

THE PROCUREMENT OF COMMERCIAL AND SEMI-COMMERCIAL WAR MATERIAL --  
PLACE-TIME PLANNING.

Lecture by  
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My talk with you today is in response to a request for a presentation of "what can be done during time of peace in the way of planning and preparation for War, and of the troubles which are likely to be experienced in time of War, with suggestions as to how they may be avoided".

It was further suggested that my subject be restricted by the assumption that requirements have been determined and are definitely known.

Requirements are defined as the quantities of supplies of all kinds needed to complete stock all depots and assure the supply of all troops, wherever located and under any and all conditions of service - initial equipment and maintenance.

You will not fail to note that the assumption that requirements are definitely known wipes the slate clean of a very large slice of detailed work preliminary to actual procurement, and definitely fixes a point from which to proceed. As a matter of fact, requirements have been figured in some 5,000 items, the more essential ones, leaving about 5,000 to be computed.

Having determined requirements - or assumed them as in this case - my discussion has to do with the next and succeeding moves in the program. The sequence is quite clear. First, you must have the agencies upon which you are going to rely to procure the definitely known requirements. That means a network of Quartermaster depots, located at centers of supply. Those are the machines which do the real work. They must be organized and put in readiness for this task. It devolves upon the office of The Quartermaster General to apportion the definitely known requirements among them according to the capacity of each. After that, those agencies must take up and put through the execution of their share of the total - for which they have been organized and trained in peacetime.

The total load divided up and allotted to the field agencies, it will be self-evident that the heavy work from that stage falls upon those agencies. Of the total procured by each field agency, a part will be passed on to consumers who, through the established routine of supply, are served directly by the procuring depots; another part will be subject to distribution where needed, pursuant to orders from Washington to the depots. That sounds easy enough, and, in fact, is so.

If the combined capacity of the procuring agencies equalled or exceeded the total requirements, we would have our problem in its simplest form and nothing would remain to be studied out but distribution. As a matter of fact, there are many important classes in which this would be

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true, such as -

Forage  
Gasoline, Oils and Greases  
Packing House Products, etc.

These classes may be eliminated from the problem and given no further thought so far as concerns procurement. The articles which we figure will not be forthcoming in sufficient quantities and the supply of which will call for special forethought and, in some instances, ingenuity, may be put in two general classes, those for which substitutes are available, and those having no suitable substitutes. In the case of those articles for which no substitutes are available and for which we depend upon imports, the action to be taken is pretty clearly understood and defined, and is being worked up at the present time, viz:

The preparation of calls upon consuls;  
Issue of orders for conservation of such quantities as  
within this Country;  
Requests that special effort be made to keep open certain  
sea routes.

Regarding those items for which there are possible substitutes, a continuing study is being made to evolve better substitutes. Where no substitutes can be found and the source of imports is shut off, it follows that we will have to do without.

So, we have taken our assumed requirements in hand, divided them up among the Field Agencies according to the capacity of each to procure, the depots go ahead procuring, stock up, balance their stocks where so prescribed, fill requisitions made upon them direct and ship their surpluses as ordered from Washington, while certain designated officers wrestle with ways and means to tide over respecting the short or strategic articles.

As my subject hinges primarily on troubles incident to procurement, and how to avoid such troubles, you will conclude by this time that I have deliberately destroyed what I was to talk about, committed something akin to harakari respecting my subject. That is exactly what is intended in one sense, but not in another. For I am going to try to convince you that there are no troubles, as we ordinarily understand that word, in the processes incident to procurement and issue of Quartermaster supplies - - at least no troubles other than the one placed upon the human race at the beginning - work - plain everyday practical work -- eating your bread in the sweat of your brow.

In most cases what we conceive of as troubles arise through lack of clear vision, through failure to properly block out and analyze the task that confronts us. Such analysis or blocking out will invariably free the problem from those factors which bewilder the mind and add to the proportions of our ancient enemy - misdirected energy. Bewilderment is a millstone about the neck of progress. When one is bewildered, he does not know which way to turn or what to do -- so he usually does nothing by the method of going around in a circle.

Some months ago a senior officer of the Army stated that he could not see how the Quartermaster Corps could function in war-time because of the magnitude of the duty devolving upon the Corps. Naturally, I told him that the picture did not look that way at all to me. A little further

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discussion showed that this officer really had no conception of the means, the carefully planned field agencies, through which the Quartermaster Corps executes its mission. He was confused by a mass of figures and the amount of printed matter, regulations, specifications, number of different items handled, a point of view of it all one might acquire through continued service at a desk here in Washington.

On another occasion I listened to quite a little discourse by an officer on war planning and, in a way, unfavorable to the Supply Branches. I asked the question, "What then will be done when war comes along?" He replied, "We will get the biggest business man in the country to handle the supply work". That thought kept nagging me for some time -- indeed until the birth of the Army Industrial College on February 21, 1924, when The Assistant Secretary stated in his address -

"The theory so often advanced, therefore, that we can quickly settle our war supply problems by calling in from the industrial world men of high standing, in my judgment, is not sound. They should be brought in, for they can unquestionably be of great help, especially upon particular phases of the problem with which they are acquainted, but, if we would achieve satisfactory supply preparedness, we must have a going organization that is efficient and that is prepared for the necessary expansion. The officers of that organization should know more about its work than anybody else and should be prepared and be required to man the key positions, at least until they can make their knowledge available to successors."

Again at the formal opening of the second course of the Army Industrial College, September 2, 1924, the Assistant Secretary stated -

"The idea that the Army can solve all its industrial problems in the event of war by immediately calling in available 'big business' men is fallacious. Such men are available and their services to the country will be of inestimable value but unless there is an existing organization into which they can fit, a detailed knowledge of what our requirements are and a carefully prepared plan to obtain these requirements from available resources, we would inevitably again experience all the wasted effort, confusion and delay that was our lot in 1917-1918."

If there was any lost morale, due to the unfavorable discourse to which I referred, these paragraphs restored it. I would like to have written them myself.

'A going organization that is efficient; officers of that organization knowing more about its work than anybody else' -- those extracts indicate the goal toward which all our efforts are aimed.

Before going further into my subject I would emphasize again that so far as the troubles are concerned, they are largely imaginary and, perhaps, result from applying too much theory to what are really very practical matters.

If the tea plant does not grow in the United States, and if the ocean routes for shipment of tea from where it is produced are shut off, we will have to get along without tea, and no mental struggle or theorizing can

change that situation. If it is an item produced in our own country, but not in a sufficient quantity to meet war-time needs, as well as civilian needs, the necessary lawful procedure must be taken to give preference to Army needs, with such curtailment of civilian needs as absolutely necessary. While this will inconvenience the civilian population, there is no trouble in making the action effective, it is simply something to be done in accordance with due process of law.

A very general outline of steps in the Quartermaster Preparedness Program has been given. The scene of action may now be said to shift from Washington to the field. It is in the field that practically everything is done, save the computation of requirements.

Service in Washington has a tendency to minimize, in one's conception, the importance of the field work as compared with the Washington work. Only officers who have been connected intimately with the great field agencies -- depots of the Quartermaster Corps -- can realize how relatively small the part performed in Washington is, as compared with that in the field. Any one of our big Quartermaster depots compares favorably with the average of large commercial plants or organizations in the country.

During peace-time the existing agencies are organized in every detail and respect as they would operate in war-time, and the only change from peace-time to war-time operation will be in expansion. Each of these agencies has what is called its peace-time chart and its war-time chart, and the difference in the two covers war-time expansion.

Of course, the readiness to expand is the important consideration. To refer to a concrete case, I will take the Chicago Quartermaster Depot. The peace-time and war-time organization of this depot compares as follows:

	Peace-Time		War-Time	
	: Officers	: Civilian	: Officers	: Civilian
	:	: Employees:	:	: Employees
Administrative and Personnel	: 6	: 62	: 15	: 658
Supply	: 6	: 111	: 119	: 2588
Transportation	: 1	: 13	: 7	: 103
Construction	: 1	: 15	: 9	: 258
TOTAL	14	201	150	3607

Throughout the field all possible steps have been taken to put the active depots in a fair state of preparedness to effect the necessary expansion to go on a war-time basis. In this connection, one of the most important peace-time preparations is the practical training of each officer for his war-time job, and getting Quartermasters, both regular and reserve, in touch with local big business men. Both of these purposes are now being accomplished at a gratifying rate, through the medium of Winter Plattsburg. This system of training has been heartily approved by both the Secretary and The Assistant Secretary of War.

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But, in addition to the existing peace-time agencies, the creation of many new field agencies will be necessary to meet the demands of war-time. In the nature of things, these additional agencies cannot come into existence until the emergency of war confronts us. But the building up of tentative organizations, in readiness to be called into existence by the mere issue of an order, involves one of the biggest items of peace-time preparation with which we are confronted. However, I am glad to be able to tell you that this enormous project is now well under way and that from week to week we add to the number of organized, but inactive agencies.

The general method being followed is to designate a Commanding Officer and such assistants as may be available for assignment. Then we send to the designated Commanding Officer a basic chart and all general information that we have which would be helpful to him; also, as detailed information as it is practicable to give of the mission of his depot or other unit, in the event of war; with that foundation, we encourage him to prepare his own unit plan. This means that he, and each of his assistants, must think it out and that is what counts. After this office assigns the assistants, it is left to the Commanding Officer to assign each to a Division, Branch or Section, according to the qualifications and rank of the officer and the importance of the duties of the sub-division.

It can readily be seen that when such a-what might be called - paper organization is created at any place in the field, the officers assigned become at once bound together by mutual interests; have an incentive to assemble occasionally and get acquainted with each other and, by simply talking the same language, they accomplish much toward preparing themselves for the day of actual call. In short, every depot or other organization, although only on paper, gives them something in which to take a pride as military men and patriotic citizens.

Those who have not actually observed results in the field cannot realize how much this means to the officers assigned, and how genuinely they feel their importance as real links in the chain of National Defense.

The Reserve Officers in all parts of the country are doing constructive work and numerous letters, containing valuable suggestions, are being received from them. The assignment of prominent business men, civilians not officers, to positions of leadership in certain groups of Winter Plattsburg Courses is promoting the cooperation of local industry to a greater degree than ever before. The many are working now, where formerly it was the few.

To convey an idea of how far preparatory work has proceeded in the various services, I may say that the organization plan of the Construction Service, O.Q.M.G., is 100% complete. Plans for the Construction Service in the field provide for 135 Construction Groups, each composed of three officers. Each of these Groups is adapted to handle one of the smaller projects, while for larger projects, two or more Groups would be combined. The assignment of commissioned personnel to Construction Groups is 44% complete. Standard plans have been approved for -

- Barracks
- Kitchen and mess buildings
- Officers quarters
- Hospital ward buildings

- Regimental storehouses
- Stables
- Truck and gun sheds

and a half dozen other kinds of portable type buildings; also, the successive steps to be taken in their erection, and the materials required for each building. Typical Camp Plans have been prepared for -

- An Infantry Division
- An Infantry Brigade
- An Infantry Regiment
- An Artillery Brigade
- An Artillery Regiment

showing the number of buildings of each type required, and, also, requirements for utilities, water and sewer lines, electric light lines, etc.

Requirements for Construction have been received from two of the Corps Areas and for all except two of the War Department Branches. Upon these requirements the Construction Service is now working out buildings and utilities needed; also, materials necessary.

In the Remount Service, five (5) Purchasing and Breeding Headquarters have been provided for, to which are attached 40 Boards to cover the horse and mule producing sections of the Country; one Quartermaster has been selected and assigned by name to each of these Boards and the second and third members, Veterinarians, will be assigned by the Medical Department; the limited permanent commissioned personnel is allotted to supervisory places and this number is supplemented by qualified horsemen, officers of the Quartermaster Corps, for key positions; Commanding Officers for 10 Remount Concentration Depots for the reception and care of animals prior to issue have been assigned by name, and 40% of the balance of the personnel assigned; Remount Officers for the Ports of Embarkation are now in process of assignment. As, in the nature of things, the procurement of animals, through the agency of the Boards and Purchasing stations, could not become immediately effective, plans have been thought out and are now being reduced to writing for the open market purchase or commandeering of such animals as may be required until such time as the Remount machinery is able to procure animals as fast as required by the mobilization rate.

In the manner of general supplies, it devolves upon each existing agency, in order to bear its share of the burden in war-time, to get a line on available sources of production, through its Industrial Survey, as well as to locate potential sources of supply which could be made productive after the out-break of war.

It is not necessary to name the peace-time Quartermaster depots in the great commercial centers, as all are familiar with them. But, large as the producing capacity of existing stations would be when expanded and put on a war-time basis, mobilization needs will require the creation of many additional procurement agencies to supplement that capacity. Therefore, our peace-time preparations include the tentative organization of such agencies at centers like -

- Norfolk
- Baltimore
- Pittsburgh
- Rochester
- Buffalo

- Cleveland
- Toledo
- Omaha
- St. Paul
- Seattle
- Portland
- Denver
- Los Angeles

and so on. In a number of these cases, tentative organizations have been formulated and commanding officers, together with such assistants as available, assigned.

In the Washington office computations beyond the 5,000 plus items already finished up are being pushed, also, allocations to the field, after which the field continues the program through Industrial Surveys.

Coming to the Transportation Service, we are confronted with procurement projects on an enormous scale, notwithstanding it is limited to motor vehicles for transportation of troops and supplies of the Army, as may be designated by the Secretary of War and such means of Transportation of the Army by water as may be prescribed by the President.

During peace-time there is little doing in the way of procurement of motor vehicles and motor supplies. Consequently, the agencies for these duties during war-time are largely tentative or paper organizations. To-date, it has been figured that three (3) procurement agencies would be required, viz:

- New York
- Detroit
- Akron

and tentative set-ups for these, together with tentative organization for Reception Parks at -

- Waukegan, Ill.
- Toledo, Ohio
- Cincinnati, Ohio

have been made, some of the commanding officers and assistants assigned and these officers started upon the preparation of their unit plans.

The procurement plan takes note of the fact that the bulk of automotive manufacture is centered in certain areas. The procurement office at Akron, located in the heart of the tire industry, is intended to handle tire products only.

The Reception Parks are distributing centers. They receive vehicles directly from factories. Truck bodies will be shipped direct to these parks and there mounted on chassis. Delivery of vehicles overland is contemplated, partly to relieve railroad traffic.

Computation of requirements for the first 27 months include, among other items:-

- 196,407 Trucks
- 120,633 Motorcycles
- 5,585,056 Tires (solid and pneumatic)

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The list of spare parts is a long one and special care is necessary in making it up. As an illustration, the number of different parts in the standard "B" truck alone is 1700.

On the other hand, the transportation problem is simplified with respect to Rail and Water transport, in view of the fact that the railroads are in existence and in operation, and our relation to them is simply that of a patron who desires services performed and makes known to them what those services are. To assist in smoothing out and coordinating as between the Transportation Service and the railroads, our peace-time preparations include the assignment by name, to the office in Washington, of some forty representatives of the American Railway Association, both passenger and traffic; also, representatives of such Association at Corps Area Headquarters, Depots, Supply Points, and any other stations where their services might facilitate the handling of business as between the representatives of the operating facilities on one side and the representatives of the Military on the other.

As you know, the construction, operation and maintenance of military railroads in the Theatre of Operations, also, in the Zone of the interior, to such extent as may be required, is a responsibility of the Engineer Corps.

Regarding Water Transport, you are all, perhaps, aware that the mission of the Navy includes the,

"\*\*Procuring, manning and operating by the Navy of all vessels to be employed at sea for the Army Transportation Service \*\*" while the mission of the Army includes the duty,

"To establish, operate and maintain all ports of embarkation for the Army Transportation Service \*\*\*".

Under this arrangement, the relation of the Army Transportation Service to the Water Transport is similar to its relation to the railroads. That is, our functions are traffic and not operative.

It may be noted, also, that a similar relation exists respecting military railroads. the Corps of Engineers being the operating agency and ours, the traffic agency, while, respecting Animal and Motor Transport, the Transportation Service is both a traffic and operating service.

The traffic agencies at active peace-time stations in the field have been well organized, war-time expansion provided for, and the new agencies that will be required in war-time are now in process of tentative organization. These new agencies include 40 to 50 offices at Railway centers and new Production Centers.

The importance of satisfactory transportation during war-time cannot be over-estimated. To have a satisfactory Transportation Service, or, indeed, a satisfactory service of any kind, it is essential to avoid intricate and confused procedure, and stick to simple and understandable rules, avoiding division of responsibility.

The War Department has established a splendid example of undivided responsibility by placing upon Corps Area Commanders the sole responsibility for transportation within their respective Corps Area. It is be-

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lieved that the soundness of that principle cannot be questioned. Then, the responsibility for traffic having to do with exempted stations is made the responsibility of the officer in command of the exempted station. The World War showed us all that unity of command within designated spheres, and unconfused methods, are vitally essential to successful carrying-on.

The sole restriction from Washington lies in the coordinating steps necessary to prevent conflict between shipments made under the authority of Corps Area Commanders and under the Commanders of Exempted Stations.

The War Department rule that the procuring agency would deliver the supplies at Corps Area Supply Points, and the Corps Area authorities from the Supply Points to places where required for issue, simplifies the question of transportation and removes many annoyances from the minds of officers whose time will be pretty well occupied at the best.

The War Department has, also, cleared the air of uncertainty regarding the status of Transportation by providing for its administration as an entirely separate War Department Branch during a National Emergency, and not to exceed one year after the termination of the Emergency. This definite determination puts a stop to unprofitable agitation.

Before closing with Transportation, it is desired to add that tables of weights and measurements have been completed for all combat units and branch units, except Ordnance, Chemical Warfare and Signal Corps. These tables cover both peace and war strength and include specific weights and measurements by classes as follows:

- All organization equipment
- Rations - field 2 days, reserve 1 day
- Motor Vehicles
- Animal drawn vehicles
- Animals
- Forage 3 days

This concludes a brief reference to procurement in the several Services of the Quartermaster Corps, charged with responsibility for that duty, namely, the Supply, Transportation and Remount Services.

To sum up, respecting what can be done in time of peace in preparation for war, the important steps are -

- Decentralization
- Practical Business Methods

Neither need argument these days, although both did not long ago. From a practical view point, when war comes, we must deal with commercial conditions then existing and to be developed thereafter, for there is little or no hope that business interests will construct any munition plants in anticipation of war-time needs.

The estimates of war-time needs are important, but without the machinery to supply same would avail nothing.

Under decentralization, the field is working for us and with us to create this machinery and build a sound foundation under it. Decentralization -- to quote the recruiting posters -- builds men. It also taboos meddling so long as the responsibility imposed is lived up to. Instead of telling the field what to do and how to do it, we tell them the results desired and encourage them to work out their own salvation. This develops self-reliance and confidence, and a thought-out unit plan which means something -- a unit plan worth-while.