WAR DEPARTMENT

WAR DEPARTMENT GENERAL STAFF

WAR PLANS DIVISION

WASHINGTON

December 5, 1940

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL GEROW:

Subject: Development of Mechanization and Armored Units in the U. S. Army.

1. The subject presented.

Outline of subject with particular reference to the attitude of the War Plans Division.

1. Fact bearing upon the subject.
2. In 1928, for a period of three months, a mechanized unit consisting primarily of portee tanks was organized at Camp Meade, Maryland. The force was disbanded for lack of funds. There is no indication of War Plans Division attitude relating to this force.
3. In 1930 a test mechanized force, including nine arms and services, was organized at Camp Eustis, Virginia. It operated for about one year, at which time a new policy was adopted. There is no record of War Plans Division attitude.
4. In 1931 a definite mechanization program was adopted. It provided that “every part of the Army will adopt mechanization and motorization as far as practicable and desirable.” There is no record of War Plans Division attitude.
5. In 1933 the approved policy for mechanization and motorization proved for the mechanization of:
6. Cavalry:
7. One brigade of two regiments.
8. Seven separate armored car troops for use with three Regular and four National Guard divisions.
9. One scout car platoon for each of thirteen Regular Army horsed regiments.
10. Infantry:
11. To fully equip one regiment with light tanks and one with medium tanks.
12. To fully equip seven companies with light tanks for use with Regular Army divisions.

There is no record of the War Plans Division attitude.

1. In 1938 the policy was changed to apply to certain infantry and cavalry units to the extent necessary to enable these arms better to carry out their prescribed tactical functions. The policy was not to be construed as excluding further development of other mechanized materiel needed as an organic part of larger mechanized units. Under this policy the 7th Cavalry Brigade (mecz) and the Infantry Tank Units continued their development. There is no record of the War Plans Division attitude.
2. On May 31, 1940, General Strong, War Plans Division, signed a memorandum for the Chief of Staff in which he recommended that responsibility for the control and direction of the development of mechanization be centralized in a single Branch, to be created for this purpose. G-3 concurred in principle with this memorandum but stated that it was preparing a memorandum of its own on this subject. G-4 did not concur, on the ground that it would be an admission that the Chief of Staff cannot coordinate the efforts of existing Chief of Arms. Because of the two non-concurrences, the War Plans Division memorandum was not submitted to the Chief of Staff.
3. The War Plans Division concurrent in G-3 memorandum for the Chief of Staff, which recommended revision of current mechanization policies, including a considerable increase in mechanized units. The Chief of Staff approved the memorandum on June 7, 1940. The revision was accomplished by conferences held under the supervision of the assistant Chief of Staff, G-3. The principal roles were taken by recommendations submitted to the Chief of Staff provided for the formation of two armored divisions under a field force commander, and other items necessary to the organization and training of such a force. War Plan Division agreed with the organization proposed use of the 7th Cavalry Brigade, which was to be used in the expansion, and which War Plans Division desired to have retained intact in readiness for immediate possible use. The G-3 memorandum was approved by the Chief of Staff on July 1, 1940, with certain amendments, and resulted in the publication of letter, TAG, July 10, 1940, subject: “Organization of the Armored Force.” A copy of this letter is attached hereto, pertinent portions being underlined in RED. It will be noted that this letter did not provide for a new Army, a separate Tank or Armored Force.
4. The next and latest event in this series is the present G-3 memorandum recommending the establishment of a separate Arm.

J. W. Anderson

Incl. Colonel, G. S. C.