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Authority ND 843099  
By R NARA Date 12A09

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MEMORANDUM

12 November 1943

SUBJECT: PWB Field Teams - COMBAT TEAMS.  
FROM : Frederick Oechsner

1. The PWB field set-up for the Sicilian campaign provided for three "waves" of teams, viz:
  - a. Combat Teams (or reconnaissance)
  - b. Occupational (or dissemination) Teams
  - c. Base (or permanent) Teams.

The make-up and activities of these various teams would obviously vary according to the problems faced, e.g. where the combat area was rural or urban in nature, densely or sparsely populated, advanced or backward in culture etc.

2. COMBAT TEAMS:

Combat teams were made up of three to five men, mixed military and civilian. One was attached to the 7th (American) Army under John Whittaker of MO, civilian, with one British and one American officer; and one attached to the 8th (British) Army under Lt. Col. McFarlane of PWB with a British and American officer. These teams were provided with Jeeps and trailers and with full field equipment for self subsistence and protection for anything up to five days or a week. Their duties were manifold, including not only the gathering of intelligence and the active prosecution of psychological warfare, but the "selling" of propaganda and psychological warfare to Field Commanders. It may be said that the Combat teams amply justified themselves in the Sicilian operation. The intelligence they procured was invaluable to the Base Areas for the preparation of radio programs and strategical leaflets, of black radio programs, as well as for tactical leaflets in the field; most of the intelligence procured was also of value to G-2 (with whom the Combat teams worked in close cooperation) and Field Security.

3. The essential duties of the Combat teams might be outlined as follows:

- a. To locate, ear-mark for later use and to seize, when necessary, radio broadcasting stations, printing presses (for leaflets, posters, etc), newspaper plants (for the issuance of newspapers), stocks of paper and cinemas.
- b. To locate and procure by force, if necessary, the essential parts of radio stations, printing presses, newspaper plants, which may have been removed by the enemy.
- c. To estimate the damage caused by the enemy and the parts necessary and probable time required to repair the plants to usefulness.

In Sicily some of us felt that it was desirable not to high pressure the population with posters, merely giving them a new type of political propaganda when what they really needed was a relief from high pressure propaganda after ten to twenty years of it.)

e. To collaborate further with the Civilian Administration Authorities in any "conditioning" of the local population that is required.

f. To enlist further local reliable assistants in the operation of radio stations, newspapers, printing presses, etc.

g. To take in whatever field equipment may be necessary (particularly mobile printing presses and loudspeaker units) to service combat teams in their further operations up forward.

5. The lessons to be learned from the experiences of the Occupational teams may be roughly described as follows:

a. The necessity of organizing a thoroughly reliable communications set-up as between the Advance (occupational team) base and the Base Hqs. for the transmission of material as well as for the transmission of Combat team material which the teams may not have been able to get through themselves.

b. The necessity of ascertaining accurately, by means of public opinion testing surveys, the attitude of the population in the area for purposes of propaganda. Such attitudes will have to be gauged by the Occupational teams more fully than the Combat Teams will be able to do; moreover an independent test is necessary for the reason that the attitude of the population may actually have changed between the time that the Combat team left and the Occupational team arrived.

c. The necessity of organizing good transportation at Advance Base Headquarters, not only for members of the Advance Base staff but also for the repair of the vehicles of Combat teams.

d. The necessity of remaining in close contact with G-2, Field Security, Civilian Administration Authorities and other authorities in the area.

e. The necessity of forming a radio program and newspaper content which will appeal to, rather than in any way antagonize, the population which will just be coming out from under the influence of several years of Axis propaganda.

f. The necessity of selection motion pictures for display in cinemas in the area from the same point of view as in e. above.

6. The functions of personnel of the Advance Headquarters (Occupational) Group were as follows:

Commanding Officer  
Deputy Commanding Officer  
Administration Section (under a British Captain) responsible for:  
    Billeting  
    Mess  
    Transportation

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Security and Duty Officers  
Equipment  
Personnel  
Secretariat

Daily Activities Reports  
Liaison with Amgot

Dissemination Section (under a civilian) responsible for:

Press  
Radio (white)  
Radio (black)  
Motion pictures  
Mobile Press  
Local printing work  
Leaflets  
Loudspeakers  
Propaganda displays  
Photographs (front photographs as well as laboratory work at Advance Hqs.)  
Posters

Intelligence (under an American Army Captain) responsible for:

Monitoring  
Liaison with G-2

Intelligence reports to Hq. Algiers, Tunis, London and Washington.

Communications (under an American Army Captain) responsible for:

Technical operation of the local radio  
Technical operation of mobile radio  
Technical operation of the loudspeaker unit  
Technical operation of the intercept unit

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2. OCCUPATIONAL TEAMS:

In Sicily established Advance Base Headquarters for the taking over of PWB activities from the Combat teams; they also served as field bases for the Combat teams. In Sicily the main Advance Headquarters was established at Palermo with a sub-section in Catania; the Palermo staff (including 25 persons in the mobile broadcasting company and about 10 persons shuttling to the forward areas) totalled 75 persons.

3. The Occupational team, which set-up Advance Headquarters under Frederick Oechsner of MO, proceeded from Tunis by troop transport to Syracuse on D plus 20, proceeded by airplane or motor vehicle (the mobile broadcasting company going under its own power) to Palermo and Catania where it took over there the Headquarters established by the Combat teams attached respectively to the 7th and 8th Armies.

4. The essential duties of the Occupational teams might be outlined as follows:

a. To open and commence the operation of radio stations, printing presses, newspapers and cinemas which have been located by the Combat Teams.

b. To conduct whatever white or black field radio broadcasting operations are indicated (mobile broadcasting units).

c. To serve Base Headquarters more amply than the Combat Teams were able to do with intelligence, intelligence evaluation, open radio program material and a steady flow of photographs.

d. To expand the display of posters (again only, of course, after it has been decided that it is desirable to use posters in any particular locality).

d. To report on all these matters to Base Headquarters.

e. To visit the Headquarters of enemy political organizations and seize whatever documents and other materials useful in the conduct of psychological warfare such as name lists, instructions and circulars, annual reports, etc.

f. To make direct contact with political leaders, friendly and unfriendly, and local dignitaries, for the purpose of securing the assistance of these persons or to securing their arrest through the appropriate field authorities (Field Security).

g. To distribute hand-bills and put up posters, where putting up of posters is desirable.

h. To collaborate with Civilian Administration Authorities in the printing of circulars and proclamations.

i. To interrogate prisoners for information useful at Base Hqs. in the preparation of radio programs and leaflets, or in the preparation of leaflets in the field.

j. To send full and continuous reports back to Base Hqs. by wireless and courier on all matters of morale among the population, including full descriptive messages suitable for using in open propaganda programs, as well as evaluation of material such as captured documents and prisoner of war interrogation.

k. To actually prepare all tactical leaflets for use against the immediately opposing enemy troops and the delivery of these leaflets by mortar or airplanes.

l. To secure reliable local personnel to help in re-opening radio stations, printing presses, newspaper plants and cinemas.

m. To spread tactical rumours amongst the population.

4. The primary lessons to be learned from the experiences of the Combat Team in Sicily might be roughly described as follows:

a. Teams should go in on "D" Day, not later.

b. They may be of military and civilian make-up, but preferably under an officer of the rank of at least a Major or Lt. Colonel.

c. It is not necessary for all members of the team to be armed, but the teams as such should be adequately protected against emergencies.

d. All members of the team should speak fluently the language of the country in which they are going to operate.

e. They should be fairly young men (I should suggest between the ages of 28 and 45), in good physical condition to withstand long hours of work under arduous field conditions, should be men of coolness, poise, judgement and courage.

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f. They should be fully equipped with transport vehicles, command cars, probably with trailers, so as to carry not only equipment but a supply of posters and hand-bills to distribute among liberated populations.

g. They should be supplied, if possible, with lists of reliable and non-reliable, in the communities where they are going to operate.

h. They should have adequate communications with their bases, preferably via their own wireless sets; and each team should have a sturdy reliable radio receiver for monitoring enemy broadcasts in the field.

i. The training of the members of the Combat Teams should include some close combat and small arms practice as well as a general familiarity with the principle types of booby-traps and mines. It would also be desirable, of course, to have drivers who are familiar with automobile mechanics, as well as obviously a man capable of handling wireless telegraphy, if a transmitter is included in the equipment.

j. If there is enough time before the commencement of an operation, it would be highly desirable to have the Combat teams actually trained with the units to which they are to be attached in the field. Members of the Combat teams can thus get to know the officers with whom they are later going to have to work under combat conditions; conversely, the officers would become familiar with the personalities and methods of the team.

k. In Sicily there was only one team attached to the 7th Army and one to the 8th Army. Experience showed that in view of the necessity of the Combat teams keeping contact with various units, and meeting the problems of these units on different fronts, it is probably necessary to have a greater number of teams. Depending, of course, upon the size of the new teams, the ideal might be one per Corps, or conceivably one per Division.

l. Leaflet shells are not yet perfect, though they permit a more accurate placing of leaflets than by plane (wind-drift, deflection of plane by ground-force etc).

m. Loudspeakers are in general not desired at the front; they draw fire and are useful only in delivering a certain specific message to a certain specific unit known to be opposite one's position; it is probably well to have a loudspeaker unit available if it should be called for in a particular operation.

n. Leaflets remain the single most important means of attack. In order to use them for tactical uses (especially gun delivery) mobile printing units are necessary which can be run right up to the front for work directly next to the leaflet gun.

o. The reporting functions of the team (primarily the sending back for Base radio programs of field reports; description of reactions of populations to liberation, battle descriptions, etc) needs strengthening.

P. A good make-up for Combat teams might be: one officer (preferably Lt. Colonel) for constant liaison with Army Field Headquarters, G-2, etc.; one Intelligence man for centralising and evaluating field intelligence (P/V, interrogation, captured documents, interviews with agents etc) for field Base Headquarters and tactical (leaflet) use; and for general reports for Base radio programs; one radio man to locate radio stations, check equipment, power, operating personnel, extent of damage, and report back to Base; one movie man (where large cities or towns lie in the combat area) to check movie facilities and report back to Base.

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SUBJECT: PWB Field Teams - BASE SECTION.

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- a. Combat (or reconnaissance) Teams
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2. BASE TEAMS:

The work of the Base or permanent Section is to take over the operation of radio, printing, newspapers, cinemas and other propaganda activities in an occupied territory on a permanent basis, leading eventually to turning over all these activities to local personnel with perhaps only one or two PWB representatives as supervisors. The Base team obviously remains in close contact with Civil Affairs Authorities; in effect the work of the PWB personnel is to continue the "conditioning" of the occupied population in conformity with Civil Affairs "Administration" of the area.

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