THE GENERAL BOARD

United States Forces, European Theater

FUNCTIONAL OPERATIONS OF INSPECTORS GENERAL IN AIR FORCE UNITS

MISSION: Prepare Report and Recommendations pertaining to Functional Operations of Inspectors General in Air Force Units.

The General Board was established by General Orders 128, Headquarters European Theater of Operations, US Army, dated 17 June 1945, as amended by General Orders 182, dated 7 August 1945 and General Orders 312 dated 20 November 1945, Headquarters United States Forces, European Theater, to prepare a factual analysis of the strategy, tactics, and administration employed by the United States forces in the European Theater.

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FUNCTIONAL OPERATIONS OF INSPECTORS GENERAL IN AIR FORCE UNITS

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FUNCTIONAL OPERATIONS OF INSPECTORS GENERAL IN AIR FORCE UNITS

PART ONE

INSPECTOR GENERAL FUNCTIONS OF THE AIR FORCE

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1

TROOPS

1. The first combat group of the Eighth Air Force arrived in Great Britain in May, 1942. The Ninth Air Force moved in October, 1943 from Africa to Great Britain. Additional troops were assigned to the United States Strategical Air Force in the European Theater of Operations, bringing the total strength on 8 May 1945, to about 418,000 men. At the close of the War, the following major commands were assigned for administration to Headquarters, United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe:

a. First Tactical Air Force. (Provisional)

b. Eighth Air Force.

c. Ninth Air Force.

d. Ninth Troop Carrier Command (in First Allied Airborne Army.)

e. Fifteenth Air Force. (Italy)

SECTION 2

INSPECTION SECTIONS

2. The Air Force has long realized the value of frequent, thorough and systematic inspections. Therefore, the inspection system in the European Theater of Operations Air Force in January, 1944 was well organized. It consisted of an Air Inspector Section on the staff of each commander from the Strategic Air Force Headquarters, down to and including the group.

3. The Air Inspector's Section in the United States Strategical Air Force and the major subordinate commands acted almost entirely on the policy level and in a supervisory capacity. The higher commanders' policies were carried out through frequent and thorough inspections and visits of observation to the tactical groups and service units covering tactical, technical and administrative procedure and equipment. The inspections and visits of observation of the higher headquarters were made on the inspection sections of the lower echelons--the inspector inspected the inspecting systems! The inspection sections of the lower headquarters

inspected the assigned units and the inspection sections of lower echelons. Inspectors of major commands made sufficient detailed inspections of combat units to insure that inspection systems of intermediate commands were functioning properly.

CHAPTER 2

SCOPE OF INSPECTIONS

SECTION 1

AIR INSPECTOR

4. The basic inspection policy of the Air Inspector was decentralization of inspections with constant supervision to speed the attainment of operational efficiency and to establish well-organized and competent inspection sections in the subordinate commands. The Air Inspector operated directly under the Commanding General with the mission of increasing the operational efficiency of the subordinate units by frequent and thorough inspections and investigations. In order to accomplish this mission, the Air Inspector divided his section into three sub-sections:

a. The Inspector General Sub-Section for administration.

b. The Technical Sub-Section for technical inspections.

c. The Tactical Sub-Section for tactical inspections.

5. The three sub-sections were of varying sizes, depending upon the number of units under the headquarters and the work to be accomplished. Each sub-section completed its inspections or investigations and reported the results to the Air Inspector. The Air Inspector might, in certain instances, conduct the inspection himself with the assistance of one or more of the sub-sections. Thus, the Air Inspector, through his three sub-sections, kept himself informed at all times, and in turn informed the Commanding General. The Commanding General took the necessary action to correct the defect or report it to higher headquarters. In case of inefficient personnel, the Commanding General had them trained or removed.

6. The Air Inspectors and assistants conducted their inspections to obtain information and instruct personnel through one of three types:

a. Direct - complete and instructional. The direct inspections were complete, covering every phase of administration, maintenance, operations, and usually completed by all sub-sections of the inspecting force, working together.

b. Supervisory - special and instructional. The supervisory inspections covered one or more phases of the unit's activities. For instance, the Inspector General might inspect certain records, or the Technical Section might make a technical inspection to determine whether or not the inspectors in the lower echelons were competent and

efficient; or check on a certain instrument.

c. Visits of Observation - This third type of inspection known as "Visits of Observation" was as the phrase indicates, visits to observe the general efficiency and operation of the lower units. Observation was made covering the operation of equipment and training of personnel with special emphasis on the efficiency of the inspecting personnel in the unit observed.

SECTION 2

INSPECTOR GENERAL

7. The administrative inspections were conducted by the Inspector General's Sub-Section in the Air Inspector's Office. A complete direct administrative inspection was made at various Air Forces under Theater Air Forces, and in accordance with AR 20-10 and Army Air Forces Regulation 120-6 to cover property and records; motor vehicles and records; personal equipment and personnel records; welfare activities; exchanges; funds; sanitation; messing; and general morale factors of the command.

8. The complete direct inspections were conducted every four to six months. The supervisory inspections and visits of observation were made at frequent, irregular intervals as experience dictated.

SECTION 3

TECHNICAL INSPECTOR

9. Technical inspections were made by specially trained technical personnel. By specially trained technical personnel is meant that the personnel were trained on the specific type of plane, weapon or instrument used by that organization. These technical inspections were made sometimes as frequently as every 15 or 20 days; or under less strenuous circumstances, might be made every two to four months. The situation and conditions found at the last inspection dictated the frequency with which these inspections were made.

10. Technical inspections are the key inspections of the personnel and equipment. Due to the various types of planes and the many complicated instruments, the technical personnel had to be well-trained and, at the same time, be continuously on the alert to improve themselves to the end that they knew all about every item inspected. The excellent results of our European Air Force during the War is a direct tribute to the excellent work accomplished by the technical inspection teams.

SECTION 4

TACTICAL INSPECTOR

11. The tactical Inspection Section operated under the Air Inspector with the object of determining whether or not the unit was capable of accomplishing its assigned mission. However, in many instances (especially at the group level) the Air Inspector conducted the tactical inspections and investigations with the assistance of the members of the subsection. These tactical inspections were as indicated

above--direct, supervisory, or visits of observation, depending upon the situation.

12. The more thorough types of inspections covered all phases of tactical training and operation. These thorough inspections were made at periods varying from one to three months, depending upon the situation. Supervisory inspections and visits of observation were frequent and with a view to improving the efficiency of the unit.

CHAPTER 3

ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARDS

SECTION 1

GENERAL

13. The European Air Force developed from a small detachment of personnel in England in May 1942 to about 418,000 on 8 May 1945. This enormous increase in personnel, the necessary tons of equipment, the modifications and improvements in equipment, the ever-changing personnel, the need for frequent flights, the need for long flights under unfavorable conditions, and the fact that a failure to check one small part or instrument might result in that plane not returning, placed a tremendous burden and responsibility on the air inspector's section. The work of this section in the higher headquarters was largely checking the inspecting sections of the lower echelons to determine whether they were efficient or not. Through constant inspections and visits of observation, the higher inspectors were able to raise the standards of the lower inspecting sections and thus raise the combat efficiency of the entire unit.

SECTION 2

AIR INSPECTOR

14. Standards were established through the constant and energetic work performed by all members of the staff and especially the Air Inspector's Section. The Air Inspector's Section attained and maintained high standards through constant pressure on all units. In order that an inspecting team did not overlook any item during an inspection, check lists were prepared. These check lists covered all points to be observed by the inspecting team, and the results noted by the personnel were recorded on them, thus giving a concrete and semi-permanent record of conditions within each unit.

15. These check lists formed the basis for the report to the Commanding General through or by the Air Inspector.

SECTION 3

INSPECTOR GENERAL

16. The Inspector General established and maintained his standards under the supervision of the Air Inspector by frequent inspections in the same manner as Inspectors General with Ground Force units. The Inspector General used check

lists, some of which were made up locally, and some were those published by The Inspector General, Washington, D.C., modified to conform to the local regulations and situations.

17. These check lists provided a semi-permanent record of the situation within each organization and formed the basis of the reports submitted to the Air Inspector and the Commanding General.

CHAPTER 4

INVESTIGATIONS

SECTION 1

AIR INSPECTOR

18. The Air Inspector assisted by the technical and tactical sections conducted all types of investigations relative to technical and tactical matters. In the case of accidents, the local commanding officer appointed a board to investigate and report on the accident. The Air Inspector might take the report of this board and conduct a further investigation, and make a report to his Commanding General on one or all phases of the board report.

19. Investigations were formal or informal, the formal type being used for more serious and important investigations and those which were required to be forwarded to higher headquarters. These were classified "Confidential" or "Secret" depending on the content. The informal investigations were classified "Confidential" and filed in the headquarters of origin.

SECTION 2

INSPECTOR GENERAL

20. Within the scope of his duties, the Inspector General conducted such investigations as the Commanding General and Air Inspector directed. These investigations were formal or informal in type, depending upon the situation. They were conducted in accordance with AR 20-30 and as a rule were submitted direct to the Commanding General. However, the Air Inspector had the right to receive them for approval or disapproval before forwarding to the Commanding General. They were normally classified "Confidential" and filed in the office of origin.

CHAPTER 5

TYPES AND CHANNELS OF REPORTS

SECTION 1

INSPECTIONS

21. Reports of complete or direct inspections were submitted through the Commanding Officer of the unit inspected, through command channels, to the Commanding General directing the inspection. Each headquarters, through which the report passed, stated in the forwarding indorsement the corrective action taken on each and every irregularitity or

deficiency noted in the report, and withdrew a copy for file. In this way, all headquarters were informed of conditions and of the corrective action taken.

22. In certain cases, where the inspection report covered a defect of a serious technical nature, this portion of the report would be extracted and forwarded to higher headquarters by a more rapid means of communication. In case the defect was corrected, the correction was also extracted from the report and forwarded by a more rapid means of communication to higher and lower headquarters for their information and necessary action.

23. The visits of observation resulted in a short informal report, or in some cases an oral report to the Commanding General who took the necessary action.

SECTION 2

INVESTIGATIONS

24. The technical and tactical investigations were either formal or informal, depending upon the subject matter.

25. The formal reports, with conclusions and recommendations were delivered to the Commanding General directing the investigation. If necessary corrective or disciplinary action was completed by the Commanding General, the report was filed in that headquarters. In case the subject matter was of interest to or required action by higher headquarters, it was forwarded through normal channels.

26. The informal reports, after necessary action, were usually filed within the headquarters making the investigation.

27. The Inspector General investigations were conducted on the subjects normally investigated by inspectors general in other branches of the service. These reports were classified as "Confidential" in almost every case. However, some were given a higher classification. The reports covered subjects that normally could be handled by the Commanding General directing the investigation and, therefore, were usually kept and filed within the headquarters directing the investigation. In certain cases, investigations were forwarded to higher headquarters. These usually involved cases as follows:

a. Investigations directed by higher headquarters and requiring a report.

b. Where the final action was beyond the disciplinary powers of the appointing Commanding General.

c. Where the facts indicated action by a higher headquarters.

The informal investigations were filed in the headquarters of origin after appropriate action.

CHAPTER 6

INSPECTION PERSONNEL

SECTION 1

AIR CORPS OFFICERS

28. The Air Inspector was and should be on the staff of each group and higher commander. The ideal Air Inspector should be a pilot currently and actively participating in aerial flights, and in addition have a burning desire to be accurate in all minute details, and possess certain administrative ability. The officers with these qualifications in the European Theater of Operations were insufficient in number to fill all required positions. Therefore, the Commanding General, United States Air Forces in Europe placed officers best qualified to be Air Inspectors in the higher headquarters and used these officers to supervise and train officers in lower headquarters. By their constant efforts, supervision, and advice, other officers were trained and the standard of the Air Force raised.

29. Some Air Inspectors were obtained from the United States from the Air Corps School at Orlando, Florida. The majority were obtained and developed from personnel within the European Theater. Considerable difficulty was experienced in obtaining capable air inspectors on the staff of a group commander because the group staff normally consisted of younger officers with insufficient experience and background to qualify them to be capable Air Inspectors. Development of capable Air Inspectors in group headquarters was further handicapped by the inexperience of group commanders. The group commander often did not fully realize the importance of adequate inspections by an Air Inspector, and therefore did not stress the inspections. Inspections are no better than the commanding officer demands.

30. The technical inspection personnel operated under the Air Inspector in headquarters of group and higher commanders. These technical inspectors were required to have a thorough knowledge of all equipment in their command. They had to be capable of making a thorough inspection, correcting all possible defects and making an accurate report to the Air Inspector of the status of equipment and personnel. Here again, the technical inspectors were inadequate in number in the European Theater during the War. Some were trained in the United States at the school at Orlando, Florida and at air fields within the United States. This supply was inadequate to fill the requirements of the European Theater. The deficiency in this theater was made up by the trained personnel in higher headquarters training personnel on the job.

31. The tactical inspector was on the staff of all group and higher commanders and operated under the Air Inspector. In some cases, especially at the group level, the Air Inspector and the Tactical Inspector were one and the same officer. Competent tactical inspectors were inadequate in number within the European Theater of Operations. Here again, they were obtained from schools and air fields in the United States or trained on the job by Air Inspectors or Tactical Inspectors in higher headquarters.

32. The Air Forces in the European Theater of Operations developed so rapidly that it was almost impossible for sufficient trained personnel to be sent from the United States. This resulted in training the personnel within the European Theater by officers in higher headquarters. It was always possible to obtain officers who for one or more reasons were unable to participate in active flying, but had the fundamental knowledge and foundations of the Air Forces. These officers were readily converted to inspection work, filled the void, and kept the units operating.

33. The noncommissioned officers necessary to aid the Air, Technical and Tactical Inspectors were not present in the European Theater of Operations in sufficient numbers. Some men were received from schools and air fields in the United States, and some were taken from other duties within the European Theater and placed in the inspection sections. A number of Air Corps officers stated that more trained noncommissioned officers could have been used to advantage on this important work.

SECTION 2

INSPECTOR GENERAL OFFICERS

34. In the majority of cases the Inspectors General were on the staff of wing and higher commanders. However, due to shortage of trained inspectors general, a number of wings operated in the European Theater without the services of an inspector general. The Commanding General, United States Air Forces in Europe, had authority to detail suitable officers in the Inspector General's Department. In this way, the Air Force was able to utilize the services of officers who had formerly been trained pilots and for various reasons were unable to be rated. These officers with Air Corps background proved to be more valuable as Inspectors General than officers who did not have this essential knowledge.

35. A few officers from other branches were detailed into the Inspector General's Department and placed on duty with Air Force units. Some officers of this category were transferred to the European Theater from the United States, but were insufficient in number.

PART TWO

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CHAPTER 1

SECTION 1

CONCLUSIONS

36. That the commanding officers of some groups were not sufficiently impressed with the importance of thorough inspection service.

37. That the Air Inspector is the logical member to coordinate the Inspector General, Technical and Tactical inspections.

38. That the Air and Tactical Inspectors should be rated pilots and all other officers in the Air Inspector's Section have as much air experience as possible in addition to their technical training.

39. That there were insufficient officers in the European Theater of Operations qualified for duty in the Air Inspector's Section.

40. That there were insufficient noncommissioned officers in the European Theater of Operations qualified for duty with the Air Inspector's Section.

SECTION 2

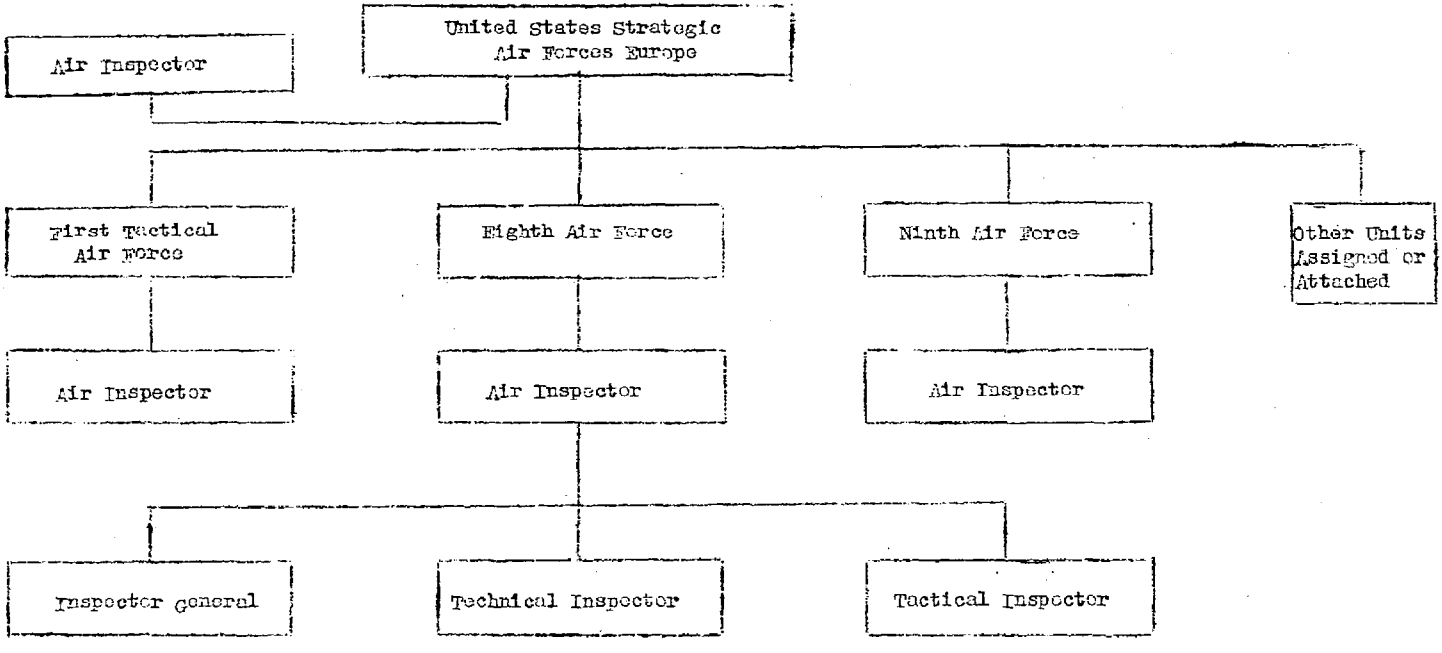
RECOMMENDATIONS

41. That each Air Corps School impress on all student personnel the importance of inspections to the end that young group commanders will stress this necessary part of training and operation.

42. That ex-flying officers be given special training to qualify them for duty with one part of the Air Inspector's Section.

43. That selected noncommissioned officers be given special training to qualify them for duty with the Air Inspector's Section.

AIR INSPECTOR SECTION IN EUROPEAN THEATER



Note 1. Wing and higher headquarters had a complete Air Inspector's Section.

Note 2. The Air Inspector Section in the group headquarters seldom contained an Inspector General.

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