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Naval Staffs

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FOREWORD

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NAVAL STAFFS

A Lecture delivered by
Captain S. S. Miller, USN
at the Naval War College
5 November 1951

The subject of my lecture this morning is "Naval Staffs". In this lecture I will cover the subject of staffs in general terms, from the current functional and organizational viewpoints; U. S. Naval Staffs in particular; and I will touch lightly on the organization and functioning of the U. S. Army and Air Force Staffs. Since Captain Dingfelder's lecture, which follows mine, will deal in some detail with Naval Staff procedures and techniques, I will not discuss these matters but will confine my remarks to the broad discussion of the "what" and "why" of staffs. My aim is to present an appreciation for the necessity of a staff and some of the fundamentals which should be used as guides in creating and maintaining a good staff.

About two years ago, I was persuaded by my two sons, then 11 and 13 years of age respectively, to climb the highest mountain peak in the United Kingdom, Ben Nevis. I accepted the challenge but found that after four hours of huffing and puffing and resting, the two youngsters—the mountain goats—were laughing at my condition and were scampering circles around me. At last, fifteen long minutes later, when I finally managed to reach the foggy, cold top, I came to the reluctant conclusion that they could turn right around and climb it again and under two hours at that.

One year later, however, I hiked the Wapack trail in New Hampshire with the same two youngsters. But this time I equipped myself with a walking stick, a staff, before I set out to climb. My sons no longer scampered around me like mountain goats, but, instead, obediently fell in astern of me, squaw fashion, and accepted

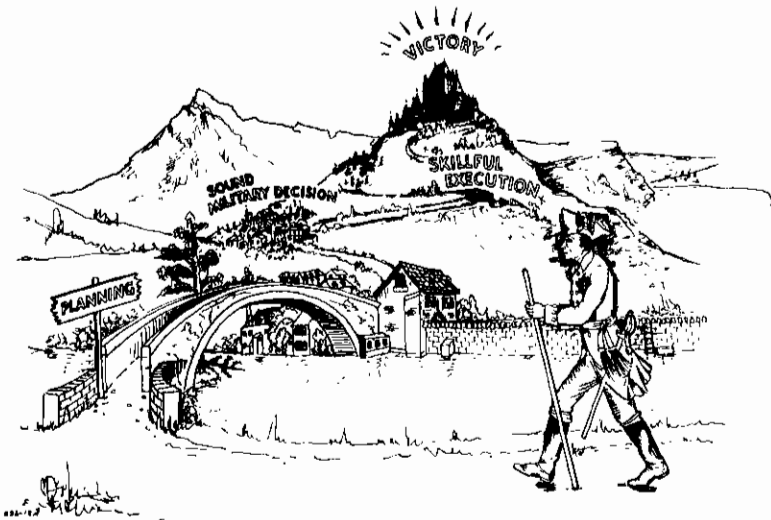
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the fact that the old man could climb a mite better and longer than they could. This was entirely due, in my opinion, to the help of my "Staff".

As an example of another "old man" who found a staff of assistance, I would like to call a cartoon to your attention.

Fig. One—"FREDERICK THE GREAT"



This is **FREDERICK THE GREAT** with his staff in hand. He apparently intends to cross the bridge shortly and to proceed via the pathway marked "PLANNING" toward the village, "THE SOUND MILITARY DECISION". From thence, up the trail named "SKILLFUL EXECUTION", he undoubtedly will achieve his goal "VICTORY" at the top of the mountain peak. His way will be made easy by his staff.

Although well stated in the Naval Officer's Staff Manual, which is on your reading list, it is necessary at this time to briefly

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mention the "why" of the staff. Why is a staff necessary? Well, briefly, the myriad of details inherent in a large organization makes it virtually prohibitive for the Commander, himself, to be encumbered with these details and at the same time accomplish his primary function of command. Apart from the fact that the mental and physical powers of one man are unequal to such a task, the actual control of all the fighting forces under his command necessitates his undivided attention and if he had to attend to all these other myriad details, he would be seriously impaired in his function of command. Actually, of course, he does not have enough minds, enough brains, enough hands, enough time, enough sleep, to do it all. He needs help. The Commander therefore must have a reasonable number of assistants to whom these details may be entrusted. And these assistants are his staff. His staff provides the means by which the Commander multiplies and maintains his mental capacity, his energies, his skills and his capabilities. Thus he is able to exercise ceaseless command of his forces; he can continuously and vigilantly reappraise the situation confronting him, and by constant foresight and initiative formulate sound decisions; issue timely plans and directives; and maintain adequate force and drive to execute his will. In summary, then, it is the purpose of a staff to furnish the necessary aid to the commander to permit him effectively to carry out his functions of command.

What, in general, are the functions of the Commander? A generally accepted definition of these functions is: "To authoritatively and effectively control and direct the forces assigned him in the successful accomplishment of his assigned missions".

The functions of the Commander include the functions of his staff.

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RESTRICTED**DIAGRAM ONE—**

**X = Functions of
Commander**

**Y = Functions of
Staff**

**Z = Incremental functions
Commander ALONE can
perform**

X = Y / Z

This diagram illustrates the relation of the Commander's and his Staff's functions. It is clear that the functions of the Commander (X in the formula), equals the functions of the staff (Y) plus the incremental functions (Z) which the Commander, himself, can alone perform.

If the Commander has no staff then he, himself, must perform all of the functions and we have X-Z. But where he does have a staff, and in higher command this is a "must", for reasons I have outlined, his functions equal the functions of his staff plus the incremental functions he alone can perform. These incremental functions include the making of the decision and the bearing of the full responsibility, for everything his forces do or fail to do. These latter functions he can never evade.

Let us now turn our attention to the "Y" functions of the Staff. I will not cover these in detail since Captain Dingfelder will do so later. But I would like to review them briefly.

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DIAGRAM TWO—

“FUNCTIONS OF A STAFF

Provide information

Anticipatory planning

Recommendations for Plans and Orders

Preparation of directives

Supervise and evaluate”

The first function is to “Provide Information”. This all important function provides the basis for the Sound Military Decision. This necessary information on own and enemy forces and other pertinent tangible and intangible matters must be constantly obtained from every fruitful source, evaluated, and analyzed to insure that it is sufficiently detailed and accurate to permit the Commander to make sound strategic, tactical and logistic plans. This information must be disseminated to all friendly commands who need to know, both vertically and horizontally in the over-all military organization as well as completely within the staff, itself, to insure coordinated staff action.

The second point is “Anticipatory Planning”. This function entails making a continuous study of the situation and preparing plans for possible future contingencies in the fields of strategy, tactics and logistics.

The third function is to make recommendations for plans and orders, based upon the mission of the Commander and also on directives received from higher authority.

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The fourth function is to translate the Commander's decisions into directives. This function includes the transmission of such directives accurately, surely, securely, and in timely fashion to the properly designated recipients.

The fifth function is supervising and evaluating. To the extent authorized by the Commander, certain designated members of the staff supervise the execution of plans and orders, and take such action as necessary, always in the name of the Commander, to insure the Commander's intentions are carried out. The evaluating function concerns itself with results of planned action in order to apply lessons learned to future planning.

The next matters I would like to discuss are "what makes a good staff organization" and "what makes a staff function properly— i. e., what makes it 'tick' "?

I must emphasize here that these fundamentals which I will discuss are not dogmas nor all inclusive. They are guides which the Commander and his staff should thoughtfully consider and use, as appropriate, in organizing and operating their staffs and their staff sub-divisions, respectively.

First let us consider the Static Fundamentals of Staff Organization, shown on the next diagram.

DIAGRAM THREE—

"STATIC FUNDAMENTALS OF STAFF ORGANIZATION

Unity of Command

Span of Control

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Homogeneous Assignment

Delegation of Authority”

These fundamentals I term “static” because they are fixed, “standing-still” and are the frame work or matrix in which the staff functions dynamically, as a living organism. They are the skeleton which does not become dynamic until galvanized into action by the muscles of the dynamic fundamentals which I will discuss shortly.

The first of these static fundamentals is “Unity of Command”. This fundamental provides that the ultimate control of all action in any organization, and this includes a staff, must be vested in one individual at each organizational level. One “Commander” is located at each controlling level. In the staff organizational diagrams which I shall show you presently, it will be clear that this fundamental is observed in good U. S. Staff organizations. Each individual in the staff must know his job and must know “to whom he reports” and “who reports to him”. In this way unity of staff action can be best assured.

Secondly, consider the fundamental of span of control. This fundamental defines the optimum number of individuals to be controlled from a central source and the considerations associated therewith. The Commander should not control too many individuals nor too few directly. The Commander also must consider the space and time magnitudes which separate him from those immediately subordinate individuals over whom he exercises direct control. Current theory has it that the number of subordinate individuals directly controlled by the Commander should not be less than 3 nor more than 7. This bracket permits the average Commander

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to operate at peak efficiency. Those who claim that it is cheaper to have your families by the dozen may take exception to this, but on the other hand they may relegate the control of the twelve children to their wife and thus themselves avoid violating the fundamental requirement of organizational theory that the span of control be limited to three to seven. Under normal circumstances, space-time considerations have less significance in this age of airplane and rapid communications. But, as it will happen when it *couldn't* happen, the airplanes *can't* fly, and the rapid communications *won't* work, and the carrier pigeons are fog-bound. Then the time-space factors must either be acceptable or the Commander's organization will suffer. The Commander must assure himself that the span of control considerations of space and time are properly recognized and planned for.

The third static fundamental is "homogeneous assignment". Homogeneous is derived from the Greek "homos"—meaning "same" and "genos", meaning "race or kind". Homogeneous assignment then means the same kind of assignment. As applied to organizations this fundamental requires that units or individuals within an organization should be assigned to tasks which are of the same kind or related nature, taking advantage of each individual's training and natural aptitude. As examples: We would prefer to assign an outstanding language student of the enemy's tongue to an intelligence translation section rather than to an engineering specialist staff billet; or an electronics engineer to communications rather than to the Admiral's personal staff as aide. By the same token, the USW section would best be assigned to Plans and Operations, rather than to Logistics or Communications; and Aerology to Operations or Intelligence rather than to Administration, Logistics or Communications.

The fourth static fundamental may be called "Delegation of Authority". Although the responsibility of the Commander cannot be delegated, the authority of the Commander can be delegated

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by himself if he so desires. In a staff, no staff officer, acting in that capacity alone, has any authority to command whatsoever. The Commander, on the other hand, can and does authorize certain members of his staff to act for him on pre-determined matters and within strict policy limits which he has established. All staff officers thus designated act in the name of the Commander and the responsibility of the Commander for their actions rests on the Commander's shoulders. However, the Commander can certainly take action within his own command against officers who let him down.

Let us pass on now from the static fundamentals of a staff organization, and consider what makes the staff tick. That is the "dynamic fundamentals of staff functioning". I would like to point these out now and discuss them briefly on the next diagram:

DIAGRAM FOUR—

**"DYNAMIC FUNDAMENTALS OF
STAFF ORGANIZATION**

Selflessness — loyalty

Honesty

Knowledge

Judgment

Human Relations

Cooperation

Coordination

Collaboration

Timing

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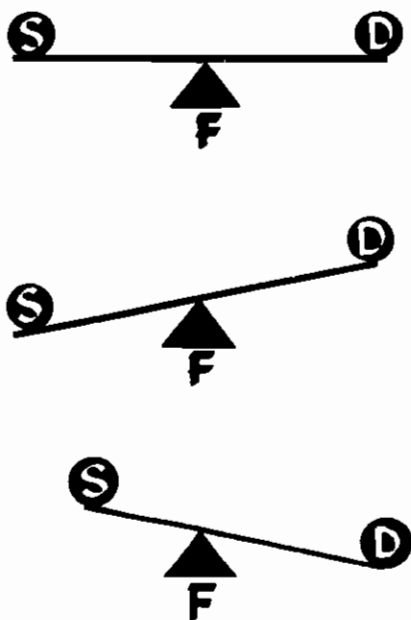
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Selflessness of staff officers is an essential part of the dynamic fundamentals of good staff functioning. Every staff officer must submerge his own desires; he must work for the good of the Commander, and once a decision is reached, support the Commander's decision as if it were his own. The staff officer is completely *honest* and *frank* with his Commander and his associates and he thus avoids *misunderstanding* which make for *poor* dynamic functioning. A staff officer realizes in order to contribute most to the success of his Commander he must have well founded knowledge and his judgment must be sound, and he does everything in his power to increase his knowledge and improve his judgment. In his human relations he is tactful, forbearing, he is friendly, he is willing to accept responsibility when given to him and strives to work in harmony with others. He looks upon his staff officers as brothers and his Commander as the "old man", his father. He further gains the respect of his associates by insuring that his motives in all matters are beyond question. The watch words of a dynamic functioning staff are cooperation, coordination and collaboration. It is the job of the Chief of Staff to see to it that the actions implied by these watch words are carried out. And it is also the job of the Chief of Staff, as well as his other staff officers, to make every effort to insure that timing in integrated staff work is accomplished.

The functions of the Staff, (F); the static fundamentals of staff organization, (S); and the dynamic fundamentals of staff functioning, (D), can be portrayed graphically by means of diagram five which will show their relationships from an interesting point of view.

DIAGRAM FIVE—



The see-saw shown here rests on (F), the functions. When the Static and Dynamic fundamentals are in balance, then we have the best combination. The organization is sound, it functions smoothly, and the Commander is free to most effectively do his job. He is relieved of routine and regular duties, in large part, and can devote his full attention to performing the tasks for which he is best fitted in special and creative fields .

On the other hand, if the static fundamentals have been ignored and the staff functions by virtue of over-emphasis on dynamic fundamentals a dangerous condition arises because once the source of the dynamic impulse—the personal element, the touch,—is gone, the organization ceases to function effectively. It would be better,

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if we have to emphasize one over the other set of fundamentals, to organize on sound static fundamental lines at the expense of lightening emphasis on the dynamic—for who can tell when the leader may fall, and in what dire circumstances this might occur. It is then that a well organized and well trained staff can help carry the heavy load falling on the leader's successor and enable him to carry out his task with minimum reliance on supplying the dynamic influence withdrawn by the former leader's untimely departure.

The term "leader", as used herein, does not refer to the Commander alone but to a "leader" within the staff, itself, as well.

It behooves us all to neglect none of these three important considerations in organizing and operating our staffs. Let us make sure our staffs perform their designated functions, that they are organized on sound static fundamental lines and that their smooth functioning is assured by proper application of the dynamic fundamentals of staff functioning.. Let us avoid overemphasizing either the dynamic or static fundamentals. In particular, care should be taken to avoid placing too great reliance on the personal touch, the one man show.

At this point, I would like to go back to my previous general definition of the functions of the Commander, which, you will recall, was "to authoritatively and effectively control and direct the force assigned him in the successful accomplishment of his assigned missions".

These general functions may be specifically sub-divided into two categories as shown on the next diagram.

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DIAGRAM SIX—

FUNCTIONS OF COMMAND

- A. Operational (Leading directly to accomplishment of Mission)**
- B. Supporting (Permitting success of A.)**

Category A is operational functions, leading directly to the accomplishment of the missions assigned, and category B is the supporting functions which permit the accomplishment of Category A functions.

These latter supporting functions include physically building up and maintaining the quantity of men and material of the command to a point of adequate quantitative combat readiness; preparation of forces (men and material) to a point of adequate qualitative combat readiness, and maintenance of that condition; service for the human and material requirements of the command, and maintenance of the good condition of the personnel and material of the command.

Nowadays, many Naval staffs are organized to assist the Commander in carrying out his functions along the following functional lines.

Let us now see how staffs so organized effectively assist the Commander in exercising the specific functions of command as set forth in categories A and B.

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DIAGRAM SEVEN—

**ONE METHOD OF EXECUTING
THE PROCESSES OF COMMAND**

1. ADMINISTRATION
2. INTELLIGENCE
3. OPERATIONS AND PLANS
4. LOGISTICS
5. COMMUNICATIONS (THE MEANS BY WHICH
A COMMANDER EXERCISES HIS COMMAND).

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For example, the operational functions leading directly to the accomplishment of the mission tie directly to Administration (personnel—quantity, records, control and morale); Intelligence (for information of enemy forces and other tangible and intangible elements bearing directly and indirectly on the achievement of the Commander's mission); Operations, for organization, plans, operations, training of personnel and intelligence on own forces; Communications, for providing rapid means for direction of his forces in accordance with the Commander's will and advising other interested commands of what they need to know in order to assist in the overall achievement of the friendly objective.

In the supporting functions all five functional divisions tie in directly in providing for adequate quantitative combat readiness of men and material, likewise the preparation of forces for adequate qualitative combat readiness ties in directly with these five divisions, particularly with Operations in respect to training of personnel; and

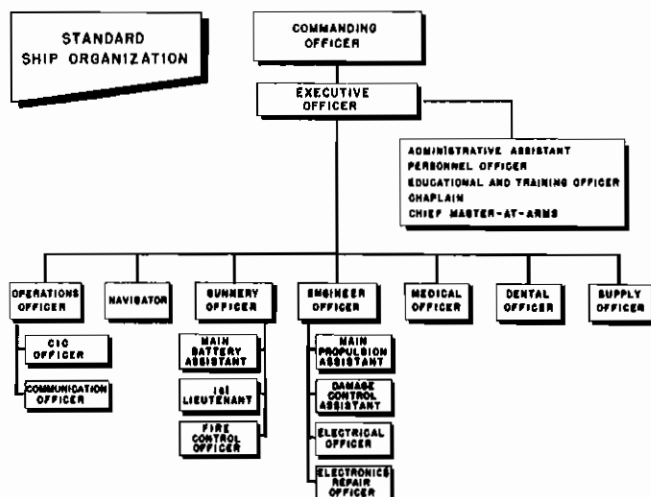
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logistics, and communications, in respect to material. The maintenance of the good condition of the personnel and materiel of the command, tie-in to a greater or lesser degree with all five divisions.

Now I will discuss some typical U. S. Naval Staffs.

First, let us consider a standard ship's organization.

FIGURE 2 — STANDARD SHIP'S ORGANIZATION



In a standard ship's organization given here we have taken it for a ship which has greater emphasis placed on its offensive power, either gunnery or aircraft, hence we have the Gunnery Officer as a head of department rather than the deck officer. You will notice that Administration, in the functional diagram on the left, is handled at the Executive Officer's level in large part. Intelligence can be said to fall in under the Operations Officer as well as the Navigator who gives the Captain intelligence of the ship's position. The Operations and Plans functions are largely performed

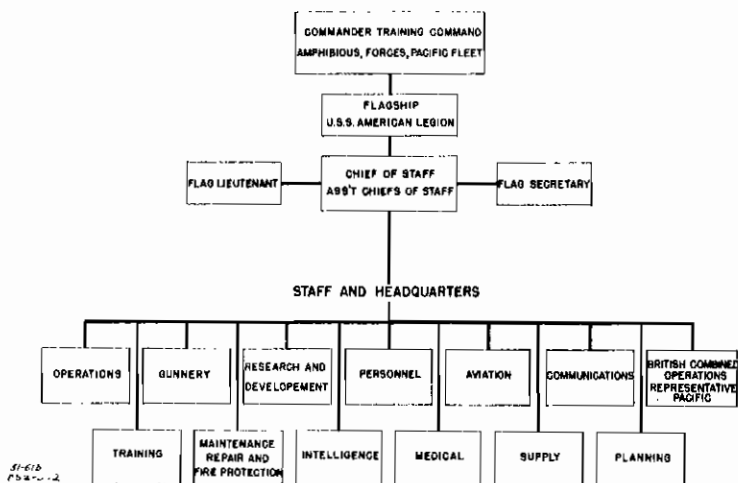
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by the Operations Officer. From the point of view of logistics we have a tie-in, under the Executive Officer, of the Supply Officer, the Dental Officer, the Medical Officer, the Engineer Officer, the Gunnery Officer, even the Navigator and the Operations Officer. These Heads of Departments are all tied in under this general classification of logistics as agents of the Executive Officer who sees that their logistical requirements are coordinated. Communications, the means by which the Commander exercises his command, in this case, are tied in under the Operations Officer.

Figure 3 shows the organization of the Commander Amphibious Training Forces, Pacific Fleet.

**FIGURE 3—COMMANDER TRAINING COMMAND,
AMPHIBIOUS FORCES, PACIFIC FLEET**

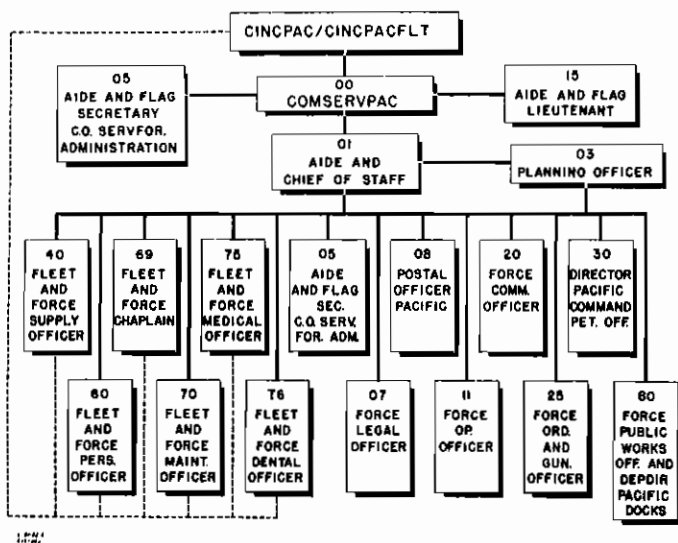


A glance at this chart makes us feel that perhaps the static fundamental of span of control has been violated, but actually the traffic volume is low between the Chief of Staff and certain of these

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staff divisions. Thus the Commander, through his Chief of Staff, can afford to have more than 7 people reporting to him for direct control. In this case it is obvious that the operations would tie-in under operations, gunnery under operations, training under the operational function, research and development is of an administrative nature tying in across the board with operations for evaluation; maintenance, repair and fire protection would come under the category of logistics, and so on; personnel under administration, intelligence under the intelligence function, and across the line I think we can see that everything here is catered to by the functional layout.

FIGURE 4 — COMSERVPAC



I would like now to consider ComServPac organization which on first glance again appears to be somewhat out of line with the fundamental of span of control but notice the dotted lines for the left hand six brackets used to indicate that these staff officers have additional duty as agents of CinCPac. They are wearing two caps,

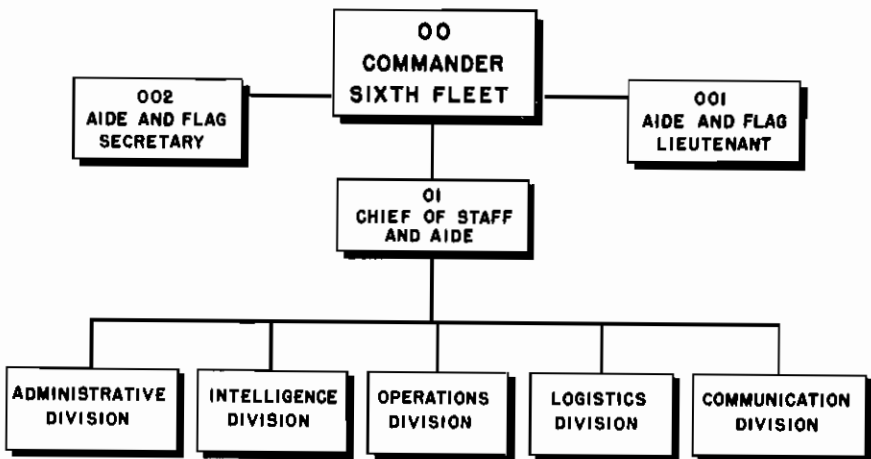
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and this affords an important liaison tie-in between ComServPac and CinPac. As in the case of the Figure 4 the volume of traffic and direct exercise of control over these 14 odd coordinating staff levels is low in some cases and hence the number of people directly and continuously controlled is lower than the chart indicates. Furthermore ComServPac personally being of a dynamic character can well afford to control this many individuals. This demonstrates that the static fundamentals are not dogmas and are violated in special circumstances.

The next figure is ComSixthFleet, a typical operational staff organization, where we find the direct tie-in across the board with no other explanation necessary, except that I would like to comment on the operational staff's design a little bit later.

FIGURE 5 — COMMANDER SIXTH FLEET



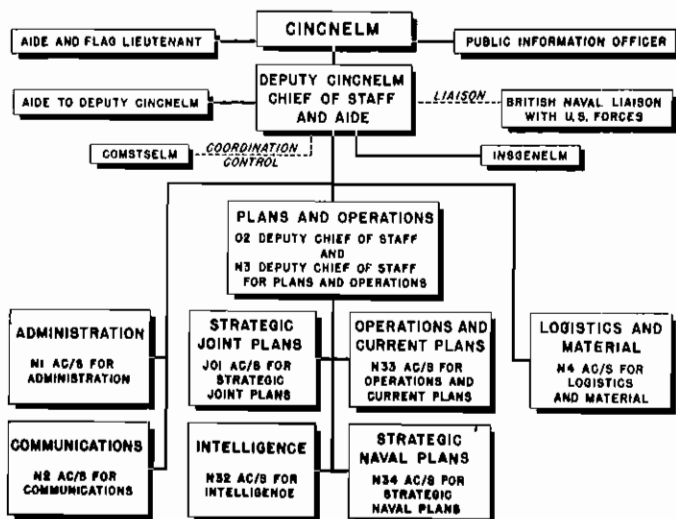
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The next figure is an organization of CinCNelm staff, you will notice here that every one of the functional items is catered

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to. Administration and Communications tie-in directly. Under Plans and Operations we will find Intelligence, lower left. Logistics, across the board, is a separate division.

FIGURE 6 — CINCNELM



The Naval Staffs which we have discussed follow no fixed organizational pattern. Each is organized with the mission and the major tasks of the command in mind. In general, however, there emerges a rough pattern for Operational (seagoing) staffs and for Administrative (often times shorebased) staffs. The seagoing, Operational staffs, particularly in time of war, find it impracticable to perform many of their normal administrative functions in the personnel and logistic fields due to radio silence and other restrictions. Moreover, the limited space aboard a single ship for housing the staff makes it necessary to restrict the size of the staff. In Operations, the shift of emphasis from one area to another, perhaps thousands of miles apart, makes it mandatory that Naval Operational Staffs be organized to handle varied and

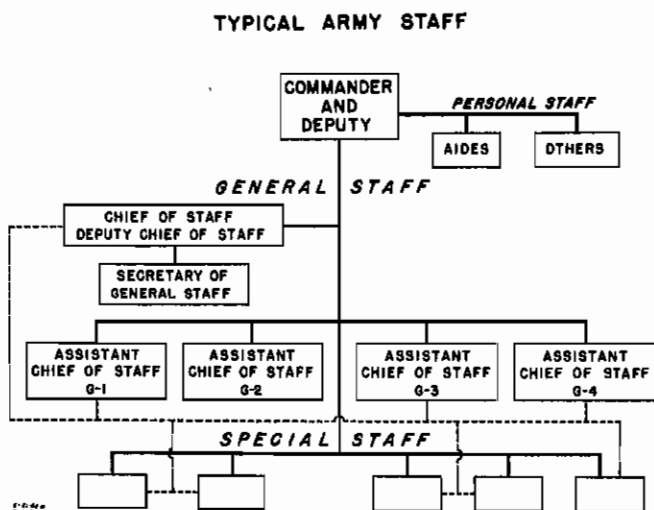
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complicated problems on the spot. Operational staffs must therefore contain many talents in few men. The Administrative details though handled in large part for short periods of time by the relatively self-contained units, the ships, which carry their own specialists and special gear, still must be supplied with personnel and logistic support. These Administrative requirements are met by rear echelons staffed to perform these essential supporting functions. ComServPac, ComPhibTraPac—are examples of these administrative types of staff whereas ComSixthFleet is an example of the seagoing, Operational staff.

Now let us take a look at the typical Army staff.

FIGURE 7—



I would like to point out here the characteristic of Army staffs which Navy staffs do not always have. Up at the level of the Commander we find his personal staff, his aides and others. Others frequently include Inspector Generals, Public Relations Of-

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fficers, and so forth. To be absolutely correct this chart should show the Chief of Staff immediately under the Commander where the arrow now points. The Chief of Staff directly commands the general staff. The term "general" staff as used here means the staff that concerns itself with a "general" *overall* picture with which the Commander is faced. In the Air Force the "general" staff is called the "coordinating" staff. The general or coordinating staff here is shown by G one, two, three, four, the colored rectangles—Administration, Intelligence, Operations and Material, respectively. Then down below the General Staff we find the Special Staff. The Special Staff is comprised of officers who are specialists in their own field, the medical officers, artillery officers, transportation officers, signal officers, and so forth. In the Army Staff organization, the special staff section heads report directly to the Commander and not to the Chief of Staff, and in some staff organizations, special staff officers also, by wearing another cap, directly command the technical troops which are assigned them. For example, the artillery special staff officer could also, and frequently does, directly command all artillery not assigned to other organic elements in the Commander's organization. The same is true oftentimes of the signal officer. I would like to note here that the difference between the Navy concept and the Army concept in respect to the communications or signals agencies is that in the Navy concept we have the communications up at this general staff level (as it is called in the Army), whereas in the Army it is in special staff level.

The Army Staffs are, in general, organized along the same pattern. This characteristic is due, I believe, to the relative fixity of requirements for staff assistance to the Commander in each organic element of the Army. The Battalion, the Regiment, the Division, the Corps, the Army are of such organic similitude that a standard staff for the Commander at their respective levels is

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natural. Besides, this method facilitates academic instruction in preparing officers for staff duties and permits staff officers to be shifted readily from one staff to another with no lost motion in breaking in.

FIGURE 8—

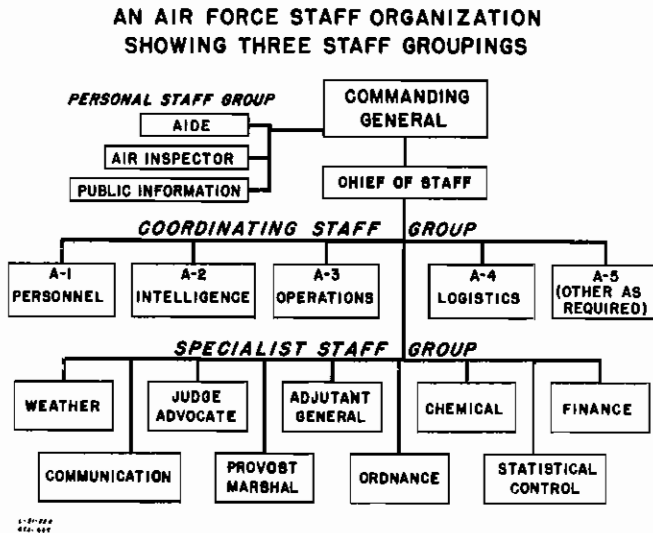


Figure 8 shows an organization of an Air Force staff. Here we find the personal staff, which we found before in the Army staff. At the level of the Army General Staff we find what is known in the Air Force as the coordinating staff whose groups consist of A-one through four and others as required. And then here below, we find the specialists staff group. Note here that communications falls in the specialists staff group. At times, the Air Force includes communications under operations. In fact, the Air Force staff organization is a little more flexible in its contour and pattern than the Army because it is more like the Navy in its requirements for molding its own task forces for particular situations.

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The Army's semi-fixed staff pattern, as I have previously pointed out, is due, in large part, to the relative fixity of requirements for staff assistance to the Commander due to the similitude of organization between Armies, Corps, Regiments, Battalions, Divisions, and so forth.

Now none of these staff structures are identical. And the reason for this is that the missions and special circumstances and organizational concepts of the Commander are not all the same. Naval staffs have this variable pattern as I have pointed out, due to space, time and operational considerations and variable forces and missions. The Air Force has more or less the same flexibility in their staff organizations, whereas the Army has a somewhat more rigid staff organizational pattern.

Naval Staff organizational tendencies appear to be to separate administration and operational functions, for reasons I have previously mentioned, and to follow the Army General Staff pattern, somewhat. You will notice the N-one, two, three, four and five coming out more and more in staff organizations of the Navy.

Some characteristics of the Navy staff include specialists being placed in what the Air Force calls the coordinating staff rather than down in the special staff. And communications in Navy staff organization usually is a separate division at the Assistant Chief of Staff level.

In conclusion, I believe that ample bibliography exists for any intelligent and thoughtful Naval officer to gain sufficient basic knowledge to become a good staff officer. But the basic knowledge is insufficient. Practice and diligent application of the fundamentals is mandatory in order for the staff officer to become well rounded and valuable. It is hoped that this lecture will serve to stimulate motivation in this direction for those who have not been staff of-

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fficers before and will stimulate constructive criticism from all of-
fficers in this auditorium who have borne with me through my talk.