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THE GENERAL BOARD

United States Forces, European Theater

ARMY TACTICAL INFORMATION SERVICE

MISSION: Prepare report and recommendations on an Army Tactical Information Service.

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  
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ARMY TACTICAL INFORMATION SERVICE

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ARMY TACTICAL INFORMATION SERVICE

	PAGE
Section 1: Discussion	1
Section 2: Conclusions and Recommendations	6
Bibliography	7
Appendix 1 - Statement by General Eisenhower	

## SECTION 1

### DISCUSSION

1. An Army Tactical Information Service may be defined as a service which provides the army and higher commanders with information of tactical value more quickly than it can be processed through normal signal communications channels.

2. The Directive to this committee asks if there is a requirement in higher headquarters for a Tactical Information Service containing facilities for:

- a. Obtaining tactical information.
- b. Monitoring for purposes of signal security.

3. The Consensus of Personnel Interviewed and Documents Studied is that there is a definite need for a unit or units to perform both of these missions, but that it is not desirable to have one unit perform both missions.

a. In making its original request for a unit to perform the above functions, 1st United States Army Group stated: "This headquarters feels there is a vital need for a means of supplying prompt battle information on the tactical situation at the front, at all times, to Division, Corps and Army Commanders in the field."<sup>1</sup> In its 10th indorsement to this initial request 12th Army Group stated on 27 October 1944: "Since this headquarters has been operational it has been conclusively proved that there exists a vital need for a staff information service ....., " and dispatched an officer to Washington with the indorsement to expedite obtaining necessary facilities to establish such a service. In the meantime operational necessity had produced the following expedients:

- (1) Personnel and equipment had been borrowed from the British GHQ Liaison Regiment to link all active United States corps to 12th Army Group by radio through 21 Army Group (British) and its GHQ Liaison radio net.
- (2) Third Army had converted a cavalry reconnaissance group headquarters and one squadron to use as an Army Information Service.
- (3) Several corps headquarters had established their own special information links to subordinate units.

Operations had proved the original conviction that it would be necessary to supplement normal signal communications facilities with agencies under control of higher tactical commanders in order to obtain information of tactical value more quickly under all circumstances, and to provide an additional reliable means of communication in fast-moving or confused situations where wire and other normal communications means might be out. Attempts to obtain a comprehensive Tactical Information Service for the European Theater were finally realized in part when Signal Information and Monitoring Companies augmented by special liaison

patrols became operational with First, Third and Seventh Armies, and the 12th Army Group Liaison Detachment (SIAM) with 12th Army Group. Organization and equipment were far from adequate; personnel was incompletely trained; and the war in Europe ended before the capabilities of the organization could be thoroughly tested. The need had been established, however, and recommendations were immediately submitted to improve the embryo service.<sup>2</sup>

b. With the huge volume of radio traffic in modern warfare, signal security is essential. From the standpoint of all commanders some special means, such as monitoring, is necessary to insure that proper security is maintained.

c. If both missions of obtaining tactical information and monitoring for signal security must be performed, it might appear desirable in theory to have one unit perform both, in order to effect economy in personnel and equipment, and to take advantage of the fact that monitoring for signal security sometimes also yields information of tactical value. Despite theories, however, one unit must have one mission in practice. The more important mission in the eyes of the army staff would receive emphasis, and the other would be neglected. Monitoring friendly nets for security and monitoring for information are unrelated functions with respect to (1) the information sought, (2) the processing of information secured, and (3) the action taken on information secured. Further, information obtained by monitoring is incomplete and sometimes unreliable, and must be confirmed by information obtained from other sources. Monitoring is not a satisfactory primary means of obtaining tactical information. It is therefore considered desirable to have an organization tailored especially for gathering tactical information, uncomplicated by the additional mission of monitoring for signal security with its incidental benefits to the information service.

4. The Mission of such a unit would be to obtain, by personal contact by liaison officer at division, corps and army level, information of the activities of friendly or enemy troops of value to higher commanders, and to pass such information back, using its own radio or other communications facilities, to the highest headquarters in the theater exercising tactical command over the field armies. All information sent up must have the approval of the local commander or senior staff officer. The information from division would be intercepted by corps, and would be processed by elements of the unit at army, thereby giving all intermediate commanders the advantages of the service. The employment of such a unit should be dictated by a battalion headquarters at army group, to insure uniformity in training, employment, methods of operation and capabilities of the companies, maintain flexibility that would care for the constantly changing strength of armies, and insure the army group commander the maximum benefits of such a service. The information would be passed from army group or separate armies to theater by teletype. If there were no army group, the battalion could operate directly under theater headquarters. More detailed information on the mission and operation of such a service is contained in a special report submitted by 12th Army Group.<sup>3</sup>

5. Organization and Equipment. There is no table of organization and equipment applicable to such a unit. An organization with personnel and equipment generally as follows would be adequate for the purpose of obtaining tactical information

for higher headquarters. All officers and men should be of highest caliber, accertable to any headquarters, and carefully trained to realize that they are servants of the whole command scheme, and are not staff officers expected to interfere with or to advise any lower echelon.<sup>4</sup>

a. A team for each division and corps, consisting of:

- (1) A captain trained in the operation of a large staff and the type of information desired by such a staff. He should be intelligent, personable, energetic, persistent and completely reliable.
- (2) Sufficient high speed radio operators and code clerks to operate one radio 24 hours a day if necessary, but normally from about 0600 to 2400. The chief radio operator would have to act as assistant to the team chief, and should be highly capable. He should be a staff sergeant.
- (3) A radio repairman and two drivers. The repairman could function as one of the drivers.
- (4) A radio capable of operation under all conditions at any range up to 200 miles, mounted in a vehicle for operation, but easily removable.
- (5) A light vehicle, with trailer, for messenger use around corps or division headquarters and for transportation on moves.

b. A company headquarters detachment at army, consisting of:

- (1) A major, company commander and liaison officer between the unit and army staff. He and his operations assistants should have the same qualifications as the officer in the division team.
- (2) An operations platoon, commanded by a captain who would be company executive and operations officer. Other personnel should include: two first lieutenants, who would assist the operations officer to maintain the operations map, check information before submitting to army operations officer or passing on to army group, and prepare information summaries (supplementary to the normal situation reports) for transmission to lower echelons; sufficient high-speed radio operators and code clerks to operate one radio to each corps and one to army group 24 hours a day; an operations sergeant, draftsman and three clerks; one motor messenger per corps.
- (3) An administrative section, headed by a first lieutenant, responsible for company administration.

- (4) A maintenance section, with necessary personnel to maintain radios and motor transportation. It should include a communications officer and a transportation officer.
- (5) One radio per corps and army group with same characteristics as those in corps and division teams.
- (6) Necessary administrative equipment, including sufficient light vehicles to provide one for a motor messenger to each corps, one for messenger use between the army and adjacent armies or army group, and two for use between unit and army headquarters and on inspection and maintenance trips down to corps and division teams.
- (7) Facilities for teletype communication between army and army group. This would be the primary means of communication between these two headquarters, the radio being secondary or emergency equipment. The same personnel could operate either the teletypewriter or the radio.

c. A battalion headquarters and headquarters company at army group headquarters. While the company should be completely self-sufficient at army level so that it could operate efficiently alone, the battalion headquarters should have complete control and responsibility, administrative and tactical, when two or more armies operate under an army group. The battalion headquarters and headquarters company should contain the following:

- (1) One lieutenant colonel, battalion commander.
- (2) Two majors - one executive, and one operations and training officer.
- (3) One captain, S-1, S-4 and company commander, with one warrant officer, assistant S-1 and S-4, a sergeant major, a first sergeant, a company supply sergeant, a company clerk, a personnel clerk, a file clerk, a supply clerk and a typist.
- (4) Two captains, assistant operations officers.
- (5) One captain, communications officer, with a communications sergeant qualified as a radio repairman, and a teletypewriter repairman.
- (6) One first lieutenant, automotive maintenance officer, with one motor sergeant, battalion and company, and two mechanics and maintenance inspectors.
- (7) An operations sergeant, a draftsman, and three general clerks.
- (8) One radio per army with necessary high speed operators and code clerks for a 24-hour operation. The primary means of communication with army should be teletype, with radio as secondary

or emergency equipment. Personnel qualified to operate the radio could also operate the teletypewriter. There should also be teletype facilities for communication between two echelons of army group and between army group and theater. Three additional code clerks would be required at one echelon of army group.

- (9) One motor messenger per army.
- (10) Three light vehicles with drivers for command inspection and maintenance trips to armies, corps, and divisions.
- (11) Sufficient transportation to move by shuttling.
- (12) No facilities for messing would be necessary, as the strength would be only about 55 officers and men, who could eat in army group messes during operations and with one of the company messes in training. Two basics should be included, however, to supplement the mess to which the unit is attached for rations.
- (13) Since companies would be attached to armies for administrative support during operations the functions of a battalion supply section would be negligible. When the battalion came together for training, however, the combination S-1 and S-4 would be overburdened, and it would be necessary to borrow from the operations section of battalion headquarters to improvise a supply section. It would therefore be desirable for the companies to function as separate companies insofar as property accounting is concerned, as the battalion supply section could not maintain property records during operations.

SECTION 2

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6. It is Concluded:

a. That there is a requirement in higher headquarters for a tactical information service containing facilities for obtaining tactical information.

b. That monitoring to maintain signal security is necessary.

c. That monitoring is not a practical means of obtaining reliable tactical information, and that there is therefore no advantage to including monitoring facilities in a tactical information service.

d. That a separate unit should be established for obtaining tactical information, and that monitoring for signal security should be performed by elements of existing signal units or by special units organized for that purpose.

7. It is Recommended:

a. That a tactical information service for higher headquarters be made a permanent part of the military establishment.

b. That its functions, organization and equipment be substantially as indicated in Section 1.

c. That in time of war a unit of appropriate size as indicated in Section 1 be organized for each division, corps, army or army group (or theater) mobilized or organized.

d. That appropriate War Department agencies prepare detailed tables of organization and equipment to provide such a service.

e. That one skeleton battalion headquarters and one skeleton company be made a part of the peacetime military establishment for the purpose of conducting research and training to improve the organization, equipment and methods of operation of the service.

NOTE:

This report represents the opinion of a majority of the Board. However, from my personal point of view gained from no inconsiderable experience as an Army Commander, I feel that there is no need for a Tactical Information Service of this nature between Army Headquarters and subordinate units.

(Signed) G. S. PATTON JR  
General  
President of The Board

## Bibliography

1. Letter, Headquarters 1st United States Army Group, AG 322 (Sig) subject: "Signal Monitoring and Staff Information Company", dated 17 February 1944, with 11 indorsements.
2. Letter, Headquarters United States Forces, European Theater, AG 320.3 GCF-AGO, subject: "Changes in Table of Organization and Equipment 11-87S (SIAM)", dated 27 August 1945, with one inclosure.
3. Letter, Headquarters United States Forces, European Theater, AG 322 GCF-AGO, subject: "Army Tactical Information Service", dated 18 August 1945, with "Special Report, Army Tactical Information Service", prepared by the 12th Army Group Liaison Detachment (SIAM), as an inclosure.
4. Statement by General Eisenhower (attached as Appendix 1).
5. 1st indorsement, Headquarters Seventh United States Army, dated 15 September 1945, to letter, The General Board, 322 (TGBCD), subject: "Proposed T/O&E for SIAM Company", dated 3 September 1945.
6. 1st indorsement, Headquarters Third United States Army, dated 22 September 1945, to letter, The General Board, 322 (TGBCD), subject: "Proposed T/O&E for SIAM Company", dated 3 September 1945.

HEADQUARTERS  
U. S. FORCES, EUROPEAN THEATER  
Office of the Commanding General

4 October 1945

Answers to questions on attached sheet relative to a "Phantom" service:

1. I consider that the "Phantom" service in this war, when properly operated, was of extraordinary value. While it is possible that improvement in technical means of communication may someday make the maintenance of such a service unnecessary, in the conditions we had during the campaigns in Africa and Europe, the service was indispensable. For the present, we should plan for its continuation.

2. The service is definitely established for the information and assistance of the Commander. In my opinion it should operate under G-3. While a commander could put it under the direct supervision of any of his staff officers, it most emphatically should not be placed under a technical staff officer where the emphasis would be on technique rather than on the service itself. In this connection there has been some question whether "Phantom" should head up into Army or into Army Group. My own belief is that it should head up to Army only so long as an Army Group has not been established. Thereafter it should head up into the higher headquarters.

3. The monitoring of friendly radio nets is sometimes an excellent source of information. I know of one amphibious operation in this war where the only information we could get for a number of hours was by this means. However, I do not believe it necessary to set up a special organization for this purpose. Rather, in an emergency and when no other information is coming in, I would merely direct the technical service to get everything they could by monitoring friendly radio nets.

4. As stated above, it is not necessary to set up special units for the monitoring of friendly nets. Every commander should, with the means now available to him, occasionally make spot checks of his subordinate nets to determine that security regulations are being observed.

5. The answer to this question is found in the comments on the two preceding questions.

6. My own opinion is that a "Phantom" service should be a small well-organized group and should have no other function. This group will, of course, occasionally pick up a lead on a piece of information through casual monitoring of friendly nets, but in reporting such information the responsible officer should state the source. It must never be forgotten that in this type of work it is just as important to state the source as it is to state what was learned. For example, within a Division a Commander might sometimes use his radio as part of a cover or deception plan, well knowing that the simple code he was using could be quickly broken by the enemy. Therefore, to report to a higher commander information gained by monitoring might well mislead him completely unless the message also tells how the information was gained.

7. I would not be able to give details of a desirable organization. However, the following apply: -

(a) The line officer responsible for gathering the information is the authoritative director of the effort; his technical experts are merely his servants.

(b) Organizations should not be based upon accomplishing anything more than securing and transmitting information. Each unit should be mobile, the organization should be streamlined, and everyone in it should be highly competent.

(c) Selection of personnel is equally important with determining details of organization. The "Phantom" service should be eager to pass to each Headquarters in the neighborhood any piece of information that might be considered appropriate. Consequently its officers and men should be of the type that are acceptable in any Headquarters and they should be carefully trained to realize that they are servants of the whole command scheme and are not staff officers expected to interfere with or to advise any lower echelon.

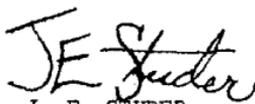
8. This is a technical question of which I know very little, but it was my understanding that messages transmitted by "Phantom" service enjoyed a very high degree of security.

#### General Comment

The "Phantom" service is one of those things in a military organization which, properly organized, trained and used, is a highly valuable instrument and one which commanders at all levels will soon learn to appreciate. On the other hand, unless it is carefully handled it can become a most objectionable thing, utilizing men and equipment to the detriment of personal relationships between Commanders of the several echelons. It is of the utmost importance that the Army itself be indoctrinated as to the value of a properly designed "Phantom" and that the "Phantom" organization itself understand its responsibilities in this matter.

/s/ Dwight D. Eisenhower

"A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY"

  
J. E. STUDER,  
CWO, USA.

1. Do you consider necessary or desirable a special information service designed to bypass normal communications channels in order to expedite delivering information of tactical value to higher headquarters?

2. Under whom should such a unit operate, the Army G-3 or the Army Signal Officer?

3. Would monitoring friendly radio nets be a lucrative source of information? Would information obtained from such a source have any practical value - that is, would it be complete enough to be meaningful and consistently correct enough to be reliable?

4. Do you think it necessary to have special units with the mission of monitoring friendly nets to maintain signal security? Should such units, if necessary, be under army, corps, or division control?

5. If monitoring friendly nets to obtain information is desirable, could this function be combined with monitoring for signal security?

6. If monitoring for security is necessary but is not considered a practical source of tactical information would it still be desirable to include security monitoring elements in a tactical information service in order to economize on administrative personnel and equipment?

7. Roughly what organization, equipment, and functions should an information gathering unit have at division level? Corps level? Army level?

8. Do you consider the "one-time pad" safe for encoding intentions to be sent by radio?