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THE NEED FOR THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BRANCH IN THE U. S. ARMY

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by

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The question has been raised as to the continuing need for a Military Intelligence Branch in the US Army of the future. The validity of the question has been examined, and the overall value and importance of the military intelligence specialization to the Army has been reviewed. The increasing need for a viable and professional military intelligence specialty, the growing recognition of this need, and the possible results of not having such a professional branch are discussed. It has been determined that the successful accomplishment of the US Army's mission would be impaired if there were not a Military Intelligence Branch. A further need for increased knowledge and communication between the commander and his intelligence specialist has been duly recognized. There is a continuing need for the Military Intelligence Branch in the US Army of the future.

THE NEED FOR THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BRANCH IN THE US ARMY

Voices of doubt have raised the question as to the need for a career Military Intelligence Branch in the US Army of the future. These voices do not specifically concern themselves with the mechanics of how the military intelligence functions would be accomplished without the professionally trained and dedicated specialist. However, they do point vigorously to the fact that the Army functioned victoriously for 186 years prior to the establishment of the Military Intelligence Branch in 1962.

They hasten to point out the specific failures of intelligence over the years — years during which intelligence operations were conducted, for the most part, by non-career oriented or non-professionally trained intelligence specialists. They fail to examine specific defeats wherein victory might have been won if the commander had had accurate and timely intelligence on hand. Sun Tzu, in his The Art of War writes: "Hence the saying: If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself, but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle."[1]

It is interesting, and gratifying, to note that most of our more successful military commanders of today, like General George Washington of the Revolutionary War, recognize the criticality of intelligence information to mission success. "General Washington's appreciation of intelligence is set forth in a letter he wrote to Colonel Elias Dayton, then his intelligence chief in New Jersey, dated 26 July 1777. In it he stated: "The necessity of procuring good In-

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[1]Sun Tzu, The Art of War, p. 51.

telligence is apparent & need not be further urged — ..."[2] In 1965, then President Johnson wrote, "Our intelligence must be unquestionably the best in the world. You have my full support in our effort to make it so."[3] He further wrote, "The interests of national defense and security require sustained effort on the part of the intelligence community to support me and other officials having policy and command responsibilities. ... Efficient management and direction of the complex activities which make up the total foreign intelligence effort are essential to meet day-to-day national requirements, and to ensure the development and application of advanced means for the collection, processing, analysis, estimating and reporting of intelligence information."[4]

To further document examples of the growing importance attached to the need for sound intelligence and the professionalism required to attain it, the following extracts are submitted for consideration.

> Brigadier General Williams, in Army magazine, writes: "Until we accept the fact that the G2 is just as vital as the G3 (in peace or war) and that the commander must know both jobs, we will never solve our many other intelligence problems."[5]

Similarly, in an interview by Armed Forces Journal with Lieutenant General John Norton of the Combat Development Command on his

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[2] Presidents of the United States on Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, p. 2.

[3] Ibid., p. 25.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Robert W. Williams, Commanders and Intelligence--The Growing Gap, Army Magazine, Dec. 72, p. 23.

views of the Army's problems and opportunities, and specifically about Army intelligence, he stated that in the order of priorities tactical intelligence development was one of the things that had to come "...before airmobility and the attack helicopter. ..."[6] He further stated: " ... If you took 5 or 10% of our planned expenditures on firepower and mobility for the next 10 years and put it on intelligence, this might be the most important thing you could do for national security and peace. We've tried every other way to deter - maybe the most direct route to deterrence is through a major improvement in our intelligence system."[7]

In view of these and many other historical and current reflections on the need for and value of sound intelligence systems which can only be accomplished by a corps of highly trained and dedicated intelligence specialists, why then is there a voice of dissent today? The specific reasons appear to be non-identifiable in a voice of unity. The reasons are probably as varied as the backgrounds and motivations of the persons holding them. Many, I feel certain, are the result of isolated, yet individually important, incidents related to an individual and his personal association with intelligence activities. Many senior officers of the Army have not been exposed to the professionalism of the young military intelligence officer of today, but rather relates back to the time when perhaps an ill-qualified non-professional officer detailed to intelligence duties, performed only half-heartedly or in a mediocre manner at best.

As a former Infantry officer, detailed to intelligence duties in 1955, transferred to the Military Intelligence Reserve in 1956, and with continuous intelligence or intelligence related assignments since, I have encountered many attitudes, and reasons for those attitudes, toward a professionally dedicated Military Intelligence

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[6]John Norton, "Conliferation," Smaller Divisions, Better Intelligence...and Hard Choices, Armed Forces Journal, Aug. 71, p. 35.

[7]Ibid.

Branch. There is no doubt that today the majority of these attitudes are positive to the need for a Military Intelligence Branch. A brief examination of the history of military intelligence, its current progress, and its future potential will solidify that position.

THE FORMATIVE YEARS

On 1 July 1972, the Military Intelligence Branch celebrated its tenth anniversary of formal existence with appropriate recognition afforded it by the Chief of Staff, US Army and other distinguished officials. During that ten year period, the accomplishments of the Branch as a viable and essential part of the Army structure have been marked by significant milestones of achievement — and by the more widely publicized failures of intelligence efforts.

Before we examine the Branch today, it would be appropriate to look at the intelligence systems of the past. As pointed out earlier, the need for and employment of intelligence by the United States is documented in the Revolutionary War days, and played a vital role in the settlement of our country even before that. The very history of intelligence gathering can be attributed to a much earlier society. Documented in the Bible is one such instance: "And Moses sent them to spy out the land of Canaan, and said unto them, Get you up this way southward, and go up into the mountain: And see the land, what it is, and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; ..."[8]

Does not this sound familar - perhaps a "Blue Goose" task from Operation Jayhawk at the Command and General Staff College? Or perhaps its reminiscent of a need that man exercises every day of his

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[8]Holy Bible, Scofield Reference Edition, Numbers 13:17.18, p. 183.

life — the need to gather information, perform his own analysis, convert it into a plan of action, and then execute his decision. Thus we see that the art of intelligence in itself is not some isolated mystery clouded in a cloak of misty secrecy as some would have us believe, but rather it is an everyday ongoing process as vital to the well-being of the individual as it is to the well-being and security of nations. The intelligence process is as restrictive in revelation as that individual — or nation — deems necessary to accomplish set goals. The professional career oriented military intelligence officer can greatly assist our nation in attaining and insuring its well-being. The untrained and non-disciplined individual will continue to think, rationalize and act as an individual, and not as part of a well organized team.

Throughout history, victory has gone to the leader who successfully employed an intelligence system in one form or another. Wellington was a strong advocate of the use of intelligence who most of the time functioned as his own intelligence officer, Napoleon and Robert E. Lee suffered crucial defeats because of lapses of intelligence, Hannibal used it in his campaigns crossing the Alps, and Churchill of England and the Nazi regime of Hitler Germany employed it extensively with the resulting use or failure to use it correctly changing the course of history. The US failed to recognize it and suffered the Pearl Harbor disaster — the Russians have long considered it their most effective weapon, internally as well as externally.

The US intelligence system has come a long way since one of our more renowned cabinet members once made the outraged declaration that "Gentlemen don't read other people's mail."[9] This sort of naivete was as detrimental to our security then as it is today in the attitude of some of our military and civilian leaders that we can long

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[9]Sanche de Gramont, The Secret War, 1962, p. 40.

endure without an effective and professional intelligence system. The cover to Strategic Intelligence For American World Policy by Sherman Kent has the statement: "For the first time Intelligence is lifted out of the adolescent, cloak-and-dagger category to be defined and clarified as a key factor in the conduct of a mature world policy. Sherman Kent shows how intelligence activity and its consequences go far beyond military considerations and are as essential to keep the peace as they are to win the war."[10] Irving Heymont, in his book Combat Intelligence In Modern Warfare relates: "The decisive factor in warfare has often been combat intelligence. It has been of major influence in every battle, campaign, and war in history, affecting the outcome of struggles between squads and armies. Yet, no other single factor has been so consistently ignored and neglected by unsuccessful commanders. Nothing else has been so universally used and emphasized by successful commanders.,"[11] and "A military commander without an effective combat intelligence system is as handicapped as a blindfolded boxing champion."[12] Heymont further writes, "As important as combat intelligence has been in the past it is even more important now that nuclear weapons are available."[13]

Similar quotes, evidence of concern by enlightened military commanders and civilian leaders, could in themselves fill a book. Those used herein were selected at random, and are not intended to alone convey the seriousness of the impact of relegation of intelli-

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[10]Sherman Kent, Strategic Intelligence For American World Policy, 1966, p. cover.

[11]Irving Heymont, Combat Intelligence in Modern Warfare, 1960, p. 1.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid.

gence to a back seat role as has so often happened, particularly after periods of protracted armed conflict. With reduced military forces and a seemingly trend toward relaxed international tensions and antagonisms by the world powers, it is more critically important than ever before that our nation have all possible information available with which to plan its national security. Thus once again the need for professional intelligence personnel is seen as vitally important to accomplish this task.

Relating to recent personal observations of intelligence management and operations in the Republic of Vietnam as a battalion commander responsible for providing intelligence support to US and Allied forces throughout the theater of operations, I saw much to concern me. In many instances, I saw unknowledgeable and inexperienced — and at times disinterested — combat arms officers thrust into key intelligence positions and expected to perform crystal ball miracles. For the most part, these men were good solid combat officers who, if they had had adequate training and experience, would have excelled in their duties. Without the training or some degree of prior experience in the management of intelligence resources, these normally competent officers could offer only an adequate accomplishment of mission, and intelligence collection resources went begging.

By the same token, I observed intelligence officers in the same or equivalent level positions who also performed only adequately at best, although most were highly proficient when involved with a particular portion of an intelligence system. This may be attributed to the fact that most military intelligence officers, prior to Vietnam, were indeed specialists in a particular phase of intelligence — counter-intelligence, imagery interpretation, area intelligence, etc. — with only peripheral knowledge of other aspects of intelligence systems. This is not the fault of any of these officers — they were the product of the pre-Vietnam intelli-

gence environment predicated on the then requirements of the Army and its concept of employment of intelligence personnel and other resources. Few of the younger military intelligence officers had served in or with combat arms units, while the older and more experienced were needed to fill intelligence positions at higher levels.

However, to be a successful military intelligence officer today, one must be at least knowledgeable if not experienced of the many and varied intelligence resources available, and more importantly the best management techniques of employing them to their maximum effectiveness. The G2 or S2 who doesn't understand or recognize how to gain the most efficiency of air reconnaissance coverage utilizing the OV-1D aerial reconnaissance aircraft and its sophisticated sensor systems, integrating these collection systems with other equally sophisticated ground and sensor detection systems, employing cryptologic collection and security systems, using the geographic knowledge and cultural resources native to the local inhabitants through experienced agent handlers, and many other such factors, cannot hope to give his commander the accurate and timely information he so vitally needs. If he doesn't effectively employ his security resources, and hasn't insured that the members of his unit, small or large, have been thoroughly trained in intelligence collection and processing and security, then his commander may never have a need for his G2's ability to employ his other resources — his mission will have failed before it has started. The non-professional intelligence officer cannot hope to be competent as an intelligence officer in a combat situation, with all the inherent factors thereof, and also be professionally competent in his own branch of the Army.

Perhaps the most important factor of effective intelligence is communication — clear, concise, timely and definitive, but not to the point where it becomes laboriously cumbersome and an operational hindrance. The intelligence officer must be able to communicate — and in a language understood by all — this is the language of the

supported combat arms element. This is a two way street, and it is as vitally important that the G2 and the commander understand one another, as it is for the G3 and the commander to talk the same language. There can only be one language. This, in the past, has been one of the shortcomings of the professional intelligence officer, and is one reason why many commanders preferred a combat arms officer as their G2 or S2. Colonel Elias Townsend in Risks: The Key to Combat Intelligence wrote: "Of the primary military fields, that is, personnel, intelligence, operations, and logistics, intelligence has demonstrated the least understanding of command, its problems, the responsibilities inherent therein, and the relationship that should exist between command and intelligence."[14] He continues with, "Technically and mechanically our combat intelligence is superb. Our intelligence people have demonstrated the ability to hold their own with anybody in the world. The difficulties referred to arise from improper orientation of effort and mistaken ideas of what can and should be accomplished.,"[15] and "This situation between command and intelligence is of tremendous importance today. It appears to be the consensus of authorities who have studied the subject that intelligence — combat intelligence — is the real key to sucess of tactical forces in battle in this atomic era. ..."[16]

The compelling need then, in insuring the effectiveness of our intelligence programs, is to insure the professionalism of our military intelligence personnel — the military intelligence officer himself — in the specific intricacies of our intelligence resources, and to insure the ease and effectiveness of communication be-

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[14] Elias C. Townsend, RISKS: The Key To Combat Intelligence, 1955, p. 1.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

tween the commander, the operations personnel, and the intelligence personnel.

NOW AND TOMORROW

The following words of then Major General Alva R. Fitch, Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Army, generally portray the birth of what is now the Military Intelligence Branch.

> "Military Intelligence, whose history parallels that of our Nation from earliest days, took a significant step forward on 27 June when Secretary of the Army Stahr approved General Decker's recommendation that an Intelligence and Security Branch be established in the Army. Inception of the new basic branch, the first since 1950 when the Military Police and Transportation Branches were added, will provide an attraction for high potential, high quality officers toward a career in intelligence and security."[17]

> "What was the reasoning behind the decision to create this new basic branch?
> Intelligence has assumed a greatly increased stature at both the national and military levels. At the same time, however, the shortage of intelligence and security officers to fill vital Army requirements was reaching the critical point."[18]

> "Intelligence has always been an essential element of Army operations during war as well as during so-called periods of peace. Despite its vital role and the varied fields of activity offered, intelligence has failed to attract sufficient career-minded officers primarily because no basic branch existed to provide the personalized career control possible in a formally established branch."[19]

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[17]Alva R. Fitch, Intelligence and Security — The Army's Newest Basic Branch, Army Information Digest, Aug. 62, p. 2.
[18]Ibid, p. 3.
[19]Ibid., p. 4.

During these ten years of existence, the Branch has undergone many of the growing pains that I'm sure have been experienced by other branches during their formative years. In addition, because of the ever increasing attention to the intelligence needs of our country, the Branch strength and direction has ebbed and flowed with the tides of committee investigations of intelligence activities and effectiveness, Blue Ribbon panel reviews and recommendations, study groups such as those conducted by the Haines Board and the Norris Board resulting in recommendations significantly affecting the Branch, and most recently by the presidential directed intelligence reorganizations and the establishment of an Assistant Secretary of Defense (Intelligence). While some of our more senior intelligence officers viewed these changes with, perhaps skepticism, and a minority forecast the "doom" of the Military Intelligence Branch, one cannot but feel that there had to be a cause before the effect. Establishment of the newly created Defense Investigative Service, as an example, is viewed with optimism by the Branch, and will serve as an assignment opportunity whereby the Military Intelligence officer can gain further experience with which to better perform his combat or non-combat intelligence duties in fulfillment of Army requirements.

During the height of the Vietnam conflict, the Military Intelligence Branch intensified its efforts to place its officers in key combat intelligence positions at all levels. In general, the Military Intelligence officer performed his duties with distinction and as a result, senior commanders at brigade and division level today are actively seeking Military Intelligence Branch officers as their S2s and G2s, and in some cases as other staff officers.

General Fitch's article on the establishment of the Army Intelligence and Security Branch in Army Information Digest of August 1962 makes the statement, "The requirement continues, of course, for com-

bat intelligence personnel."[20] The Military Intelligence Branch personnel management staff of 1972, of which I am a member, would perhaps view this statement as lacking emphasis in the environment of today. On the contrary, the emphasis is on combat intelligence as evidenced by the fact that of the existing thirteen Army division G2 positions, Military Intelligence officers currently occupy twelve of them. A substantial and growing number of brigade and battalion S2 positions are now filled by Military Intelligence officers, and many division commanders are directing fill of these positions by Branch officers.

The Regular Army lieutenant of the Branch, enroute to his combat arms detail duty for one year, is now normally Branch qualified as a combat intelligence officer prior to beginning that detail. Branch policy actively supports the young detailee remaining in non-intelligence and intelligence positions within the combat arms for the duration of his normal tour in a particular area in order that he can gain the most experience possible in the combat arms. It is felt that this can only better qualify him for more critical combat intelligence positions later, and insure his voice of communication with his combat arms contemporaries.

At the same time, the Branch is not neglecting its requirements for qualified officers in the other functional fields of intelligence — cryptology, strategic, and counter-intelligence/HUMINT. Careful attention to current and projected intelligence personnel requirements together with professional development objectives serve the Army and the Branch officer in meeting common goals of professionalism in performance and results.

The newly developed and soon to be implemented Officer Personnel Management System (OPMS) for the Military Intelligence officer is designed to produce the most professional intelligence officer the Army has yet had. The increasing emphasis on warrant officer

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[20] Fitch, Army Information Digest, Aug. 62, p. 3.

fill in the purely specialist duties, such as interrogator, provides more opportunities for the commissioned officer to develop his intelligence resource management skills to better prepare him to assume any military intelligence role in the future.

The pathway to the top for the Military Intelligence officer of the future is infinitely more brighter than it has been in the past. He belongs to a Branch, the youngest and fastest developing of the combat-combat support arms, yet now the fifth largest branch of the Army. The Branch quota for the Command and General Staff College remain high, and the Senior Service College selections for 1973-74 included eleven Military Intelligence officers, a significant increase over past years and hopefully a portrayal of the future. Promotions have been comparable to the Army average, especially when one considers that the Branch career development patterns have been in operation for only ten years. One major obstacle yet to be overcome is to increase the chances for the Military Intelligence officer to attain the stars of the general officer. Increased allocation of requirements at the Department of Army staff and other high departmental and joint level assignments will help in this objective, and again aid in producing a more professional intelligence officer capable of performing duty as a well grounded Army officer. The quality of performance by the younger officer, the dedication and professionalism, and the incentives and desires exist as never before — the Military Intelligence Branch is one of demanding professionalism, not a haven for the poor performer — the future of the career Military Intelligence officer is optimistically bright.

History has shown us, quite vividly, that career intelligence is vitally needed to provide the professional intelligence so critically needed for the security of our nation in time of peace. It has also provided the proof that now, more than ever, the career and professionally oriented and trained Military Intelligence officer must be present in order to make the most effective use of the ever increasing and sophisticated intelligence resources now available to the combat commander for the fulfillment of his mission.

Again to quote Sun Tzu from The Art of War: "What is called 'foreknowledge' cannot be elicited from spirits, nor from gods, nor by analogy with past events, nor from calculations. It must be obtained from men who know the enemy situation."[21] The men who know the enemy situation, and who can accurately advise the commander on a timely basis, are the men who know how to effectively employ all available intelligence resources, and then properly evaluate the product of those resources.

The Military Intelligence Branch of today and the future is and can provide these men. No other branch of the Army— or other element for that matter — is in a position to produce and manage the professionalism required. The combat arms officer detailed to a tour with intelligence may be effective only for that tour and for that specific duty, and in order to maintain his own branch proficiency, he will avoid repeat intelligence assignments. Stabilization trends of today will tend to negate the effectiveness of an officer detailed to too many varied duties out of and not related to his basic branch or skills. The Military Intelligence Branch officer will perform professionally in repeated intelligence assignments bringing with him skill and experience. As the logistician, the signalman, the commander are in their respective fields, he is the professional in intelligence. It is critically essential that this professionalism not be lost, but that our commanders and leaders demand its proficiency, its advancement, and its full support.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a continuing, recognizable, and critical need for a Military Intelligence Branch in the US Army of today and the future.

It is also evident that, as the military intelligence officer must continually sharpen his professional knowledge and competency

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[21]Sun Tzu, The Art of War (Samuel B. Griffith), 1963, p. 145.

insuring his proficiency in keeping up with the ever developing sophistication of intelligence systems and processes, the commanders of the Army must be afforded the knowledge and training as to the management of these professionals. He must be able to insure their total integration and contribution to his team, or he will have caused an irreparable short-circuit in his march to success. General Norton recently stated, "A good commander puts his intelligence as the first order of business. The S-2 or G-2 has got to come first."[22] In order for the potential commander to understand the necessity for this priority, and to implement it, he must first receive adequate training and orientation along these lines. This should be accomplished at all levels of military schooling through the Command and General Staff College level, or by attendance at the Combat Intelligence Officer's course at Fort Huachuca. In this way the commander's first priority of operational accomplishment — intelligence — would be served by his own general knowledge and communication with his Military Intelligence Branch specialist.

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[22] Norton, Armed Forces Journal, Aug. 71, p. 35.

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