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Sales store in the combat area, by Lt Col
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SALES STORE IN THE COMBAT AREA

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY

BY

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1946-47

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THE SALES STORE IN THE COMBAT ZONE

I. GENERAL

A. Problem--Under existing regulations, commissioned personnel of the armed forces of the United States, are required to purchase all items of individual clothing and equipment. The problem is to provide a suitable and practical method for the resale or issuing of these items to commissioned personnel in the combat zone.

B. Definition of a Sales Store--A government owned and operated agency, established in the combat zone for the purpose of making available for resale to authorized personnel, such items of uniform, accessories, and equipment as they may be authorized or entitled to purchase, within the limits or whatever control or rationing system as may be established.

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It is concluded that the present method of providing commissioned personnel with an opportunity to replenish their individual clothing and equipment needs, in the combat zone is unsatisfactory.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the current directive that all members of the United States Army will wear the same uniform. It is recommended:

A. That officers be authorized, as an habitual procedure to obtain all items of individual clothing and equipment, through normal government issue channels, in the same manner as the enlisted soldier, without payment, or

B. That the above Paragraph A, be adopted in conjunction with establishment of a simplified accounting procedure, to enable the officer to either pay cash or have the amount entered upon his

pay voucher, and to enable the supply agency to account for the transaction with the minimum of paper work.

C. It is further recommended that continued consideration be given to the development of an efficient and effective Sales Store for field use, with particular emphasis being placed upon the development of accurate and comprehensive replacement and tariff factors. This store to be used for the resale of such items as future Uniform Regulations and customs of dress for commissioned personnel may require.

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Tab D

A

II. OPERATION

Sales stores were operated under the provisions of various War Department Circulars, the most recent of which is Number 285, dated 8 July 1944. The general policy is stated substantially as follows:

a. Supply

1. Local procurement.--Army Exchanges and Sales Stores will purchase all items locally whenever possible and practicable. In view of the transportation space involved in shipping these items overseas, full use will be made of items locally when such items are acceptable from the buyers standpoint, and preference.

2. Items furnished by the Quartermaster General.--Items deemed necessary for exchanges and sales stores overseas, which are not obtainable locally will ordinarily be supplied by the Quartermaster General from stocks in the United States. The items which the Quartermaster General will be required to procure for sales agencies located outside of the continental United States are contained Par. 2 of Circular 285. These items are mostly items of officer uniform equipment such as blouses, caps, trousers, shirts, overcoats, service ribbons, insignia of rank, shoes, jackets, and certain items of a strictly feminine nature to be sold solely to Nurses, WAC's, American Red Cross and Civilian employees.

To maintain these stocks, each commander of an overseas theater, department or separate base, has to furnish the Quartermaster General a quarterly statement giving certain information. The information, follows this general form; items to be stocked; if a certain brand or brands is desired, the percentage of each brand will be indicated; consumption factors, together with recommendations for an adjustment of the factor if necessary; quantities desired for resale during the quarter; items procured locally; strength of the command, including full information of personnel other than Army, which may be authorized to make purchases, and list of items which this personnel may purchase. This statement will be prepared and forwarded in time to reach the Quartermaster General at least ninety (90) days in advance of the beginning of the new quarter of the calendar year to which the statement applies.

During World War II, a major portion of the uniform stocks and accessories offered for sale in the European Theater of Operations, were manufactured in England--shoes, socks, pajamas, bath robes, trousers, blouses, caps, etc. as well as many other items. (in fact quite a bit of issue equipment was obtained from this source.) These items were practically the same as those procurable in the United States and in the case of certain items, notably shoes and wool socks, appeared to be a better value for the money.

b. Organization for Sales

The sales organization for the field is provided by the Quartermaster Sales Company, Mobile T/O & E 10-157. This unit has a strength of 4 Officers and 174 Enlisted Men, organized into three platoons, of four sections each, and has the following sales capacity:

	<u>Sales per Day</u>
<u>Unit</u>	<u>Customers</u>
Section	10,000
Platoon	40,000
Company	120,000

The company is mounted in the following transportation:

Truck, $2\frac{1}{2}$ T, cargo	13
Truck, $3/4$ T, wpns car	1
Truck, $1/4$ T	4
Trlr, 1-T	13

III. HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

a. World War I--Due to the fact that there does not seem to be any written history of activities of resale agency for items of the type under discussion, for this war, it was decided that interviews with individuals, who had participated in the operations overseas during World War I would provide the necessary material.

It was found that the situation had not changed or improved appreciably during the interim between the two wars. One officer, who served in a staff capacity during the war and was usually working in what was termed the Communication Zone of World War II, stated that initially there were Post Exchanges, which carried their usual line of merchandise and also handled the items now stocked by the Sales Store. Later in the war the Quartermaster set up installations, which were practically identical with our present type sales store. These stores were located in the large cities such as Paris, Brest, Tours, and after the war was over, in Koblenz and Andernach. They offered the normal line of insignia, shirts, shoes, and material for the tailoring of uniforms. In some cases the services of civilian tailors were available in conjunction with the sales store.

Another officer stated that he was a "front line soldier", and brought all of his equipment from the United States, and had no knowledge of any Sales Stores. Both officers stated that it was normal for officers to utilize issue clothing when the exigencies of the situation warranted such action--in all cases paying for the items as is done under present practices.

b. World War II--Like many other facilities, the Sales Store appears to have been developed to fill a need. My information on its evolution in world War II, is obtained various memoranda, letters, circulars, etc, which originated in the Office of The Quartermaster and various section of the Headquarters SOS, European Theater of Operations.

Correspondence from the Supply Division, SOS ETO, to the Operations Division, Plans and Training Branch, in February 1943,

indicates that a survey compiled about that time, was not too favourable towards the then current versions of Quartermaster Sales Company T/O & E 10-157, as evidenced by the following extract "The T/O & E 10-157, WD 1 April 1942, covers a sales store and lists highly specialized equipment, to include special trucks with drop sides, built-in counters, etc., which are not apt to be found in this theater. This T/O also lists 72 clerks to make 120,000 sales per day. This shows an average of 1,666 sales per company per eight(8) hours day, 204 per clerk per hour, or $3\frac{1}{2}$ per minute. While the T/O reads 'Capacity sales per day', it is not believed that this is what is meant. This T/O is undoubtedly intended for operation in the continental United States. Wide experience with Mobile units in this theater shows that continual improvisation is necessary.

"In this theater no special equipment is available, units are widely scattered, and it is therefore necessary to take advantage of the facilities at hand. Experience proves that an average of 500 sales per truck under field conditions, existing in the UK using 2 to 4 clerks is to be expected. In addition, it is necessary to sell out of the back of the trucks, and to be continually shifting stock inside the truck and from the supply truck to the sales truck. Experience shows that troops located in isolated areas and not frequently served with sales stores, will average one sale per man per visit of the Mobile unit, that is, if capacity of the unit is 4,500 sales per day, and there are 9,000 troops present, and the unit stays there for 2 days, it can be assumed that every man will make a purchase.

"In field operations such as exist in the UK, the functions of the Company Headquarters are greatly reduced, inasmuch as the company is seldom assembled in one unit except when transporting from one area to another. The practice has been to billet and ration the sales personnel with the troops being served at the moment, and to stay in the field for long periods of time."¹

¹ From a report "The necessary QM Troops Units under Plan "B" dated 5 Feb 43, Hq. SOS ETO.

It appears that following this survey, the sales store as we know it, was evolved. This utilized standard issue trucks of either 4x4 or 6x6 design, and made its sales out of the back of the trucks or set up in vacant buildings. The following is a summary of capabilities of this type company based on experience in the UK--under static conditions, one company was sufficient to operate three sales stores, one platoon operating each store. Normally, a sales store was capable of making 1,200 sales per day, averaging \$10,000 per sales day. When augmented by civilian personnel, this company could operate six such stores. Under mobile conditions, one company could meet the requirements of the officers of a force totalling approximately 600,000, since sales to many of the officers were made by the static stores in the rear areas. When a company was used to operate the distribution system for the Army Exchange System between the bulk QM Depot and the unit exchanges, one company was able to handle AES items for approximately 1,800,000 troops.

Information on the early planning for employment of sales stores on the continent of Europe, made a breakdown of one store to each of four armies and one to the Communications Zone. Further information reveals that the Sales Company was originally planned on the basis of performing its primary mission of supplementing unit Exchanges and gratuitous issue of PX items, by selling a small assortment of basic PX articles and officers clothing and accessories. The rated capacity of the company on the basis of selling PX items only was as follows:

(a) Sales expectancy from 120,000 troops per day--UK experience under ideal static conditions.

(b) Sales expectancy from 65,000 troops per week--mobile conditions.

Early in troop planning a basic assumption was made. One-half of the total force was to receive PX rations on a gratuitous basis and the remaining troops were to be furnished with these articles within unit exchanges, supplemented by Army Exchange Service-Post Exchanges. Officer's clothing and accessories were to be

provided by the sales also, on a sales store basis.

The Theater was allotted only 6 2/3 companies. Consequently, these early assumptions could not possibly hold, under actual conditions, if all troops were to be furnished these services.

Before the troops left for the Continent, the QM Service had allotted a proportionate share of Sales Companies to the ABS, which was responsible for operating PX's and sent the remaining companies to the Continent with the primary mission of providing sales store facilities to officers, nurses, and WAC personnel, and to a limited number of Allied Nations personnel working with the US forces. These changes were made because these 6 2/3 companies alone could not have satisfied troop requirements.

The First United States Army after action report makes the following statement about the operation of sales stores: "The Army QM Sales Store will be located in the vicinity of the Class II & IV depot and will be operated by the Sales Company. It will make sales of individual clothing to officers, ARC personnel, war correspondents, and personnel authorized to make purchases by the Commanding General. Further, it will make sales of PX items and general sales items to organizational sales officers. It will not operate PX's nor will it make any individual sales of articles other than clothing. In each clothing sale, the purchaser will certify that the items purchased are for his or her personal use. Platoons of this company will from time to time conduct mobile sales store service in the locations to be designated by the Army Quartermaster. A schedule of sales to organizations exchange officers will be made by the sales store company commander, and allowances of such items will also be fixed by them. In the event that a sales company should not be available to the depot, group sales of clothing to officers, will be made by a sales officer to be designated by the Army QM, from the personnel of the depot supply company. In such case, separate stocks of clothing will not be kept segregated for this purpose, but the clothing will be issued from depot stocks on tally-out to the purchaser, after he has paid the purchase price therefor."

The following items are representative of those sold during the "Beach Head" period of the First Army sales store operation, during the period 14 July to 1 August, 1944, in France.

	<u>Pairs</u>		<u>Each</u>
Combat boots	3,961	Handkerchiefs	16,917
Drawers	7,418	Shirts, wool	1,043
Socks	12,960	Undershirts	5,384
Fatigues	1,462	Bath towels	3,929
Trousers	1,708		

This large volume may be accounted for to some extent by the fact that all troops who came ashore into the beachhead for considerable length of time were wearing impregnated clothing, and were only allowed to bring the barest essentials in socks and underclothing. Shoes had also been treated prior to leaving England, in addition, both shoes and clothing probably suffered from immersion or exposure to salt water and air, during and after the landings.

The sales of insignia of rank and branch of service during the period may of some interest:

CWO	7	AG	1	Medical	12
WOJG	40	B/G Aide	2	Med Adm	12
2d Lt	118	Armd	7	MP	16
1st Lt	565	Chaplain	5	Ordnance	9
Captain	389	CAC	23	QM	41
Major	183	Engr.	194	Sig. Corps	45
Lt Col	80	Inf.	184	Tank Destr	131
Gen'l	5	JAG	9		

The total for sales for all types of items for this period were \$106,919.05.

From 1 August to the end of the war the First Army QM Sales Store followed the same plan of operation, which had been started during the early days of the campaign, in that the static store was located at the Army Class II & IV depot and the two mobile units (designated #1 and #2) went forward to service the elements of the army in the field.

The sales store facilities were adequately furnished throughout the campaign by employing civilian personnel in the stores. Personnel of the sales store company were utilized mostly in a supervisory capacity, while the civilians were the sales clerks.

The ability of the sales store to operate under mobile conditions is directly related to the troop-dispersion factor. During the campaign our troops were dispersed over a very large area, which sometimes made timely service very difficult.

c. Allied Nations

1. British Army--The British officer received his uniforms and accessories through two mediums:

(a) All items of "General Issue", e.g. battle-dress, underclothing, shoes, socks, etc. were furnished him on an issue basis and were replaced item for item on an exchange basis. In other words, when something wore out or became unserviceable, he just took it to the supply sergeant and exchanged it for a serviceable item. No payment for issue was involved in this transaction.

(b) The Ordnance Branch of the British Army (which in this case corresponds to QM) operated Officers Shops in the Theater of Operations--these were of two types. One a fixed or static store, usually found in centrally located communities, and the other a mobile unit, normally transported in one or more three ton trucks.

These stores contained ready-made items of officers uniform and accessories such as shirts, ties, shoes, insignia, caps, and various other items of a nature peculiar to officers needs and which would not be supplied through normal supply channels. These items were procured either locally or ordered from England.

The sale of such items was controlled through the use of a ration card, this was necessary due to the short supply and also to insure an even distribution. The officer paid cash for the purchases or took the necessary action to have the amount deducted from his pay.

2. Canadian Army--The Canadian officer, like the British officer, obtains his uniforms and accessories through two mediums:

(a) All items of "General Issue" are obtained

through normal supply channels, by drawing them from the Quartermaster of whatever unit they are assigned to at the time, this is usually handled at the Battalion level. There is a simple paper transaction, wherein the officer signs a form indicating that he has received the issue, this constitutes a sort of debit voucher, and is processed through normal channels and a deduction is made from the officers pay.

(b) Canadian officers avail themselves of the facilities of the nearest British Officers shop for those items which are not available through issue.



IV. DISCUSSION

As was stated at the outset, commissioned personnel of the armed forces under existing regulations are required to purchase all items of individual clothing and equipment, in the field as well as in garrison. It was to provide for this purchasing, that the present sales store was evolved.

Let us examine the sales store and see how it actually functioned. In this examination, I have drawn rather heavily on my experience and on the experiences of other officers, whom I talked with about the matter. My first visit to an overseas sales store was in Oran, North Africa, in late January, 1943. This store was of the earlier type in that it was a combined Army Exchange and Sales Store. In some respects, this combining of the two stores is a good plan, for this reason--the clothing section rarely if ever, had what was desired, the first time you tried to purchase an item, but was usually "expecting it in, any day". The Exchange items were made available on a weekly ration basis, which necessitated a weekly visit to the store. With the two stores in the same room, you could combine the weekly visit to the Exchange, with a check on the stocks in the clothing store.

This store is not actually a bonafide combat type sales store since it was in a stabilized location in a building, and employed civilian girls for clerks--although, I believe that the Sales Store Officer did get a Battle Star under a later ruling on combat areas.

Sales stores in the field, fall roughly into two types or categories--those in the forward areas, and those in the rear areas.

a. Forward areas--These stores were handled in a variety of ways. Probably the most prevalent, were the following types:

(1) The Quartermaster Mobile Sales Store unit, which visited the the combat divisions, and usually set up shop somewhere near Division Rear or some other easily located and stabilized installation. Commissioned personnel and other authorized personnel or their representative could then visit the store and make their selections.

(2) The Division Quartermaster store, which sold items of government issue only, e.g. socks, underwear, shirts, trousers, boots, etc. This was a field expedient and was not really a sales store per se.

I had several experiences with the sales store, both static and mobile, either personally or through an agent--and as you have probably guessed by now, they were not always satisfactory experiences. This was due to several reasons, some of which I will enumerate.

The Mobile Sales Store was supposed to carry a fairly complete assortment of commissioned personnel requirements. However, it was my observation, and that of many of my fellow officers, that the store seldom had the items that were really needed. I speak particularly of insignia of rank for anyone below the grade of full Colonel, or insignia of branch, other than those for IG, JAG, AG, Cml C, Aides, etc. The clothing available, and in particular, shirts, trousers, and boots, usually fell into the two proverbial army sizes--too large or too small.

b. Rear Areas--These stores were located in the large cities, were usually well stocked, with a complete selection of sizes in clothing, and of other items. The chief difficulty from the standpoint of the individual in the forward areas--was how to get back to patronize the store. This in some cases actually involved two problems--transportation, and/or convincing the Local uniform enforcing agencies (to use a polite name) that the reason that you were out of uniform, was because that was all that you owned, and that the reason you were in the town was to purchase proper uniform.

There were various restrictions in effect in the stores, some amusing--amusing now, at least--for instance an officer had to present his promotion order in order to purchase insignia of rank, then he was restricted to a total of six (6), and initially it wasn't clear in the minds of the clerks, as to whether this meant six pieces or six pair--consequently a violent discussion

inevitably ensued if an officer encountered one of the clerks who "hadn't gotten the word" that the six meant six pair. The purchase of all items in the stores, was controlled from the fall of 1944, through the use of a rationing system. This became necessary to conserve stocks and also to insure an equitable distribution--and probably in later days may have prevented certain illegal practices on the part of some unscrupulous individuals. I had one experience with this ration card. The items were listed on the left of the card, rations of particular items were indicated by time periods to the right, by quarters if I recall correctly. On one occasion, I sent an officer to do my purchasing and since it was near the end of one of the periods--when the clerk marked out the items, which had been purchased--he just marked out the entire column, thus cancelling all items not purchased. It so happened that a pair of low cut shoes was in that column. At the time I had some shoes; however, they were subsequently lost and when I went to purchase a replacement pair, I had quite a time convincing the clerk, that I had not received my ration of shoes previously, inasmuch as they had been marked out on the card.

Finally, in considering the sales store, it should be realized that the uniform problems of the commissioned personnel in the forward areas, are not the same those of the officer in the rear areas. The needs of those in the forward areas are relatively simple and few in number, and are of the type that could be handled from the unit supply stocks, except insignia. It was found to be expedient and necessary to wear the same uniform as that of the enlisted soldier, when engaged in field operations.

In view of what has been said about the inability of the mobile store to meet the normal requirements of the customers, for sizes, of essential items, such as trousers, shirts, boots, etc., the officer usually had to resort to one of two field expedients. He could purchase the items from the sales store, accepting any size and trade them to the unit supply agency to obtain his proper size, or as was frequently the case--he just by-passed the sales store,

and either turned in his old clothing and drew new clothing, or if he had none to turn in, he just obtained an issue, from the unit supply agency. Since

In the Pacific, since there were no sales stores operated in the combat zone during the war, this latter procedure was authorized by the Theater Commander, it being the responsibility of the individual to deduct it from his pay.

However, this practice, if done to any great degree, is likely to upset the replacement factor for such items. Inasmuch, as the officer was not included when arriving at the factor.



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