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THE GENERAL BOARD

United States Forces, European Theater

ARMY POSTAL SERVICE

MISSION: Prepare a factual, annotated report with appropriate conclusions and recommendations on the organization and administrative operations of the Army Postal Service in this theater.

The General Board was established by General Orders 128, Headquarters European Theater of Operations, US Army, dated 17 June 1945, as amended by General Orders 182, dated 7 August 1945 and General Orders 312 dated 20 November 1945, Headquarters United States Forces, European Theater, to prepare a factual analysis of the strategy, tactics, and administration employed by the United States Forces in the European Theater.

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THE GENERAL BOARD
UNITED STATES FORCES, EUROPEAN THEATER
APO 408

ARMY POSTAL SERVICE

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THE GENERAL BOARD
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STUDY OF THE ARMY POSTAL SERVICE EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS

CHAPTER 1

ADMINISTRATION

SECTION 1

POSTAL DIVISION OF THE THEATER ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE

1. Organization of the Postal Staff Section: The Army Postal Service began operations in the European Theater in Northern Ireland on 29 January 1942, shortly after the first United States troops landed on British soil. It was obvious that little foresight was used in planning for the initial operation of the Army Postal Service in the European Theater. Trained postal personnel and adequate equipment were lacking. No provisions had been made for the dispatch of mail to the United States, making it necessary to use British postage and to dispatch mail through the International Postal Service.[1]

The Postal Division, United States Army Forces, in the British Isles, was established in London in March 1942 with one officer. During the period March 1942 to the end of 1943, considerable difficulty was encountered in the establishment of the various sub-sections because of the lack of personnel qualified in both army and postal procedures.[2] On 15 June 1942, responsibility of operation of the United States Army Postal Service was transferred from Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, to Services of Supply, European Theater of Operations, United States Army. Shortly thereafter the Postal Division, Adjutant General's Office, Services of Supply was established with six officers and a few enlisted men. On D-Day the following sub-sections comprised the Postal Division, Adjutant General's Office, Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, the Services of Supply and Theater Headquarters having been combined.

Chief of Division
Executive Officer
Administrative Section
Control Section
Finance and Supply Section
Miscellaneous Section
Operations Section
Personnel Section
Transportation Section

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1 - History of the Army Postal Service in the European Theater (Par 1 and 3, Sec II, Annex 1).

2 - Remarks of Col S. G. Schwartz, Theater Postal Officer (Annex 3).

Although many administrative and operational problems were encountered, the original organization of the Postal Staff Section proved to be basically sound, as it remained substantially the same during the entire operation.

2. Administrative and Operating Problems: The build-up of troops in the United Kingdom prior to D-Day presented a problem in mail service, as postal units did not arrive in proportion to other troops. During this same period, postal units in the United Kingdom were being prepared for transfer to the continent, and plans were being formulated for the operation of mail service in continental areas. These problems were increased by lack of sufficient information for planning purposes,[1] and the shortage of qualified postal officers within the European Theater.[2] Postal units were late in arriving from the Zone of Interior and were inadequately trained and equipped.[2] The Army Postal Service is basically an operational and service function reaching every individual in the army. It furnishes a special service to each individual person by name, and has specially organized units to accomplish this mission. There is no predetermined level of supply, as in other services, provision must be made for mail both to and from the troops, and the organization must be flexible enough to handle a fluctuating volume of mail. Although, as stated above, this is a service to the troops, it was placed under the jurisdiction of the Adjutant General's Department whose primary mission is administration in the headquarters of which it is a part. The movement of combat and service troops, the rail, water, motor and air force communications net, and future planning, all have a bearing on the routing of mail and the disposition of postal units. It is necessary for the Army Postal Service to be in close liaison with all staff sections, the same as other supporting services. While in many cases no difficulty was encountered in the planning, coordination and operation of the postal services, conferences with some postal officers indicate that in other instances there was a lack of interest and appreciation of postal problems. It is believed that had the Army Postal Service been organized as a special staff section, consisting of both competent military and postal personnel, a better postal service would have resulted. In this connection consideration might well be given to a "Communications" staff section, handling courier service, air delivery letter service, postal service, and other related communication activities.

3. The Army Postal Inspection Service: The Army Postal Inspection Service was operated by the Army Postal Service in Washington D C with the inspectors on temporary duty in the theater. Under this arrangement these inspectors were directly under the control of the Director, Army Postal Service, Washington, D C, and rendered their reports direct to their own headquarters. Although the instructions from Washington on direct reporting remained in force, arrangements were made by the Adjutant General, Service of Supply, for inspectors to leave copies of their reports with the command concerned and the Theater Postal Officer. This eliminated the delay, in taking corrective action, which would have occurred with reports being submitted to Washington and then referred to the Theater for action.

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1 - "Mail Service in the Invasion of Europe," remarks Maj John Jehowski, Army Postal Inspector (Par 2b, Annex 2).

2 - Remarks of Col S. G. Schwartz, Theater Postal Officer (Annex 3).

Their activities covered investigation of complaints, inspection of field installations, with the recommendations for corrective action, and depredation work. Due to their freedom of action valuable service was rendered in all of these activities. Investigations were also made at the request of the Theater Postal Officer. The value of the Army Postal Inspector to the Theater would have been greatly increased if they had been assigned to the Theater, and been directly under the control of the Theater Postal Officer, with copies of reports furnished the Director of Army Postal Service in Washington.[1]

4. Claims and Inquiries: Initially one man in the Theater Postal Staff Section was assigned the task of handling claims and inquiries, but it became necessary to organize a large sub-section in order to handle the ever increasing volume. A large percentage of the inquiries received concerned delays in mail delivery to soldiers who had become involved in the reinforcement system or were hospitalized. It is believed that many of those inquiries concerning delays in mail delivery were of such a minor nature that they could have been answered in the Zone of the Interior, thereby greatly reducing the volume of correspondence forwarded to the Theater. The lapse of time that occurred by referring these inquiries to the Theater was so great that remedial action had usually been taken before the letter was referred to the Theater. Considerable difficulty was experienced in the processing of claims for actual loss or damage to mail by reason of the fact that the unit concerned had usually moved several times, and received mail through several different Army Post Offices. This necessitated tracing mail service back to the Army Post Office serving the unit at the time the articles was mailed. This often took weeks and many man hours of time for searching records. In view of this, much time and expense could have been saved if the Post Office Department, or the Army, whichever concerned, had arbitrarily settled minor claims within an established monetary bracket.[2]

SECTION 2

TABLES OF ORGANIZATION AND EQUIPMENT

5. Base Post Office. a. Administration and Personnel: The present cellular type Table of Organization and Equipment 12-601 for Base Post Offices is adequate in postal personnel for servicing the number of troops for which originally designed; however, equipment as authorized is inadequate. In the organization of large type Base Post Offices, the number of personnel proved too large and unwieldy to administer as a single unit. The Table of Organization does not include sufficient specialized personnel to handle functions of supply, mess, and transportation. This is borne out by experiences of the 17th Base Post Office, which was split between two ports of mail entry without the necessary personnel to operate as two separate sections. In operations on a large scale, such splitting of a unit is not unusual, as mail will necessarily be received by both surface and air.[3]

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1 - Remarks of Col. S. G. Schwartz, Theater Postal Officer (Annex 3).

2 - Conference with Capt T. N. Bordeen, OIC Correspondence and Review Branch, AG Postal Division, Theater AG Section, 29 August 1945.

3 - Extract of Ltr, 25th Base Post Office, "Study of Postal Operations," (Annex 4).

It is considered essential to include additional personnel in large type base post offices for the organization of a headquarters section to administer the unit properly.[1] This additional personnel would enable specially trained postal personnel to perform their primary mission of handling mail. The further breakdown of a large unit into platoons or companies would simplify administration and control. This would permit a detached postal unit to operate at a forward point or separate port of entry.

All officers in the base post office are trained only as postal officers. This resulted in the assignment of specialists to such positions as detachment commanders, transportation officers, mess, and supply officers at a time when officers with postal knowledge were desperately needed in the theater to perform postal work.[1] The assignment of officers from Branch Immaterial to perform normal administrative and supply functions of a large unit would release postal officers for the mission for which they have been trained.

b. Equipment: Special postal equipment as authorized by Table of Equipment was sometimes as much as 50% short of that actually required while other items were in excess. A list of changes in items of equipment considered necessary in a type "O" Base Post Office is attached.[2] This is based on recommendations from the 17th Base Post Office and is considered reasonable. The equipment for other type units organized under Table of Organization and Equipment 12-601 should be adjusted in proportion to the size of the unit.

c. Transportation: Transportation is particulary inadequate as under the present policy the base post office is responsible for transportation of mail from air ports, rail stations, and from whatever point at which the mail might arrive. The present Table of Organization and Equipment states, under "Remarks" column, that transportation requirements will be met by the furnishing of vehicles from a transportation pool. This was proven impracticable as mail was continually back-logged during active operations by lack of transportation. If sufficient transportation were assigned the Base Post Office either as an assigned unit or included in the Table of Organization and Equipment as a transportation section, continuity of the flow of mail could be maintained. The recommendation of a Quartermaster Truck Company or an equivalent number of vehicles, assigned directly to a Base Post Office is considered the normal requirement for a type "O" unit such as operated in the European Theater.[1]

7. Postal Regulating Section. a. Administration and Personnel: The Table of Organization and Equipment for a Postal Regulating Section provides a single type unit of three officers and 28 enlisted men. In the original planning, it was visualized as a unit transferring mail in bulk loads between a base post office and the forward Army Post Offices. Combat experience proved that the functions of the Postal Regulating Section could not be confined to bulk mail handling but had to be extended to distribution and dispatch of intra-Army Post Office mail as well as in some cases the operation of a finance section

1 - Extract ltr, 25th Base Post Office, "Study of Postal Operations." (Annex 4).

2 - Changes in Equipment considered necessary in a type "O" Base Post Office (Annex 5).

for the sale of stamps and money orders. Postal Regulating Sections were planned for use in a port of entry to reroute mail to the Base Post Office and the forward Postal Regulating Sections, supervise the unloading of ships, arrange for transportation, and many other various details incident to operations at a port. A unit of this size was unable to accomplish the task for which designed. For instance, in the two type operations, port and forward postal regulating sections, personnel was not sufficient to provide adequate supervision for the additional untrained men that had to be assigned to accomplish the work. Port postal regulating sections were augmented by civilians, temporary attachments from units in the vicinity, and prisoners of war, running up to a figure many times the size of the Table of Organization unit. In the forward Postal Regulating Sections as high as 250 and seldom less than 100 additional personnel were required to keep the mail moving. It is evident that a change in this type unit is necessary. A cellular type Table of Organization and Equipment covering at least three types of Postal Regulating Sections is required. One for port operations, one as a forward Postal Regulating Section to follow the combat troops, and one of a smaller type to be used at a transfer point such as air fields.

In addition to not having sufficient personnel to provide adequate supervision for untrained labor, postal regulating sections found it necessary to operate a mess which under active combat conditions ran on a 24 hour basis. No provisions were made in the Table of Organization for sufficient mess personnel to perform this work. It was necessary, due to distance involved, for the Postal Regulating Section to furnish one meal a day to drivers and guards of all Army Post Offices they served. During combat this was often during the middle of the night. A mess section with sufficient equipment to perform those duties is definitely needed.

b. Transportation: Transportation, as in all echelons of the postal service, was one of the main contributing factors to the backlog and delay of mail. This is particularly true in the delay in handling intra-theater mail from one Army Post Office to another. Lateral contact between Postal Regulating Sections is absolutely necessary if there is to be efficient mail service to combat troops. In combat, units are shifted rapidly from one position to another and even from one command to another making the rerouting of mail necessary. If Postal Regulating Sections had been furnished with sufficient transportation to maintain lateral contact with the Regulating Section on each flank the necessity of sending mail back to the Base Post Office, if the unit moved, would have been eliminated. In conferring with postal personnel familiar with regulating section operations it is a concensus of opinion that a transportation section to include ten (10) $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks is necessary to maintain efficient mail service in the forward areas of a combat zone.

8. Army Postal Units. a. General: Originally Table of Organization and Equipment 12-605 provided for a single type Army Postal Unit of one officer and 11 enlisted men to operate an Army Post Office. It was soon realized that a revision was necessary to provide units of varying size to furnish postal service in relation to the number of troops served. Accordingly a cellular type Table of Organization and Equipment was adopted to provide Army Postal Units of a size ranging from two to 29 men covering service from 1,000 to 25,000 troops. Generally the experience in the European

Theater showed that the maximum of troops listed in the Table of Organization and Equipment to be served by any one type Army Postal Unit was high. For instance, the Army Postal Unit of one officer and 11 enlisted men, which was the general type used to serve non-organic troops, was estimated to serve from 7,500 to 10,000. While many of these units served more than their rated maximum they could not cover all phases of the operation efficiently, and it was found that instead of estimating one Army Postal Unit of this type for every 10,000 troops served, the better estimate was one Army Postal Unit for every 7,500 troops served. A downward revision should be made in the estimate of the number of troops to be served by any of the type Army Postal Units now organized.[1]

b. Equipment: Generally the equipment listed in Table of Organization and Equipment 12-605 was found to be adequate. A few shortages of postal equipment and the usual shortage of transportation existed. A shortage of distribution cases, sack racks, and cash boxes were the most serious, and was necessary in almost every case to improvise equipment to cover the deficiencies. An item of special equipment that would facilitate the financial operation in all Army Post Offices would be the development of a special folding type stamp and cash box which could also be used as a small desk in the field. Several excellent improvised articles of this type were noted in visiting the various Army Post Offices. All Army Postal Units had difficulty in obtaining transportation to transport mail to and from the Postal Regulating Sections. In this connection there is a definite need for a cargo truck to be included in the equipment of all Army Postal Units, the size and capacity varying with the type unit.

c. Organic Army Post Offices: Present Table of Organization and Equipment calls for an organic postal unit included in the organization of a Division or Army Headquarters varying in size up to two officers and 14 enlisted men in the Army organization. The Table of Organization and Equipment for a Corps headquarters orginally included an organic postal section which was deleted in 1943 in a revision of the Corps Table of Organization and Equipment. The revised Corps Table of Organization and Equipment provided for three postal enlisted men to furnish postal service to the Corps Headquarters and assigned troops. An Army Postal Unit of the general type was normally used at Corps headquarters to furnish postal service to attached corps troops, located in that vicinity. The three man unit of Corps headquarters was found to be too small to operate an Army Post Office for the Corps, and lacked postal officer supervision. The addition of a postal officer and the increase of postal personnel to five or six enlisted men would have greatly facilitated postal service to corps headquarters and assigned troops. The personnel allotted to the organic Army Postal Offices was inadequate to perform all postal work efficiently. In the original concept of personnel required in organic Army Post Offices the extent of the work involved was not visualized, particularly the directory service, the detaching of money order units to furnish service to forward echelons, and to points where troops concentrations were heavy. Each organic post office also maintained a locator file of all assigned units. This file is necessary as much mail for transferees and other personnel must be rerouted in the organic Army Post Office by directory service.

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1 - Memo, Hq United States Forces, European Theater, Office of the Adjutant General, File AG 314.7 AGM, Subj: "Army Postal Service Operations Report," 1 April 1942 to 31 July 1945.

To accomplish these things additional personnel, in almost every case was detailed to assist the Army Post Office ranging in total strengths from 18 to 25 enlisted men. In the division the need of an assistant postal officer is evident. This was later remedied in the Armored Division by the inclusion of a Warrant Officer as an assistant postal officer but the Infantry Division with its larger strength was still left with only one postal officer.

The organization of an Army headquarters provides for one staff postal officer and no clerical assistants. In active operations it is necessary for the postal officer to be in the field a great part of the time, leaving the office in army headquarters without representation. As a result, either the field work or the administration suffered. Many staff conferences were often missed by the postal officer being in the field. Information for planning purposes was received second hand and late when he returned to headquarters. An assistant postal officer and at least two clerks are deemed necessary for a headquarters the size of an army.

CHAPTER 2

FIELD OPERATIONS

SECTION 1

INVASION

9. Planning. a. Western France: Plans for the impending invasion and operations on the continent began with the formation of the Postal Staff Section in the United Kingdom. Considerable difficulty was encountered in the formulation and adoption of a plan covering the invasion due to lack of recognition or appreciation of postal problems, the constant revision of the postal plan to conform to the overall plan as changes occurred and a lack of qualified personnel.[1]

b. Southern France: Information is not available on the planning for the operation of postal service in the landing in Southern France as this plan was produced at headquarters North African Theater, United States Army; however, it is evident from the effective method of operation that the planning was sound.[2]

10. Beach Operations: While it is realized that mail is an important morale factor, it is believed that the attempt to land postal personnel, and deliver mail, during the actual securing and expansion of the beach head was made too early. Troops, high priority supplies, and equipment must necessarily come first and as a result the Army Postal Units phased for D plus two had to lay off shore until priority items were unloaded. It was four days until the 20th Postal Regulating Section was unloaded. During the actual landing and securing of the beach head, troops are more concerned in actual combat than they are with the receipt of mail. This was borne out by the fact that during the first few days subsequent to D Day troops did not have time to write, as little or no mail was

1 - Remarks of Col S. G. Schwartz, Theater Postal Officer (Annex 3).

2 - Ltr, Hq Army Service Forces, Subj: "Mail Handling During the Invasion of Southern France for Period 15-30 Aug 44 (D-Day plus 15)" dated 30 Aug 44 (Annex 6).

dispatched from the continent to the United Kingdom. Conferences with postal inspectors and Postal Regulating personnel revealed that mail was being sent to the continent as filler cargo. This resulted in small quantities of mail being strewn up and down the entire length of both beaches instead of being unloaded in one general area where it could be guarded and properly handled. No representative of the Theater Postal Staff Section was present on the continent during the initial operation to coordinate the establishment and movement of postal units and mail handling procedures.[1] The presence of an officer from this section would have eliminated much of the confusion that existed with postal units arriving without instructions as to whom and where to report. Better liaison could have been maintained with the United Kingdom section to control the forwarding of mail to the continent.

11. Port Operations: The major functions of the Postal Service at a port are supervision of unloading ships and scheming and routing mail in bulk to various Army Post Offices or Base Post Offices as the case may be. This is the type of work the Postal Regulating Section is organized to accomplish, however, present Postal Regulating Sections do not have sufficient personnel for port operations. While it is realized that as much civilian and Prisoner of War labor as available is utilized, close supervision is necessary. The scheming of thousands of bags of mail requires personnel with postal training. It was found that three officers and 28 men units could not meet the requirements. A Postal Regulating Section designed for port operation should be included in Table of Organization and Equipment 12-602. It should have at least five officers, and 60 enlisted men. Three officers should be Postal Officers and two Branch Immaterial, one of which should be qualified in transportation as transportation is a large factor in successful operation at a port. Constant pressure was required to get even minimum transportation requirements to move mail. An officer qualified in transportation would greatly facilitate the movement of mail.

SECTION 2

OPERATIONS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND OPERATIONS ON THE CONTINENT

12. General: With the forward movement of the invasion forces and the establishment of base sections the mail service on the continent became stabilized. The 17th Base Post Office was moved to Cherbourg, France and began operations on 1 August 1944 at that port. On 17 October 1944 the first class section was moved to Vitry-sur-Seine, near Paris, and on 31 October 1944 the parcel post section moved to Le Mans, France.[2] Mail was broken down to units by the Postal Concentration Center in New York and direct shipment to the continent began. After arrival at ports of entry, and the Base Post Office, the mail was routed to Army Post Offices through the Postal Regulating Sections in accordance with the established procedure. As the troops advanced, the communication lines extended until the transportation again became a problem and backlogs of mail occurred. At one time mail was moved forward by

1 - "Mail Service in Invasion of Europe," remarks Maj John Jehowski, Army Postal Inspector (Annex 2).

2 - History of the Army Postal Service, European Theater of Operations, 13 June 1945.

the "Hitch hike" method with military policemen stopping every empty truck moving forward, and directing them to the Postal Regulating Section for a load of mail going to an Army Post Office in the direction of travel.[1] The establishing of the "Toot Sweet" rail express from the coast to Paris, Liege, and Verdun was a big help, as this gave rapid service to the Postal units at those points. Late in the summer of 1945 air service was established to forward postal regulating sections.[2] This was improved later by assigning a definite number of planes for mail service.

The Postal Division in Paris controlled the publishing of the mail scheme for all units on the continent. The rapid shifting of units in combat with a lack of a rapid means of reporting changes caused much misrouting of mail. By the time the published changes reached the Army Post Offices days had elapsed and in some cases units had changed serving Army Post Offices several times. This was later improved by the establishing of a daily courier service to all Postal Regulating Sections. Daily scheme changes submitted by all Army Post Offices to the Base Post Office with the Base Post Office responsible for the publishing of all changes would have speeded up delivery to units. [3 & 4]

Except for the intra-theater service, the plan for operation of mail service on the continent was sound, but the same problem that occurred in the early phases (transportation) was the sore spot and practically all back logs of mail were traced to this deficiency.

13. Intra-Theater Mail Service: Prior to the invasion, the intra-Army Post Office mail service in the United Kingdom was generally satisfactory. Army Post Offices dispatched mail via the British rail system, and while transportation was limited it was regular. Intra-theater mail was the chief cause of complaint in mail delivery on the continent.[2] It was not unusual for a letter to take from one to three weeks for delivery between Army Post Offices on the continent. One week to twelve days was not unusual for delivery time from Paris to a forward Army Post Office. There were two main contributing factors for this delay, first, all mail had to be routed back to the Base Post Office in Paris to be redispatched; and second the lack of transportation, particularly with the Postal Regulating Sections. The mail service between Army Post Offices could have been cut to a few days if dispatching Army Post Offices had schemed intra-theater mail and regulating sections worked mail to other regulating sections in the theater. Contact between all regulating sections could have been maintained and mail exchanged if sufficient transportation had been assigned to all postal regulating sections, thereby eliminating the necessity of mail being returned to Paris for redispatch to the proper Army Post Office. [3 & 4]

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1 - History of the Army Postal Service, European Theater of Operations, 13 June 1945.

2 - Memo, Hq United States Forces, European Theater, Office of the Adjutant General, File AG 314.7 AGM, Subj: "Army Postal Service Operations Report," 1 April 1942 to 31 July 1945.

3 - "Mail Service in Invasion of Europe," remarks Maj John Jehowski, Army Postal Inspector.

4 - Extract, Sec III, Ltr, Hq 25th Base Post Office, R 311 TBGAB, 31 Oct 45, Subj: "Study of Postal Operations." (Annex 4).

14. Air Forces Postal Service: Technical control for the Air Forces postal service was under the Theater Postal Officer. Postal Units were assigned to the United States Strategic Air Forces and were under the operational control of the staff postal officer of that headquarters. Mail followed the normal channels until it reached the base post office assigned to the Air Forces, but from that point it followed air force postal channels. This organization functioned satisfactorily and mail service was good.[1]

15. Transportation. a. From the Zone of the Interior to the United Kingdom: As previously stated transportation was one of the big problems of the Army Postal Service. The greatest contributing factor to delay in mail deliveries was inability to secure the necessary transportation to move the mail.[1] During the early period of the operation, mail was shipped from the Zone of the Interior by surface as filler cargo, whenever space was obtainable, and by air three times weekly through an arrangement with the Pan-American Airways. Later arrangements were made to have an allocation of space on the Queen Mary and the Queen Elizabeth. This resulted in good service until November 1942, when weather caused the northern air routes to be discontinued; and the increase of troops shipments and supplies to the United Kingdom caused a shortage of cargo space in surface vessels. Many requests were made for allocation of a specified space allotment for all types of mail, but this was not furnished.[1] In the spring of 1943 the Air Transport Command established the European Wing and a weight allotment on aircraft in both directions was acquired. This resulted in excellent air service during 1943 and the early part of 1944. The same problem continued to exist on shipment of other classes of mail because of the policy of using mail as filler cargo.

b. Transportation in the United Kingdom: Mail service in the United Kingdom was excellent. The rail and postal facilities of the British Government were utilized in transporting mail from English ports to Base Post Offices and Army Post Offices established in the United Kingdom which resulted in timely and continuous service. Intra-Army Post Office service in the United Kingdom was also excellent due to good rail facilities and cooperation of the British Postal Service; however, this system failed to properly train postal personnel, particularly regulating sections, in handling mail for troops. The transportation corps had little knowledge of the postal requirements.[1] During the period just prior to D Day, delivery of mail in the United Kingdom necessarily suffered from lack of transportation due to troop movements, and movement of high priority supplies to marshalling areas.

c. Transportation on the Continent: During the early days no specific allotment of transportation could be obtained. Some first class mail was flown to the continent, other mail was used as filler cargo on ammunition coasters, resulting in mail being unloaded almost anywhere on the beaches. In this respect it is believed the British system of allotting small boats exclusively for transportation of mail was superior, as mail moved with some degree of regularity and to a definite point for unloading. In the continental operations transportation of mail again became a paramount issue for the Army

1 - Memo, Hq United States Forces, European Theater, Office of the Adjutant General, file AG 314.7 AGM, Subj: "Army Postal Service Operations Report, 1 April 1942 to 31 July 1945."

Postal Service as our forces broke out of the beach head and continued across France. The postal units had no transportation to forward the mail over the ever extending line of communication. The system of "hitch-hiking," as previously stated, was used with some degree of success; however, a considerable quantity of mail backlogged and piled up.[1] Eventually the port of Cherburg was opened and a Base Post Office moved in and the shipment began direct to and from New York. This eliminated the transhipment of mail to the United Kingdom for troops on the continent, and resulted in better mail service. As rail facilities became available some vans were obtained and mail cars were included as part of freight trains moving forward; however, considerable time would elapse between the ports and the forward destinations. This caused an investigation into the delay of delivery of mail, and in March 1945, the Chief of Staff of the European Theater of Operations, directed that an express service be established from the ports to Paris and to the forward areas.[1] From this time on an improvement in all mail service was evident. In May 1945, our forces advanced so far forward that even the rail service was not adequate and a plane service was established to all forward postal regulating sections for the transportation of first class mail. This service cut from two to five days on the transit time of mail and many instances were noted of delivery of airmail to the addressee from the Zone of the Interior in six or seven days. In spite of this speeding up of the service on mail from the United States the problem still existed of service of mail between units on the continent which was due to the fact that mail between Army Post Offices had to be returned to the Base Post Office in Paris and redispatched (as described in paragraph 13). The exchange of mail between Postal Regulating Sections would have eliminated many days of delivery time. This was impossible at the time due to the fact that there was insufficient transportation allotted to postal units for this work. In some cases this was realized by the command which the regulating sections served and some transportation was assigned from sources available to that particular command. A decided improvement was noticed in the mail service between the Regulating Sections and the Army Post Offices served by them through the allotment of the much needed transportation. It is believed the mail service was good within the limitations of transportation available except between Army Post Offices on the continent.

16. Reinforcement Mail: The handling of mail for reinforcements presented a peculiar and difficult problem for there was no way of determining in advance how many depots troops would pass through or how long they would remain at any one depot. The original system called for a Central Ground Force Reinforcement Command Directory where a file of locator cards for each individual was to be maintained. This system placed the burden on the individual to prepare change of address cards and correctly dispose of them. It was found that only a small percentage of the reinforcements were submitting the required cards. This made it necessary to resort to the use of movement orders furnished by the commands in order to secure correct changes of address and keep locator files current.[1]

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1 - Memo, Hq United States Forces, European Theater, Office of the Adjutant General, file AG 314.7 AGM, Subj: "Army Postal Service Operation Report, 1 April 1942 to 31 July 1945."

Reinforcements from the Zone of the Interior were formed into provisional units of 200 men each, with all arms and branches of service represented. They could not be utilized intact. As a result these provisional units were disbanded upon arrival in the United Kingdom and men were assigned to different depots. This meant every piece of reinforcement mail required directory service. Three months after the invasion new depots were established on the continent. The provisional units were shipped direct and intact to these depots through Le Havre, France. Mail for these units was tied in platoon bundles and sent by air from New York to Le Havre, making it possible to deliver a large quantity of mail to the reinforcements at Le Havre, thereby eliminating much Ground Force Reinforcement Command directory work. The tendency grew to have these provisional units remain intact as long as possible to lessen administrative problems.[1] Although it still remained a problem, mail service for reinforcements gradually improved after the organization of reinforcements in to companies, platoons, etc.

17. Mail for Hospitalized Personnel: Handling of mail for hospitalized personnel presented no difficulty until after D Day, but from D Day on, it became a major problem due to the increased number of casualties and the uncertainty of the hospital evacuation policy. The paramount issue in hospitalization of casualties is care of the man, therefore, it was necessary for the postal service to adapt itself to the hospital evacuation system.

The casualties passed through hospitals in the forward areas and were evacuated to hospitals in rear areas, United Kingdom or the Zone of the Interior. Change of address cards were dispatched from each hospital, except Field and Evacuation Hospitals, to the patients former unit, requesting mail be forwarded to the hospital mentioned. Consequently, most of the mail followed the hospital evacuation channel. Not over 5% of this mail was deliverable at the hospital, so it was forwarded to the Central Postal Directory.[1] Because of the backlog of mail on hand, a separate directory to process mail for hospitalized personnel was established 20 April 1945 at Vitry sur-Seine, a suburb of Paris. The forwarding of mail from hospital to hospital was discontinued. Hospitals were required to send mail to the hospital directory. This brought mail for hospitalized personnel under control. Current instructions placed the responsibility of preparing the change of address cards for patients directly on the hospital administration. This burden, added to the heavy administrative load of preparing the necessary medical reports, would delay the preparation and mail of the change of address cards. It is believed that a small Army Postal Unit (Type A for Station Hospitals and Type B for General Hospitals) assigned to each Station and General Hospital to be responsible for all postal functions of the hospital would have facilitated mail handling.

18. Casualty Mail: Mail for personnel that were killed or missing in action was processed through the unit and verified by the unit commander or other designated officer. To eliminate as many chances of error as possible a locator file was established known as the Casualty Directory. The cards for this locator file were furnished by a central Machine Records Unit from verified casualty reports.

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1 - Memo, Hq United States Forces, European Theater, Office of the Adjutant General, File AG 314.7 AGM, Subj: "Army Postal Service Operation Report," 1 April 1942 to 31 July 1945."

All mail of this type that had been verified in the unit was forwarded through postal channels to the Casualty Directory where each piece was again verified. In this way a large number of errors were caught. Mail for personnel who had been erroneously reported as killed or missing in action was stopped at this point and placed in proper channels for delivery instead of being returned to the sender. It is believed that the Casualty Directory served a good purpose as it prevented heartaches among friends and relatives of military personnel which would have resulted if the letters had been returned incorrectly indorsed.

19. Directory Service: In any Theater of Operations it necessarily happens that a certain percentage of personnel are shifted from one unit to another or individuals become casualties. Normally this mail is forwarded to the next address by the unit to which he was assigned; however, this did not always work satisfactorily and to facilitate the location of a person within the European Theater, a Central Directory was established for the purpose of directorizing all undeliverable mail. In a small theater this would work out satisfactorily, but in a theater the size of the European Theater of Operations, this directory reached proportions of several million cards. At one time between three and four thousand personnel were utilized.[1] It was necessary to funnel mail back through returned mail channels to the Central Directory thus requiring much additional handling, a great deal of delay and additional transportation. In addition to the Central Directory, each organic Army Post Office maintained a locator file of personnel in units assigned to the command. All mail normally was processed through this directory service before it was sent to the Central Directory for final processing. In addition a Ground Force Reinforcement Directory Service, a Hospital Directory Service and Casualty Directory Service were established. This made five separate directories for various types of mail with the Central Directory usually a duplication of the other. Inasmuch as undeliverable mail received directory service at the organic Army Post Office, and then at one of the three other according to its classification, it was sometimes months before a letter was finally processed through the final directory service. By this time it is safe to conclude the letter had lost its value and subsequent mail had been received by the addressee at his new address by notification through his own correspondence. From this it would seem that for a large portion of mail requiring directory service, the Central Directory could be eliminated, thereby saving personnel and transportation space.

SECTION 3

ADDITIONAL POSTAL SERVICES

20. Expeditionary Force Messages and Senders Composition Messages: The Expeditionary Force Message (EFM) and the Senders Composition Message (SCM) were two means of communication established to give military personnel a rapid means of transmitting important messages to their families. The Expeditionary Force Message was a fixed text message available to all personnel at a nominal cost. The Senders Composition Message was a message of the Senders own composition.

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1 - Memo, Hq United States Forces, European Theater, Office of the Adjutant General, File AG 314.7 AGM, Subj: "Army Postal Service Operation Report, 1 April 1942 to 31 July 1945."

The cost was based on charges made by available commercial facilities. The collection of outgoing messages from the troops, and the delivery of incoming messages, was a function of the Army Postal Service. It provided a satisfactory method for this type communication. While the Army Postal Service was responsible for the handling of those messages below Theater level, the actual transmission to the Zone of the Interior was a commercial function, being turned over to commercial facilities after reaching theater headquarters. It is believed that the benefits derived by the troops from this type communication made the extra work entailed in the handling well worth while. One feature in the transmission that should receive consideration is the Senders Composition Message, the rate of which was fairly high for the average soldier. In this connection the recommendation of the Theater Postal Officer for the transmission of this type message by the Signal Corps is believed to warrant consideration, as this service has operating control of electrical communications.[1]

21. V-Mail: In 1942 the communication service known as V-Mail was inaugurated by the Army Postal Service. It consisted of microfilming letters written on a special form and transmitting the rolls of microfilmed letters overseas where they were reproduced in one quarters the original size and placed in the normal mail channels for delivery. This was a speedy, safe, and sure way of sending letters. The greatest argument in favor of this type communication was the weight and space saving, which was approximately 98% of that required for the same amount of ordinary letters.[1] The delivery time took about two to three days longer than the airmail. The equipment necessary to process this type letter was intricate and expensive. The original work was done on a contract basis with photographic concerns. The reproduction of the letters when placed in mail for delivery was so small that it could not be handled rapidly in the postal service as addresses were at times too small and indistinguishable. Many complaints were received from the field that the writing was reproduced too small for ordinary reading. Later a special section known as the V-Mail Section, was added to the Table of Organization and Equipment of the Base Post Office, which brought the entire control of this type letter under the Army Postal Service. It is believed a more satisfactory service could have been given, and much expense in equipment and many man hours saved, had a special lightweight airmail letter been adopted.[1]

CHAPTER 3

MISCELLANEOUS

SECTION 1

FUTURE OF THE ARMY POSTAL SERVICE

22. Future Army Postal Service: The course of world events prior to our actual entry into World War II led to a certain amount of preparation for the possibility of being drawn into the fast approaching conflict. Mail service by the army for military personnel had not been considered in the peace time army, consequently, no

1 - Memo, Hq United States Forces, European Theater, Office of the Adjutant General, File AG 314.7, AGM, Subj: "Army Postal Service Operation Report, 1 April 1942 to 31 July 1945."

provision had ever been made for it. In March of 1940 the War Department and the Post Office Department entered into an agreement whereby each would furnish certain equipment and services to establish the Army Postal Service.[1]

To place this plan in operation required trained personnel. The post office department did not have personnel with Army experience, and the War Department did not have personnel familiar with the technical problems of mail service. The combination was hard to find. As a result postal personnel were commissioned direct from civilian Post Offices and an attempt was made to fit the postal service into the Army structure. The initial phases of the army postal service were costly in time and personnel and required much coordination of the various army staff sections before a workable organization was formed. The postal units first conceived were inadequate. Revision was necessary both for personnel and equipment. The close of the conflict still found many shortcomings in certain types of postal organizations and equipment necessary for field operations.

Had the postal service to troops in the years prior to the present war been handled by the army, or even the army postal service been considered in a reserve status, as that of other arms and services, many deficiencies that existed in the early days of organization would not have occurred. The experience gained in this war has shown that there is definite need for the continuing of the Army Postal Service in the future peace time organization of the army.

SECTION 2

CONCLUSIONS

23. A study of the available reports on the Army Postal Service and conferences with available postal officers leads to the following conclusions:

a. There was a lack of planning due to inexperience.

b. Personnel and units were initially sent to the European Theater without proper training in army postal work.

c. That the Army Postal Inspection Service would have given more valuable assistance had it been placed directly under or coordinated with the Theater Commander instead of the War Department.

d. That many claims and inquiries reached this theater that could have been screened out in the Zone of the Interior. That an arbitrary settlement of small claims would have saved time and expense.

e. That the Table of Organization and Equipment of the postal units and organic Postal Sections in all echelons was inadequate.

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1 - Field Manual 12-105, 17 May 1943.

f. That mail service to the invasion forces was phased too early after D Day.

g. That the allocation of transportation was inadequate for the prompt movement of mail forward.

h. That insufficient attention and study was given to reinforcement and hospital mail service until the problems reached major proportions.

i. That there were duplications in some phases of the directory service using many man hours of time and transportation.

j. That while the Expeditionary Force Messages and the Senders Composition Message service was generally good the V-Mail service required longer to reach the addressee than airmail; was harder to handle, and much harder to read by the addressee.

k. That the Army Postal Service should be continued as a permanent part of the Army Organization.

SECTION 3

RECOMMENDATIONS

24. It is recommended:

a. That the Army Postal Service be established as a separate service, or a separate communications service be established which would include the postal service.

b. That the Army Postal Inspection Service be included in a Theater postal staff section under the Theater Commander.

c. That a cellular type Table of Organization and Equipment be developed for Postal Regulating Sections and that continuing study be made of the personnel and equipment allotted to all postal units.

d. That an Army Postal Section comprised of one officer and six enlisted men be included in a Corps Table of Organization and Equipment.

e. That the organic postal sections of an Army headquarters and all Divisions be revised to include two postal officers and an increase in enlisted personnel of Army headquarters and Infantry Divisions to 20 and Airborne and Armored Divisions to 15.

f. That the Table of Organization and Equipment for army headquarters be revised to include an Assistant Postal Officer and two enlisted clerks.

g. That adequate transportation be allotted all postal units for the transportation of mail.

h. That each station and general hospital have a type A & B postal unit respectively, included in the Table of Organization and Equipment as an organic part of the hospital.

i. That in a large theater a Central Postal Directory be dispensed with.

j. That future V-Mail service be eliminated in favor of a standard light weight Air Mail letter.

k. That the Army Postal Service be continued in the peace time organization of the army.

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3. Field Manual 12-105, 7 May 1943.

4. Annex 1 - Extracts from History of Mail Service in the European Theater of Operations, Postal Division, Office of the Adjutant General, Headquarters European Theater.

   Annex 2 - "Mail Service in Invasion of Europe," comment of Major John Jehowski, Army Postal Inspector.

   Annex 3 - Remarks by Colonel S. G. Schwartz, Theater Postal Officer.

   Annex 4 - Extracts, Letter, Headquarters 25th Base Post Office, File R 311, Subject: " Study of Postal Operations."

   Annex 5 - Recommendations as to changes in equipment necessary in Type "O" Base Post Offices, Letter, Hq 25th Base Post Office, File R 311, Subject: "Study of Postal Operations."

   Annex 6 - "Mail Handling during the Invasion of Southern France for period 15 - 30 Aug 44 (D Day to D plus 15;)" Letter to Director of Army Postal Service by Captain J. J. Clougherty, Army Postal Inspector.

EXTRACT

HISTORY

THE ARMY POSTAL SERVICE
European Theater of Operations
(26 January, 1942 to 6 June, 1944)

INDEX

I	Introduction
II	Origin
III	Development
IV	Formation of Postal Division
V	Organization of Postal Division
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X	Base Post Offices
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II -- ORIGIN. 1. The Second Postal Regulating Section disembarked in Northern Ireland on 26 January 1942, with the First A.E.F. to arrive in the European Theater of Operations. No advance postal service arrangements had been made. Second Lieutenant Joseph E. Porch, commanding the unit, opened Army Postal Office 813 at Belfast on 29 January 1942. Six branch APOs were opened immediately to service troops over a widely scattered area. Later, as postal units arrived, the branch offices were discontinued; however, the newly arrived units came very poorly equipped and had to borrow from the postmasters in the towns where they were located.

2. Lt. Porch brought with him postage stamp stock in the amount of $10,000,00, and two mail keys, but no other equipment of any kind. He received invaluable assistance from the British Army Postal Officials in the British Base Post Office at Belfast.

3. Since no advance arrangements had been made, it was necessary to use British postage on all outgoing mail. The mail was dispatched through the International Postal Service until 15 April 1942. The first mail for the troops from the United States was received during the first week in March.

4. Headquarters of the United States Army Forces in the British Isles, now ETOUSA, was located in London and conducted its correspondence with the United States through State Department Courier channels. There was no APO in London. Until 22 March all postal service arrangements were on a temporary and emergency basis.

* * * * *

A TRUE COPY: C. L. Bodine
C. L. BODINE,
Major, AGD.

ANNEX 1

JJ/mvs

MAIL SERVICE IN INVASION OF EUROPE

Personal observations and opinions of Major
John Jehowski, Army Postal Inspector.

1. The observations and opinions set forth below, are personal opinions based on observations of planning for mail service to troops in the invasion of Europe; and observations in the field up to V.E. Day. The mail service as actually given is official History, and will be repeated only in part. The statements will be confined to criticisms and possible action which would have improved the service.

2. In planning phases, the chief points were:

a. The Theater Postal S.O.P. which was drafted at least two months before D-Day was not approved for publication by the Theater G I, prior to movements of troops into "sealed" marshalling areas. This handicapped the 1st U.S. Army in that it did not have theater policy on which to base instructions issued to 1st Army units. A carbon copy of the unofficial draft of the S.O.P. was obtained by an Army Postal Inspector as a last resort, and was used as a basis of instructions to troops by the 1st Army Postal Officer. Instructions were consequently late in distribution and many units did not receive them.

b. Liaison was had between the Theater Postal Officer and 1st Army planning group at London but the 1st Army postal officer at Bristol had difficulty obtaining the information. Major Schoerke, Army Postal Inspector, and myself undertook to act as liaison. Close liaison was necessary as illustrated by mail lift alotted to the continent and what G-4 actually assigned. Increasing tonnages were alotted from D # 2 on, but when 1st Army tonnage schedules were published the theater postal officer told us that 1st Army allowed only one shipment to one beach head on D # 2, then none until D # 10; and no mail to the other beach head. This was taken up with 1st Army G-1 and G-4 with the result that tonnage was alotted as planned.

3. In the landing and establishment of postal service during the 1st two months on the continent, instructions based on the unofficial copy of the Theater S.O.P. was used. In the Normandie campaign mail service was good although it could have been better.

a. Army units lacked instructions as to reporting to nearest APO to obtain their mail and in instructions on postage to be used. This was also true of Third Army units arriving at a later date.

b. No information was available to APOs as to what kind of currency other than invasion currency, could be accepted for stamps and money orders.

c. Postal Regulating Sections transportation was inadequate to carry necessary operational equipment, and to handle mails to air ports, beaches and between PRSs.

d. Personnel of PRSs was inadequate to process the incoming and outgoing mail. This was overcome by working over 16 hours a day, and dispatching unprocessed mail to England.

e. Mail arrived on cargo boats, and was unloaded in accordance with priority of principal cargo. Low priority cargo caused delay as information as to which boats carried mail was not available during 1st 10 days.

f. Official representative of theater Postal Officer's office was not on continent (nor 1st Army Postal Officer) to establish a policy where available instructions would not cover the situation.

4. The third and fourth month of the campaign brought other problems but principally the problem of transportation.

a. Transport to the continent from England was still on cargo ships and by air. Cargo ships were slow, requiring 10 days and more from loading date to unloading date.

b. Air lift for all letter mail was not alotted, and when bad weather cancelled flights, mail accumulated and had to be sent by boat from England.

c. Mail routing changes (scheme changes) were sent to Theater headquarters for consolidation by mail, making them 10 days to 20 days old when received and resulting in misrouting of mail. This was solved by a jeep courier system to all PRSs, collecting and distributing scheme changes.

d. Lack of alotted and controlled transport for carrying mail caused delays, and complaints.

e. Lack of an officer from Theater Headquarters in the field from the start of the invasion resulted in that office not realizing the true conditions in the field, and what remedies were needed.

f. No exchange of mails between PRS when troops were shifted from one army to another caused long delays.

5. The 5th to 9th month settled problems of the 1st four months but developed the problem of inter-theater mail, and brought mail problems for reinforcements and hospitalized personnel to a head as a major problem.

a. Lack of transport was still a major item.

b. Changing conditions in the field necessitated prompt issuance of instructions, but instructions were not promptly issued. As a result, the need for said instructions had passed and new instructions were needed before the first was issued. The cause of delay was due to insufficient personnel in theater postal division and realization that instructions were needed promptly.

6. The problem of the 10th month to V.E. day were related to transport and the reinforcement, and hospitalized mail problem.

7. Chief criticisms of the entire delivery system can be placed on the lack of:

a. Transportation for mail.

b. Sufficient personnel in theater Headquarters, and subordinate units.

c. Lack of study of hospitalized and reinforcement mail problems. This lack was due to insufficient personnel in Theater Headquarters.

9. Comments would not be complete unless postal units were taken separately; and the reinforcement and hospitalized mail problems treated separately.

a. Postal Regulating Sections: Present units are too small. There should be a unit of at least 71 men and officers to serve a full army. Each should have a messing section, and an enlarged transportation section (at least 8, 2½ ton trucks).

b. Postal Units: More 5 to 7 man units should be used, particularly by the air corps. Larger Postal sections should be provided to Army Hq., and Army Corps should have a postal section even though they have no assigned troops. Infantry and Armored Divisions should have postal sections of at least 20 men and 2 officers if they are to operate efficiently in the field. All divisions in the field had to assign additional men to assist their APO. A 4 man APO should be provided each general hospital.

c. Base Post Offices: Should be provided with suitable operating space on lines of communication centrally located. A pool of men (BPO over strength) should be provided to form provisional APO units. In Europe no suitable quarters were provided until postal service almost failed for that reason.

d. Sufficient trucks to transport all mail should be placed under control of the Theater Postal Officer, where rail service is not efficient.

e. Reinforcements should be sent forward in provisional units and kept as intact as possible until assigned. Provisional units should contain only one classification and depot commanders should be required to move and assign them intact if the requisition amounted to the number in a complete unit. The system in effect during concluding months of the war delivered mail to reinforcements.

f. Mail for hospitalized personnel: Each general hospital or unit operating a hospital plant should have a four or five man postal unit. This unit to be responsible for mail and to notify a central directory and man's unit, of arrivals and departures of patients. Placing burden of such notices on hospital administrative personnel and lack of such postal units caused breakdown of deliveries to hospitalized personnel in Europe.

g. Inspectors: Sufficient inspecting officers to afford monthly visits to all postal installations. An Inspector should spend 15 days of each month examining processes at BPOs; and one day every two weeks at PRSs. Inspectors should be assigned to specialize in study of reinforcement mail problems; Hospitalized mail problems; and to depredation problems.

A TRUE COPY:

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Major, AGD.

REMARK OF COLONEL S. G. SCHWARTZ ON POSTAL AGENDA.

29 August 1945

ADMINISTRATION.

Basically inadequate provision was made for the organization of a Postal Staff Section under the theater Adjutant General when the table of allotment was drawn up initially for the European Theater.

A successful postal service for the armed forces is admittedly the greatest single factor affecting the morale of all troops. In spite of this, the Postal Service was permitted to "rock along" and the Theater Postal Officer given inadequate support and left to improvise as best he could to provide service. The result of this was that postal conditions naturally got into a bad state of affairs, so that the postal service came to the attention of the Theater Commander who directed an investigation. The investigation disclosed that there was no lack of planning on the part of postal people but rather a lack of recognation of their basic needs and failure to adequately provide the necessary personnel, equipment, and transportation. It was SOP to require Postal to beg for the tools to work with which should have been provided automatically.

These conditions developed as a result of a lack of representation by professional postal people in staff meetings of the Theater Commander or the Commanding General, Communications Zone.

The Army Postal Service is basically an operational division and not an administrative function. Consequently it should have been organized as a special staff section of the theater with appropriate staff representation.

The Army Postal Service is admittedly an important theater-wide operation. Under the tri-lateral organization of the Army, it has, at times, been charged to the Communications Zone on the theory that basically it is a supply service. While this theory may be sound from certain military aspects it should be understood that mail is not a supply in the same logistical sense as any other Army item which is furnished on definite one-way requirement basis. To the contrary there is no pre-determined level of supply of mail. The volume fluctuates in accordance with the whims and attitudes of the writing public. Not only must provisions for mail to soldiers be made but also for mail from soldiers to their families and friends in the Z of I. For this reason the Postal Service has to be so organized as to control the operation from Port of Embarkation in the Z of I down to company level, and return.

Adequate command supervision of the theater postal service cannot be maintained from a subordinate echelon. The Postal Division should be organized as a special staff section on theater level. This recommendation is borne out by the experience in other theaters where the postal service was quite successfully operated and where it was so organized.

Special Services and the WACs for instance have staff representation although their operation in the theater cannot approach the intimate contact with the soldier that is required of the Army Postal Service, which must find and deliver a letter addressed to a special John Doe and not to just any John Doe.

ANNEX 3

Another important requirement why Postal be organized with representation on theater level is that it must exercise command supervision not only for the Postal Service in Com Z. but also for the Ground and Air Force no matter where located, and unless it is so organized it does not have the command power to exercise such overall supervision.

PERSONNEL.

Trained personnel replacements were not available in the early stages for the reason that there is no peace-time Army Postal Service, and those in authority in the theater failed to recognize that postal is a specialized operation which requires trained personnel to perform the work. The theory was that anyone, including basic 521s, could perform postal work successfully. That this feeling existed is substantiated by the fact that even in the G-1 Section of this theater there never was a trained professional postal officer handling postal work, it apparently being the feeling that just any officer at all could perform the mission successfully in addition to his other duties.

Initially Army Postal Units arrived from the Z of I inadequately trained for combat service. Later provision for such training was made in the Z of I, which has responsibility for such training.

ARMY POSTAL INSPECTORS.

The Postal Inspection Service is properly conceived but inadequately organized and supervised. It was claimed that it operated like the IG Department but it did not for the basic reason that the inspectors were on TD from the War Department and made reports direct to the War Department instead of being under the control of the Theater Commander. The Army Postal Inspectors did much good work and because of their freedom of action were in a position to uncover and bring to light matters which should have been corrected and which could have been corrected only by decisions in high places. However, by the very nature of the organization, conflicts of opinions were inevitable and occurred. Because their reports were submitted to the War Department and later referred to the theater much valuable time was lost. In many cases the need for remedial action had expired.

That there is a need for such an organization as Army Postal Inspectors there can be no question, because the mail service touches the life of not only every soldier in the theater but of nearly every civilian in the Z of I, where much pressure is engendered through representative in Congress and elsewhere. In the future, however, inspectors should be assigned to the theater, making their reports direct to the Theater Commander and having authority to transmit directly through channels copies to the War Department. They would then operate similarly to Inspectors General.

A TRUE COPY:

C. L. Bodine

C. L. BODINE,
Major, AGD.

EXTRACT

HEADQUARTERS
25TH BASE POST OFFICE
APO 800, U.S.ARMY

R 311 TGBAG 31 October 1945

SUBJECT: Study of Postal Operations.

TO: Commanding General, 15th U.S. Army, APO 408, U.S. Army.
(Att: Major C. L. Bodine, Asst. Adjutant General)

* * * * *

I. ORGANIZATION OF BASE POST OFFICE AND THE EQUIPMENT FOR SAME.

1. The Base Post Office on the Continent consisted of 824 EM and 31 Officers, under T/O 12-601, Type 0, 8 Feb 1944. A unit of this size is set up to handle mail for 750,000 to 1,000,000 troops. It is estimated that more than 3,000,000 were served at the peak, with no additional military personnel authorized to augment the BPO. At the peak approximately 1200 civilians were employed.

2. The 17th Base Post Office, commonly known as the "Invasion Base Post Office," did not operate as a single unit until 19 March 1945. Previously, operations were performed by two main detachments, 1st class mail being handled at Vitry-sur-Seine (near Paris) France, and other classes at Cherbourg and Le Mans, France. This set-up was never intended when the T/O was originally drafted, and it worked a hardship because of the necessity to duplicate overhead duties such as supply, kitchen, special service, I & E, Post Exchange, messenger service and Troop Commanders. The arrangement also split organic transportation which, as authorized, is not sufficient for organizational needs. Moreover, it was not possible to shift personnel from section to section as the work load required.

3. The T/O of a Type 0 Base Post Office should be revised to conform more nearly with that of other military organizations of similar strength. First, the strength should be increased to an aggregate of about 1,000, to serve one million troops. It should be made up into four companies of 250 each. Three companies to perform postal duties, the other to handle "overhead" functions, such as mess, guards, motor pool, post exchange, utilities, headquarters and supply. This would eliminate the use of experienced postal personnel (always scarce) on non-postal duties. The revised T/O should authorize Company Commanders, Mess Officer, Supply Officer, and Motor Transportation Officer. The current T/O calls for all AGD Officers, many of whom are commissioned direct from civilian life. It is considered inefficient to commission an officer direct from civilian life because of his postal experience and then endeavor to use him as a Mess or Motor Transportation Officer. Under the present set-up of a battalion (not broken into companies) the Commanding Officer is directly responsible for Military requirements, as well as full technical operations. Each company should be authorized a First Sergeant. It has been found impracticable for one First Sergeant to handle the strength of a battalion.

4. Experience has demonstrated that the T/O for a large BPO should be revised to include a few men familiar in trade skills such as plumbers, electricians, and carpenters. Responsibility for the

preparation of suitable work space and living quarters rests with the Engineer Corps. This, however, is not a satisfactory arrangement since the Engineers are usually engaged on work considered more important. Then too, immediate repairs must be made at any time over a 24-hour period.

5. The present T/E for a Type O Base Post Office is generally inadequate, although a few items are furnished in excess of needs, Suggested changes are attached as Enclosure 1.

* * * * *

III. DISTRIBUTION OF SCHEMES AND DAILY CHANGES.

12. The central scheme section was maintained at Postal Division (Hq, COM Z) although it was suggested that it be moved to the BPO. This would have afforded direct contact with the problems arising concerning the routing of mail. It would have insured the changing of schemes and case headers before the new scheme was published, saving at least 24 hours in making changes and preventing the mis-routing of a large quantity of mail. All Postal Regulating Sections or APOs operating as Postal Regulating Sections should have sent daily scheme changes to the Base Post Office.

IV. TRANSPORTATION.

13. Organic transportation of a Base Post Office was not sufficient to provide for transportation of any mail matter. Courier runs usually absorbed all available vehicles. This condition could have been alleviated by attaching a truck company to the Base Post Office in the initial stages and upon arrival at a new location. This was usually done, but not before action could be taken by the higher echelon. By then, a serious backlog of mail had developed. The reassignment of a truck company from the Base Post Office without the foresight of having another immediately available also resulted in inefficient mail handling, and created a storage problem that could not be met in a devastated area. It was necessary to store parcel post in fields and to protect it from the elements by the use of tarpaulins. This necessitated uncovering and the recovering at the slightest sign of a thundershower, wasting valuable time. The storage of mail in piles also caused damage by crushing, as well as criticism on the part of passing Officers and Enlisted Men.

14. When operations were first started in Cherbourg, France, the post office was allocated eight railroad cars a day for transporting mail to forward Postal Regulating Sections. Actually, mail was accumulating at the rate of about forty cars a day. The ensuing problem is one of arithmetic.

15. It is interesting to note that after the parcel post section was moved to Le Mans, France, the business of the Base Post Office at that point amounted to 99.6% of the RTO's business. The largest number of cars handled in one week amounted to 1770.

16. Early in the war it was stated that mail would be handled as Class I Supplies. Yet, it was never accorded the priority that was necessary to keep it moving.

* * * * *

VII. INTRA-THEATRE MAIL.

24. Intra-theatre mail today, as in the days of an active war, still presents a special problem. Many schedules have been prepared and revised in order to expedite theatre mail. There doesn't seem to be any explanation as to why mail is received from the States in less time than it takes to deliver a letter in the Theatre, although this occurrence persists. Small Base Post Offices, preferably Type D (6 Officers, 92 Enlisted Men) assigned to each Army, instead of a PRS, would have expedited the delivery of all mail, including intra-theatre mail.

25. The policy of having forward Postal Regulating Sections set up shuttle trips between them seems to be the likely way to eliminate delays in forward zones. This would preclude the necessity of returning mail to the Base Post Office in a rear area to be distributed and re-dispatched to another forward Postal Regulating Section.

* * * * *

s/t/A. J. HARKINS
Lt. Col., AGD
Commanding

A TRUE COPY:

C. L. Bodine

C. L. BODINE,
Major, AGD.

EXTRACT - Report of Lt Col A.J. Harkins, AGD.

SUGGESTED CHANGES IN SOME T/E ITEMS

The T/E Equipment of a Type O Base Post Office is far below the actual needs. The following table gives the present allowances and the equipment actually used and needed:

ITEM	AUTH. AMT.	REQ. AMT	REMARKS
ENGINEER			
Extinguisher, fire	16	50	
Set, Oxy-acetylene welding	0	1	
Skillsaw, electric	0	1	
Tool Set, electrician	0	1	
Tool Set, plumber	0	1	
MEDICAL			
Kit, first aid, MV	3	16	
ORDNANCE			
Carbine, cal. 30 M2	672	291	Note 1
Compressor, air, gas operated	0	2	
Rifle, US Cal. 30	180	0	Note 1
Pistol, automatic, cal. 45	3	564	Note 1
Truck, 1½ ton, 4 x 4 cargo	0	6	
Staff Car	0	1	
QUARTERMASTER			
Bag, canvas, field	31	855	
Haversack, w/pack carrier	824	0	
Belt, Pistol	675	855	
Belt, cartridge	180	0	
Pocket, mag, carbine	672	855	
Bag, canvas mail	10	4	
Bag, canvas money	3	1	
Basket, mail, 28" x 17" x 10"	100	200	
Basket, mail, 42" x 30" x 30"	125	475	
Box, cash & stamp	15	10	
Bucket, canvas water	10	16	
Bucket, GP, 14 qt.	12	36	
Can, galv. 10 gal.	6	12	
Can, galv. 16 gal.	6	12	
Can, galv. 24 gal.	6	12	
Can, galv, 32 gal.	6	12	
Case, dist, mail port.	150	0	
Case, wooden, 42 hole	0	20	Note 2
Case, wooden, 48 hole	0	75	Note 2
Case, wooden, 70 hole	0	20	Note 2
Case, wooden, 84 hole	0	150	Note 2
Case, wooden, 140 hole	0	70	Note 2
Chair, folding, wooden	100	250	
Desk, distr. & mail	75	5	
File, paper arch	40	0	
Heater, immersion type	3	9	
Machine, cancelling (hand)	2	1	

ITEM	AUTH. AMT.	REQ. AMT.	REMARKS
Machine, cancelling (electric)	0	1	
Rack, bag, mail	250	1500	
Range, field, M37			
2 unit	1	0	
4 unit	2	4	
Scale, weighing, 300# cap.	1	3	
Truck, hand platform	30	125	
Typewriter, 3/8" type	0	1	
Table, folding, general purpose	0	300	
Tool set, carpenters #2	1	0	
Tool set, carpenters and wheel-wright	0	2	
Machine, mimeograph	0	1	
Outfit, officers mess	0	4	
Kit, typewriter repair	0	1	
Kit, barber	0	2	

NOTES

1. Pfc's and Privates should be equipped with carbine; all other personnel with 45 cal. automatic pistol. A soldier can carry an automatic and work conveniently.

2. Rigid wooden cases can be pre-fabricated and shipped knocked-down, saving 75% of the normal shipping space. The 17th BPO constructed rigid cases in the UK and shipped them to the Continent. The case frames (top, bottom and sides) were used as the outer container. Portable canvas cases are of little value to a BPO.

   T/E should be increased proportionately on personal items if T/O is increased to aggregate of 1000.

A TRUE COPY:

C. L. Bodine

C. L. BODINE,
Major, AGD.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY SERVICE FORCES
Office of the Adjutant General
Army Postal Service
Washington 25, D.C.

Auth: TAG
Initials:
Date: 30 Aug 44

Written at APO 758
30 August 44

SUBJECT: Mail handling during the invasion of Southern France for period 15-30 Aug 44 (D Day to D plus 15).

TO: Director, Army Postal Service, Washington 25, D.C.

1. Information contained in this report relating to that period prior to 25 Aug was obtained by interviews with various officers who took part in the postal operations incident to the Invasion of Southern France. Information from 25 Aug on was obtained by personal visits to postal units concerned. Maj. C. M. Hanahoe, AGD, Staff Postal Officer, 7th Army, through his cooperation facilitated this investigation.

2. a. The 11th Postal Regulating Section, APO 434, landed at St. Tropez, France, the morning of 16 Aug (D plus 1) and was set up in a building formerly used as a night-club. This building is located about 100 yards from 7th Army Hqs, (Rear) in St-Tropez. Floor space consists of about 5000 square feet. A large parking lot in front of the building is being used in which to handle bulk mail.

b. Capt. William E. Jameson, AGD., CO of the 11th PRS was wounded by an anti-personnel bomb during an air raid on 18 Aug (D plus 3). His right eye has been removed. Capt Jameson has been evacuated to a hospital in Naples, Italy. 1st Lt. S. J. Franco, AGD, has been placed in command, and is assisted by 1st Lt. E. R. Sweeten, AGD.

c. The 11th PRS delivered a small amount of mail on 16 Aug (D plus 1), which it had brought over on the boat. The first mail in any appreciable volume was received by surface vessel from Naples, 20 Aug (D plus 5), when 162 pouches of first class mail and 120 sacks of parcel post were unloaded at St. Tropez.

d. On 25 Aug (D plus 10) about 5300 sacks and pouches were received by surface vessel from Naples. There were approximately 400 pouches in this shipment.

3. a. Lt. Col. A. G. Lagace, AGD, Chief Postal Officer, NATOUSA, was in Southern France from 22-28 Aug. He advised that preparations to handle the mail situation for this Invasion had been made months in advance. Lt. Col Lagace further advised that the EAPO, NYNY, had been furnished with a list of units which were to participate in the invasion and directed to pouch mail for these units to "Toulon, France." In this manner, all mail for units in Southern France can be intercepted in Algiers, Algeria, and dispatched directly to France.

b. On 28 Aug (D plus 13) daily plane service was inaugurated between Algiers and Le Luc Air Field, France. One (1) C-47 plane flies from Algiers to Bastia, Corsica, and carries mail only. At Bastia this mail plane connects daily with a special plane for Le Luc Air Field. Le Luc is approximately 25 miles from St-Tropez. On 28 Aug, 77 pouches were received on the Algiers plane and 57 pouches were received on 29 Aug. These pouches were dispatched by the EAPO, NYNY on 25 Aug. Postmarks on this mail matter were, in general, from 19-24 Aug. As a result, the Armed Forces in Southern France are receiving mail in five (5) and six (6) days from the U.S. Naturally there will be other mail which had been dispatched via Naples which will not be received in such good time.

4. a. The first outgoing mail was dispatched on 18 Aug (D plus 3). From 18-22 Aug, mail was dispatched by fast surface vessel to Naples. Beginning 23 Aug (D plus 8) outgoing mail was dispatched by courier and hospital evac planes to Naples. Beginning 28 Aug (D plus 13) mail was dispatched by the special mail plane to Algiers. Mail addressed to units in Italy will continue to be dispatched by courier and hospital evac planes. All parcel post is being and will be dispatched by surface vessel.

5. a. APU 758, assigned to Hqs (Rear) 7th Army and APU 778 assigned to Hqs (Forward) 7th Army landed on 16 Aug (D plus 1). Both APU's began operations on 17 Aug at St. Tropez. On 27 Aug (D plus 12) APU 778 moved to Brignoles, location of Hqs (Forward), 7th Army.

6. a. APU 523, assigned to the Air Forces, began operations at Le Luc Air Field on 24 Aug (D plus 9).

7. a. APU 768 landed on 25 Aug (D plus 10) at St. Tropez and its personnel assisted the 11th PRS from 26-29 Aug. On 30 Aug, APO 768 set up at Meyrargues, about 95 miles northwest of St. Tropez, to do postal regulating work for the Army units in the forward areas. Maj. Hanahoe advised that APU 768 will be moved further forward as soon as transportation to carry the mail is available. At present, the divisions will have have to call at 768 for their mail. But within a few days APU 539 will be set up at a point about 75 miles beyond APU 768. APU's 768 and 539 will have two (2) 2½ ton trucks between them will will give them sufficient transportation facilities to at least move the first class mail into the forward areas.

8. a. APU 548, assigned to the 1st Air Borne Task Force, landed on 25 Aug (D plus 10) and began operations on the following day.

9. a. The advance unit of APO 3, assigned to the 3d Infantry Division, landed on D Day. It set up in the Division QM at Carpentras about 130 miles northwest of St. Tropez. This APO received its first mail, 32 pouches, on 21 Aug (D plus 6). It dispatched its first mail on 19 Aug (D plus 4). The rear unit of APO 3 landed at St. Tropez on 29 Aug (D plus 14). The rear unit of the APO, while in Italy, received the divisional mail from the 2d Base Post Office, broke the regimental mail down to companies, and dispatched it in company directs to the forward unit of APO 3 in France. During a visit to the forward unit of APO 3, 29 Aug (D plus 14), it was noted that the mail was being handled efficiently. Several pouches of letter mail were on hand which had been dispatched only four days

previously by the EAPO, NYNY. This mail had been flown from Algiers to Le Luc Air Field by the special mail plane, trucked to the 11th PRS, where it was picked up by trucks from the 3d Division QM. Postmarks on this mail, in general, covered the period from 18-23 Aug. Pouch label dated 25 Aug at EAPO, and letter facing slips dated 22 and 23 Aug at Postal Concentration Center, NYNY, were obtained from the aforementioned pouches, and are submitted with original copy of this report as inclusure #1.

10. a. APO 36 assigned to the 36th Infantry Division, was visited 22 Aug (D plus 13). This APO landed on 20 Aug (D plus 5) and began operations on 23 Aug (D plus 8). APO 36 is located at Aspres about 150 miles northwest of St. Tropez. On 26 Aug (D plus 11), 45 pouches were picked up at APO 434, St. Tropez, by the 36th Division.

11. a. APO 45, assigned to the 45th Infantry Division, was visited on 28 Aug (D plus 13). This APO landed on 20 Aug (D plus 5). Equipment was unloaded on 22 Aug (D plus 7) and operations started on 24 Aug (D plus 9) at Aspres.

12. At present transportation presents the biggest postal problem. The divisions have moved forward much faster than was contemplated. There is a shortage of transportation even for rations and ammunition. First class mail has moved forward to the divisions without delay. The 3d Division has been able to move all its mail to the forward APO. The 36th Division has moved all but about 300 sacks of parcel post from St. Tropez to its APO at Apres. The 45th Division still has about 800 sacks of parcel post at St. Tropez. It does not matter greatly if this parcel post at St. Tropez is left here until the 7th Army can move it forward to apoint nearer to the divisions. As long as fast first class mail service is rendered, the soldiers are very well satisfied.

13. Railroad facilities are being rapidly repaired and it is likely that within a short time mail will be moved to the forward areas by both trucks and rail.

14. 20th Base Post Office is due to land on 4 Sept (D plus 20). Present plans call for setting this unit up in Marseilles, and moving the 11th PRS inland about 150 miles. Several smaller postal units are scheduled to arrive shortly and it is believed that the postal situation will be adequately taken care of.

15. From observation, it is my opinion that the mail handling during the period 15-30 Aug (D Day to D plus 15) has been excellent. The results have shown study and forethought. A supplementary report will be submitted at a later date describing the mail handling from 31 Aug onward.

s/t/J. J. CLOUGHERTY,
Capt. A.G.D.
Army Postal Inspector.

Incl. Pouch label and facing slips.
cc-CO, NATOUSA, thru Chief Postal Officer, APO 512.
cc-CG, 7th Army, thru Staff Postal Officer, APO 758.

A TRUE COPY:

C. L. Bodine
C. L. BODINE,
Major, AGD.