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TO WHAT EXTENT CAN DECENTRALIZATION OF AUTHORITY
BE EFFECTED IN THE BATTLE GROUP

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Roster NR 155

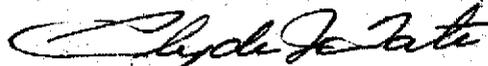
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PREFACE

17 September 1958

The point of view expressed in this paper is that of the author not necessarily that of the United States Army Infantry School or the United States Army.



CLYDE J. TATE
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this monograph is to discuss a subject that is of the utmost importance to every commander, officer and top non commissioned officer of the United States Army; specifically, To What Extent Can Decentralization of Authority Be Effected In The Battle Group.

What is decentralization? The American College Encyclopedic Dictionary defines decentralization as "to undo the centralization of power." This is a very clear definition and from the military standpoint it is a key definition. Now we ask ourselves, "what is authority?" Authority is defined as the right to determine, adjudicate, or otherwise settle issues or disputes; the right to control and command.

The ultimate goal of all commanders is the attainment of combat effectiveness for his unit. Therefore, the scope of this monograph will only discuss those areas which contribute the greatest to the attainment of this goal, which are, Span of Control, Military Justice, Training, (Basic Combat and Post Cycle) and Combat Operations. This subject will be approached from the standpoint of the authority now exercised by commanders, company and battle group and the sufficiency of this authority.

The advent of Atomic Weapons has caused a great change in tactics, organization, and doctrine of the army. Greater dispersion, flexibility and firepower has made this goal of the commander, to say the least, extremely difficult, and the final test is combat operations.

The questions that are derived from this subject are:
Does the commander have sufficient authority to accomplish his mission and attain his goal of combat effectiveness?
Should the battle group commander give more authority to the company commanders? Should the platoon leader become a commander? All of these questions will be answered by the author expressing his point of view in the four major subjects previously indicated (Span of Control, Military Justice, Training and Combat Operations).

The author would like at this time to refer to the following Annexes that will assist the reader.

Annex A - A letter from General McAullaife to his subordinate commanders in Europe.

Annex B - A letter from Colonel W. B. Rossen, Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

DISCUSSION

Command is defined as the right to control, influence, and order. It also is defined as , to order or direct with authority. In the present day battle group there are only two echelons of command: that exercised by the battle group commander over his company commanders, and the authority they exercise over their subordinate-leaders. This has a definite purpose; to limit the span of control.

The span of control is established so that any one person is working for one boss and, therefore, only receiving instructions from that person. The span of control also limits the number of subordinates a person will have direct responsibility for. This span of control must be appreciated by any person who is to become a successful leader. Failure to follow, and utilize the span of control will only result in inefficient leaders, men and organizations.

The span of control has been violated by many commanders only to cause themselves additional work, a degree of inefficiency, and a feeling that they were doing too much work themselves. The main danger caused by the violation of the span of control is confusion in subordinates. It is realized that a person can only pay attention to a limited number of things at one time. If a battle group commander gives orders to the platoon leaders of a company, and continues to do so, then where is the company commander? He is lost in the chain of command. Even though the company commander is responsible, he will soon lose control of the company, because the battle group commander

has violated the span of control and the chain of command. It is believed that three persons is the minimum number a commander should control, otherwise he will be doing the work himself. The proper number of persons in the span of control will be determined by several factors. The first and most important one is the experience and training of the supervisor (commander) and the personality of the men being supervised.

The author was a member of a tactical unit in Germany from August 1954 until July 1956, and saw many violations of the span of control. The unit of which the author was a member had a change of company commanders and although the new commander was an aggressive, forceful, and capable leader it was apparent that he failed to utilize the span of control. Failure on his part caused this unit to slowly become inefficient. Every subordinate leader was afraid to act on his own because the commander had deprived them of any initiative of action. There was no doubt that this individual had control of his unit, the problem was he was working himself to a point of destruction, not only his own destruction but that of his subordinate leaders and the organization. The final blow came to this unit during a field exercise. This unit although passing the test, gave a poor performance. All leaders of this unit were capable, the non commissioned officers were of the highest caliber, but due to over-supervision they were unable to act without the presence of the company commander, for fear of being reprimanded.

Centralization is the act of bringing under one control; the power to act, or make decisions. There has been considerable discussion that we must decentralize. Are there some specific evils to centralization? Yes, and these evils are loss of prestige and authority for the subordinate commander, not to mention the loss of initiative of the subordinate leaders.

The unit commander who has every decision taken away from him by higher headquarters has lost the prestige that once was his. The battle group S-3 who publishes the operations order to a subordinate commander, telling this subordinate how to do the job has infringed upon the right of this commander to command. This is a clear indication that the company commander is presumed to be incapable of tactically employing his unit.

It must be remembered that the staff officer is not a member of the chain of command and he must not make decisions for the commander. Too often the subordinate commander is harassed by unit staff officers who have the command complex, and as is the case in the battle group, the staff officer is superior in rank to the unit commander. For the staff officer to give instructions to the subordinate leader is to violate the span of control and cause confusion in junior leaders.

Centralization is not all evil. There are areas where we must centralize. These areas are in the field of supply and administration. The current supply system is something the battle group has needed for sometime. The administrative burden of supply has been taken from the commander and he is only involved in the command aspect of supervision; to insure proper maintenance, and safeguarding of supplies and equipment that the platoon leaders of his organization have signed for. This system permits the junior leader (platoon leader, platoon sgt.) to realize their responsibility more fully of supply economy, and thereby encouraging initiative on their part.

The functioning of administration must be centralized to allow the company commander to train his unit, and reach his ultimate goal of combat effectiveness. The company commanders of the battle group have got to utilize fully their executive officers in the handling of administrative matters. A good executive officer, properly trained by the commander, will

reduce considerably the administrative burden of the commander.

The 39th. Infantry Regiment of the Ninth Division in December of 1957 was given the mission of establishing an Administrative Center to determine the suitability of such an organization. The author was commanding a company at this time and at first strongly opposed this plan. The company clerks were removed from the orderly room into a separate building known as the Administrative Center. The unit morning report, status reports, and all records were moved with the clerk. The only records maintained in the unit orderly room were the duty roster and sick slips. Each morning the unit clerk would receive his instructions from the company executive officer or 1st. Sgt., and go to the Administrative Center and work under the supervision of the personnel officer, preparing necessary reports, letters and documents. At the end of the training day these reports in final form were available for the commanders signature. The morning report was signed by the personnel officer and a copy was furnished the unit to permit the commander to keep abreast of his accurate strength.

Any reports that could be submitted from records of the personnel section were prepared and submitted from records of the personnel section without the unit commander being involved. The author was amazed at the reduction of paper work required in the unit. This permitted the commander to spend more time with his unit in the accomplishing of the mission.

It was no longer necessary for the battle group headquarters to call the unit for morning report information, or records, they called the administrative center where the records were kept and available to the personnel officer.

The centralization of supply economy and administrative is a must if the commander is to be permitted to train his unit and the junior leaders of his command. The establishment of

the supply procedure previously stated is a step toward this centralization.

The battle group commander exercises command thru his subordinate commanders. (6:2). This statement contained in Army Regulations 220-60, General Provisions of the Battle Group and Battalion dated January 1958, clearly defines the span of control of the battle group commander. Command is further defined, in Army Regulations 600-20 Personnel General Command as; being exercised by virtue of office and the special assignment of officers holding military rank who are eligible by law to exercise command. (8:2) Army Regulations 220-20 states that the company commander commands his company, and he uses his chain of command to develop initiative and responsibility in his subordinate leaders. The above Army Regulations is the policy of the Army and clearly states who commands. The prerogatives of the commander at all echelons are defined by the regulations, but the commanders at intermediate commands are imposing on the rights of the commander at the next lower level because of lack of trust, faith, and confidence. This feeling is caused by the never ending battle ~~group~~ of statistics placed on the higher commander. The commanders of the battle group must be carefully selected so as to insure that lower commanders are given an opportunity to develop. Decentralization must be approached from the top, the highest level to the lowest level. It can not be a half-hearted affair.

During and before World War 11 the necessity for rapid mobilization required a complete overhauling of our training system. The system of the unit commander training his men could not furnish replacements quickly enough for our front line units. A method of training known as the committee system was devised. This was a pooling of all instructors

and equipment in order to give the most standardized training to the men going overseas as replacements. The committee system of training, was best for our emergency requirements during World War 11, but it does not meet our needs today. "Let's go back to unit training". (4:54) This article appeared in the July-September issue of the Infantry magazine, written by Brig. General Joseph B. Crawford. This author was very fortunate to have served with the Ninth Division during the period covered in the article by General Crawford. As a unit commander under a committee system of training and later under the decentralized system. Under the committee system of training, the unit commander's greatest problem is to maintain a high state of morale among his non-commissioned officers. The feeling that they are only housekeepers and guides for their unit, causes the non-commissioned officer and junior officers to loose pride in themselves and their unit. A complete loss of initiative, prestige, and authority resulted from the committee system of instruction and training. Upon the departure of the men for other assignments the unit did not feel a great deal of accomplishment or pride in the results obtained by the non-commissioned officers and junior officers. This same feeling was present among the departing personnel. They had never felt as if they belonged to the unit.

This training must be given back to the unit commander; it is he who is responsible for every thing his unit does or fails to do. In the Ninth Division this was done and the results were amazing. The non-commissioned officers, junior officers, and commanders again felt a sense of accomplishment. The commander, now that he was being held directly responsible for the level of his unit training, insures that each trainee gets a maximum of instruction. The junior officers and non-commissioned officers know their men. They know the ones that

need additional training and conduct the training within their platoons. The instructors of the company (platoon sgts., platoon leaders) know the level of the class. Greater flexibility is added to the training. Every leader is working toward a common goal, to produce the most efficient, best trained combat soldier possible. Competitive spirit between platoons and companies was most gratifying to observe. The trainees were at last a part of the unit and morale rose and disciplinary problems were fewer.

Under the unit training, when it came time for the personnel to depart, the noncommissioned officers and officers stood just a little taller, knowing that the men leaving the company were the men that they trained.

Our mission in the Army today is to build and maintain the best trained and most efficient peace time army in our history. We have the time, manpower, experience and facilities to accomplish this. Why should we be satisfied with the crash measures of World War II, when they are no longer necessary? (4:56).

The material previously discussed applied to the training division. However, it could have been a post cycle training unit. To have committee type instruction in a TO&E organization could prove fatal to such an organization. With the organization of our battle groups there has been much discussion of flexibility, Mobility, and firepower. These can only be obtained through greater decentralization (excluding mobility). If a unit is trained by a centralized system it will re-act only in combat to that type of system. If we do not give our junior leaders an opportunity to lead during training they will not lead during combat. Gen. A.C. McAuliffe in a letter to his corp commanders in Europe stated "In the matter of training, all higher headquarters must seek to cut to a proper minimum the required hours for specified subjects, in an endeavor to leave the company or

battery commander a reasonable latitude in the training of his unit in subjects which he selects as requiring greater emphasis". (Annex A) This clearly indicates the importance of decentralization of training with the company commander. The advent of atomic warfare has caused greater dispersion between units of all sizes, the junior leaders must be trained to act on their own, make quick and timely estimates, and tactically and proficiently employ their platoons.

The close relationship between training and combat will necessarily cause a short discussion of combat operations. As previously stated, dispersion, flexibility, firepower, and mobility are all common to the atomic battle field. These terms very readily imply speed and freedom of action, the presence of mission type orders. Telling the subordinate commander what to do, and not how to do it, will be the frequent rather than the infrequent. If the subordinate leader is to know how to accomplish a mission he must be trained. He can only be trained thru decentralization of authority. A platoon occupying a position on the extreme flank of a unit will be operating essentially on his own. Time will not be available for higher headquarters to control the actions of the platoon. He must be able to act on his own through proper training, initiative, responsibility and authority. The company commander must have the authority as well as the responsibility to do a task well. One will not stand without the other.

The function of command also encompasses the responsibility of military justice (11:11). Each commander exercising courts martial jurisdiction must have a sound understanding of the provisions of the Uniform Code. In this respect, organizational changes dictated by new tactics of warfare are imposing greater responsibility of the Special Court Martial Convening Authority. (11:10) There is no cause for a major overhauling in current

military justice procedures as they are related to the battle group and subordinate units. The company commanders should be given the maximum latitude possible with respect to company punishment, and his recommendations concerning reduction and promotion. These recommendations must be supported in full if the unit commander is to retain his place of command. The company commander should permit his subordinate leaders to take an active part in the administration of military justice in his command. By proper utilization of the chain of command, platoon leaders should be able to recommend to the commanders the punishment they feel necessary to place an individual back on the proper track. The author is not implying that the platoon leader or squad leader should have authority to administer military justice, only that they must be able to recommend to the commander and through this relationship they will learn their responsibilities in future positions of leadership and command. A commanding officer is expected and authorized to use appropriate correctional measures to remedy deficiencies in discipline. He may warn, or rebuke an offender or require him to take further training. (11:12) The commander must be given this authority. However, there are senior commanders who would not permit a company to conduct extra training without their approval. The author was a member of such a command. If the subordinate commander is to properly train and prepare his unit for combat he must be given the authority with the responsibility.

CONCLUSIONS

In order for the commander to accomplish his mission of the attainment of combat effectiveness for his unit he must be given the authority and the responsibility to accomplish this goal. The span of control now present in the battle group is the greatest to which it can be extended. The platoon leader should not become a commander. This would only increase the span of control in the battle group.

The company commander does have sufficient authority to command his company. (8:2) The commander must be given the chance to exercise this authority. Maximum decentralization, coupled with effective co-ordination and supervision, is fundamental to successful unit performance. We should depart from this fundamental only when it can be demonstrated that the rewards of centralization in terms of efficiency, economy, in use of personnel, equipment, and facilities warrant such actions.

The company commander has the responsibility, however, the authority is controlled by higher headquarters and must be returned to the company commander. Give the training back to the commander, centralize the administration and let the commander exercise his authority and command his company.

The prestige, morale, esprit de corps, and efficiency of a unit, can well be measured by the battle group commander who gives his subordinate commanders the authority to develop their leaders, train their units, and fulfill their responsibility of combat effectiveness.

GENERAL A. C. McAULIFFE'S LETTER TO HIS CORPS COMMANDERS

HEADQUARTERS SEVENTH ARMY
Office of the Commanding General
APO 46 US ARMY

ANNEX A

26 June 1954

Major General Henry I. Hodes
Commanding General
VII Corps
APO 107, US ARMY

Dear General Hodes:

I desire by this letter to express certain of my thoughts upon an urgent and vexing problem which faces both the United States Army as a whole and the Seventh Army in particular. I refer to the strictly professional aspects of the life, within combat units, of the junior officer and the senior non-commissioned officer.

The Department of the Army in Washington is, as you know, concerning itself actively in improving the lot of the military man as respects such matters as pay and so-called "fringe benefits". I hope also for ultimate success in its efforts to separate the categories of noncommissioned leader and specialist. These, however, are matters generally beyond our local jurisdiction; our efforts must be directed specifically to the improvement of daily duty-the military routine-within the Seventh Army.

I think there is much that must be done, for I believe I am correct in saying that too often the junior officer and the senior noncommissioned officer (I refer throughout to the first-three-grader) consider their lots neither happy nor professionally stimulating. It is my understanding that assignment to command of a company or battery is not a popular one, a pronounced contrast to the attitude existing prior to World War II.

To improve this state of affairs, we must give emphasis to the decentralization of command, a departure from present practice. In the past several years there has been a pronounced and undesirable tendency towards ever greater centralization-a tendency arising from the fact that we have had to deal with considerable numbers of imperfectly trained subordinates. This trend must be reversed: the senior noncommissioned officer must be given more and more responsibility, including tasks requiring the exercise of independent judgment; the junior officer must in turn be relieved of such tasks as can be performed by noncommissioned officers and made to shoulder in full measure the responsibility properly pertaining to the rank of officer. To do this requires a critical search

through the standing orders and policies established at all levels of command.

A policy of decentralization infers a confidence by the senior in the junior. There is no question but that such confidence may in some instances be misplaced, resulting in duty poorly performed and certain difficulty. There rough spots must simply be acknowledged and corrected as a necessary price to pay for the overall good. The man who fails over a period of time to measure up to his responsibility must be removed or reduced, but for our program to be effective the point of failure must be accurately identified. While we cannot relieve the commander of overall responsibility for his unit, he should not be censured for failure in a task or function responsibility for which he had laid, with propriety and good judgment, on an assigned subordinate. In a word, we must not preach decentralization and at the same time punish the commander for practicing it.

Our trust in the junior leader must be demonstrated also in other ways: specifically, in granting to noncommissioned officers of the first three grades privileges to the maximum extent permissible within the policies of our senior headquarters; by the occasional group conference with non-commissioned officers and junior officers by senior commanders; by a constant effort on the part of commanders at all levels in seeking earnestly the opinions and suggestions of their subordinates; by emphasizing tradition and the customs of the service; and by avoiding improper emphasis on strict adherence to duty hours.

Without violating the intent of existing regulations, we must do all we can do to increase the influence of the company commander in the promotion and reduction of NCOs, and the influence of NCOs in ridding the company (and the Army) of incompetent private soldiers.

In the matter of training, all higher headquarters must seek to cut to a proper minimum the required hours for specified subject, in an endeavor to leave the company or battery commander a reasonable latitude in the training of his unit in subjects which he selects as requiring greater emphasis.

In training it is necessary also to avoid over-supervision. By this I do not mean that battalion, regimental, or higher commanders should spend any less time in the field and in inspection of training, but the company commander must have the feeling that he is being trusted with the training of his company, and that each move he makes is not being supervised by a hovering senior. Training supervision should take the form more of inspection of result, as distinguished from detailed checking of process. As an example, a battalion commander should not perform his duties by telling the company commander how to emplace his company on a defensive position, but rather by inspecting the company after the position has been taken-which inspection should be very detailed and as critical as the situation makes desirable. This principle should not, of course, restrict the battalion commander from schooling his officers by tactical walks or any other device.

Another policy which I strongly recommend is that a platoon leader (commissioned or noncommissioned) shall have totally unsupervised control of his platoon in the field for a 24-hour period ten or twelve times annually. There is no

objection to the company or battalion commander specifying in part what should be accomplished in the 24 hours, but the platoon leader should not be inspected or even visited in this period of time. The platoon leader should have uninhibited and uninterrupted control of his platoon; he will learn from the experience.

Much also can be accomplished if we increase the tempo of tactical training. In our general endeavor to make sure that we are through in our tactical actions, we have made the routine tactical problem a pretty dull affair. Troops spend on periods doing nothing, thinking, learning nothing. We must recapture the art of the quick estimation of the situation, the quickly delivered order (which frequently should be simply a command), and the prompt execution of the problem itself, depending for intelligent execution upon the initiative and judgement of the subordinate commanders. Perhaps by his system more mistakes will be committed initially, but these may be corrected by the process of critique and by the process of doing similar exercises again and again, over different bits of ground, keeping the tempo fast and the interest high.

Tactical thought will also be much stimulated by the imaginative conduct of tactical walks and tactical rides. These will become more possible for officers if by decentralization we make the noncommissioned officers carry a proper portion of the unit job.

Aside from training, there are additional things we can and must do.

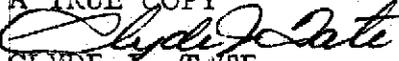
At all costs we must avoid the false front. A certain amount of this is engendered from time to time by the improper pressure from higher echelons. I have recently asked you to de-emphasize the importance of the statistical reports as respects to the so-called morale indices. This does not mean that I wish to decrease our efforts to improve our performance as respects AWOL, serious incidents, safety, etc., but I do wish to point out once more that these are not the primary bases for the determination of whether the unit is a good one or a poor one. We must make certain that we devote our efforts wholeheartedly towards the improvement of all units of the Army as military organizations, and insist that efficiency be measured entirely on the basis of the ability of the organization to perform its military task. If this idea is firmly implanted in the minds of all commanders, high and low, then all things (including important administrative and disciplinary matters) will fall into proper perspective. By these measures I think we can raise the military standards of the Seventh Army.

I shall appreciate your reactions to the policies I have outlined here and your suggestions for further action.

Sincerely yours,

A TRUE COPY
S/BOYD T. BASHORE
CAPTAIN, INFANTRY

A. C. McAULIFFE
Lieutenant General, USA
Commanding

A TRUE COPY

CLYDE I. TATE
1/LIEUTENANT, INFANTRY

ANNEX B - Letter from Colonel W. B. Rossen

22 July 1958

Dear Tate:

Your most welcome letter reaches me at a time when the Middle East situation leaves me with less time than I would like for developing a paper on decentralization of authority in the battle group. Rather than delay my reply, however, I propose to outline my principal thoughts on the subject without going into detail. In this way I would hope to meet your early deadline while at the same time providing some food for thought.

To begin with, I advance the view that maximum decentralization, coupled with effective coordination and supervision, is fundamental to successful unit performance. We should depart from this fundamental only when it can be demonstrated that the rewards of centralization in terms of efficiency, economy in use of personnel, equipment, and facilities, or achievement of uniform standards warrants such action. You will agree with me, I am sure, that under the impact of modern weapons our organization and doctrine must emphasize greater dispersion, mobility and independent action. These requirements demand that we develop commanders who are capable of acting on their own initiative, and who have been trained to accept full responsibility for what their unit does or fails to do. But can we hope to develop commanders of this caliber if we centralize important responsibilities at each successive higher level of command? I think not. The solution must lie in the opposite approach -- decentralization. Only in this way can we indoctrinate our commanders from squad level up in the assumption and exercise of full responsibility for unit performance. Only in this way can we begin to develop commanders who are used to acting on their own initiative.

With the foregoing theme as background, I offer the following specific comments on decentralization within the battle group based on the four functions identified in your letter.

a. Military Justice. I foresee no need for a major overhaul in current military justice procedures as they relate to the battle group and its subordinate units. I consider that the company commander should be given maximum latitude with respect to company punishments, and his recommendations concerning reductions and promotions should be supported in full, subject only to the customary reviews by higher authority.

By the same token, I believe that the company commander must utilize his chain of command in connection with military

justice matters. This would bring the platoon leader into the picture as being responsible for recommending punishments and other actions affecting his men. Through this procedure we can indoctrinate our junior officers and non-commissioned officers in the disciplinary responsibilities they are expected to exercise in future positions of greater responsibility. With respect to courts-martial, I believe it desirable to centralize the administrative and legal work in the battle group headquarters. The same applies to the bulk of the paper work involved in Article 15 cases.

b. Training. I feel very strongly that the company commander should be responsible for the training of his company. This is a fundamental which has undergone considerable erosion during and since World War II on the grounds that mass production training requires the committee system. While I have no major quarrel with the committee system for use in basic and specialist training, I am convinced that its extended application within tactical units has taken from the company commander certain responsibilities which he must exercise if he is to have a cohesive and effective unit. In my view the company commander should be allowed as much training time as feasible for his own purposes. He should be responsible for drawing up his own training schedule within the framework of the battle group directive. Widest possible latitude should be allowed him in concentrating on those subjects which he regards as requiring the greatest emphasis within his unit.

Accepting the foregoing as the desired approach, I recognize that within a unit the size of the battle group it will normally be necessary, due primarily to availability of instructors, equipment and facilities, to centralize certain types of instructions, e. g., crew served weapons, communications, specialized intelligence activities, drivers and mechanics, etc. Properly conducted, this technique will help the company while at the same time insuring uniform standards of training within the battle group.

The greatest single bar to attainment of decentralized training within the battle group is, unfortunately, a matter over which the battle group commander has little control. I refer here to the endless number of required subjects imposed upon the battle group by higher headquarters. These combine to fill up so much of the training program as to restrict unfavorably the time left to the initiative of the battle group commander and his subordinates. Until this procedure can be modified, I see little hope of achieving the type of decentralization desired. A compromise is probably the best that can be hoped for. Since we cannot and should not discard the training accomplishments we have attained during and since World War II, we should work for an easing of higher echelon requirements and a resultant increase in the time available to each lower commander for subjects of his own choosing.

Concerning decentralization below company level, I am inclined to believe that the same principles we have discussed will apply, although in lesser degree. The platoon and squad leaders should be afforded maximum opportunity to conduct the training of their units, but they should not be burdened with the administrative requirements incident to such training. Except for specialized units such as communications, I & R, P & A platoons and the like, the company is the lowest level at which scheduling and administration of training can be conducted with due regard to

economy of instructor personnel, equipment and facilities.

c. Combat. We have already observed that modern combat places a high premium on the capability for independent action and for the highest degree of initiative and resourcefulness on the part of unit commanders - - all born out of the habit of exercise of responsibility through decentralization. Within the battle group, however, it must be recognized that the battle group commander alone possesses a staff adequate to assist him in coordination and supervising the many and varied activities of the command, and in assisting the subordinate echelons. It will be necessary, therefore, to recognize that the battle group commander must reserve to himself a rather full measure of responsibility for planning and coordination. With this exception, decentralization in carrying out combat operations of the unit can best be thought of as utilization of the chain of command from top to bottom, with each subordinate commander being given a mission-type order to maximum practicable extent. Centralization must, of course, be applied to such matters as fire support, reconnaissance activities, transportation and supply.

d. Command. I find difficulty in determining any major difference between decentralization as discussed above under combat, and decentralization as applied to command generally. What I have said in connection with combat above, I would therefore apply here. If there is any difference of emphasis to be considered, I would take the position that decentralized command is more important under combat than other conditions.

In evaluating this material, please bear in mind that I have had no experience in commanding a battle group. My experience at battalion and regimental level has, however, convinced me of the importance of the decentralized approach to command. The problem in the regiment differs in at least one major respect from the battle group; namely, that in delegating or decentralizing to the battalion commander, the regimental commander knows that the battalion commander is supported by a sizeable staff to assist him in coordination and supervising the companies. When the battle group commander decentralizes to the company, he does so in the knowledge that the company commander has little staff support.

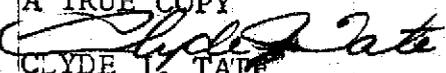
With this I will terminate what has been an admittedly general discussion made necessary by the press of time. I hope you will find it useful in developing what will most certainly be a very challenging and contributive monograph.

My thanks for allowing me to be of assistance to you, and best wishes for a fine academic year. Please extend my regards to your family, and let me know how this project turns out.

Sincerely,

s/Colonel Rossen

A TRUE COPY


CLYDE J. TATE
1/LT. INFANTRY

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