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The Battle for Fox Green Beach by Dwight C. Shepler.

U.S. Navy

Jointness and the Impact of the War

By DAVID A. ARMSTRONG

As General Colin L. Powell noted two years ago in introducing the inaugural issue of *JFQ*, the experience of World War II provided a foundation for jointness. Operations during the war clearly and repeatedly demonstrated the advantages of jointness and the penalties for failing to achieve it. At war's end, the Joint Chiefs of Staff supported jointness in principle.[1] The progress of jointness was slow, however. A review of JCS action in creating a postwar system of unified commands suggests that the wartime experience left an ambiguous legacy for the development of jointness.

Unified command of U.S. forces in Europe began with the establishment in June 1942 of the European Theater of Operations, U.S. Army (ETOUSA), a joint command in which an Army officer exercised planning and operational control of assigned naval forces. Directed to cooperate with the British, ETOUSA commander Major General Dwight D. Eisenhower was, however, to maintain U.S. forces as "a separate and distinct component of the combined forces." With a task that called for Army leadership, the prospect of American participation in coalition operations led to early agreement by the War and Navy Departments to establish a joint command in Europe.[2]

Jointness was strongest in face of the enemy or when necessitated by coalition operations. But even in war, it fell prey to interservice rivalries and other concerns. In the Pacific, the lack of strong allied forces diminished coalition pressures to achieve unified command. Coupled with the special problems posed by the presence of General Douglas MacArthur, Army and Navy reluctance to trust their forces to the command of officers of another service led to separate theater commands. The Army promoted unity of

command by forces or functions while the Navy advocated achieving it geographically. While joint operations were routine in the Pacific, command of the entire theater had not been unified at the war's end.[3]

Dissatisfied by the separate command of Army and Navy forces in the Pacific, the Chief of Naval Operations, Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, called in 1946 for creating a single command for the entire Pacific less Japan, China, Korea, and the coastal areas of Central and South America. Based on Oahu and supported by a joint staff, the commander would "exercise unity of command" of all U.S. forces in the theater. The Army and Army Air Forces countered the Nimitz initiative with a proposal to organize command based on the assignment of forces. The heart of the problem lay in establishing an organization that centralized control of forces without impinging on what the services considered basic prerogatives in the command of their respective forces.[4]

With joint planners split along service lines, JCS deferred action for almost six months. Finally, the Army Chief of Staff, General of the Army Eisenhower, revived the issue with a paper outlining command arrangements worldwide. That proposal was greeted by one from the Navy, and subsequent staff deliberations were complicated when the question of control over strategic air forces was raised by General Carl A. Spaatz, the Commander of Army Air Forces. In December, having seen nine staff papers on unified command in less than three months, General Eisenhower sought a compromise. Admiral Nimitz was similarly inclined. Including provisions that dealt with problems posed by the requirements of Far East Command under General of the Army MacArthur and of strategic air forces, the plan that emerged established a worldwide system for the unified command of U.S. forces under JCS control.

Approved by the President on December 14, 1946, the "Outline Command Plan" was the first unified command plan, a basic document of the joint system. Publication of the plan did not, however, resolve the issue of the organization of unified commands. The debate over organizing by geographic area versus forces and functions was to surface repeatedly in the joint arena during the decades of the Cold War.[5]

As the Chairman observes in this issue, the lessons of World War II are boundless. In the medley of original contributions that make up this JFQ Forum, various aspects of that conflict are presented as tribute to the soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen who fought as a team to lay the foundations of joint and combined warfare. JFQ

NOTES

[1] See, for example, statements by Ernest J. King and Henry H. Arnold on the inside back cover of Joint Pub 1, *Joint Warfare of the U.S. Armed Forces* (Washington: National Defense University Press, 1991).

[2] Maurice Matloff and Edwin M. Snell, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1941–1942, United States Army in World War II* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1953), pp. 196–97. Subsequent developments are covered in Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943–1944, United States Army in World War II* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1959), pp. 102–05, 270–74.

[3] Louis Morton, *Strategy and Command: The First Two Years, United States Army in World War II* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1962), pp. 361–63; Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun* (New York: Vintage Books, 1985), pp. xiii–xv, 540–43; Matloff, *Strategic Planning, 1943–1944*, pp. 525–26, 536; Grace Person Hayes, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II, The War Against Japan* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982), pp. 93–96, 476–79, 563–66, 586–95.

[4] James F. Schnabel et al., *The Joint Chiefs of Staff and National Policy, 1945–1947* (Washington: Historical Division, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1979), pp. 171–77.

[5] Ibid., pp. 177–86. The original commands were the Far East, Pacific, Alaskan, Northeast, Atlantic Fleet, Caribbean, and European. JCS also recognized the Strategic Air Command (SAC), an Army Air Forces command made up of units normally based in the United States and under a commander responsible to JCS. SAC was the first example of what later were known as specified commands. Control of the Bonin and the Marianas Islands was split with MacArthur controlling forces and local facilities, but having no responsibility for military or civil government or naval administration and logistics. The Cold War debate over unified and specified commands will be treated in *The History of the Unified Command Plan, 1946–1993* (Washington: Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint History Office, February 1995).

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