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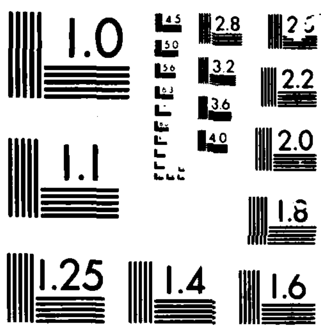

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Examines the training, organization, and equipment of corps and division level command posts during World War II. Discusses special short courses given to staff officers at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, during the war. Describes the configuration of corps and division headquarters in the field. Describes the organization and functions of war rooms giving 3rd Infantry Division and 33rd Infantry Division war rooms as examples. Analyzes the interrelationships of commanders and staffs with emphasis on the scope of staff officers' authority and responsibility.

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Division and Corps Command Posts in World War II

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Division and Corps Command Posts in World War II

Summary

Commanders spent most of their time forward, rather than staying in their command posts. During their absence, staff officers issued instructions in accordance with current operational planning and the commanders' intentions. Chiefs of staff and operations officers were key personnel. They had to enjoy their commanders' trust and know what kinds of decisions the commanders would reserve to themselves.

Prior to the war, command posts functioned as separate staff sections. But during combat, some command posts integrated their staff sections, as G-2/G-3 groups or as War Rooms. War Rooms included officers from G-2, G-3 and division or corps artillery. In the War Rooms were charts and maps depicting the strengths of friendly units, the current situation, projected plans, the supply situation and transportation net. Commanders and staff officers learned the current situation quickly by visiting War Rooms. These were often the locales of command briefings at the opening or close of the day. War Rooms might be subscribers to special command nets and they might have direct lines to the artillery fire direction centers. During combat operations, War Rooms were nerve centers, constantly taking reports and issuing orders or instructions to subordinate units.

Strength of Division and Corps Headquarters

The strength of division and corps headquarters was set by Tables of Organization (T/O) and from 1943 by Tables of Organization and Equipment (T/O&E). This strength increased substantially during the war. Prior to 1941, the infantry division headquarters was authorized 27 officers and the armored division headquarters 28 officers.[1] In

1943, the infantry division headquarters was authorized 38 officers and in 1945 this strength increased to 42 officers. [2] Two years earlier, the armored division headquarters had also been set at 42 officers. [3] Enlisted strength in these headquarters was about 105 to 115 men, exclusive of support personnel in the headquarters companies.

At the end of the war, an infantry division headquarters was authorized one major general as commander, one brigadier general as assistant commander, one colonel as chief of staff and one colonel as chief of the G-3 section. [4] Eleven lieutenant colonels were authorized as G-1, G-2, assistant G-3, G-4 and chiefs of special staff sections. Up to 1945, the G-3 had been authorized the rank of lieutenant colonel. Assistant chiefs of G-1, G-2, and G-4 sections were authorized rank of major. Three captains were authorized as liaison officers. The total number of general staff officers (chief of staff, chiefs of general staff sections, assistant chiefs of general staff sections, and liaison officers) was thus only 11 officers. However, in practice general staffs were often augmented from various sources.

In general, the authorization documents designated officer positions on the general staff, but authorized enlisted personnel for the headquarters as a whole. However, the 1942 T/O for armored division headquarters designated by position both officer and enlisted personnel in the four general staff sections. [5] According to this T/O, the G-2 section had one lieutenant colonel, one major, one motor sergeant, one draftsman, and one stenographer in grade 5. The G-3 section had one lieutenant colonel, two majors, one master sergeant, one staff sergeant clerk, one draftsman, and two stenographers in grade 4. According to these authorizations, the G-2 section would have totaled only five personnel and the G-3 section totaled only ten personnel including two personnel in G-3 Air. Experience during the war showed that more strength was required.

In 1945, the General Board observed that "The personnel alloted to

G-3 Sections by standard tables of organization was generally found to be inadequate. ... Not all, but most of the other headquarters - army, corps and division - found it necessary to augment their G-3 Sections with personnel from various sources within the headquarters and from subordinate units." [6] The General Board recommended a total of 26 personnel for a division G-3 section including one lieutenant colonel, three majors and six captains. [7] Three of these captains were liaison officers assigned to a liaison section within G-3. The operations and training section alone comprised two captains and eight enlisted personnel.

Authorization for corps headquarters was set by T/O&E during 1943 at 53 officers, 5 warrant officers, and 93 enlisted men. [8] Officers in the corps headquarters included one lieutenant general as commander, one brigadier general as chief of staff, 15 colonels, 10 lieutenant colonels, 16 majors, and 10 captains. Two majors and three captains were directly subordinate to the chief of staff. The general staff sections had these officer strengths: G-1: 2; G-2: 4; G-3: 6; G-4: 3. While the corps was a flexible formation tailored for particular operations, the following units were normally organic to a corps in the field: a headquarters company, a signal battalion, a headquarters and headquarters battery serving corps artillery, and an observation battalion in support of field artillery.

The staffs of infantry and armored divisions were supported by headquarters companies organized under separate T/O&E. Elements in support of the infantry division headquarters included an administrative headquarters, transportation and a defense platoon. Equipment in 1943 included 16 quarter ton trucks, 6 three-quarter ton command trucks, and 7 one and one half ton trucks. [9] In addition, division artillery operated light aircraft primarily for artillery spotting, but also for reconnaissance and liaison. In 1943, the headquarters company of an armored division was authorized 2 light aircraft, 2 M-8 armored cars, 1 M-3 half track, 16 M-3A1 half tracks minus armament, 3 light tanks, 13 quarter ton trucks, 2 three-quarter ton trucks, and 4 two and one half ton trucks. [10] The divisions often modified vehicles to support command and staff functions. Typical modifications included installation of additional radios, fabrication of containers to store files and portable typewriters, and construction of map boards

Maps overlaid with acetate and annotated with grease pencil were the focus of staff activity. Each section of the general staff required its own situation map or chart, kept as current as possible. In the G-2 and G-3 sections or in the War Room were records of communications. Often these documents included verbatim transcriptions of telephone and radio conversations recorded by stenographers. Other important tools of the headquarters were portable typewriters and mimeograph machines to disseminate orders and instructions. The primary means of communication was wire, increasingly supplemented by radio. Telephone calls were funneled through division and corps switchboards and often monitored by interested staff officers or formal information services.

Training of Staff Officers

To meet the demands of war, the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth drastically changed its courses and the pace of instruction. The standard staff officers' course had required two years during the period 1927 to 1935. In 1935, it had reverted to a one year's course. About 200 Regular Army officers, most of them majors with 10 to 15 years service, entered this course each June. Their instruction included tactical rides and terrain studies done on horseback. The curriculum concentrated heavily on the control of infantry formations in the field with much less attention paid to administration, logistics or more technical staff work. [11]

Mobilization quickly revealed that too few officers had been properly trained. For example, of 17,752 National Guard Officers called to active duty by September 1941, only 6,800 had attended some service school, often many years previously.[12] To fill the pressing need for better trained staff officers, Leavenworth began a series of short courses each lasting only two months. The first such class opened in December 1940. It included 54 National Guard officers, 11 Reserve officers, and 31 Regular Army officers.[13] This new short course, originally termed Special Course by the school, encompassed just over 300 hours of instruction, of which about 250 hours were practical exercises. The first eleven Special Courses had separate 31 hour blocks of instruction for officers destined to perform duties in Air, G-1, G-2, G-3, and G-4 sections. Later, it proved impractical to forecast an officer's assignment to a particular general staff section and this specialized instruction ceased. As a result of the increasing number of students, Leavenworth abandoned field exercises, but the emphasis on practical staff work continued.[14]

Commanding officers throughout the Army selected candidates for the Special Course based on quotas set by the War Department. The criteria were for officers in rank captain or above, currently serving on staff at any level from army through battalion, and preferably under forty years of age.[15] Instructors were not senior in rank to many of their students, but they often did have valuable experience to impart. As the war progressed, younger Reserve and National Guard officers became instructors at Leavenworth. They had themelves graduated from the Command and General Staff School or were at least college graduates. Officers with overseas experience were preferred and The Surgeon General reported the arrival in the United States of qualified officers who were recovering from wounds or sickness. By 1944, about eighty percent of the Leavenworth faculty had previously served overseas.[16] These relatively young yet experienced officers gave a practical, realistic tone to the course work.

In January 1942, Leavenworth initiated another series of an abbreviated course. This new four week course was designed to prepare commanders and staffs of newly forming divisions. During 1943, Army Ground Forces activated 38 new divisions and during 1943 an additional 17 divisions.[17] Prior to activation, most of these divisions sent their commanders, assistant commanders, and key staff officers to attend the four week course. These staff officers initially included the G-2, G-3, G-4, ordnance officer, adjutant general, chemical officer, inspector general, division engineer, judge advocate general, headquarters commandant, signal officer, and the executive officer of division artillery, with some others added in later versions of the course.[18] The course consisted primarily of map exercises intended to make the commander and his staff into a smoothly functioning team. From January 1942 to July 1943, a total of 3,746 officers graduated from the four week course.[19]

Training during the war years was a team effort. Personalized instruction was infeasible during the immense rush to produce qualified staff officers. At peak, Leavenworth had just 175 instructors, but by 1944 it was graduating about 5,000 students annually.[20] The ratio of instructors to students fell from 1:5 in the prewar years to 1:10 during the latter part of the war.[21] Classes usually took place in large halls and the students worked with minimal supervision. The instructors did very lttle lecturing. Instead, they presented problems and assigned tasks, usually the preparation of appropriate staff papers in standard formats. Critique of student solutions often took place in a conference atmosphere.

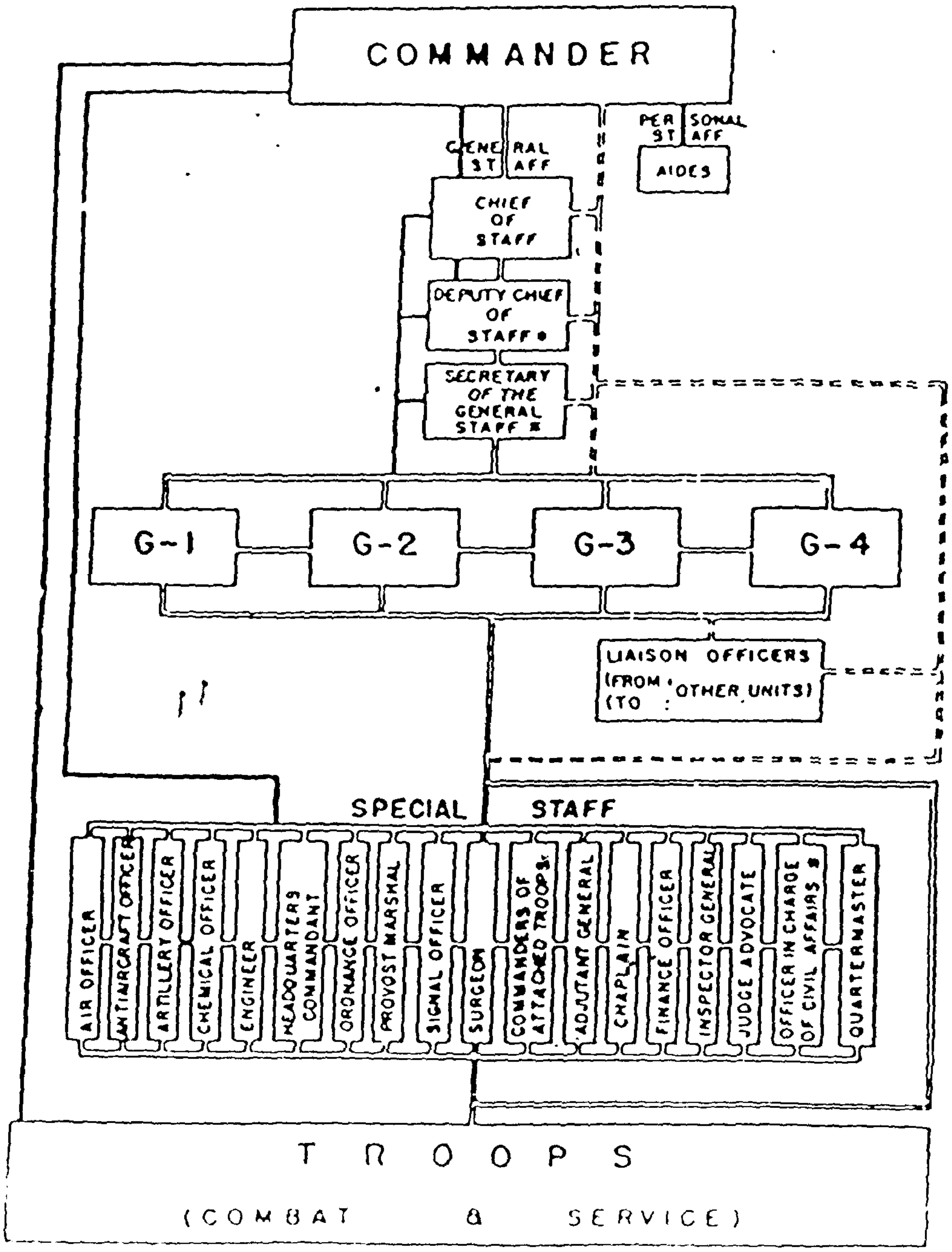
From simple beginnings, the two months Special Course developed a sophisticated curriculum that reflected experience in joint and combined operations. The first Special Course in December 1940 had devoted only 7 hours to aviation topics. It had given more time (3 hours) to cavalry than to airborne troops (1 hour) or tanks (1 hour).[22] Instruction on division operations had been divided equally between the square infantry division and the triangular infantry division with three infantry regiments that was just being introduced. Originally, there was only one version of the Special Course, although for a time some specialized training in the general staff sections was offered. By June 1944, the Special Course, now called the General Staff Course, was offered in two versions, the Air Forces Course and the Ground Forces Course. Out of 426 total hours, these versions had 274 hours of common instruction. [23] In addition, Leavenworth now offered an Army Service Forces Course with a completely separate curriculum. The Ground Forces Course was further specialized into armor, infantry, airborne, and antiaircraft variants. Staff procedure at division and corps level was still the heart of the Ground Forces version, but the curriculum also included The Artillery-Infantry-Tank Team, Tactical Air Force Communications and Control, Air Operations in a Task Force, the British-American Task Force, four hours of Airborne Operations, Naval Gunfire Support, Jungle and Amphibious Operations, and a map exercise called Attack of an Atoll. [24]

The primary references for instruction at Leavenworth were Field Manual 100-5, Operations; Field Manual 100-15, Larger Units; and Field Manual 101-5, Staff Officers' Field Manual - The Staff and Combat Orders. The August 1940 edition of Field Manual 101-5 with ten changes remained in force throughout the war. It described the responsibilities of commanders and staffs with the familar distinction between general and special staffs. **(Figure 1)** Commanders of attached troops were dual-hatted as special staff officers. In a paragraph entitled "AUTHORITY", the field manual said this:

> A staff officer as such has no authority to command. All policies, decisions, and plans whether originating with the commander or with the staff must be authorized by the commander before they are put into effect. When a staff officer by virtue of delegated authority issues an order in the name of the commander, responsibility remains with the commander even though he may not know of the order. [25]

The faculty at Leavenworth seems to have taken an even more empirical view of the authority execised by staff officers in the field. A set of instructors' notes states (emphasis in original):

COMMAND AND STAFF PROCEDURE



* IN CERTAIN UNITS WHEN NOT REPRESENTED ON SPECIAL STAFF.

——— COMMAND CHANNEL (DOWN)
– – – ROUTINE CHANNEL FOR –
ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS (UP)
COORDINATION (DOWN)
COOPERATION
INFORMATION
=== OCCASIONAL CHANNEL FOR ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATION (UP)
INFORMATION

FM 101-5, p.2
August, 1940

Figure 1

A STAFF OFFICER DOES GIVE ORDERS. MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT THAT BECAUSE THE FACT IS OFTEN OBSCURED. [26]

Beyond the mechanics of staff procedure, Leavenworth taught staff officers how to exercise their authority as extensions of their commanders. The first point was that staff officers carried out the commanders' decisions whatever the staff officers thought of their wisdom:

> First prerequisite of a staff officer is ability "to accept a situation as dictated by God, the Enemy and your General" and to make the best. [27]

The next injunction was to consider the recommendations of subordinate commanders:

> Always consult subordinate commanders, when they are available, on all matters relating to their units which have not been specifically provided for in the division commander's orders. [28]

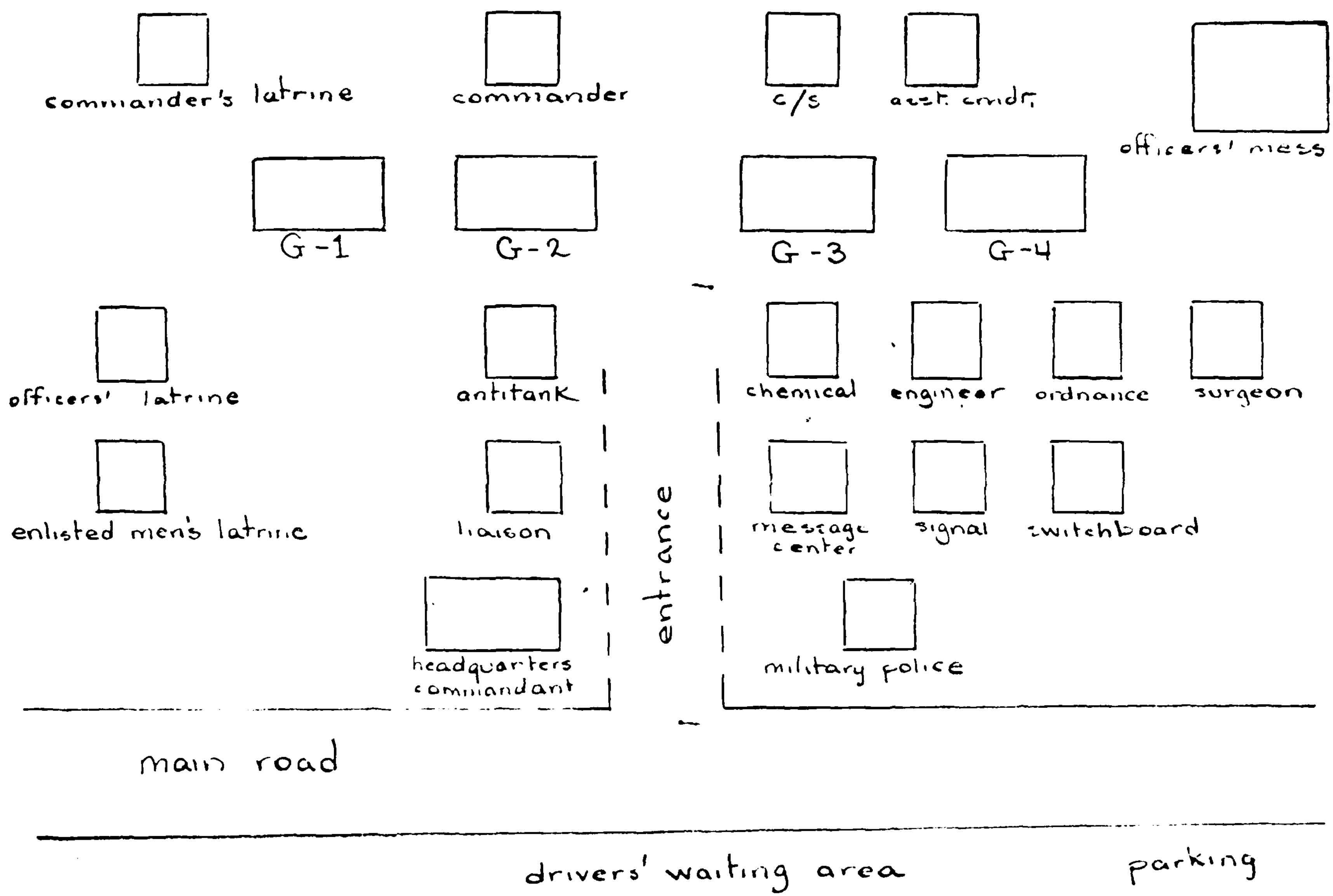
For this system to work, the staff officers had to know not only their commanders' decisions. They also had to understand the intent behind the orders. An instructor in 1943 said:

> I want to make another point. Everyone agrees that orders should be short, concise and clear. But they must alo be complete. In the effort to get speed and to shorten orders there is a tendency to omit details that are necessary if subordinate commanders are to be able to meet unexpected developments in accordance with your general wishes.
> ... I saw a division get an order to "Push vigorously on Kershaw." The General was not told "Why," so when he encountered the enemy he made an attack. This brought on a general engagement which was contrary to the wishes of the Corps commander. What the order was supposed to have meant was "Push vigorously on Kershaw in order to develop the enemy situation and cover the advance of the corps to a line several miles short of Kershaw." If that "Why" or reason had been in the order, the division commander would have acted differently and more in accord with the Corps Commander's wishes. So remember, a subordinate commander is entitled to know "Why" in the order; you cannot expect him to be a mind reader. [29]

Field Deployment of Headquarters

In the field, division and corps headquarters normally deployed in forward and rear echelons. The command post was always located in the forward echelon. This echelon normally included the commander, assistant commander, chiefs of the general staff sections (G-1 through G-4) and the artillery commander. The staff sections G-2, G-3 and G-4 were normally in the forward echelon, while the G-1 section was often in the rear echelon. Special staff sections were usually deployed with the chemical section, ordnance section, engineer section, signal section and provost marshal in the forward echelon. In the rear echelon were the adjutant general, judge advocate, inspector general, medical section, finance section, postal section, chaplain and special services. Thus the forward echelon contained operational elements and the rear echelon contained administrative elements of the headquarters.

A typical standard operating procedure grouped the forward echelon around the chief of staff and the G-2/G-3 sections. **(Figure 2)** In close proximity were the commander, G-4, artillery commander and the air liaison officer. Special staff sections were on the periphery. A message center would normally be located near the entrance to the area. The supporting signal unit and the headquarters company were within walking distance. The command post of the division or corps artillery was separate from the headquarters but usually not far distant. The entire forward echelon was normally within a few hundred yards of a major road, but not close to a junction or other feature likely to attract enemy fire. In Africa, Sicily and Italy, headquarters often used tents, but in France, Belgium and Germany severe weather made buildings preferable. These buildings ranged from nondescript structures to magnificent French chateaux. Concealment from the air was a persistent but minor consideration. Enemy artillery was a greater problem for the division command post, because it was often within artillery range of the opposing forces.



Forward Echelon (Command Post)
SOP 3d Infantry Division, 4 March 1942

Figure 2.

Division command posts were located well forward, so that the commanders, liaison officers and members of the staff could easily visit subordinate units and the front. Normally, division command posts were about two to five miles from the line of contact. It was thought better to suffer occasional incoming rounds than to forfeit close contact with subordinate units. Corps command posts were farther from the front, but still within easy driving distance from the division command posts. The remote location of II Corps command post in February 1942 during the Tunisian campaign was considered a poor commentary on its commander. [30]

With some exceptions, division and corps commanders spent most of their waking hours away from their command posts. In response to a questionnaire from General Bruce C. Clarke, retired general officers estimated they had spent no more than 25 percent of their time at their command posts. [31] Some commanders would quickly and informally update themselves at their command posts before leaving for the field. Other commanders preferred to stay at their command posts for formal briefings and important conferences. All commanders responding to the questionnaire reported that they had spent at least 75 percent of their time in the field visiting subordinate units, viewing the front and controlling operations. The commanders' aides or staff officers of subordinate units kept the command posts informed of the commanders' locations. When General Omar N. Bradley visited 79th Infantry Division in July 1944, he was displeased to discover both the commander and assistant commander in the command post at the same time. [32] Bradley thought that least one of them should have been forward.

Commanders went forward with one or two vehicles and sometimes a small armed escort. They relied on subordinate units to provide security and command post facilities. On occasion, particularly during rapid advance, a commander might deploy a small forward command group. This group might include the commander, his aide, the G-3 or another officer from the G-3 section, an artillery representative, radio operators and an armed escort appropriate to the situation. Forward command groups were regularly employed in armored divisions during offensive operations.

The chiefs of staff and operations officers had vital roles. Ernest N. Harmon, commander of 1st Armored Division, thought that a commander's success depended less on his tactical ability than on the selection of a brilliant chief of staff. [33] Under normal conditions, the chief or staff had sole responsibility for the activities of the staff while the commander did no more than spotcheck its work. Commanders often accorded wide lattitude to their chiefs of staff and operations officers while the commanders themselves were gone on visits. About half of the World War II commanders preferred to remain available while their staffs planned major operations. The other half of the commanders thought their staffs could work on the basis of a clear directive with little or no further command guidance. Such trust developed quickly during the war and was easier when staffs remained stable. If a commander was reassigned, he often took his chief of staff and operations officer with him to his new command.

Separate Staff Sections

Prior to World War II, general staff sections worked in formal separation from each other. Field Manual 101-5, Staff Officers' Field Manual, described the staff sections and listed the responsibilities of each. In general terms, these responsibilities have changed little to the present day. The Field Manual was published in pocket-sized format so that a staff officer might have it readily available. It delineated required journals, situation maps and reports. It also indicated when a staff section should coordinate with another staff section. For example, G-3 was to coordinate with G-2 as concerned the enemy situation, terrain and weather, intelligence missions of combat troops and tactical measures to gain surprise. [34] In general, the field manual envisioned that each staff section would maintain its own situation map. However, in divisions "when personnel of the general staff section is inadequate, a joint G-2/G-3 situation map may suffice."[35] It further specified that in highly mobile units each staff section kept its own journal, except that at division level when personnel strength was inadequate, two or more sections might combine their journals.

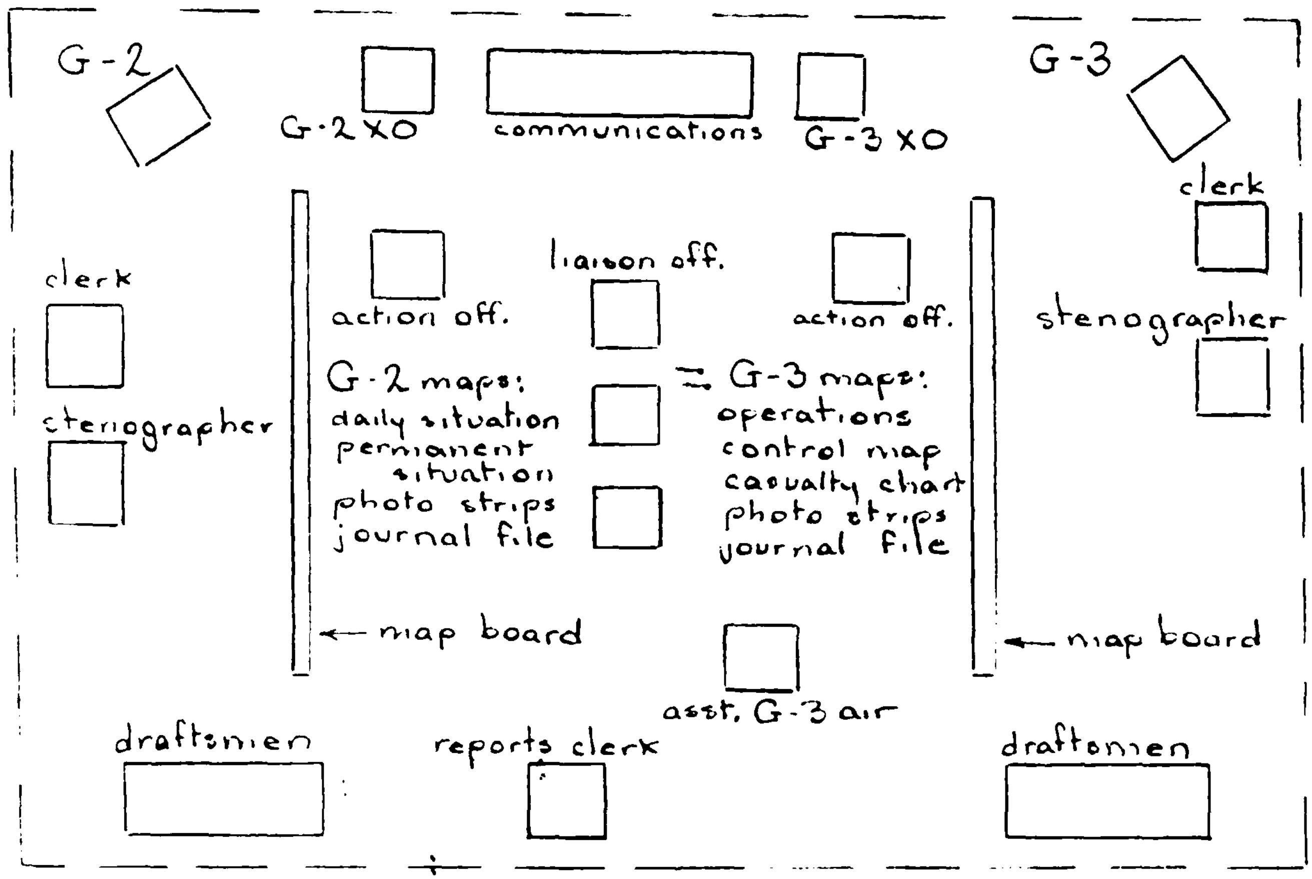
Following the guidance of the field manuals, division and corps entered the war with separate general staff sections. These sections might be located less than one hundred yards apart and they might coordinate informally on a continuous basis, but each remained separate. Even prior to combat, these arrangements could be cumbersome. The Standard Operating Procedure for 3d Infantry Division, for example, had this stipulation: "A draftsman from the G-2 office will copy the enemy situation on a portable map. He will then go to the G-3 office, post the enemy situation on the G-3 map and copy our own situation from the G-3 map onto the portable map. He will then go to the Chief of Staff, the Liaison Tent and the G-4 office in turn and bring their maps up to date. He will then return to the G-2 office."[36] A system like this was better suited to peacetime than to combat.

During the war, division and corps staffs often found that separation of general staff sections was cumbersome. This problem had several solutions. Often staff sections moved closer to each other and and intensified coordination, thus preserving formal separation while informally joining together. This was the most common solution. As an alternative, elements of G-2 and G-3 joined formally and this G-2/G-3 group became the hub of the command post. In perhaps the best solution, a "War Room" developed. During World War II, a "War Room" usually corresponded roughly to today's tactical operations center. (Confusingly, some commands used the term "War Room" to describe a briefing facility where visitors received information without disturbing the headquarters.)

War Rooms

During operations in the southwestern Pacific, 33d Infantry Division found that G-2 and G-3 operations required a consolidated staff element.[37] Usually, this G-2/G-3 group was housed in two squad tents set side by side. **(Figure 3)** In the center was a communications desk with clerks from G-2 and G-3 sitting next to each other. On this desk were telephones to the G-2 switchboard, G-3 switchboard, directly to the three infantry regiments, to the artillery fire direction center and also to major attached units. These direct communications avoided the delays common when communicating through the division's switchboards. The G-2, the G-3, and action officers from each of their sections had desks near the communications desk. Aligned with the ridgepoles of the tents were large display boards. On these boards were a daily situation map, a permanent situation map, displays of aerial photographs, an operational map, a control map and a casualty chart. The regimental liaison officers and the assistant G-3 air also had desks there. With clerks and draftsman, the G-2/G-3 group normally included twelve officers and fourteen to sixteen enlisted men. An establishment this size was practical because the command post moved infrequently.

The G-2/G-3 group in the 33d Infantry Division command post was the nerve center for combat operations. It was a subscriber to a radio operations net that included the commander, assistant commander, chief of staff, division artillery commander, the G-2 and G-3 sections and the division liaison officers at higher, adjacent and lower units. The commander often used this net to communicate operational decisions to his chief of staff or G-3. Within the G-2/G-3 group, clerks copied each important message in triplicate. One copy each went to the G-2, G-3 and the journal clerk. Action teams from G-2 and G-3 updated their situation maps, disseminated the information and posted messages next to the maps. Anyone entering the G-2/G-3 group tents could learn the latest situation by reading these messages and studying the maps. Normally, the commander received his briefing in the War Room at 1900



G-2 / G-3 Group, 33d Infantry Division
Military Review, XXV, #11, February 1946, p. 18.

Figure 3.

hours each day together with the general and special staff officers. At these briefings, G-2, G-3, regimental liaison officers and a representative from division artillery usually spoke. Following their briefings, the commander outlined plans for the following day.

During operations in the European Theater, 3d Infantry Division developed a War Room.[38] **(Figure 4)** This command element could move ahead of the forward echelon of the headquarters. Depending on the situation, the forward echelon might catch up later. The War Room required a minimum of three officers and four enlisted men. It included one G-2 officer, one G-3 officer, and an artillery liaison officer. In addition, there were three stenographers who recorded conversations verbatim. Information from these calls became part of a consolidated G-2/G-3 journal kept in the War Room. One chief clerk assured action on incoming calls and posted the G-3 map. During lulls in the fighting, a single night duty officer had responsibility for the War Room. When combat became intense or planning for a major operation was in progress, the War Room operated at full strength through the night.

The 3d Infantry Division War Room staff maintained charts and maps displaying the current situation of the division. The G-1 board displayed current data on personnel including the strength of each unit and casualties broken down by cause such as small arms fire, mortar and artillery fire, accident and illness. The G-2 map displayed enemy dispositions, locations of enemy artillery and order of battle information. The G-3 map showed current dispositions of the division's tactical units and flanking divisions as well as planned operations. The G-4 map reflected supply routes, supply points, location of the evacuation hospital and the dispositions of service elements, including the division's shower units. The engineer map showed roads and bridges with their capacities. To bring himself up to date, the commander or any staff officer could look at these displays and read the G-2/G-3 journal.

General Eisenhower, Supreme Commander Allied Forces in the Mediterranean Theater, Lieutenant General Clark, CG I Army and Major General Lucas leave the 3d Division War Room during a tour of the front in Italy.

Figure 4.

The operators at the 3d Infantry Division switchboard routed operational calls through the War Room where they were monitored. In the same manner, the War Room monitored outgoing calls from the commander, the chief of staff and chiefs of staff sections. In addition, the War Room had a direct line to the fire control center of division artillery. If an incoming call contained information about suitable targets for the artillery, that information was immediately relayed to the fire control center. From the War Room, the commander would often call regiment and battalion commanders, discuss their current situation and give them orders. He would give these orders orally and stenographers would record them, thus eliminating confusion as to what had been said.

A normal War Room routine would begin in the morning when a G-2 representative contacted regimental S-2 officers to learn the results of the previous night's patrols. After relieving the night duty officer, the G-3 representative called the regiments and often battalions to be certain they knew what they were expected to do and what the flanking units had been instructed to do. The G-3 officer continued calling throughout the day to learn the progress of the lead battalions. In the evening, the last calls were made to assure that the units were secure, patrols had left as planned, each unit knew the disposition of its neighbors and supplies were arriving at the units.

Conclusion

War Rooms varied according to the wishes of commanders and their chiefs of staff, but they followed a pattern. They required a close and continual relationship between the G-2 and G-3 staff sections. This relationship was so close that common G-2/G-3 maps and G-2/G-3 journals might be maintained. G-2 and G-3 had reciprocal functions: the G-3 needed the most current intelligence estimates to develop operational plans, and these plans determined the G-2 collection requirements. Also, when the G-2 gave the most likely enemy courses of action, he was in effect acting as the enemy G-3. In short, the G-2 and G-3 sections were like players in a board game. They had to interact constantly if the game were to be played well.

The War Room also required good communications to the subordinate units, the artillery, the chief of staff and the commander. In World War II, these communications might include dedicated land lines terminating at a row of field telephones. Alternatively, calls from the War Room would have priority at the division and corps switchboards. During later stages of the war, communications might also include a special radio net that helped the commander contol his units during the long periods when he was absent from his command post. Personnel in the War Room would constantly monitor the command net and use it to transmit vital information and instructions.

However configured, the War Room served as the only source of completely current and integrated combat information. An officer who had to know the full situation quickly could learn it in the War Room. The commander usually made at least one daily visit to the War Room, often for a formal or informal briefing at the beginning or end of the day. Liaison officers might be permanent members of the War Room or frequent visitors. Commanders from higher, lower and adjacent formations also found the War Room their best source of information. Since all the vital information was available there, the War Room might also serve as the locale for important conferences and command decisions. But during intense combat, conferences were usually held outside the War Room to avoid interrupting its routine.

The World War II division and corps commander generally preferred to spend most of his time forward. When his command post functioned well, the commander did not need to spend much time in it. Instead, he gained first-hand knowledge of subordinate units and conditions at the front. During his absence, staff officers issued instructions to implement the current operations orders and plans. Especially the chief of staff and the operations officer made decisions for their commander in accord with his operational intentions. After long acquaintance with the commander, they usually knew what decisions he would reserve for himself.

ENDNOTES

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Appendix I: Army Force Structure

During World War II, the Army used standardized divisions that served as building blocks for operational planning. Of the eighty-nine divisions employed, sixty-eight were infantry (including one mountain division), sixteen were armored and five were airborne. The infantry division was organized around three infantry regiments and it included engineer, ordnance, quartermaster and medical support. In 1945, an infantry division had about 14,000 personnel, of which about 9,000 were infantry and about 2,000 were artillerymen. The armored division also had just over 14,000 personnel in 1942, but the following year it was reduced to about 11,000. This new armored division had three battalions each of armor, infantry and artillery organized into combat commands. There were about 2,200 men in the armored battalions, 3,000 in the infantry battalions and 1,600 in division artillery. The new armored division retained organic combat service support, including almost 2,000 personnel organized into division trains.

Up to 1942, the Army planned to form type armies and type corps. A type corps would have included a regiment of armor, a regiment of mechanized reconnaissance troops (cavalry), two regiments of combat engineers and a brigade of field artillery, plus support elements. Each infantry corps would have controlled three infantry divisions and there would have been a distinctive armor corps. But in late 1942, General Lesley J. McNair, commanding Army Ground Forces, proposed to eliminate type army and type corps in favor of flexible formations. He feared that type organizations would waste assets by assigning them where unneeded. Although the War Department returned General McNair's proposal without action, it went into effect piecemeal during 1943. At the same time, logistic support moved up to army level or down to division and unit level, leaving corps without logistic functions unless organized for independent operations. As a result, corps became simply an operational headquarters, controlling three to six divisions plus varying numbers of other units usually attached to the divisions or held in reserve. The Army employed a total of twenty-four corps during the war.

In the European Theater of Operations, the corps became the preeminent level of operational command. While divisions rotated or were transfered to different areas of the front, corps retained responsibility for their sectors. During a year in Europe, VII Corps included twenty-seven different divisions, although for a short period of time it had only one. Without direct responsibility for logistic support, the corps commander was free to concentrate on operational planning and the conduct of operations. He could concentrate combat power on axes of advance and reinforce his lead divisions by attaching additional units, especially artillery and combat engineers. He could influence the course of a battle by shifting forces and committing reserves.

Appendix II

Excerpt from Field Manual 101-5, August 1940: (pp. 14-17)

15. MILITARY INTELLIGENCE (G-2) SECTION. -a. The military intelligence section is charged with planning and preparation of orders (par. 62) and to some extent with operations pertaining to the collection, evaluation, interpretation, and distribution of information of the enemy and counterintelligence activities. Its primary function is to keep the commander and all others concerned informed regarding the enemy's situation and capabilities.

b. The specific duties of the military intelligence section may include -

(1) Intelligence (FM 30-5). -(a) Planning and preparation of orders for and supervision of activities concerning the collection, by subordinate units, of information of the enemy and of the terrain not under our control, and of weather conditions affecting operations over enemy territory and for the employment of aviation, the location, construction, vulnerability, and defenses of air objectives. (Coordination with G-1 for prisoner of war matters; G-3 for use of combat troops for intelligence missions; G-4 for examination of captured materiel.)

(b) Collection, by personnel of the section, of information bearing on enemy capabilities or terrain not under our control. (FM 30-10, FM 30-15, and FM 30-21.) (Coordination with G-1 for prisoners of war and captured documents; G-3 for location of observation posts; G-4 for examination of captured materiel.)

. . . . .

c. The organization of the military intelligence section in each unit varies with the personnel available and the work to be accomplished. In corps and higher units separate subsections pertaining to administration, intelligence, and counterintelligence may be organized.

. . . . .

16. OPERATIONS AND TRAINING (G-3) SECTION. -a. The operations and training section is charged with those functions of the staff which relate to organization, training, and combat operations. It is responsible for tactical training and inspections, as directed by the commander (AR 265-10).

b. The specific duties of the operations and training section may include:

. . . . .

(3) Operations, to include, in general: tactical and strategic studies and estimates; plans and orders based thereon; supervision of combat operations; and future planning. Specific duties relative to operations may include -

(a) Continuous study ofthe tactical situation, as affected by -

1. The enemy situation. (Coordination with G-2.)

2. Instructions from higher units.

3. Actions of adjacent or supporting units.

4. Location, morale, and capabilities of the troops. (Coordination with G-1 for morale matters.)

5. Needs for replacements and reinforcements. (Coordination with G-1 for replacements.)

6. Terrain and weather conditions. (Coordination with G-2.)

7. Status of equipment and supplies. (Coordination with G-4 for priorities of replacement of materiel and allocation of supplies.)

. . . . .

(d) Preparation and authentication of field orders and operation maps required to carry out the tactical plan and their transmission to units and staff officers concerned (par. 62). (Coordination with G-2 for maps and for paragraphs and annexes dealing with enemy information, reconnaissance, and counterintelligence measures; G-4 for paragraph dealing with administrative matters.)

. . . . .

c. The organization of the operations and training section in each unit will vary with the personnel available and the work to be accomplished. . . .

Appendix III: A War Room Briefing

On 21 June, Lt. Gen. Willis D. Crittenberger's IV Corps was part of Fifth Army advancing along the western littoral of Italy towards Leghorn. The weakened Germans were delaying along successive lines of defense in rough terrain. Only ten days earlier, IV Corps had relieved VI Corps, now reforming for the invasion of southern France. Crittenberger had just one division fully committed: 36th Infantry Division moving on the coastal highway. In addition, he commanded 1st Armored Division, 34th Infantry Division and various corps units. Harmon's 1st Armored Division was relieving Task Force Ramey on the right flank of 36th Infantry Division, while 34th Infantry Division was in corps reserve. Crittenberger would soon lose 36th Infantry Division because it was designated for operations in France.

The morning briefing began at 0730 in the War Room, housed in two wall tents located in an olive grove near Grosseto about ten miles inland from the coast. Crittenberger, his general staff officers and selected special staff officers were present. The G-1 described measures to refresh 34th Infantry Division before it relieved 36th Infantry Division. In conclusion, he assessed corps morale as high due to warm summer weather and rapid advance. Then the chief of staff shouted "G-2!" This officer took his place beside the combined G-2/G-3 situation map showing enemy in red and friendly forces in blue symbols. Using a broken radio antenna as a pointer, he gave an all-source analysis of enemy strength on the corps front and opposite the neighboring corps. He described how the German 162d Infantry Division, now composed largely of volunteers from the southern Soviet Union, was disintregating through desertion. But on 20 June, 16th SS _Panzergrenadier_ Division "_Reichsfuehrer_" had been identified on the corps left flank. After a pause while the draftsman set up another map, the G-2 described the fortifications of the Gothic Line stretching across Italy in the northern Appennine hills. To support his analysis, the G-2 drew on documents captured in Marshal Kesselring's headquarters, information obtained from prisoners, refugees, partisans and agents of the Office of Strategic Services, and photographic reconnaissance of the past four months. The staff listened carefully, knowing that eventually the corps would have to breach the Gothic Line.

Before the chief of staf could cry "G-3!" that officer stepped up to the same combined G-2/G-3 map that the G-2 had used. Pointing the radio antenna at the blue symbols, he described the rapid advance of the past days. He forecast a slower pace in the near future against stiffening enemy resistance through more difficult terrain. He explained the plans for 36th Infantry Division and 1st Armored Division to advance abreast with the armored division covering a twenty mile front. He described the French operation against Elba that had begun four days earlier and the actions by the French Expeditionary Force on the corps right flank.

The next briefer was the G-4 who used a map to explain the supply situation. He showed that the corps had only one major supply route: the coastal road that was already heavily used by supply convoys from Fifth Army installations to the south. He described how Fifth Army established stocks at supply points recommended by IV Corps, usually situated at ten to fifteen mile intervals behind the advance. At corps recommendation, stocks were held to the minimum level consistent with emergency resupply. However, Class II and IV supplies came directly from army bases and dumps. As supply lines lengthened, the corps would have to augment its single quartermaster truck company. The corps engineer officer then briefed the severe problems posed by enemy demolitions and minefields. At 0800, the signal officer concluded the briefing by announcing "Gentlemen - 0800." In silence, the officers adjusted the stems of their wristwatches. With the command "Now!" the signal officer synchronized their time and concluded the morning briefing.

Source: Peter Wondolowski, History of IV Corps (IV Corps, 15 June 1948), pp. 107-121.

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