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THE GENERAL BOARD

United States Forces, European Theater

SPECIAL SERVICES SUPPLY

MISSION: Prepare Report and Recommendations on Special Services Supply.

The General Board was established by General Orders 123, Headquarters European Theater of Operations, US Army, dated 17 June 1945, as amended by General Orders 162, 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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UNITED STATES FORCES, EUROPEAN THEATER
APO 406

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APO 406

SPECIAL SERVICES SUPPLY

Prepared by:

Colonel Walter J. Currie, 0335000, AGD, Chief, Special Services Section, The General Board.
WOJG Elton S. Slat, W2132223, USA, Special Services Section, The General Board.

Principal consultants:

Colonel Charles E. Finnegan, 0235531, Inf, Special Services Officer, Delta Base Section, Theater Service Forces, European Theater.
Lieutenant Colonel Lester C. Ayers, 0241069, Inf, Special Services Officer, XI Corps.
Lieutenant Colonel Grasson W. Kaul, 0164763, Inf, Special Services Section, Delta Base Section, Theater Service Forces, European Theater.
Major E. W. Anderson, 01284931, Inf, Special Services Section, The General Board.
Major Lloyd E. Barber, 0919039, Inf, Commanding Officer, 6317 Special Services Battalion.
Major James A. Bollier, 0372410, FA, Executive Officer, Supply Division, Special Services, Theater Service Forces, European Theater.
Major Lewis J. Bowen, 0333181, FA, Special Services Officer, 2 Armored Division.
Major Thomas Cook, 0293634, Inf, Special Services Officer, Chanor Base Section, Theater Service Forces, European Theater.
Major George Fotos, 0563178, AC, Special Services Officer, Ninth Air Force.
Major Aaron R. Klein, 01894536, TC, Chief, Traffic & Control Branch, Theater Service Forces, European Theater.
Major E. M. Loud, 0229774, Cav, Special Services Officer, United Kingdom Base.
Major William Mitchell, 0237122, Inf, Special Services Officer, 3 Infantry Division.
Major Ralph E. Waldo, 01297983, Inf, Special Services Officer, XXIII Corps.
Captain Clarence L. Mills, 01546070, MAC, Special Services Section, The General Board.
Captain W. H. Nixon, 01166796, FA, Special Services Officer, Headquarters Command, United States Forces, European Theater.
Lieutenant Edward J. O'Brien, 02011800, AUS, Depot Control Officer, Supply Division, Special Services, Theater Service Forces, European Theater.
CWO Val K. Gaertner, W2134032, USA, Supply Division, Special Services, Theater Service Forces, European Theater.

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SPECIAL SERVICES SUPPLY

SECTION 1

ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION

Foreword.

a. Special Services Supply was organized in the European Theater of Operations to perform the administrative and operational functions of procurement, storage and distribution of supplies and equipment peculiar to special services. The organization expanded from a theater staff section branch to include administrative and operational functions of depots and distributing points.¹ The Supply Branch, Special Services Division, European Theater of Operations, was responsible directly to the Chief of Special Services.²

b. Due to the limited data available from training and field manuals, standing operating procedures and records, the most information used in connection with this study was obtained from personal interviews, questionnaires, surveys and after-action reports; and the analysis consists of representative comments, opinions, suggestions and experiences. The conclusions and recommendations of this report are based on an analysis of information from these combined sources.

2. Supply Responsibility. The criticism that special services supplies and equipment were inadequate in the European Theater of Operations during the campaign evoked the suggestion that the Quartermaster Corps could have conducted the operation more efficiently. The opinions expressed by special services officers and consultants favored the present policy of special services being responsible for the procurement, storage and distribution of special services supplies for the following reasons:

a. The Quartermaster Corps has never had the complete responsibility, although it has assisted special services in the performance of its functions for the procurement, storage and distribution of special services supplies and equipment.

b. Quartermaster requirements and issues are based on authorized tables of equipment and basis of issue which have not been clearly defined for special services. Special services equipment requires specialized handling in that it is normally neither procured nor issued on authenticated tables of equipment or strength basis, but must be procured and issued in accordance with widely varied programs dependent upon interests and abilities of personnel. This requires a flexible system of procurement and distribution, as well as the keen interest of the supply personnel, which can best be accomplished by Special Services.³

3. Organization. The Supply Branch, Special Services Division, European Theater of Operations, was established as an administrative agency to plan, coordinate and control the procurement, storage and distribution of special services supplies and equipment. It was staffed from special services table of allowances. Increased shipments of supplies and a general expansion of the program required

additional installations and personnel to perform increasing administrative functions. The administrative structure developed in an effort to meet demands. The supply branch was organized as a division, 4 April 1945. Provision was made for the staffing of headquarters, port depots and base sections with adequate personnel.²

4. A survey of the supply system made in November and December 1944, concluded that:

a. The Supply Branch, Special Services Division, European Theater of Operations, United States Army, was acting in many respects as an operating agency instead of functioning as a staff organization. The responsibility for actual operations in most instances was not sufficiently delegated to base sections, and the staff section failed to exercise the proper supervision to assure that complete action was taken. Observations revealed a need for dissemination of general supply and policy information throughout the field by headquarters, and a closer liaison between headquarters and distributing points. Information furnished by the War Department, such as advance copies of shipping documents, were not utilized to the greatest extent possible, and definite arrangements to provide transportation for supplies was a noticeable deficiency in the formulation of plans.⁴

SECTION 2

FISCAL AND PROCUREMENT

5. Plan and Procedure, Special services supplies and equipment were procured from allocated funds as follows:

a. Procurement from the Zone of Interior was made through periodic requisition upon the New York Port of Embarkation. Requisition were based upon a quarterly monetary allotment made to the European Theater by the Special Services Division, Army Service Forces, War Department, as set forth in War Department Memorandum W 35-44, "Basis of Issu of Special Services Items Supplied on Overseas Requisitions", dated 8 May 1944.⁵ This monetary allotment was apportioned, by the Supply Division, to the various branches and divisions of special services in the European Theater on the basis of past experiences, programs, availability of items, on hand and due. These branches and divisions then submitted requirements to the Supply Division for consolidation and submission to the New York Port of Embarkation.

b. Procurement by reciprocal aid was accomplished by requisitions. The over-all programs covering supplies and equipment available on reciprocal aid were submitted to the General Purchasing Agent, European Theater, who completed negotiations for procurement. Credits were established with the allied countries from which procurement was made. The General Purchasing Agent Liaison Officer for Special Services contacted the manufacturers or firms and arranged delivery schedules and issued the necessary documents for the release of supplies.

c. Finance Department General Allotment (FDGA) Funds were used for procurement on the open market. The approval of the European Theater General Purchasing Agent and Chief of Special Services was required before FDGA funds could be expended by the unit purchasing and contracting officer for items not available through normal supply channels.

6. Discussion. Inadequate supplies in the European Theater of Operations was one of the major problems in special services during all phases of the campaign. The lack of availability from the Zone of Interior resulted in heavy cancellations of some requests and delayed shipment of other items. If shipments were not received within the normal

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mal 90-120 day log, special services programs were disrupted. Reports indicate, however, that inadequate supplies were also due to the lack of shipping and transportation facilities.

a. Limited availability against requisitions was attributed to:

- (1) Raw materials and labor being utilized in higher priority production.
- (2) Failure of procuring agencies to anticipate requirements and initiate procurement in advance of demands.
- (3) Insufficient advance planning by the War Department and European Theater to assure that substantial stocks would be maintained.^{3,6}

b. The policy of augmenting supplies and equipment from the Zone of Interior by procurement through reciprocal aid had its advantages and disadvantages:

- (1) Advantages. It provided troops with supplies and equipment which were not otherwise available; it alleviated the problem of shipping priorities; and since procurement was in smaller quantities, it expedited movement and reduced warehousing requirements.
- (2) Disadvantages. Due to shortages of labor and materials difficulties were encountered in obtaining repairs and replacements for items procured in United Kingdom. When parts could not be obtained, the equipment became obsolete, and in many instances, was abandoned. Cancellation of commitments impeded the regularity of shipment of supplies and caused delay and curtailment of intended programs. An excessive amount of equipment procured locally was of inferior quality.

c. Finance Department General Allotment funds made possible local purchases of supplies and equipment which otherwise may not have been available for issue from either the Zone of Interior or reciprocal aid stocks. Sometimes procurement was conducted without proper control and supervision thereby resulting in a pool of excess items for which there were no provisions for equitable distribution. Competitive buying on the open market gave impetus to an impending inflation.³

d. Large quantities of supplies had been shipped from the Zone of Interior and were in the Theater soon after D-Day (6 June 1944). A large portion of these stocks was sent to various English ports to be transported across the channel soon after D-Day (6 June 1944). Some of these supplies were held either on the docks or off shore for as long as 60 days due to port congestion on the continent.⁷

e. The problems of procurement would have been alleviated considerably had all units arrived in the European Theater with adequate special services supplies. Many units anticipated, but failed to receive such supplies at the port of embarkation, under the provisions of War Department Circular 218, dated 18 September 1943, which was rescinded by War Department Circular 41, dated 31 January 1944, because special services supplies in sufficient quantities were not available there. Units in the Zone of Interior were not advised of the shortage of recreational equipment in the European Theater.³

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SECTION 3

REQUIREMENTS

7. Plan and Procedure. Overall yearly requirements were submitted to the Requirements Section, Supply Division, Special Services, European Theater, from the various special services agencies for the supplies and equipment they deemed necessary to carry out planned programs. The Section edited, adjusted and consolidated the requisitions and made recommendations and decisions as to the sources of procurement based upon past experiences, records, and information as to availability. Requisitions were submitted to the following sources of supply:

- a. The Zone of Interior. (Quarterly requisitions against monetary allotment.)
- b. Liberated allied countries on reciprocal aid.
- c. Various other United States Army supply agencies such as Signal, Quartermaster and Ordnance.
- d. Local sources for direct purchase.

8. Discussion. The bulk of overall requirements for 1944 and 1945 were submitted to the New York Port of Embarkation.

a. A shortage of labor and materials curtailed reciprocal aid transactions to the extent that only small quantities of a limited number of items were obtained from the British.

b. Signal and Ordnance supply agencies operating in the European Theater faced a critical supply shortage and could not meet special services overall requirements.

c. Only a limited number of authorized items were available on the open market for purchase with Finance Department General Allotment funds.

d. In November and December of 1944, it was found that allocations of supply were being made directly by the Supply Branch, Special Services, European Theater, without reference to appropriate program branches. In justification of this, however, it was pointed out that the program branches were not functioning satisfactorily. Overall requirements were not based on a policy to meet requirements for planned programs, therefore, requisitions were not properly balanced.^{3,4,6}

SECTION 4

TRAFFIC AND DEPOT CONTROL

9. Mission and Functions. The Supply Division, Office of Chief of Special Services, European Theater of Operations, included a Traffic and Depot Control Section which controlled the transportation and storage of special services supplies and equipment. It was the responsibility of the section to determine from the information presented in War Department shipping documents the quantity and type of transportation required to move supplies from ports to depots and from depots to distributing points; to secure warehouse facilities for the storage of supplies; to advise base sections and commands of tonnage involved; and make arrangements for delivery of supplies to distributing points.⁶

10. Supply plans were altered, modified and developed to meet the demands and contingencies of the campaign. Some difficulties encountered by the Traffic and Control Section were:

a. Provisions for storage and transportation were based upon the current requirements with little reference to future ones.

b. Because of its low priority, special services supply usually was allotted limited and sometimes outside storage space in Quartermaster and other service supply depots. This resulted in losses from pilferage and weather damage.

c. Special services had no organic transportation. Because of the critical transportation shortage in the European Theater and the low priority given to special services supplies, transportation was not always available when requested to move these supplies.

d. Inadequate and inexperienced personnel could not perform efficiently the duties of the decentralized control and operation, thereby hampering advance planning.

e. Rapidly changing situations under combat conditions prevented many units from securing their allocated special services supplies from distant depots and distributing points.^{3,7}

11. Depot Operation.

a. General depots from which special services also operated were established in the United Kingdom and on the Continent. These were:

- (1) The first depot, G-40, established in the United Kingdom, was located at Barry, South Wales. Later, the operations were transferred to depot G-24, located at Honeybourne, Gloucestershire.
- (2) A temporary depot was operated by special services on Omaha Beach following D-Day (6 June 1944), 25 July to 25 August 1944.
- (3) Depot Q-177, located in Paris, was opened in September 1944. It was operated under the supervision of the Seine Base Section, Communications Zone. A total allocation of ten officers and 34 enlisted men was made for the operation of both the base section supply and the depot.
- (4) Depot SS-1160 located at Marsilles was also used as a bulk depot for stocks and a distributing point for Delta Base Section supply.
- (5) Depot SS-1001, located at Boom, Belgium, was opened in April 1945, as a separate depot for special services. A depot company was activated 25 April 1945, and assigned for its operation.

b. Increased allotments of personnel and the activation of a depot company resulted in a much more efficient operation of depots. Authority was granted to the Chief of Special Services 10 May 1945, to establish base depots, and a definite plan for establishing issuing depots was adopted. A standing operating procedure governing depot control for special services, which embodied the fundamental principles applied during the campaign, was published.^{3,6,3}

12. Port Operations. A War Department investigation of the supply situation in the European Theater of Operations made in November and December 1944, revealed that substantial quantities of supplies were

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being received at ports, but that provisions for their unloading, temporary storage and forwarding to central depots had not been made. Following a conference of the investigating officers with officers from the Office of Chief of Transportation, European Theater of Operations, personnel was assigned for port operation and a port liaison group was established to assist in port activities. Upon receipt of War Department shipping documents, the port liaison group would proceed to the designated ports to safeguard large shipments and to arrange transportation for the supplies to a central depot. The increase in supplies received at depots from ports indicated the effectiveness of this action. Thereafter:

- a. The bulk of cargo at Rouen was moved to Paris within 14 days.
- b. Cargo began to arrive at the Paris depot from Le Havre and Cherbourg in substantial quantities within three weeks.
- c. Planning provided for personnel when the port at Antwerp was opened. As a result, supplies at this port were received and handled in a most satisfactory manner.
- d. Establishment of adequate and experienced port personnel resulted in a more rapid movement of supplies, practically eliminated pilferage, and effected the recovery of supplies landed in past periods which had been overlooked and stored in warehouses used by other services.

SECTION 5

DISTRIBUTION

13. Allocation. Due to limited quantities of special services supplies, the first distributions were based upon bulk allocation made to the major commands. Also, the bulk allocation system was used by major commands to distributing points and to using organizations. Morning reports figures were used as a basis for these allocations to the various commands.

a. The system of distribution of supplies by allocation on a strength percentage basis was unsound. It resulted in large stockpiles and encouraged distribution points to make hasty and informal issues of supplies from critical storage space. No system of control existed; therefore, excessive stocks accumulated at one point could not be shifted to other points where they were urgently needed. No provision was made to control requisitions from units, and as a result, distribution points and base depots issued duplicate supplies to organizations.

14. Requisition. In the reorganization of the supply system in January 1945, when ample quantities of supplies were becoming available, the bulk allocation of supplies terminated, and a requisition system for the distribution of all supplies was instituted. Arrangements were made for close liaison between, and dissemination of information to and from, base headquarters and distributing depots. A rigid control of seasonal items was effected.

a. Major commands monthly requisitions were submitted to the supply division based upon troop strength, facilities available and planned programs. Requisitions were edited by appropriate branches and divisions of the Office of the Chief of Special Services, European Theater of Operations, and approved within the limits of established credits and as justified by the basis presented. Credits not absorbed

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by requisition were available to the command in later periods. Requisitions were then forwarded to base depots with pertinent shipping instructions. The base depots assembled the supplies and notified issuing depots or supply points when shipments were made. Upon receipt of the supplies, the issue depot made distribution in accordance with instructions from the command special services officer.⁶

15. Standing Operating Procedure Number 7, European Theater of Operations, 19 March 1945, giving the supply procedures to be followed in the requisition and distribution of special services supplies, was based on the principles formulated and instituted in the reorganization of special services supply agencies.

SECTION 6

EQUIPMENT

16. Special services equipment consisted of a variety of specialized items selected for the purpose of providing recreation and entertainment for military personnel. A general classification included athletic equipment, small games, musical instruments, radios, phonographs, reading materials and theatrical equipment. Distribution of the supplies and equipment was made by the issue of kits augmented by issues from bulk stock.

17. In the early phases of the campaign issue was made by standard kits which contained a number of items in one case, such as:

a. The athletic and recreation "A" Kit, consisted of a variety of sports equipment for soccer, softball, volleyball, baseball, table tennis, badminton, horseshoes and a number of small game sets such as checkers and bingo. This kit was issued on the basis of 12 per 1,000 men.

b. The radio-phonograph "B" Kit, contained a radio, phonograph, records, small musical instruments and expendable books. It was issued on the basis of six per 1,000 men.

c. The book "L" Kit, contained library books of three classifications; fiction and general reading, reference books and self-teaching materials. The basis of issue for fiction was one book for four men; for reference books, one per ten men.⁹

18. Experience indicated that it was not practical for all special services supplies to be included in a limited number of types of kits. Distribution by issue of kits was not adequate and did not meet the demands for planned programs. Facilities did not exist in all organization areas for the utilization of all specialized items included in kits and equipment that could not be used was abandoned and wasted. Replacement by kits resulted in an excess of equipment for which there was no demand and an acute shortage of other equipment for which there was a critical need.³

19. Availability of athletic uniforms and shoes from procurement sources was not sufficient to meet the demands for planned programs at any time during the campaign. The athletic and recreation "A" Kit, did not include a uniform or a pair of shoes. There were numerous requests for rubber sole shoes. An appropriate uniform for sports programs would have aroused more individual interest; the programs would have been better organized and participants would have derived more recreational benefit.³

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20. Standardization of Equipment. The problems of procurement, storage, transportation and distribution would have been simplified by the standardization of equipment as it would have reduced the number of special services items. A prescribed number of popular items could have been procured and distributed instead of accepting and issuing large assortments in small quantities; more equitable distribution where facility existed could have been accomplished; and more satisfactory arrangements could have been negotiated with manufacturers for large scale production which would have assured the availability of more adequate stocks, spare parts and accessories if they had been standardized. Obtaining replacements and spare parts for various manufactured items was the chief difficulty encountered by procurement agencies during the campaign. If manufactured according to specifications, the equipment could have been shipped in standard size containers making it easier to handle, store and issue, and a number of items for which there had been very little usage would have been eliminated, thereby, making the materials and labor used in manufacture available for the manufacture of supplies for which there was a demand.

SECTION 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

21. It is concluded that:

- a. Overall planning by Special Services, War Department and European Theater of Operations, did not make sufficient provision for the procurement, warehousing, transportation and distribution of special services supplies and equipment.
- b. Initially, adequate and trained personnel was not available to perform the functions of supply in a satisfactory manner.
- c. Procurement of supplies from the Zone of Interior, augmented by those made available by reciprocal aid and purchase by Finance Department General Allotment funds was not adequate to meet demands up to 3 May 1945.
- d. Low priority on procurement and transportation of special services supplies and equipment was a contributing factor in limiting the effectiveness of the special services program in the European Theater of Operations.
- e. Depots and distributing points were not sufficient in number and too distant from the using organizations to efficiently serve all units in the theater.
- f. Standard authorized kits did not meet the requirements of all units. Kits resulted in excesses and shortages of certain items contained in them.
- g. There was a demand for certain items which were not included in kits and not available in substantial quantities from procurement sources.

22. It is recommended that:

- a. The procurement, storage and distribution of normal special services supplies remain the the responsibility of Special Services.

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- b. An all-purpose athletic uniform be included in the initial pre-combat issue of clothing to each soldier.
- c. Wherever practicable, special services supplies and equipment for specific activities be included in standard kits.
- d. All special services supplies and equipment be standardized.
- e. Adequate reserves of stocks be maintained to meet emergencies and military contingencies.
- f. A definite table of allowances be established to perform the functions of a supply agency.
- g. Specialized training be provided special services supply personnel at all levels.
- h. Continuous study be conducted to formulate plans and procedures for providing maximum special services benefits to troops in military operations so that low transportation priorities will not eliminate them.

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