

TALK DELIVERED TO A. I. C. ON DECEMBER 13, 1939 BY LT. COL. W. M.
ROBERTSON, G. S., EXECUTIVE, G-4 DIVISION, W. D. G. S., on THE SUPPLY
DIVISION, W. D. G. S.

1. SCOPE: I am going to limit my discussion of the functions of the G-4 Division of the War Department General Staff to matters which are primarily related to the work of the Planning Branch, Office of The Assistant Secretary of War.

2. FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATION While the Chiefs of the Supply Arms and Services have direct responsibility for supply to the armed forces, all matters connected with distribution, storage and issue of supplies are supervised by The Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4. To carry out supervisory responsibilities, the office of G-4 is organized into four permanent Branches - the Supply and Transportation Branch, the Construction Branch, the Finance Branch, and the Planning and Equipment Branch. At the present time there is a fifth Branch, the CCC Branch, which supervises all War Department activities connected with the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The SUPPLY AND TRANSPORTATION BRANCH handles all matters concerned with current supply, and animal, motor, rail and water transportation. In time of war, this Branch will be separated into a Supply Branch and a Transportation Branch. The CONSTRUCTION BRANCH deals with all problems connected with War Department construction. The FINANCE BRANCH, along with other fiscal duties, represents G-4 on the War Department Budget Advisory Committee, and follows War Department estimates from the time they are presented to this Committee until appropriations are made by Congress. The work of the PLANNING AND EQUIPMENT

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BRANCH reflects directly upon procurement planning. This Branch processes tables of basic allowances, passes upon questions of standardization, coordinates research and development, prepares the annual list of critical items to be included in estimates for augmentation of War Reserves, establishes priorities for estimates for rearmament and reequipment, examines the supply features of projects for the defense of overseas departments, and prepares those parts of mobilization plans which deal with matters of primary interest to G-4. In time of war, the Planning and Equipment Branch will continue its peacetime functions to keep supply plans in step with the changing military situation. Close liaison will be maintained with The Assistant Secretary of War, the Chiefs of Arms and Services, the Navy Department, and other Government agencies concerned in the development and procurement of munitions.

At this point I desire to emphasize that while separate branches exist in the War Department G-4 organization, these branches do not work in separate compartments. All supply matters are carefully coordinated not only with the other interested branches of G-4, but with all interested divisions of the War Department General Staff, particularly G-3 and the War Plans Division.

3. SUPPLY DIVISION FUNCTIONS IN RELATION TO PROCUREMENT PLANNING

Before procurement planning can be initiated by the supply arms and services, it is first necessary to determine what is known as "Supply Requirements", or in other words, the answers to the questions What supplies are needed, how much, when they are needed, and where, i. e. in the Zone of the Interior or the Theater of Operations. These

answers are obtained from the mobilization plan, which gives the troop basis, and from the tables of basic allowances, which show what supplies are required, and in what quantities. From a G-4 viewpoint as well as that of The Assistant Secretary of War, it is important that tables of basic allowances list every item which will be required in a mobilization. This is only possible, provided the item has been standardized, that is, accepted as the standard for the purpose intended.

Supervision of standardization is one of G-4's functions. The procedure employed in determining the suitability of an article for military use is, of necessity, time-consuming. Depending upon the complexity of the article under consideration, it may take from a few months to several years to complete. The process starts with the inception of an indicated need for a new or improved article. This need may originate in either a Supply Service or a Using Arm. In either case, the idea is presented to the chief of the Using Arm having primary interest, who passes upon its military utility. If found to be of use, it is then referred to the Supply Service having primary supply interest, where it is given further consideration by a Technical Committee composed of members of all arms and services. If the item is believed to warrant development, a subcommittee is appointed to make final recommendations and to formulate military characteristics to guide development. Military characteristics determined upon are then forwarded by the Chief of the Supply Service concerned to The Adjutant General, and finally to G-4, for approval. If the item appears to have military value, military characteristics are approved and authority is granted to establish a development pro-

ject. If funds are available development work is started immediately. If funds are not available, the Chief of the development Service is authorized to include the project in his next estimates, in which case, funds may not be supplied until eighteen to twenty months later, depending upon the budget cycle. During the long period of processing estimates, G-4 exercises active interest to see that funds required for development projects are forthcoming.

Before authorizing development of the item in question the matter is normally referred to G-3, and frequently to WPD to obtain concurrences. When the item is finally developed a test sample is produced, which is given a preliminary test by the developing Service. If it appears to be satisfactory from a technical viewpoint a sufficient quantity is produced for the purpose of conducting a service test under the supervision of the testing Board of the Using Arm having primary interest. If found to be unsuitable for the purpose intended, the item is returned, together with appropriate recommendations, to the developing Service for further development. This procedure is continued until such time as the item is considered to be satisfactory, or until the project is abandoned as impracticable.

When considered acceptable, the Using Arm recommends that the item be standardized. These recommendations are reviewed by the Technical Committee of the developing Service. If the members of this Committee concur in the recommendation for standardization, the Chief of the Service concerned recommends to The Adjutant General, through The Assistant Secretary of War, that the item be adopted as standard. In forwarding this recommendation to The Adjutant General, the Office of The Assistant

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Secretary of War indicates a clearance for procurement and designates the Supply Service to be charged with procurement. The recommendation is then acted upon by G-4, and if all the requirements for standardization have been complied with, the item is classified as standard, as a current supply or war reserve, critical or noncritical, item. The basis of issue, and maintenance factors for planning purposes, are set forth in the G-4 action, which are normally those recommended. When the approved recommendation is received by the Chief of the Supply Service concerned it is referred to the Technical Committee, where it is read for record. Pertinent data are then extracted and entered in the Book of Standards and the Tables of Basic Allowances. This ends the period of development.

At this point procurement planning begins. Supervision of such matters is a responsibility of the Assistant Secretary of War.

If the newly standardized item is an article of current supply, funds are requested in current estimates to cover the manufacture of the item for current issue. If it is an item of war reserve, a priority is established and funds for procurement are included in War Reserve estimates prepared under the supervision of G-4.

In view of the long development cycle, it is imperative that there be a standard for every item used by the Armed forces. The office of G-4 cooperates to the fullest extent possible with the office of The Assistant Secretary of War in insisting that at least one of each type of article required for field service is classified as standard. A recommendation for reclassification of a standard article is given careful attention, and, unless there is some good reason for doing otherwise, the item is not reclassified. It is a general rule that items will not be

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reclassified unless a suitable article is simultaneously adopted as the new standard.

4. WAR RESERVE IN RELATION TO PROCUREMENT PLANNING.

The size of War Reserves is of vital interest to both G-4 and The Assistant Secretary of War. If we had adequate War Reserve stocks supply and procurement problems would be reduced almost to a minimum. We have never been in such a fortunate position. Every effort is made by G-4 to obtain funds for the procurement in peacetime of those items which require considerable time to manufacture. These are called "Critical Items". Unfortunately, budgetary limitations in the past have prevented the accumulation of adequate war reserves of these items. In fact, funds have been so limited that most of the units of the Regular Army are today still equipped with World War type weapons and equipment. Funds obtained in appropriations authorized by the last Congress will greatly relieve this situation, and it is anticipated that within the next eighteen months almost all units of the Initial Protective Force, that is, the active units of the Regular Army and National Guard, will receive new and modern equipment. There will still be some units that will not be so equipped. These units will have to wait until Congress provides funds included in the 1941 War Department estimates. Reserves of ammunition are, likewise, being augmented with funds supplied for this fiscal year. All in all, the army supply picture is considerably improved.

In conclusion, I wish to assure you that G-4 is ever watchful of any opportunity to obtain funds to augment War Reserves or to improve the supply situation. Data upon which to base estimates are continually being accumulated and placed in shape for ready reference. We have a

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long way to go before we can feel satisfied that supply problems have reached an irreducible minimum. Given the funds and the time to execute procurement we may approach that happy state. History tells us, however, that funds are not easily obtained in peacetime, and time is of little consequence until an emergency arises. It is quite evident, therefore, that our supply problems are here to stay. It is only through mutual understanding of each other's problems, and through complete cooperation in their solution, that G-4 and The Assistant Secretary of War may be assured that supply will be continuous and uninterrupted in wartime. This happy situation now exists, and gives assurance to us all that the difficult supply problem which continuously confronts the War Department will be effectively met.

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DISCUSSION
following lecture by
Lt. Colonel Walter P. Robertson, G.S.C.
on
G-4, Supply Division, W.D.G.S.

Q. Can you tell us, Colonel, in repressing the development of military requirements for standardization what consideration is given to characteristics of similar items now in industrial commercial production?

A. In the Staff we appreciate very much your problem in procurement planning and we try to cooperate to the fullest extent in getting a standard item of commercial manufacture in every instance where it will meet military requirements.

Q. It has been suggested many times, Colonel Robertson, that it might expedite matters if the War Department had a committee on equipment composed of representatives of G-3, G-4 and the different supply departments in the using services instead of having to have the matters go back and forth. Can you give us your ideas on that? Would it be feasible or not?

A. All I can say about that is this -- the present procedure is very laborious. A project comes into G-4 and in and out -- it is referred to the using service and referred to the developing service and I think perhaps a central control committee might expedite that very much. I would like to ask my expert back there, Major Wood, to comment on that.

Major Wood I'm sorry, but I don't agree to that, Colonel. I think we are getting a very high degree of coordination at the present

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time through our Technical Committee as represented by the developing agency. We have that as a set committee. The group is a constant one. They have set times of meeting. In the Ordnance they meet each week. On that committee you have every representative of every using arm and service and I think that possibly we over-exaggerate in our minds the amount of travel that this standardization paper goes through. In many cases we have an item which is developed, presented to the committee, and after its technical phases are completed, subjected to its service test, and frequently it clicks completely and the services come back and say that is the article we want. In cases like that, and there are many of them, that paper will come right from the Technical Committee and down to G-4. We write a standardization form and clear it for production--get a clearance from G-3 and War Plans and the thing is complete. That was done in the case of field ranges. We decided last Summer that the time had come to stop further development on that. We felt that that range had been under development for two or three years and the services were in need of something modern and that we had better get it out to the troops. That standardization was perfected within approximately 24 days and we are now under procurement for about 600 of those ranges. So I think the present set up, though in some instances rather elaborate, that very elaborateness is our protection against going completely haywire in some instances in the procurement field.

Major Logan. Does G-4 take cognizance of the equipment of foreign armies when it sanctions the development of a piece of equipment, or does

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it leave that up to the procurement arm. For instance, that we shall have a shoulder rifle, semi-automatic, in which the military characteristics have been defined equal to or better than any other rifle in the world?

A. I should say we give definite cognizance of it. I know I have processed two or three papers within the last week on items that have come up that have appeared in the newspapers, inferring that some of the present participants in this war had certain items that we did not know very much about. We have taken action to get through G-2 to gather information on that and we have already contacted the probably development agency or arm with a view to getting them to research the subject. I would say we take very definite cognizance of it and we would be very dissatisfied to find that any foreign army had any arm that was superior to its counterpart in our own army.

Q. You spoke, Colonel, of the war reserves being a pain in the neck. We have had discussed in here that the Navy Department by use of its revolving appropriations is able to avoid obligating funds to June 30 of every year. Do you have a legislative branch in G-4?

A. Yes, we prepare a lot of legislation in G-4.

Q. Have you ever considered drafting a bill or getting through Congress a change in the War Department restrictions as against the Navy — the Navy can use up money as they need it where we have to obligate it by a certain time or we don't get it.

A. I can't answer that question absolutely, but the Navy Department is much more fortunate in that respect than we are.

Q. Well, why aren't we?

A. In the first place, their appropriation is not broken down nearly so much as ours. It allows more freedom. In the second place, the Navy Department is not confronted with enormous expansion or war reserves because they are on a war status all the time. When they commission a ship they commission the ammunition required for that ship for practically the lifetime of the gun as I understand it. In contrast our War Reserve is not to take care of our existing establishment—it is to take care of the expansion of our establishment.

Q. As it stands now/ⁱⁿthe last quarter of every fiscal year there is a hurry and scurry to get funds obligated by June 30, and there is careless procuring in the field. I wonder if G-4 has given a thought to effecting a change in that?

A. There is much thought in that respect, but as a matter of fact all items of that kind meet with much opposition by the Bureau of the Budget. For instance, for many years we have realized the need particularly of having a reserve fund or contingency fund in reserve for development which is even more pressing than the item I mentioned and we have never been able to get to first base on it. We have it in the pending estimates and we hope as a result of/^amore liberal attitude on the part of the Administration now to get that through this year. Whether we will or not I can't tell you.

Colonel Borden I will have to cut off further questions, but Colonel Robertson will remain to answer any other questions at the end of the period.