



215/
OFFICERS' ADVANCED TRAINING SCHOOL

PURVIS: COMMAND AND GROUP HEADQUARTERS

References: A.P. 1301 Chapter 1 Pages 15 - 16
E.R. & A.C.I. Chapter 11, Appendix 1.

Introduction

1. The organization, as set out below, is a typical one for air forces operating under one or more of the following conditions :-
 - (a) In defence of the United Kingdom with air forces operating from the U.K.
 - (b) In defence of possessions overseas and of Imperial communications, with air forces operating in one or more of the existing overseas commands.
 - (c) As air forces detached from either the United Kingdom or one or more of the existing overseas commands and operating from allied territory or in parts of the Empire not normally occupied by air forces in times of peace.

Responsibilities of a Commander

2. Broadly speaking, a commander has two main responsibilities:-
 - (a) The planning and direction of the operations of his force, and
 - (b) The administration and organisation of his force to enable it to undertake these operations in the most efficient manner possible.
3. To do this, he must keep in close touch with his units. He will also need advice and help from the administrative and special services, and from officers with specialist knowledge.

Structure of a Headquarters' Staff

4. The structure and establishment of a staff should be designed to assist the Commander in undertaking these responsibilities.
5. Officers on the Staff Headquarters' establishment are divided into the following categories :-
 - (a) Policy Staff Officers
 - (b) Staffs of the Services
 - (c) Advisers
 - (d) Officers filling personal or local administrative appointments.

The Policy Staff

6. Division into two Branches. The Policy Staff is divided into two branches :-
 - (a) The Air Branch, which deals with operations, and
 - (b) The Administrative Branch, which sees to the general organisation and upkeep of the force.

/Contd....

Control of the Air Branch

7. (a) The S.A.S.O. is the head of the Air Branch and must represent the views of the branch as a whole. He controls the work of all sections of the Air Branch and is the principal staff officer to whom the Commander turns for advice about the preparation and execution of operational plans.

(b) The A.O.A. or S.O.A. is responsible that the administrative branch and the administrative services work closely together so as to meet operational requirements. He controls administrative policy and advises the Commander and S.A.S.O. when administrative resources cannot meet operational needs.

Co-ordination of Staff Work

8. The Commander is responsible for co-ordination of all staff work, but usually delegates part, or all, of this responsibility to the S.A.S.O., who is therefore in close touch with the work of the administrative branch, and is the Commander's right-hand man. This does not mean functions of A.O.A., who, as a principal staff officer, is directly responsible to the Commander for administration.

Organisation of the Air Branch

9. Duties of the Air Branch These are given in paragraphs 1 to 4 of Chapter IV of the War Manual Part II. Note the additional responsibilities of the air branch when air forces operate in the primary role. All these duties are allotted between four sections of the Air Branch:

- (a) The plans section
- (b) The operations section
- (c) The intelligence section
- (d) The training section.

10. The Plans Section This Section studies the strategical and tactical situation, prepares appreciations and plans of campaign. It obtains information about our own and enemy forces from the operations and intelligence sections, and co-operates with the operations section and the administrative branch to ensure that operational plans are practicable. Execution of a Commander's plans is the responsibility of the operations section and administrative branch.

11. The Operations Section Orders and instructions to give effect to the operational plans are issued by the operations section. The operations staff study the day-to-day situation, particularly with regard to our own forces, and distribute the information they gather to all who require it. Detailed operational planning is usually done by the operations section at Group Headquarters.

12. The Intelligence Section The Air Intelligence Branch of the Air Machinery takes the necessary measures in advance in peace time to acquire all the information that is likely to be required by Air Officers Commanding in the field and on the outbreak of war to ensure that they are supplied with all the relevant information as it becomes available.

13. Under the control of the Senior Air Staff Officer the head of the intelligence section at commands will be responsible for the collection, and distribution of all information about the enemy forces and their activities in the theatre of operations. Speed and accuracy are important features of intelligence work.

/Contd....

14. The Training Section Whether this Section is large or small, its duties will generally include:-

- (a) Studying enemy tactics and training our own personnel in new tactics to counteract them or to meet new operational requirements.
- (b) The general direction of unit and inter-unit training.
- (c) The allotment of training areas, bombing and air-firing ranges.
- (d) The policy governing allotment of vacancies in schools and courses.
- (e) Preparation of training schemes.
- (f) Maintenance of uniformity in training.

The plans and operations sections must keep in close touch with training.

Organisation of the Administrative Branch

15. Duties of the Administrative Branch These are given in para. 5 of Chapter V of the War Manual, Part II. They are administrative planning, organisation of the force and control of the administrative services, so as to meet the personal and material requirements of the force. In Command Headquarters, this work is done in three sections, at Group Headquarters, in Sections (b) and (c).

- (a) Administrative plans section.
- (b) Organisation section.
- (c) Personnel section.

16. The Administrative Plans Section This Section prepares plans to meet the operational requirements. It co-operates closely with the plans section of the air branch and must keep the A.O.C. informed of any new commitments or operational plans. It is concerned with establishments in conjunction with other sections, and formulates policy in regard to formation of new units, equipment, re-equipment and works programmes. This section is also concerned with the policy and plans for provision of personnel and material to meet air branch requirements for station defence.

17. The Organisation Section This section is concerned mainly with policy matters relating to :-

- (a) Accommodation, including lay-out of stations, requisitioning of land and buildings.
- (b) Establishment of personnel and M.F.
- (c) Movements of personnel and material, the opening up of new stations and the formation of new units.

18. It also issues orders and instructions to certain of the administrative services to give effect to Administrative plans, and studies the day-to-day situation in the Command or formation from an administrative point of view.

/Contd.,....

19. The Personnel Section This section is responsible for Policy and direction concerning :-

- (a) Supply and posting of R.A.F. and U.A.I.R. personnel, honours and awards and recommendations for promotion.
- (b) Discipline and ceremonial.
- (c) Medical arrangements.
- (d) Burials.
- (e) Custody and disposal of prisoners of war.
- (f) Pay accounting.
- (g) Spiritual and physical welfare.
- (h) Enlisted labour, if operating overseas.

20. The execution of many of these duties is done by one or other of the chaplains, graves, medical provost and accounting services which are controlled by the personnel section.

21. The S.P.S.O. has to maintain a close liaison with the other sections in regard to training of personnel, replacement of casualties and personnel for new units.

Staffs of the Services

22. The services provide units with personnel and material to meet operational requirements. Executive control of the services is centred largely at Command Headquarters. The head of a service receives general policy direction from the policy staff but exercises executive control of his own organisation. He is adviser to the Commander and policy staff on technical matters affecting his service. The services, according to their functions and the technical nature of their work are divided between the air branch, organization and personnel sections.

Representatives of Services in Lower Formations

23. Representatives of certain services are appointed to Group Headquarters :-

- (a) To keep Group Commander informed about the technical state of units and to advise him on matters in his own particular service which may influence operations or training.
- (b) To keep the head of his service in touch with any special problems or requirements in the group.
- (c) To exercise limited control of their service within the group, if authorized by Command.

Specialised Advisers

24. These may be divided into two categories :-

- (a) Officers who can advise the Commander on the employment of arms having specialised characteristics, i.e. Army Contingents, R.A.F. Regiment or Balloons.
- (b) Officers or civilians with special qualifications, such as Financial, Legal and Scientific advisers.

/Contd...

Miscellaneous Appointments

25. These may include:-

Personal Assistants
Cypher Officers
Camp Commandant

Amendments to this Precis: