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THE GENERAL BOARD

United States Forces, European Theater

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Awards and Decorations in a Theater of Operations

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No. 10

MISSION: Prepare a factual, annotated report with appropriate conclusions and recommendations on the processing of awards and decorations in the European Theater of Operations.

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

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS IN A THEATER OF OPERATIONS

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## PART ONE

### Policies

1. The War Department: a. The purpose of granting awards to military personnel is to reward extraordinary, unusual or outstanding services, either for combat or in an administrative capacity. Prompt and just awards provide incentive and builds morale of troops.

b. In order that a uniform policy might prevail, the War Department promulgated a basic directive to govern all awards and decorations to Army personnel. This is AR 600-45 of 22 September 1943, as amended and War Department Circular 333 of 22 December 1943. The instructions contained therein are considered appropriate and the system has proven generally practicable.

(1) Considerable difficulty has arisen, however, because of a lack of specific descriptions of the qualifications necessary for each award. In many cases, an interpretation of the basic directive was made by an individual recommending officer, who had not been sufficiently indoctrinated in the requirements for the various awards. This usually resulted in too liberal standards, which defeated the purpose of rewarding truly distinguished service. On the other hand, there were officers, who held the requirements too high and thus denied recognition to many deserving cases.

(a) Most awards for heroism are initiated in lower echelons, as the result of action in combat. In such circumstances it is often difficult to differentiate between degrees of self-sacrifice and "service beyond the call of duty", particularly if young commanding officers are not thoroughly familiar with the standards established for each award. At the same time, it is inevitable that many actions will go completely unnoticed, especially when small groups are isolated from their main unit.

(b) Meritorious service awards are usually initiated by officers of more mature judgment and hence the ability to evaluate more correctly the superior performance of duty and the type of award which corresponds with the degree of service rendered. Again, however, the lack of specific definition in the basic directives has caused considerable difficulty, and very often the type of award has been determined by personal considerations and interpretations of the standards.

2. The European Theater of Operations. a. In order to implement basic War Department directives, and to provide a uniform policy for the European Theater of Operations, the Commanding General issued Circular 32 on 20 March 1944. This directive elaborated on the War Department policies; stated that the War Department retained sole authority for the award of the MEDAL OF HONOR, the DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE MEDAL, the LEGION OF MERIT to Allied personnel, and the MEDAL OF MERIT to civilians; and delegated to subordinate commanding officers the authority to take final action on recommendations for the following awards:

Commanding General, European Theater of Operations: the LEGION OF MERIT to United States military personnel;

Commanding Generals, United States Strategic Air Forces; Service of Supply European Theater; 1st United States Army Group; Iceland Base Command; armies; separate corps if the commander is a major general or higher; and their designated subordinates not below the rank of major general; the DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE CROSS, SILVER STAR, DISTINGUISHED-FLYING CROSS, the SOLDIER'S MEDAL, the BRONZE STAR, and the AIR MEDAL:

Commander of any force who is a brigadier general or above, and the commander of any medical unit authorized to place personnel on sick report: the PURPLE HEART.

On 27 May 1944, the Commanding General, European Theater of Operations, issued Circular 56 amending the basic directive, retaining the authority to award the DISTINGUISHED-FLYING CROSS to Army Liaison pilots.

b. The source of greatest difficulty in determining awards for meritorious service lay in the distinction between the DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE MEDAL and the LEGION OF MERIT. The lack of specific definition gave rise to wide variations of interpretations by individual recommending officers, and often the final decision was made on a purely personal basis. Later, the distinction gradually came to be based on the degree of responsibility held by the recipient. This proved to be the most satisfactory method of granting awards for administrative and organizational activities. The policy was adopted by the Commanding General 12th Army Group on 6 March 1945. Based upon this policy the following positions were considered to be ones of great responsibility which might warrant award of the DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE MEDAL:

<u>Army Group</u>	<u>Army</u>	<u>Corps</u>	<u>Inf. Division</u>	<u>Arm'd Division</u>	
				<u>Old</u>	<u>New</u>
CG	CG	CG	CG	CG	CG
C/S	C/S	C/S	Asst.CG	CG,CCA	CG,CCA
DC/S	DC/S	Arty	Div Arty	CG,CCB	(or B)
G-1	G-1	G-2, under	C/S, under		Reserv
G-2	G-2	certain con-	certain con-		Comdr
G-3	G-3	ditions	ditions	G/S and G-3	in both
G-4	G-4	G-3,under	G-3, under	old and new,	under
G-5	DC/S(adm)	certain con-	certain con-	certain conditions.	
AA	under cer-	ditions	ditions		
AG	tain con-				
Engr	ditions				
JA	G-5,under				
Ord	certain con-				
P&Pw	ditions				
QM	Armd				
Sig	Arty				
Surg	Engr				
	Med				
	Ord				
	QM				
	Sig				

c. The armies agreed to adopt the same quota system as that used in 12th Army Group Headquarters, namely 2 percent of the headquarters strength.

d. In addition to the above positions it was the Theater policy to recommend the award of the DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE MEDAL for army, corps and division commanders who had performed their duties successfully six weeks in combat.

e. Deserving cases of staff officers other than enumerated above regimental and combat commanders were handled separately.

f. On 17 June 1945 the Commanding General, 12th Army Group, defining the position for award of the LEGION OF MERIT as ones of considerable responsibility considered the following positions as being of sufficient responsibility to warrant such an award:

<u>Army Group</u>	<u>Army</u>	<u>Corps</u>	<u>Inf. Div.</u>	<u>Arm'd Div.</u>
SGS	DC/S	DC/S	C/S	C/S
Asst G-1	Asst G-1	G-1	G-1	G-1
" G-2	" G-2	G-2	G-2	G-2
" G-3	" G-3	G-3	G-3	G-3
" G-4	" G-4	G-4	G-4	G-4
" G-5	" Arty Off.	AG	AG	AG
" AG	" AAA Off.	CWS	CWS	CWS
AAS	" Engr Off.	Engr	Engr	Exec CC Hq
Armd	" Sig Off.	IG	IG	Engr
Chap	AG	JA	JA	IG
CWS	IG	Ord	Ord	JA
Asst.Engr	JA	QM	QM	Ord
Fianace	PM	Sig	Sig	CO CCR
Hq Comdt	Asst Surg	Surg	Surg	
IG	Asst Ord Off.			
Asst JA				
Asst Ord				
PM				
Asst P&PW				
Asst QM				
Asst Sig				
SSO				
Trans				

g. In addition, it was established that where independence of action and responsibility was involved, commanding officers and executive officers of regiments, groups or units of similar size might be considered as positions warranting this award. Deserving cases of other staff officers and of enlisted men were handled separately.

PART TWO

U.S. Awards to U.S. Personnel

3. Awards and Decorations Boards: a. It early became obvious that some system was needed to provide for the uniform processing of recommendations for awards, not only to determine that all documentation and papers were correctly prepared, but also to insure prompt action by higher headquarters. To achieve these ends, a directive was issued by the Commanding General, European Theater of Operations on 2 December 1943, directing subordinate headquarters to establish Awards and Decorations Boards which should handle all recommendations to be submitted to Headquarters, European Theater of Operations.

b. The Boards were composed of three or four senior officers of experience and good judgment. The Assistant Chief of Staff G-1, or his delegate frequently was included. Later, some commands relieved the G-1 representative of his Board duties, so that he could take independent action. To insure consistency, it was directed that personnel changes be kept to a minimum.

c. Taking as their guide the general outline in AR 600-45, the Boards gave especial attention to:

(1) Obtaining all possible evidence to support the recommendation;

(2) Rewriting citations where they were inadequate or inaccurate;

(3) Assuring lower echelons of prompt action and of favorable review unless a gross mistake or injustice was evident;

(4) Insuring that awards were granted on an absolutely fair and impartial basis, regardless of the rank, prestige or position of the recipient.

The appointment of these Boards did not relieve a commanding officer of his command responsibility of determining that:

(1) A thorough investigation had been made of each case;

(2) Consistency was being observed in fitting the award to the service, and in granting similar awards for similar acts;

(3) Awards were being utilized as incentives to greater efforts and as instruments to build and maintain morale.

d. On 22 March 1944, the Commanding General European Theater of Operations directed that a Board be appointed to review recommendations for all awards which could be granted by the Commanding Generals of United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe, First Army Group, First United States Army, Third United States Army, and Iceland Base Command. All recommendations by these headquarters were required to contain full Board proceedings. This

Board could also review recommendations submitted to Headquarters European Theater of Operations, but such procedure was not mandatory.

e. While the mechanics varied slightly in the individual headquarters, the general procedures were similar throughout the European Theater of Operations. Recommendations were initially forwarded to the Adjutant General, who checked carefully to make sure that they met all requirements set forth in current directives. Incomplete or incorrect papers were returned for revision; those which the Adjutant General found correct were submitted to the members of the Decorations Board who, either individually or acting as a body, indicated their approval or disapproval. If the Board was satisfied that the recommendation was valid, it was then forwarded to the Assistant Chief of Staff G-1, who in turn reviewed the papers and transmitted them to the Chief of Staff for final action by the Commanding General. It was for this reason that the Assistant Chief of Staff G-1 was relieved of Board duties by some headquarters, where it was believed that he should act independently in making his recommendations to the Commanding General.

f. This procedure did have the disadvantage of slowing down transmission of recommendations from the initiator to the headquarters taking final action. This fault, however, was far outweighed by the fact that all recommendations reached the awarding authorities in correct form, so that final action was expedited.

g. It was essential that close relations should exist between G-1, the Adjutant General and the Board, because in many cases each served as a check on the others. G-1 established policies in line with current directives, and the Board determined whether or not recommendations for awards met the requirements of such policies. Experience throughout the European Theater of Operations showed that, in spite of the large numbers of recommendations submitted, there were comparatively few instances of disagreement between the Board and G-1.

4. Quota System for Awards and Decorations: a. During the early operations in the European Theater, the general inclination was toward an excessively liberal interpretation of the standards required for the various awards, although there were also a few cases of overly rigid demands by some recommending officers. The primary cause was a lack of familiarity with the basic purpose of decorations or with the methods of their presentation. This relatively open-handed policy tended to cheapen all awards, so that they no longer served as recognition of outstanding actions beyond the service that should normally be expected of any soldier in the discharge of his duties.

b. In order to control the number of awards, and to equalize the wide discrepancies which were developing in the various headquarters, quota systems were established giving purpoertealy general guides. Experience in the 12th Army Group prompted the promulgation on 31 October 1944 of instructions that, based on the strength of an infantry division, for each week of offensive combat the following figures for gallantry awards would be used "as a guide":

DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE CROSS	.025 of 1% - 3 awards
SILVER STAR	.25 of 1% - 35 awards
BRONZE STAR MEDAL	.55 of 1% - 79 awards

Subordinate units were directed not to exceed these quotas.

c. After some two months of operations, a few modifications were deemed desirable. Certain commands had interpreted the guide as a rigid framework with which they had to observe strict compliance. This often resulted in passing over obviously worthy cases because the quota would be exceeded, or in making comparatively undeserved awards merely to meet the quota figures. On 8 January 1945, the Commanding General Twelfth Army Group issued a letter stating that it was "not intended that merited awards be denied. The figures ... constitute a guide by which the number of awards may be measured from time to time. ... Due to the type and intensity of action ... during a given period, the number of acts of gallantry ... will in some instances exceed the figure shown and in other be less." (Underscoring added). This letter also established for units the size of an infantry division, the quota of .25 of 1% for BRONZE STAR MEDALS in recognition of meritorious service. It was also directed that quotas were to be figured proportionately for armored divisions and for corps and army troops who had served in action.

d. Since all the above quotas except that for the BRONZE STAR as stated in paragraph 4c above were for combat awards, meritorious service awards were still on a non-quota basis. To eliminate this discrepancy, a conference was called on 24 January 1945 between the Assistant Chiefs of Staff G-1 of the First, Third and Ninth United States Armies. The Commanding General 12th Army Group proposed the following limitations for staff awards in armies and corps, based on the strength of the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachments:

DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE MEDAL	2%
LEGION OF MERIT	9%
BRONZE STAR MEDAL	13%

No time factor was established, although the tacit assumption was that the period of service would generally cover approximately one year.

e. Among the difficulties encountered in the operation of the quota system, the most important was the failure of commanding officers to regard the policy as a guide rather than as a strict allotment of awards. For example, on 1 December 1944, the Commanding General 4th Infantry Division requested temporary suspension of the quota for the BRONZE STAR MEDAL, on the grounds that during the fighting in Hurtgen Forest (F-0035), his command had suffered over 4000 casualties. If he were to adhere to his quota, many deserving members of his command would be denied proper and timely recognition for their deeds. His request was approved - on the basis of the violence of the action, however, rather than of the number of casualties sustained. This distinction was specifically made, since the number of casualties is applicable as a criterium only for the award of the PURPLE HEART.

f. The Air Force commands, although they followed the quota system on several occasions, have always protested its injustice. They maintain that such a system defeats the very spirit of basic war Department directives, wherein awards are specifically authorized for outstanding heroism or service. In their opinion, simultaneous awards of a large number of medals not only cheapens the award for the individual, but does nothing to improve troop morale.

g. In a letter dated 22 June 1945, the Assistant Division Commander of the 6th. Armored Division voiced another objection when he pointed out that the wording "for offensive combat" was ambiguous and could be extremely unjust. He cited the case of the defensive fighting at Bastogne, probably one of the bitterest actions of the entire war.

h. Additional injustice was often evident when men were transferred from quota to non-quota units, since the system was not uniform throughout the European Theater of Operations. It was unavoidable that this should have a highly adverse effect on the morale of troops.

i. The comments in sub-paragraphs e, f, g and h above are not intended as blanket criticism of the quota system, which in general proved valid in concept and practicable in application. They are merely indications of some of the weaknesses of the system. The ideal situation would not have required quotas in the first place, had recommending officers all been properly indoctrinated; lacking the ideal, the quotas should have been established earlier, to eliminate original excesses and to prevent inequality of standards between headquarters.

5. Restrictions on a Second Award of Meritorious Service Decorations: a. The War Department basic directive AR 600-45 states that "for each deed, act, or achievement sufficient to justify an award, a bronze OAK-LEAF CLUSTER will be awarded in lieu (of an additional medal). This provision was arbitrarily suspended on 27 May 1944 by the Commanding General European Theater of Operations in the case of additional awards to European Theater personnel of the DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE MEDAL and of the LEGION OF MERIT, which are both meritorious service awards exclusively. The policy was automatically promulgated throughout the 12th Army Group by its Commanding General, who also extended its application to the BRONZE STAR MEDAL when originally awarded for meritorious service.

b. This suspension of AR 600-45 was intended to place some form of control on the number of meritorious service awards made. While it unquestionably achieved this purpose, it is generally considered to have been unfair and undesirable in practice. In the case of high ranking officers, the restriction denies to a corps or higher commander an award for service during combat if he has already been decorated for the planning phase of an operation. It also precludes a further decoration to division and corps commanders who may be promoted to a higher command. In the case of lower grades, a man whose responsibilities and services would qualify him for the award of the BRONZE STAR MEDAL would be ineligible for either or both of the higher awards. Likewise, he could not be awarded an OAK LEAF CLUSTER to a BRONZE STAR MEDAL originally awarded for meritorious service, even though his performance of duty might be eminently deserving of recognition.

c. The initial purpose of avoiding excessive awards of a second service decoration is admittedly sound, but the implementation of the limitation has been almost universally criticized. The general consensus supports the thesis that standards for a second award (in the form of an OAK-LEAF CLUSTER) should be held at least as high as those for an original award. Particularly in the cases of the DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE MEDAL and the LEGION OF MERIT, this should work automatically as a check on excess liberality in second

awards. It would also eliminate the obvious discrimination against lower-ranking officers and against enlisted men, with the resultant adverse effect on morale: while higher ranking officers are able to receive separate awards of two or more service decorations, other personnel are necessarily limited to a single award of the BRONZE STAR MEDAL.

6. The Various Awards: a. The decorations worn by military personnel fall naturally into two complementary categories: those awarded for heroism and those awarded for meritorious service. This distinction governs not only awards to individuals, but also those to units. With the exception of the MEDAL OF HONOR and the PURPLE HEART, which both hold unique positions of their own, the two types of awards follow parallel scales of descending importance.

b. In the European Theater of Operations, the following awards were granted to individuals for outstanding accomplishment:

(1) The MEDAL OF HONOR, the highest United States award for gallantry, is awarded by Congress to any officer, non-commissioned officer, or private who distinguishes himself conspicuously in actual conflict with the enemy. All recommendations must be made to the War Department. It is felt that this medal has been very well handled by all echelons.

(2) The DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE CROSS is awarded by the Commanding General in a theater of operations and certain other commanding generals specifically named by the War Department. It is bestowed on persons who, while serving in any capacity with the Army, distinguish themselves by heroism during military operations against the enemy. Standards for this decoration have been held extremely high, in the opinion of many, excessively so. In the European Theater of Operations, awards fell far short of the maximum number indicated in the quota system devised by 12th Army Group. It is now realized that many SILVER STARS should have been DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE CROSSES, but it is feared that any attempt at this late date to rectify the mistakes might only cause additional injustice. This is one case where thorough indoctrination in the standards for the award is very necessary.

(3) the DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE MEDAL is awarded by the War Department only, on the recommendation of theater commanders, to persons who, while serving in any capacity with the Army, distinguish themselves in a duty of great responsibility. Although AR 600-45 defines the requirements in comparatively broad terms, the actual practice in the European Theater of Operations was to limit the award to senior commanders of regimental level up, as shown in Paragraph 2b above. Since it ranks equally with the DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE CROSS, it would seem more consistent to delegate jurisdiction to the same commanding generals who are authorized to grant the heroism award, rather than to retain final authority in the War Department.

(4) The LEGION OF MERIT is awarded by commanders specifically designated by the War Department to persons who distinguish themselves through the meritorious performance of outstanding services. In the European Theater of Operations, the Commanding General has the sole authority for this award. Again, although the AR 600-45 definition is quite broad, practice in this theater generally established the positions which might warrant the medal; namely, those shown in paragraph 2b above. In considering

recommendations for gallantry awards to individuals extreme care must be exercised to insure that such recommendations are not approved when the act or service was performed under circumstances which a meritorious service award would be the more appropriate. Such cases might be the award of the DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE CROSS or the SILVER STAR to senior combat commanders who have displayed outstanding leadership. Also, in many instances junior officers and at times enlisted personnel have displayed leadership ability far above that normally expected and which would be deserving of a higher award than the BRONZE STAR MEDAL. In such instances consideration should be given to awarding the LEGION OF MERIT in recognition of such ability.

(5) The SILVER STAR is awarded by the Commanding General of a theater of operations and by other commanding generals to whom authority has been delegated to persons who, while serving in any capacity with the Army, distinguish themselves by gallantry in action against the enemy. The primary criticism of this award has been against its use instead of the DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE CROSS for actions which in many instances would appear to have warranted the latter.

(6) The DISTINGUISHED-FLYING CROSS is awarded by the Commanding General of a theater of operations and other commanding generals to whom authority was delegated to Army Air Force personnel who distinguish themselves by heroism or outstanding achievement while participating in aerial flight. There appears to have been no great controversy over this medal.

(7) The SOLDIER'S MEDAL is awarded by the Commanding General of a theater of operations and other commanding generals to whom authority was delegated to persons who, while serving in any capacity with the Army, distinguish themselves by heroism not involving actual conflict with the enemy. This medal is generally considered to have been well handled in the European Theater of Operations.

(8) The AIR MEDAL is awarded by the Commanding General of a theater of operations and other commanding generals to whom authority was delegated to persons who, while serving in any capacity with the Army, distinguish themselves by meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight. Although this medal ranks below the DISTINGUISHED-FLYING CROSS, the standards for it should be held considerably higher than has been the practice in the European Theater of Operations. The Air Forces have had no generally basic uniform policy for this decoration, basing the multitudinous variations on the type of plane flown, the particular mission, and the individual Air Force involved.

(a) Some special awards of the AIR MEDAL are as follows:

(1.) To Field Artillery Liaison Pilots and Observers, who were required either to have achieved one single meritorious act while participating in aerial flight; or to have completed thirty-five sorties. (Credit for a sortie was given for any flight involving conflict with the enemy, or for ordered flights involving at least one hour's air travel in continental operations.) No serious controversy developed in this Theater over this award.

(2.) To pilots of Army Air Forces Liaison Squadrons who were required by TmL #EX43925 issued by the Commanding General European Theater of Operations to have fulfilled the same requirements as for Field Artillery Liaison Pilots and Observers. Prior to the issuance of this Theater directive, the Commanding General First United States Army had established the policy that to receive the AIR MEDAL, Liaison Pilots must have an efficiency rating of "excellent" or better; must have conducted themselves in an exemplary manner; and must either have fulfilled a single meritorious act while in aerial flight, or have completed 175 hours flying time over the continent of Europe. Only one AIR MEDAL (or OAK-LEAF CLUSTER to a previous "non-hours" award) could be earned for hours flown. On 3 March 1945, the Commanding General 12th Army Group recommended to the Commanding General European Theater of Operations that the policy should be as stated in paragraph (2) above, except that the AIR MEDAL and two OAK-LEAF CLUSTERS (or three OAK-LEAF CLUSTERS to a previous "non-hours" award) could be awarded on the basis of hours flown. The Commanding General United States Air Forces in Europe recommends that the basis for this award should be either a single meritorious act, or sustained operational activities against the enemy.

(3.) To pilots flying anti-submarine patrol, who were required to have completed 200 hours. No further award might be made, regardless of the hours flown in excess of 200, for this type of patrol.

(9) The PURPLE HEART is awarded by the Commanding General of a theater of operations, by certain other commanding generals specifically named by the War Department, and by specified medical officers to members of the Armed Forces and to civilians who require treatment by a medical officer for wounds received in action against the enemy. Opinion seems to be divided on the manner in which this award was handled in the European Theater of Operations. It is felt that much improvement could be effected in the requirements laid down for the PURPLE HEART, to avoid excessive distribution.

(10) The BRONZE STAR, which has become the most controversial award in the European Theater of Operations, was established by the War Department on 4 February 1944:

"The BRONZE STAR may be awarded for acts of gallantry or meritorious service in actual combat or in direct support of combat operations. It provides a means for recognizing performance of duty beyond the ordinary, but which is not sufficiently outstanding to warrant the award of a SILVER STAR or LEGION OF MERIT. It should be used freely in the infantry to recognize minor acts of heroism and courageous conduct in combat, and with increasing restraint as the distance from the area of close combat increases." (underscoring added)

The basic directive was later modified to provide that:

"The required achievement or service for award of the BRONZE STAR is less than that required for award of the SILVER STAR or the LEGION OF MERIT, but must nevertheless be accomplished with distinction. The BRONZE STAR may be awarded to recognize minor acts of heroism in actual combat or single acts of merit, or meritorious service either in sustained operational activities against an enemy or in direct support of such operations." (Underscoring added)

In precedence it was to fall between the SOLDIER'S MEDAL and the PURPLE HEART.

(a) The basic concept of a decoration of minor degree to be awarded liberally for acts deserving of recognition and yet not sufficiently outstanding to merit the higher awards, was eminently valid. The source of controversy lay less in the large numbers granted than in the fact that the BRONZE STAR may be awarded either for heroism on the battlefield or for service. There is no way of determining at a glance what type of act prompted the award, since the medal and ribbon are identical in either case; an OAK-LEAF CLUSTER in lieu of a second award is equally unidentifiable. While it is unquestionably true that service operations in support of combat are often as important as the battle itself, a single award for both activities is certain to create dissention. It is difficult to convince a man who has been wounded in battle that his BRONZE STAR does not decrease in worth when he sees the same ribbon worn by a company clerk -- regardless of the important contribution which the latter may have made to the very operation in which the other was wounded. Hard as it may be for soldiers to make this distinction, it is even more so for civilians. For this reason, the BRONZE STAR has lost considerable "face", both among the recipients themselves and among their family and friends at home, thus defeating the very purpose for which it was created.

(b) Recognizing the fact that the BRONZE STAR was not being received at its intended value, the Commanding General, European Theater of Operations proposed a modification in the ribbons, based on the recommendations from the Commanding Generals of the 6th Army Group and 12th Army Group. Since blue has always been the basic color of awards for heroism, he suggested that the colors of the BRONZE STAR ribbon merely be transposed. In this way, even a casual glance would immediately identify the ribbon with gallantry or service, thus raising the prestige of the former immeasurably and at the same time keeping the two awards parallel in degree of merit. When submitted to the Navy Department, this suggestion met with full concurrence. Up to the present date, however, no final action has been taken jointly by the two Departments.

(c) It has been proposed that the BRONZE STAR be retained as a peace-time award, and this proposal has brought forth a storm of protest - in the event that no clearly recognizable distinction is made in the design of the medal and ribbon for heroism and for service. While a medal of lower degree admittedly has a place among peace-time awards, its war-time value as a medal for valor would be greatly reduced.

(11) The GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL is awarded by immediate commanding officers to enlisted personnel of the Army who have conducted themselves with exemplary behavior, efficiency and fidelity during a specified period of time.

(12) The TYPHUS COMMISSION MEDAL is awarded by the Secretary of War for the President to military personnel who have rendered meritorious service in typhus control.

(13) OAK LEAF CLUSTERS are authorized by AR 600-45 in lieu of second awards of any medal for heroism or for meritorious service. The standards for a CLUSTER should be at least as high as those for an original award, and in the opinion of many, should be

even higher. For a discussion of restrictions on the award of OAK LEAF CLUSTERS to meritorious service awards, see paragraph 5.

(14) THEATER RIBBONS are authorized for all military personnel who have served in any capacity in specified areas. The "European-African-Middle Eastern" Theater ribbon is worn by all personnel who served in the European Theater of Operations.

c. Civilians attached to the Army in any capacity are entitled to wear only the PURPLE HEART and the THEATER RIBBONS. All medals for heroism or for service have been deferred until such time as the War Department may make post-hostilities decisions in these cases.

d. In the European Theater of Operations, the following awards were granted to units for outstanding accomplishment:

(1) The DISTINGUISHED UNIT BADGE is awarded by the War Department to large units; and by the Commanding General of a theater of operations, of an army or of an air force to companies and battalions (Army Air Force squadrons and groups). The unit must have distinguished itself in conspicuous battle action, and must be cited in War Department General Orders. The badge, which is worn on the right breast, is the unit equivalent of the DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS worn by an individual. Recommendations for this award must be fully substantiated by as much data as possible, in order to avoid too liberal a distribution of the citations and the resultant decrease in their value. The badge is worn permanently by all personnel who actually participated in the action; it is worn by others only so long as they are attached or assigned to the decorated unit. In general, this award is considered to have been well handled; the primary criticism lies in the problem of attached units, which often played a very important part in the over-all battle; and yet, by virtue of their temporary assignment for a particular job, are not entitled to share in the citation. Such is the case of tank, infantry or reconnaissance platoons attached to task forces; platoons of anti-aircraft or tank destroyer battalions; and many other similar types of small units which could be equally deserving with the main group they were supporting, and yet were never eligible for the DISTINGUISHED UNIT BADGE.

(2) The UNIT PLAQUE is awarded by certain commanding generals specifically named by the War Department in the initial directive, Circular 345 of 23 August 1944. It is granted on a competitive basis to service units which have maintained high standards of discipline, efficiency and conduct. According to the basic directive, a unit was limited to one plaque only, additional awards being indicated by a star. War Department Circular 421 defined eligible units as "service regiments, service battalions, service companies or units, similar army, corps, division, and Army Air Forces and service commands, service units (provided the total strength of such unit is not less than forty officers and men." This directive created two problems:

(a) Were provisionally organized units eligible for the award? A later clarification by the War Department established the policy that the award could be made only to properly constituted units.

(b) What recognition might be made for meritorious service by units of less than forty officers and men? It was later announced that due consideration would be given to a waiver of this provision in the case of a particularly outstanding and deserving unit.

(3) BATTLE PARTICIPATION CREDIT is indicated by small devices worn on the theater ribbon. In most cases, this is a small bronze star; if a man has taken part in five battles, he replaces the five bronze stars with a silver star of the same size. For a very few airborne and amphibious assaults, a special device in the form of a small arrow head has been established. Authority to grant battle credit is vested solely in the Theater commander, who indicated approval by indorsement on letters of application forwarded to him by unit commanders, following up with a formal letter which contained a list of the units which were entitled to campaign credit. It is generally felt that this procedure involved excessive and redundant correspondence, as most cases are clear-cut and routine and could well be handled at lower levels. Where reasonable doubt exists as to the eligibility of certain units, authority to make the final decision should naturally rest with the Theater Headquarters. The long delay often resulting from the present method of granting battle participation credit has a most adverse effect on the morale of the troops involved. A second criticism of the administration of these credits is similar to that offered against the UNIT BADGE where attached or service units are often denied recognition, even though they may have played a most important part in sustaining a particular operation.

Allied Awards

7. U.S. Awards to Allied Personnel: a. Provision is made in AR 600-45 for the award of certain U.S. medals to Allied personnel. The MEDAL OF HONOR and the PURPLE HEART are specifically excepted from this provision. In the case of other awards:

(1) The DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE MEDAL and the LEGION OF MERIT may be granted only with the approval of the President of the United States;

(2) Other awards may be made by the Commanding General of a theater of operations and other specifically named commanding generals under the following conditions:

(a) The recipient must be below the grade of colonel or its equivalent;

(b) Prior concurrence must be obtained from the senior field commander of the recipient's forces, and the senior field commander must be of at least equal grade to a brigadier general.

b. In the European Theater of Operations, Army commanders were authorized to make limited numbers of immediate combat awards, after direct communication with the senior Allied commander involved. Upon receipt of concurrence, field officers forwarded information copies of the completed correspondence to Theater Headquarters. In other cases, recommendations were forwarded to Theater Headquarters, which would then obtain the necessary concurrence. Approval was returned to the initiating officer, who would ultimately make the award.

c. The method of direct communication at field level provided much prompter action, but had the disadvantage of decentralizing authority. This resulted in varied policies as to the number of awards granted, the standards of achievement required, and the administrative procedures followed. In spite of the delay caused by centralization, this would seem to be the more proper method, as it insures an over-all policy and creates a more favorable impression of the United States in the eyes of foreign governments.

8. Allied Awards to U.S. Personnel. a. In general, no member of the United States Armed Forces may accept any award from a foreign government without the prior approval of congress. However, AR600-45 provides that "during the present war and for one year thereafter", immediate combat awards may be accepted by officers and enlisted men of the U.S. Army. Any other type of award must still carry Congressional approval before it may be received.

b. As each foreign government had its own administrative procedures, it was necessary for the U.S. commanders to follow the method of the individual proffering nation. Usually, a government announced that it proposed to grant a certain number of awards for a certain action. In some cases, only a list of names was required, and all persons received a pro forma citation. In other cases, individual recommendations with supporting documentary evidence were

required. As these recommendations usually received only cursory attention and approval by the proffering government was almost automatic, this latter method would seem to involve excessive and unnecessary paper work for the U.S. commanders. However, the simpler method of submitting merely a list did carry with it the danger that undeserving cases might be listed merely to fill the quota. The obvious solution, of course, lies in by recommending officers, in order to screen out such cases, even if the quota is left unfilled.

c. In all cases of these awards, close consultation was necessarily maintained with the liaison officers of the foreign government, in order to avoid mistakes in the administrative procedures followed by U.S. commanders. In addition, be found preferable all such awards at Theater level, so that uniformity in qualifications was assured and so that indiscriminate awards to American personnel at field level might be avoided.

## PART FOUR

### Conclusions and Recommendations

9. Conclusions: a. The system of awards and decorations as devised by War Department is adequate, except as indicated in b.
- b. The directives issued by War Department were inadequate in defining the standards and qualifications of certain awards.
- c. Junior officers are not adequately instructed in determining standards and in submitting recommendations for awards.
- d. The Theater directives based upon War Department publications were appropriate and adequate, except in certain cases.
- e. Decorations Boards were required at headquarters where final action on recommendations for awards was authorized.
- f. The Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, usually acted in a dual capacity as Board members and as advisor to the Commanding General on recommendations for awards.
- g. The quotas established by 12th Army Group were generally sufficient to permit recognition of all deserving individuals.
- h. A rigid quota system is not desirable.
- i. A guide by which commanders may measure the number of awards made from time to time is desirable.
- j. Any guide established must be made applicable to the Theater as a whole, not merely to certain commands.
- k. The policy of only one award for meritorious service is not sound in that it may deny just recognition to deserving individuals in positions of responsibility.
- l. Extreme caution must be exercised in approving awards for gallantry whereas a meritorious service award would be more appropriate.
- m. The Bronze Star Medal was created to recognize minor acts of gallantry and meritorious service performed in actual combat; or meritorious service in sustained operational activities against an enemy, or in direct support of such operations.
- n. Use of the Bronze Star Medal as a peace-time award would lessen its value as a war-time award.
- o. The Bronze Star Medal is not a suitable award for both heroism and meritorious service.
- p. The inadequacy of the Bronze Star decoration was recognized by Theater, which submitted to the War Department a proposed change that would denote an award for heroism.
- q. It is concluded that recommendations for battle participation credit should not be forwarded as high as theater headquarters; that the regulations concerning unit eligibility for battle participation credit are inadequate; and that the theater policy regarding same is not sufficiently clear.

r. The administrative instructions pertaining to immediate combat awards to personnel of foreign nations were adequate.

s. Army commanders could make immediate combat awards and were authorized to correspond with the appropriate headquarters of the foreign nation.

t. To insure an equitable distribution of awards to personnel of foreign nations close theater supervision is desirable.

u. It was necessary for the United States to follow the administrative procedure used by the proffering government, in the case of foreign awards to U.S. personnel.

v. Lists of names, either with or without a pro forma citation are preferable to individual recommendations.

10. Recommendations: a. It is recommended that the standards and qualifications of the various awards be more clearly defined by War Department.

b. It is recommended that personnel in a position to initiate recommendations for awards be instructed in the necessary qualifications for each award and the proper method of presentation.

c. It is recommended that the composition and procedure of the Decorations Boards be left to the individual desires of Commanding Generals, and that the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1 remain in the capacity of advisor to the Commanding General on matters of policy.

d. It is recommended that a continuing study of decorations awarded in a theater of operations be made, and a guide published from time to time with which commanders may compare the number of decorations awarded.

e. It is recommended that the policy of allowing only one award for meritorious service be abandoned, but that the degree of achievement for the second award of a meritorious type decoration be sufficiently high to limit the number of recipients.

f. It is recommended that the required achievements for the award of the Legion of Merit be broadened so as to permit the use of this decoration in recognizing outstanding leadership ability in all ranks.

g. It is recommended that the Theater Commander retain authority to make the final decision concerning battle participation credit only in cases where a reasonable doubt exists; that in all other cases the decision of the army commander or similar unit be final; and that the paragraph defining participation in combat should be amended so as to eliminate any ambiguity.

h. It is recommended that in order to reduce the administrative burden, only lists of names with a pro forma citation be required for foreign awards to U.S. personnel.

i. It is recommended that the liaison officers of the governments concerned be consulted at every level to insure that recommendations reach their government in the correct form.

HEADQUARTERS 6TH ARMORED DIVISION  
Office of the Assistant Division Commander

APO 256, U S Army  
22 June 1945

SUBJECT: Awards and Decorations

TO : The Adjutant General, Washington 25, D.C.  
(Through Channels)

1. Experience during this war, together with considerable thought and study on the above subject has led me to the opinion that certain existing regulations and policies should be modified. None of the problems appear insurmountable and it is with the idea of offering constructive criticism that this letter is written.
2. It is realized the problem of awards and decorations is closely tied-up with personalities of commanders and it will always be difficult to have an equitable system which is entirely uniform throughout the service. However, much can be accomplished by well-defined, clear-cut policies, sufficient emphasis on the subject, and by the proper and timely education of all concerned. Failure to stress these points sufficiently must have caused many divisions and other units to get off to a bad start. This was unfortunate as many injustices were done deserving men which were difficult, if not impossible to correct when they came to light as the war progressed. This was not entirely the fault of the units concerned but rather due to the lack of a proper educational program.
3. Certain regulations and other published instructions were none too clear to start with and left entirely too much room for different interpretations. This was particularly true in the case of the Legion of Merit as to just when the act or service was completed and a recommendation could be submitted. The instructions regarding the percentage figures for other awards for a given number of days of combat were ambiguous. The instructions stated in part "For each week in offensive combat for a unit the size of an infantry division." Just what was implied by the word offensive is not clear. In our particular case, the bitterest fighting we had during the entire war was while on the defensive at Bastogne. Later, it stated the figures were a guide only. No effort was made to require units to abide by the figures given. Some appear to have ignored them, as is evidenced by the large number of awards presented, while others attempted to set a high standard which was obviously too high and which resulted in fewer awards. I cite these merely as examples to show the necessity for clarification. Recent instructions have clarified the award of the Legion of Merit to some extent but at such a late date as to possibly nullify the desired results. The intention of the regulations on some awards is not too easy to interpret and causes a lot of differences in opinions and policies. For example, I believe it is intended that either the Silver Star or the Distinguished Service Cross can be given for a series of gallant acts and not necessarily for one specific act, or a series of consecutive related acts taking place over a short period of time. Many boards seem to agree with me and some don't as is evidenced by the different action taken in some of these cases. The Medal of Honor should be for one specific act or a series of specific consecutive acts over a short period. It is extremely difficult as you go along in combat, to appreciate the true worth of certain individuals and sometimes it only becomes apparent after a considerable period of time that certain men are gallant, outstanding soldiers; yet, for one reason or another, never received proper recognition. Everyone knows of their gallantry and they should be adequately rewarded. Regulations should

be clarified on this matter. There are other points as well, too numerous to mention at this time, which seem to indicate that a revision or modification of existing instructions is in order.

4. It is my definite opinion that units must be required to work on some sort of a percentage basis in order to have a proper guide which will insure a reasonable degree of uniformity and equality. This must be based on a standard that will not cheapen decorations but which will also be liberal and just. It is felt that all units should be required to remain within the percentage figures authorized unless they secured specific permission from higher headquarters to exceed the total numbers. Such requests would have to be fully justified by the circumstances involved. Likewise, commanders should be encouraged, if not required, to make the authorized number of awards within reasonable limits. Obviously, there are many different types of actions and innumerable factors that come into play which would justify a considerable spread. However, where all things are equal and two like divisions have the same number of days of fighting under similar conditions and are about on a par, it is unfair to everyone concerned to permit one division commander to set a very high standard and another a very low standard. Naturally, no one likes to have restrictions imposed upon awards and it is certainly not intended to deny any deserving soldier of his just deserts but rather to make it fairer to all concerned by curbing certain individuals in one case and pushing others along in the other. After all, even division commanders aren't infallible and most of them would welcome a reasonable guide.

5. Sometime ago, quotas were imposed on recommendations for the Legion of Merit which limited this Division to two recommendations a month except for a few special cases. These restrictions were just recently removed. So far, no percentage figures have been given out on this award and, consequently, units do not have a guide upon which to base their recommendations. This is very apt to result in a bad situation as no one knows just how far to go.

6. The organization of and the policies under which "Awards Boards" function should be better standardized throughout the Army insofar as possible. This is important for uniformity and because some divisions always serve in a number of different Armies and Corps. The following are a few points that should be observed:

a. All cases should be studied with a view to recommending a higher award if it appears justified.

b. No board should be permitted to arbitrarily deny, lower or raise any award without first returning the recommendation with appropriate remarks to the initiating officer or unit for further comment.

c. All boards should make subordinate headquarters feel that they will generally go along with them on their recommendations unless there is some obvious mistake or injustice involved. If this is done, units will honestly and conscientiously write up their recommendations and not try to overdo them. When a division commander recommends a Distinguished Service Cross, the case should be pretty well cut and dried so far as higher boards are concerned and unless he is exceeding his authorized percentage basis, they should hesitate before returning the award.

d. Board members should be selected insofar as possible from officers who have had combat experience and who have been decorated for bravery. They can better determine the merits of a case and will be more appreciative of what the man has been through.

e. Boards must insure that awards are on an absolutely fair and impartial basis regardless of the rank, prestige or position of the recipient. In short, no senior officer should ever be given an award for an act or acts of gallantry in action for which a private would not be given the same award under identical circumstances.

7. As to decorations themselves, they naturally fall into two main categories, those given for gallant or heroic action and those for distinguished or meritorious service. In general, each award for distinguished or meritorious service should complement an award for gallant or heroic action and should rank just beneath it. The following points on various decorations are deemed worthy of mention:

a. The Medal of Honor holds a unique place of its own and should not be complemented by any other decoration. This award appears to have been well handled.

b. The Distinguished Service Cross has not, in my opinion, been properly used as the accepted standard has been too high. No division that I know of has approached the percentage basis authorized in this Theater. Unquestionably, units and higher headquarters have set too high a standard for this award. For example, on the percentage basis, this division was authorized approximately 27 Distinguished Service Crosses. Of this number, only twenty-four (less than 19%) have been recommended. Fourteen have been awarded (less than 12%). Six have been denied or returned, and the balance not yet heard from. This is out of all proportion to other awards. We now realize, and I presume others do also, that many of our Silver Stars should have been Distinguished Service Crosses instead. However, we feel it poor policy now to start revoking orders in order to try to correct past mistakes. This would become a vicious cycle which might soon get out of hand. That is why I reiterate how important it is to get started on the right foot, forewarned and forearmed.

c. As to the Distinguished Service Medal, we have received no clear-cut policy. In my opinion, it should generally be limited to senior commanders, say from regimental level on up, although regulations seem to provide for other officers and enlisted men. However, since it ranks below the Distinguished Service Cross, which is correct, an Army Commander should be authorized to approve the award as he does in the case of the Distinguished Service Cross. Until this is clarified, there are apt to be certain superfluous recommendations, unnecessary correspondence and certain injustices done.

d. The Silver Star is an appropriate award for a Division Commander. Since it is for gallantry in action, it should rank just below the Distinguished Service Medal and ahead of the Legion of Merit.

e. The Legion of Merit is noticeably out of place. It should compliment the Silver Star and rank below it. Division Commanders should be permitted to authorize this award. As to the various grades of the Legion of Merit, I am not prepared to comment but my impression is that if any grade ranks below the Silver Star, then all grades must rank the same.

f. Unfortunately, everyone feels that a serious mistake was made when it was decided to award the Bronze Star for heroic and meritorious service. All decorations should be distinctive and specifically for gallant or heroic action in combat as opposed to distinguished or meritorious service not necessarily in combat. The Bronze Star for heroic action should rank just under the Legion of Merit and should be complimented with another award to rank beneath it. Since so many Bronze Star decorations have been awarded, it is probably too late to recall those for meritorious service and change this to another medal. However, this would be highly desirable if it could be done. If not, then I feel that some other solution must be found to distinguish between the two awards. I am well aware of the complications and difficulties involved as in many cases personnel have been given the award for both heroic and meritorious service. One of the best solutions was suggested by a soldier in the Stars and Stripes. He contended that a star should be worn on the ribbon to indicate heroic action but he did not amplify this remark or go into any more detail. There are any number of devices that could be used but the simplest solution appears to be the use of bronze and silver stars. Since stars are only worn so far on service ribbons and medals, I can see no complications or objections to their use on the Bronze Star ribbon. If stars were adopted, then it would appear necessary to do away with the Oak Leaf Cluster for this award. For example, for every award of the Bronze Star Medal for heroic action, the recipient would wear a small silver star on the ribbon, and for each award for meritorious service, he would wear two silver and one bronze star, indicating three Bronze Star awards and the class of each award. This appears to be a workable solution since the stars are already available and the change, if approved, could be put into effect at once. For the medal itself, a clasp would be worn on the ribbon with the word "Heroic" or "Meritorious" on it, or the clasps could be silver or bronze to correspond to the stars, or the stars themselves could be used.

g. No mention has been made of the Distinguished Flying Cross as I am not too familiar with this award. However, it appears that it should rank immediately below the Silver Star and ahead of the Legion of Merit.

h. The Soldiers Medal seems to be out of place and should not outrank the Bronze Star for heroic action.

i. The Air Medal has not been well handled for field artillery observers and is given so generously under the regulations that it has been cheapened in my opinion. Unless a different policy is adopted, it deserves no higher rank.

j. There is much room for improvement in awarding the Purple Heart, and, in my opinion, it is entirely too easily obtained. This is a difficult problem and I have no intelligent solution to offer.

k. The Presidential Unit Citation award requires considerable interpretation and does not provide adequately for units in an armored division or attached thereto. Since an armored division almost habitually fights by task forces, there are always platoon attachments. Throughout the war, the anti-aircraft battalion and the tank destroyer battalion were almost always broken down to platoons and this seems to preclude their chances of ever receiving the award. Many tank, infantry and reconnaissance platoons were attached to task forces. Many of these platoons conducted themselves gallantly and are considered deserving of the award but it cannot be recommended. It is realized that this is a difficult problem but it is deemed worthy of mention and should be studied.

8. The question of compensation for awards received by enlisted men may have been changed by recent regulations with which I am not familiar. Present regulations call for this compensation for the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, Distinguished Flying Cross and Soldiers Medal. Naturally, the Legion of Merit, Silver Star and possibly the Bronze Star for heroic action should also be included. If this compensation is to remain in effect, it should then be made commensurate with the award and on a graduated scale. \$2.00 is a rather small amount to give a soldier with the Medal of Honor when one with the Soldiers Medal, who may never have been in combat, gets the same amount. I would say that the lowest award should receive at least \$2.00 and the highest at least \$20.00 or \$25.00. For the Medal of Honor, the sum should probably be paid for life and not just during active service. My recommendation, however, is that any compensation be limited to awards made for gallantry in action.

9. All awards forwarded to higher headquarters appear to be unduly delayed and sometimes many months pass before the publication of the orders. This situation appears to be entirely unnecessary and indicates a lack of the necessary machinery and personnel to process the recommendations promptly. Some awards submitted as long as four months ago have neither been heard from nor has the order been published as yet. This applies primarily to the Legion of Merit and Distinguished Service Medal. Distinguished Service Crosses have usually been acted upon more promptly as they only go to Army for approval. The longer delay in the Medal of Honor can be understood although a recommendation for this award should receive number one priority at all headquarters through which it passes. Every effort must be made to handle awards in the most expeditious manner. As it is now, particularly in the case of the Legion of Merit, many officers and men will not receive this decoration until long after they have been discharged.

10. The magnitude of this task is fully appreciated and it is realized that different policies probably exist in different theaters of operation. The points and ideas enumerated above are purely my own and do not necessarily reflect the attitude of any senior commander. I appreciate that well-qualified officers have made a detailed and continuing study of these matters and fully understand the difficulties involved. There are undoubtedly excellent reasons why some of the points mentioned have not and should not be changed. I trust this letter will be received in the spirit in which it is written and that some of the ideas set forth may prove of value.

/s/ George W. Read, Jr.  
/t/ GEORGE W. READ, JR.  
Brigadier General, USA  
Assistant Division Commander

1st Ind

HEADQUARTERS 6TH ARMORED DIVISION, Office of the Commanding General  
APO 256, U S Army, 22 June 1945

TO: Commanding General, VIII Corps, APO 308, U S Army

1. The basic letter was prepared by Brigadier General Read after several months command experience in combat, and a considerable period of duty as President of the 6th Armored Division Awards Board.

2. The suggestions and recommendations are fully concurred in. It is a very complicated and comprehensive subject that will require an exhaustive study, but from the point of view of the combat unit commander, there is no more important subject. Therefore, it is urged that positive and thorough action be initiated at this time.

/s/ R. W. Grow  
/t/ R. W. GROW  
Major General, USA  
Commanding

AG 200.6 - GNMHG  
(22 June 45)

2nd Ind

HEADQUARTERS VIII CORPS, APO 308, U.S. Army 28 June 1945.

TO: Commanding General, Seventh U.S. Army, APO 756, U.S. Army

This letter presents the best solution to this important problem that I have seen, and I recommend that the recommendations contained therein be put into effect.

/s/ I. T. WYCHE  
/t/ I. T. WYCHE  
Major General, U S Army  
Commanding

B/L Hq 6th Arm'd Div

22 Jun 45

Subj: Awards and Decorations

AG 200.6-A

3rd Ind

FSC/je

HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH ARMY, APO 758, U S Army, 24 August 1945

TO: Commanding General, United States Forces, European Theater (Main)  
APO 858, U S Army

1. The basic letter brings out in a forceful manner, many of the problems of awards in the field, and, while this headquarters does not agree with all the solutions suggested, it believes that all are worthy of careful study.

2. Since a quota cannot be placed on heroism or merit the quota system for awards is not believed to be the most desirable in any situation except one where standards or methods of selection break down. To meet a deadline to fill a quota, recommendations will be rushed and will be processed more leniently for the reason that the unit commander has made the selection to fill his quota. Also a certain percentage will receive awards regardless of outstanding performance of the individual or the group.

3. In the discussion of relative rank of medals, it is believed that the present rank of medals is appropriate.

/s/ F. W. Milburn  
/t/ F. W. MILBURN  
Major General, USA  
Commanding

- a. Adequacy and appropriateness of War Department and Theater directives establishing and defining the various awards and decorations.

Need clearer definition on part of War Department for Silver Star Medal, particularly in reference to gallant service on the part of higher commanders. STOUZA was in error concerning the policy on awards for overlapping periods, i.e., Bronze Star Medal for one period, Legion of Merit for a somewhat longer period and Distinguished-Service Medal for a still longer period--each one of which might have included part or all of the period for which the previous awards had been made. In general, directives were adequate and appropriate. The field did not understand the standards required or methods of presentation.

- b. Appropriateness of the Bronze Star Medal as a peacetime award.

The Bronze Star is not an appropriate peacetime award. It detracts from war time value.

- c. Analysis and evaluation of the system of quota allocation of awards; propriety of such under current Army Regulations; effect on the number of awards made and recommended; incidental effect on troop morale.

Value of quota is a check on commanding officers who do not have a standard for awards or who are overly decorations conscious. It is a spur to commanding officers whose standards are too high or are not aware of the morale factor. Rigid quotas must not be applied so that meritorious awards are denied. Must be broadly applied. Criticism on execution of quotas--some commanding officers did not try to exceed, while other commanding officers tried to meet the quota setup. Too rigid application has an adverse morale effect. Use of the term "quota" is wrong; suggest use of the word "guide" or a similar expression.

- d. Restriction on second awards of meritorious service-type decorations; propriety of such under current Army Regulations; effect on the number of awards made and recommended; incidental effect on troop morale.

Restriction of second awards for meritorious service-type decorations is bad--example: 2 Legion of Merit awards will be awarded if services were entirely divorced. Application of this policy reduces the number of awards made. The effect on troop morale is meager except in higher headquarters. In any case, it denies prompt recognition for meritorious service.

- e. Responsibilities and functions of decorations boards; relationship between decorations board and G-1.

Decorations boards should be divorced from G-1 in order that G-1 is free to make his own recommendations. If outvoted by board action, G-1 loses his position as advisor to the Commanding General. Awards and decorations board should review and make recommendations. G-1 comes into scene policy-wise.

f. Allied awards to U.S. personnel, with specific reference to immediate combat awards made on the basis of bulk allotment as distinguished from those made on the basis of individual recommendations; administrative procedures involved.

Each country has own setup--the U.S. has to follow such procedures. Allotment of awards rests with the various countries. Administrative procedure should be simple, but again, rests with the national governments concerned. In view of the amount of work, only lists should be submitted. Liaison officers should be consulted throughout. The liaison officer should in turn tie in with the senior field liaison officer. Theater commander would not approve asking foreign nations for awards.

g. U. S. awards to Allied personnel; feasibility of direct communication between Armies and appropriate foreign commanders effecting elimination of Theater headquarters as an intermediate echelon; considerations effecting bulk allotments of awards as distinguished from awards prepared on individual recommendations.

Immediate combat awards to Allied personnel should be handled by direct communication between armies and the appropriate foreign commanders. Service awards should be awarded through theater.

h. Award of Distinguished-Service Medal and Bronze Star Medal for both heroic achievement and meritorious service; appropriateness of distinguishing ribbons or different decorations to indicate heroic action and meritorious service.

Distinguished-Service Medal to remain as is. The Bronze Star Medal should be changed to the Bronze Service Cross or similar decoration for acts of heroism, and should equal the Air Medal.

i. Awards to civilians; propriety of Theater restriction against submission of recommendations prior to termination of hostilities; basis for and processing of awards of Theater ribbons to civilians.

Propriety of theater restrictions against recommendations prior to termination of hostilities for awards to civilians is good. It relieves commanding officers of pressure and assures right persons achieved the award. Recommendations could be submitted upon completion or termination of duty, but action could be withheld. Theater ribbons for civilians is a controversial issue. Where does one draw the line? Recommend Medal For Freedom in lieu of service ribbons.

j. Award of Air Medal to Army Liaison Pilots; disagreement in basic policy between ground and air forces; suggested minimum qualifications for award, based upon experience in this theater.

Standards for award of Air Medal to liaison pilots should be tough.

k. Unit citations; administrative procedures involved; eligibility of personnel attached for operations only as distinguished from personnel assigned or attached for both operations and administration.

Provisions to recognize attached units must be made. The adverse morale factor on omitted units is great. Recommendations are not properly prepared in that they are too cumbersome, with a mass of documents, without the highlights being spotted.

1. Battle participation credit.

- (1) Unit credit; adequacy and appropriateness of current directives in defining qualifications for eligibility of various units; feasibility of uniform policies and procedures throughout all Theaters and commands; feasibility of decentralization to Army level of authority and responsibility for taking final action on applications for unit credit.
- (2) Individual eligibility; adequacy and appropriateness of current directives; administrative procedures involved; decentralization to Army level of authority and responsibility to take final action on individual requests for battle participation credit.

Unit credit needs further definition. When does a headquarters get credit? What percent of units must participate to obtain credit? Should be standard policy for all theaters. Oppose decentralization to army level to take final action on applications. Adequacy of individual directives are not clear. Restrictions should cover all units intended for citations, and individuals and no more. Bronze Star indicates service in the combat zone defined by Field Service Regulations. In some cases the headquarters of combat units may be in rear of combat zone boundary for short periods of time, but should receive credit. All communications zone units forward of army rear boundaries receive credit. For communications zone units, in lieu of Bronze Star, some other device should be authorized. This has an important morale effect on combat troops.

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS  
IN A THEATER OF OPERATIONS

1 December 1945

Prepared by: A 1 United States Air Forces in Europe

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## AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

### CHAPTER 1

#### PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this report is to present the plans and policies on awards used by the United States Strategic Air Forces during the period of July 1944 to 8 May 1945. No attempt will be made to cover existing War Department and Theater Directives except where the Air Forces are utilizing policies differing from the aforementioned directives or where a change in policy or procedure will be recommended. As the preparation and processing of awards will be adequately covered in the Committee Reports, and the purpose of this report is merely to supplement the aforementioned; emphasis will be placed on points upon which disagreement exists.

### CHAPTER 2

#### SCOPE

2. As it was impossible to cover all the controversial points involved in Awards and Decorations, in the available time and space, it was decided to place the emphasis of this report on the following points:

- a. Adequacy of Present War Department and Theater Directives.  
This headquarters is of the opinion that present War Department and Theater Directives are adequate in establishing and defining the various awards and decorations, with the exception of changes proposed in the following paragraphs.
- b. Appropriateness of the Bronze Star Medal as a Peacetime Award  
It is the opinion of this headquarters that the Bronze Star Medal would be an appropriate peacetime award.
- c. Quota Allocations of Awards.  
Although several quota allocations of awards have been made within United States Strategic Air Force, the practice is not looked on with favor. Such action is deemed to defeat the spirit of awards for achievements. Awards should be made for specific accomplishment or act. Awarding of a large prescribed number of medals simultaneously cheapens the award to the person who has earned it, and does nothing to improve morale of troops.
- d. Restrictions on Second Awards of Meritorious Service-Type Decorations.  
It is proper to make second awards of meritorious service-type decorations. The degree of achievement should be held to such high standards that there would be very few recipients thereof. In the majority of cases where second awards of meritorious service-type decorations have been made the degree of performance has been held to be approximately the same or higher degree of performance upon which the initial award was based.

- e. Responsibilities and Functions of Decorations Board.  
The function of the decorations board is to receive and pass judgment on whether the degree of performance contained in the recommendation is of such calibre as to warrant the approval of the recommended award. By their decisions they establish a high or low degree of performance as the minimum essential for a certain medal. The G-1 Section sets the policies as to minimum essentials for all awards. Therefore out of necessity there must be a very close relationship between the Awards Board and the G-1 Section. Between the two elements involved the entire policy on awards is established, thus if there is unity between the two elements there is one unified policy, but if there is a divergence there is no unity and a wide variance and confusion of policy.
- f. Allied Awards to United States Personnel.  
It is believed that the better procedure is to submit individual recommendation for awards in lieu of bulk allotments. When immediate combat awards are made in bulk allotment many undeserving awards are made merely for the purpose of utilizing the whole allotment. By the submission of individual recommendations they can be carefully scrutinized so as to eliminate to a large extent undeserving cases. The present theater policy of requiring concurrence of Theater Commander before the acceptance of an Allied Award is viewed favorably here. This policy necessitates the submission of some justification for the granting of the award and if it was done away with it is feared that Allied Awards would be given to American personnel indiscriminately.
- g. United States Awards to Allied Personnel.  
It would be feasible to grant to Commanding Generals of Numbered Air Forces the authority to make small numbers of combat awards to Allied Personnel without prior concurrence of the Theater Commander. These awards however should be very limited and used only in exceptional cases where expeditious action is necessary. In the majority of cases where United States Awards are to be made to Allied Personnel, it is thought that the prior concurrence of the Theater Commander should be obtained. Although time would be saved by eliminating the Theater Headquarters as an intermediate echelon, it is proper that there be a central authority to restrain the individual commanders from making indiscriminately large numbers of awards. Also, it is insurance that all awards will reach the foreign commanders in correct and identical form, thus creating a favorable impression and promoting Allied good will.
- h. Award of Distinguished-Service Medal and Bronze Star Medal for Both Heroic Achievement and Meritorious Service.  
It is believed that no definite distinction should be made between the Bronze Star Medal being awarded for heroic action in combat, or for meritorious service. This headquarters does not deem it necessary or appropriate to award distinguishing ribbons or different decorations to indicate heroic action and meritorious service. Current War Department and Theater Directives outlining the essentials and requisites for the aforementioned medal are deemed to be entirely adequate and complete.

As long as the present high standards for qualifying for the Distinguished-Service Medal and the Bronze Star Medal are maintained no change in existing regulations is suggested.

i. Awards to Civilians.

(1) The theater restriction against submission of recommendations for awards for civilians prior to the termination of hostilities, unless submitted for some act of heroism while serving with troops, is viewed with favor.

(2) The Air Forces have also adhered very strictly to the policy regarding the awarding of the theater ribbon to civilians, outlined in theater directive. The four months minimum service for consideration of the award is regarded as the very minimum of service required.

(3) It is believed that the new War Department directives on the Medal for Freedom will clarify the situation as regards awards for civilians.

j. Award of Air Medal to Liaison Pilots.

(1) Because of the difference between the type of missions and planes involved the Air Force and Ground Forces have differences in minimum requirements for the Air Medal. The Air Force minimum requirements for consideration for the award of the Air Medal vary in accordance with type of plane flown, the mission, and the Air Force involved.

(2) The suggested minimum basis for consideration for the award of an Air Medal for an Army Liaison Pilot is as follows:

- (a) A single meritorious act or
- (b) Sustained operational activities against the enemy.

k. Unit Citations.

(1) In accordance with theater policy, all requests for unit citations are submitted through channels, including Theater Headquarters, to the War Department for final approval. As the Unit Citation is such a distinctive award it is believed proper to require approval of all intermediate headquarters before the award can be made.

(2) It is believed proper to award the citation to individuals attached for operations only, as well as those assigned for operations and administration. The citation is usually awarded on the basis of one particular act involving operations, thus the individual assigned for operations only may have done more towards the gaining of the citation than the person who is attached for operations and administration. Accordingly, it is believed that to insure that justice is done, all persons attached for operations only should be allowed to wear the Unit Citation.

l. Battle Participation Credit.

(1) Unit Credit.

- (a) Current Theater and War Department directives

are totally inadequate on this subject. "Under existing regulations, only organizations which have actively participated in combat or organizations stationed in the combat zone may be recommended for battle participation credit. Personnel of service units not stationed within a combat zone but physically associated with operational units are not eligible for such credit. The War Department has consistently rendered the interpretation that the extension of battle participation credit to service personnel in the category referred to would result in dissipation of the value of battle participation credit and defeat of the purpose for which it is accorded.

(b) It is emphasized that combat operations of the Air Forces in this theater have been conducted on a station basis; that is, the station consisting of a bombardment or fighter group and its affiliated service units, has worked as a team with no distinction between combat group, ground personnel, and service unit personnel. In the case of a bombardment group, service units not assigned or attached directly to the combat group are pooled at an Army Air Force station with operational group units. The service units are assigned to the station and the Group Commander serves as Commanding Officer of the station and exercises, through such command, jurisdiction and control over all units and personnel physically present at such station. The service units thus become an intrinsic element in the operation of combat group and the lack of direct assignment or attachment to the combat group is purely a matter of administrative convenience. During duty hours and off-duty hours, operational group and service unit personnel mingle to such an extent that it is impossible to differentiate between them. Service unit officers in many instances occupy positions on the operational group staff.

(c) While it is true that the bombardment and fighter groups contain combat elements, whereas the service units do not, this fact has little more than academic interest to personnel of the service units who work on the operational stations with the group ground personnel, subject to similar duties.

(d) The following are examples of discrimination in the awarding of battle participation credit resulting from strict adherence to current directives and are difficult to justify:

(1) Bombardment group personnel are servicing gasoline into an airplane at the same time that ordnance and chemical personnel are loading bombs. The gas servicing men are receiving battle participation credit, whereas the others are receiving only words or praise from their commanders.

(2) Flying control operators who are intimately concerned with the operation of each combat mission are denied the award while permanent K.P.'s and Barracks Orderlies of bombardment squadrons have been awarded as many as four Bronze Service Stars.

(3) Mechanics performing minor maintenance on aircraft are awarded battle credit while Air Engineering Squadron Mechanics performing major repairs are not.

(4) Men who have spent the greater part of a campaign in the guardhouse are eligible for this award, whereas antiaircraft gunners and fire fighters may not receive such credit.

(e) In view of the foregoing facts it is strongly recommended that current policy governing the award of battle participation credit be re-studied with the view of giving further consideration to service elements located at combat stations. It is felt that the personnel serving as members of service units stationed on combat basus of this command have participated in the campaigns established for this Theater to the same degree as have the ground personnel of operational groups and qualify equally to receive recognition therefore under the provisions of paragraph 21 b (3) AR 260-10.

(f) It is not deemed feasible to decentralize to an army level the authority and responsibility for taking final action on applications for unit credit. It is believed such action would lead to the awarding of battle credit indiscriminately. By maintaining the authority at its present level a close scrutiny can be maintained on all applications.

## (2) Individual Eligibility.

(a) The current War Department and Theater directives on this subject are totally inadequate. As no instructions were forthcoming from higher headquarters, this headquarters proceeded to place the following interpretation on paragraph 18a, AR 345-400, 3 January 1945. Any person who served at a normal post of duty and in accordance with all other requirements of the paragraph, for any length of time on temporary duty was eligible for the credit. This policy was followed until 28 April 1945, when the Theater Letter on Battle Participation Credit was published. This required a thirty-day period of temporary duty to qualify under the paragraph in question. It is believed the Theater interpretation of the above question is preferable to the interpretation formerly adopted by this headquarters.

(b) It is believed feasible to decentralize to a Numbered Air Force level the authority to take final action on individual requests for battle participation credit. It is not necessary to refer all such requests to higher headquarters when same results may be obtained at a much lower level of command.

200.6 (G-1)

31 October 1944.

SUBJECT: Awards and Decorations

TO : Commanding Generals,  
First US Army, APO 230  
Third US Army, APO 403  
Ninth US Army, APO 339  
Each Corps  
Each Division  
Special Troops, Twelfth Army Group, APO 655.

1. For your information there is inclosed a chart which represents graphically the total number of DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSSES, SILVER STARS, and BRONZE STAR MEDALS reported awarded in various infantry and armored division as of 15 October 1944. Certain wide discrepancies are obvious.

2. In order to attain a more uniform basis for and thereby to insure greater equality in the matter of awards in recognition of acts of gallantry, the following is proposed as a guide, based upon the strength of an infantry division:

a. For each week in offensive combat:

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS	.025 of 1%	3 awards
SILVER STAR	.25 of 1%	35 awards
BRONZE STAR MEDAL	.55 of 1%	79 awards

3. The quotas shown above will not be exceeded. Divisions which have served in action during inactive periods or in quiet parts of the line will, of course, have fewer awards than indicated.

4. Awards for Corps and Army troops that have been engaged in combat will be figured proportionately.

By command of Lieutenant General BRADLEY:

/s/ C. R. Landon  
/t/ C. R. LANDON  
Colonel, AGD  
Adjutant General

1 Incl.  
Incl 1 - Awards and  
Decorations Chart.

~~SECRET~~



HEADQUARTERS 12TH ARMY GROUP  
G-1 SECTION  
APO 655

16 April 1945

MEMORANDUM TO: Commanding General, 12th Army Group

SUBJECT Basis for Award of Distinguished Service Medal.

1. The Commanding General in his memorandum to G-1, dated 6 March 1945 stated that the basis for the award of the Distinguished Service Medal should be meritorious service in a position of great responsibility.

2. a. T/O & E 200-1 provides for fifteen (15) general officers in an Army Headquarters, thereby indicating that the following may be considered positions of great responsibility:

CG	Armd
C/S	Arty
DC/S	Engr
G-1	Med
G-2	Ord
G-3	QM
G-4	Sig

b. Under certain conditions the following may be considered as positions of great responsibility:

DC/S  
G-5

c. The Armies agreed to adopt a quota system based on the percentage adopted for this headquarters. That provided for a quota for Distinguished Service Medals equivalent to 2% of the headquarters strength (739) or fifteen (15) awards.

3. a. T/O & E 100-1 provides for following three (3) general officers in a Corps Headquarters:

C/G  
C/S  
Arty

b. Under certain conditions the following may be considered as positions of great responsibility:

G-2  
G-3

c. Quota system was not adopted for Corps or Division because it was not believed applicable.

4. a. T/O & E 7 provides for following three (3) general officers in an Infantry Division Headquarters:

CG  
Asst CG  
Div Arty

b. Under certain conditions following may be considered as positions of great responsibility:

C/S  
G-3

5. a. T/O & E 17 provides the following general officers in an Armored Division (both old and new type)

<u>Old</u>	<u>New</u>
CG	CG
CG, CCA	CG, CCA (or B)
CG, CCB	Res Comdr

b. Under certain conditions the following may be considered as positions of great responsibility (both old and new types):

C/S  
G-3

6. Under quota adopted for this headquarters eighteen (18) Distinguished Service Medals were set up.

7. Recommendations:

a. That the Theater Commander be requested to authorize the submission of recommendations for the award of the Distinguished Service Medal for officers occupying key staff positions in the various echelons of this command after six months successful completion of duties in combat.

b. That in the event of the cessation of hostilities individual recommendations may be submitted for lesser periods based on record of performance.

c. That the six weeks policy for commanders be continued.

d. That deserving cases of staff officers other than enumerated above, regimental and other combat commanders be handled separately.

/s/ J. J. O'Hare  
/t/ J. J. O'HARE  
Brigadier General, GSC  
AC of S, G-1

HEADQUARTERS 12TH ARMY GROUP  
G-1 Section  
APO 655

17 June 1945

MEMORANDUM TO: Commanding General, 12th Army Group

SUBJECT: Basis for Award of Legion of Merit

1. The Commanding General in his memorandum to G-1, dated 6 March 1945, stated that the basis for the award of the LEGION OF MERIT should be meritorious service in a position of considerable responsibility, plus those cases where an officer or an enlisted man has developed some piece of equipment or office procedure whereby there has been accomplished a great time saving.

2. The Armies agreed to adopt a quota system based on percentages adopted for this headquarters, namely, 9% of headquarters strength (739) or 67 awards per Army Headquarters.

3. It is believed that the following positions in Army Headquarters may be considered as positions of considerable responsibility where the duties performed might warrant the award of the LEGION OF MERIT. These positions are held by Colonels or Lt. Colonels and do not include certain Chiefs of Sections, such as the G's, who are general officers to whom the DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL might be awarded.

DC/S	Asst Engr Officer
Asst G-1	Asst Sig Officer
Asst G-2	AG
Asst G-3	IG
Asst G-4	JA
Asst Arty Officer	PM
Asst AAA Officer	Asst Surg
	Asst Ord Officer

4. a. It is believed that the following positions in Corps and Division Headquarters may be considered as positions of considerable responsibility where the duties performed might warrant the LEGION OF MERIT. These positions are held by Colonels and Lt Colonels and do not include general officers to whom the DISTINGUISHED SERVICE MEDAL might be awarded:

<u>Corps Hq</u>	<u>Inf Div Hq</u>	<u>Armd Div Hq</u>	<u>Armd Div CC Hq</u>
DC/S	C/S	C/S	Executive
G-1	G-1	G-1	
G-2	G-2	G-2	
G-3	G-3	G-3	
G-4	G-4	G-4	
AG	AG	AG	
CW	CW	CW	
Engr	Engr	Engr	
IG	IG	IG	
JA	JA	JA	
Ord	Ord	Ord	
QM	QM	QM	
Sig	Sig	Surg	
Surg	Surg	CO Res C	

b. Under certain conditions, individual responsibility of persons occupying the following positions might be such as to warrant consideration for the award.

<u>Corps Hq</u>	<u>Inf Div Hq</u>	<u>Armd Div Hq</u>	<u>CC Hq</u>
Air Ground Liaison (Lt Col)	Asst G-3 (Lt Col)	Asst G-3 (Lt Col)	Intel Officer(Maj)
Asst G-3 (Lt Col)	Asst G-3 (Maj)	Air Liaison (Maj)	Air S-3 (Maj)
Asst G-2 (Lt Col)	Asst G-4 (Maj)	Asst G-4 (Maj)	

5. In situations involving independence of action and responsibility commanders, executive officers and certain other staff officers of regiments, groups and units of similar size; and commanders of battalions or units of similar size may be considered as positions of considerable responsibility where the duties performed might warrant the award of the LEGION OF MERIT.

6. Recommend that:

a. The above standards be used as a guide in consideration of recommendations for awards of the LEGION OF MERIT.

b. Deserving cases of staff officers other than those enumerated above and of enlisted men be handled separately.

J. J. O'HARE  
Brigadier General, G.S.C.  
AC of S, G-1