job skills acquired in the military to good use upon discharge) and to solicit their interest and support. They do not involve skilled negotiation or defense of matters of considerable consequence requiring a high level of persuasive ability or negotiation skill, as required for Level 4B-3 credit. Rather, they involve an appeal to civic and charitable interests of others, once they are informed of the programs and how they might assist. His internal contacts are typically to coordinate the Branch's work with other organizations and to resolve processing inconsistencies or differences of opinion concerning the Transition Branch's functions, which are fully credited at Level 4B-2.

We evaluate this subfactor at Level 4B-2 and credit 75 points.

Factor 5: Difficulty of Typical Work Directed

This factor covers the difficulty and complexity of the basic work most typical of the organizational unit directed, as well as other line, staff, or contracted work for which supervisors have technical or oversight responsibility, either directly or through subordinate supervisors, team leaders, or others. For first line supervisors, the highest grade of the work directed is determined by two factors: 1) that which best characterizes the nature of the basic mission oriented nonsupervisory work performed or overseen by the organization directed; and 2) that which constitutes 25 percent or more of the workload (not positions or employees) of the organization.

The appellant believes Level 5-4 credit is warranted and states:

I am the second line supervisor with-in the Transition Branch. Most of my supervisory time is spent with the GS-08 supervisor directly under me. This factor does not address "RESPONSIBILITY" but it needs to factor in somewhere. Not only do I have responsibility for all areas with-in Transition Branch, I have also been delegated the approval authority for all enlisted and officer retirements. This is delegated from the Commanding General to the Adjutant General who has delegated the responsibility down to Chief, Transition Branch, which is myself.

This factor evaluates the difficulty of the nonsupervisory work directed. The appellant's supervisory responsibilities are more directly assessed elsewhere, notably under Factors 1 and 3. Signatory authority, e.g., signing orders or contracts, affects a position's responsibilities in various fashions, but these are better assessed by the criteria given under relevant factor level descriptions.

The level credited for this factor normally must constitute at least 25 percent of the workload of the organization supervised. Excluded from consideration are:

- ▶ work of lower level positions that primarily support the basic work of the unit,
- ▶ work that is graded based upon the supervisory or leader guides,
- ▶ work that is graded higher than normal because of extraordinary independence from supervision, and
- ▶ work not fully under the supervisor's authority and responsibility as defined under Factor 3.

The agency workload analysis indicates that at least 25 percent of the Branch's mission related work is at the GS-5/6 level, i.e., the Branch's Contact Representative work. None of the Contact Representative work is lower than GS-5. No higher graded, nonsupervisory work is performed within the Branch (excluding the appellant's personally performed work). The subordinate supervisor's work and the lead clerks' work are properly excluded from consideration. Consequently, GS-5/6 is the highest grade level work characteristic of the organization. A GS-5/6 base level of work equates to Factor Level 5-3 according to the conversion table on page 24 of the guide.

We evaluate this factor at Level 5-3 and credit 340 points.

Factor 6: Other Conditions

This factor measures the extent to which various conditions add to the difficulty of carrying out supervisory duties, authorities, and responsibilities.

The appellant states:

The work I supervise involves technician and or support work comparable in difficulty to GS-08, or work at the GS-4, 5, or 6 level where the supervisor has full and final technical authority over the work, which requires coordination and integration of work efforts. I have full and final technical authority with-in the Transition Branch. My decisions and work is subject to review from an administrative or program evaluation standpoint. Also in justification, this position directs subordinate supervisor of work comparable to GS-06 or lower (Note, I direct a GS-08 subordinate supervisor). A continuing effort is required to assure quality and service standards, timeliness

for products, forms, procedures, accuracy, and quantity. I insure these are met through a subordinate supervisor.

Level 6-2 requires that work supervised or overseen involves technician and/or support work comparable in difficulty to GS-7 or GS-8, or work at the GS-4, 5, or 6 level where the supervisor has full and final technical authority over the work (i.e., is responsible for all technical determinations arising from the work, without technical advice or assistance on even the more difficult and unusual problems, and without further review except from an administrative or program evaluation standpoint).

As noted under Factor 5, the appellant directs GS-5/6 work. Although he makes day-to-day operating decisions independently, guidance and advice on particularly difficult and out-of-the-ordinary technical problems arising from the work processed by his subordinates is available from his supervisor, who reviews such cases and is held fully responsible for the action taken, rather than the appellant. For example, issues like the calculation and enforcement of deadlines and their applicability and affect on the processing of discharges under Chapter 8 versus Chapter 11 are ultimately decided by the appellant's supervisor. Consequently, only minimum level credit applies.

Special Situations

When Level 6-1 is selected, a single additional level may be credited if the position meets three or more of eight *Special Situations*. The appellant's position clearly does not meet situations two through eight, described on pages 29-30 of the guide. Consequently, no additional credit is warranted.

We evaluate this factor at Level 6-1 and credit 310 points.

<i>EVALUATION SUMMARY</i> <i>Supervisory Duties</i>		
<i>FACTOR</i>	<i>LEVEL</i>	<i>POINTS</i>
1	1-2	350
2	2-1	100
3	3-2	450
4A	4A-2	50
4B	4B-2	75
5	5-3	340
6	6-1	310
	<i>TOTAL</i>	1675

The above table summarizes our evaluation of the appellant's supervisory responsibilities under the GSSG criteria. The grade conversion table on page 31 of the guide shows that 1675 points convert to grade GS-8 (1605 - 1850).

We next evaluate the appellant's nonsupervisory, personnel specialist work.

Military Specialist Work

The GS-201 Personnel Management classification standard is presented in two parts. Part I provides criteria for the classification of Personnel Officers and Assistant Personnel Officers. Such positions have responsibility for directing a total personnel management program. Part II, on the other hand, covers specialized personnel work in various segments of the personnel program.

The appellant feels that his position should be classified as a Personnel Officer rather than a Personnel Specialist because he has program responsibility for transition and retirement matters.

The title and grading criteria for Personnel Officer are reserved to positions directing the overall personnel organization or program, rather than a part of the organization or program. The Transition Branch provides a portion of the overall personnel support rendered to the military organizations served. It has virtually no responsibility for the many other activities that military personnel organizations support, e.g., entry, training, assignment, promotion, reenlistment, evaluation, awards and decorations, etc. Responsibility for management of the overall military personnel program belongs to the appellant's supervisor, a GS-14 Military Personnel Officer. The appellant does not function as an Assistant Military Personnel Officer, but rather has responsibility for a discrete portion of the total services provided. Hence, Part II, Personnel Specialist, criteria of the standard apply to his position rather than Part I, Personnel Officer, criteria.

Part II of the classification standard prescribes five factors for distinguishing among grade levels. The factors are: 1) Complexity and Difficulty of Technical Personnel Programs, 2) Management Advisory Service Functions, 3) Nature of Supervision Received, 4) Authority, and 5) Personal Contacts. Grade level determination requires the application of the grade level descriptions found under each factor. In order for a certain grade level to be assigned, the duties must fully meet that grade level in all of the factors. If work is not fully equivalent to the overall intent of a particular level described in the standard, a lower level must be assigned, unless the deficiency is balanced by an equally important aspect of the work that meets a higher level.

The grade-level portions of Part II of the standard describe separately, at each grade, the characteristics of three different types of work: 1) Program Operations, 2) Program Evaluation, and 3) Program Development. The first type involves the direct performance of personnel work in an operating personnel office providing day to day servicing. The second involves review and evaluation of the work of operating personnel offices (excluding self-evaluation conducted by an operating personnel staff). The third involves the preparation of guides to be used by management officials and operating personnel offices in performance of personnel management work. The appellant's higher graded assignments involve staff, rather than operating functions, and thus are characteristic of the second and third types, evaluation and development. (Lower graded Clerks and Technicians

implement military personnel regulations and policies. Higher graded Specialists, on the other hand, perform staff work by developing or revising these regulations and policies, analyzing and improving work procedures used in implementing them, and advising commanders on related personnel matters.)

GS-9 Specialist work is characterized by assignments that regularly encompass problems of average difficulty, frequently combined with management advisory service functions.

GS-11 Specialist work is characterized by either: (1) assignments that regularly encompass problems of more than average difficulty, combined with management advisory service functions characteristic of the GS-9; or (2) assignments of an average level of difficulty (as described at GS-9) combined with full responsibility for management advisory service functions requiring a high level of technical skill, broad personnel management knowledge, persuasiveness, and imagination.

The appellant manages transition and retirement services, making decisions relating to problems on eligibility for retirement and decisions on the grounds for separation of soldiers. He indicates that he is a local subject-matter-expert in both areas and is relied upon to resolve technical issues in accordance with Army regulation, rules, and principles. Further, he states that he advises and informs the Deputy Adjutant General, Chief of Staff, and Commander on issues pertaining to his program. In addition, he indicates that he does not perform the day-to-day work, but instead resolves problems his subordinate supervisor cannot resolve and reviews retirement and separation actions for technical adequacy.

In response to our request for work specific examples, the appellant provides the following examples of typical problems that he personally resolves and advises on:

- clarification of instructions and regulations,
- development and presentation to the Adjutant General of a plan for handling seasonal workload fluctuations,
- operation orders for Retiree Activity Days, and
- evaluation of program changes.

We examine these in turn against the grade level factors specified in the classification standard.

Factor 1: Complexity and Difficulty of the Technical Personnel Programs

This factor considers the complexity of problems, organizations, and jobs that Personnel Specialists must deal with and the nature of guidelines used. The appellant supports the transition demands of three major commands. The problems he encounters, however, depend not so much on the organization or job characteristics of the commands as they do on the status and circumstances surrounding the personnel being processed (e.g., officer or enlisted, regular or reserve, early or normal discharge, honorable, general, or dishonorable conditions, etc.). The personnel functions for which he is responsible involve the full range of circumstances and conditions for both officers and enlisted personnel. The regulations and guidelines he applies contain many provisions and

alternatives, but for the most part are specific and detailed. Decisions are based primarily upon factual information and documentation, rather than interpretation of a considerable amount of incomplete and conflicting data.

As at the GS-9 level, retirement and transition functions involve sufficiently standardized operating procedures and specifically applicable guides that their work processes and eligibility requirements are readily understood. The main technical problems encountered are those relating to the development of full factual information and its documentation. At the GS-11 level, personnel issues vary widely, cutting across assignments, promotions, records, automated systems, retirements, and separations. Incomplete and conflicting data complicate the resolution of issues and problems. In contrast, the appellant typically resolves procedural problems (such as, which address to use for travel allowances when more than one home address is shown on forms) limited to the two personnel functions for which he is responsible.

We evaluate this factor at the GS-9 level.

Factor 2: Management Advisory Service Functions

The appellant indicates that he advises commanders on matters specific to his program. He further indicates that he is a consultant to the [installation]Army Retiree Council. This council consists of twenty members (ten enlisted and ten officers) and two Generals usually attend the meetings. The appellant sets up this meeting and acts as an intermediary between the Chief of Staff and the Council members. The appellant is responsible for orchestrating an annual Open House, which usually attracts about 12,000 visitors. He advises the Council on this function and its funding requirements each year.

As at the GS-9 level, the appellant's advice to commanders consists of a limited amount and type of advice to supervisors in the exercise of their responsibilities. His advice (such as clarifying entry level status to help commanders present valid discharge requests for pregnant soldiers, suggesting how to structure retirement day activities, and recommending community resources that might be tapped for transition support) can be made without having to weigh and consider the relationship of the retirement or transition functions to other personnel specializations or the total field of personnel management. Thus his advice is of lesser scope and difficulty than, for example, advice GS-11 Specialists may offer commanders on sensitive personnel issues and issues that cut across several military personnel functions (assignments, promotions, records, automated systems, etc.) Similarly, it is of lesser scope and difficulty than what GS-11 Specialists may offer civilian managers regarding organizational and position management, where grade level, pay, career path, recruitment, and qualification requirements of alternative structures must be weighed and balanced through considerable analysis. Though persuasiveness and skill in explaining are necessary, the appellant's advice does not demand the high level of technical skill and broad personnel management knowledge characteristic of the GS-11 level.

His program evaluation assignments also fall considerably short of the GS-11 level, where Specialists typically are concerned with actions taken by a number of different operating personnel offices for a wide range of areas and gather case information through interviews with personnel office staff, operating supervisors, and employees to determine the factual basis for the personnel actions. He

cites his analysis and projection of additional personnel, equipment, space, and overtime (e.g., five temporary summer hires and three students) necessary to handle increased workload (about 4,000 additional Reserve and National Guard members for processing) in his program during the summer. He further notes that he offered better reasons for not adopting one of five recommendations an evaluation team made for enhancing his program. However, his analysis and recommendations concern only his own Branch's functions and actions, which typically comprise cases of limited difficulty, rather than several personnel functions or other offices' actions.

His program development responsibilities are similarly constrained and involve development of supplemental guides within the framework of more general guides to secure their more uniform application to problems typically encountered in the organizations served. Unlike GS-11 Specialists, the appellant is not expected when preparing guidance to gather and correlate a mass of factual information and opinions, to arrive at significant generalizations, and to express clearly in writing and orally the decisions reached.

We evaluate this factor at the GS-9 level.

Factor 3: Nature of Supervision Received

According to the appellant, he submits a plan for his program including desired funding levels and priorities. He also notes:

I have full responsibility for making contacts that will establish rapport with individuals in local communities I consult with Command Group reference retiree needs and benefits for local retirees, responsible and chief consultant for the [installation] Retiree Council, member of the Retired Officer Association, member of Association of the United States Army and etc. I work independently in establishing relationships with these agencies, institutions, and organizations My decisions and work is subject to review from an administrative or program evaluation standpoint.

This factor assesses both independence and responsibility. The appellant works independently on day to day matters involving common problems, as is typical for the GS-9 level. (Supervision received at the GS-9 level is general in nature. Technical review of completed work is more detailed when the results may serve as local precedents for future actions, the decisions may have a significant impact on other functions of the personnel office, or the recommendations may affect relationships with employee groups or key supervisors within the establishment.) He does not have responsibility for the more difficult problems common to the GS-11 level, as noted under Factor 1. Without this additional responsibility, the nature of supervision received cannot exceed GS-9.

We evaluate this factor at the GS-9 level.

Factor 4: Authority

The appellant states:

Not only do I have responsibility for all areas with-in Transition Branch, I have also been delegated the approval authority for all enlisted and officer retirements. This is delegated from the Commanding General to the Adjutant General who has delegated the responsibility down to Chief, Transition Branch, which is myself.

The GS-9 level is characterized by the fact that recommendations and decisions mainly apply to individual actions. No single decision, therefore, has significant impact on the agency or the personnel program. Final signature authority for certain designated types of actions may be present or absent without grade significance.

GS-11 level authority is similar, in many respects, to that described at GS-9. However, GS-11 Specialists are given greater authority to plan their own work, e.g., recruiting campaigns. Also, their judgment and recommendations are relied on very heavily in final decisions on individual case problems.

The appellant's recommendations and decisions do not involve cases or actions typical of the GS-11 level. Hence, he cannot exercise GS-11 level authority. The authority he exercises is fully recognized at the GS-9 level.

We evaluate this factor at the GS-9 level.

Factor 5: Personal Contacts

The appellant states:

I have full responsibility for making contacts that will establish rapport with individuals in local communities. These contacts are used to promote and explore programs and benefits which will benefit widows and retirees. Example, I was instrumental in developing our present Widow Support Program. I assessed problems within this particular community along with the help of the Retiree Council and developed our very successful Widow Support Program. This position requires the ability to organize efforts of various agencies to focus on needs of retirees and widows. I consult with Command Group reference retiree needs and benefits for local retirees, responsible and chief consultant for the [installation] Retiree Council, member of the Retired Officer Association, member of Association of the United States Army and etc. I work independently in establishing relationships with these agencies, institutions, and organizations

The purpose of these contacts are to justify, defend and explore potential for participation by organizations in providing services to retired and widowed personnel. I promote opportunities to spread information regarding the services and benefits through the media that will reach persons who need them. EXAMPLE. Participation in radio interviews and talk shows plus in 1996 my plans include a live talk show to promote services for retired military personnel I influence, motivate, or persuade persons or groups to accept opinions or take actions related to advancing the fundamental goals and objectives of the transition program. EXAMPLE. I am meeting with Command Group (Chief of Staff or the Commanding General) to persuade them to except this years recommendation for the annual Retiree Open House.

At the GS-9 level, personal work contacts are characterized by responsibility for maintaining effective work relationships with employees and their supervisors and, in some positions, the general public. Specialists initiate contacts with operating officials and employees to: (1) obtain factual information on which recommendations, decisions, or actions can be based; (2) explain the basis for personnel decisions, recommendations, and actions; and (3) help further an understanding of the agency personnel management policies and programs. The appellant's contacts within his own agency are at this level.

Personal contacts at the GS-11 level are similar to the GS-9 in many respects. However, GS-11 Specialists typically need to "sell" themselves to all levels of supervisors and management staff

specialists, in order to gain confidence and acceptance of advice. Some of the appellant's contacts outside the agency meet this level.

The appellant's contacts outside his agency occur in a different setting and for a different purpose than his internal contacts. They occur in a less structured setting and require him to catch the interest of various parties. As noted earlier, the appellant informs business leaders, retiree councils and hospital administrators of the Transition Branch's program objectives (such as putting job skills acquired in the military to good use upon discharge) and solicits their interest and support. They do not require a high level of persuasive ability or negotiation skill as claimed, but demand that the appellant establish his role each time in making new contacts and win the cooperation of otherwise disinterested parties. The nature of these contacts, consequently, substantially exceed the GS-9 level and are equivalent to those expected at the GS-11 level.

We evaluate this factor at the GS-11.

Extra Credit Provisions: Variety and Program Responsibility

The Personnel Specialist classification standard provides extra grade level credit under special circumstances for positions involved solely in personnel operations. These provisions do not apply to the appellant's position, since it is graded based upon its advisory, development, and evaluation work, rather than operations.

Decision

In order for a grade level to be assigned, a position must fully meet that grade level in all of the standard's grade level factors. The appellant's position meets the GS-11 level under only one factor. Consequently, the position is properly classified as GS-205-9 and titled according to agency discretion.