

CHAPTER I

BASIC PLANNING FOR FINAL DISPOSITION OF THE WAR DEAD

Examination of policies and plans for final disposition of the overseas dead of World War II was originally undertaken as a phase of demobilization planning. In June 1943 the Commanding General, Army Service Forces (ASF), issued through the Project Planning Division of his headquarters a directive instructing The Quartermaster General "to study and draw up a body of recommendations in reference to the problems of disposal of the war dead."¹

Policy Study No. 34

The Project Planning Division specified that these recommendations should be based on an analysis of three major aspects of the problem, namely: "(1) the determination of a policy relating to burial overseas and return of the dead to the homeland; (2) the plan of operation, both in the United States and overseas; (3) the possible necessity of expansion of national cemeteries in the United States and the acquisition of sites for cemeteries in foreign countries."²

Assuming direction of the Memorial Branch, Service Installations Division, Office of The Quartermaster General (OQMG), on 1 July 1943, Col. R. P. Harbold undertook personal responsibility for preparation of the study. On 14 August he submitted to Quartermaster General Edmund B. Gregory a paper which bore the assigned title "Policy Study No. 34" and treated in three separate parts the specified phases of the disposition problem.

Part I recommended a policy requiring the return of all dead from any overseas theater if 70 percent or more of the next of kin of these dead should express such a desire in response to a poll to be conducted by the War Department after the conclusion of hostilities. In the absence of any request for a particular sort of disposition, the remains in question would be shipped to the homeland and given final burial under direction of The Quartermaster General in a national cemetery. Then, while the report expressed a conviction that current correspondence with friends and relatives of the dead foreshadowed an overwhelming preference for the return of all remains,

¹ Memo, Brig Gen William F. Tomkins, Dep CofS, ASF for TQMG, 22 Jun 43, no sub.

² *Ibid.*

provision for permanent burial places beyond the seas was not arbitrarily excluded. It recommended the adoption of:

A general policy to return World War II dead to the United States or to concentrate them in national cemeteries to be established in Allied countries upon request of the nearest of kin.³

But this latter provision was qualified by the observation that "it did not seem wise, economically, or sentimentally sound to consider the establishment of additional national cemeteries in the far-flung battle areas of this war."⁴

Part II recommended the establishment of an American Graves Registration Service (AGRS) which would operate under direction of The Quartermaster General, both in the United States and in those overseas areas that had or would have been included by boundaries assigned to the various theater commands. Section A of this part presented a detailed examination of the command and staff structure of the proposed organization. Section B outlined an organizational scheme for the overseas commands. The relative importance attached to command and staff elements appears in the apportionment of space to the two sections of part II. Section A contained 44 typed pages; section B numbered 15, or approximately one-fourth of the whole.

In proceeding on the assumption that the designation of a commanding general and his staff constituted the first step in activating any large military unit, Colonel Harbold labored under a serious difficulty: there were no approved tables of organization and distribution of personnel for such an establishment. Section A therefore stipulated that The Quartermaster General should be given a special grant of authority in connection with the responsibilities he would assume as director of the proposed organization, and that the Memorial Branch should be reorganized with a view to undertaking the performance of all necessary staff functions relative to final disposition of the war dead. In addition it would continue to discharge its current responsibilities with respect to the administration of national cemeteries, and procurement of soldiers' headstones.

The first of these two stipulations prompted a recommendation that The Quartermaster General be designated as Chief, AGRS, and that under this designation he would assume responsibility for maintaining records of all fatalities and burials in the overseas theaters, and furthermore, that—

he be charged, with the organization, formulation of policies and promulgation of regulations for return of overseas dead and

³ Policy Study No. 34, pt. I, p. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*

their concentration in national cemeteries, should they be established in foreign countries.⁵

The second stipulation directed attention to deficiencies of organizational arrangements within the OQMG for care of the dead. It was stated that restoration of the divisional status which the Memorial Branch had enjoyed prior to 30 March 1942, together with an increase of civilian employees from 33 to 80, and the establishment of a Graves Registration Service Branch as an autonomous element in the reconstituted division "is the most essential step in preparing for the comprehensive plans for return of the dead." Noting in this connection that a decrease of civilian employees in the Memorial Branch from 56 to 33 had accompanied an increase in the strength of the Army from approximately 1,400,000 to 8,000,000 during the years 1941-43, and that this disproportion, along with an accelerated rate of fatalities in battle, imposed burdens that the branch as presently organized could no longer support, the report insisted that—

Its need [for expansion] is immediate and consequently the elaboration of this particular plan has been made to bring to the attention of higher authority its present inadequacy to properly process current work from the United States and overseas; its lack of personnel to initiate and maintain records, maps, and charts which will be of vital importance when repatriation of the dead becomes a fact.⁶

Establishment of the proposed Graves Registration Service Branch dominated the entire concept of reorganization. This new branch was to have 30 civilian employees out of 80 allotted to the proposed divisional organization and, incidentally, just three less than the strength of the Memorial Branch as presently organized. The Overseas Section, a unit set up in the Memorial Division upon the outbreak of war and designed to serve as a central records office for the recording and processing of overseas death and burial reports, was to serve as the nucleus of expansion. Its components were to be strengthened numerically and given greater diversity of function as sections within the new branch by an addition of subsections, notably a Maps and Plots Subsection which would be assigned to the Records and Statistical Section. These measures were directed toward the creation of an agency competent to furnish data essential to future planning purposes and to serve as a Special Staff of The Quartermaster General in his extraordinary capacity as Chief, AGRS.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pt. II, p. 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pt. II, sec. A, unnumbered introductory page.

As sketched in section B of part II, the AGRS overseas elements were to consist of 12 major zone commands and 45 subordinate sector commands. Generally speaking, the zones would embrace large geographical regions roughly identified with military operations then in progress or contemplated in the progressive deployment of American arms. Yet the boundaries of several zone commands, as drawn in 1943, did not coincide with those of existing theater establishments, while little concern seems to have been given to identifying the boundaries of others with the land and sea areas which would probably be assigned to future operational areas. In other words, the zone areas were determined largely by political and geographical influences that assumedly would apply after the cessation of hostilities rather than those military considerations that actually applied in the theaters of operations. The 12 zones contemplated were (1) North America, (2) the Hawaiian Islands, (3) Australia, (4) the Netherlands East Indies and Malaya, (5) the Philippine Islands, (6) India and Burma, (7) China, (8) the Middle East, (9) Europe, (10) Great Britain and Ireland, (11) Africa, (12) the Caribbean.⁷

The determination of sector areas was equally vague. Aside from an opinion that the China Zone should have four sectors, no effort was made to designate or define the areas which would be assigned to these subdivisions. Elsewhere there was a tendency to identify the sector areas with pre-existing political divisions, the Africa Zone, for instance, being subdivided into the sectors of Morocco, Algeria, and Tripoli. Yet the prospective Zone of Europe would comprise an odd assortment of political divisions—the sectors of France and Italy—while other sector areas were roughly indicated by such geographical expressions as the Lowlands, Dalmatia, the Balkans, and Austria-Hungary.

Holding the rank of colonel, the Zone Commander was to be assisted by a headquarters establishment of 46 commissioned officers (21 field grade and 25 company grade) who would staff three divisions and four independent offices. A group of 72 civilians, including clerical personnel, auto mechanics and chauffeurs completed the establishment.⁸ Commanded by a colonel and totalling 79 persons (22 commissioned officers, 5 enlisted men, and 65 civilians), sector headquarters reproduced the main features of the Zone establishment, "with certain obvious sections and subsections omitted and functions of other sections."⁹ While the Zone establishment was to

⁷ *Ibid.*, pt. II, pp. 1-2.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pt. II, pp. 8-10.

⁹ *Ibid.*

be concerned largely with matters of policy, particularly those related to operational concepts, logistics, and diplomatic affairs, sector headquarters was intended to exercise direct supervision over field operations.

The principal AGRS operating units were the Field Operating Section and the Port Office. The former would conduct exhumation and casketing activities in the field. Commanded by a captain with two lieutenants acting as inspectors, and four professional embalmers assisted by eight technical helpers, this unit was an exact reproduction of the one employed by the American Graves Registration Service, QMC, in Europe following World War I. With a total strength of 43 officers and civilians, and such local labor as was required in any particular assignment, the Field Operating Section became responsible not only for maintaining prescribed standards in the exhumation and casketing of bodies, but for the transportation of bodies to shipping points and the completion of individual records relating to each successive phase of its operations.

The Port Office would be commanded by a major and staffed by a force of 2 commissioned officers and 42 civilians. Two such offices were to be established in each sector and would assume responsibility for the following functions: "(1) receipt of supplies; (2) distribution to sections in the field; (3) inspection, testing, and repair of caskets, shipping cases, etc., received from the United States; (4) manufacture of packing pillows for caskets and other essential items; (5) receipt and storage of casketed bodies; (6) inspection of cases received, cleaning and replacing of broken handles; (7) loading bodies on transport; (8) accomplishment of bills of lading, manifests, etc. [passenger lists, deceased]." ¹⁰

Consolidated figures of the AGRS table of organization included 12 Zones, 45 Sectors, 90 Port Offices and 270 Field Operating Sections. There was an aggregate personnel allotment, military and civilian, of 22,792. Military personnel totalled 3,189, including 2,622 commissioned officers. Totalling 19,603, the civilian component included 3,443 office workers, 3,420 morticians and technical assistants. The organic transport consisted of 5,895 motor vehicles, including passenger cars, trucks, and ambulances, with a servicing force of 924 mechanics and helpers. ¹¹

Recommendations embodied in part III of the policy study took a negative position in regard to the need of additional cemeteries at home and the acquisition of cemetery sites abroad. In view of an overwhelming consensus for the return of all dead, as manifested at

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pt. II, p. 12.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

the time in correspondence with next of kin, it was thought that active consideration of any program for the establishment of overseas cemeteries would be premature. In any event, the report observed that "the location of sites can be better chosen in an area after the country has returned to a peace status and the terrain, centers of population, communications systems and supply facilities assume a prewar normality."¹²

Any plan for extension of the national cemetery system lay for the present beyond the competence of the War Department. During the first month of hostilities, President Roosevelt disapproved a project for establishing the Willamette National Cemetery, near Portland, Oreg., on the ground that expenditures of labor in development of the land and allocation of required building materials would be inconsistent with the extraordinary demands imposed by war.¹³

Until the President saw fit to modify his policy in this regard, or the Congress initiated legislation looking to expansion of the system and called upon the War Department for technical information and advice, The Quartermaster General was, as already indicated, rigidly restricted to a negative attitude. Within this limited scope, part III of the policy study pointed out that available acreage in eight of the larger national cemeteries provided space for 160,000 graves. Since approximately 85 percent of the repatriated remains of World War I were interred in family plots or privately operated cemeteries, leaving only 5,300 for interment in the national system, and since there was no reason to believe that this ratio would be radically altered after World War II, it followed that existing space in the system could easily accommodate its share of a death roll far exceeding that of the first world conflict.

However satisfactory from a statistical point of view, the concentration of available burial space in a few cemeteries posed a problem that had already engaged the attention of veterans' organizations and, moreover, was destined within 3 months following submission of the policy study to assume such proportions as to persuade the Congress that disregard of agitation for a more equitable distribution of burial space would be impolitic. As will be seen in the section on the cemeterial problem, the House Committee on Military Affairs, 78th Congress, entertained legislation calling for large additions to the national cemetery system. In seeking information and advice on related technical aspects, the Congress removed all restrictions of policy heretofore imposed by the President on the War Department.

¹² *Ibid.*, pt. III, p. 1.

¹³ On 29 Dec 41. *Ibid.*, pt. III, p. 2.

Taken as a whole, Policy Study No. 34 reflected the uncertain conditions and fluctuating circumstances of war prevailing at the time of its preparation. Inability to make a fairly reliable approximation of total fatalities withheld much of the basic data essential to planning such a project. Again, want of knowledge concerning the geographical distribution of burial places at the conclusion of hostilities obscured and in a sense magnified the vast dimensions of the problem. While successive echelons of authority gave their concurrence to recommendations set forth in parts I and III, criticism of the proposed organization of AGRS overseas commands tended to ignore rather than come to grips with this important aspect of the problem. Indeed, the War Department went no further in its approval of the policy study than it had already gone by giving in death notices to thousands of next of kin the assurance that the war dead would, upon request, eventually be returned to the homeland.

Comment on section B of part II disclosed perplexities as forbidding and numerous as those that had beset the authors of the study. ASF Headquarters was critical of the whole concept of overseas organization. Existing War Department policy, it stated, offered no ready method of integrating in the various theater establishments those AGRS elements which would eventually assume responsibility for final disposition of the war dead. In questioning the advisability of "setting up elaborate Graves Registration Headquarters throughout the world," Maj. Gen. LeRoy Lutes, Director of Operations, ASF, recommended that consideration "should be given to the establishment of sections to fit in into Headquarters structures of the Theater of Operations," and that "the Quartermaster Graves Registration Unit TO 600-2, then in process of approval, might be included as a cell in the Communications Zone organization."¹⁴

Personnel Division, ASF, foresaw special difficulties in its own administrative province. Col. C. E. Nixon, the Deputy Director, stipulated that authorization of personnel for the world-wide organization outlined in Policy Study No. 34 must be established in accordance with existing commitments, and that whenever personnel became available for the purpose in question, all allotments should be made "by the War Department to the Theater Headquarters for distribution to the sectors as organized within their existing chain of command." It was observed in this connection that "the present commitment of personnel to supply and combat functions makes it mandatory that no portion of the recommended plan for the return of bodies from overseas be put into effect prior to the availability of

¹⁴ TS, Maj Gen LeRoy Lutes, Dir of Opns, ASF to Dir Control Div, ASF, Sep 43, sub: Dmbl Plng.

personnel at the end of the war."¹⁵ In other words, personnel requirements of the postwar program could not be met until the theater establishments into which AGRS elements must be fitted had lost their primary reason for existence and, for the most part, were passing into disuse.

Awareness of these difficulties was reflected by The Adjutant General in announcing War Department approval of those broad aspects of policy recommended in parts I and III of the study. With reference to part II, he added: "changing circumstances may make it necessary that a re-examination of the present plan take place with the conclusion of major hostilities in the European-African Theater."¹⁶

Reviewing authorities offered no comment on the detailed recommendations for establishment of a Memorial Division competent to furnish complete and reliable digests of burial statistics at any given time and give continuous attention to such phases of planning for the disposition of remains as "changing circumstances" might require before the end of hostilities against Germany appeared imminent. In fact, two such situations arose while Policy Study No. 34 was still under review, one being the designation of The Quartermaster General as Chief, AGRS, in Circular No. 206, War Department, 11 September 1943; the other, a request made by the 78th Congress in November 1943 for a War Department study in connection with proposed legislation on the national cemeteries.

The former measure, it should be noted, parenthetically, proceeded from a recommendation initiated by the Chief, Memorial Branch, on 15 July 1943, a month prior to submission of Policy Study No. 34.¹⁷ While the delegation of powers conferred by Circular No. 206 fell somewhat short of those proposed in part II of the policy study, and were designed primarily to eliminate duplication of effort and consequent confusion in the dissemination of burial information to next of kin, The Quartermaster General did acquire the right of corresponding directly with graves registration officers in the overseas theaters, thereby enabling him to realize more vividly than before that the formulation of wartime policies affecting care of the dead could not be divorced from problems that would condition the final disposition of remains.

It would appear that employment of Policy Study No. 34 as a ve-

¹⁵ TS, Col C. E. Nixon, Pers Dir, ASF, to Dir of Pers, ASF, 24 Sep 43, 1st Ind to above citation.

¹⁶ Ltr, Maj Gen J. A. Ulio, TAG to TQMG, 28 Nov 43, sub: Dmbl Plng (Disposal of the Dead).

¹⁷ Ltr, Brig Gen F. H. Pope, QMC to CG, ASF (thru Under S/W), 15 Jul 43, sub: Dissemination of Info re: GR Matters.

hicle to convey convincing evidence to higher authority that the proposed reorganization of the Memorial Branch was a prime requisite to effective planning for return of the dead had the effect of defeating the very purpose sought in using this device. Since General Gregory ignored section A of part II in transmitting the paper, none of the higher reviewing authorities took occasion to comment on a phase of the problem that lay within the jurisdiction of The Quartermaster General. Thereafter, efforts on the part of the Memorial Branch Chief to secure a divisional organization, or any substantial increase of personnel took the difficult form of representing a cause that had invoked the cold frown of official displeasure. A period of 9 months elapsed before any measure of recognition was accorded his persistent representations.

Planning Projects, October 1943-November 1945

Establishment and Reorganization of the Memorial Division

Designation of The Quartermaster General as Chief, AGRS, added to the burdens progressively imposed by war, particularly during the same period in which the Memorial Branch lost nearly half of its effective strength. Late in September the Branch Chief called this anomalous situation to the attention of the Personnel Authorization Officer, OQMG, stating that paragraphs 5 and 6 of War Department Circular No. 206 directed the Chief, AGRS, to furnish information on the location of graves to next of kin as cemeteries were released from security regulations. It was estimated that the prospective release of cemeteries in North Africa and Sicily alone would require the preparation of 12,000 letters by the Overseas Section. Although ill-equipped to cope even with inquiries seeking burial information which could not as yet be disclosed, the Chief of the Memorial Branch was, by reason of public demand, persuaded "to recommend clearance on all cemeteries situated in overseas areas which are behind the combat zone and can be assumed as the final temporary burial sites until operations are begun after the war to return our dead to the United States." This policy, it was explained, "would mean additional cemeteries to be recommended for clearance to the Military Intelligence as the invasion moves forward and reoccupied areas [become] stabilized so that the grave locations furnished to the nearest of kin will possess no military value to the enemy."¹⁸ These current and prospective obligations were then offered in justification of a request that "The

¹⁸ Ltr, Col R. P. Harbold, Chief, Mem Br to Personnel Authorization Officer (thru Dir Svc Instls Div), 28 Sep 43, no sub.

Overseas Section be considered a new installation incident to our entry into the war and that due allotment of civilian personnel necessary for the efficient operation of this section be authorized over and above the existing allotment of 54 for the Memorial Branch, and the existing ceiling for the OQMG.”¹⁹

These recommendations led to a survey for the purpose of establishing a scientific estimate of personnel requirements of the Overseas Section. On 27 October, the Chief of the Organization, Planning, and Control (OP&C) Division survey staff reported six general recommendations that were calculated to increase the productive capacity of the section to an extent that would obviate the need of additional employees. Success of the several measures depended on the outcome of one which proposed a “Photographic Process” in “creating” two basic records, that is, the AGO “Report of Death” and the “Graves Registration Burial Report.” The results did not meet expectations. As conceded by OP&C experts in a subsequent survey, the “Photographic Method” was found to be impractical, not only contributing to greater confusion instead of achieving the promised increase in productive capacity but also defeating the purpose for which these records were maintained.

Confronting this unhappy situation, the Branch Chief addressed a 10-page memorandum to The Quartermaster General in which he reiterated his former recommendations for additional employees and presented a severe arraignment of the personnel policy that, in so far as an intelligent estimate of the extraordinary workloads imposed by hostilities was concerned, had virtually ignored the existence of a state of war. While OP&C specialists had conducted elaborate surveys for the purpose of examining the abnormalities manifested in mounting backlogs, and had suggested remedies intended to restore the branch to a normal state of efficiency, it was now evident that a drastic correction of the underlying causes of failing productivity, rather than continued treatment of surface symptoms, must be undertaken without further delay.²⁰

This indictment of policy was followed on 5 April by recommendations for a divisional setup of six branches, including a Graves Registration Branch, which would take over expanding activities of the Overseas Section, and a Planning and Requirements Branch which was to furnish data and recommendations to the House Committee on Military Affairs in connection with legislation for expansion of the national cemetery system.²¹

Action on the divisional organization was finally taken in May

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Memo, Col R. P. Harbold, Chief, Mem Br for TQMG, 30 Mar 44, no sub.

²¹ Ltr, Col R. P. Harbold, Chief, Mem Br to TQMG, 5 Apr 44.

1944, just one month before the cross-Channel assault on Fortress Europe. In contrast to the organization proposed by the Branch Chief and his advisors, the division then established comprised three branches—Administrative, Cemeterial, and Planning and Registration, together with two staff elements—a Special Assistant on Policy Matters and a Technical Advisor to the Director. With an aggregate strength of 105 employees, the distribution gave 56 to the Planning and Registration Branch, 26 to the Cemeterial Branch and 5 to the Administrative Branch. The Planning and Registration Branch, it should be noted, included two diverse elements—the Planning and Requirements Section and the Graves Registration Section.²²

Although the volume of work to be performed by the Graves Registration Section admittedly required an allotment of 51 persons, or approximately 50 percent of the aggregate strength of the division and 91 percent of the Planning and Registration Branch, recognition of the functional importance of this growing section was stubbornly denied. Furthermore, its incorporation in the same branch with a section which was concerned exclusively with cemeterial affairs in the United States presented a combination of dissimilar elements. Yet, while every dictate of the principles of sound organization argued against the association of such unlike elements, there was a certain logic in the groupment of agencies which, in the near future, would undertake expanding responsibilities, quite apart from those identified with traditional functions of the division.

Even though a step in the right direction, the advance was made in so hesitant a manner as scarcely to indicate an appreciation of developments pointing to the probability that the Memorial Division would shortly undertake three separate missions—one involving an ambitious cemetery construction project in the United States, the second relating to final disposition of the war dead, the third a continuation of its traditional function, as enhanced by the multiplication of national cemeteries and an enormous increase in the number of living veterans eligible for future burial in this enlarged system.

Indications late in 1944 that the Congress seemed inclined to favor a revolutionary transformation of the national cemetery system encouraged recommendations for a corresponding expansion of the Memorial Division. Dated 8 March 1945, an organizational chart outlined a division to be composed of the Planning and Requirements Branch, the Graves Registration Branch, the Cemeterial

²² (1) Memo, E. O'Toole, OR&C Div for Brig Gen H. A. Barnes, Dir OP&C Div, 13 Apr 44, No. 44. (2) Organizational chart, Mem Div, prepared by Orgn Plng Br, OP&C Div, 15 Apr 44. (3) OQMG OO No. 25-78, 6 May 44.

Branch, and the Administrative Branch.²³ Out of an aggregate personnel strength of 640 awarded to this proposed division, the Planning and Requirements Branch, together with its Field Service of 12 Regional Offices, received an allotment of 400, or 62 percent of the whole. The Graves Registration Branch ranked second in order of numerical strength, having an allotment of 179, or 28 percent of the whole. As compared to the old line branches—Cemeterial and Administrative—but excluding the Planning and Requirements Branch, the proportional strength of the Graves Registration Branch was given an enormous increase—approximately 74 percent, as compared to 50 percent of the whole in the scheme of April 1944. Furthermore, an Operations Section was suggested for this greatly enlarged branch.

The order of importance of the three separate missions of the Memorial Division seems evident in these various proposals. In recognition of prior claims of the new cemeterial project, an elaborate branch organization was devised for its development. Attaching secondary importance to the return program, the plan gave a substantial numerical increase and some diversification of functions to the Graves Registration Branch. Relatively speaking, only slight increases were awarded the old line branches. Whatever error of judgment there may have been in the determination of priorities and suggestions for a detailed setup for the development of one mission to the relative neglect of others, the proposed organization was sound in that it broke up the anomalous relationship between units identified with the overseas dead and national cemeteries in the homeland. While no action was taken on the tentative chart of 8 March 1945, it reflected tendencies that persisted until all construction and maintenance operations in connection with national cemeteries were assigned to the Corps of Engineers.

The faulty logic of associating dissimilar elements in the Planning and Registration Branch, as established in May 1944, persisted for another four months. Pursuant to recommendations of the Director, this branch organization was abolished on 14 June 1945 and its components were set up under their former section designations as independent branches.²⁴ An Operations Section was also added to the Graves Registration Branch, increasing again the personnel strength of this Branch in relation to other elements of the Division

²³ Memo, Col R. P. Harbold, Dir of Mem Div for TQMG, 6 Apr 45, sub: Reorgn of Mem Div, Incl: Orgn Chart for Mem Div, 8 Mar 45.

²⁴ (1) Ltr, Chief, Mem Div, to TQMG, 12 Jun 45, sub: Reorgn of the Mem Div. (2) OQMG OO No. 75-78-A, 14 Jun 45.

and marking it as the nucleus for future expansion.²⁵ Thus, a divisional organization of four branches—Graves Registration, Planning and Requirements, Cemeterial, and Administrative—and similar in its general features to the one proposed during August 1943 in Policy Study No. 34, came into being one month after the surrender of Germany.

Assignment of Complete Responsibility to Chief, AGRS, for Return of United States War Dead

Within two months following reorganization of the Memorial Branch as a division, the Director instigated a planning project which had not been contemplated in the instructions calling for preparation of Policy Study No. 34 but which now pressed for immediate attention. By May 1944 the United Nations had gained control of the Mediterranean region and had turned the tide of war in the Pacific Ocean and on the Russian steppes. Plans for the cross-Channel attack against Germany had been perfected; assault divisions of the Allied Expeditionary Force awaited only the signal to storm ashore and breach the outer defenses of *Festung Europa*.

In June 1944 Colonel Harbold, Director of the Memorial Division, submitted a proposal that total responsibility for the return of all American dead should be assigned to The Quartermaster General. In supporting this measure, the Director called attention to the vast area which would be embraced by the return operation and to the fact that, however executed, The Quartermaster General would be required "to lay the groundwork for such return." Furthermore, he pointed out that unified action would avoid confusion and duplication of effort in the exhumation of remains in overseas cemeteries by several agencies at different times, and, finally, that a single authority would "simplify negotiations with foreign governments in obtaining clearances, permits and authorization for repatriation of all American dead, and permit of the sites to be immediately returned to their rightful owners."²⁶

Following approval of Colonel Harbold's proposal, the Commanding General, ASF, instructed Quartermaster General Gregory to set up a conference in the OQMG on 25 August and send letters of invitation explaining the purpose of the meeting to all departments and agencies of the Government interested in the return program. By special request, the Chief of Transportation and the Director,

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ Ltr, Col R. P. Harbold, Dir, Mem Div, to TQMG, 20 Jan 44, no sub.

Plans and Operations for Demobilization, ASF, were to attend the conference.²⁷

Response of the departments and agencies was prompt, cordial, and favorably disposed toward the policies indicated in the invitation. On 25 August General Gregory struck the keynote of the conference in stating the desirability of formulating an operational procedure which would "give maximum expedition, economy and unity in effecting the return of America's war dead from temporary cemeteries scattered throughout the world."²⁸

It was not to be expected that complete unanimity of opinion on all details could be achieved at a single meeting. In fact, the agenda was limited to a brief analysis of War Department policies governing return of the dead and an exposition of the organization and functions of the postwar AGRS, as detailed in Policy Study No. 34. Eight charts portrayed almost to the point of over-simplification the larger geographical and statistical aspects of the problem, as well as the functional relationship of The Quartermaster General to other Governmental agencies engaged in the enterprise. An open discussion followed the presentation of policy and organizational relationships.

As the only participant other than the Army, with a large number of overseas dead, the Navy voiced through its representative, Mr. W. S. Douglas, the opinion that "all communications between the Navy Department, Marine Corps and the Coast Guard Service and the next of kin should be conducted by their respective agencies rather than by the Army." Mr. Douglas also suggested that the question of providing escorts for remains should be considered in light of the fact that the Navy would prefer a blue jacket for its own dead. Similar sentiments were entertained by the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard Service.

While no decisions or commitments were made during the deliberations of 25 August, the questions raised at that time and subsequently addressed to The Quartermaster General gave rise to a detailed analysis of many problems that had heretofore been considered as abstract propositions. The Navy's desire to poll next of kin of its own dead called attention to the fact that The Quartermaster Gen-

²⁷ (1) Ltr. Lt Gen Somervell, CG, ASF to TQMG, 29 Jul 44, 1st Ind on Ltr, Brig Gen W. F. Tomkins, Special Training Div, ASF, to CG, ASF, 21 Jul 44, no sub. (2) Ltr, TQMG to the Foreign Service Administration, Dept of State, *et al.*, 10 Aug 44, no sub. (3) The Departments and agencies which received invitations were the Department of State, the Navy Department (including the Commandants, USMC and USCGS), Chief of Transportation, Chief of Chaplains, American Red Cross, U. S. Employees' Compensation Commission Administration, U. S. Maritime Commission and the American Field Service Commission.

²⁸ Stenographic record, conf of 25 Aug 44, OQMG, Wash., D. C.

eral, who must assume responsibility for determining exhumation and shipment schedules, should have access to all Navy burial records. Accordingly, representatives of the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, which directed graves registration operations in the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard Service, and Col. Mayo A. Darling, Chief of the Graves Registration Section, Memorial Division, agreed on 29 September that the Navy Department would supply the Memorial Division with copies of its overseas burial records and assign a liaison officer for permanent duty with the Graves Registration Section, together with such additional personnel as might subsequently be requested by the Director of the Memorial Division.²⁹ Other procedural and policy problems were examined by Colonel Darling and Mr. Douglas and summarized in a memorandum to the Director, Memorial Division, with the suggestion that "your opinion and recommendations on these various matters will assist this Bureau in arranging for complete co-operation toward one common end."³⁰

Having voluntarily enlisted in the enterprise as a subordinate member, the Navy was not disposed to await recommendations on matters affecting its own special interests. The Bureau of Medicine and Surgery sought precise interpretations on the following points of policy: (1) plans for the simultaneous evacuation of areas; (2) the general subject of isolated burials; (3) recovery of bodies washed ashore on remote coastlines and buried by friendly natives; (4) procedures that would apply in the exhumation of mass burials and burials containing fragments of unidentified bodies; (5) contemplated procedures to govern identification by AGRS units of the remains of Navy and Marine Corps personnel killed at the beginning of hostilities in areas lost to the enemy and subsequently recovered; (6) the transfer of jurisdiction over cemeteries established by the Navy or Marine Corps to the Army Graves Registration Service prior to exhumation of remains; (7) the effect of a majority vote of next of kin favoring permanent burial in the area where the dead had fallen.³¹

The explicit and detailed reply on all points raised by the Navy was far more than a list of answers appended to a questionnaire. Indeed, planning for the return of remains emerges in this document from an announcement of theoretical principles to the practical con-

²⁹ Ltr, W. S. Douglas, Civilian Assistant, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, Navy Dept to Col R. P. Harbold, Dir, Mem Div, 29 Sep 44, no sub.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ In answering the questions put by the Navy, Colonel Harbold restated each question and appended his answers in Ltr, Col R. P. Harbold, Dir, Mem Div to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, 16 Oct 44. The original letter from the Bureau cannot be found in OQMG Mail and Records Branch.

sideration of concrete situations. The Navy, for instance, was informed that the large areas assigned to the 12 zone commands described in Policy Study No. 34 would be evacuated simultaneously, while evacuation of subordinate sector areas would be accomplished in rotation. Then, having stated the policy, suggestions were offered as a guide to the Navy's participation in this phase of the program. After all burial records, including duplicates of those filed for a particular area by the Navy in the Graves Registration Section, had been co-ordinated, checked, and corrected, the Navy would be apprised of exhumation orders sent to that area. Thereupon, it would be expected to contact the next of kin for shipping instructions, advising them that all remains will be returned to a given address or shipped to a designated national cemetery, if so desired. The date of arrival in the United States of each shipment containing Navy dead would be posted at the port of debarkation in time for the Navy representative at that port to arrange for escorts to accompany the bodies to their appointed destinations.³²

Replies to all other questions were equally explicit and, in fact, anticipated many procedures later written into AGRS manuals. But one reply failed to foresee developments that subsequently modified the announced policy of returning all the dead from an overseas area if a 70 percent vote of next of kin favored return to the homeland. Replying to the Navy's request as to the probable effect of a majority vote favoring burial in an area where the dead had fallen, the Director of the Memorial Division stated that such a contingency seemed highly improbable. Noting that out of 20,000 letters received by his office no more than four or five correspondents had expressed opposition to a uniform policy of returning the dead, he nevertheless conceded that "if a poll of the next of kin results in a majority desiring the remains left overseas, then the matter will be taken up for a determination as to the establishment of American cemeteries abroad."³³

While making no commitments as to the future moving away from a negative policy that would disregard the wishes of a minority group comprising 30 percent of all next of kin, the concession stated in this connection tacitly admitted that defense of the present policy would be difficult in face of demands for a positive attitude on the part of any considerable minority favoring burial of the dead

³² This arrangement was later modified by shipping bodies from the New York and San Francisco Ports of Embarkation through distribution centers in the United States, and assembling escorts at these centers to accompany the individual remains to their final destinations.

³³ *Ibid.*

wherever they fell. As matters eventuated, less than 70 percent of the next of kin requested return to the homeland.³⁴

The establishment of working relations with the Transportation Corps accompanied the development of co-operative planning with the Navy Department. On 6 October, just 2 days after submission by the Memorial Division to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery of the interpretive statement on tentative policies and procedures governing joint operations in the theaters, the Chief of Transportation notified General Gregory that the plan presented at the conference of 25 August had been reviewed by his office and considered sound. Except for certain minor details, it could be effectively implemented by the Transportation Corps. In reply to information as to dimensions of the standard casket then being designed for the shipment of remains, the Chief of Transportation was apprised that "specifications had been submitted to the Casket Manufacturing Industry and that a conference of the representatives of the interested services would be called as soon as the industries' recommendations became available."³⁵ Despite hopes of an early solution, delays in allocating critical materials for casket construction postponed further consideration of this phase of the planning program beyond the period of hostilities.

*Planning for Quartermaster Graves Registration Service Area Commands
(Zone of Interior)*

Just as the impact of expanding battle fronts in the Mediterranean region, Continental Europe and the Western Pacific had dissuaded various echelons of the War and Navy Departments from the comfortable position that re-examination of plans for final disposition of the war dead should be deferred until the dust of war had settled in the European-African areas, so the accumulation of thousands of American dead in temporary military cemeteries and isolated burial places beyond the seas convinced responsible officers both at home and abroad by midsummer of 1944 that the continuation of effective graves operations in the theaters should be accompanied by organizational changes designed in large measure to anticipate requirements of the return program.³⁶ This point of view, like that supporting expansion of the national cemetery system, found expression long before the defeat of Germany was assured. Instead of waiting

³⁴ Statistical Data of Casualties, World War II, and Disposition of Remains, as of 30 Jun 56, Mem Div, OQMG.

³⁵ Col R. P. Harbold, Dir, Mem Div, to Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, 16 Oct 44.

³⁶ Allied Forces Headquarters, Italy, inquired as to the status of such plans on 1 Sep 44. See footnote No. 37 below.

for the dust to settle and then substituting elements of the postwar AGRS in place of the theater graves registration services, this new concept provided for the insertion of special type units in the communications zones of the overseas theaters. In a sense, the proposal amounted to acceptance of the suggestion offered by General Lutes in connection with his objections to the organizational scheme recommended in the policy study of August 1943.

The concern felt at this time for graves registration problems in the theaters was not entirely dominated by a belief that organizational adjustments should be dictated by future requirements. Present needs were given equal recognition. While the Graves Registration Company (TOE 10-297) was regarded as adequate in achieving its assigned mission—evacuation, identification, and burial of battlefield dead—the maintenance of large military cemeteries in rear areas absorbed large detachments from the assigned number of theater Graves Registration Service companies for the performance of activities that could be satisfactorily executed by newly designed types of supervisory and field units operating as a Zone of Interior organization under The Quartermaster General. It became increasingly evident to graves registration officers in the theater and in the Memorial Division that continued dilution of the limited number of Graves Registration companies acting in direct support of combat could only be halted by the establishment of such an organization in those rear areas that presented conditions relative to care of the dead more nearly approximating the situation in the Zone of Interior than at the front.

For immediate purposes, these proposals offered the advantage of circumventing War Department objection to the activation of AGRS area and zone commands without regard to existing theater establishments. Furthermore, adoption of the scheme promised to relieve theater commanders of burdensome administrative responsibilities in rear areas which distracted attention from pursuit of their tactical missions. Allied Force Headquarters at Caserta, Italy, was first in seeking this measure of relief. On 1 September 1944, just five days following the conference which examined the problem of assigning complete responsibility to The Quartermaster General for the return of American dead, the Commanding General in Italy expressed his interest to the War Department as follows:

Request for early radio reply as to present status of your proposed plan for operation by Zone of Interior graves registration units of all cemeteries in rear areas of this theater for use in planning purposes affecting personnel and service units.

Suggest consideration as development of this plan with a flexibility that would permit early turnover within entire Mediterranean Theater or area of all cemeteries to Zone of Interior.³⁷

During October, Col. Thomas R. Howard, former Chief of the Memorial Branch and then Graves Registration Officer in the Mediterranean area, was assigned for temporary duty in the OQMG to collaborate with the Memorial and Military Planning Divisions, in preparing an adaptation of this scheme for the Mediterranean Theater area. Under the title "Organization, Quartermaster Graves Registration Service (Zone of Interior)," ³⁸ Colonel Howard presented in an introductory statement the proposition that—

. . . as the Combat Zone moves forward and no further need is held for manning the rear areas by service troops in support of combat, cemetery facilities in such rearward areas shall pass to the control of the Zone of the Interior Graves Registration Service Area Command.³⁹

In other words, elements of the proposed Quartermaster Graves Registration area commands were to be phased into the existing theater establishments, while the Zone of Interior, accompanying each phase of expansion in any given theater, would be extended overseas and, upon the conclusion of hostilities, embrace the entire operational area.

The total organization of these Zone of Interior area commands, and their personnel buildup, it was stated, would be based on estimates of operational requirements during four successive phases of development. Colonel Howard described these phases in the following words:

1st Phase—Cemetery Security, Caretaking and Maintenance.

To be initiated at such time that it becomes impracticable to provide security, care and maintenance of cemeteries in rear areas through continued use of regularly constituted Graves Registration companies of the normally determined theater overhead.

2d Phase—Supply, Finance, and Medical Responsibilities.

To be initiated at such time that, through application of a redeployment program or for other cogent reasons, technical service facilities no longer are available in the area, zones or sectors and Graves Registration units must become self-sufficient in these regards.

³⁷ Rad 90302, Allied Force Hq, Caserta, Italy, to WD, 1 Sep 44.

³⁸ The study consisted of an introductory statement entitled "Introductory Statement of Phased Development of Activation of Graves Registration Area Commands and Subordinate Units," together with 5 exhibits labeled Tabs A-E. This study is hereafter cited as Orgn QM GRS (ZI).

³⁹ Orgn QM GRS (ZI), Introductory Statement.

3d Phase—Reception and Information.

To be initiated at such time that commercial transport are open to civilian travel; to receive and furnish information to visiting personnel . . . and to conduct visitors on tours of inspection and observation of cemeteries. . . .

4th Phase—Exhumation and Repatriation.

To be initiated at such time that provisions must be developed for repatriation of the United States dead and transfer of custody of enemy and allied dead shall be made to the appropriate nation.⁴⁰

The first step in setting up an area command would be taken whenever conditions similar to those indicated in phase I obtained in the theater. At such time, the activation of cemeterial caretaking teams and maintenance units would be effected. At the same time, provisional zone and sector supervisory headquarters establishments would be activated, the sector headquarters "under a table of distribution comparable to the Platoon Headquarters, type AB, T/O&E 10-500," and the zone establishment conforming to one "comparable to Company Headquarters, type AC, T/O&E 10-500."⁴¹

Phase 2, which marked the shift to self-sufficiency in regard to technical service facilities, would require the expansion of sector and zone headquarters to the Company Type AC and Battalion Type AD, replacing the platoon and company types respectively. During phases 1 and 2, the administration and technical control of Zone of Interior (operating units) and supervisory headquarters establishments was to be exercised by The Quartermaster General through a Field Agent on duty in the theater. Selection of this officer and the delegation of authority would be made by The Quartermaster General, with the consent of the Theater Commander.⁴²

According to Colonel Howard's introductory statement, the area command would be established "at an appropriate time prior to the eventuation of conditions outlined in phase 3." The Area Commander would then assume direct control under The Quartermaster General. Holding the rank of Brigadier General, he would be assisted by a headquarters staff of 42 commissioned officers, 7 warrant officers and 142 other ranks. With the addition of Reception Teams during phase 3 and Exhumation Teams during phase 4, the organization of the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service Area Command would be brought to completion. The Area Commander, under direction of The Quartermaster General, would assume re-

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Introductory Statement and Tab B.

⁴² *Ibid.*, Tab B.

sponsibility for administrative and technical supervision of all activities relating to the following functions:

- (a) Security, care, and maintenance of United States temporary cemeteries.
- (b) Exhumation and repatriation of United States deceased.
- (c) Transfer of custody of Allied and Enemy dead buried by United States personnel to the appropriate Nation.
- (d) Rehabilitation of abandoned cemeterial lands and their return to their rightful owners.
- (e) Reception and orientation of visiting relatives and friends of United States deceased and representatives of various Governments and others acting in an official capacity in connection with graves registration matters.
- (f) Such other functions as may be especially delegated them by The Quartermaster General.⁴³

Territorial boundaries assigned to the area command included North Africa, Sicily, Southern Italy, and the Balkan States, all of which were designated as subordinate zone commands and bore numerical designations, 1 to 4, in the order mentioned. Zone 2 included the Islands of Corsica and Sardinia. Zone 4, it will be noted, embraced territory beyond the assigned theater boundary. Justified on grounds that many American flyers had fallen in this Zone, the arrangements here formed a precedent for adding contiguous allied or enemy countries to theater areas in determining the areas which were eventually assigned to the AGRS overseas commands.⁴⁴

On 11 November 1944, General Gregory submitted the study through channels, with recommendations "that the plan as outlined . . . for the Mediterranean theater of operations be approved and referred to the Commanding General, Mediterranean Theater of Operations," and that "the Quartermaster General be authorized to present through technical channels to other Theater commanders, the plan, herewith, for the Mediterranean Theater of Operations and arrange for the implementation thereof by the respective Theater commanders."⁴⁵

Plans and Operations, ASF, interposed objections which virtually nullified the hopes entertained by General Gregory in submitting the plan. Major General Lutes, Director, Plans and Operations, contended that responsibility for all military cemeteries within the geographical boundaries of an operational theater resides in the Theater Commander and that this responsibility can be abolished or

⁴³ *Ibid.*, Tab C.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Introductory Statement and Tab E.

⁴⁵ Memo, TQMG for CG, ASF, 11 Nov 44, Attn: Dir, Plans and Opns.

abridged only by inactivation of the theater or alteration of its territorial boundaries. It followed that until one or the other of these transformations had taken place "responsibility of Army Service Forces (The Quartermaster General) for overseas cemeteries [should] be limited to technical advice and assistance in formulation of policies as required by Circular No. 206, War Department, 1943."⁴⁶ In short, none of the attributes of power and prerogative originally vested in a theater command could be alienated by the Commanding General, as proposed in this instance by the Mediterranean Theater Commander, or usurped by the chief of any technical service. While there was no objection to action on the part of a Theater Commander looking to reorganization of his graves registration service along lines recommended by The Quartermaster General, there could be no delegation of authority or transfer of responsibility that in effect would constitute a divided command within the theater area.

Interested divisions of the War Department General Staff approved the amendment suggested by General Lutes and indorsed by the Commanding General, ASF. Personnel Division (G-1) raised objections which defeated the last possibility of realizing the objectives sought in devising the scheme. After noting that "no increase of personnel and grades to overhead allotment is involved," G-1 observed that the grades proposed for Area Headquarters, Quartermaster Graves Registration Service (Tab C) were excessive. It added: "However, as personnel and grades will be absorbed in the theater overhead allotments, allocation of grades for the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service will be a function of the overseas commander." This is to say that the Mediterranean Theater Commander must provide the strength from his own overhead to man the service designed for his area. Thus restricted, the plan was returned through channels on 15 December to The Quartermaster General, with instructions that "it be rewritten, incorporating the recommended changes."⁴⁷

Recasting the plan involved no changes in organizational structure other than a restatement of relationships between the Theater Commander and the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service

⁴⁶ Maj Gen LeRoy Lutes, Dir, Plans and Opns, ASF to ACofS, OPD, WDGS, 25 Nov 44, Comment No. 2 to above cited Memo.

⁴⁷ (1) Col J. W. Bowen, Chief, Mediterranean Theater Sec, Theater Group, ODP, in turn to G-4, G-3, G-1, 27 Nov 44. (2) Col S. A. Blair, Chief, Plng Br, G-4, in turn to G-3, G-1, 20 Nov 44. (3) Brig Gen W. W. Irvine, Deputy CofS, G-3; in turn to G-1, OPD, 7 Dec 44. (4) Lt Col G. B. Walker, Jr., Asst Exec G-1 to OPD, 13 Dec 44. (5) Col C. P. Smith, Actg Chief, Mediterranean Theater Sec, Theater Group, to CG, ASF, 15 Dec 44.

Area Commander, on the one hand, and between the Chief, AGRS, and the Theater Commander, on the other. This was accomplished by substituting for Colonel Howard's introductory statement a preamble entitled "Phase Development of Graves Registration Service Area Commands and Subordinate Units Required for the Care of Military Cemeteries and for the Repatriation of American War Dead." In brief, the new preamble offered the three following amendments: (1) The Area Commander would be under the administration and operational control of the Quartermaster of the command, who would continue to be responsible for the accomplishment of Graves Registration Service activities in accordance with provisions of section II, Circular No. 2, War Department, 1 January 1945, and such policies as were announced by The Quartermaster General;⁴⁸ (2) The Quartermaster General would assume complete control of all graves registration service activities when, due to discontinuance of a theater or a readjustment of its geographical boundaries, responsibility for military cemeteries in such circumstances passed from the Theater Commander to the Zone of Interior; (3) the initial activation of units of the Quartermaster Graves Registration Area commands "will be accomplished by utilization of personnel now employed in the theater and charged to the theater troop ceiling."⁴⁹

After resubmission and subsequent approval by the War Department, The Adjutant General transmitted the plan to all overseas commands, with the notation that it "is not to be construed as a basis for an increase in the theater personnel or troop basis."⁵⁰

Shortage of military manpower was the real obstacle to establishing self-contained Quartermaster Graves Registration Service area commands that would upon the cessation of hostilities have been capable of initiating final operations for disposal of the war dead. Some progress was made with limited service personnel in activating Zone of Interior units, but hardly on a scale that would have thoroughly tested the scheme. Thus, while falling short of the objective sought by its sponsors, it did offer something more toward setting up a postwar organization than would have been derived from an untried paper plan. This contribution is reflected in the AGRS or-

⁴⁸ Section II, Circular No. 2, WD, 1 Jan 45 incorporated the text of Circular No. 206, WD, 11 Sep 43, along with recent changes covering report of casualties and dissemination of burial information, etc. Since the promulgation of Circular No. 2 fell between the WDGS's direction for rewriting of the plan and general Gregory's submission of the amended version, he cited Circular No. 2, WD, 1945, instead of Circular No. 206, WD, 1943, as General Lutes did previously in the same connection.

⁴⁹ Memo, TQMG for CG, ASF, 13 Jan 45, Incl. 1, Tab A.

⁵⁰ Ltr, TAG to CinC, SWPA *et al.*, 30 Jan 45, sub: Organization for the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service.

ganization proposed by the *Plan for Repatriation of the Dead of World War II and Establishment of Permanent United States Military Cemeteries at Home and Abroad*, as approved 8 September 1945.

Joint Planning for Removal of Remains from Abandoned Cemeteries

Interservice planning for the final disposition of war remains was not restricted to an exchange of views between the OQMG and officers representing the Navy Department and other agencies of the Government interested in the return program. The problem of maintaining temporary cemeteries established at the outset of operations in the South Pacific became complicated during October 1944 by demands on all available shipping to support amphibious assaults that were pressing the front of attack toward the home waters of Japan. Proposals for abandonment of naval bases in the Samoan Defense Group prompted a recommendation for the removal of remains from temporary cemeteries in that area to the Tutuila Military Cemetery.⁵¹

Disapproval of this project by Admiral Nimitz on the ground that no sanction for it could be found in existing directives⁵² led to a review of the case by Admiral E. J. King, Commander in Chief, United States Fleet. Noting in a Memorandum (JCS 1195) addressed to the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) that "there exists no policy expressed or implied regarding disinterment and reinterment of remains," Admiral King added: "It is considered that such a policy will be needed and that it should be made joint."⁵³

With the concurrence of General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, Memorandum JCS 1195 was referred to the Joint Logistics Committee, JCS, for study and recommendations. Acting under Col. R. P. Harbold, Director of the Memorial Division, as "Steering Member," a subcommittee authorized by the Joint Logistics Committee and composed of 10 Army and 2 Navy Officers framed a set of recommendations which was approved and embodied in JCS Policy Memorandum No. 12. On 17 February 1945, a month following transmission to overseas commanders of the plan for establishing Quartermaster Graves Registration Service area commands, copies of the policy memorandum and the text of a JCS

⁵¹ Ltr, Admiral I. H. Mayfield, CofS, Samoan Defense Group to CinC, U. S. Pacific Fleet, 31 Oct 44.

⁵² Ltr, Admiral J. H. Towers, Deputy CinC, U. S. Pacific Fleet and POA, to CinC, U. S. Fleet, 23 Nov 44, 1st Ind to above cited Ltr. Reference was made in this Indorsement to the following directives concerning disposition of Navy remains: (a) BU M&S ONZO/A 14-6 (121) of 25 Jun 42; (b) BU M&S QWZO/A 14-6 (121) of 4 Mar 43; (c) Sec Nav Dispatch 261900 of 26 Jun 42.

⁵³ Memo, Admiral E. J. King, CinC, U. S. Fleet for JCofS (Memo JCS 1195), 11 Dec 44.

directive for all Theater Commanders were transmitted to the Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations Division (G-1) and to the Aide of the Commander in Chief, United States Fleet, for action.⁵⁴

Briefly, JCS Policy Memorandum No. 12 required (1) that the Graves Registration Service of the Army would accomplish the exhumation and concentration of American dead "in such larger cemeteries as may be located nearest such places where there will be an Army installation and as may be readily accessible to promote expeditious repatriation of all our service dead," (2) that such exhumation operations must not be conducted on a scale that would interfere with military operations or divert waterborne military or naval transportation from assignments previously made by appropriate commanders, (3) that, whenever the conduct of exhumation and concentration activities would interfere with military operations or disrupt existing transportation schedules, the Department of State would endeavor "to obtain the cooperation of the appropriate foreign government controlling the base in providing for adequate security and caretaking of the cemetery."

Planning for Extension of the National Cemetery System

While prevailing opinion held that re-examination of plans for the final disposition of remains should await the conclusion of major hostilities in Africa and Europe, the problem of expanding the national cemetery system in order to provide adequate burial space against future needs commanded continuous attention from November 1943, when Congress first sought the collaboration of the War Department in drafting legislation for additional cemeteries. Accompanying the development of four other separate planning projects, the scope of which has been described in the foregoing sections, treatment of the cemetery problem tended to emphasize the desirability of changing cemeterial policy so as to facilitate the multiplication of national cemeteries rather than the requirements imposed by the return program. An understanding of the issues involved in this endeavor requires a brief survey of the historical development of the system.

Growth of the American system of national cemeteries has been conditioned from its beginning by cross currents of executive action and legislative regulation. Established under the Act of July 17, 1862, authorizing The President "to purchase lands to be used for a national cemetery for all who shall die in the service of the country," the system contained 34 cemeteries at the end of the Civil War and 73 when the reburial program was brought to completion in

⁵⁴ Memo, Capt E. D. Graves, Jr., Dep Sec, JCS for ACofS, Opns Div, WDGS, and for Aide to CinC, U. S. Fleet, re: Policy Memo No. 12, 17 Feb 45.

1870. With grave markers counting over 300,000 war remains, and restricting the right of burial to those who had been killed in battle or died of disease during the war, this system was intended to serve the same purpose as is achieved by the overseas cemeteries of World War I and II now administered by the American Battle Monuments Commission.

This purpose did not survive the pressure of postwar events. Congress, sensitive to the influence wielded by the Grand Army of the Republic, extended in the Act of March 3, 1873, the right of burial to all honorably discharged veterans of the Civil War. Confronted meanwhile with burial problems arising from two decades of conflict with Indian tribes in the western territories, the War Department established additional national cemeteries and thus destroyed the complete identity of the system with the Civil War. Interment of those who fell beyond the seas in the Spanish-American War followed as a matter of course the practice invoked on the Great Plains. Then, on 11 June 1899, the Secretary of War extended in an administrative interpretation of existing law and custom the right of burial to honorably discharged veterans of the conflict with Spain. At the end of World War I, Congress gave this pronouncement the full force of law, and extended its provisions to the veterans of all wars, past and future, in the act approved April 15, 1920.

In the process of liberalizing requirements for burial, it cannot be said that the War Department has always acted as a restraining influence on the Congress. While opposing the law of 1873, the Department established a precedent for extending the right to veterans of all wars. It then took the initiative in opening up an area which may be described as "second degree eligibility," that is, eligibility conferred by virtue of the family relation. As now recorded, burials of eligibles of the second degree amount to 80 percent of those of the first degree. By the end of World War I, the practice of interring wives beside the remains of their soldier husbands had become general. Special requests for the interment of minor dependents and dependent adult daughters were seldom denied.

These additions to the laws governing eligibility had not as yet caused any of the serious consequences predicted by the War Department in its opposition to the act which extended the right of burial to Civil War veterans. During the years 1873-1919, national cemeteries afforded little attraction as burial places to Civil War veterans. A large majority resided in remote rural communities, and many joined the westward migration. Less than 3.5 percent of all eligible veterans, including those of the Spanish-American War,

used the privilege. Yet a significant trend in the population growth of the nation toward large urban centers modified this apparent indifference toward national cemeteries. In justifying a special fund for enlarging the acreage of Cypress Hill National Cemetery in 1883, the War Department estimated that 10 percent of the veteran population residing in the metropolitan area of New York would seek burial in this cemetery.

Extension of the burial privilege to the dead and surviving veterans of World War I did not immediately impose an insufferable burden on the national cemeteries. Only 5,300 of the 46,520 remains returned to the homeland were laid to rest in national cemeteries. But the five million veterans who acquired eligibility by the law of April 15, 1920, posed a problem that could not be long ignored.

The problem, indeed, was harnessed to forces that were rapidly completing the transformation of America from a rural to an urban society. Between 1860 and 1890 the ratio of urban to rural dwellers rose from one-sixth to one-third. In 1930 the two elements reached an even balance. Thereafter the rate of increase of urban over rural communities proceeded at a greatly accelerated rate, creating a situation by 1950 in which there were 151 urban centers, each with a population of more than 100,000, and 12 metropolitan areas containing altogether 42 million—a figure considerably greater than the combined population of the North and South when the guns of Sumter called the sections into conflict. Land values rose in accordance with the concentration of population, a circumstance which added an economic motive to the sentimental attitude toward national cemeteries.

A survey of available grave space in 1929, just as a balance was struck between urban and rural dwellers, disclosed that 84 cemeteries in the national system afforded 190,922 grave sites. At the current rate of 2,779 burials a year, this space would last until 1993. While reassuring at first glance, the survey also revealed that a majority of burials took place in nine national cemeteries which were located in or near metropolitan areas, and which offered approximately 80,000 grave sites, or less than one-half of the available total. Moreover, 58,000 of these sites were situated in Arlington and the Soldiers' Home National cemeteries in the Washington, D. C., area, leaving only 22,000 to accommodate the veteran population in other metropolitan areas.⁵⁵

Just as the Grand Army of the Republic had been instrumental

⁵⁵ Memo, Maj Gen B. F. Cheatham, TQMG for Asst S/W, 13 Feb 29, sub: Study of Available Space in National Cemeteries.

during the 1870's in extending the burial privilege to surviving veterans of the Civil War, so now the American Legion and other veterans' organizations sponsored proposals looking to the establishment of "national-area" cemeteries for the express purpose of accommodating veterans residing in regions remote from any national cemetery. Legislation in 1936 providing for five such cemeteries met stout opposition from the War Department. Stating that while "the Department was not unsympathetic toward the idea of making burial facilities accessible to veterans throughout the country, . . . the attitude heretofore has been that the War Department preferred to expand existing national cemeteries rather than multiply the number of these cemeteries."⁵⁶

Although War Department hostility to the national-area cemeteries project prevailed,⁵⁷ mounting pressure for additional cemeteries to serve such areas constrained the Department to moderate its policy of outright opposition to one of neutrality, "limiting its activities to research and supply Congress the results thereof [and] giving them all the needed information to enable them to decide."⁵⁸

This policy guided the War Department's attitude toward a bill (S. 948, 75th Congress) authorizing the Secretary of War to accept donations of land from those States in which no national cemetery existed and directing him "to establish thereon a national cemetery and to provide for the care and maintenance of such national cemetery." While still opposed in principle to the measure, the Secretary advised that "since these cemeteries, if established, would be mainly for the benefit of those no longer in the service . . . the question of their establishment is one of general public policy which Congress should decide."⁵⁹

The act approved June 29, 1938, authorized the 20 national cemeteries proposed in S. 948, and put the Congress on record as

⁵⁶ (1) Quartermaster General Henry Gibbins' Statement, *Hearings*, Subcommittee of Senate Committee on Military Affairs, 20 May 36. (2) Ltr, Maj Gen Henry Gibbins, TQMG, to Asst S/W, 8 Feb 37, sub: Policy re: Establishment of National Cemeteries.

⁵⁷ The victory was not complete; an act approved 23 Jun 36, and amended 13 May 37, authorized the establishment of a national cemetery on the military reservation of old Fort Snelling, long since abandoned as an active post. The cemetery at this site served no obvious purpose other than serving the veteran population of the St. Paul—Minneapolis area. Cf Memo, Col J. H. Burnes, General Staff, Executive for S/W, 5 Mar 37, sub: Policy of the WD to be expressed in reports to Congress for the establishment of additional national cemeteries.

⁵⁸ Memo, Maj Gen Henry Gibbins, TQMG for Asst S/W, 8 Feb 37, sub: Policy re: Establishment of National Cemeteries.

⁵⁹ (1) Memo, Col J. H. Burnes, General Staff, Executive for the S/W, 5 Mar 37, sub: Policy of the War Dept to be expressed in reports. (2) Ltr, Hon Harry H. Woodring, S/W, to Hon Morris Sheppard, Chairman, Committee on Military Affairs, 17 May 37, no sub.

favoring the principle of extending the national system not only for the purpose of meeting current service needs, but also for accommodating future requirements of the veteran population. The project, however, was held in abeyance by an incomplete response of the States; only Oregon responded with a 201-acre tract near Portland. President Roosevelt's opposition to development of the land during hostilities postponed establishment of a national cemetery on this site until 1950.⁶⁰

Congress took no active interest in cemeterial matters until expansion of the Armed Forces approached its maximum strength in 1943. Already on record as favoring the policy of providing at least one national cemetery for each State, the House Committee drafted a bill (H.R. 3582, 78th Congress) along these lines. Then desirous of detailed information, the Committee requested the War Department to prepare a report which would include estimates of the total number of veterans eligible for burial in each State, the space required to meet all demands, total burial costs, and "recommendations for execution of plans based upon the proposed legislation."⁶¹

Prepared under direction of The Quartermaster General in the Memorial Division and submitted on 7 February 1944, a month following the convening of the 78th Congress, the report completely disavowed the stand taken by the War Department eight years before in opposing the establishment of five national-area cemeteries. Now it not only acknowledged the obligation "to provide adequate and suitable places of burial for all honorably discharged veterans" but maintained that 69 new national cemeteries represented "the minimum number to meet all requirements of H.R. 3582 and the potential veteran requirements."⁶²

The honeymoon of cemeterial planning continued into the 79th Congress. Thinking in astronomical terms of wartime finance, the new Congress regarded legislative proposals of its predecessor on national cemeteries as inadequate. This thinking took shape in H.R. 516, a bill providing for one national cemetery in every State, territory, and possession, "and such other national cemeteries, or enlargements of existing ones, as may be needed in the States, territories and possessions." The Congress again called on the Secretary of War for a study that would amplify the report submitted during February in accordance with the enlarged program now

⁶⁰ GO No. 1, 1950 announced establishment of the Willamette National Cemetery.

⁶¹ Ltr, Jonothan W. Marty, Adm Asst, S/W to Hon Andrew J. May, Chairman, Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives, 6 Nov 43, acknowledging receipt of request of Mr. May, dated 2 Nov 43, for study in connection with H.R. 3582.

⁶² Memo, Maj Gen E. B. Gregory, TQMG for Under S/W, 7 Feb 44, sub: Study on National Cemeteries.

under consideration. The Plans and Requirements Section, Memorial Division, took this assignment in hand. Assisted by other elements of the Division because of the magnitude of the project, the section made satisfactory progress toward completion of the study by the end of November. At this juncture, the five planning projects, including the one on national cemeteries, that had been conducted separately by the Memorial Division since October of the previous year, were given a redirection that merged these activities in a single program. Initiating a new phase in the formulation of policies and plans for final disposition of the war dead, this transition requires attention. The study related to H.R. 516 will be examined in connection with the unified planning program.

CHAPTER II

SUMMARY PLANNING FOR DISPOSITION OF REMAINS

Planning Directive, 30 November 1944

On 30 November 1944, ASF Headquarters advised The Quartermaster General that "existing War Department policy should be revised, reviewed and additional recommendations submitted to the War Department if considered important."¹ The directive suggested seven points which appeared to have an important bearing on prospective policy changes.

The first questioned the logic of permitting a 70 percent vote of next of kin favoring return of the dead to ignore wishes of the remaining 30 percent. It was suggested that the present policy be modified to the extent "that every desire of the next of kin should be fulfilled."

The second pointed out that introduction of legislation providing for one national cemetery in every State and such other cemeteries as may be needed required a restatement of policy to govern "the formulation of firm plans for the extension of national cemeteries in the United States."

The third point suggested that final steps should be taken to commit all service and civilian agencies of the Government to proposals that The Quartermaster General be charged with full and complete responsibility for removal of Americans to the United States and the creation of American cemeteries in areas where dead are not to be returned.²

Points 4 to 7 were stated as follows:

(4) General plans for contacting next of kin and basis for determination of degree of kinship.

(5) Policy determination as to whether or not next of kin will be permitted to alter their requests for the disposal of remains once made or shall such requests be irrevocable.

(6) Consideration of a policy that repatriation operations should occur simultaneously in all theaters.

(7) Changes in present policies or additional recommendations for changes that would be of interest to the American

¹ Ltr, Maj Gen LeRoy Lutes, Dir, Plans and Opns, ASF to TQMG, Attn: Mem Div—Col R. P. Harbold, 30 Nov 44, sub: Current Plans for Return of American Dead and Establishment of Overseas and U. S. Cemeteries.

² *Ibid.*

Battle Monuments Commission in order to obtain its views, since its mission may be extended to cover the erection of battle monuments and chapels in overseas cemeteries, and perhaps the maintenance of such, including cemeteries, as is now the case.³

After examining the inadequacies of existing War Department policies with respect to the contemplated program, the directive enumerated in some detail the essentials of a comprehensive plan for the ultimate disposition of an assumed total of 250,000 war dead. These essentials embraced the following: (1) a set of maps indicating the location of proposed overseas cemeteries; (2) the draft of a zone and sector organization under the Graves Registration Service; (3) a summary of data concerning the proposed overseas cemetery as to size, burial plot, and design criteria; (4) a statement of specifications for mortuary and cemeterial supplies; (5) comparative estimates of costs of returning remains as against their retention overseas; (6) a discussion of arrangements with the Chief of Transportation concerning shipment of bodies, requirements as to port facilities and distribution centers in the United States, conversion of Liberty Ships, and responsibilities of the Transportation Corps in movements from ports of embarkation to ports of debarkation; (7) a detailed analysis of the problem of cemeterial expansion in the United States, including topographical exhibits of proposed sites for new national cemeteries and the relationship of such sites to population centers, a discussion of design criteria for the layout and the memorial features of new sites, statistical determination of the amount of burial space required for living veterans who might eventually claim the privilege of interment in a national cemetery, and a statement of proposed postwar construction, and of plans for the maintenance of all cemeteries in accordance with desirable standards.

In justly evaluating the directive of 30 November 1944, it should be noted that, in effect, ASF headquarters instructed The Quartermaster General to summarize the various planning programs that had been given continuous attention since October 1943. This activity, it will be recalled, embraced five separate projects—one presenting an exhaustive study of the National Cemetery System in connection with legislation proposed by the 78th Congress, another examining advantages of charging The Quartermaster General with complete responsibility for final disposition of the war dead, the third considering interservice co-operation to this end, the fourth contemplating establishment of Quartermaster Graves Registration Service Area Commands in the overseas theaters, the fifth contrib-

³ *Ibid.*

uting to the formulation of JCS Policy Memorandum No. 12 to govern the concentration of remains so as to facilitate return operations. Actually, the proposed establishment of overseas cemeteries was the only unexplored area of planning. At the same time, the directive prescribed both the limitations and form of a comprehensive plan which would include these various elements. Finally, it set 1 April 1945 as the date for completion of the project.⁴

Because of the magnitude of the cemeterial project and the necessity of submitting on 15 February the report on detailed requirements to the House Committee on Military Affairs, the Chief of the Memorial Division requested that the original completion date for the overall plan be extended to 1 May 1945.⁵ Then, when it became apparent early in April that burial reports on record in the Memorial Division were 75,000 or more below AGO death reports and far short of the number of interments indicated by monthly burial reports from the theaters, Colonel Harbold recommended that the date for submission of the completed plan be further extended to 1 June 1945. Such an extension, he urged, would enable the Division to obtain additional burial reports from the European and Mediterranean Theaters and utilize "accurate figures on which to base a detailed plan for repatriation of our dead in these two theaters."⁶

Basic Plan for Disposition of Remains

Final preparation of the study was entrusted to Lt. Col. Earl B. Sechrest, former Graves Registration Officer, ETO, who had been invalidated to the United States and assigned to duty with the Memorial Division after his discharge from the hospital early in April.⁷ Colonel Sechrest completed the project in time to meet the deferred target date. Colonel Harbold delivered the study personally at ASF Headquarters on 1 June 1945.⁸

Entitled *Plan for Repatriation of the Dead of World War II and Establishment of Permanent United States Military Cemeteries at Home and Abroad*, this basic or "current" plan consisted of six parts and an appendix of seven exhibits.⁹ Part I served as an introductory state-

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Ltr, Col R. P. Harbold to Lt Col C. C. Ingle, Plans and Opns Div, ASF, 29 Mar 45.

⁶ Ltr, Col R. P. Harbold to Dir, Plans and Opns, ASF, 28 Apr 45.

⁷ Interv, OQMG Historian, Col Earl S. Sechrest, USAR, 18 Jun 47.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Hereinafter cited as Current Plan for Return of American Dead. The word "current" came into general usage, in describing this plan, probably because of General Lutes' employment of the term in indicating the subject of his directive of 30 Nov 44. This reads, "Sub: Current Plans for Return of American Dead and Establishment of Overseas and U. S. Cemeteries."

ment of the scope of the plan; part II was devoted to an analysis of the factual considerations and assumptions which conditioned the planning; part III presented a statement of policy governing the final disposition of the remains of the war dead; part IV stated in a brief paragraph the terms under which jurisdiction was sought for The Quartermaster General, as Chief, American Graves Registration Service, to act for all the armed services and various civilian agencies of the Government; part V detailed the organizational structure of three superior AGRS area commands, 14 subordinate zone commands and their assigned field operating units, and examined the problem of establishing permanent overseas cemeteries. Part VI consisted of a notation that the report on national cemeteries requested by the House Committee on Military Affairs and transmitted to that body on 15 February 1945 was attached as Exhibit A.¹⁰

A careful examination of the text of the six parts tends to support a conclusion that the current plan was a synthesis of such planning as had been accomplished since October 1943. While new data, which became available in April and May 1945, required a considerable revision of the recommendations embodied in Policy Study No. 34, none of the revisions appearing in the current plan involved radical departures from the results of preliminary and intermediate efforts. The fundamental consistency running through the whole program attests the soundness of the concluding contribution.¹¹

Formulated under the direction of TQMG in his capacity as Chief, AGRS, the scope of the plan embraced three distinct parts. These are described in the following paragraphs:

1. Plan for and carry out in all theaters of operations of the current war the work involved in returning the remains of American dead to include military, naval and other personnel who served with our forces outside the continental U. S., to the United States, and their delivery to the next of kin at place of their selection for private interment or interment in national cemeteries.

2. To acquire the land, lay out, improve, construct necessary buildings and provide for the beautification and maintenance of new national cemeteries and extension of existing national cemeteries in the U. S. in accordance with the provisions of H.R. 516 and report submitted thereon by The Quartermaster General, dated 15 February 1945, exhibit A attached, if and

¹⁰ This version of the plan was published by The Adjutant General's Office on 24 Sep 45.

¹¹ A comparison between the organization structure of the AGRS as indicated in August 1943, and the one proposed in the basic plan appears below.

when this bill is enacted into law and the necessary funds are appropriated therefor.

3. Prepare and submit through regular channels draft of legislation, acquisition of necessary land and the establishment of a limited number of permanent cemeteries on foreign soil for concentration of the remains of our World War II dead whom the next of kin specifically indicated their desire to remain buried abroad.¹²

According to data assembled by the end of April 1945, there was a total of 165,995 recorded burials of Army personnel and 25,000 of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard service. These remains lay in 454 temporary military cemeteries or in other registered burial sites within the borders of 86 nations distributed over six continents and on numerous islands scattered through the seven seas.¹³ It was apparent, however, that there was a considerable lag between the number of burials recorded on a given date in the Memorial Division and the total number of deaths from all causes on the same date in the overseas theaters. As of 30 April 1945, according to AGO casualty reports, fatalities in battle totalled 174,656 for all theaters, 108,731 having fallen in the European Theater, 36,274 in the Mediterranean Theater and 29,651 in other theaters. Nonbattle Army deaths in all theaters were estimated at 22,000. Thus the number of known Army deaths on 30 April 1945 totalled 196,656. To this figure the 25,000 recorded burials of Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard personnel, together with the difference between known deaths of these services and their recorded burials, should be added. Since the latter figure was not available on 30 April, the aggregate of 221,656 remains for all services was incomplete.

An approximation for planning purposes of the total number of remains was not restricted to an exact calculation of known deaths on 30 April 1945. Any close determination of the number of overseas burials at such time as operations for the final disposition of remains should be initiated involved two additional factors. One was speculative to the point of prophecy, requiring an estimate of deaths yet to be sustained in overthrowing the Japanese Empire. The other related to an assumption that 90 percent of those currently reported as missing in action were actually dead and that the remains of 50 percent of the missing in action would be recovered through systematic search. With 44,243 military personnel reported as missing in action on 30 April 1945 in the European Thea-

¹² Current Plan for Return of American Dead, p. 1.

¹³ As of 30 Apr 45, burial reports for the Pacific Ocean Area were incomplete. The figure for naval dead was approximate, and therefore, the aggregate of 191,000 military and naval burials as estimated on 30 April was an approximation. *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 3.

ter, 22,121 remains could be added to the tentative aggregate of that date for known deaths of all services. The addition gives 243,777.¹⁴

While still excluding losses yet to be suffered in defeating the Japanese, and ignoring that proportion of the missing in action of all services in the Pacific that might be recovered, this tentative figure was only 6,223 short of the one (250,000) stipulated in the ASF Headquarters directive of 30 November 1944 as the basis for repatriation planning. Nor did the tentative aggregate of 243,777 include the remains of Allied and enemy dead which had been interred in United States military cemeteries and which had to be exhumed before restoration and return of the cemetery sites to their rightful owners. Disregarding the Pacific areas for which no complete figures were available, these burials totalled 74,543 for the European and Mediterranean Theaters. Colonel Sechrest's computations materially revised the original ASF estimate and sustained his opinion that "total casualties in all theaters of operations would appear to warrant an assumption of over 300,000 burials before the end of hostilities."¹⁵

Although the number of burials in the Pacific areas aggregated less than one-fifth of those in the European and Mediterranean Theaters, the wide dispersal of grave sites among the many archipelagoes of the central and southwest Pacific and over the great land masses of New Guinea and Australia, to say nothing of approximately one-third of continental Asia, presented difficulties peculiar to great distances. For the present, these difficulties were enhanced by the fact that active operations were still in progress against Japan. In contrast, the more compact distribution of burials in the Mediterranean region and western Europe, where hostilities had been recently suspended by surrender of the German forces, imposed a problem in which numbers rather than great distances would condition the solution.¹⁶

In the Mediterranean Theater, 36,746 dead (28,630 Americans, 659 Allied, and 7,457 enemy) were interred in 51 United States temporary military cemeteries or registered burial places, 14 of which were located in Africa, 10 on the islands in the waist of the Mediterranean Sea, 20 in Italy, and 7 in Yugoslavia. The largest single site was the United States Military Cemetery at Nettuno in Italy, containing 6,060 American, 61 Allied and 2,604 enemy dead.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

¹⁶ It should be noted that the wide distribution of isolated burials over Africa offers an obvious exception. As a general proposition, however, a high proportion of American remains on this continent were concentrated in the temporary military cemeteries of North Africa.

Six burial sites held only one body each, four of these being situated in Yugoslavia; nine sites contained less than 12 bodies each.¹⁷ In the European Theater, 190,985 dead (117,322 American, 1,773 Allied and 71,890 enemy) were concentrated in temporary United States Military Cemeteries. Of the enemy remains in custody of the European Theater Graves Registration Service, 12,441 were interred in 15 cemeteries allotted exclusively to enemy dead. Only five cemeteries of this theater excluded enemy dead, three being in the United Kingdom and two in France.¹⁸

The urgency of redeployment now brought The Quartermaster General and theater Graves Registration officers face to face with an aggravated form of a problem that had been consistently ignored during the period of hostilities. It will be recalled that, while objections were interposed in 1943 to the establishment of AGRS overseas commands without regard to existing theater establishments, as proposed in Policy Study No. 34, the War Department virtually vetoed plans for the phased development of Quartermaster Graves Registration area commands within the theater structures by requiring that personnel allotments to these commands must be accomplished by utilization of personnel employed in the theater and charged to the troop ceiling.¹⁹

In the ordinary course of events the release of theater graves registration companies from support of combat after V-E Day should have afforded the desired personnel. Unfortunately, the cessation of hostilities in Europe did not institute a normal transition from war to peace: the two largest of all overseas theaters in point of effectives were transformed overnight into a reservoir of troops for operations contemplated in the western Pacific and, perhaps, on the Asiatic mainland. Just as the outbreak of hostilities in December 1941 had revealed the inadequacy of measures taken in reference to the activation and training of Graves Registration companies during the critical years of preparation for war, so now the cessation of hostilities in Europe disclosed a situation which had not been anticipated by demobilization planning in connection with the war dead. Where the deployment program of 1941-42 called insistently for Graves Registration companies that had not been activated or trained, the redeployment schedules of 1945 required the removal of many regularly constituted Graves Registration companies from the two adjoining theaters where two-thirds of the war dead were buried and where scarcely more than a paper scheme remained as the basis

¹⁷ Current Plan for Return of American Dead, pp. 3-5.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 5-7. In all there were 36 U. S. Military Cemeteries in the European Theater.

¹⁹ See above.

for an organization which must initiate operations preparatory to final disposition of these war dead. Again, a new form of the old crisis was ineffectually solved by hasty improvisations that might have been obviated had the War Department General Staff evinced a keener perception of future requirements with respect to care of the dead and taken effective and timely steps to insure among subordinate levels the development of advance planning in greater detail than was actually accomplished.

Part II of the current plan attempted to meet this situation in a realistic manner. It proposed that immediately upon cessation of hostilities, all Graves Registration companies would be utilized (1) to conduct a search of battlefields for unburied remains and isolated graves; (2) to contact local officials and other civilians in order to obtain information concerning men known to be missing in a given area and the location of their graves; (3) to secure information on all burials in other Allied, neutral, and enemy countries in the theater; (4) to complete the concentration of remains found in isolated graves and communal cemeteries, and to identify or record all information on remains classed as unknown.²⁰

In addition to the specified operations assigned Graves Registration companies prior to redeployment, it was proposed that caretaking and maintenance teams should be organized in accordance with tables of distribution in the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service (Zone of the Interior) Plan as transmitted to the theaters on 30 January 1945, and that area and zone headquarters should be phased in for the purpose of directing what is described as "interim operations," or, in other words, those activities which were identified in the plan of 30 January with phases 1 to 3. Upon initiation of the final stage of repatriation in phase 4, the interim setup would be displaced by an overall organization, the elements of which were set forth in part V of the basic plan. Only one departure was to be made from the approved plan of 30 January 1945 during the interim period: exhumation teams would be activated simultaneously with cemeterial caretaking and maintenance teams, instead of waiting until phase 4, as originally proposed.²¹

It was estimated in May that, owing to present and anticipated future requirements for manpower, transportation, and raw materials, "the actual beginning of field operations looking to final disposition of the war dead should be deferred until approximately six months after the cessation of hostilities." In other words, the interim period would extend from V-E Day until six months following

²⁰ Current Plan for Return of American Dead, p. 7.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

an unknown date for the capitulation of Japan. While this basis of calculation promised the authors of the current plan more latitude than the swift course of events in the Pacific actually allowed, they realized the necessity of determining all questions of policy during this interim period and of "the firming up of an administrative organization which will be prepared to build up and supervise operations of field units within a reasonable time after the cessation of hostilities." The following measures, it was urged, must be accomplished during the interim period in the interests of orderly, efficient expenditures and economical performance: (1) passage of H.R. 516, which provided for the modernized national cemeterial system detailed in Exhibit A of the current plan; (2) legislative authorization and appropriation of funds to acquire land required for a limited number of World War II permanent cemeteries abroad; (3) authorization through the State Department from foreign governments for disinterment of remains, transportation, storage, etc., and for other arrangements concerning the transfer of remains between Allied cemeteries and the transfer of custody of enemy cemeteries or enemy dead in temporary United States cemeteries to the proper governments; (4) securing contract authorization and awarding contracts for the manufacture of caskets and other technical equipment for repatriation of the dead; (5) immediate determination of the extent to which military personnel would be replaced or augmented by civilians.²²

The statement of policy on final disposition of remains of the war dead examined in minute detail the obligations of the War Department with respect to the next of kin and specified those procedures by which all commitments should be carried out by The Quartermaster General. These were stated as follows:

- (a) All feasible wishes of the next of kin will be complied with and, with this in view, the next of kin shall be given an opportunity to designate final burial in one of the following places:
- (1) Any U. S. National Cemetery.
 - (2) Any local or private cemetery in the homeland of the next of kin.
 - (3) The American military cemetery which may be established nearest the place of temporary burial.
- (b) All World War II unknown dead will be returned for reburial in U. S. National Cemeteries.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 9. Point 5 in this summarization presupposed completion of the program "in a period of one to one and a half years from the date of commencement of operations." In connection with the utilization of military personnel it was stated that, "if military personnel are mainly utilized, it should be to a large extent on a voluntary basis, due to the nature of the operations and the fact that such projects will extend to approximately two years after the cessation of hostilities."

(c) Government sponsored pilgrimages to the graves of the dead buried overseas are not favored.

(d) Permanent American Cemeteries will be established and maintained abroad if the number of requested burials therein justifies their establishment.

(e) The Government will assume all cost incident to—

- (1) Burial of remains in American Military Cemeteries abroad.
- (2) Burial of remains in local cemeteries abroad.
- (3) Delivery of remains to the next of kin as authorized in AR 30-1830.²³

The degree of kinship (affinity or consanguinity) recognized as having paramount right in directing final disposition of remains fell into two groups—married and unmarried. The degree in the married group was: (a) widow (widower), if she (he) had not remarried; (b) child, if the wife (husband) was deceased or had remarried and in the case of more than one child, the oldest living, except that in the case of a minor, such request should be made through the appointed guardian; (c) other relatives in the order set forth for unmarried personnel. The degree in the unmarried deceased was: (a) father, if he was not disqualified, i. e., had not abandoned the support of his family; (b) mother, if the father was dead or disqualified; (c) brother, if both parents were dead or if mother was disqualified, and in the case of more than one brother, the oldest living; (d) sister, if both parents were dead or if mother was deceased and the father disqualified and there were no living brothers, and, if more than one sister, the oldest living.²⁴

In the execution of this policy, it was proposed that the next of kin of all known overseas dead should be polled to determine their wishes as to the final disposition of remains and that the date of mailing of poll forms to different groups of addressees would be determined by planned operations in the field. The next of kin would be expected to conform to stated requirements in indicating their preference, or in requesting any change in the disposition originally indicated. It was specified that next of kin must return their completed poll forms to the War Department within three months after the date of mailing and that notification of any change on their part should be filed before the announced date of exhumation. These restrictions were justified on the grounds that "there must in all cases be fixed a date after which requested disposition of remains will be irrevocable," and that the "fixed date . . . should be based

²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

on date of actual operations in a given cemetery or area." Such irrevocable date was to be filled in on the form when mailed to the next of kin. Then, anticipating that many requests for changes in originally stated desires might arise from lack of appreciation by next of kin of the magnitude and complexities involved in conducting a progressive and economical scheme of exhumation, it was proposed that a "circular letter" should accompany the poll form and apprise next of kin just what alternatives would be possible in the event of a requested change. These limitations were implied in the following statement:

Considering the global aspects of the repatriation and concentration activities, with the vast distances involved, Graves Registration Service personnel cannot, obviously, return to the same cemetery repeatedly to exhume bodies as occurred, in some instances, after the last war. All bodies, except in sites selected for permanent cemeteries, must be exhumed in one operation and shipped either to the United States or to permanent cemeteries abroad. Bodies once concentrated into permanent cemeteries should not be further disturbed. Any material number of disinterments from a permanent cemetery would require a reconcentration of plots and affect or destroy the planned layout.²⁵

In accordance with specific instructions in the ASF directive of 30 November 1944, it was proposed that existing War Department policy should be amended by changing paragraph 1, section II of Circular No. 2, 1 January 1945, so as to assign to The Quartermaster General "full and complete responsibility for return to the United States or shipment to any foreign country, if so requested by next of kin, of all American dead, outside the continental limits of the United States, except personnel of the State Department not serving with the Army and Navy in the theaters of war at time of death . . . and for the creation of necessary additional cemeteries in overseas areas."²⁶

Section II (Policies) of the current plan reaffirmed the opinion previously expressed by Colonel Harbold in consultation with the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery that repatriation operations should be conducted simultaneously in all theaters or areas. After emphasizing that the magnitude of detailed planning required to begin these operations, the need of commissioned officers and professional morticians not then available, the scarcity of transport facilities, and the shortage of raw materials for the manufacture of caskets and

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

shipping cases would necessarily defer the beginning of repatriation and final concentration operations until approximately six months after the cessation of all hostilities, the following conclusion was stated:

Assuming the correctness of the foregoing premise, there would appear to be no logical reason why operations should not begin simultaneously in all theaters. At such time there should be sufficient personnel, transportation and supplies and material available for such extensive operations. In fact, from consideration of public opinion such action would appear highly desirable. However, due to many unforeseen and unpredictable circumstances that may arise in the Pacific Area, it is not known at this time whether operations in that area could be completed as soon as in other theaters.²⁷

The aspect of the current plan which concerned jurisdiction of the Quartermaster General was stated in a brief paragraph, indicating that the Navy Department, the Air Transport Command, the War Shipping Administration, American Red Cross, American Field Service and the United States Compensation Commission had accepted proposals looking to unity of action and specifying that "the return from overseas of their dead and the creation of United States cemeteries in areas where dead are not to be returned should be the responsibility of the American Graves Registration Service under The Quartermaster General as Chief of such Service." It was also noted that the State Department had been originally committed to this program, "but withdrew its concurrence at the time of the change in its personnel incident to the resignation of the Honorable Cordell Hull."²⁸

The structure as well as the concept of personnel policies and of functions to be assigned a world-wide American Graves Registration Service was derived from many sources.²⁹ Any useful discussion of this section of the plan is necessarily concerned with origins and analyses of the organizational forms in terms of development and refinement through various stages. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the current plan embodied the results of some two years of constructive thought. This thinking, moreover, was influenced by lessons of the return program following World War I. Many of the administrative and operating units indicated in Policy Study No. 34 of 14 August 1943 appear in the final plan. Those which

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ As noted in the discussion immediately following, the table of distribution for headquarters of the Quartermaster Graves Registration Area Command proposed in November 1944 was adopted without change as the headquarters structure of the major AGRS Commands specified in the current plan.

were retained underwent little modification. Considerable revision, however, was made in the total number of operating units. Again, the tables of distribution for certain units specified in the plan for establishing Quartermaster Graves Registration Service area commands in the overseas theaters were retained for many elements of the postwar American Graves Registration Service.

Delay, however, in the implementation of this plan during hostilities completely altered the circumstances under which the operating units would be established. In reality, the first three phases, as defined in the plan for setting up Quartermaster Graves Registration Service area commands became identified with the so-called "interim period," which embraced the time between V-E Day and the initiation of repatriation activities. The original phase concept, nevertheless, was retained in planning for the establishment of American Graves Registration Service units because of the identification of corresponding units of the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service with the different phases.

The first step in setting up the world-wide organization would consist of activating all operational units of the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service area commands. The procedure was stated in the following terms:

These types of administrative and operating units should be employed only during the interim period from the time of withdrawal of regularly constituted graves registration service companies to the actual beginning of repatriation activities (phase 4) with the exception of "Cemeterial Teams" which may be required for a longer period. Also as previously stated, "Exhumation Teams" should be provided for concentration and identification activities under phases 1, 2, and 3, and be replaced by a different organization setup under phase 4.³⁰

The original contribution offered by the current plan was the proposed creation of three superior AGRS area commands. One, the American Area, would embrace all territories that had been concerned with the defense of the Western Hemisphere—North America, Hawaii, the Caribbean, and Africa except North Africa. A second, the European and Mediterranean Area, was intended to include all operational theaters involved in the war against Germany. This area comprised not only Europe but also North Africa and the Middle East. The third, to be called the Southwest Pacific and Asiatic Area, would embrace lands involved in the war against Japan—the Philippines, Australia, the Dutch East Indies, the Malay States, China, Burma, India, and, tentatively, Japan and Manchukuo. The American Area would come under the immediate juris-

³⁰ Current Plan for Return of American Dead, p. 18.

diction of the Director, Memorial Division, and the other two areas would operate under commanders responsible directly to The Quartermaster General in his capacity as Chief, AGRS.

These area commands, it is important to note, had no counterpart in the organizational scheme proposed by Policy Study No. 34, nor are they to be confused with the area commands of the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service (Zone of Interior) as transmitted to the overseas theaters on 30 January 1945. There was, nevertheless, some connection between the two in that the table of distribution designed in November 1944 for Headquarters of the Quartermaster Graves Registration Area Command in the Mediterranean Theater was borrowed and applied without change to the headquarters establishment of the proposed European and Mediterranean and the Southwest Pacific and Asiatic Area commands.³¹ This table showed a total personnel of 193, including a commanding general with the rank of brigadier general, 43 other commissioned officers, 7 warrant officers and 142 other ranks. Its organizational structure embodied two principal elements: (1) a headquarters staff composed of the deputy commander, medical officer, chaplain, and chiefs of the four staff divisions, all of whom would hold the rank of colonel, and (2) four operating divisions, namely the Administrative, Intelligence, Plans and Operations, and Supply Divisions. The headquarters staff was designed as a policy-making organ which would be concerned with such matters as international relations, inspection, civilian personnel, procurement, and general supervision of operations. At the same time, a complete comparison between these two organizational concepts reveals a fundamental dissimilarity: the entire extent of territory embraced in the Quartermaster Graves Registration Area Command of the Mediterranean Theater, as originally proposed in 1944, was to be assigned to two subordinate zones of the European and Mediterranean Area Command.

In all, according to tables of organization in the current plan, there were to be 14 subordinate commands—5 in the European and Mediterranean Area, 5 in the Southwest Pacific and Asiatic Area, and 4 in the American Area. It will be recalled that the plan outlined in Policy Study No. 34 contemplated the establishment of 12 separate zones. There was no intermediate authority, however, between these Zone Commands and the Chief, AGRS. The proposed territorial distribution and the subordinate zone commands within the American and the Southwest Pacific and Asiatic area commands was similar to the scheme outlined in the plan of 14 August 1943.

³¹ Orgn, QM GRS (Z/I), Tab B, Incl to Memo, TQMG for CG, ASF, 11 Nov 44, sub: Orgn for the QM Gr Reg Sv.

The interior organization of the new European and Mediterranean Area Command, however, departed widely from the original plan: the old Zone of Europe was broken up and distributed to three new major subordinate zone commands, one of which included French North Africa. With certain territorial adjustments, the old Zone of Great Britain and Ireland and the Middle East Zone were retained as subordinate zone commands. The vast stretch of territory south of the Sahara Desert was incorporated in the Zone of Africa and assigned to the American Zone.³² There is no difficulty in perceiving at this point that the authors of the current plan had no more concern about cutting across theater boundaries in the determination of areas to be assigned to AGRS commands than had been evinced in Policy Study No. 34.

While personnel requirements determined during 1944 in connection with the proposed Quartermaster Graves Registration Service Area Command of the Mediterranean Theater appeared to be adequate for the headquarters establishments of the two independent American Graves Registration Service area commands contemplated in 1945, it was thought that the personnel allotments that had been made for the relatively small zones of the Mediterranean Theater Quartermaster Graves Registration Service setup would be totally inadequate for the administration of those extensive geopolitical regions which now comprised the 14 zones of the current plan. Moreover, it was apparent that personnel requirements of the new zone headquarters would vary under different conditions, "depending on the number of field operating sections, ports, burials, and whether operations are principally land or amphibious."³³

With these variants in mind, a maximum requirement of 22 commissioned officers, 2 warrant officers, 3 technical sergeants and 92 civilians for the zone headquarters was determined. The military personnel would fall into the following classification:

- 1 Colonel—Chief of Zone
 - 1 Lt. Colonel—Executive Officer
 - 4 Majors—Division and Branch Chiefs
 - 8 Captains—Chiefs of Sections: Inspector, Medical Officer,
Finance Officer, Chaplain and Adjutant
 - 5 1st Lieutenants—Assistants
 - 3 2d Lieutenants—Assistants
- * * * * * * *

³² Cf. (1) Policy Study No. 34, 14 Aug 43, Pt. II, Sec. B, pp. 3-7. (2) Current Plan for Return of American Dead, Exhibits D-G.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

2 Warrant Officers—Headquarters

* * * * *

1 Technical Sergeant—Garage

1 Technical Sergeant—Medical

1 Technical Sergeant—Finance³⁴

The overall function of this headquarters, it was stated, "will be general supervision and control of a number of field sections, varying in number and depending on the number of burials in a particular zone engaged in exhumation and concentration activities and port offices serving such field operating sections."³⁵ The detailed organization, duties, and responsibilities assigned the zone headquarters would be similar to those of the area organization, except for the obvious combination or omission of certain sections and subsections.

As already stated, only minor changes were made in the internal organization of field operating sections and port offices as detailed in Policy Study No. 34. Two typists were added to the former unit, while a technical assistant and a carpenter were allotted to the latter.³⁶ The current plan also presented a clear statement of the function assigned to the field operating section. This was described as a mobile unit engaged primarily in the exhumation, identification, preparation and casketing of bodies of United States dead. The section was based on four embalming groups, each capable of handling 10 bodies a day or a total of 40 bodies per section in areas where large numbers of remains were concentrated into temporary cemeteries. In addition, each section included 3 commissioned officers, 1 captain as master of the section and 2 first lieutenants, each responsible for the work of two embalmers; the necessary clerical personnel to prepare detailed records and disinterment reports; conveyors to guard bodies while in storage and in transit to concentration points or ports; a transport section and laborers, hired locally. It was estimated that the concentration and return of remains would require 55 field sections, only a fraction of the 270 that Policy Study No. 34 estimated to be required. These 55 field sections were to be distributed as follows:³⁷

³⁴ (1) *Ibid.* (2) Cf. personnel allotments for Zone Headquarters in Orgn, QM GRS (Z/I), Tab D, as cited in fn. 31.

³⁵ Current Plan for Return of American Dead, p. 19.

³⁶ (1) *Ibid.*, p. 20. (2) Steere, *The Graves Registration Service in World War II* (QMC Historical Studies No. 21), p. 214.

³⁷ (1) Current Plan for Return of American Dead, pp. 21-22. (2) The number of field sections estimated in Policy Study No. 34 was 270.

	<i>Field sections required</i>
<i>European and Mediterranean Area</i>	
Zone of Great Britain.....	2
Zone of Western Europe.....	12
Zone of North and Central Europe.....	9
Zone of South, Southeast Europe and North Africa.....	7
Zone of Middle East.....	1
	<hr/>
	31
<i>Southwest Pacific and Asiatic Area</i>	
Zone of Philippine Islands.....	3
Zone of India-Burma.....	2
Zone of Australia.....	3
Zone of Dutch East Indies and Malay States.....	1
Zone of China (tentatively includes Japan and Manchukuo).....	7
	<hr/>
	16
<i>American Area</i>	
Zone of North America.....	2
Zone of Hawaii.....	3
Zone of Caribbean.....	2
Zone of Africa except North Africa.....	1
	<hr/>
	8
Total.....	<hr/> 55

While the organization and functions of the port office establishment, like that of the field section, underwent no material change, the total number, as in the case of the field section, was reduced, the tentative figure being cut from 90 to 30. Estimated requirements for this unit were stated in the following terms:

It is believed that two port Quartermaster offices will suffice for most zones. In some of the island areas it may be advisable to establish additional ports to avoid transshipments. On the continent of Europe and possibly Asia, the disrupted and destroyed railroad facilities may compel establishing additional ports. The uncertainties involved at this time, as well as the present lack of information as to future operations, will not permit more than a general estimate as to the port office establishment and its principal functions.³⁸

Both the current plan and Policy Study No. 34, 14 August 1943, present tables recapitulating Quartermaster personnel requirements. These tables illustrate the similarities and differences of the two plans.³⁹ (See Tables 1 and 2.) A comparison of the data presented in these two tables indicates that the zone principle suggested in

³⁸ Current Plan for Return of American Dead, p. 22.

³⁹ Figures given in the accompanying table are adapted from the following sources: (1) Policy Study No. 34, 14 Aug 43, Pt. II, Sec. 3, "Recapitulation." (2) Current Plan for Return of American Dead, pp. 21-22.

TABLE 1—Plan of 14 August 1943

Unit	No. of units	Personnel			
		Commissioned officers	Warrant officers	EM or civilians	Total
Area Hq.	0	0	0	0	0
Zone Hq.	12	522	36	924	1,482
Sector Hq.	45	990	90	4,275	5,355
Field Sections	270	810	0	10,800	11,610
Port Offices	90	270	90	3,960	4,320
Total	417	2,592	216	19,959	22,767

TABLE 2—Basic Plan

Unit	No. of units	Personnel			
		Commissioned officers	Warrant officers	EM or civilians	Total
Area Hq.	2	88	14	284	386
Zone Hq.	14	308	28	1,330	1,666
Sector Hq.	0	0	0	0	0
Field Sections	55	165	0	2,310	2,475
Port Offices	30	90	30	1,380	1,500
Total	101	651	72	5,304	6,027

Additional requirements for local labor in the field and at port offices was estimated at 4,475.

August 1943 was regarded by the authors of the current plan as fundamentally sound. Personnel allotments for the zone headquarters as estimated in August 1943 did not vary greatly from those of the current plan—1,482 for the 12 zone establishments proposed in 1943, as compared to 1,666 for the 14 headquarters units in the 1945 scheme. Reductions in total personnel requirements—from 22,767 to 6,027—were effected in the current plan by elimination of the sector headquarters and a sharp reduction in the total number of both port office establishments and field sections. The rate of reduction in the number of administrative and operating units, as Chart 1 shows, corresponds roughly to that effected in the overall reduction of personnel requirements. In other words, the fundamentals of the structure sketched in 1943 were retained in the design of 1945.

The problem of establishing permanent United States military cemeteries beyond the seas could not be stated in definitive form until a final tabulation of the wishes of the next of kin had been made.⁴⁰ Planning in this respect was necessarily restricted to an examination of available sites, design criteria, equipment, and the adoption of a firm policy in regard to the use of World War I cemeteries. These aspects of the problem were thoroughly explored.

Three groups of temporary United States military cemeteries, numbering 17 in all, appeared to be desirable as the sites for permanent burial places abroad and adequate for all eventual needs. The first group consisted of 11 cemeteries in the proposed European and Mediterranean Area, 5 of which were located in France, 2 in Italy, and 1 each in the United Kingdom, Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, and Tunisia. The second group, numbering 4 cemeteries, fell within the American Area, one being allotted to each of its four zones. The third group, situated in the Southwest Pacific and Asiatic Area, consisted of 2 cemeteries, 1 in Australia, and the other in the Philippine Islands. Information concerning the second and third groups was incomplete.⁴¹ The controlling factors in the selection of cemeteries were described as follows:

The number of permanent cemeteries and actual acreage required cannot be definitely determined until final results of the

⁴⁰ At this time no decided change of opinion among next of kin had been indicated in correspondence with the Memorial Division since August 1943. "The present trend of requests from the next of kin with relatives in the European, North African and Mediterranean Theaters indicates that far more than 70 percent of such relatives desire the remains of their loved ones returned for final burial in their native land. In fact, if national cemeteries are authorized in each state and the policies hereinbefore enumerated are announced, such requests may approximate 95 percent of the whole. Requests for return of remains from other theaters including the entire Pacific Area indicate a similar trend." *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

poll of the next of kin are tabulated. Furthermore, it is the firm belief of the Office of The Quartermaster General from the current trend of requests that practically all bodies will be returned to the United States. But assuming for comparative purposes, that in the European Theater of Operations thirty percent or more of the next of kin desired that the remains of their soldier dead be buried abroad, the largest cemetery would be located at Henri Chapelle, Belgium. In this general area there are now 21,840 burials, thirty percent of which is 6,522 maximum burials for a permanent cemetery at this location. This would require approximately 16 acres for burial purposes exclusive of a peripheral zone. On the same percentage basis, other sites would range from 6 to 12 acres excluding the peripheral zone.⁴²

Design criteria were based on two factors: required acreage for the total number of proposed burials and allowance for permanent installations such as caretakers' lodges, chapels, utilities, and additional ground for desirable landscaping and for protection against the encroachment of local developments that would mar the entire design. Burials were computed on the basis of 400 to the acre. Beautification, memorial features, and space allotment for utilities and for protection would require a peripheral zone of at least 100 yards around the actual burial plot. A 10-acre cemetery, it was estimated, would require approximately 20 additional acres for the peripheral zone.

A definite stand was taken on both practical and sentimental grounds against using any of the overseas military cemeteries of World War I for the burial of World War II dead. Since these cemeteries were laid out on the basis of a predetermined number of burials, any extension for the accommodation of additional bodies would mar the symmetry of the original layout. United States military cemeteries, it was held, are something more than burial places: ". . . there is a definite inborn pride of the veterans of the two different wars which, when associated with the general locality of their sacrifices, requires and justifies such cemeteries being established separate and apart from the other as memorials and fields of honor to the accomplishments of each."⁴³

Specifications for grave markers, caskets, and shipping cases were under review when the study was submitted on 1 June. The World War I overseas markers of white marble were considered satisfactory with the exception that size specifications of both Christian Crosses

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

and Stars of David limited the space for inscription. Studies of casket specifications contemplated a design which would have simple lines, yet be stately in appearance, with inside dimensions of 22 inches in width, 21 inches in height, 78 inches in length and considerably lighter than the type used after the last war. It was estimated that the overall reduction in weight of casket and shipping case would be approximately one-third.⁴⁴

Estimates for the complete repatriation operation put the average cost per body delivered to the next of kin at \$700. The comparable figure for World War I was \$400 per body. The total cost of delivering 300,000 bodies to next of kin would approximate \$210,000,000. To establish and improve 18 overseas cemeteries containing 45,000 bodies, which was considered a maximum, would involve the following costs: (1) \$200 per body for concentration; (2) \$200 per burial for initial improvement of the site; (3) \$6 per year per burial for maintenance over a period of 50 years, or \$300. These three items equalled the cost of \$700 for returning bodies to the United States.⁴⁵ The total cost of burial overseas did not end here; the Government would still have the perpetual obligation for maintenance of overseas cemeteries. The choice, however, was not regarded as a matter of dollars and cents.

In the opinion of this office, comparative costs of this type are not in any event the primary consideration in a matter so involved with sentiment. Final disposition of our soldiers' remains, in accordance with the wishes of their loved ones, is an inherent obligation of the Government as the final gesture of a grateful country to those who paid the supreme sacrifice.⁴⁶

The 2-volume report entitled *National Cemeteries: A Study Prepared in the OQMG upon Request of the House Committee of Military Affairs, Reference H.R. 516* and submitted through channels on 15 February 1945 constituted part VI of the current plan. As previously stated, it was attached as Exhibit A.⁴⁷ Prepared at the request of Congress, and approaching completion when The Quartermaster General received instructions to examine and revise War Department policies relating to the final disposition of remains, this study can scarcely be considered as an integral part of the current plan. Like the study

⁴⁴ The weight reduction when containing remains was estimated at 200 pounds, the average weight of the World War II design being 400 pounds as compared to 600 pounds for the World War I design. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Hereinafter cited as Report on National Cemeteries. Volume I contains an analysis of the problem; Volume II consists of exhibits and charts. Neither volume is paged

furnished Congress in February 1944, it put greater emphasis on reconciling long-standing differences of policy between Congress and the War Department regarding the extent to which burial requirements of the veteran population should be permitted to determine the multiplication of national cemeteries than on making an estimate of the amount of burial space required for the dead of World War II. The latter problem, to be sure, was swallowed by the former one. At the same time, it should be noted, the Director of Plans and Operations, ASF, included, in his directive of 30 November 1944, veterans' requirements as one of the criteria in guiding recommendations for expansion of the National Cemetery System. While apparently in complete agreement during the war, the Congress and the War Department were destined to emerge from their wartime honeymoon sponsoring policies which presented a complete reversal of the roles they had so vigorously supported in the decade preceding World War II.

The study, transmitted on 15 February 1945 and appearing as Exhibit A of the current plan, enthusiastically embraced the doctrine that privilege of burial conferred the right to demand equal convenience in pursuit of the privilege. After pointing out that the distribution of remains in temporary burial places near the place of death had determined the location of national cemeteries established during and immediately following the Civil War, and that subsequent additions to the system had been made to meet current service needs, the study insisted that these cemeteries could not be regarded as a national system in the sense of offering equal convenience to all who might claim the right of burial. Many sites were difficult of access; 20 States had no national cemeteries within their borders. Disregarding the fact that burial in these cemeteries was originally identical to that in our present overseas military cemeteries, restricting burial to those who gave their lives during the war or who died in service, there seems little exaggeration in the statement that—

They were a negative answer to thousands of veterans who were offered the privilege of burial in a National Cemetery for their loved ones. To avail themselves of this privilege, a journey of 500 to 1,000 miles would be required for the body and members of the family who desired to be at the graveside when the remains were committed to their final resting place.⁴⁸

Further proof was offered in an analysis of burial statistics for the years 1939-44. During this period one-fourth of all burials occurred in 61 national cemeteries remote from populous centers, while three-

⁴⁸ Report on National Cemeteries, Vol. I, Preface.

fourths took place in nine cemeteries enjoying the advantage of location near metropolitan areas.⁴⁹

In seeking to correct this situation, it was proposed that the required number of new national cemeteries should be determined by that number of population areas in which the distance to a centrally located cemetery would not ordinarily exceed 250 miles. But, since H.R. 516 required the allotment of cemeteries by States, Territories and Possessions, the actual calculation of potential eligibles was based on political divisions. Population areas, however, disregarded State boundaries; southwestern Nevada, for instance, fell within the Los Angeles area, while most of eastern New Mexico went to the area of which El Paso, Tex., was the central point.

In view of the fact that a 250-mile radius determined the number of population areas to be served by a single cemetery, requirements as to burial space were related to the veteran population in these areas. An estimate for World War II veterans was derived from the number of "Registrants" less an assumed number of war fatalities. The accepted figure stood at 12,394,552, to which 3,897,483 World War I and 134,415 Spanish-American War veterans were added, giving a total of 16,426,450. Residence of World War II veterans was determined by place of registration. World War II "Registrants" in any State, together with the known number of Spanish-American War and World War I veterans, gave the number of potential veteran eligibles within that State. This total was then broken down into population areas. The calculation of "Probable Eligibles" was based on an assumption that 16.66 percent of eligible veterans would use the facilities thus provided. This reckoning gave a total of 2,736,646. The addition of 80 percent of this latter figure for wives and widows gave a grand total of 4,925,963 "Probable Burials." Allowance of an average safety factor of approximately 10 percent called for 5,407,989 grave spaces in all. On this basis the single cemetery assigned to Nevada had a grave capacity of 7,500. Los Angeles, one of the four allotted to California, had 100,000 grave sites; the other three—San Diego, Fresno, and Sacramento—had 50,000 each.

An accompanying survey of the existing system indicated that only 14 cemeteries, such as Long Island and Golden Gate, offered the advantages of both location and grave space that would justify inclusion in the new scheme. Then there were eight which could be used until the limited amount of space was exhausted. The remaining 54, all of which had been established between 1862 and 1870, were to be closed and maintained as a memorial to the Civil War.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pt. I.

After making these selections from the old system, the study recommended that 79 new national cemeteries should be authorized. The estimated total cost was \$120,000,000—a figure, it was pointed out, approximating the cost of a capital ship and, it might be added, a mere bagatelle when compared to the billions expended in making America the arsenal of democracy and champion of the free world.

Unfortunately for the sponsors of this ambitious project, H.R. 516 was not reported for debate on the House floor until Congress had lost much of its tolerance for lavish wartime spending, and was disposed to regard with a jaundiced eye the free spending of the boisterous years of high adventure. The bill returned on 20 June 1946 to committee from which it never emerged.

Meanwhile, on 1 June 1945, the current plan was submitted through ASF Headquarters (the Director, Plans and Operations) to the War Department General Staff. Review of the report by interested staff sections developed no serious objections; G-1 and the Operations and Plans Division, War Department General Staff, expressed dissatisfaction with paragraph 3c (3) (d), "Caskets and Outside Shipping Cases." With the elimination of this paragraph, the War Department General Staff and Headquarters, ASF, concurred in the report. Final approval was given by the Secretary of War on 8 September 1945. Four days later, 12 September, the document was returned by the Director, Planning Division, ASF, to The Quartermaster General with instructions to implement the plan "or parts thereof as conditions and circumstances warrant."⁵⁰

Whatever the unique prerogatives vested in The Quartermaster General as Chief, AGRS, during hostilities, they were vastly extended in specific provisions of the approved plan of 8 September 1945. Briefly, he became responsible for the following:

(1) Planning for a modernized system of national cemeteries in the continental United States and for a system of permanent military cemeteries beyond the seas;

(2) Final disposition of the dead of all the armed services of the United States and, excepting the Department of State, those of all civil agencies of the Government who gave their lives on land and sea in support of military operations;

(3) Establishment for implementation of this mission of the American Graves Registration Service, an organization consisting of 3 superior commands and 14 major subordinate zone commands, and embracing in its far-flung area of responsibility great land masses of

⁵⁰ Memo, Brig Gen Henry C. Wolfe, Dir, Plng Div, ASF, for TQMG, 12 Sep 45, sub: Current Plan for Return of American Dead and Establishment of Overseas and U. S. Cemeteries.

the six Continents and many archipelagoes dotting the Seven Seas;

(4) Planning to this end in conjunction with commanding generals of existing theater establishments for the organization of interim theater graves registration service commands, which were to become self-sufficient and which, upon inactivation of the various overseas theaters, were to be assigned to full command responsibility of The Quartermaster General as Chief, AGRS;

(5) Determination of the specifications of many items of mortuary equipment, including a revolutionary design of casket construction intended to stand the stresses of shipment by land and sea, and through different climatic regions, to the final resting place;

(6) Procurement, storage, and distribution of all such technical supplies, as well as the supply of common items upon attainment of self-sufficiency by AGRS overseas commands;

(7) Reorganization of the Memorial Division, OQMG, for purposes of continuing its traditional function—administration of national cemeteries and procurement of headstones—and serving as a general staff of the Chief, AGRS, in carrying forward: (a) the completion and verification of burial records; (b) the determination of progressive exhumation schedules with a view to conducting such operations simultaneously in the different overseas commands; (c) the polling of next of kin in accordance with the sequence of planned exhumation schedules; (d) the determination of transport requirements for shipment of some 270,000 casketed remains from the point of exhumation to place of final interment specified by the next of kin; (e) the determination of specifications for conversion of Liberty Ships and other craft to serve as a mortuary fleet operating under technical direction of the Chief, AGRS; (f) the design of mortuary cars for carriage of remains to their final destination in the homeland; (g) the maintenance of liaison with government agencies (foreign and domestic) and with individuals concerned in the exhumation and delivery of remains.

Approved by the Secretary of War and returned to The Quartermaster General for implementation, the current plan for final disposition of the war dead envisaged a delegation of command and administrative responsibilities without precedent in the history of the Quartermaster Corps. Indeed, this assignment cannot be accurately or justly compared with any single function of the Corps—neither the major ones identified with procurement, storage and distribution, nor the miscellaneous services performed in operational theaters by Bakery, Bath and Fumigation, Salvage, Graves Registration, and other types of Quartermaster companies. Separate and apart from these traditional functions, the new delegation

should be associated with the concept which first found expression in War Department Circular No. 206 of 11 September 1943 and which gave recognition to the fact that the manifold complexities of formulating policies and technical standards for care of the dead constituted an extraordinary function, and that The Quartermaster General should, in pursuit of these activities, enjoy a special status conferred with the distinctive title, Chief, American Graves Registration Service.

CHAPTER III

DETAILED PLANNING FOR FINAL DISPOSITION OF REMAINS

Major Problems

The approved plan of 8 September 1945¹ left little to be desired as a broad analysis of operational requirements and a summary statement of objectives. While carefully exploring all questions relating to major policies and proposing in outline form an organizational structure, it did not prescribe an elaborate set of procedures to govern the mobilization of a world-wide AGRS. In the last analysis, this plan defined certain principles that appeared to be acceptable as the basis of a whole series of planning programs, each of which must be approved and incorporated in a master plan.

Issuance of instructions for implementation of the current plan, "or portions thereof as conditions and circumstances warrant,"² put The Quartermaster General in a position not unlike the one he occupied at the outbreak of hostilities with respect to the organization of a graves registration service. Although assigned by AR 30-1805, 1 February 1924, the responsibility of organizing "in time of war . . . a graves registration service for the purposes of supervising all mortuary matters pertaining to the personnel of the army,"³ he could not act promptly in the crisis of December 1941 for the very reason that there was no standby plan for the mobilization of such a service. So hindered, his action was restricted to reminding the War Department that commanding generals at all stations beyond the seas should be instructed to establish graves registration services in their respective commands.⁴ This was accomplished by issuance of an unnumbered War Department Circular on 18 February 1942—some 10 weeks after the declaration of hostilities. In a sense, the War Department passed on to commanders in the field the consequences of deficient planning by the General Staff and OQMG. The con-

¹ Reference is made to *Current Plan for Return of American Dead*, 8 Sep 45.

² Memo, Brig Gen Henry C. Wolfe, Plng Div, ASF for TQMG, 12 Sep 45, sub: Current Plan for Return of American War Dead and Establishment of Overseas and US Cemeteries.

³ AR 30-1805, 1 Feb 1924, sec I, par. 1.

⁴ After recommending on 8 December 1941 that shipment of remains from all overseas commands be suspended and, on 9 December, that an embargo be placed on the shipment of all Army mortuary supplies to such commands, TQMG on 20 January 1942, submitted to CofS, GHQ, the tentative draft of a WD Circular requiring the establishment of graves registration services in the overseas commands. See above.

duct of graves registration service operations in the theaters was seriously hampered until these deficiencies could be corrected.⁵

It is a notable characteristic of the national psychology that Americans have in their armed conflicts been only too willing to accept the exorbitant costs of hasty improvisation. Payment of such a price has always seemed preferable to the alternative of submitting to that measure of discipline which accompanies the less expensive method of making war in accordance with well laid plans and detailed preparations. This indifferent attitude, however, undergoes an abrupt change with the advent of war.

American public opinion ran true to form during the summer of 1945. The inflexibility of purpose that endured casualty lists unprecedented in the history of the Nation and sustained the Government in its imposition of the selective draft, to say nothing of rationing and price control, now took the form of indiscriminate sympathy for all who had sacrificed to the common cause. Fortitude dissolved into something closely akin to self-pity. A resentful opinion now sought the assessment of penalties for every muddle in the conduct of a war for which the Nation had been reluctant to prepare. Absolving itself of any blame in this respect, the public managed to center its displeasure on a number of impersonal scapegoats. While no comprehensive list of individuals was prepared, a storm of resentment burst upon the "Top Brass." The most odious of all such malefactors, however, was the so-called "Caste System" which, according to popular belief, had managed to imbed its pernicious tentacles in the officers' corps of the armed services.

At any rate, demobilization of the forces was accompanied by a mobilization of public opinion which would no longer tolerate the restrictions that had shrouded the administration of military affairs in secrecy. All activities connected with liquidation of the war machine must henceforth be conducted in the light of public scrutiny. Final disposition of the dead was a case in point. Despite an almost limitless possibility for error in the vast amount of paper work incidental to the execution of such an extensive and delicate operation, a single error in the eyes of but one of some 300,000 next of kin might well be construed as conclusive evidence of ineptitude and indifference in the discharge of a sacred trust.

The explosive possibilities of working under a close public scrutiny constituted not the least of the difficulties that would confront the AGRS. As already indicated, long-range preparations for this very

⁵ Reference is made here to the fact that only two graves registration companies, the 46th and 47th, were activated during the first 6 months of the war. Cf (1) Rpt, Orgn and Directing Sec, AGO, c. 2 Jan 46, sub: List of all QM Gr Reg Units in Army of US.

eventuality had been retarded during the war years. It will be recalled that final disposition of the dead was originally regarded as a phase of the program of demobilization planning. Insofar as disposition of the dead is concerned, its inclusion in such planning was both unfortunate and illogical. In the first place, when it developed that the problem of remains did not lend itself to treatment by the machinery set up within the OQMG to examine the overall program of demobilization, no corresponding arrangements were made for special consideration of final disposition of the war dead. In the second place, the determination of organizational requirements for disposition of the dead was governed, not so much by the availability of personnel and materiel at any given date as it was by the nature of the operation. While the procurement of personnel, equipment, and critical materials depended in large measure upon a planned program for demobilization, the rate of procurement thus facilitated does not disguise the fact that establishment of the AGRS was essentially a program of mobilization. The want of logic in the original attempt to associate dissimilar programs, together with an oversight in making adequate provision for the one after its disassociation from the other, is pointedly illustrated in a summary statement of demobilization planning trends in the OQMG.

The heart of demobilization planning centered on the reconstruction of the country's industrial machine from wartime to peacetime production, and War Department and Quartermaster planning efforts were focused primarily on industrial demobilization. From April 1943 to V-E Day, attention was centered on developing a materiel demobilization plan, which though comprehensive, was to be so workable in detail that the plan, together with the necessary directives, could be put into effect without change on V Day. This objective necessitated infinite refinement of the plans at each echelon of authority and accounts for the many months of work that went into them.⁶

The refinement of plans for demobilization at different echelons of authority was not accomplished without considerable revision of planning procedures in the OQMG. After unsatisfactory experimentation with various devices, notably a control committee composed principally of the chiefs of divisions, and then a preliminary special unit for materiel demobilization planning with at least one senior officer assigned full-time duty for this purpose,⁷ Headquarters, ASF, advised that the supervision and direction of such planning in

⁶ Erna Risch, *Demobilization Planning and Operation in the QMC*, (QMC Historical Studies No. 19), p. 1. Hereinafter cited as Risch, *Dmbl Plng*.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

each staff echelon would require "the *undivided* attention of competent personnel."⁸ Accordingly, the OQMG established on 27 November 1943, a Demobilization Planning Branch in the Organization Planning and Control (OP&C) Division.⁹ Thereafter, this branch functioned in a staff capacity for The Quartermaster General, supervising, co-ordinating, and controlling all demobilization planning within the Quartermaster Corps.¹⁰

Planning for final disposition of the war dead, however, was excluded from this scheme of co-ordinated action before the Demobilization Planning Branch came into existence. Policy Study No. 34 (Disposal of the Dead), the first of the exploratory demobilization planning studies to be completed, was submitted through channels on 14 August 1943 to the Project Planning Division, ASF, by Col. R. P. Harbold, newly appointed Chief of the Memorial Branch.¹¹ While the broad aspects of policy recommended in his study were given War Department approval on 28 November, just one day after establishment of the Demobilization Planning Branch, the concurring authorities foresaw so many difficulties in connection with the problem of integrating elements of the proposed Zone-Sector organization in the theater structures at the end of the war that they recommended a re-examination of the plan "with the conclusion of major hostilities in the European-African Theater."¹² This negative decision, it is scarcely necessary to add, was in direct contrast to the positive attitude that dominated the whole program of demobilization planning. There the ruling consideration was summarized in the statement: "Tomorrow is V-Day."¹³

Along with a negative attitude that referred the solution of vital decisions to future consideration was a disposition to ignore specific recommendations for immediate action in correcting deficiencies of Memorial Branch organization. Policy Study No. 34 devoted two-thirds of its entire space to this theme.¹⁴ Furthermore, there was no possibility of applying the principle so insistently advocated by ASF Headquarters, namely, that the direction and co-ordination of planning activities should receive "the *undivided* attention of competent personnel."¹⁵ Planning suffered, while the uneven battle

⁸ (1) Memo, CofS, Hq ASF for TQMG, *et al.*, 31 Jul 43, sub: Special Plng Div.

(2) Memo, CofS, Hq ASF for TQMG, *et al.*, 16 Nov 43, sub: Dmbl Plng.

⁹ OQMG OO 25-57, 27 Nov 43, sub: Industrial Dmbl Plng.

¹⁰ Risch, *Dmbl Plng*, p. 4.

¹¹ (1) OQMG OO No. 30-140, 5 Jul 45. (2) OQMG OO No. 45-70, 7 Jul 45.

¹² AG Memo for TQMG *et al.*, 18 Nov 43, sub: Dmbl Plng (Disposal of the Dead).

¹³ Risch, *Dmbl Plng*, p. 3.

¹⁴ Policy Study No. 34, Pt. II, Introduction.

¹⁵ See above, fn. 8.

against accumulating backlogs continued until the end of hostilities.¹⁶

On 11 September 1945, just 3 days after the basic repatriation plan had received War Department approval, occasion arose during a staff conference of Memorial Division officers to compare results of the two planning systems, one of which had been skillfully directed toward clearly defined objectives by minds freed from routine distractions, the other pushed in spasmodic efforts along an uncharted course by executives who were heavily burdened with operating responsibilities. The agenda of the conference included discussion of overtime work, estimates of personnel requirements for polling the next of kin and bringing burial records up-to-date, and finally, proposals for the return of unknown soldiers to national cemeteries. Planning procedures at this critical time are disclosed by a statement that "each branch should make up their individual requirements and then get together and coordinate these ideas in one report; the report in its entirety to cover the immediate needs for the next 60 to 80 days, requirements for repatriation through July 1946."¹⁷

Although the wide range of activities to be included in the report would indicate that the branch chiefs realized the magnitude of their co-operative endeavor, Brigadier General Beyette, who had recently superseded Colonel Harbold as Chief of the Memorial Division, was dissatisfied with the method of approach. The minutes record: "The general stated he felt our weakness was lack of overall planning and gave an example of the vast plan that was carried out by Storage Division, ASF [a phase of demobilization planning], which was performed on V-E Day without a hitch."¹⁸

It will be well to pause at this juncture and review progress in advance planning since V-E Day for return of the war dead. In admitting first of all that the rate of progress was not impressive, three limiting factors should be considered. First, completion of the basic plan for return of American war dead had been set forward from the original target date of 1 March 1945 to 1 June. The delay it will be recalled, was caused by a lag in the transmission of burial records from the theaters, together with a backlog of unprocessed reports in the Memorial Division.¹⁹ Here, the pace of plan-

¹⁶ Col R. P. Harbold stated in a memorandum that burial records for 45,000 reported deaths had not been forwarded from the European Theater of Operations. (1) Memo, Col R. P. Harbold, Chief, Mem Div for Maj Gen R. M. Littlejohn, Chief, QM ETO, 12 Apr 45, sub: Gr Reg Sv in the ETO. (2) Cf, Memo, Maj Gen Littlejohn for TQMG, 9 May 45, sub: Reply to Comments on Graves Registration and Effects Activities in the ETO.

¹⁷ Report No. 2, Staff Meetings, 2 PM, Tuesdays, Minutes of Staff Meeting held on 11 Sep 45, Adm Br, Mem Div, Reference File.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ See above, fn. 16.

ning in general was determined by progress in the collection of data essential to development of the basic plan. Second, additional months elapsed before War Department approval was given the plan submitted on 1 June 1945, creating a situation in which supplementary planning would be tentative and subject to revision. Finally, the direction and co-ordination of all such planning was left to committee action, as taken by the branch chiefs at periodic staff meetings, instead of being entrusted to a special planning group, each member of which could give undivided attention to the work at hand.

Just as soon as favorable action on the part of interested General Staff divisions indicated that War Department approval of the basic plan was assured, Lt. Col. Earl F. Sechrest, Chief of the newly established Operations Branch,²⁰ took steps to initiate a comprehensive program of detailed advance planning for purposes of implementing the basic statement of objectives and requirements. Announced on 3 September in a paper bearing the somewhat ambiguous title, "Graves Registration Service, Repatriation and Concentration of Remains, Overseas Plans and Operations," the program specified 29 projects which fell into four main groups: (1) "Operational Planning and Control (United States and abroad)"; (2) "Personnel and Fiscal"; (3) "Transportation and Distribution"; (4) "Liaison, Acquisition, Rental, and Supply."

The first group included such items as the preparation of factual data, particularly the completion of burial records, for general planning purposes; the development of a detailed organizational setup for area, zone, port, and field operating sections in all parts of the world covered by the operations of United States troops; the co-ordination of plans with the Transportation Corps for the procurement of a mortuary fleet; the establishment of distribution points within the United States to receive from overseas and transship remains in co-operation with the Transportation Corps to their final destinations; the formulation of procedures to direct and co-ordinate the objectives of all organizational elements comprising the world-wide AGRS.

As indicated in its heading, the second group embraced a study of policies and procedures to be followed in the establishment of job specifications and the procurement of employees for service abroad. The preparation of budget estimates, which incidentally had no precedent in the history of military finance, comprised a difficult

²⁰ See below.

planning program in this group.²¹ The third group, "Transportation and Distribution," opened up the complicated problems of logistical support for operations in every quarter of the globe, while the fourth group, "Liaison, Acquisition, Rental, and Supply," touched on questions of foreign relations, with all their ramifications in territories subject to the jurisdiction of former allies, co-belligerents and liberated nations.

While the scope of this program is but vaguely indicated in such a summary description, there can be no doubt that it reflected full consciousness on the part of Memorial Division officials that the initiation of a vast and complicated planning program was an imminent necessity, and that further delay in the rapid development of such a program would be attended with disastrous consequences. The approved current plan of 8 September 1945 implied a commitment on the part of the War Department to begin shipment of remains to the United States within 6 months following the surrender of Japan.²² At any rate, the paper of 3 September served the purpose of hastening planning activities that were long overdue. Within a few days the draft of a War Department directive authorizing the establishment of an American Graves Registration Service Command which would embrace all geographical areas within the European and Mediterranean Theaters, together with those identified with the North Africa and Middle East Theater and the Persian Gulf Command, was prepared for the signature of The Quartermaster General and submitted through channels.²³ Then, within the same week, the Logistics Section of the Operations Branch initiated plans looking to the allocation of surplus war materials in the overseas theaters that would be required for graves registration operations and, in addition, undertook the formulation of pro-

²¹ It had been possible to estimate costs in the return of World War I dead on the basis of a highly concentrated operation conducted in a restricted area of Western Europe where the economic and political fabric had suffered comparatively little damage. In contrast, the return program of World War II was global in extent, embracing civilized areas that had sustained unparalleled damage, as well as vast stretches of territory and remote islands where the most primitive conditions of life had always prevailed. In such a situation, the determination of costs relating to transportation, the hire of personnel, rental of lands and buildings, etc., was largely speculative. Furthermore, any calculation of the cost of mortuary supplies, as derived from World War I experience, was subject to wide price variations. Finally, there was no firm figure for the total number of remains to be returned. Interv, OQMG Historian with Maj W S. Wittbrodt, Exec Officer Budget Off, OQMG, 26 Oct 46.

²² Current Plan for Return of American Dead, pp. 14-15.

²³ Memo, TQMG for CG, ASF, 6 Sep 45, sub: Establishment of the American Graves Registration Command in the Europe—Mediterranean—North Africa—Middle East—Persian Gulf Theaters.

cedures for requisition and issue of such supplies.²⁴ Consideration of these problems brought about a complete reorientation of planning concepts and methods within the Memorial Division.

Reorientation of Planning and Methods

The primary problem under consideration involved the bottleneck of burial records in the Graves Registration Branch which were inaccurate, incomplete, and unusable in their existing form as a body of information for planning purposes. In realization of this situation, General Beyette, on 6 September, requested that representatives of the Operations Planning and Control Division (OP&C) conduct a survey of the Graves Registration Branch with a view to determining the adequacy of records, improving the branch organization, and examining both the possibilities and the advantages of setting up electrical accounting machine (EAM) punched card records for statistical purposes of the branch.²⁵ Greater emphasis was given these objectives 2 days later when General Beyette reviewed all details of the project with Lt. Col. H. C. Hanson and Mr. P. C. Purington of the OP&C Division and discussed future requirements that were indicated in proposals for legislative action.²⁶

Two specific requirements were foreshadowed. One had to do with a form of notice for disinterment of remains which would be prepared by the Memorial Division and forwarded to cemeteries in the various theaters. Every notice or order for disinterment must be predicated on the express desire of the next of kin. As a prerequisite to all such action, it was expected that Headquarters, ASF, would require a poll of approximately 300,000 next of kin of deceased servicemen to obtain information as to their wishes concerning the disposition of these remains. General Beyette visualized five distinct steps involved in the polling, the preparation of notices of disinterment, and related operations.

- (a) Preparation of letters to all next of kin. This will involve searching of files for all pertinent data.
- (b) Subsequent correspondence with those next of kin as a result of the poll.

²⁴ (1) Ltr, ACofS, G-4 to CG, ASF, 11 Sep 45, sub: Computation of Sup & Equip for Repat Opns, File WDGS 3469. Interv, OQMG Historian, 2 Sep 48, with Louis Zindell, now Chief, Requirements and Supply Section, establishes that this letter was prepared by Logistics Section, Operations Branch, Memorial Division, for action by the Secretary of War. (2) Ltr, TQMG to CG, ASF, 22 Oct 45, sub: Computation of Sup & Equip for Repat Opns, File SPOPP 400.

²⁵ OP&C Div, Project Record No. 431, 8 Sep 45 (suggested 6 Sep 45), sub: Study of Gr Reg Br, Mem Div.

²⁶ Memo, OP&C Div for Dep TQMG for Adm & Mgmt, 10 Sep 45, sub: Rpt of Interv with General Beyette, 8 Sep 45, and OP&C representatives Lt Col Hanson and Mr. Purington.

(c) Preparation of Form 114 (Notice of Interment) which in effect reports instructions to cemetery organizations overseas as to the elected disposition of the next of kin.

(d) Handling of changes in original instructions from next of kin.

(e) Continuous correspondence during the interim period from the poll date to shipment date after receipt of remains in a United States port.

(f) Necessary planning and co-ordination required to assure a smoothly operating repatriation program.²⁷

The soundness of objectives sought in the survey was fully established. The inadequacy of burial records both as to accuracy and completeness of data for purposes of polling the next of kin called for an immediate reorganization of the Graves Registration Branch and a redirection of its activities for the specific purpose of converting these records into usable form. Two closely interrelated courses of action were required to attain this end. One suggested abandonment of the filing system established in May 1944, along with the photographic reproduction of burial reports²⁸ and the return to a modified form of the earlier card filing system in which duplicate 5- by 8-inch cards containing abstracts of The Adjutant General's Office Report of Death, together with the theater Graves Registration Service Report of Burial, were arranged alphabetically in two files, the first—the so-called "master file"—by name of deceased, the second by place, or cemetery of burial.²⁹ It was now proposed to substitute for the old alphabetical file a new type of grave location file. Known as the Master Grave Location Card Record, this file would contain cards which, in addition to showing all data entered under the original system, would be designed to serve as a record for all phases of the repatriation program. The old alphabetical file was to be replaced by a new one which would be used for cross-reference purposes only and would be produced by making a carbon imprint from the Master Graves Location Card Record of the data essential to this limited use.³⁰

The second activity was planned with a view to providing a final check on the data assembled for the Master Graves Location Card Record. This required the establishment of a standard plot record, consisting of detailed plot maps which, drawn to scale, would show

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Steere, *GR in WW II*, pp. 173 ff.

²⁹ Rpt, OP&C Div to TQMG, 1 Jul, sub: Process Charts in Summary of Recommendations (Overseas Section), Personnel Survey—Memorial Division.

³⁰ "Standard Operating Procedures for Converting the Present Cemetery Files now made up of Photostatic copies of AGO Reports on 5 x 8 cards previously prepared by the Branch", (Graves Registration Branch, Memorial Division, OQMG, 4 Oct 45), pp. 1-10.

the name, initials, and serial number of each identified deceased in its proper grave space, as derived from burial records transmitted by theaters to the Memorial Division. Grave spaces occupied by unknown dead would be indicated by the conventional sign—an X with the index number determined by the order of burial in a particular cemetery. Upon completion, each set of plot maps by cemeteries, or plots within a single cemetery, would be dispatched to the theaters for check and correction on the basis of comparison between each name or symbol on the sheets with that shown by the grave marker indicating the same location on the ground.³¹ The necessity of eliminating discrepancies between the burial location of names, as plotted on paper in the Graves Registration Branch, and the physical location, as attested by grave location markers in the overseas cemeteries, was based on the following assumption:

The number of burials in any given cemetery as presently recorded by the Graves Registration Branch, based upon Burial Reports received from the Theaters, does not correspond with the number of burials in that cemetery as reported by the Theater as in most instances where discrepancies exist in such burial figures the number of burials reported by the Theater exceeds the number of burials recorded by this office. It is believed that part of this discrepancy is due to the lag in the receipt of burial reports forwarded by the Theater to this office and the number of burials recorded as of a particular date in a specified cemetery by that Theater. It is also believed, based on an examination of the records of this office, that the difference between statistics is also due to the failure on the part of this office to receive burial reports transmitted by the Theater, as well as the failure of the Theater to transmit all burial reports to this office.³²

Ample justification of the above reasoning was soon established. In using 8,000 burial reports as the basis for preparing the first series of plot maps, it was discovered that several different grave locations were occupied by two individuals. Other anomalies were discovered. Markers had been established for graves in which no remains were interred. In such instances, however, burial reports were forwarded to the Graves Registration Branch, citing the grave location and the name prematurely placed on the marker. Again, it came to light that during concentration operations in the Pacific Ocean Areas, more bodies were actually exhumed from a particular cemetery than were shown in the Theater burial records from that cemetery. The most distressing situation of all, no doubt, was the

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³² Rpt, Col E. V. Turner, *et al.*, Mem Div (no date or title), presented at division conference on 17 Oct 45.

disclosure that known individuals buried in definitely established locations, and so indicated in records of the Graves Registration Branch, had become unknown as the result of concentration operations.³³

By 24 September the survey had been completed and reported to The Deputy Quartermaster General for Administration and Management.³⁴ General Beyette approved recommendations for the conversion of present cemetery files to a card record adaptable for use through all phases of the repatriation program, and issued instruction that the conversion should be initiated and conducted in accordance with a tentative operation procedure which had been developed under the direction of Col. M. V. Turner, Chief of the Graves Registration Branch.³⁵

At the same time, two forms essential to completion and correction of burial data were established. One was the Plot Map Chart;³⁶ the other was the Master Grave Location Card.³⁷ This form comprised a 5- by 8-inch card, with an outer flap measuring 4 by 8 inches. Filed in a visible cabinet by cemetery, plot, and grave number, the outer fold of the card exposed to view all data transposed from The Adjutant General's death reports, 293 files and burial reports, including information pertaining to name, address, and relationship of both the tentative and legally established next of kin. Visible below the outer flap were blank spaces for recording the final disposition of remains by plot, row, and grave number either in a national cemetery or in an American military cemetery in an overseas area. Since remains to be interred in privately owned cemeteries in the United States or abroad would pass beyond the jurisdiction of the War Department, any such disposition was not recorded by place of burial on the card record. The reverse side of the flap and the space covered by the downfolded flap contained spaces for recording the disposition of remains indicated by the legally established next of kin and the successive movements of the remains from the date of disinterment overseas to the final burial specified by the next of kin.

The Graves Registration Branch officers and the OP&C Division representatives gave serious consideration to applying EAM equipment to the statistical needs of the program. It was the consensus of the branch, however, that their present needs were restricted to the card record and plot map file, an opinion which General Beyette

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-17.

³⁴ Memo, OP&C Div, for Dep TQMG for Adm & Mgmt, 24 Sep 45, sub: Rpt on Project No. 431—Survey of the Gr Reg Br.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ OQMG Form 331, 17 Sep 45.

³⁷ OQMG Form 333, 1 Oct 45.

felt inclined to accept for the time being.³⁸ A supplementary report of 26 September on the survey presented an analysis of the progress that had been made since 14 July in the reduction of backlogs.

A backlog of 48,595 burial reports as of 14 July, it appears, had been reduced to 18,140 by 1 September and to 13,781 by date of the report. With a current weekly production rate of 7,041, elimination of the existing backlog involved only 1.9 work weeks. Over the same period, the backlog of incoming correspondence had been reduced to a figure (4,150) which, according to the weekly production rate, could be eliminated in 1.1 work weeks. Against this satisfactory state of affairs, the proposed program of converting burial records into the Master Grave Location Card Record created a new backlog of huge proportions—one estimated at 249,500 burial records, including 186,000 already processed, 13,500 processed but not recorded, 14,000 in backlog, 20,000 due from the European Theater area and 16,000 due from the Pacific Ocean area.³⁹ It was thought, however, that the benefits to be gained by conversion justified the effort. These were summarized in the following statement:

(a) Provides necessary records and information required in connection with the Repatriation Program.

(b) Reduces the production time required to process Burial Reports received thereafter.

(c) Provides a basic and complete historical record for all World War II burials so that all basic data will be on one card.⁴⁰

The burial records conversion program required a special organization headed by a junior administrative assistant and staffed by 115 checkers, file clerks, plot map clerks, typists, and supervisors. Of the total required personnel, only 59 were immediately available.⁴¹ Thus, initiation of the project demanded a quick resolution of several difficulties, including personnel recruitment, amplification, and refinement of the tentative standard operating procedure, training of the assembled force, phasing the program, and finally, procurement of the printed grave location cards and grave plot charts. Since the direction and co-ordination of these various activities would require the undivided attention of a single individual, General Beyette requested the temporary assignment of P. G. Purington, of the Planning Organization Branch, OP&C Divi-

³⁸ See above, fn. 34.

³⁹ Rpt, Chief, Gr Reg Br, to Dir, Mem Div, 26 Sep 45, sub: Backlog Data.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Worksheet entitled, "Planned Conversion Organization," n.d., presumably compiled by P. G. Purington, OP&C representative in Memorial Div, c. Sep 45-Jan 46.

sion, to assume overall management of the project.⁴² Orders were immediately given for delivery of 100,000 cards. Mr. Purington worked with the Personnel Division on the problem of procuring and training qualified personnel and collaborated with Graves Registration Branch officers in developing the standard operating procedure, which, in addition to prescribing the method and determining the sequence of all operations for conversion, was designed to serve the purpose of a training manual and assist in drawing up job instruction sheets for the program. The SOP was completed and approved by 4 October.⁴³ The training program was scheduled to start on the 11th of the same month. In view of the anticipated delivery of 100,000 printed cards on 15 October, it was planned to initiate the records conversion program on that date.⁴⁴

The problem of determining those phases into which the records conversion program would logically fall necessarily directed attention to a related problem—polling the next of kin. As a matter of fact, these two problems were inseparable. The first phase in developing the Master Grave Location Card Record would involve the collection of data from AGO death reports, GRS burial reports, 293 files and other service records establishing the name, rank, serial number, and service connection of the deceased as well as the circumstances of death, place of temporary burial, and the name and address of the tentative next of kin. Verification of the place of temporary burial would require checking of the plot map in the theater and return of the corrected map to the Graves Registration Branch. Again, identity of the legal next of kin and the desired disposition of remains could only be determined by a poll.⁴⁵

Because of the close relationship between records conversion and polling the next of kin, the OP&C representative, Mr. Purington, was drawn into preliminary planning for the poll. It was tentatively agreed that a letter would be sent to the recorded next of kin, including the name, serial number, cemetery and grave location of the deceased, and that a "Return Form" would be inclosed for the purpose of enabling the addressee to indicate the desired disposition of the remains in question and furnish any additional information that might be required in connection with the particular disposition expressed. At the same time, Colonel Turner, Chief of the Graves

⁴² See above, fn. 34.

⁴³ (1) Informal Record of Actions taken in connection with Staff Assistance Rendered (by Mr. Purington) to the Mem Div (Gr Reg Br), period: 25 Sep–10 Oct 45. A series of informal records were prepared by Mr. Purington and are located in the Purington file. This material will hereinafter be cited as Informal Record with appropriate dates.

(2) See fn. 30.

⁴⁴ Informal Record, 25 Sep–10 Oct 45.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

Registration Branch, and Lieutenant Colonel Darling, his assistant chief, in collaboration with the OP&C Division representative, developed a phased program for the work of the branch in connection with completing the Master Grave Location Card Record and conducting the poll. This program consisted of ten distinct phases:

1. The establishment of a card record for each occupied grave location.
2. The establishment of cemetery plot maps showing the name and army serial number of each remains buried in each grave.
3. A check of 293 files in Mail and Records Branch against the established card file to obtain the latest information as to name and address of the next of kin.
4. The dispatch, simultaneous with the 293 files check, of cemetery plot maps to the theater for verification and return within a specified number of days.
5. The preparation of poll letters to the next of kin, the poll being conducted on a scheduled basis to allow for planning of the work required on poll forms returned by the next of kin.
6. Notification to theaters of the polling schedule to enable each theater to co-ordinate its advance planning with the Graves Registration Branch.
7. Reflecting on the card record the disposition requested by next of kin on the returned poll form.
8. The processing of returned poll forms for extraction of statistical data required in connection with the planning for and establishment of national cemeteries.
9. The preparation of orders to the theaters for disinterment and return of remains to the United States, or reinterment abroad.
10. Completion of the card record, entering dates of action taken by the theater at each point through which the remains pass to the point of final destination.⁴⁶

Following closely to plan, the records conversion program began on 17 October.⁴⁷ The staff, however, was still in the process of recruitment and its available personnel only emerging from a preliminary stage of training. With a total volume of some 249,000 processed cards as its objective, this understaffed and partially trained force completed 58,500 cards, or about 23 percent of the whole, by the close of business on 21 November 1945. While the production fell short of established rates, the actual performance was attributed to unfamiliarity with a new type of work that did not lend itself to high production rates. Two devices, therefore, were adopted to

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 11 Oct-19 Oct 45.

speed production: (1) typists were divided into groups of equal production rates for purposes of fostering intergroup competition; (2) the practice of marking and checking basic material prior to typing was instituted, the supposition being that the job of typing would be simplified and that the number of cards typed per person would thus be increased.⁴⁸

Meantime, the clumsy method of co-ordinating separately conducted planning programs by committee action of the branch chiefs fell into marked disorder over the consideration of ways and means to conduct the poll. In view of the tremendous number (approximately 249,000) of poll letters to be written and dispatched, representatives of the Navy Department and a strong body of opinion within the Memorial Division held that the poll must be deferred until a master control record file had been established to govern the polling operation and a master control record for each individual interred overseas was available for recording the desires of the next of kin as to the disposition of these remains. The opposition feared an unfavorable public reaction if initiation of the polling operation suffered any considerable delay.⁴⁹

A more serious rift of opinion centered on the method of taking the poll, one faction contending that the operation should be accomplished all at once in order to forestall a heavy volume of correspondence with anxious relatives who would neither understand nor appreciate the reasons for an orderly, step-by-step procedure. The opposing faction pointed to the advantage of a cemetery-by-cemetery schedule, arguing that a shortened period between dispatch of the poll letter and final disposition of the remains would eliminate the possibility of changes in the succession of next of kin, to say nothing of many changes of address and reversal of original decisions as to disposition. The fancied disadvantage of scheduled polling, it was maintained, could be dispelled by intelligent publicity. The final argument presented by this faction held that disinterment orders to the theaters could be written on the basis of a scheduled poll with less delay than would apply in the case of a one-time poll.⁵⁰

These difficulties came to a head on 17 October, the same day that saw the records conversion program get under way. While the logic of circumstances ultimately sustained the contention for a scheduled poll, it is difficult to understand why there should have been any conflict at this time. The Master Grave Location Card file was set up on the presumption that the poll would be conducted

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 20 Oct–2 Nov 45.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 11 Oct–19 Oct 45.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

on a cemetery-by-cemetery basis. Furthermore, the policy in this matter was clear and so stated in the approved plan of 8 September 1945.

Forms asking the next of kin to express a desire as to the final disposition of remains will be based on planned operations and will not be mailed until a reasonable time before actual exhumations are to begin in a given area. Such procedure will avoid too great a lapse of time before the actual return of the body. Otherwise, lapses of long periods of time would cause complaints and inevitable changes in the next of kin and result in a large and unnecessary volume of correspondence.⁵¹

Despite an admitted "weakness," or rather the want of machinery to direct and properly co-ordinate the separate phases of an overall planning program, some progress toward agreement on polling forms and literature appears to have been made at the conference of 17 October. Two different sorts of poll letter came under consideration. One consisted of a form letter, all parts of which would be mechanically typed excepting the name and address of next of kin and the name, serial number, and graves location of the deceased. These individual items would be typed manually, filling allotted spaces in the form letter. The other sort of poll contemplated an engraved certificate, with the individual items manually typed by reconditioned machines equipped with pica type and standard soft gray ribbons.⁵²

No serious difficulties or conflicts of opinion were originally encountered in developing primary requirements of the return poll form. Since the standard 8- by 10½-inch letter page would not contain all the required information, it was decided to use a single 10½- by 17½-inch sheet which would fold into one measuring 8- by 10½ inches, thus avoiding the difficulties that would arise in always keeping together the separate sheets of a single form.⁵³

Opinion was firm on one requirement in the preparation of this form: The name, initials, serial number, and grave location of the deceased must be a carbon imprint of the data typed on the poll letter, or engraved certificate. Such a procedure would tie the return form directly to the Master Grave Location Card and, in addition, provide a safeguard against the release of poll letters in case of unknown burial locations.

Ideas on an explanatory pamphlet took shape. Attached to the poll letter, or the engraved certificate if such a form were used, the

⁵¹ Col Turner, *et al.*, in Rpt to Chief, Mem Div, as submitted 17 Oct 45 (see fn. 32), quoting, Current Plan for Return of American Dead, p. 13.

⁵² Informal Record, 11-19 Oct 45.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

pamphlet would be prepared with a view to providing the next of kin with all the general information and special instructions required for the execution of an acceptable reply form. The explanatory pamphlet, in other words, was regarded as a device to anticipate the need of any correspondence other than the poll letter itself, and to reduce to a minimum the number of unacceptable reply forms which, in the absence of carefully considered instructions, would certainly be productive of voluminous correspondence.⁵⁴

In many respects the conference of 17 October 1945 may, on the one hand, be regarded as a climax of the confusion engendered by haste in pushing a complicated planning program for which little long-range preparation had been made and, on the other, as a turning point where unco-ordinated activities were patiently pieced together and redirected toward a common goal. Furthermore, while considerable confusion was inevitable in such circumstances, a rapid succession of division chiefs during the period between V-E Day and April 1946 could hardly be regarded as a stabilizing influence. Col. Clarence A. Blake relieved General Beyette on 2 October 1945.⁵⁵ After serving less than 4 months, Colonel Blake was superseded by Col. Michael H. Zwicker in January 1946.⁵⁶ Brig. Gen. J. B. Franks, in turn, relieved Colonel Zwicker during March, while the latter officer was assigned as Deputy to the Director.⁵⁷ In ill health, General Franks relinquished his post on 22 April to Brig. Gen. George A. Horkan.⁵⁸ The situation produced by this combination of circumstances was hardly conducive to precision and rapidity in mobilizing the AGRS. Given such conditions, the task encountered many of the perplexities and setbacks that would have plagued the War Department General Staff, if, for the sake of drawing a parallel situation, it can be imagined that the Nation had gone to war without so much as a mobilization plan and, moreover, had been so unfortunate as to have had four successive chiefs of staff during the first year of hostilities.

At the very time the conflict of views over polling methods obscured the fact that a governing policy had already been established, Colonel Blake put the whole matter on a commonsense basis by resolving to undertake a revision of planning methods. In view of an early termination to the temporary assignment by which the services of Mr. Purington, of the OP&C Division, had been made

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ OQMG OO No. 45-195, 2 Oct 45.

⁵⁶ (1) Officers Record Card, Pers & Trng Div, OQMG. (2) OQMG OO No. 30-100, 22 Jan 45, as cited in 201 file.

⁵⁷ OQMG OO No. 45-226, 15 Mar 46, as cited in 201 file.

⁵⁸ (1) WDSO 27/6, 1 Feb 46, assigned Gen Horkan as Asst to TQMG. (2) WDSO 91/2, 18 Apr 46. (3) OQMG OO No. 30-115, 22 Apr 46.

available for such purposes to the Memorial Division, Colonel Blake contemplated the establishment of a special planning group in order to put on a permanent footing the provisional arrangement that had been in operation for the past 4 weeks. At his request, the Organization Planning Branch, OP&C Division, prepared a study of the problem. A summary of the situation under study was stated in the following terms:

. . . it is evident that there is a major and very important job necessary to be established in Memorial Division. Up to the present time, the Division has been apparently unaware of the size of the job or number of staff required to accomplish the advance planning. This conclusion is reached because several individuals are now involved in the planning of each of the operations mentioned, but these same individuals are also carrying heavy operating responsibilities as well as staff responsibilities.⁵⁹

Completed on 29 October and entitled "Notes on the Memorial Division," the paper drew a careful distinction between staff studies dealing with current operations and those concerned with operations to be initiated at some future date. Contract termination was cited as an example of the latter classification. This program, according to the paper, required a careful examination of policies, plans, and procedures, as well as of the type of organization best designed to accomplish the speedy termination of war contracts under certain foreseeable conditions. Particular stress was put upon the point that the development of these detailed plans was undertaken far in advance of the initiation of operations and required continuous effort on the part of both operating personnel and the staff or advisory personnel who were primarily responsible for development of the overall planning program.⁶⁰

While the Organization Planning Branch study conceded that the statement of general policies and broad plans outlined many desirable objectives, the job of planning to attain these objectives, like the one concerned with contract termination, required unremitting effort and constant supervision. In the diffuse terminology affected by planning and management experts, it was emphasized that "considerable effort has yet to be expended in examining, developing, and evaluating all possible ideas, plans, procedures, and methods in order to arrive at the most effective plan, procedure, or method for each of the operations required to accomplish the broad objectives."

⁵⁹ (1) Informal Record, 11-19 Oct 45, p. 4. (2) Rpt by Orgn Plng Br, OP&C Div, to Chief, Div, 29 Nov 45, sub: Notes on Mem Div, p. 9. Hereinafter cited as Notes on Mem Div.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

Having established in the jargon of the trade "the importance of submitting to advance planning, with a view to successful accomplishment, all the various objectives assigned to the division," the paper offered a definite proposal.

This emphasis on advance planning is best maintained by designating a special group of qualified individuals to spend their full time in advance planning without the burden of any operating responsibilities. This group, of necessity, should be close to the Division Chief so that the established policies will be the governing factors in any plans developed. The assignment of such a full-time group (altogether it probably should be limited to three or four qualified individuals) will provide a substantial assistance not alone to the key operating personnel but to all operating personnel in that the burden of developing plans, procedures and methods will be removed from the shoulders of the key operating personnel and thereby permit them to concentrate on administering the plans developed by this Control Staff. This arrangement would concentrate in a small group the development of all the plans, methods and procedures required by the Division and in so doing would guarantee that each of the plans as developed would be properly keyed to the related plans previously developed or yet to be developed.⁶¹

After suggesting an organizational scheme for a more efficient conduct of the planning program, the memorandum then surveyed the overall project by noting those areas which had already been examined in detail and listing those which required exploration. For purposes of graphic illustration, the Organization Planning Branch prepared a scheme entitled "Chart Showing Steps Involved in Preparing for Execution of Repatriation Program."⁶²

The chart showed fourteen distinct steps, beginning with the typing of grave location cards and terminating with posting on the master grave location card those significant dates in connection with handling shipment of remains which were covered by shipping orders to the theater. In the overall program, steps 1 through 7 were concerned with records conversion. The eighth step called for a reorganization and marshalling of personnel for polling operations, while the remaining steps 9 through 14 specified consecutive operations in transmitting poll letters, processing return forms, preparation of orders to appropriate theaters for disinterment, reburial or return of remains to the United States and, as already stated, posting of significant dates of action on master grave location cards.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁶² The published chart has no date.

Concurrent operations were outlined for each consecutive step. In connection with preparation of poll letters to next of kin (step 9), for example, advance notice would be sent to the appropriate theater, stating the cemetery-by-cemetery schedule to be followed in forwarding the poll letters to next of kin. Again, concurrent with step 11—recording requested disposition of remains on the master grave location cards—were operations involved in the processing of returned poll forms for the body of statistical data that would be required in the conduct of the program and, as an aid in making such data readily available, the determination of basic statistics to be placed on EAM cards.

Actually, the chart put in diagrammatic form the elements of an integrated planning program and, moreover, measured present accomplishments in terms of total requirements. Data accompanying parallel descriptions of consecutive and concurrent operations indicated that standard operating procedures had been prepared, or were in process of preparation, for only 4 of the required 14 steps. In other words, a measurement of progress along the plotted course established that only a small fraction of the entire distance had been traversed and that the need of quickening the pace was imperative.

A third aspect of the memorandum of 29 October dealt with the advantages of establishing some simple control medium through which the Memorial Division and branch chiefs could determine, on a daily basis, the progress made in each phase of the project. The proposed medium embraced a threefold system of reporting: (1) a daily report submitted by each branch chief to the division chief, containing a statement of actions accomplished, together with mention of such problems as could not be solved at the branch level; (2) a weekly report from the division to The Quartermaster General similar in purpose to the daily report but touching only on major accomplishments and problems; (3) a procedure for the discussion at weekly staff meetings of current and impending problems, the branch chiefs acting on such occasions as a board of advisors to the division chief in reviewing and deciding upon the real problems of the division.⁶³

The Organization Planning Branch offered nothing original in its presentation of planning principles. Its basic argument for the establishment of a specialized planning unit rested on the success of methods applied in the field of demobilization planning, notably contract termination. Key personnel of the Memorial Division fully understood the implications of this argument and were well

⁶³ Notes on Mem Div, p. 7.

aware that a faulty performance in their own development of advance planning was due primarily to long-standing organization defects which since 1943 had precluded the possibility of making adequate provision for effective long-range planning. The statement that "up to the present the Division has been apparently unaware of the size of the job or number of staff required to accomplish the advance planning"⁶⁴ seems strangely at variance with the fact that the essence of Policy Study No. 34 of 14 August 1943 was a plea for liberation of personnel restrictions and the adoption of a type of organization that would have made such planning possible.⁶⁵ This statement, in effect, amounts to an accusation that the man who has long and unsuccessfully pled the economy of using an automobile instead of a horse and buggy for his business had always been insensible to the advantages of motor transportation. There is no question, however, that the recommendations looking to the establishment of a special planning group were highly pertinent to the needs of the Memorial Division.

Emanating from the official planning agency of the OQMG, the memorandum of 29 October 1945 actually announced a complete reversal of the policy that had hitherto so persistently frustrated efforts within the Memorial Division to create an overseas Graves Registration Service Branch and invest it with functions similar to those which were now assigned to the proposed planning group. Since the new policy was, in fact, a belated acceptance of the one that had been originally advocated by Colonel Harbold in 1943, and unsuccessfully renewed in May 1944 when the Memorial Branch was reorganized on a divisional basis, it was a foregone conclusion that response on the part of Colonel Blake and his branch chiefs would be unanimously favorable. Such, indeed, was the case. As soon as advance copies of the memorandum were available, Colonel Blake reviewed the proposed list of objectives with Lieutenant Colonel McConville, his executive officer, and Lieutenant Colonel Sechrest, Chief of the Operations Branch.⁶⁶ These officers were in agreement that all recommendations advanced in the paper were pertinent to the accomplishment of a successful program. While additional copies of the memorandum were prepared for distribution to key individuals of the division, Lieutenant Colonel McConville took action under instructions of the division chief to designate a division Planning and Control Branch. Composed of Capt. H. S. Edlis, Lt. Louis G. Zindel and Mr. A. E. Davidson, the new control staff was instructed to assume responsibility for de-

⁶⁴ See above, fn. 58.

⁶⁵ See above.

⁶⁶ Informal Record, 20 Oct-2 Nov 45.

veloping the approved planning agency.⁶⁷ This measure was amplified on 14 November at a meeting attended by Brigadier General McKinley, Chief, OP&C Division, and Colonel Blake, together with representatives of both divisions. The following recommendations were discussed:

(1) That all personnel (civilians or officers) spending full time on planning be assigned to one planning and control staff rather than to have overall planning performed by two different organizational activities, one at a branch level and one at a section level. This type of organization would better comply with Headquarters, ASF organization activities.

(2) That the Planning and Control staff be headed by an officer who would be relieved from operating responsibilities so that his full time may be spent in directing the vital functions of staff planning. The staff members of the Planning and Control Group would likewise be relieved from operating responsibilities (this in accordance with "Notes on the Memorial Division" dated 29 October 1945, paragraph 5).⁶⁸

While proposals looking to the effective operation of a planning and control staff could not be fully realized until a reorganization of the division as a whole had been carried to completion, the conferees agreed that the staff should proceed on a provisional basis and that assistance would be afforded during this interim by two additional qualified individuals from the OP&C Division. Thereafter, outside help would be requested only in the event of some extraordinary need.⁶⁹

Final Planning Efforts

These belated efforts offer convincing proof that none of the foresight that had been exercised in determining the proper sort of vehicle for demobilization planning was employed during the initial phase of planning for the final disposition of remains, and that the expedient ultimately adopted suggested something of the method of hitching a fresh horse to an old hack several hours after a smart conveyance would have been well along the road toward its destination.

It was an actual achievement, nonetheless, to get the program under way on a charted course. The pace, while far from satisfactory, did not invite unfavorable criticism from higher authority or the general public. For the moment, popular concern was so completely occupied in voicing demands "to bring the boys home" and visiting displeasure on the War Department for its inability to per-

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

form miracles in the demobilization of manpower that the lapse in planning for return of the war dead went unnoticed. Toward the end of 1945, however, the drift of events was hastened by indications that Congress would give its attention early in 1946 to legislation authorizing the establishment of additional national cemeteries and the return of American war dead.⁷⁰

Apprehensive that H. R. 3936 (79th Congress) and related bills might become law before detailed plans for execution had been perfected, the Control Division of the Office of the Commanding General, ASF, instructed The Quartermaster General on 14 December 1945 to prepare "a tentative phasing schedule of the planned progression of Graves Registration Operations" and beginning in February 1946, to submit on the 15th of each month "a Monthly Progress Report covering the status of graves registration activities as of the last day of each month."⁷¹

The ASF directive of 14 December 1945 was intended to exert an influence on the course of detailed advance planning for final disposition of the dead similar to that produced on previous long-range planning by the directive emanating from the same headquarters on 30 November 1944 and urging the statement of policy and plans embodied in the so-called "current" plan of 8 September 1945. While the earlier letter caused the results of such long-range planning as had been accomplished during hostilities to be consolidated in a basic plan for the World War II Dead Program, it was hoped that the later one might hasten the process by which all activities deemed essential to execution of the basic plan would be integrated in an overall program and referred to a tentative time schedule.

The planned progression requested on 14 December 1945 was submitted on 29 December.⁷² The prompt reply would indicate that Memorial Division planners had, to say the least, advanced their work to the point where separate elements of an overall program could be visualized as interrelated parts of the whole. Entitled "Report on Preparation of Impending Graves Registration Operations," the proposed schedule exhibited in graphic form a

⁷⁰ H. Comm. on Military Affairs, 79th Cong., 1st Sess., *Hearings Before the Committee on Military Affairs, House of Representatives, Seventy-Ninth Congress, First Session on S. 524 and Various House Bills Providing for the Establishment of a National Cemetery in each State, etc., H. R. 3560, A Bill to Enlarge Arlington, and for Other Purposes, and H. R. 3936, A Bill to Provide for Evacuation and Repatriation of the Remains of Certain Persons who Died and are Buried and Whose Remains Could not Heretofore be Returned to their Homeland due to Wartime Shipping Restrictions. October 15 and 22, 1945* (Washington: GPO, 1945).

⁷¹ Col M. F. Hass, ACofS, ASF, Memo for TQMG, 14 Dec 45, sub: Planned Progression of Gr Reg Opns.

⁷² Since no covering letter can be found, the date of the report has been taken as the date of transmission.

total of thirty-seven concurrent and consecutive operations ranging from establishment of the Master Control Graves Location Card File to the preparation of delivery papers which would accompany remains to their final destination. According to the schedule, this final operation would be initiated on or about 1 December 1946.

The thirty-seven separate activities were grouped in nine operational cycles. Two of these cycles—the preparation of a technical manual and the development of a continuous training program for graves registration officers—involved single projects of major proportions. Six of the remaining seven cycles included activities which would be projected as measures preparatory to the seventh cycle—the exhumation of remains in the field and shipment therefrom to the United States, or to other places of final destination. The six preparatory cycles comprised the following: (1) transformation and verification of burial records; (2) determination of data for EAM card records and the preparation from EAM abstracts of cards ready for use; (3) preparation of poll forms and literature and development of procedures for polling the next of kin; (4) development of a suitable casket design, determination of approximate quantities of caskets and other mortuary supplies, and the procurement of such items and shipment through United States and foreign ports to cemeteries abroad; (5) conversion of ships for the transportation of remains and mortuary supplies; (6) preparation and submission of budget estimates.⁷³

Certain operations included in three of the cycles would continue during the return of remains from abroad. These related to the dispatch of poll letters to next of kin and the processing of reply forms, the preparation of EAM cards for final use, and the procurement and shipment of mortuary supplies to the overseas commands. Only those cycles concerned with completion and verification of burial records pertaining to remains specified in the first exhumation schedule, assemblage of the mortuary fleet, preparation and submission of estimates for a budget, together with initial phases of developing EAM card records and casket procurement were scheduled for completion prior to dispatch of the first "Repatriation Orders," (disinterment directives) to the overseas theaters.⁷⁴

Dispatch of the first lot of disinterment directives on 15 June 1946 would initiate the seventh cycle. This activity would comprise seven consecutive operations, including the transmission of orders,

⁷³ Rpt on Preparation for Impending Gr Reg Opns, pt. II, pp. 1-5. Hereinafter cited as Impending GR Opns.

⁷⁴ Upon adoption during January 1946 of Form 1194 to supersede Disinterment Order (Form 114), the term Disinterment Directive was substituted for Disinterment Order.

exhumation and transportation of casketed remains to the overseas port, transshipment through United States ports and distribution centers and delivery at the designated place of final burial.⁷⁵

The time-span from January to December 1946 fell into four periods which were marked off by dates assigned to the passage of enabling legislation, the appropriation of funds and the availability of caskets.⁷⁶ It was assumed "for chart purposes only," that R-Day, the date of legislative authorization for the return program, would fall on 1 March 1946 and that A-Day, the date of approval, or appropriation of funds for the program, would follow on 1 May. While many operations could be initiated in anticipation of R-Day and some, as instanced by the conversion of burial records, preparation of poll forms, planning for mortuary supplies and the fleet, and the preparation of budget estimates were in various stages of development by the first of the year, others, such as the dispatch of poll letters to next of kin, issuance of informal invitations to bid on ship conversion and casket production, and the submission of budget estimates through channels to Congress must await the eventuality of R-Day. Still others of necessity would be deferred to A-Day, namely, the negotiation of contracts for caskets and other mortuary supplies and the completion of contracts for the conversion and delivery of ships.⁷⁷

Aside from attempting a reasonable prediction of Congressional action, the dates given R-Day and A-Day were intended to simplify the problem of scheduling. In view of the fact that all preparations for initiating the poll were to be completed by 20 April,⁷⁸ a lag in the eventuation of R-Day beyond this date would retard the polling program. Again, a deferment of A-Day would delay arrangements for assembling the mortuary fleet and halt the casket procurement program. Since the first overseas shipment of caskets must be made during July in order to meet a scheduled date of 25 September for beginning exhumations, any postponement of A-Day beyond 1 May would cut into a calculated margin of approximately three months for production and delivery of the number of caskets required for this shipment. Thus, three dates—R-Day, A-Day, and one which would be established by delivery of the first increment of caskets—actually determined the possibility of conducting the planned progression without bringing one phase of the

⁷⁵ Impending GR Opns, pt II, p. 6.

⁷⁶ No definite date was assigned in the report of 29 December 1945 to a Casket Availability Day as prime limiting factor. However, Casket Availability Day ultimately became the sole limiting factor.

⁷⁷ Impending GR Opns, pt. II, p. 3.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

progression to a complete stop before another consecutive phase could be put in motion. Yet the whole course and consummation of events which would establish these crucial dates were beyond control of the War Department. Even assuming that the Memorial Division could accomplish all the scheduled activities for which it was directly responsible and that Congress would act in accordance with the purposes of the chart, the entire planned progression would be disarranged if postwar industrial conditions should prohibit the delivery of caskets and shipping cases according to contract requirements. As a matter of fact, neither the legislators nor the industrialists conformed to requirements set forth in the schedule of 29 December 1945.⁷⁹

Immediately after submitting the report on prospective repatriation procedures to Headquarters, ASF, Colonel Blake delegated to various Memorial Division officers the responsibility of supervising specified activities of the planned progression.⁸⁰ In the main, the delegation was made on a basis of operational cycles and assigned to those branch officers who, by the nature of their functions, would be concerned with the activity in question. The conversion and verification of burial records, for the most part, became a joint enterprise of Lieutenant Colonels Robinson and Turner, of the Graves Registration Branch. Planning for assemblage of the fleet was assigned to Lieutenant Colonel Sechrest and Major C. R. Allbee, of the Operations Branch.⁸¹

Cycles involving the functions of more than one branch were assigned to officers representing the appropriate branches. Maj. George Kremkau, Operations Branch, Maj. M. A. Beyers, Control Branch, and Col. L. E. Bumen, Chief of the Supply Branch, were to collaborate with Lieutenant Colonels Robinson and Turner in developing the EAM card program, while Lt. Col. L. I. Peak, Coordinator of Special Projects, and Major Kremkau could assume responsibility for preparing the technical manual. Lieutenant Colonel Sechrest and Major Kremkau were instructed to coordinate the training program with Lt. Col. M. T. Sanders, Operations Branch. The determination of approximate quantities of caskets and other mortuary supplies fell to Colonel Bumen, Lieutenant Colonel Sechrest and Major Beyers. Subsequent phases of the procurement program for mortuary supplies were delegated to Colonel

⁷⁹ Public Law 383, an amended version of HR 3936, was approved on 16 May 1946, while caskets for the first return shipment became available on 1 May 1947. Cf. Ltr, Col Ira K. Evans, Asst Chief, Mem Div, to all AGR Divs, 1 May 47: "It is now firmly established that C-Day (casket availability day) will be 1 July 1947; E-Day (Exhumation day overseas) will be 1 September 1947."

⁸⁰ Ltr, Col C. A. Blake to Staff and Br Chiefs, Mem Div, 4 Jan 46.

⁸¹ Interv, OQMG Historian with C. R. Allbee, Opns Br, Mem Div, 3 Mar 48.

Bumen and Major Beyers. However, two representatives of the Operations Branch—Lieutenant Colonel Sechrest and Major Allbee—would direct the shipment of caskets and other mortuary supplies to overseas ports.

Activities involving the division as a unit were to be co-ordinated at the staff level, with such assistance as might be required by representatives of the various branches. Thus, Colonel Zwicker, Deputy Director of the Memorial Division, Colonel Harbold, Special Deputy to the Director, and Colonel Peak, Co-ordinator of Special Projects, received the assignment of preparing and submitting budget estimates. Colonel Zwicker undertook sole responsibility for drafting the poll letter, informational pamphlet and return poll form. In addition to provisions for effective liaison between all branch units by the method of assigning responsibilities, Colonel Blake advised his branch chiefs that “The Control Branch will set up such co-ordinating controls as are necessary to assume proper timing and co-ordination. . . .”⁸²

On 18 January 1946, the Commanding General, ASF, approved the report of 29 December 1945. Two memoranda of this date were devoted to the subject, one⁸³ conveying the statement of approval, the other⁸⁴ itemizing objections to the timing of events. While indicating approval in general terms of the planned progression, the first letter directed that the technical manual should be developed around the approved procedures and extended in scope to include detailed instructions concerning the preparation of all forms incident to the program and, in addition, present basic organizational charts, with manning strengths, of all elements of the AGRS. Voicing the concern expressed in its directive of 17 December 1945, Headquarters, ASF, again emphasized the urgency of bringing preparation for the return operation to an early conclusion.

It is imperative that the complete procedures and operations be established and distributed to the field at the earliest possible date, such that if impending legislation is passed, the War Department will not be subjected to criticism in undertaking a job which has been anticipated for years.⁸⁵

A disquieting sense of working against time was carried to considerable lengths in the accompanying memorandum of 18 January. First of all, a fundamental objection was levelled against the timing

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ Memo, Col M. F. Hass, ACofS, for TQMG, 18 Jan 46, sub: Procedures for Repatriation of Deceased Personnel.

⁸⁴ Memo, Maj Gen Daniel Noce, CofS, ASF, for TQMG, 18 Jan 46, sub: Repatriation Program for Deceased Personnel.

⁸⁵ Memo, Col M. R. Hass, ACofS, ASF for TQMG, 18 Jan 46, sub: Procedures for Repatriation of Deceased Personnel.

of the program on grounds that it implied a continuation of field operations in Europe through the winter. This directive, therefore, required that means must be devised whereby the exhumation of remains scheduled for return to the United States during 1946 could begin early in spring rather than later during the summer.

Such a shift involved two basic revisions in scheduling the planned progression of events: (1) designating R-Day (1 March 1946) as the target date for completion of the technical manual and other essential preparations for conducting the poll; (2) elimination of A-Day (1 May 1946) as a control date by the relaxation of budgetary restrictions so that contracts for the procurement of caskets and other mortuary supplies might be concluded immediately after R-Day.

In accomplishing the first revision, Headquarters, ASF, advised that The Quartermaster General could "prepare two or three alternate poll letters and secure the necessary concurrences so that when legislation is passed the proper letter and pamphlet can be dispatched with the minimum of delay." The point was emphasized that "Initial poll letters for the first cemetery to be disinterred should be dispatched to the next of kin within 2 weeks after passage of the bill."⁸⁶

Obstacles of a fiscal nature were brushed aside in the same optimistic mood.

There is no need for waiting till A-Day to procure the first lot of caskets. The initial lot of 30,000 or 40,000 should be procured immediately upon passage of the bill without waiting until appropriation of funds. These could be procured from current funds, with the necessary transfer of funds made later, subject to approval of the War Department Budget Division. It would even be advisable to procure a small quantity prior to the passage of the bill (say 5,000 caskets, as they can be used in current and future requirements under the current overseas deceased program).⁸⁷

Additional directives as to short cuts in scheduling the progression of events were, apparently, based on a conviction at Headquarters, ASF, that the desire of Memorial Division planners to attain perfection in their preparations had needlessly postponed the date for initiating active operations in the field. At any rate, the ASF memorandum insisted that the delivery of a small quantity of caskets should not be held up pending full shiploads; nor should the conversion of ships be permitted to delay the program. The initial shipment of remains could, if necessary, be carried by Army

⁸⁶ Memo, Maj Gen Daniel Noce, CofS, ASF, for TQMG, 18 Jan 46, sub: Repatriation Program for Deceased Personnel.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

freighters on scheduled runs between foreign and United States ports. Furthermore, it was stated, the conversion order "should not necessarily await formal appropriation, after assurance has been given that funds would be available."⁸⁸

Granting a successful adaptation of these time-saving devices, Headquarters, ASF, was confident that dispatch of the first disinterment directives could be accomplished by 15 April 1946 and, with the momentum imparted by an early start, all subsequent phases of the program would move at an accelerated pace. Accordingly, two specific orders were stated in this memorandum.

It is therefore desired that you take appropriate steps to revise your plan so that if the bill is passed by Congress in March, the first bodies will arrive at final resting place in the United States not later than 1 June 1946, and that a substantial portion of the program will be completed prior to 1 December 1946.

It is desired that the revised schedule be forwarded to this office for approval not later than 1 February 1946. The revised schedule should show actions beyond your control and your recommendations for overcoming such obstacles.⁸⁹

In accordance with requirements specified in the two directives of 18 January, the Memorial Division abandoned its original scheme of timing consecutive phases of the overall operation through four chronological periods determined by R-Day, A-Day, and the day on which caskets for the first return shipment became available. Accepting the ASF dictum that casket procurement need not await the formal appropriation act, and that the completion of ship conversion was not an indispensable prerequisite to the transportation of remains, the Memorial Division developed three different schedules and, employing the same graphic device used in the original report, presented each one in a separate chart. The charts were transmitted to Headquarters, ASF, on 5 February 1946.⁹⁰

Chart I set forth the timing of twenty-five concurrent and consecutive operations relative to records conversion and verification, polling the next of kin, preparation and dispatch of disinterment directives, and the series of field operations beginning with exhumation of designated remains and terminating at the point of final delivery. Chart II exhibited the sequence of six so-called "Miscellaneous Operations" relating to the technical manual, ship conversion and fiscal matters. Chart III presented an independent schedule for six consecutive operations incident to the procurement and distribution of caskets and other mortuary supplies. In trans-

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ 1st Ind, TQMG to CG, ASF, 5 Feb 46, same sub.

mitting these three charts, Maj. Gen. C. L. Corbin, the Acting The Quartermaster General, noted in an introductory remark to his analysis of the schedules that reconsideration had been given to all elements concerned, and that "the best estimate of this office is that first remains repatriated should arrive at their final resting place on or about 12 September 1946."⁹¹

General Corbin's analysis of the amended estimates conveys a definite impression that he sought to allay all suspicion lest his forecast of events be adjudged as overly optimistic. There is little to indicate that he felt obliged to apologize for missing the prescribed target date by 3 months. Indeed, the new set of calculations was conditioned by the same difficulties that had beset the first effort. Elimination of A-Day from the reckoning reduced by only a small segment the total area of action which lay beyond control of The Quartermaster General or, for that matter, the Secretary of War.

Enabling legislation (R-Day) must be enacted before poll letters could be dispatched to the next of kin. Again, in meeting requirements of a novel casket design, plant managers must find solutions to technological problems of unknown complexity before the date of casket availability could be synchronized with the operations scheduled in chart I. As a matter of fact, the whole burden of General Corbin's communication was that chart I represented the minimum period for completion of all actions for which his office could assume responsibility, and that chart III, regardless of possibilities, scheduled a casket procurement program which was designed to meet requirement of the schedule set forth in chart I. No necessity, however, was seen for keying the miscellaneous operations of chart II with those of charts I and III. Ship conversion might be postponed and budget estimates submitted in due course, while any emergency arising from delay attending procedures of final approval, publication, and distribution of the technical manual could be met by the issuance of technical bulletins. Thus the problem really centered on the relationship of R-Day to chart I and the feasibility of timing the progression of events in chart III with those of chart I. Here the Acting The Quartermaster General was specific.

In the preparation of data for polling next of kin and interpreting the results of the poll, he pointed out that the approved method of mechanically reproducing approximately 350,000 existing casualty punch cards furnished by The Adjutant General's Office, together with the process of standardizing codes, realigning cards in serial number sequence and, finally, matching the reproduced cards against a set of cemetery punch cards in order to obtain a basic set includ-

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

ing individual grave location would, according to combined estimates of the Memorial, the Military Planning and the Supply Divisions, require a minimum of thirty-nine days. That is, assuming satisfactory progress in the completion and verification of burial records, operations for completing the EAM punch card record would extend from 15 February to 25 March. A similar estimate added 30 days for dispatch of poll letters and calculated the lapse of another month before substantial returns from the next of kin might be expected. On a basis of these estimates, the following conclusion was established:

The minimum estimate of this office of the time required to process poll returns, prepare disinterment directives (Form 1194) with accompanying transmittal lists, and to get them into the hands of overseas cemetery personnel is 58 days. As indicated on chart I, assuming R-Day to occur on or before 25 April 46, it is estimated that these directives and lists, at best, cannot be prepared in time to reach cemetery personnel before 21 July 46.⁹²

The date of delivery of disinterment directives to overseas cemetery personnel called for caskets at the site of exhumation. In other words, the concurrent operations separately scheduled in charts I and III must converge on 21 July 1946 and thenceforth flow in a single stream of continuous operations. Yet there was no positive assurance that the fiscal and technological problems attending casket production could or would be solved in such manner as to guarantee the required date of convergence. General Corbin had unofficial advices to the effect that the War Department Budget Officer would disapprove the use of 1946 military funds to purchase caskets intended for use in the return of war remains.⁹³ He therefore discussed certain alternatives that might contribute to the delivery of caskets at the point of exhumation by 21 July.

Failing authorization for the use of current military funds, he proposed the addition of a rider for 20,000 caskets to some deficiency appropriation bill. In this initial lot there would be 9,300 of the modified Navy-type recently designed for the Current Death Program⁹⁴ and 10,300 of the deep-drawn, seamless design which had been developed with a view to meeting both the physical and legal conditions that were involved in moving disinterred war remains from one climatic region to another and across international and State boundary lines. Since no difficult production problems were

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ These advices were later written in a letter from Colonel Illig, Chief, Fiscal Division, to Dir of the Memorial Division, 15 February 1946.

⁹⁴ The Current Death Program was first discussed during the fall of 1945, with a view to formulating procedures for returning remains of deceased military personnel of the existing overseas command. Ltr, Lt Col H. C. Carpenter, Chief, Natl Cem Br, Mem Div, to Dep Div, 26 Jun 46, sub: Current Deaths.

involved in fabricating the modified Navy-type, caskets of this design could, if immediately ordered, be made available during April and May. Its use for war remains, however, was predicated upon certification by The Surgeon General of the Army as to characteristics which would comply with sanitary regulations of the various States, including the prime requisite of being hermetically sealed. Due, then, to want of positive evidence concerning the proven physical characteristics of this design, as well as the time-consuming technological problems which conditioned production of the seamless casket, General Corbin stated his position in the following observations:

In event this modified Navy-type casket is not approved . . . the initial June-July availability of the approved seamless type casket will retard the period by which the first repatriated remains can be delivered to next of kin in the United States to the latter half of October 46. Should funds be withheld until the Repatriation Appropriation [A-Day] becomes available, industry's best estimate of initial availability at manufacturers' plant of the approved seamless casket is the fourth month following R-Day. In line with the above estimates, this means that arrival in port and loading during the fifth month, with arrival in theater by the third week of the sixth month, and the period by which the first repatriated remains can be delivered to the next of kin in the United States retarded to the eighth month [December] following R-Day, and with caskets being the prime limiting component.⁹⁵

Assuming that the schedule for delivery of disinterment directives to theater cemeteries by 21 July represented a reasonably close analysis of possibilities, it followed that casket production became the "prime limiting component," and that any unforeseen development which retarded this phase of the program would necessarily delay the grand cycle of operations terminating with final delivery of the first trans-ocean shipment of remains. Headquarters, ASF, however, refused to admit any such thesis as a "prime limiting component," or that a reasonably close calculation of other controlling factors had been made. This dictum was delivered on 8 February under signature of Lieutenant General Lutes, Commanding General, ASF.⁹⁶

In criticizing the schedule set forth in chart I, General Lutes insisted that the date for dispatch of poll letters to next of kin could be advanced from 25 April to 15 March by either hiring additional personnel or revising procedures for the preparation of records, forms,

⁹⁵ 1st Ind. TQMG to CG, ASF, 5 Feb 46, sub: Repatriation Program for Deceased Personnel.

⁹⁶ Memo, Lt Gen LeRoy Lutes, CG, ASF, for TQMG, 8 Feb 46, sub: Repatriation Program—American Dead.

and EAM cards. He suggested in this connection that the verification of cemetery plot maps in the overseas theaters might be hastened by use of a command letter bearing The Adjutant General's signature, by direction of the Secretary of War, and providing for delivery of plot maps to theater authorities by special courier. Along with a saving of 40 days in preparation for the delivery of disinterment directives to theater cemeteries, a production program calling for 40,000 caskets—just twice the number contemplated in chart III—should, he insisted, be pushed to completion within the diminished period of time. The Acting The Quartermaster General's proposal to supplement any deficiency in the technical manual after 1 March by issuing technical bulletins encountered a sharp rebuke: "It is again emphasized that the Technical Manual must be completed. This manual will be used as a basis of operational bulletins as proposed."⁹⁷ Although admitting no change of circumstances or abatement of the pressure demanding prompt action in his pointed criticisms of the revised schedules, General Lutes was inclined towards some measure of leniency. He substituted a target date of 1 July 1946 for the one set at 1 June in his reply to the original schedule.⁹⁸

Since 14 December 1945 the correspondence between Headquarters, ASF, and the OQMG had, in the main, revolved around irreconcilable opinions concerning developments over which the War Department had no direct control and could only hope to influence by some sort of indirect action. Before a reply to General Lutes' memorandum of 8 February could be prepared, a new "prime limiting component" was imposed by production stoppage in the strike-bound plants of the steel industry. Unforeseen by either party, this development interposed obstacles to the casket procurement program which reduced continued discussion of any target date for the return of war remains during 1946 to the level of academic futility.

On 21 January 1946 the Civilian Production Administration (CPA) suspended all outstanding ratings for the allocation of steel and iron and substituted emergency measures which would henceforth restrict allotments to specific orders on producers and distributors "in the interests of the public health and safety," or to a rating of AAA based on a similar justification but valid only against distributors' stocks.⁹⁹

Failure in these circumstances on the part of the Procurement Division, OQMG, to secure a blanket AAA rating through Head-

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ CPA, Dir 13 to PR-1, Pt. 944—Regulations Applicable to the Operation of the Priorities System, 21 Jan 46.

quarters, ASF,¹⁰⁰ removed beyond the bounds of reasonable expectations all hope of realizing the previously scheduled June-July availability of seamless caskets. Replying on 25 February to the ASF memorandum specifying a return target date of 1 July 1946, Maj. Gen. T. B. Larkin, recently appointed The Quartermaster General of the Army, felt constrained to observe that "because of critical shortages of steel and, perhaps, plywood [for shipping cases] this schedule is indeed optimistic."¹⁰¹

In view of the fact that it became increasingly difficult to justify 12 September as the earliest possible date for arrival in the United States of the first shipment of war remains, General Larkin recommended that Headquarters, ASF, accept this date in place of 1 July. Recognizing that no good purpose could be served in planning by edict when both the supervising and operating agencies were powerless in the face of limiting factors, ASF acceded to The Quartermaster General's suggestion. On 1 March the terse indorsement stating this decision conveyed an admonition rather than a concession: "Approved with the understanding that every possible step will be taken to better the date of 12 September 1946."¹⁰²

The reconciliation of views brought about at this time contributed little toward the determination of a realistic schedule. If under impetus of prodding by Headquarters, ASF, the OQMG had been over-sanguine in planning a casket procurement program, its calculations regarding the preparation of records, forms, and EAM cards for polling the next of kin were distorted by a similar form of compulsory optimism.

Illustrations of this sanguine mood may be found by looking for a moment from 1 March 1946 into the future. Final verification of plot maps giving grave location within Henri-Chapelle, the first European temporary cemetery scheduled for exhumation, was not completed until 29 March 1946.¹⁰³ Since both the original schedule of 29 December 1945 and the revised one of 6 February 1946 allowed an interval of 5 months and 23 days (from 28 January to 21 July) between verification of plot maps and delivery of disinterment directives to the overseas cemetery, it is obvious that this unforeseen lag of 2 months would, aside from any other causes of

¹⁰⁰ (1) Ltr, Brig Gen H. L. Peckham, Chief, Mem Div, OQMG, to CG, ASF, 15 Feb 46, sub: Priorities—Casket Program. (2) 1st Ind, Col P. W. Smith, Dir, Proc Div, ASF, to TQMG, 14 Feb 46, stating: "Blanket AAA authority is not available."

¹⁰¹ 1st Ind, TQMG to CG, ASF, 25 Feb 46, sub: Repatriation Program—American Dead.

¹⁰² 1st Ind, CG, ASF to TQMG, 1 Mar 46, to Memo, TQMG to CG, ASF, 8 Feb 46, sub: Repatriation Program—American Dead.

¹⁰³ Plot Map Section, Repatriation Records Branch, Henri-Chapelle Plot Map Book, 29 Mar 46.

delay, have retarded the most conservative estimate of possibilities in timing the planned progression of events.

Again, while Memorial Division officers stoutly maintained that all preparations for dispatch of the first poll letters could not be completed before 25 April, they seem to have had only a dim realization of the time-consuming complications that actually delayed reproduction of the approved poll letter until 7 June 1946.¹⁰⁴ In accounting for these mistakes of judgment, it might be added that one of their more costly errors grew out of an assumption that the Commanding General, ASF, would spur his own headquarters establishment quite as mercilessly as he had roweled the OQMG whenever it became incumbent on that superior echelon to act with dispatch in securing final approval of some such aspect of the return program as the phraseology of the poll letter and informational pamphlet.

In reviewing the correspondence of January–February between Headquarters, ASF, and OQMG it appears that, while one accused the other of undue caution in setting its target dates for specific phases of the planned progression of events, both as a matter of fact betrayed an unwarranted optimism in viewing all related circumstances of the progression, particularly those which lay in fields of action beyond control of the War Department.

Differing in estimates of possible performance within a margin of only 3 months, both ASF and OQMG were confronted in the steel crisis by an impasse that held the contemplated schedules in suspension for over a year. After insisting that arrival of the first shipment of overseas dead in the United States should be scheduled for 1 June 1946, ASF reluctantly accepted a revised target date of 12 September 1946. But as matters transpired, the first mortuary ship bearing over 3,000 dead from the Pacific docked at the San Francisco Port of Embarkation on 10 October 1947. A second shipment of more than 5,000 from Europe arrived about two weeks later at the Brooklyn Army Base.

An intelligible account of developments during this interim now requires a shift of attention to measures that had for some time been afoot toward creating the world-wide organization envisaged in the basic Quartermaster plan for return of the war dead.

¹⁰⁴ Mgmt Analysis Br, Weekly Activities Rpt, 7 Jun 46, p. 2.

CHAPTER IV

ACTIVATION OF THE AMERICAN GRAVES REGISTRATION SERVICE

In broad terms, the steps taken since the cessation of hostilities in Europe toward creating a world-wide organization for final disposition of the war dead had been directed toward three main objectives: (1) the preparation of a War Department General Order which would authorize the establishment of AGRS overseas commands and define the jurisdiction of The Quartermaster General as Chief, AGRS, in relation thereto; (2) an extensive reorganization of the Memorial Division, OQMG, for purposes of serving as a general headquarters staff of the world-wide organization; (3) the transformation of theater graves registration services into theater service commands in order to provide for an effective continuation of activities relative to care of the dead under altered conditions of peace, giving particular emphasis to recovery of isolated remains and acquiring the organizational forms that would best facilitate the process of integration as major subordinate commands of AGRS.

As a general proposition, the problem of translating objectives of the basic plan into a controlled progression of events had been complicated from the beginning by a divisional organization which was ill-adapted to the work in hand. Efforts in formulating procedures to implement the basic plan produced a double reaction, one impulse exerting pressure for a reorganization of the Memorial Division, the other giving increasing impetus to the planning program. It would be more accurate, perhaps, to say that procedural planning at a certain point intensified the demand for organizational adjustment, and that fulfillment of requirements in the latter aspect facilitated progress in the former sphere of activity. Furthermore, promulgation of a War Department directive to authorize the establishment of AGRS commands beyond the seas not only conferred powers and responsibilities on The Quartermaster General additional to those specified in Circular No. 1, 1945, but necessarily required a corresponding extension of the functions to be performed by the Memorial Division.

For those reasons, the first and second of the three above stated objectives are so closely interrelated that they suggest treatment as a single theme. A product of action under direct responsibility of the theater commanders, and conditioned largely by events accom-

panying the reorganization or inactivation of those overseas establishments, the third can best be treated as a separate subject and developed from the theater point of view.

Authorization of AGRS Area and Separate Zone Commands

In giving approval of policy measures and organizational forms presented in the basic plan for final disposition of remains, the War Department took a position which can scarcely be reconciled with its insistence relative to the plan of August 1943 that headquarters establishments of the postwar AGRS must be integrated into existing theater structures and that, prior to inactivation of any operational theater, no graves registration command could be established within its territorial jurisdiction without being subordinated to the theater chain of command and charged to the theater troop ceiling. It now appeared that the War Department was disposed to take a practical view of the problem involved in relating self-contained components of the postwar AGRS to theater structures which, apart from those that were to assume occupational duties in Germany, Italy, and Japan, had no military or political justification for continued existence and, assumedly, would be inactivated as rapidly as administrative difficulties concerning personnel and property matters could be adjusted. Then it seemed probable that the European and Mediterranean theaters might be consolidated under a single command. In other words, the existence of certain residual theaters or independent base commands slated for early inactivation offered no practical obstacle to creation of the three major AGRS commands which had been planned without regard to the boundaries of wartime theaters and, in the case of the one to be identified with areas of the war against Germany, transcended those of the European, the Mediterranean, and the North African and Middle East theaters of operations.

Definite proposals looking to the activation of this vast area command caused the War Department to revert to its original position. Obviously, there would be some confusion in subordinating an AGRS area commander to more than one theater commander. Additional difficulties would certainly arise when a zone commander became responsible alike to his own area chief and the commanding general of the theater in which his zone happened to be located. Unfortunately, the reversion to first principles consumed 4 months of valuable time, postponing to the end of 1945 War Department authorization for the establishment of AGRS overseas commands.

Anticipating instructions of 12 September to implement such portions of the approved plan as circumstances might warrant, General Gregory, on 6 September, submitted through the Commanding Gen-

eral, ASF, the draft for a War Department General Order which would authorize the establishment of a self-sufficient AGRS area command embracing all territories involved in the war against Germany, and in fact, identical to the European and Mediterranean Area Command indicated in the basic plan. The draft specified that this command would be designated the American Graves Registration Service in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East (AGRS—EAME), that it would function under “the direct operation, control and supervision of The Quartermaster General,” and that its Commanding General would be appointed by the War Department upon recommendation of The Quartermaster General.¹

Justification for setting up “a self-sufficient command, independent of other headquarters,” was based on grounds that the proposed command would assume responsibility for a long-range program and should, therefore, be so constituted that its “activities can be continued without interruption regardless of changes in other forces overseas.”²

Because of an anticipated public demand for prompt action in returning the war dead, and the consequent urgency of initiating preliminary operations in those areas where three-fifths of the war dead were interred, General Gregory insisted that the Commanding General, AGRS—EAME, should be authorized to establish “such zone and sector subdivisions, including port offices, as are essential to complete the assigned mission subject to approval of The Quartermaster General.”³ With the same end in view, he recommended that the Commanding General should be authorized to expedite the release of military personnel for civilian employment in the proposed Command, as prescribed in paragraph 25, Section IV, War Department Readjustment Regulations, RR 1-1, dated 15 February 1945.⁴

Both of these recommendations, it should be noted, were framed without regard to two tenets of War Department policy that had emerged during recent planning for disposition of the dead. One was written into the approved basic plan of 8 September 1945, stating that “there would appear to be no logical reason why operations should not begin simultaneously in all theaters.”⁵ The tentative draft made no provision for an American Graves Registration Command in the Pacific Ocean areas, or in the defense commands adjoining the American continents. The other policy had been re-

¹ Memo, TQMG, for CG, ASF, 6 Sep 45, sub: Establishment of American Graves Registration Command in the Europe—Mediterranean—North Africa—Middle East—Persian Gulf Theaters, Incl. 1—Proposed WDGO.

² Memo, TQMG, for CG, ASF, 6 Sep 45, same sub.

³ *Ibid.*, Incl. 1—Proposed WDGO.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ (1) *Ibid.* (2) Current Plan for Return of American Dead, 8 Sep 45, p. 15.

affirmed on 15 December 1944, when the Chief of Staff directed that plans for establishment in the Mediterranean Theater of a Quartermaster Graves Registration Area Command under direct control of The Quartermaster General should be revised to conform with War Department principles holding that the prerogatives and responsibilities of a theater commander could be modified only by inactivation of the theater or readjustment of its geographical boundaries.⁶ The proposal of 6 September 1945 encountered objections on the part of the General Staff identical to those interposed on 15 December 1944.

On 4 October 1945 the Commanding General, ASF, was instructed by the Secretary of War that the tentative general order should be rewritten "to obviate the present disagreement with War Department policies where conflict occurs and so that its provisions can be projected into the Pacific Theater."⁷ The points of disagreement noted were: (1) the status of AGRS—EAME as a separate command within geographical areas subject to the jurisdiction of a theater commander and designation of the Commanding General, AGRS—EAME, by The Quartermaster General without reference to the theater commander; (2) the allocation of personnel to the proposed separate command in disregard of established theater troop ceilings; (3) a special system for return and release of personnel under readjustment regulations which did not appear to be in conformity with current War Department policy and regulations.⁸

A redraft prepared by the Director of the Memorial Division and submitted through the Operations Division, ASF, on 26 October met most of the objections encountered by the original draft.⁹ The following principles were stated in paragraph 2 of the redraft as essential to the establishment and future operations of the proposed organization.

(a) Theater Commanders . . . will continue to be responsible for Graves Registration activities within their respective area commands, until such time as their commands are abolished. At such time, responsibility for those activities will pass to The Quartermaster General, for delegation to appropriate American Graves Registration Service Area or Separate Zone Commanders.

⁶ (1) Memo, Maj Gen LeRoy Lutes, Div of Plng & Opns, ASF, for ACofS, Opn Div, 25 Nov 44. (2) 1st Ind to Memo, TQMG for CG, ASF, 11 Nov 44, sub: Orgn for the QM Gr Reg Sv. (3) DF, Maj Gen J. E. Hull, ACofS, G-4, to CG, ASF, 15 Dec 44, same sub.

⁷ Memo, Col James L. Snyder, Chief, Plng Br, G-4, WDGS, for CG, ASF, 4 Oct 45, sub: Establishment of AGRC in the Europe—Africa—Middle East Area.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Ltr, Col C. J. Blake, Chief, Mem Div to Opns Div, ASF, 26 Oct 45, sub: Establishment of AGRC in the Europe—Africa—Middle East Area. SPQUE File 320.3 Gr Reg Sv.

(b) The purpose in establishing these commands is to provide for self-contained organizations capable of operating and administering the functions of the American Graves Registration Service in areas outside the continental limits of the United States . . . under the control of theater or other commanders, and capable in the future of assuming full operational and administrative control . . . when such control passes to these commands. . . .¹⁰

The redraft called for the immediate establishment of two area commands, one for the wartime European and Mediterranean Theaters of operations (AGRS—EMTA), the other for the recently created Pacific Theater (AGRS—PATA), and six separate zone commands for the following theaters, defense commands and military departments: (1) United States Forces African—Middle East Theater (AGRS—AMETZ); (2) United States Forces China Theater (AGRS—CZ); (3) United States Forces India—Burma Theater (AGRS—IBZ); (4) Eastern Defense Command (AGRS—EDCZ); (5) Alaskan Department (AGRS—ALDZ); (6) Caribbean Defense Command (AGRS—CARZ). In keeping with the principles announced in paragraph 2, it was specified that “a Quartermaster Officer, as commander for each area and separate zone command, will be appointed by the Senior Commander or commander in the area concerned.”¹¹ The AGRS area and zone commanders, however, would retain authority to establish, in conformity with the basic plan for return of American dead, and subject to approval of The Quartermaster General, “such sector and port office subdivisions as may be required to complete successfully and expeditiously the concentration and repatriation of the remains of American dead.”¹² While area and zone commanders were to be responsible to those commanding generals of military jurisdictions in which their respective commands were located, they would function under the direct technical supervision of The Quartermaster General as Chief, AGRS, who was authorized to communicate directly with all area and zone commanders on technical matters and to “originate, prepare and publish the policies, plans, and manuals necessary to implement existing and subsequent War Department Graves Registration directives.”¹³

Although the redraft of 26 October 1945 specified that the internal organization of American Graves Registration Service commands would conform to the basic plan for return of American dead, a

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Incl. 1, Redraft.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.* Authority assigned to the Chief, AGRS was based on that prescribed in War Department Cir. No. 2, 1 Jan 45.

¹³ *Ibid.*

considerable deviation from that plan is plainly apparent. Indeed, the original conception of the area command underwent a complete transformation. The three areas of the plan of 8 September were regarded as superior commands, each including a group of subordinate zones. Moreover, each superior area command was identified with a major operational area of the global conflict—one with the war against Germany, another with the war against Japan, the third with the defensive bastions guarding the American continents. In contrast, the two area commands specified on 26 October were over-large zones, one embracing two theaters which had been activated during the course of hostilities in Western Europe and, according to plans then under consideration, were to be amalgamated; the other including three wartime operational theaters of the Pacific Theater of Operations. It would appear, then, that the provision for six separate zone and two area, or super zone commands, together with assignment of responsibility for their functions to the appropriate theater or other commander, marks a tendency toward reviving the plan of December 1944 for establishing Quartermaster Graves Registration area commands within the existing framework of overseas theater or other commands.

Pending examination of these proposals by overseas commanders, the War Department suspended judgment on the revised draft. Although complexities of the problem of integrating postwar AGRS commands in the wartime theater structures had been foreseen as early as August 1943, satisfactory progress toward a realistic solution lagged for 6 months following the cessation of hostilities in Europe. At the same time, the accelerated demobilization of the forces clearly indicated that further delay would be attended with grave consequences.

Difficulties in the determination of area and zone boundaries, as well as the solution of personnel problems, are illustrated in an exchange of views at this time between Colonel Blake and Maj. Gen. R. M. Littlejohn, Chief Quartermaster, European Theater Area. During November, the Memorial Division chief apprised his correspondent at Paris that, according to prevalent opinion in Washington, the territorial limits of the proposed European—Mediterranean area command would embrace the former European and Mediterranean Theaters of Operations, together with all contiguous Allied, neutral and enemy territory, but for the time being, would exclude the present African—Middle East Theater and Iceland. Then, noting that it was the consensus of Memorial Division officers that the setup for search and recovery operations would of necessity be based almost entirely on available GR companies and additional personnel from other theater forces, Colonel Blake added that ship-

ment of remains to the homeland would compel a radical change in personnel policies. He concluded:

At the time of the actual beginning of repatriation operations, the organizational setup would shift to an officer-civilian basis operating under a central area headquarters with zone, sector and port office installations. The reasons for proposing to shift largely to a civilian setup are twofold: (1) due to the rapidly decreasing strength of the Armed Forces, it would be extremely difficult to secure military technicians for this work; (2) through the payment of adequate compensation, embalmers, technicians, and other personnel could be secured and retained on a more permanent basis for the duration of the work.¹⁴

Again in December, the Director of the Memorial Division expressed to General Littlejohn his concern over the delay in obtaining War Department approval of the proposed order, noting in particular the difficulty from the planning standpoint in not having a War Department General Order which precisely defined the geographical boundaries of graves registration operational areas:

At the present time, promulgation of the General Order is being delayed due to lack of receipt of reply from the European and India-Burma Theaters. Moreover, there is a further complication, as it appears there will be a delay of consolidation of ETO and MTO, due to existing conditions in Italy. A lack of specifically defined geographical boundaries of Graves Registration Area and Zone setups is also materially hampering the completing of definite plans being formulated in this office.¹⁵

With a considerable condensation of text and the addition of another separate zone command, the American Graves Registration Service, United States Forces, Mediterranean Theater (AGRS—MTZ), the revised draft of 26 October was finally approved and published as War Department General Order No. 125, American Graves Registration Service Area and Separate Zone Commands, 29 December 1945.

The approved draft embodied principles that emphasized trends toward reviving the plan of December 1944 and, in a sense, foreshadowed a return to the organizational scheme first proposed in Policy Study No. 34 of 14 August 1943. That plan, it will be recalled, provided for a total of 12 separate zones. The approved plan of 29 December 1945 authorized nine commands, only two of which bore the designation of area commands. Each one of the nine, however, was now identified with a single overseas theater, defense

¹⁴ Ltr, Col C. J. Blake to Maj Gen R. M. Littlejohn, CQM, TSF ETA, 16 Nov 45, Rdg file (Gen Littlejohn), Opns Br, Mem Div.

¹⁵ Ltr, same to same, 7 Dec 45.

command, or military department. With abolition of the Pacific Area during March 1947 and the establishment in its place of two separate zone commands—the Pacific and Far East Zones—there was a total of 10, only one of which survived as an area command.¹⁶ Despite its designation, this command was a super zone, having the same status in the overall organization as a separate zone command.

Coming 8 months after the cessation of hostilities in Europe and 4 months after the surrender of Japan, General Order No. 125 brought to a belated climax the development of policy looking toward the activation of an American Graves Registration Service for final disposition of the war dead. At the time of publication, only 2 months remained before the tentative target date established in the basic plan of 8 September for initiation of repatriation operations.

Organizational Changes in Memorial Division

Organizational deficiencies of the Memorial Division during this period were as apparent to the new director as they had been a source of dissatisfaction to the retiring chief, who temporarily assumed office as deputy to the director. Replying to a suggestion from Maj. Gen. Robert M. Littlejohn, Chief Quartermaster, European Theater Area, that the graves registration offices in Washington and Paris should maintain a close personal contact, General Beyette observed that "since my assignment in Memorial Division, my entire time has been taken up in reorganization work of the office, in order to get a workable plan for repatriation."¹⁷

General Beyette's tenure of office was so brief that he scarcely had an opportunity to initiate action for a thorough reorganization of the division. Relinquishing command on 1 October 1945 by reason of ill health,¹⁸ he passed to his successor, Col. Clarence J. Blake, the hitherto baffling problem of providing a suitable organization for the Memorial Division. The necessity for immediate action, however, had now become so critical that for all practical purposes of speeding action, the new director was given a free hand. Indeed, a grant of summary power was imperative. Within a few days after taking office, Colonel Blake had occasion to observe in his correspondence with General Littlejohn that faulty organization was seriously hindering a rapid development of the planning program.

¹⁶ WDGO No. 50, "American Graves Registration Service Area and Separate Zone Commands," 29 May 47.

¹⁷ Ltr, Brig Gen H. W. Beyette to Maj Gen R. M. Littlejohn, 15 Sep 45. Rdg file (Gen Littlejohn), Opns Br, Mem Div.

¹⁸ (1) OQMG OO No. 45-195, 2 Oct 45. (2) Ltr, Gen Beyette to Gen Littlejohn, 4 Oct 45. Rdg file (Gen Littlejohn), Mem Div.

Without going into further detail, I feel that by now we should have many more people in responsible jobs here and that we should have a better Memorial Division in depth. I hope we can remedy this without delay, and I can only mention it to present the difficulty of releasing anyone at the moment for an on-the-ground study of the situation (in Europe), or for me to come over shortly. It is felt most important that I have some 90 days in which to get this part of the work well organized and operating, and to clear contact channels in Washington, so that we are not deterred *too much* by slow-moving local decisions.¹⁹

It will be recalled that both General Beyette and Colonel Blake had requested assistance from the OP&C Division in the solution of various planning problems, and that the Organization Planning Branch of that division had undertaken at Colonel Blake's express request a study of organizational adjustments within the Memorial Division to facilitate improved planning procedures.²⁰ While the study in question was not intended to explore the whole problem of organization, it may be assumed that informal suggestions were offered during the course of the restricted investigation, and that many of these suggestions were embodied in an organizational chart which was prepared under direction of Colonel Blake and approved by The Quartermaster General on 24 October 1945.²¹ It will also be recalled that advance copies of the study, "Notes on the Memorial Division," were forwarded to Memorial Division officers, thus making available its conclusions to those who participated in drawing up the October chart.²² This method of collaboration no doubt accounts for the fact that the chart was approved by The Quartermaster General without detailed analysis and formal concurrence on the part of OP&C Division representatives.

The approved scheme of organization retained certain features of the chart proposed in consequence of plans looking to the establishment of 79 new national cemeteries and, at the same time, indicated certain departures from the thinking of that date. The Graves Registration Branch, now designated as the Registration and Records Branch, stood first in point of numbers, having a personnel assignment of 257, or approximately 35 percent of an aggregate of 734 allotted to the division. The Planning and Requirements Branch,

¹⁹ Ltr, Col C. J. Blake to Maj Gen R. M. Littlejohn, 10 Oct 45. Rdg file (Gen Littlejohn), Mem Div.

²⁰ See above.

²¹ The Organization Chart, Memorial Division, of this date was signed by Gen E. M. Gregory, TQMG. This chart was completed in the drafting section of the Planning and Requirements Branch, under the immediate supervision of Colonel Blake and Mr. H. S. Edlis, on 24 October and was handcarried to General Gregory for his signature.

²² Informal Record, 20 Oct-2 Nov 45.

as proposed on 8 March 1945, underwent considerable transformation. Redesignated as the Requirements, Maintenance and Supply Branch, and deprived of supervision over the Field Service, it followed the Registration and Records Branch in numerical importance, having a personnel strength of 208, or about 28 percent of the whole. It is interesting to note, however, that after deduction from the aggregate strength of the Planning and Requirements Branch (400), as proposed on 8 March 1945, the assigned strength of its Field Service (215), the reconstituted Requirements, Maintenance and Supply Branch actually received an increase of 15 persons.²³

Several new features appear in the October organization. The most interesting, no doubt, was the Planning and Control Branch. It should be emphasized here that this new element was introduced as a staff agency of the Director and occupied a position on the same staff level with the newly created Co-ordinator for Legislative, Special Projects, and other Services. The latter agency, however, represented a combination of functions previously performed by the Special Assistant on Policy Matters and the Technical Advisor to the Director, both of which offices dated back to the organization of 6 May 1944.²⁴

A second innovation appeared in the establishment of an Operations Branch, with a Plans Section, an Operations Section and an Overseas Liaison Section. A third was the provision for an Overseas Liaison Section in the Cemeterial Branch, which was intended to assume a measure of operational control at United States ports over all remains destined for interment in national cemeteries.²⁵

The addition of an Operations Branch and inclusion in the Cemeterial Branch of an Overseas Liaison Section, with an operating responsibility in connection with the return of remains, suggests a departure from the original conception that the American Graves Registration Branch would serve as a nucleus for the future headquarters of the AGRS. While transformation of the Overseas Section into the Graves Registration Branch and the addition of an Operations Section were steps in line with such reasoning, the establishment of an independent Operations Branch marked the departure toward a new doctrine. Apart from its operating responsibility in polling the next of kin and preparing disinterment directives for the overseas commands, the Registration and Records Branch did not evolve beyond its original status as an office of records. Instead, it became the parent of future branches, giving birth first to the

²³ (1) Orgn Chart for Mem Div, 8 Mar 45. (2) Orgn Chart, Mem Div, 24 Oct 45.

²⁴ Orgn Chart, OQMG, Mem Div, prepared by Orgn Plng Br, OP&C Div, 15 Apr 44.

²⁵ Orgn Chart, Mem Div, 24 Oct 45.

Operations Branch, then to the Identification and finally the Family Correspondence Branches.

While approved in principle, the organization proposed during October actually served as a guide for developmental purposes, rather than as a direction prescribing a firm organizational structure. In compliance with Memorial Division Order No. 7, dated 2 November 1945, and directing the preparation of data on organizational changes for publication in the forthcoming OQMG Manual, QMC 19-10, 1946, Colonel McConville, Chief, Planning and Control Branch, requested that the Co-ordinator for Legislative, Special Projects and other Services and all branch chiefs "submit . . . a statement of the functions performed by organizations *within their* respective group or groups."²⁶

The statement of functions submitted in compliance with request of Planning and Control Branch reflects a divisional organization corresponding in its general features to the one approved during October, that is, a Planning and Control Branch and a Co-ordinator for Legislative, Special Projects, and other Services at the Staff level and five branches—Administrative, Cemeterial, Operations, Registration and Records, and Requirements, Maintenance and Supply.²⁷ A preliminary study submitted in December to the Chief, Planning Branch, recommended an organization to consist of a "Director, Co-ordinator for Special Projects, Planning and Control Service, Deputy, Executive Officer, Administrative Officer and Administrative, Cemeterial, Operations, Repatriation Records, and Mortuary Service Branches." The major changes in this proposal involved a consolidation of the Cemeterial and the Requirements, Maintenance and Supply Branches and the establishment of a Mortuary Branch.²⁸

Continued study of the problem in co-ordination with the Organization Planning Branch, OP&C Division, resulted in additional changes. The final draft of an approved tentative Functional Organization Manual was transmitted to the Director, Memorial Division, on 14 January 1946 with the recommendation "that a Division Order be published indicating the following changes of designation in Staffs and Branches, within the Memorial Division." The enumerated changes proposed: (1) that the Co-ordinator of Legislative, Special Projects and other Services be redesignated as

²⁶ (1) Mem Div OO No. 7, 2 Nov 46. (2) Ltr, Lt Col J. J. McConville, Chief, Plng & Control Br, to Co-ordinator for Legislation, Special Projects & other Svs *et al.*, 9 Nov 45, sub: Statement of Functions. In Division Functions to Section Level (Project 3.1 Folder 1), Mgt Br files.

²⁷ Statement of Functions Received. In Division Functions to Section Level (Project 3.1 Folder 1), Mgt Br files.

²⁸ Ltr, A. E. Davison to Chief, Plng & Control Sv, 21 Dec 45, sub: Proposed Organizational Chart.

Co-ordinator for Special Projects; (2) that the Planning and Control Branch be redesignated as Planning and Control Services; (3) that the Administrative Branch continue without change; (4) that the Cemeterial Branch and the Requirements, Maintenance, and Supply Branch be redesignated the Cemeterial Branch; (5) that a Supply Branch be so designated and established; (6) that the Operations Branch continue without change; (7) that the Registration and Records Branch be redesignated the Repatriation Records Branch. It was also recommended that the redesignation of sections within each of the branches should conform to the section breakdown of the various branches in the approved tentative Functional Organization Manual.²⁹

Two features of this tentative scheme command attention. First, the establishment of the Supply Branch appears as a product of speculative thought during the formative stage when insistence on the theory of a self-contained AGRS went the length of visualizing an organization which would be able to operate without regard to services provided by the overseas commands and the OQMG. The extreme interpretation of such a theory had been disallowed during December 1944 by the General Staff in connection with the proposal that Quartermaster Graves Registration Area Commands activated in the passive areas of active theaters should be under direct control of The Quartermaster General.³⁰ A second rebuff was encountered in the same quarter during October 1945, when the original draft of GO No. 125 proposed that American Graves Registration Area and separate Zone Commands to be established within the territorial limits of residual theaters and defense commands, or within the military departments beyond the seas, would operate under direct control of The Quartermaster General.³¹ While the purposes sought in setting up an independent Supply Branch indicated that the ambitious designs of November 1944 and October 1945 had been considerably tempered, it seems evident that there was some reluctance to accept the conclusion that the headquarters establishment of the AGRS would function as an integral part of the Office of The Quartermaster General. For the moment, this reasoning was sustained; the Supply Branch of the Memorial Division was included in Organization Manual, QMC 19-10, 1946, along with the statement that its major function would include the initiation of action to provide

²⁹ Ltr, H. E. Edlis, Actg Chief, Plng & Control Sv, to Dir, Mem Div, sub: Changes in Orgn.

³⁰ (1) Memo, TQMG for CG, ASF, 11 Nov 44, sub: Orgn for the QM Gr Reg Sv. (2) DF, Maj Gen J. E. Hull, ACofS, G-4 to CG, ASF, 15 Dec 44, sub: Same.

³¹ (1) Memo, Col James L. Snyder, Chief, Plng Br, G-4, WDGS, for CG, ASF, 4 Oct 45, sub: Establishment of AGRC in the Europe—Africa—Middle East Area.

supplies and equipment for the AGRS overseas and within the continental United States, "and that it would exercise staff supervision over the establishment and maintenance of stock levels, storage, and distribution of all AGRS supplies and equipment overseas and within the continental United States."³²

Two other changes reflect the speculative trends of thought that finally took form in a firm doctrine of organization. The scheme of delegating to the Cemeterial Branch an operating responsibility in the return of remains was dropped with abolition of the Overseas Liaison Section. Loss of this function, however, was compensated by absorption of the Requirements, Maintenance, and Supply Branch and the assignment of responsibilities for administration of existing national cemeteries, as well as the creation of a vast new system designed to meet the future needs of some 12 million war veterans.

Publication of the tentative Functional Organization Manual in the *Statistical Yearbook of the Quartermaster Corps* gave official sanction to an incomplete scheme of organization. The description of functions on which the published version was based included only branch units, with a summary of internal organization through the section level. In view of the fact that a considerable number of these sections were in formative stages of development and that, in many instances, only a fractional part of the personnel strength allotted by the October chart had been recruited, the published version reflected scarcely more than a substantial beginning to the long-deferred program of reorganization.

On 15 January 1946, the day following submission by the Planning and Control Service of the tentative Functional Manual for the Director's approval, Colonel Blake requested that staff and branch chiefs prepare an organization chart of their staffs or branches for all elements at the subsection level and below, that these charts indicate the number of officers and civilians presently assigned to such levels, and that each chart be accompanied by a statement of the functions performed at each supervised level. It was also announced that "after further review and discussion with Branch Chiefs as to the most effective pattern of supervised levels and personnel requirements therefor, the Planning and Control Service will issue a complete functional organizational manual."³³

Termination of Colonel Blake's service as Director of the Memorial Division passed on to his successor, Brig. Gen. J. B. Franks, the completion of a project for which much of the spade work had been done. The Planning and Control Service made a close analytical

³² OQMG Orgn Manual (QMG 19-10, 1946), IV-13.

³³ Ltr (T/S), Blake to all staff and branch chiefs, 15 Jan 46, sub: Orgn.

study of the data furnished in consequence of the 15 January request and drew up specifications for a new organization manual.³⁴ Thus when General Franks assumed command on 19 March 1946, the stage was set for completion of the program initiated during August of the previous year.

This achievement may be cited as a conspicuous contribution of Colonel Blake's brief directorship. Here the method, rather than the achievement itself, seems noteworthy. Throughout the war period, all major decisions concerning problems of organization and personnel allotments were taken outside the Memorial Branch or Division. That is, the initiative of operating officers within the branch or division had been limited to requests for analysis of an existing situation by representatives of the OP&C Division. All such studies were conducted with a view to harmonizing the practical knowledge acquired by individuals in the operational sphere with such theoretical concepts of organization as were intermittently brought to bear on these problems by OP&C Division experts. A point-by-point review of all surveys conducted between July 1943 and the end of hostilities tends to show that, while collaboration between the exponents of theory and those of practice was ineffective during 1943 and 1944, some improvement may be discerned as the surveys became more frequent and some of the theorists gained a closer acquaintance with the practical aspects of Memorial Division problems.³⁵ However, it was not until the pursuit of a policy which may be justly described as one of consistent delay had produced the crisis of September 1945 that General Beyette felt constrained to invite continuous collaboration on the part of OP&C Division representatives. The provisional arrangement offered so many advantages over the previous scheme of intermittent participation that the chiefs of both divisions came to agreement that the Memorial Division should perpetuate the practice by setting up its own planning agency which, functioning on the staff level, could co-ordinate each successive stage in the development of any project with the superior staff echelon in the Office of The Quartermaster General.³⁶ In view of the command functions which were assigned to The Quartermaster General in connection with the Return Program, this arrangement was one of vital importance. Indeed, it applied the basic principle of general staff planning, as first introduced to United States Army

³⁴ Mem Div, Mgt Analysis Br, Project No. 3 (Orgn), c. 1 Feb 45. Hereinafter cited as Project No. 3 (Orgn). In Mgt Br files: folder marked "Division Functions to Section Level, Approved Draft of Functional Manual for M. D. (Project 3.1 Folder 2)." Hereinafter cited as Project No. 3 (Orgn).

³⁵ Cf, Steere, *GR in WW II*, pp. 171-88, 238-44.

³⁶ Approval of the Organization Chart of 24 October 1945 is a case in point.

organization by Elihu Root in 1903. However belated, a considerable share of the credit for adaptation of this principle to AGRS requirements should, it seems, be accorded to Colonel Blake and rated, perhaps, as the outstanding achievement during his tour of duty with the Memorial Division.

Analysis of the tentative organizational scheme of 14 February 1946 by the Planning and Control Section proceeded on the basic assumption that "functions of staff and branch elements require consolidation to avoid duplication of activities, to reduce the number of chiefs reporting to the director or his deputy, and to eliminate excess military and civilian personnel."³⁷ In other words, there was an attempt to identify staff functions assigned to branch organizations, as well as administrative functions performed by staff agencies, with a view to reassigning all such misplaced functions to appropriate levels and simplifying the relationship of parts to the whole.

Application of this reasoning suggested that the functions recently assigned the Deputy Director, as Co-ordinator of Special Projects, were administrative in nature, comprising activities related to Congressional correspondence, the budget, and prospective legislation and should therefore be placed in the Administrative Branch. Such an adjustment, it was argued, would release the Deputy from miscellaneous administrative responsibilities and enable him to assist the Director in matters that should not be delegated to a subordinate echelon. The necessity of establishing the office of Deputy Director was pleaded on grounds that "this will be even more imperative when the Repatriation Program gets under way and the Director must devote much of his time to activities outside the Division, leaving the Deputy Director to act for him and in his name during his absence."³⁸

Along with the removal of administrative activities from the staff level were recommendations for additional staff elements to absorb functions improperly handled at the branch level. Liaison with the Offices of the Secretaries of War and Navy and Chiefs of the Air and Ground Forces, it was thought, should be accomplished by a Joint Army—Navy Board on the staff level, rather than by an agency subordinated to a branch chief.³⁹ Another revision of staff elements had to do with the Planning and Control Service, which was redesignated as the Management and Analysis Branch and assigned a somewhat specialized phase of planning—the evaluation of statistical data and the determination of internal policies and procedures.⁴⁰

³⁷ Project No. 3 (Orgn), p. 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 4, 7.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

In view of the fact that the organization chart subsequently approved by the OP&C Division provided for a Plans Branch responsible for such varied functions as planning for all field operations, the preparation of tables of organization and technical manuals covering all policies and procedures, and the co-ordination of matters involving two or more field organizations, it would appear that the study was incomplete in its provisions for planning as a staff function and that its omissions in this respect were repaired at a later date.

Some doubt was reflected in the study concerning a suitable organization for administration of the national cemeteries. While inclined to support the solution offered in the tentative scheme of 14 January, it suggested the alternative of setting up a National Cemeteries Development and Maintenance Branch, which would undertake "the development and maintenance of new and existing cemeteries," while a National Cemeteries and Headstone Branch would be established "for supplying headstones and markers and the control of grave space registries at all national cemeteries. . . ." ⁴¹

Undoubtedly, the most difficult and interesting of all organizational problems encountered in the course of establishing the AGRS, this particular problem was destined within a few months to receive a purely negative solution. Issuance of War Department Memorandum 40-45, 7 June 1946, on recommendation of the Chief of the Memorial Division and The Quartermaster General, transferred responsibility for construction of the cemeterial project proposed in H. R. 516 (79th Congress) to the Chief of Engineers. ⁴² On 14 June 1946 the bill was defeated in the House of Representatives, relieving all parties from further responsibility in an enterprise ⁴³ which, from the standpoint of cost, creative endeavor, and enduring results, bade fair to eclipse the return program.

Aside from perplexities concerning a satisfactory organization for the administration of existing and contemplated cemeteries, the study took a decisive stand on the question of branch organization. Here positive thinking was based on a conviction that "the Operations Branch is the focal point around which all activities pertaining to the Repatriation Program revolve. . . ." ⁴⁴ It followed that liaison activities scattered through several branches should, excepting those vested in the Joint Army-Navy Board, be concentrated in a single

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁴² (1) Ltr, TQMG to CG, ASF, 22 May 46, 1st Ind to Memo, Lt Gen R. A. Wheeler, Chief of Engineers for TQMG, 21 May, sub: Natl Cems. (2) WD Memo No. 30-46, 7 Jun 46, sub: Asgmt of Responsibilities and Operating Procedure in Connection with Establishment of Natl Cems.

⁴³ *Congressional Record, Proceedings and Debates of the 79th Congress, Second Session*, Vol. 92, No. 115, pp. 7078-87.

⁴⁴ Project No. 3 (Orgn), p. 4.

section of the Operations Branch. The same logic argued against an independent Mortuary Branch and, at the same time, made a convincing case for abolition of the recently established Supply Branch.

It is recommended that the attached Supply Policy for the AGRS (exhibit "D") be established for the Memorial Division and AGRS. This would result in abolishing the Supply Branch and consolidating the Supply Function with the requirements function in the Logistics Section of the Operations Branch. However, the title "Logistics Section" does not adequately or accurately describe the functions of recruiting requirements and the limited supply coordination prescribed by the War Department Supply Manuals and directives. It is therefore proposed that the Logistics Section be redesignated the Supply Requirements and Coordination Section. Attached to the Supply Policy are a statement of the supply activities, and a procedures chart showing the changes required in processing requisitions referred to the OQMG by Ports of Embarkation for administrative action as required by ASF Manual M-411.⁴⁵

Formal action was taken on the Planning and Control Service Study after acceptance of some of the recommendations and departures from others, particularly the one stressing consolidation rather than diversification of function. On 13 March 1946, Colonel Zwicker, Deputy Director, transmitted to General Franks three alternative proposals for the reorganization of the division. All three were in agreement on the point that existing Supply Branch functions should be absorbed by the Supply Requirements Section of the Operations Branch, "as experience has indicated that our supply functions will consist solely of coordinating and following up the supply operations performed by other existing facilities of OQMG and the War Department, after our assistance in the initial development of technical supply specifications and quantities required have been determined."⁴⁶

The first of the three alternatives provided for the establishment of four operating branches, and transfer to the Administrative and Service Branch of all functions performed by the Co-ordinator for Special Projects. The second contemplated the interposition of two assistant directors between branch chiefs and the Director, namely an Assistant Director for Operations, who would have control over the four operating branches—Operations, Repatriation Records, Na-

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5; Exhibit "D" together with other exhibits originally attached to this study are missing.

⁴⁶ Ltr, Col M. H. Zwicker, Dep Dir, to Dir, Mem Div, 13 Mar 46, sub: Proposed Organizational Plans.

tional Cemeteries, and Mortuary—and an Assistant Director for Administration who would exercise immediate supervision over those four branches comprising the administrative group—Administrative and Service, Special Projects, Effects, and Personnel Requirements. The third plan provided for an additional Assistant Director of National Cemeteries, who would co-ordinate the operations of two separate branches concerned with cemeterial affairs—the Development and Maintenance Branch and the Interment and Headstone Branch.

A preference was indicated for the second plan, the point being emphasized that the handling at lower levels of the many contacts to which the Director was exposed would permit him to concentrate his attention on problems of major policy. Again, it was felt that the operating branches would require firm and skillful co-ordination until the repatriation program had passed its peak. The Deputy Director noted that certain undesirable trends required correction.

Evidence of this lack of decision is the lack of ability to come to a conclusion on a plan of exhumation schedules with the Operations Branch pulling in one direction and the Repatriation Records Branch in the opposite direction. Once the flow of remains starts into the National Cemeteries, this branch will have to be working in close harmony with the Repatriation Program schedule and this branch's activities can be tied in more effectively under the same decisive head as these other two branches.⁴⁷

The plan prescribing a division of eight branches, four for administration and four for operations, together with four staff elements—the Plans Branch, the Management Analysis Branch, the Field Service Branch, and the Joint Army—Navy Board, was given tentative approval on 19 March. A memorandum signed “McDonald,” OP&C Division, apprised the Memorial Division that final approval would be contingent upon its fulfillment of certain conditions. Since the delay involved in a detailed analysis of the proposed organization “might jeopardize the Repatriation Program,” Lt. Col. W. J. McDonald, Executive Officer, OP&C Division, suggested that the Memorial Division should proceed with the plan as then formulated and that after it had been in effect for one month, representatives of the OP&C Division would survey the activity, “with a view to constructively appraising personnel requirements and the organizational structure.” Meantime, progress in development of the project and the determination of a completion date should be reported.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Memo, Col William J. McDonald, Exec Off, OP&C Div for Mem Div, Attn: Col Matisoff, 19 Mar 46, sub: Proposed Reorgn of Mem Div.

Management Analysis Branch elaborated details of the project, including personnel allotments and space allocations, before the end of the month.⁴⁹ General Franks then instructed the Deputies for Administration and Operations to submit to Management Analysis Branch “the designations of all organization elements below the section level.”⁵⁰ Chiefs of the three new staff elements, the Plans Branch, the Field Progress Branch, and the Joint Army—Navy Board, received similar instructions.⁵¹ At the same time, General Franks submitted copies of the revised Organizational Functions Manual to the Chiefs of the OP&C and Personnel Divisions, with a statement that the reorganization of the Memorial Division was in progress and that notice of a completion date would be forthcoming.⁵² Then on the same day, General Franks forwarded to TQMG a recommendation for designation of the Memorial Division as “the American Graves Registration Service, OQMG.” Three reasons were offered in support of the proposal: (1) that the worldwide activity of the AGRS required a new designation for the existing Division; (2) that the designation “*Memorial Division*” was not sufficiently descriptive of the mission and the nature of the activities performed by the organization; (3) that “since The Quartermaster General is designated the Chief, American Graves Registration Service, and the undersigned his Deputy and delegated the responsibility of direction, control, and supervision of the organization within the OQMG, it would seem consistent to redesignate the Memorial Division as ‘*The American Graves Registration Service, OQMG*.’”⁵³

While acceptance or rejection of a proposal for renaming the division had no direct bearing on the problem of reorganization, the proposal itself reflects much of the thinking of those who had labored on the problem since August 1943. It does not appear, however, that The Quartermaster General viewed the suggestion with favor. While a Division Order published on 2 April “by authority contained in Memorandum, OQMG, dated 19 March 1946, signed McDonald,”⁵⁴ announced that the Memorial Division “is reorganized as outlined in the inclosed Organizational and Functional Manual, ‘American Graves Registration Service,’ dated 9 March 1946,” paragraph 3 of the same order stated that “this Division

⁴⁹ Ltr, H. S. Edlis, Mgmt & Analysis Br to Dir, Mem Div, 28 Mar 46, sub: Orgn, Space and Pers.

⁵⁰ Ltr, Brig Gen J. B. Franks, Dir, Mem Div to Br Chiefs and Deputies for Adm & Opns, 27 Mar 46.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² (1) Ltr, Brig Gen J. B. Franks to Chief, OP&C Div, 28 Mar 46, sub: Reorgn of the Mem Div. (2) Ltr, Gen Franks to Dir, Pers Div, 28 Mar 46, same sub.

⁵³ Ltr, Brig Gen J. B. Franks to TQMG, 28 Mar 46, sub: New Orgn.

⁵⁴ See above, fn. 48.

will continue to be known as the 'Memorial Division' until such time as officially designated otherwise by The Quartermaster General."⁵⁵

The grant of authority in the OQMG Memorandum of March covered still another change of organization during May. Difficulties were encountered in consequence of the distribution of liaison functions between staff and branch elements. It was now proposed that a staff branch should be established to absorb these scattered activities. Embodied in a new Tentative Organization Chart approved in May by Brig. Gen. George A. Horkan, who assumed command of the division on 23 April 1946, the revised scheme was identical to the one authorized in March, excepting that the Liaison Branch appears as a staff element in place of the Joint Army—Navy Board and that the Executive Officer was redesignated as Deputy Director.⁵⁶

Establishment of the Liaison Branch may be taken as the event which brought toward completion a continuous process which began with the organizational planning reflected in Colonel Blake's chart of 24 October 1945.⁵⁷ It would be inaccurate, however, to state that this program had produced an organization so perfectly balanced that only minor changes would be required during the course of the return program. As a matter of fact, the scheme was far from perfect. The line of demarcation between staff and operating functions at the branch level was still imperfectly drawn. The Special Projects Branch represented a compromise which persisted until a line was eventually established by first assigning Congressional correspondence to the Liaison Branch and then, in December 1947, by creating two staff elements—a Budget Office and a Policy Office—the former to administer budgetary affairs, the latter to co-ordinate matters of policy.⁵⁸

Again, the tendency already noted in connection with the establishment and abolition of the Supply Branch determined the fate of the Personnel Requirements Branch. Enactment of enabling legislation for the Return Program made possible a transfer of funds to the Personnel Division for absorption of the staff of the Personnel Requirements Branch and a continuation of its function in accordance with established policies and procedures of the Office of The Quartermaster General. In similar manner, the Effects Branch was transferred to Field Service Division. Then, in accordance with the policy of eliminating duplications of functions within the OQMG

⁵⁵ Mem Div Order No. 40, 2 Apr 46.

⁵⁶ Described as a "Tentative Organization Chart," the chart of 9 May 1946 was signed by Col Ira A. Evans, Deputy Director.

⁵⁷ Mem Div Order No. 43, 18 Dec 47.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

and the Memorial Division, the Mortuary Branch was abolished and its functions returned to the Operations Branch, while duties of the Deputy Directors for Administration and Operations were again combined in a single Deputy Director.

Yet the future trends of organization were not entirely in the direction of concentration. The volume and complexity of activities related to identification of the dead and correspondence with the next of kin attained such proportions by December 1947 as to require the establishment of the Identification and the Family Correspondence Branches. Despite the organizational adjustments that accompanied normal procedural change and refinement over a period of 2 years, the structure completed in May 1946 may be accepted as the basic organization produced in the process of transforming the old establishment into a headquarters structure for the AGRS. It should not be forgotten, however, that persistent neglect of organizational requirements during the war, together with deferment to the post-hostilities period of a considerable amount of the advance planning required for final disposition of the war dead, presented an accumulation of difficulties which might well have been obviated by an exercise of foresight at higher echelons of authority and, in consequence, have avoided the troublesome task of dragging this process of transformation over a period of 8 critical months.

Establishment of Separate AGRS Zone Commands

In completing the description of AGRS organization, there are several zone commands still to be placed in the scheme. These fall into two general classifications.

First we have a group, five in number, which underwent transformation from decentralized theater services to theater service commands and then, upon inactivation of the theaters, became self-contained zones, functioning directly under operational and technical control of The Quartermaster General within those territorial areas originally assigned the wartime theater establishments. The Africa—Middle East, the India—Burma, and the China AGRS Zones are typical of this category. AGRS—MZ, the establishment of which is discussed elsewhere in this study, should, of course, be included under the classification of independent and self-contained zones. Then, presenting an exceptional case, the American Zone cannot consistently be excluded from this group. While a self-contained zone under direct control of The Quartermaster General, its territorial limits embraced areas formerly assigned to three different wartime establishments—the European Theater, the Northeast Defense Command, and USAF South Atlantic. Subsequent consoli-

dation of large ocean stretches in the North and South Atlantic, with their island bases and adjoining American shores, under the Air Transport Command (ATC), probably suggested the unique geographical basis of this independent zone establishment.

The second group comprises three AGRS commands—the Alaskan, Caribbean, and Pacific Zones—which were integrated into existing tactical commands and, while subject to technical direction of The Quartermaster General, were assigned as operating responsibilities of the commanding generals, respectively, of these tactical establishments. AGRC—EA and AGRS—PATA, which were created in accordance with WD/GO No. 125, 1945, together with the two zone commands—FEZ and PAZ—which replaced PATA upon reorganization of tactical commands in the Pacific Ocean, should be included in the second groupment.

Following AGRC—EA in the chronological order of establishment, the American Zone (AGRS—AZ) was activated in accordance with WD Circular No. 108, 13 April 1946. The command thus created replaced AGRS—EDCZ, as established by GO No. 125, 1945. Headquarters were located at Westover Field, Mass., and subsequently moved to the New York Port of Embarkation (NYPE) at Brooklyn, N. Y.⁵⁹

As already indicated, the territorial limits of AGRS—AZ represented a geographical patchwork extending from the Greenland ice cap to the southernmost tip of Brazil. Divided into two administrative regions, the northern section included Greenland, Labrador, Eastern Canada, Newfoundland, and Iceland, which was taken from the European Theater; the Southern section embraced Bermuda, Cuba, Ascension Island, and that part of the United States of Brazil originally assigned to USAF, South Atlantic.⁶⁰

Next in order of establishment came the Africa—Middle East Zone. With closeout of AMET imminent, the Commanding General notified NYPE that AGRS—AMETZ, which had been organized in accordance with paragraph 4, of WD/GO No. 125, 1945, was authorized to requisition on NYPE for supplies and equipment.⁶¹

Authorization to requisition directly on the New York Port was followed by representations on the part of Col. Clarence J. Blake, commanding, AGRS—AMETZ, that he should be given “broad authority and directive” to lease property, hire local labor, purchase or otherwise acquire such supplies, transportation, or services as were

⁵⁹ WD Cir No. 204, 10 Jul 46.

⁶⁰ History of the American Zone GRS (Hq AGRS—AZ, NYPE, 1947), p. 2.

⁶¹ Cable, Nr CLR 13567, CG, USAF-AMET to CG, NYPE, 8 May 46. The effective date for direct requisition was put at 1 May 46.

available and needed, make payments in United States or local currency at prevailing rates of exchange, to requisition on NYPE, and to call upon ATC for air transportation, "with such authority to classify air priority . . . in accordance with urgency of each case."⁶² Since Colonel Blake's representation, as listed above and transmitted by General Aurand, Commanding General, AMET, included authority to requisition on NYPE, it seems probable that the graves registration commander had discussed and presented the whole problem of going on a self-contained basis prior to 1 May, the effective date for requisition on NYPE, and that General Aurand took special action in giving priority to this particular request.⁶³

Upon final decision by the War Department to inactivate AMET, the Chief of Staff directed that, in accordance with provisions of WD/GO No. 125, 1945, the Commanding General, ASF, should "take the necessary action to establish the AGRS—AMET Zone under the Office of The Quartermaster General, effective 1 June 1946." It further stated that "AMET is being inactivated 2400 hours 31 May 1946."⁶⁴

It seems quite obvious from Colonel Blake's request for "broad powers and directive," together with issuance of instructions by the Chief of Staff to the Commanding General, ASF, to establish a self-contained zone command under TQMG, that the graves registration setup in AMET had not as yet acquired either the facilities or the organization to function on such a basis. At any rate, on midnight of 31 May, Colonel Blake announced by cable to the War Department that he "assumed command AGRS—AMETZ, a Class 4 installation under TQMG in accordance with GO No. 125, WD 29 December 1945." The announcement was accompanied by a request for "inclusion of this headquarters in pertinent directories and assignment of a station number."⁶⁵

Final actions in formally creating an independent zone command and in granting the zone commander adequate authority for development of a self-contained organization were taken during June. Lt. Gen. LeRoy Lutes, Commanding General, ASF, instructed TQMG that "by virtue of the command responsibility over the American Graves Registration Service, Africa Middle East Zone, you are authorized . . . to delegate authority to perform the following functions in the accomplishment of your missions." An enumeration of such functions was confined to those stipulated by

⁶² Cable, CLR 13640, CG, USAF-AMET to WD, 10 May 46.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ DF, File No. OPD 210.31 (17 May 46) to CG, ASF, 21 May 46, sub: Assignment of General Aurand. Comment No. 1.

⁶⁵ Cable, MC in 50670, Hq, AGRS-AMETZ, Algiers, Algeria to WD. A c/n ASF.

Colonel Blake in his request of 10 May for "broad authority and directive."⁶⁶

Despite General Lutes' reference to "The American Graves Registration Service, Africa-Middle East Zone," and his statement that command responsibility over this Zone was vested in TQMG, there was as yet no "piece of paper." To give the *de facto* command announced on 1 June a complete legal, or *de jure* basis, steps to repair this deficiency were taken. General Horkan, Chief of the Memorial Division, recommended that The Adjutant General should be requested to publish formally an announcement substantially as follows:

In accordance with War Department General Order 125, 29 December 1945, it is announced that the American Graves Registration Service (short title AGRS—AMEZ) is established as of 0001, June 1946 with territorial limits as formerly prescribed for the Africa—Middle East Theater.⁶⁷

With slight change of wording, War Department Circular No. 190, 27 June 1946, made the desired announcement. By this statement, AGRS—AMEZ came into existence one minute after midnight of 31 May 1946.

Conditions attending inactivation of the China and India—Burma Theaters determined the methods as well as the dates of establishment of the AGRS Zone Commands in these two areas. Announcement that "The American Graves Registration Service, China Zone (short title AGRS—CZ) will pass to control of The Quartermaster General, effective as of 0001, 1 September," was published just a month after the event.⁶⁸

Similarly, formal announcement that the India—Burma Zone was in existence followed the act of reorganization, the notice stating: "Effective as of 0001, 1 October 1946, The American Graves Registration Service, India—Burma Zone (short title AGRS—IBZ) is established with territorial limits as formally prescribed for the former India—Burma Theater."⁶⁹

Aside from difficulties in the procurement and assignment of suitable personnel, there were no serious administrative problems, or irreconcilable conflicts of policy and doctrine attending the organization of AGRS zone commands in military departments of the

⁶⁶ 1st Ind, 7 Jun 45 to Memo, Maj Gen T. B. Larkin, TQMG for CG, ASF, 23 May 45, sub: GRS, AMET.

⁶⁷ DF, Brig Gen George A. Horkan (for TQMG) to CG, ASF, 10 Jun 46, Comment 2 to DF WDGS, File No. OPD 210.31 (17 May 46), 21 May 46, sub: Assignment of General Aurand.

⁶⁸ WD Cir No. 265, 31 Aug 46.

continental mainland and adjoining waters. The Alaskan and Caribbean Zones present typical examples of this procedure.

AGRS—ALDZ was authorized by paragraph 4 of WD/GO No. 125, 1945. Paragraphs 4, 6 and 7 of the same directive were given effect by Headquarters, Caribbean Defense Command, in constituting "The Caribbean Zone, American Graves Registration Service (AGRS—CARZ) . . . for the administration of graves registration activities in the Caribbean Defense Command."⁷⁰

The Zone was divided into two sectors—the Panama Canal Sector and the Antilles Sector. The former was an operating responsibility of the Commanding General, Panama Canal Department; the latter was assigned as a responsibility of the Commanding General, Antilles Department.⁷¹

⁶⁹ WDGO No. 117, 9 Oct. 46.

⁷⁰ Hq CDC GO No. 7, 28 Jan 47.

⁷¹ (1) *Ibid.* (2) History of the Panama Canal Sector, AGRS (Hq Panama Canal Dept, 1948), pp. 2-3.

CHAPTER V
ORGANIZATION OF THE
AMERICAN GRAVES REGISTRATION COMMAND,
EUROPEAN THEATER AREA

Problems of Centralizing Graves Registration Service Elements

Collapse of German military resistance on 8 May 1945 released a large preponderance of six American armies for OPERATION OLYMPIC, invasion of the Island of Kyushū. The logistical organization that had sustained the sinews of combat against Nazi Germany was now geared to the gigantic task of moving many combat and service elements of these armies from battle positions in central Europe and northern Italy to marshalling areas in the western Pacific. The first assault waves were to storm ashore on 1 November.

Without parallel in the extent of land and ocean spaces to be traversed, or the vast requirements as to means of transportation, this strategic regroupment foreshadowed the greatest troop movement in the history of warfare. But the swift course of events that compelled Emperor Hirohito of Japan to sign articles of capitulation on 2 September through his emissaries aboard the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay only hastened the outward movement from Europe, transforming a planned redeployment into headlong demobilization.

Dislocations Accompanying Demobilization

Spurred by an hysteria that swept the Nation with its shrilling cry "bring our boys home," the hasty exodus from Europe complicated every measure intended to ease the abrupt transition from waging war to the occupation of hostile territory. The theater must of necessity undergo a large reduction of troop strength, along with a corresponding curtailment of logistical services. Furthermore, the change of mission necessitated a fundamental alteration in the theater structure.

Military opinion appreciated the advantage of consolidating in a general headquarters of the occupation forces much of the authority that had heretofore been divided between the staff of the Allied Supreme Commander and that of the European Theater of Operations, United States Army (ETOUSA). It was further recognized that the command system thus provided would function most effectively through the medium of major subordinate commands which

were to be established on a basis of administrative areas and designated as military districts. The base sections would, for the time being, retain their status as autonomous commands.

Reorganization along these lines became a process somewhat more complicated than the routine method of preparing staff studies and issuing directives designed to give effect to the desired changes. In the first place, the scheme of troop reduction by releasing individuals in accordance with length of service destroyed the organizational integrity of veteran combat and service formations. Then a demobilization policy which had the effect of removing soldiers of long service from direct personal contacts with untrained recruits aggravated the difficulties of readying new formations for the task of policing conquered territory. If less arduous than the role of combat troops in pursuit of victory, prosecution of the police function called for a type of discipline peculiar to the sensitive nature of the mission. Such a discipline cannot be inculcated overnight among raw levies. Finally, there was a miscellany of extraordinary duties—civil government, educational programs, civilian relief, and others—that inevitably devolve upon an occupation force commander and, despite the confusion attending dissolution of the war-time establishment, require the prompt assembling of many special service organizations.

Redirection of GRS Activities

One such duty related to continued care and final disposition of the war dead. Of immediate concern were the measures which must be taken during the throes of demobilization in creating the type of organization best suited to long-range requirements of the mission. Maintenance and beautification of the military cemeteries would, as a matter of course, continue until such time as the dead were either exhumed and returned to the homeland or reinterred in permanent overseas cemeteries. Again, while the task of evacuation, identification, and burial of battle fatalities had abruptly ceased, the relatively restricted activity of search and recovery of isolated remains behind the battle lines during hostilities must now be extended over vast areas traversed by heavy bomber formations in the far-ranging bombardment of German communications centers and industrial installations.

The latter obligation, it should be noted, was enjoined by two considerations of public policy. One proceeded from the urgent necessity of conducting field investigations for the purpose of determining the final casualty status of approximately 11,000 persons provisionally carried as Missing or Missing in Action, and to report as soon as possible to next of kin whatever final determinations

would be made. The other derived from the necessity of recovering the remains of some 25,000 American soldiers buried in isolated graves (the location of many being unknown) and establishing as far as circumstances permitted the identity of such recovered bodies in order to assist, not only in the process of final casualty determinations, but to afford to next of kin the opportunity of expressing a choice as to the final disposition of this category of remains.¹

Most of these problems, to be sure, had been anticipated in one form or another. As related in Chapter I, The Adjutant General transmitted on 30 January 1945 to all overseas commanders an approved plan for integrating Quartermaster Graves Registration Service area commands within the theater structures. It will be recalled that the various supervisory and operating elements of these commands were to be so expanded as to permit an effective discharge of the theater commander's continuing responsibility for care of the dead and, in addition, to provide a basis for self-contained organizations in anticipation of the withdrawal of logistical support that would accompany the progressive closing out of base commands. Then, upon inactivation of a theater establishment, command responsibility for the continuation of graves registration operations was to be delegated to The Quartermaster General in his capacity as Chief, AGRS.

Due to conditions already reviewed,² few of the advantages sought by proponents of this scheme had been realized by V-E Day. In other words, little or no progress had been made in transforming the decentralized theater graves registration services into centralized service commands. Instead, there was only a paper plan, untested, problematical, and in many ways, ill-suited during the unpredictable circumstances of rapid demobilization to a quick transition from battlefield evacuation and burial to area search and recovery of isolated remains, to say nothing of other operations incidental to final disposition of the war dead. Furthermore, thinking in connection with these belated adjustments was obscured from 1 June to 29 December 1945 by protracted and contradictory deliberations on the part of the War Department General Staff. As related elsewhere,³ War Department approval of the Quartermaster or "current" plan for final disposition of war remains, submitted on 1 June, lagged through July and August to 8 September, while reconsideration of modifications in organizational aspects of the approved plan dragged on to 29 December. Briefly, 7 months elapsed between

¹ A more detailed discussion of the relationship between the European Casualty Clearance Program and search and recovery operations is presented in Chapter VI.

² See above.

³ See above.

submission of the current plan and promulgation of GO No. 125, which finally authorized the establishment of AGRS overseas area and separate zone commands.⁴

Gregory—Littlejohn Correspondence

Perhaps this confusion of purpose is most clearly reflected in the interchange of views during May 1945 between The Quartermaster General and Maj. Gen. Robert M. Littlejohn, Chief Quartermaster, ETOUSA. Both officers had discussed graves registration problems at some length in personal conferences during April 1945, when General Littlejohn visited Washington. There is no reason, then, to assume that either officer betrayed a superficial knowledge of the subject, or that one was obliged to instruct the other on important aspects of the problem. The fact remains that once confronted with the urgency of making immediate adjustments to accommodate the transition from war to peace, both officers seem to have experienced some difficulty in communicating their ideas to one another through the medium of correspondence. While General Gregory appears to have misconstrued the practical bearing of the Chief Quartermaster's persistent queries regarding trends of War Department thinking in matters of long-range policy, and the application of such information to transient planning projects in Europe, General Littlejohn did not fully appreciate the very significant point that his Washington correspondent could no more penetrate the fog overhanging the Pentagon from his nearby vantage point on the east bank of the Potomac than could the theater quartermaster from his distant observation post at Paris, on the River Seine.

On 8 May 1945, the day of Germany's capitulation, General Littlejohn took occasion to express his views in a personal letter to The Quartermaster General on the nature of immediate adjustments that would be required in adapting graves registration organization to rapidly changing conditions. After observing that the tentative table of organization of the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service (Zone of Interior),⁵ had been thoroughly studied, and adding that "things are moving so fast that I must take action at an early date," he requested specific information as to the status of legislation pending before the Congress, together with an expression of General Gregory's views "concerning the organization to be set up in this theater."⁶

⁴ See Ch. III for an analysis of the arguments by which the WDGS justified its objections to the current plan as approved 8 Sep 45, and the consequent delay in embodying these objections in GO No. 125.

⁵ Ltr, TAG to CinC, SWPA, CGs TOpns, and others, 30 Jan 45, sub: Orgn for the QM GRS.

⁶ Personal Ltr, Maj Gen Robert M. Littlejohn, CQM ETO to Lt Gen Edmund B. Gregory, TQMG, 8 May 45, no sub.

Taken by itself, General Littlejohn's communication was subject to misinterpretation. His request for legislative information, as revealed in subsequent correspondence, was prompted by a belief that early action on the part of Congress authorizing establishment of a world-wide AGRS command would incite public demand for immediate return of the dead and, in consequence, impose difficult time limitations in setting up an interim organization to undertake such a program. Furthermore, the Chief Quartermaster left room for doubt that he was thinking in terms of immediate adjustments rather than those long-range considerations of policy that could not at this juncture be appreciated in the field and, unfortunately for the field, were still a subject of speculation in Washington.

On the following day, General Littlejohn amplified his views in a manner that should have left little ground for misunderstanding. After commenting on a number of routine matters relative to the processing and submission of theater burial reports, he again related that the tentative tables of organization outlining the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service (Zone of Interior) had been thoroughly studied and, while realizing that Europe must eventually create a self-contained organization for final disposition of the war dead, he thought that "any action toward adoption of this T/O in this theater at this time would be premature." He added:

It is believed more practicable to design a tailor-made organization to fit the needs of this theater and this is currently being prepared with suitable changes in organizational structure provided for [in QM GRS ZI] between the three phases, i. e., pre V-E phase, concentration phase and repatriation phase. Currently it is my intention to leave the Graves Registration and Effects Division in Paris . . . when and if Headquarters, Communication Zone, and concurrently the bulk of my office moves into Germany.⁷

During a lapse of 2 weeks, which brought nothing in reply from Washington, General Littlejohn took initial steps toward setting up the "tailor made" organization described in his second communication to The Quartermaster General. Informal discussion had already paved the way for securing the release of Brig. Gen. James W. Younger, CQM, Twelfth Army Group, to the Office of the Theater Quartermaster. A personal letter addressed to the Chief of Staff, Twelfth Army Group, stated that the assignment had been discussed with General Gregory and "we both agree that Younger is the best man now available anywhere to head up the overall Graves Registration Service because of his having served 6 years in

⁷ Personal Ltr, Littlejohn to Gregory, 9 May 45, sub: Reply on Graves Registration and Effects Activities in ETO.

Europe . . . and because of his being able to speak the languages here on the Continent.”⁸

In addition to the special qualifications urged in justification of the request for General Younger, it was observed that both the Italian and African theaters would, according to belief current in Washington and Paris, be combined with the European theater area in a single graves registration command. Littlejohn was somewhat vague as to the structure of this contemplated organization, but no more so than The Quartermaster General or the War Department General Staff. He stated that it was still to be determined just how the Graves Registration Service would be developed “. . . i. e., under G. H. Q. or C. Z. or a War Department Agency. . . .”⁹

Detailed planning for the structure of Littlejohn’s “tailor-made” organization was advanced during May. A terse summary of his thinking in this connection was furnished the G-1 Section, which requested that the Chief Quartermaster submit a statement on the graves registration problem for inclusion with its material in preparation for Planning Directive “K,” No. 1, Plan B.

With the diminishing activities of Communications Zone Sections in supporting troops in forward areas, it is anticipated that the Graves Registration Service will be established as a separate command under the Chief Quartermaster. This Graves Registration Command will be charged with the responsibility for the performance of all graves registration operations within the theater until such time as, upon the release of its territory by the theater, there will be established Graves Registration Area Commands (Zone of Interior). The latter will be charged with cemetery maintenance and security and the eventual repatriation of remains, which will be in accordance with the present announced War Department policy of returning to the United States the remains of all deceased if the next of kin of 70% or more of the deceased request such action.¹⁰

Upon informal report from Twelfth Army Group Headquarters that General Bradley would release Younger whenever his services were required for duty with the Graves Registration Service, Littlejohn took occasion to advise The Quartermaster General of this circumstance and to press his unanswered requests for positive information. Recalling their lengthy discussion on graves registration matters during April, and reminding The Quartermaster General of his promise “to write . . . the latest information concerning the

⁸ Personal Ltr, Littlejohn to Maj Gen Leven C. Allen, CofS, Twelfth Army Group Hq, 11 May 45, no sub.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ IRS, OQM to G-1, 22 May 45, sub: Gr Reg Plans.

status of the bill in Congress to create a Graves Registration Service, and also to furnish . . . any information vital to setting up such a service," General Littlejohn recounted that he was preparing a staff study which would recommend the establishment of "a Graves Registration Service under current Army Regulations," and that Younger would be placed in charge of Graves Registration activities "as soon as the necessary protocol can be established." He then concluded with a request that he might have General Gregory's views "in connection with the foregoing problems."¹¹

In view of the statement that measures were being taken to establish a Graves Registration Service Command in Europe under current Army Regulations, The Quartermaster General's reply on 28 May to the effect that no authority other than War Department Circular No. 2, dated 1 January 1945, was required in making the very adjustments that Littlejohn had in mind and, in fact, had previously described as his "tailor-made" organization, one feels impelled to conclude that General Gregory, or whoever may have prepared this letter for his signature, misinterpreted the whole tenor of his correspondence with the Chief Quartermaster in Europe. It seems difficult to understand why General Gregory should have enclosed with his letter of 28 May copies of both Circular No. 2 and the plan for establishment of the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service (Zone of Interior), along with the explanation that tables of organization accompanying this plan were intended as informational matter in complying with provisions of Circular No. 2.¹² General Littlejohn, it will be recalled, had already stated that he had carefully studied the tables relating to this very plan.

For the rest, General Gregory's reply afforded little information of practical value. The bill before Congress, he explained, had nothing to do with the creation of a Graves Registration Service. On the contrary, it provided for the establishment of a national cemetery in each State. Concerning long-range policy considerations, General Gregory gave only partial confirmation of possible developments that had already been given some credence in Paris. "It is our plan," he wrote, "to set up a headquarters in Paris which would control all graves registration matters in the Mediterranean Theater as well as the European Theater."¹³

In the field of operational planning, General Gregory was more specific, urging a measure which, apart from recovery of isolated remains, was destined to encounter opposition from the next of kin.

¹¹ Personal Ltr, Littlejohn to Gregory, 24 May 45, no sub.

¹² Personal Ltr, Gregory to Littlejohn, CQM, 28 May 45, no sub.

¹³ *Ibid.*

I believe that the concentration of bodies in the largest cemeteries should be pushed vigorously. The return of bodies to the United States will, of course, have to wait congressional action. A definite appropriation will be required for this purpose. It is a matter that I think we should move in on at once and I see no reason why General Younger should not take over immediately. If there is any trouble about getting his services I will request that General Younger be released for that purpose. I expect that discussion with French authorities will be involved very soon and it is important that a general officer be in charge of the activity.

I wish you would keep me informed of the progress and development of the Graves Registration Command.¹⁴

Proposals for a Graves Registration Service Command

Staff Studies, 29 May and 5 June 1945

Whatever the benefits that might have been derived from an interchange of letters better revealing the thoughts and intentions of both parties, there is no reason to believe that noncommittal answers on the part of General Gregory concerning high level thinking which, as a matter of fact, he was in no position to disclose, imposed any delay on actual steps taken by the Chief Quartermaster in Europe. As already indicated, want of information that might have altered his course of action was in reality due to delay in securing War Department approval of the current plan for repatriation of the war dead, and to subsequent indecision in implementing that phase of the plan that might otherwise have been given an early application in the European, Mediterranean, and Africa and Middle East theaters. At any rate, on 29 May, and before General Littlejohn could possibly have read The Quartermaster General's letter dated 28 May in Washington, he transmitted through direct channels to the theater commander, a staff study embodying his views and recommendations relative to the establishment of a theater graves registration service command.

The problem of organization, he submitted, was conditioned by a shift of emphasis in the whole activity from collection and evacuation of battlefields fatalities to the recovery of isolated dead and concentration of remains in anticipation of shipment to the homeland, or final burial abroad. During hostilities, he noted, the major task of evacuation had required the decentralization of operational control over theater Graves Registration Service units to the armies, while technical control and records administration were centered in

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

the Office of the Chief Quartermaster. With the death rate of the armies reduced to "attritional fatalities," and activities such as search and recovery claiming a priority which could not have been accorded during hostilities, it now seemed advisable to combine operational and technical control in a single command.¹⁵

He therefore recommended that, "effective not later than 16 June 1945 there be established the Graves Registration Service Command, ETO," the commanding officer of which would be responsible to the Chief Quartermaster for performance of the following functions: (1) control of cemeteries; (2) burial and registration of deceased military personnel; (3) area search for isolated graves and unburied dead, and concentration of remains; (4) control of personal effects of the deceased; (5) establishment and operation of a central office of records on graves registration matters; (6) operational control and technical supervision of all installations and personnel employed in discharge of above enumerated functions.

Initial estimates of required supervisory staff elements and operating units included: (1) a headquarters establishment, the nucleus of which would be furnished by the Graves Registration and Effects Division, OCQM; (2) a mobile element which would undertake the mission of search and recovery and consist of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachments QM Groups (TOE 10-22), QM Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Detachments (TOE 10-536) and 12 Graves Registration Service Companies (TOE 10-297), or their equivalent in personnel and equipment; (3) a static force for cemetery management, requiring an estimated total of 18 officers and 357 enlisted men.¹⁶

The draft of a theater general order intended to implement these recommendations specified that the proposed service command would be organized and function under technical direction of the Chief Quartermaster, who "is authorized to appoint a Chief of the Graves Registration Service Command (GRSC) and to delegate to him the responsibilities in connection with its functioning." Then, while announcing that "all graves registration units and installations engaged solely in graves registration and personal effects and baggage activities are transferred to the Graves Registration Service Command (GRSC)," additional paragraphs defined the administrative and logistical responsibilities which would be assumed by commanders of base sections (COM ZONE) and military districts over units assigned to GRSC and operating within such jurisdictional areas. These responsibilities included: (1) general court-martial

¹⁵ Memo, Littlejohn for the Theater Commander, 29 May 45, sub: Establishment of Graves Registration Service Command, ETO.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

jurisdiction; (2) personnel accounting; (3) hospitalization and evacuation; (4) supply of common items; (5) assistance to the commander of the GRSC unit in the administrative and disciplinary inspection of units. It was further stated that COM ZONE or Army responsibility for an individual unit "will be indicated or confirmed in Troop Assignment Orders issued by Headquarters, European Theater of Operations."¹⁷

The memorandum of 29 May was not productive of immediate results. Recast and submitted to the theater commander through the Commanding General, COM ZONE, on 5 June, this version reaffirmed the need of creating a command which would enable the theater commander to meet his current responsibilities in connection with the graves registration functions and, at the same time, provide "the necessary continuity of the program if and when territory passes to the control of the Zone of Interior." Proposals to this end, it was stated, were framed in accordance with the duties assigned by War Department Circular No. 2, 1945, to The Quartermaster General and commanders of overseas theaters and, furthermore, that provisions of the War Department Plan of 30 January 1945 for the phased development of Quartermaster Graves Registration area commands in the various theaters had been followed as far as practicable in drawing up tables of organization for the proposed Graves Registration Service Command.¹⁸

Justification for centralizing operational and technical control in a service command under the Chief Quartermaster was stated in similar terms. The same expedient for division of administrative control over GRSC units between base sections and district commanders was written into the revision. Proceeding, perhaps, on an assumption that theater headquarters was informally committed to the establishment of a graves registration command, the memorandum of 5 June offered only one recommendation—that an ETOUSA general order embodying ideas suggested in a tentative draft be published. This draft was a verbatim reproduction of the one submitted on 29 May.

A number of attachments indicated an organizational scheme for the "Initial Phase," namely 16 June to 31 December 1945.¹⁹ An overall headquarters of 13 field grade officers and 54 enlisted men was to serve at the beginning as a planning and operating staff. The operational theater was to be divided into three major sub-

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Memo, Littlejohn for the Theater Commander (thru: CG, COM ZONE), 5 Jun 45, sub: Establishment of the Organization for Graves Registration Service in the ETO.

¹⁹ (1) *Ibid.*, Tab C-1. (2) Memo, Brig Gen W. H. Middleswart, Actg CQM for G-3, 2 Jul 45, sub: Proposed TD&A for the Hq, GRS, ETO.

ordinate zone commands, with interior districts and, wherever required, subdistricts or sectors.

Zone A would embrace an area of France extending northward from the Mediterranean coast and the Pyrenees to an east-west line following French departmental boundaries from the Swiss frontier to the mouth of the River Loire. Because of the relatively small number of remains within its allotted area, Zone A was to consist of only two subdivisions—a North Sector and a South Sector.

The assignment of field operating units to Zone A sectors illustrates the general relationship between supervisory and operating elements. Three types of field units were to be created, each with a distinct mission and intended to operate within the sector boundaries. One would comprise search "groups" or detachments, aggregating 5 officers and 150 enlisted personnel; the second an exhumation group to consist of 2 officers and 20 enlisted men; while the third type, which was to be identified with cemeterial maintenance, had the designation of cemetery management and would have a personnel strength of 1 officer and 18 men.

Zone B, which was to include both the Normandy battle area and the broad path traversed in the advance to the German frontier, embraced all of France north of Zone A, together with the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Belgium, the United Kingdom, and Ireland. Containing a vast preponderance of the number of burials in temporary United States military cemeteries, Zone B was subdivided into three districts—the Eastern, Western, and United Kingdom districts. These, in turn, would have interior sectors, three being allotted to the Eastern and two each to the Western and United Kingdom districts. Zone C was to be identified with German-occupied territory and would have two districts, each with appropriate sector units.²⁰

Headquarters establishments for the three major subordinate commands, that is, Zones A, B, and C, were to be furnished by three Quartermaster Groups included in the estimate of personnel requirements. These groups totalled 105 officers and men. Six Quartermaster Battalions, totalling 165, would supply staff elements for district and sector commands. Along with a supervisory overhead of 270, the operating force of 15 GR companies, each with a paper strength of 125, put the overall troop basis at 2,145. Estimated requirements for civilian personnel were fixed at 2,503, including field investigators (128), field labor (2,200), and other categories (175). The aggregate strength, military and civilian, would, according to these computations, total 4,648.²¹

²⁰ Memo, Littlejohn for TC, 25 May 45, sub: Establishment of GRS, ETO.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Submission on 5 June 1945 of the staff study recommending establishment of the Graves Registration Service Command described in its text and attachments was accompanied by a request through G-1 to The Adjutant General for issuance of orders designating Brig. Gen. James W. Younger as Chief of Graves Registration Service, ETO. It was stated in this connection that Quartermaster General Gregory had concurred informally in the proposal.²²

Eisenhower—Littlejohn Conference

While action on Younger's designation was pending, the theater commander called General Littlejohn into conference and stated his views on major points of graves registration policy. First of all, he insisted that the removal of isolated American dead from territory about to be relinquished to British and Russian occupation forces must be given the highest priority in current operational schedules, and that this step should be followed by evacuation of all United States military cemeteries in Germany. American dead, it was stipulated, were to be concentrated at selected cemeteries in Allied countries, preferably Henri-Chapelle, and at a cemetery in Normandy. Allied and enemy dead were to be delivered to appropriate representatives of their respective nations, while the German cemetery sites would be rehabilitated and returned to their rightful owners. Then, implying approval of proposals for establishing an independent service command, General Eisenhower assured his Chief Quartermaster that he was willing "to release to TQMG control and operation of GRS in the theater at an early date provided that the personnel in charge of such meet with his approval, and further, provided the service rendered by the GRS be of the highest order."²³

In the minutes of this conference prepared by General Littlejohn for the information of Colonel Bobrink, Chief of Staff of the Graves Registration and Effects Division, the Chief Quartermaster reveals his reluctance to consider any extensive program of concentrating remains in a few selected cemeteries. Unimpressed by arguments that economy of maintenance would be realized by the concentration of bodies in a few centrally located cemeteries, or that a sense of honor enjoined prompt removal of the dead from German soil, he insisted that any such advantage would be nullified by two disinterments of every body so handled.

Personally I question the advisability of embarking on such an extensive program at this moment as proposed by General

²² IRS, OCQM (Littlejohn) to TAG (Thru G-1), 5 Jun 45, no sub.

²³ IRS, Littlejohn to Col H. W. Bobrink, CofS, GR&E Div, OCQM, 8 Jun 45, no sub. This brief account of his conference with Eisenhower on the same day offers the only available minutes of the meeting.

Eisenhower as unquestionably at this early date Congressional action will be taken toward removal of bodies to the United States. This would mean another move.²⁴

With designation on 18 June of Brigadier General Younger as Chief, Graves Registration and Effects Division, this staff agency acquired a sort of *de facto* command status. Regarded as an "Interim Commission," it was given operational control over the 1st QM Group. The command prerogative, however, was virtually limited to reassigning the Group to Twelfth Army Group Headquarters when the recovery of isolated dead from the Twelfth Army Group Area was initiated in accordance with General Eisenhower's expressed wishes.²⁵

Inadequacies of GO No. 141

From a practical point of view, no abrupt change was effected in the status of Younger's Commission when, on 25 June, the theater commander indicated approval of Littlejohn's recommendations for establishment of a service command. Nor was the situation materially altered by announcement in Part I of ETOUSA GO No. 141, 1 July 1945, that "the Graves Registration Service Command, European theater, is hereby established" and that "the mission of the command is to provide an organization which will meet the requirements for accomplishing the responsibilities of the theater commander in connection with graves registration activities and will permit the necessary continuity of the program, if and when the territory passes to control of the Zone of the Interior."

In other words, the mission of the command was to attempt in the absence of any specific grant of authority to assemble under a single command a miscellany of units, installations and offices that had been variously decentralized to combat and service commands during hostilities. It was obvious that this vague statement of purpose fell far short of the tentative theater order attached to Littlejohn's staff study of 5 June and expressly worded to serve the purpose of a theater letter of instructions, outlining as it did the responsibilities and authority of the commanding general and defining his position with respect to the territorial jurisdiction of district and base section commanders.

Preoccupation at this juncture of all staff levels with the complicated task of reconstituting the entire theater structure may account for a defective order that related to only one aspect of the new organi-

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Memo, Rpt, Brig Gen J. W. Younger, Chief, AGRC to Maj Gen Robert M. Littlejohn, CQM, 13 Jul 45, sub: Organization of the GRSC. Hereinafter cited as Younger, Rpt on Orgn, GRSC.

zational scheme, namely, a grant of authority to provide the organization. At any rate, ETOUSA was replaced on 1 July 1945 by United States Forces, European Theater (USFET); in this metamorphosis GRSC came into the troubled world without ability, as it were, to gasp for the breath of life. In the absence of General Littlejohn, who had flown to Washington for high level conferences, the ministrations of a competent midwife were urgently needed.

G-3 served the purpose. In forwarding the approved text of GO No. 141 for publication, it was noted that the instrument would be ineffective without a "letter of instructions to the Commanding General, GRSC, upon its establishment by this Headquarters."²⁶ G-4 was so informed and the OCQM, in turn, was apprised of the requirement, with a request that "the letter of instructions be drafted to follow up the GO, which merely established this Service."²⁷

These complications were not restricted to repairing deficiencies in the wording of the general order. Returning Littlejohn's staff study to the OCQM on 30 June for preparation of the required directive, Colonel Benoit, Executive Officer of the G-4 Section, informed General Younger by phone that since the staff in Paris no longer had jurisdiction, the proposed letter must be presented to the staff at Frankfurt.²⁸

Since approval for establishing GRSC, together with an assignment of authority to the commanding general and concurrence in proposals governing his administrative relationship with territorial commanders, were not put in a single packet, it now became necessary to rearrange the substance of Littlejohn's staff study in separate compartments for consideration of the staff at Frankfurt. Three papers, rather than the one suggested by G-3, were deemed essential to this purpose by both Younger and Brig. Gen. W. H. Middlewart, Deputy for Administration, OCQM, and acting Chief Quartermaster in the absence of General Littlejohn. One was a TDA for the headquarters establishment of the command, another the proposed theater letter of instructions, and the third a set of tables indicating the organization, personnel allotments and territorial assignments of the subordinate field commands.

Repair of Inadequacies

Justification of the TDA reaffirmed the original estimate as to personnel allotments for Headquarters, GRSC. It was noted that

²⁶ IRS, Actg Dep CofS, G-3 to G-4 and OCQM, 29 Jun 45, sub: Establishment of the Organization for GRS in the ETO.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Comment 2, Asst CofS, G-4 (by Col C. E. Johnson) to OCQM, 30 Jun 45.

²⁸ Rpt, Brig Gen J. W. Younger, Chief, GRSC ET for Maj Gen Robert M. Littlejohn, CQM, 13 Jul 45, sub: Organization of the GRSC. Hereinafter cited as Memo Rpt, Younger to CQM, 13 Jul 45.

while the War Department plan for the Quartermaster Graves Registration Service (Zone of Interior) provided for an area headquarters establishment of 44 officers, including 22 of field grade, the one presently proposed called for only 13 field grade officers. So curtailed, this headquarters unit must assume responsibility in the direction of field operations, undertake negotiations with foreign governments and the War Department, and assist in the organization of zone commands and their respective headquarters establishments. Furthermore, it was emphasized, creation of the separate graves registration command would add new burdens, notably the transfer of all graves registration records and correspondence files from the armies and base sections for "consolidation search, study, evaluation, and completion of actions such as search for further identifications." Finally, the varied and complicated nature of the whole undertaking required planning of the highest order. "The officers provided for in the proposed organization," it was stated, "constitutes a combination of operating and planning staff carrying on at all times current operations and at the same time making plans for future expansion and for succeeding phases of operations. Advance plans must be made to take care of various transitions through which this service must flow."²⁹

Prepared by General Younger, and elsewhere called his "Theater Enabling Act," but officially entitled the "Proposed Theater Administrative Instructions Pertaining to the Operations of the Graves Registration Service Command," the second paper³⁰ presented a somewhat elaborated edition of Littlejohn's draft of the tentative general order attached to his staff study of 5 June. Statement of mission and scope of activities of the command was couched in similar terms. Having in mind the TDA for the headquarters establishment and a revision which he intended to make in the number of field commands, he stated briefly that headquarters of the command would be organized into a headquarters, plus such subordinate territorial zones and districts as might be determined by the Commanding General, GRSC. Regarding responsibilities of the Commanding General and his relationship with district and base section commanders, he offered four points:

- (1) GRSC, with attached units is an "exempted command," re-

²⁹ (1) Memo, Brig Gen W. H. Middleswart, Actg CQM to G-3, 2 Jul 45, sub: Proposed TD&A for the Hq GRS ETO. Signed by General Middleswart, this paper was prepared by General Younger. (2) See Memo Rpt, Younger to Littlejohn, 13 Jul 45.

³⁰ Signed by General Middleswart, Actg CQM, the proposed theater administrative instructions were carried by him to Frankfurt on 6 July. After approval by General Crawford and direction by this officer that the paper be co-ordinated by interested staff sections, it received favorable consideration by G-3 and G-4 only to emerge in altered form as a theater directive on 26 November 1945. *Ibid*, fn. 29.

sponsible to the CQM, USFET, except that the several Army and COM ZONE commanders would exercise administrative authority over GRS personnel and units attached thereto located within the geographical boundaries of their respective commands for (a) supply of common items and field labor, (b) fiscal transactions, hospitalization and evacuation, (c) personnel accounting, and (d) inspection as requested by CG, AGRS.

(2) All personnel, units and installations engaged solely in GRS activities were to be transferred to GRSC.

(3) Transfer of responsibility for Graves Registration Service activities, including units, personnel and installations in any specific Army or COM ZONE areas was to be effected by orders which would be issued by this headquarters and so timed as to insure uninterrupted operations.

(4) Upon transfer of operational responsibilities to GRSC, commanding generals of military districts and base sections would retain responsibility for evacuation of current dead to cemeteries operated by the Chief, AGRC.³¹

The third paper was addressed to the problem of territorial commands. General Younger proposed five major subordinate zone commands instead of the three specified in Littlejohn's staff study of 5 June. It was assumed, of course, that the Chief Quartermaster would concur in the amended scheme before Headquarters, USAFET, took final action in the matter.

Creation of the five zones was to be accomplished by the simple expedient of transforming the three districts of Zone B into commands. Retaining their original district designations, the three new commands were to be known as the United Kingdom Zone, the Western Zone and the Eastern Zone. Without change of internal structure, Zone A would acquire a new designation—the Southern Zone. Zone C was to be enlarged by inclusion of Denmark and East Prussia and would substitute a geographical name—the German Zone—for its former alphabetical designation.³²

Whatever may have been General Littlejohn's reaction to the somewhat brusque manner in which his subordinate went about the business of revision, theater headquarters gave a qualified sort of approval to the 5-zone scheme, and without regard to the views originally entertained by Littlejohn, or to those urged by Younger in advocating an increase in the number of commands.³³

³¹ Proposed Theater Administrative Instructions Pertaining to Operations of the Graves Registration Service Command, 6 Jun 45. Original draft submitted to Hq USAFET; copy attached to Memo Rpt, Younger to Littlejohn, 13 Jul 45.

³² Memo Rpt, Younger to Littlejohn, 13 Jul 45.

³³ Younger's attitude may be regarded on technical grounds as correct. GO No. 141 did not assign GRSC to technical supervision of the CQM. The oversight was remedied in a subsequent general order dated 1 August 1945.

Discussion on 17 July of the mission and organization of GRSC at a conference attended by officers representing the base sections and Headquarters, GRSC, led to an expression of opinion on the part of Lt. Gen. C. H. Lee, commanding Theater Service Forces, that territorial assignments to all GRSC field commands should, as far as practicable, be determined by existing boundaries of the base sections. In deference to General Lee's wishes, Younger revised the allocation of areas in the following manner:

Zone command	Assigned area ³⁴
1. United Kingdom Zone	United Kingdom, Ireland, Channel Islands, Norway, and Sweden.
2. Western Zone	Chanor Base Section.
3. Eastern Zone	Seine and Oise Intermediate Base Sections.
4. Southern Zone	Delta Base Section.
5. Germany Zone	Germany, Denmark, and Czechoslovakia.

Conflict of Planning Concepts

Despite its qualified approval for establishing five territorial commands, theater headquarters withheld formal approval looking to their establishment. Headquarters, GRSC, suspended issuance of the necessary activation orders. Yet the term "Germany Zone" became associated with graves registration operations conducted in Germany and Czechoslovakia in accordance with directions given by General Eisenhower when discussing the problem of setting up a centralized graves registration command with his Chief Quartermaster. Younger relates in his memorandum report of events during Littlejohn's absence that he sent the 1st Quartermaster Group to Fulda to serve as headquarters of the Germany Zone. Due, however, to difficulties in advancing the zone organization in time to undertake recovery of isolated remains in those parts of the Twelfth Army Group area which were to be evacuated by United States Forces, he made arrangements whereby the Third and Seventh Armies would carry out the program with their organic Graves Registration Service forces, while the 1st Group was attached to Twelfth Army Group Headquarters pending assumption of operating responsibility by GRSC.³⁵

³⁴ (1) Ltr, Brig. Gen. J. W. Younger to Col. C. R. Broshous, Deputy CofS, Hq USFET (Rear), 30 Jul 45, no sub. (2) Hist, AGRC, 8 May 45-30 June 1947 (Rev. Series), pp. 251-52.

³⁵ (1) Memo Rpt, Younger to Littlejohn, 13 Jul 45. (2) Recovery of isolated remains in the Twelfth Army Group area is recounted in Ch. VI, below.

There seems every reason to believe that experience in the German mission persuaded General Younger to advise the Chief Quartermaster that "command of the Graves Registration Service, including Graves Registration Units and personnel, should not be assumed . . . until the necessary field supervisory personnel and units are available to assume command of in the various zones."³⁶ Any other course, he warned, "can only result in confusion." The 531st Quartermaster Group, he reported, had been assigned to him and would be sent to Brussels to establish headquarters of the Western Zone whenever that command might be authorized. While an additional group and six battalion headquarters and headquarters detachments in allotment schedules had not as yet been designated, Personnel Division, OCQM, advised that assembly of these units was in process and that details regarding movement into place were under consideration. He added that his administration officer was urging upon Personnel (OCQM) the advisability of phasing into these units all available officers presently attached to Graves Registration Service staffs of base depots, or who had served in a similar capacity with COM ZONE Sections. The quality of personnel, he insisted, was all-important; zone commanders should be "tops."³⁷

Building from a nucleus provided by the old Graves Registration and Effects Division, headquarters of the new command, must in General Younger's opinion, serve as a sort of keystone of the organizational arch. Yet until determination of required dimensions, the keystone could not be dropped into place. Upon assuming command he discovered that the clerical establishment was inadequate even for current routine activities. The emergency was met in part by a temporary assignment of competent personnel from other divisions of the OCQM and by easing the greatly increased burden of correspondence with next of kin through the expedient of form letters. For the rest, Personnel Division, OCQM, undertook a recruitment program especially designed to secure the desired classifications of civilian employees. An increase of 7 officers over the TDA strength of 13 field grade officers was recommended, "with a view to allowing me more freedom of action in handling the work both here and in the field."³⁸

In commenting on the status of affairs during mid-July, General Younger presented a forecast of the progressive steps by which various elements of the command were to be assembled and integrated amid the growing confusion of demobilization, theater

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.* With this increase in mind, Younger requested assignment "at the earliest possible moment of all the personnel remaining in my [QM] section in the 12th Army Group."

reorganization, and protracted indecision in the War Department General Staff concerning long-range graves registration policies. These steps were embodied in a four-point program.

Points one and two stressed establishment of the zone commands; the third emphasized the preparation of technical operating bulletins; the fourth looked to a quick solution of the complicated details involved in the preparation and publication of troop assignment orders, without which GRSC would be unable to assume command responsibility for field operations. General Younger described this program in the following terms:

- (1) General Order No. 2 [in tentative form] creating the Five Zones and announcing the commander of each.
- (2) Letters of instructions to Zone Commanders outlining their responsibilities and their authority as Zone Commanders and including instructions for the establishment of districts in certain instances.
- (3) . . . all outstanding technical instructions codified and brought up to date.
- (4) [Arrangements] with your Personnel Division for publication of the appropriate troop assignment orders assigning all grave registration units, including battalions and groups to the Graves Registration Service Command.

While Headquarters, GRSC, was preoccupied with Younger's program of building up the command structure, the Chief Quartermaster returned from Washington with a new concept of the organizational program. In regard to actual accomplishments in the European Theater, this concept really envisioned the erection of a lofty superstructure on the flimsy foundations provided by GO No. 141. Briefly, he faced the task of establishing a headquarters for the Graves Registration Command "to administer and control the activities not only in this theater but also those in the Mediterranean and Middle East Theaters."³⁹

This scheme, it will be recalled, had been written into the basic Quartermaster, or "current" plan for return of the war dead; it became a planning requirement that could not be ignored so long as the contemplated fusion of the European and Mediterranean Theaters, along with inactivation of the Africa and Middle East Theater, offered the possibility of creating a superior AGRS area command embracing the combined territories of these three jurisdictions. General Littlejohn acted accordingly, proposing on 27 July that the entire area embraced in the European, Mediterranean, and Africa and Middle East theaters should be divided into two

³⁹ Memo, CQM (Littlejohn) for CG, COM ZONE, USFET, 25 Jul 45, sub: Orgn of the GRS.

district commands. District I was to include the European Theater area and contiguous territory, including Spain, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Poland, and Austria; District II would include the Mediterranean, the Africa and Middle East theaters, together with the Persian Gulf Command and contiguous territories of Greece, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Roumania, Bulgaria, and Turkey. The districts, in turn, were to be divided into subordinate zone commands, District I having the five already under consideration, while District II would be assigned four—Italy, Greece and the Balkan nations, North Africa, and the Middle East. There would be an overall headquarters establishment and a subordinate headquarters for each of the two districts. Tentative troop assignment tables allocated 15 GR companies to District I and 9 to District II. Assuming that this superior area command would be self-contained, the tables of organization included additional units for logistical support, namely 9 QM Truck Companies, 2 Depot Supply companies and 2 Ordnance companies. District I would be composed of 74 units totaling 3,983 military personnel; District II would consist of 50 units, with a total military personnel of 2,629. The proposed aggregate would be 6,111 officers and enlisted men.⁴⁰

Looking forward for the moment, the organizational structure proposed on 27 July was expanded during September, increasing the tentative aggregate military strength from 6,111 to 6,971.⁴¹ The revision was prompted largely by advices from The Quartermaster General that "it is contemplated that an American Graves Registration Service Area Headquarters for the European and Mediterranean theaters with five zones . . . will be established in the near future."⁴² According to the geographical scheme of division described in The Quartermaster General's communication, the European Theater area and certain parts of its contiguous territory would fall within three zones, namely, the Zone of Great Britain, the Zone of Western Europe, and the Zone of North and Central Europe. In contrast to the four zones which, according to Littlejohn's scheme, were to be assigned to District II, the Gregory plan proposed two zones for this area, one (the Zone of Southeast Europe and North Africa) including the Mediterranean Theater and contiguous Balkan countries, together with French North Africa, the other (the Zone of the Middle East) embracing all other regions of

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Ltr, Maj Gen Robert M. Littlejohn, CQM to Brig Gen George S. Egster, Deputy ACoS, G-3, USFET (Main), 6 Sep 45, sub: Pers for GRS in European and Mediterranean Theater.

⁴² Ltr, Lt Gen Edmund B. Gregory, TQMG to Maj Gen Robert M. Littlejohn, CQM TSFET, 28 Aug. 45, sub: AGRS Area Hq to be established in near future.

Africa north of the Sahara and those parts of Asia inhabited by Turks, Syrians, Arabs, and Iranians.⁴³

From 27 July, until mid-December, when plans for combining the European and Mediterranean theater areas were abandoned, planning for the superior AGRS area command went hand in hand with efforts to extend the basis of GRSC, ET, as District I of that command. General Littlejohn, it should be noted, sought to retain the five zones proposed by Younger and tentatively approved in accordance with the territorial modifications suggested by Lieutenant General Lee, while the Office of The Quartermaster General held to the territorial arrangement set forth in its plan of 1 June (approved 9 September) and detailed in General Gregory's draft of the tentative general order intended to authorize the establishment of this so-called European-Mediterranean and Middle East Command.⁴⁴ There is nothing to indicate, however, that differences of opinion on the question of territorial subdivision actually retarded publication of GRSC GO No. 2, as prepared in draft form for the purpose of establishing the five zones and announcing the commander of each zone. At any rate, the order was never published; nor were the letters of instructions transmitted to the zone commanders. Then, while the concept of a superior area command remained a planning requirement, General Younger continued his efforts to build up the five zones until he was superseded in command by General Littlejohn on 1 October 1945.

Abortive Development of Subordinate Zone Commands

Meanwhile, the zones had a shadowy sort of existence. Their anomalous status is best illustrated by a multiple letter transmitted on 1 August to the prospective zone commanders. Noting the limited role they were obliged to support pending formal establishment of their commands, General Younger urged that "this preparatory or interim work must be done with considerable tact and diplomacy" and that it must be borne in mind "that the Section Commander and the District Commander are still responsible for graves registration activities in the area."

In other words, the prospective zone commanders were "to consider themselves as agents working out of this office and speaking for me rather than as field agents with operating responsibilities." Then, observing that the organization for graves registration within

⁴³ (1) *Ibid.* (2) Current Plan for Return of American Dead, 8 Sep 45, Exhibit "E."

⁴⁴ IRS, Col A. N. Stubblebine, CofS, TGRC [GRSC], to all Div Chiefs, 11 Dec 45, sub: Consolidation of USFET and MTOUSA. IRS states in part: "General Lee informs me that . . . decision has been made that USFET and MTOUSA would not be combined."

the sections was weak and that "only mediocre results are being obtained currently," he suggested that "advice and tactful suggestions might be helpful in resolving certain difficulties."⁴⁵

In the absence of formal orders authorizing activation of these commands, an organization unofficially known as the Germany Zone became operational early in August. It appears that Col. John D. Edmunds, commanding officer designate, entered into an agreement with the Quartermaster, Seventh Army, that enabled Zone Headquarters to assume operational responsibility for all Seventh Army graves registration units.⁴⁶ Thereupon, a directive entitled "Operation Plan for Germany Zone" and dated 8 August 1945, emanated from main headquarters.

After defining the mission of Germany Zone and sketching a comprehensive program, the principal features of which were completion of the removal of all American dead from German soil, intensification of casualty investigations in clearing unresolved AG casualty reports, and conducting special case investigations as directed, this plan called for the assignment of a specified number of field and supervisory units, viz:

1. QM Group (This force will set up and operate Germany Zone Headquarters);
2. QM Battalions (One battalion to set up and operate the Headquarters of each District);
3. 5¼ Graves Registration Companies (To be assigned to zone and reassigned to Districts as needed).⁴⁷

Neither the assumption of operational control over Seventh Army graves registration units nor the ambitious designs set forth in the Operations Plan of 8 August were productive of satisfactory results. The Third Army retained control over its graves registration units, while a faulty distribution of the units of both armies presented difficulties that the zone commander was powerless to correct. Then circumstances beyond the control of GRSC delayed the assignment of promised units. Colonel Edmunds discussed his troubles in a series of personal letters to General Younger. Written with a frankness of expression seldom encountered in official communications, these letters appear to have been prompted by a long-standing friendship between the two officers. On 1 September, Colonel Edmunds offered the following observation:

⁴⁵ Ltr, Younger to COs of Zones, 1 Aug 45, sub: Responsibilities of Commanding Officers Pending Establishment of Zones.

⁴⁶ Personal Ltr, Col John D. Edmunds, CO, German Zone to Brig Gen James W. Younger, Dir Gen, U. S. TGRS, 4 Sep 45, no sub.

⁴⁷ Ltr, Hq GRSC to Hq Germany Zone, 8 Oct 45, sub: Operation Plan for Germany Zone.

As I see it the problem is clearly defined and is susceptible to a simple solution. However, weather conditions being encountered before many days pass will undoubtedly bring further complications. You are, I am sure, aware of my desire to initiate action here in the Germany Zone at the earliest possible moment. Each day, when I look out of the window around here and note the leaves changing color, tends to spur this interest.⁴⁸

The zone commander's troubles were not restricted to want of effective co-operation. In the same communication he complained that "your office is, probably unknowingly, getting into a system of centralized control similar to that with which we were damned in ADSEC." At the same time, he was in complete accord with the General in matters arising from a relationship with district commanders that appears to have been somewhat lacking in cordiality. Furthermore, his enthusiasm for the diplomatic role so earnestly urged by General Younger had been dampened by a response to his efforts that failed to impress him as either sympathetic or appreciative. He wrote:

Of course, suggestion has been made where conditions were such as to indicate such action necessary. As is generally the case, such suggestions have not been productive of any real adjustment in such matters. I hope that troops, personnel and the authorization necessary to proceed with this job will be released to us in the immediate future so that we can really go to work in a manner which will insure accomplishment of this task at the earliest possible time.⁴⁹

The zone commander's views on the problem of depleted units and inefficient personnel were expanded in a later communication.

A review of the personnel in graves registration units indicates that many personnel are now over what can be construed as the critical score which of course brings the problem to mind as to what personnel will be available for the completion of this most important phase of activities. . . . If inexperienced personnel must be used it is my recommendation that units concerned be filled with such personnel at the earliest possible time in order that a training program may be instituted without delay for the purpose of qualifying personnel to carry out the job on the basis of the small individual groups which will be necessary in an area search.⁵⁰

Accompanying the development of a territorial command in Germany, the Western Zone appears to have attained a semi-official

⁴⁸ Personal Ltr. Edmunds to Younger, 1 Sep 45, no sub.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Same to same, 2 Sep 45, no sub.

status. As already related, the 531st Quartermaster Group had been assembled at Brussels to serve as the headquarters establishment of this command. On 31 August, Lt. Col. James G. Gee, Commanding, presented a staff study addressed to the problem of determining a general plan for "the operation of the Western Zone Headquarters in the consolidation, closing out, and beautification of cemeteries under the command of that headquarters."

However valuable for future reference purposes, the analyses of problems that could not be given a practical solution until AGRC paper organizations acquired the troop strength essential to an effective pursuit of its mission had the immediate effect of deepening a sense of frustration among men who were disposed to accept their appointed task with any sense of dedication. During the approach of autumn, planning for operations which should have been initiated in the summer months was hardly conducive to a high state of morale. Although 15 out of the 22^{3/4} Graves Registration Service companies allotted to the European Theater and assigned to the armies had been retained or "frozen" in the theater (seven were earmarked for Operation OLYMPIC and subsequently disbanded), the redeployment of men having sufficient points to claim their discharge could not be denied. Then, in the absence of an approved troop basis, there was no way of automatically filling the depleted strength of these "frozen" units with replacements from the Zone of Interior. Thus the problem of personnel which could only be solved at the highest levels of authority in Washington and at Frankfurt had the effect of reducing to a flimsy makeshift every organizational measure entertained by GRSC.

Whatever the complications imposed by delay in the determination of overall policies for facilitating the establishment of AGRS overseas commands, another series of changes in the European Theater structure created a situation which tended to delay rather than encourage such matters as final approval of a firm troop basis and the buildup of major subordinate commands. Furthermore, publication of a theater letter of instructions defining the position and responsibilities of the commanding general faltered. Although Younger's draft of his so-called "Theater Enabling Act" was approved by G-3 and G-4 at Headquarters, USFET, during July, the instrument did not emerge as a theater directive until 26 November.⁵¹ The delay may have been deliberate.

Issuance of USFET General Order No. 179 on 2 August 1945 announced a fundamental change in organization of the technical services. Six theater service commands, including the United

⁵¹ Memo Rpt, Younger to Littlejohn, 13 Jul 45.

States Theater Graves Registration Service (USTGRS), were set up under the Commanding General, TSFET, with a Director General in immediate command of each service. Technical command of USTGRS was vested in the Chief Quartermaster. Director General Younger, USTGRS, became a member of the Chief Quartermaster's staff. Technical command included the right "to direct activities of and to transfer or reassign personnel from one area to another for the performance of their duties." Paragraph 7 of the order specified that major functions and responsibilities of each of the six theater services "will be outlined in the forthcoming U. S. Theater Organization Plan," and that standard operating procedures "will be formulated by the chiefs of services concerned and after review by Headquarters, United States Forces." Approved 17 September 1945, SOP No. 70, USTGRS, served temporarily as a theater letter of instructions.

During the reorganization of the theater services, Younger made some progress in developing the third and fourth phases of his four-point program. By the end of September the "codification of all outstanding technical instructions" produced six technical operating bulletins which prescribed detailed procedures under the following titles:⁵²

- (1) Operation of Temporary Cemeteries.
- (2) Care of Current Deceased.
- (3) Concentration of U. S. Dead in Temporary Cemeteries.
- (4) Area Searching and Evacuation of Isolated Remains.
- (5) Preparation of GR Forms.
- (6) Techniques of Identification.

While progress on the technical bulletins continued, General Younger completed arrangements with Personnel Division, OCQM, for the publication of troop assignment orders which would authorize the transfer of several QM groups and battalions together with the 15 GR companies that had been frozen in the theater. Two such orders, Nos. 17 and 18, were published consecutively on 24 and 28 August.

Troop Assignment Order No. 17 assigned to Headquarters, GRSC three QM Group Headquarters and Headquarters Detachments (TOE 10-22)—the 1st, 531st and 551st—together with four QM Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Detachments (TOE 10-55)—the 60th, 537th, 538th and 560th. The effective date of this order, 1 August 1945, would indicate that some of these units had already been attached to USTGRS and that the order merely confirmed a provisional state of affairs. The 1st Group had been

⁵² Hist, AGRC, V, App. No. 152, Listing of TOBs, 8 May-30 Sep 45.

"made available" to Younger's Interim Commission during June, while the 531st Group was assigned to his command early in July.⁵³

Troop Assignment Order No. 18, 28 August 1945, enumerated 15¾ Quartermaster Graves Registration Companies (TOE 10-297). Like its predecessor of 24 August, this order appears to have partly confirmed a provisional state of affairs that had existed for some time.

Assuming that all units in troop assignment orders Nos. 17 and 18 were at full strength on the date of transfer, the command would have mustered approximately 2,000 effectives, exclusive of non-TO personnel at main headquarters. As a matter of fact, the effective strength of these units averaged not more than half their authorized strength.⁵⁴ Then three additional troop assignment orders—Nos. 20, 32 and 37 of 6 October, 18 October and 8 November, increased the paper strength to 3,439.⁵⁵ Due, however, to the unbalance between redeployment and replacement, effective strength fell away during the next 3 months to 1,517.⁵⁶

Inability on the part of the Chief Quartermaster to overcome an apparent reluctance at TSF Headquarters to solve the personnel problem by approving a firm troop basis put definite limitations on the growth of the command and, at the same time, prevented the discharge of its obligations in connection with casualty clearance. These circumstances impelled a wide departure from the thinking that had originally supported the organizational scheme of building up five territorial zone commands.

Revision of Organizational Concepts

As defined in the staff study of 5 June 1945, the zone commands were to conduct under general supervision of main headquarters the two types of operation which claimed equal importance in the mission of the command prior to exhumation for purposes of final disposition. One was the so-called static operation, which included all activities incidental to the maintenance, physical improvement, and beautification of temporary military cemeteries. The other was the mobile operation, or those activities which related to the

⁵³ (1) Hist, AGRC, V, 61-62. (2) WD AGO Form 016, 1 Dec 44, History Card, Hq and Hq Det, 531st QM Group indicates that this unit moved to Liège on 4 July 1945, thence to Brussels on 23 July. (3) History Card, 1st QM Group Hq and Hq Det, states: ". . . 1st QM Group is assigned to American Graves Registration Cmd, Theater Service Forces, European Theater, pursuant to Troop Asgmt Order No. 17, dated 24 August 1945. Effective 1 Aug 45."

⁵⁴ See discussion below of the actual strength of the nine GR companies assigned to First Field Headquarters upon activation of the Third Field Command on 1 Oct 45.

⁵⁵ Memo, Littlejohn to Maj Gen John B. Magruder, CofS, TSFET, 5 Dec 45, sub: Personnel Requirements for the American Graves Registration Command.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

search and recovery of isolated remains. The original scheme of organization contemplated an assignment to the zone commands of three sets of operating units, one of which was specially designed for the static operation, while the other two were trained and equipped to perform the mobile operation.⁵⁷

Where a rapid buildup of troop strength would have enabled the zone commanders to develop both phases of their mission simultaneously, inability on their part to give adequate attention to either tended to endow the mobile phase with a priority it did not originally claim. So long as the identification of graves in temporary cemeteries was retained, physical improvement and beautification of the layout could wait. But active participation of the graves registration command in the casualty clearance program was mandatory. Furthermore, every delay in launching a large-scale area search campaign diminished the chances of locating unrecorded graves and identifying the remains. This situation foreshadowed the possible necessity of utilizing a preponderance of GRSC strength in a "crash" program for area search.

Any explanation as to just why Theater Service Forces Headquarters should have waited until December to make a decision which should have been taken during August, or at the very latest in September, requires an examination of conflicting interests and confusing trends of policy related to the whole problem of military organization following the war. A cursory examination of General Littlejohn's correspondence⁵⁸ on the subject of endless staff conferences devoted exclusively to the personnel problem clearly indicates that the determination of a troop basis for any element of the occupation forces was obscured for months in a vast shuffle of events that escaped the control of statesmen at the seat of government and soldiers in the field. A decision taken today would be swept away on the morrow by the rushing ebb tide of demobilization.

By September, planning for the organization and operational role of the Graves Registration Command had reached an impasse. In theory, planners were building their field forces and assuming a greater degree of operational responsibility. Actually, the operating units were dwindling in strength and losing in the process many experienced officers and men who, given adequate provision for the

⁵⁷ These three units, as described in Staff Study, 5 June 1945, were: (1) a Cemetery Management Group, 18 men; (2) a Search Group, 5 officers and 150 enlisted men; (3) an Exhumation Group, 2 officers and 20 enlisted men.

⁵⁸ (1) Ltr, Littlejohn to Col J. C. Odell, Dep QM, 14 Aug 45, sub: *Résumé of Conferences this date at Frankfurt.* (2) Ltr, Littlejohn to Maj Gen H. R. Ray, CofS, Third Army, 17 Aug, no sub. (3) Ltr, Littlejohn to Brig Gen J. W. Younger, Col J. C. Odell *et al.*, 27 Aug 45, sub: *Non-T/O Personnel.* (4) Ltr, Col E. Busch, QM Third Army to Littlejohn, 22 Sep 45, sub: *Some Ideas on QM Organization.*

flow of replacements, might have contributed a service of inestimable value in the training of recruits.

Aware of this critical situation and hoping to find a suitable remedy, the Chief Quartermaster and several members of Theater Service Forces headquarters held another series of conferences at Frankfurt during September. A decision based on these staff talks was written into GO No. 259, Headquarters USFET, 22 September 1945, designating General Littlejohn as Commanding General, American Graves Registration Command (AGRC) in addition to his duties as Chief Quartermaster and directing that the transfer of all personnel, troop units, records and installations engaged in graves registration activities to the command be accomplished not later than 15 November 1945. No troop basis, however, was provided at this time.

General Littlejohn arrived in Paris with an announcement that his concept of graves registration organization had undergone a radical change in consequence of "having given considerable study to it during the past 30 days."⁵⁹ While awaiting distribution of GO No. 259, he communicated his views to certain staff members and directed that they be put into definite form. He stated: "I desire that you have perfected by Tuesday next at the close of business a new type of organization for AGRC in this theater."⁶⁰

Briefly, the innovations in Littlejohn's new concept consisted of two basic elements. One contemplated the formation of five brigade commands which would undertake area sweeping in the European—Mediterranean—Africa and Middle East area. General Younger, he added, was "to command the first brigade that is going into active field operations in that most important area involved in the movement of bodies from Germany."⁶¹ The other element specified a strong central organization consisting of the general commanding, his chief of staff, an executive officer and six staff divisions which would supervise affairs under the general headings of personnel, field operations, planning and organization, supply, and cemetery management.

With minor changes and amplifications, the Chief Quartermaster's directions for reorganization of Headquarters, AGRC, became effective on 1 October under Office Order No. 4, 24 September 1945. This paper provided for eight instead of six staff divisions, including a Supply and Transportation Division and a Cemetery Plant Division.

⁵⁹ CS, Littlejohn to Col H. W. Bobrink and Col A. M. Stubblebine, 23 Sep 45, sub: Organization of Command.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

In view of its dependence on the base sections for logistical support, AGRC was under no immediate compulsion to improvise a service of supply. The cemeteries, in contrast, claimed prior attention; under Col. Lyman R. Talbot, the Cemetery Plant Division drew up a program of development which called for several sector commands to act locally in a supervisory capacity under the general direction of the Cemetery Plant Division. These administrative units, it is important to note, were intended to take over the static function originally assigned to the zone commands, while the proposed brigade commands would assume responsibility for the mobile function. Generally speaking, the three brigade commands allotted to the European theater area were given territorial assignments roughly equivalent to those of the three zones specified in Littlejohn's staff study of 5 June, while the sectors, like those of the five zones subsequently proposed in place of the original three, were intended to fit into existing base sections. As will be presently seen, this arrangement was altered because the size and territorial distribution of cemeteries became the governing consideration in determining the number and areas of these sector commands.

Activation of Field and Sector Commands

General Littlejohn formally assumed command of AGRC on 1 October. Acting meanwhile under direction of the Chief Quartermaster, General Younger hastened preparations toward setting up the brigade command which was to be activated in Germany and designated the First Field Command. Responsible for graves registration operations in Germany, Poland and Czechoslovakia, Younger was to concentrate all units concerned in these operations for the express purpose of completing the removal of American dead from all military cemeteries in Germany and initiating a search and recovery program at the earliest possible date. His instructions also required that he submit by 10 October an order outlining all such activities for the period ending 31 March 1946. A detailed operations order, it was stated, would thereupon be issued by Headquarters, AGRC.⁶²

General Younger established First Field Headquarters at Fulda on 1 October and assumed command of an organization comprising 3 supervisory QM groups, 3 supporting QM battalions, 8 GR companies, together with platoon and section detachments from 4 other companies, and 3 specialized GR detachments. Four of the GR companies mustered less than 50 enlisted men. Only two had more

⁶² Ltr, Littlejohn to Younger, 27 Sep 45, sub: Establishment of Field Hq. AGRC, Fulda, Germany.

than 90 effectives. The smallest—the 607th GR Company—showed a numerical strength of 6 officers and 31 men, the largest—the 606th—had 8 officers and 99 men. Aggregate troop strength was 693—84 officers and 609 other ranks. The average GR company approximated 63 officers and other ranks.⁶³

Assignment of 8 GR companies and detachments from 4 other company units to the First Field Command made a heavy inroad on the effective troop strength of AGRC, leaving only 7 depleted company units as a reserve from which the operating forces of two additional field commands and the sector commands might be drawn.

Reinforcements brought by the three previously mentioned troop assignment orders issued during October and November—7 QM Groups, 13 QM battalions, 2 Depot Supply Companies, 1 Gas Supply Company and 7 Mess Teams—did not materially alter the situation. These reinforcements, it will be noted, consisted of supervisory units and organizations intended for logistical support of AGRC field operations. The real remedy, as will be seen in the solution given to this problem during December, called for authorization to organize a considerable number of provisional units under an approved troop basis.

Meanwhile, the activation of new commands followed the old method of setting up headquarters establishments and planning operational programs while awaiting the assignment of troop units. Issuance of GO No. 2, Headquarters, AGRC, 1 November 1945—the number reserved during 3 months for activation orders of the five zone commands—announced the establishment of five sector commands. As indicated in the accompanying table, the sectors appropriated the nomenclature applied to the formerly proposed zone commands and, like the zones, were fitted into existing base sections. Indeed, one departure brought the new arrangement into complete conformity with the TSF thesis that the assigned areas of wartime supply commands should determine those of postwar AGRC commands, despite the fact that these latter commands were to pursue a mission that had nothing to do with the supply of combat formations in war. The area formerly assigned to the Eastern Zone was now distributed between the Eastern and Western Sectors, the former falling within the Oise Intermediate Section, the latter into the Chanor Base Section. Thus the five sectors were identical in their assigned areas to the five base sections.

The Second Field Command came next in the list of new organizations. Authorized under AGRC GO No. 3, 15 November 1945, this Command consisted at the outset of only a headquarters estab-

⁶³ GO No. 1, Hq, 1st Fld Cmd, 1 Oct 45.

Sector Commands, 1 November 1945⁶⁴

<i>Designation</i>	<i>CO/CG</i>	<i>Assigned area</i>
Hq, United Kingdom Sector AGRC, London.	C. O. 516th QM Bn.	United Kingdom Base Section.
Hq, Western Sector AGRC, Liege.	C. O. 533d QM Bn.	Chanor Base Section.
Hq, Eastern Sector AGRC, Metz.	C. O. 615th QM Bn.	Oise Intermediate Section.
Hq, Central Sector	C. O. 500th QM Bn.	Seine Base Section.
Hq, Southern Sector AGRC, Marseille.	C. O. 307th QM Bn.	Delta Base Section.

lishment at Brussels, Belgium. Two months elapsed before an assignment of provisional units, and the arrival of replacements to man the units, enabled the Second Field Command to begin its transformation from a paper establishment to an operating organization.⁶⁵

At this juncture, General Littlejohn felt that the dual role he had assumed on 1 October was prejudicial to efficient performance in either sphere of action. He therefore requested that he be relieved of his duties as Chief Quartermaster "in order that I may devote my full time to solving Graves Registration problems."⁶⁶ His request was fulfilled in the issuance of USFET GO No. 314, 24 November 1945, which redesignated AGRC as the Theater Graves Registration Service (TGRS) and announced Maj. Gen. Robert M. Littlejohn as Commanding General. Col. J. C. Odell, QMC, was nominated "Acting Chief Quartermaster, vice Littlejohn, relieved effective 24 November 1945."

Giving undivided attention to completion of the organizational structure of TGRS on paper, and pressing theater headquarters for a realistic solution of the manpower problem, General Littlejohn brought his task toward completion by 29 December 1945, when issuance of War Department GO No. 125 authorized the establishment of AGRS overseas area and separate zone commands.

⁶⁴ GO No. 2, Hq AGRC, 1 Nov 45. This order confirmed the establishment of First Field Hq., Germany and added 1st Fld Cmd to the table shown above.

⁶⁵ It is reported that "on 31 December 1945, the Second Field Headquarters Command had a total strength of twenty-four (24) officers, no enlisted men and eighteen (18) War Department civilians." Hist, AGRC-EA, Vol. V, Operations (Old Series), p. 324.

⁶⁶ Ltr, Littlejohn to Maj Gen Carter B. Magruder, CofS, TSFET, 5 Dec 45, sub: Pers Rqmts AGRC ET. While bearing on his request to be relieved as CQMG, this letter was written some two weeks following issuance of the date of his release.

Meanwhile, dissatisfaction with the arrangement which had arbitrarily fitted the five sector commands into boundaries of the five base sections suggested a revision of territorial assignments to the sectors by creating an additional sector and revising the assigned areas in such manner as to equalize the task of each command. In so doing, the sector boundaries were redrawn to include thick clusters of cemeteries in small sector areas and to assign a smaller number of widely dispersed cemeteries to sectors of greater territorial extent. In complete disregard of existing base section boundaries the following sector commands were formally established under TGRS GO No. 5, 4 December 1945:

Sector Commands, 4 December 1945

<i>Designation</i>	<i>Number of cemeteries</i>	<i>Assigned area</i>
Sector I . . .	3	British Islands, Channel Islands, Norway, Finland, and Sweden.
Sector II . . .	8	The Netherlands, Belgium, and Luxembourg.
Sector III . . .	9	Including 13 Departments of E. France.
Sector IV . . .	4	Including 43 Departments of S. France.
Sector V . . .	8	Including 10 Departments of W. Central France.
Sector VI . . .	5	Including 20 Departments of Central France.

Three days later, authorization for the establishment of the "Third Mobile Field Headquarters, Southern France, Eastern France, and Switzerland" was announced in TGRS GO No. 6, 7 December 1945. Generally known as the Third Field Command, this organization was designed to sweep the path of the Seventh Army in its advance up the Rhone River basin and across southern Germany into Austria and Czechoslovakia.

Organization of Logistical Services

Study of problems relating to supply and transportation went hand in hand with planning for the buildup of field and sector commands. Like many other problems encountered prior to issuance of the theater letter of administrative instructions (26 November) and the determination of a definite troop basis (5 December), any policy regarding the logistical support of an organization that existed for the most part only on paper necessarily remained in the realm of speculation. While the small number of operating units assigned to the command between August and November were authorized to requisition common items from the nearest base section installation, the availability of supply facilities provided only a temporary solution. General Younger presented

this aspect of the problem at the conference of base section and AGRC⁶⁷ staff officers on 17 July.

As communications zone closes out we can then no longer depend upon the agencies of the services upon which we can call at the present time to accomplish part of our mission, and which we will continue to call upon so long as they exist. For example, personnel, procurement, supply communications, transportation and all those things; at present there is an agency in existence which can furnish us with those things, but as they go out of the picture it behooves us to ultimately handle supply matters ourselves. We will have to establish port facilities, worry about our own communications, handle millions of dollars in money and employ a great many people, both American and local. We must establish our own transportation setup. We must establish an agency to do that which the theater is now doing.⁶⁸

In view of existing conditions and impending changes in the theater structure, Younger recommended the immediate activation of a supply division in AGRC headquarters and the preparation of a supply study which, he thought, should examine the following considerations: (1) the allocation under existing conditions of supply responsibilities to designated agencies which would prepare estimates and submit requisitions through prescribed channels; (2) the determination of separate procedures for the storage and distribution of technical supplies, such as burial boxes, crosses, mortuary equipment, and other items peculiar to graves registration activities; (3) the determination of requirements under conditions of independent operations at such time as the supply agencies and facilities will no longer be available to AGRC.⁶⁹

In the matter of long-range requirements General Younger took steps during September "looking to immediate establishment of a theater Graves Registration Base on Isle de St. Germain," in Paris.⁷⁰

Upon assuming command of AGRC on 1 October 1945, General Littlejohn gave effect to the various measures proposed by Younger. Office Order No. 4, 28 September 1945, designated Col. L. W. Potter as Chief, Supply and Transportation Division. Composed

⁶⁷ Due to four changes of designation—GRSC, USTGRS, AGRC and TGRS while the supply problem was under consideration, the name assigned by GO No. 259, 22 Sep 46 and subsequently adopted with War Department sanction as the permanent designation of the command will henceforth be employed in the text.

⁶⁸ Minutes of Meeting of Graves Registration Base Section Representatives held at Headquarters, Graves Registration Service Command, at 1000 hours on 17 Jul 45, p. 2.

⁶⁹ (1) Memo, Younger for Chiefs of Division, GRSC, 31 Jul 45, sub: Organization of GRS. (2) Hist, AGRC-EA, Vol. IV, Supply, Transportation and Communications, 8 May 45-30 Jun 47 (Old Series), pp. 162-63.

⁷⁰ Ltr, Younger to CG, Seine Section, 18 Sep 45, sub: Establishment of Base Headquarters, GRSC, on the Isle de St. Germain.

of three branch elements—the Procurement Branch, the Storage and Distribution Branch and the Transportation Branch, the new division undertook a study of the supply problem and directed under immediate supervision of Lieutenant Colonel Beny Rosaler the development of the proposed depot at Isle St. Germain.⁷¹

As originally established under command of Col. Crosby N. Elliott, this depot was intended for the stocking of technical graves registration items, together with all classes of Quartermaster supplies and limited quantities of medical, ordnance, engineer, and Signal Corps supplies, “all of which,” according to findings of the supply study, “were necessary for proper support of organizations and units, both static and mobile, operating at a time when other depot installations of the base sections would close out and no longer be available to support the command.”⁷² Due to the limited storage space at Isle St. Germain, a subdepot was opened at Folembray, a point some 50 miles from Paris.⁷³

The problem of stocking supplies against future AGRC requirements had been given studied attention both in Washington and at Paris and Frankfurt. Upon recommendation of The Quartermaster General, the War Department approved a policy of reserving from surplus theater stocks such supplies, equipment, and motor transportation, over and above requirements of the occupation forces, as would be useful in carrying out the World War II Dead Program.⁷⁴ Since the total volume of items to be claimed from surplus stocks would, in any given theater, depend upon a fairly accurate estimate of the time element involved in the final disposition of remains, it is significant that the OQMG allowed a period of 2 years for completion of the operation in Europe. General Littlejohn insisted on a 5-year period and shaped his storage policy accordingly.⁷⁵

Issuance on 26 November of the long-awaited theater letter of administrative instructions gave official force to supply procedures that had heretofore enjoyed only the sanction of customary usage. As a matter of fact, this document conferred for the first time formal recognition on the graves registration establishment as a separate command on the theater level. Briefly, the theater directive required that common items of supply for personnel and units assigned or attached to AGRC be supplied through normal channels and, furthermore, provided that supplies peculiar to this service, such as burial boxes, mortuary supplies and equipment, would be

⁷¹ Hist, AGRC, IV, pp. 163-64, 169.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ Personal Ltr, Brig Gen H. W. Beyette, Chief, Mem Div to Littlejohn, 13 Oct 45, no sub.

⁷⁵ Personal Ltr, Littlejohn to Col J. C. Odell, Actg CQM, 28 Nov 45, no sub.

requisitioned from the AGRC Base Depot, Isle de St. Germain, in accordance with the policies and allowances prescribed by the Commanding General, AGRC.⁷⁶

Meanwhile, the Transportation Branch prepared an estimate of motor transportation and equipment requirements. Listing 21 types of motor vehicles ranging from 72 passenger sedans to 9 motor-driven road scrapers, the bulk of itemized vehicles included the following: 528 trucks, ¼-ton; 456 weapons carriers, ¾-ton; 460 cargo trucks, 2¼-ton; 396 trailers, ¼-ton; 565 trailers, 2-ton; 65 tank trucks, 750-gallon capacity.⁷⁷

The final step in the planning phase of a supply organization for the interim period of dependence on base section facilities was taken with the issuance of AGRC GO No. 3, 5 January 1946, Establishment of Sectors, American Graves Registration Command. According to Paragraph 3 (f), the various sector headquarters were to assume responsibility for the logistical support of all elements of the command operating within their respective areas of jurisdiction. Thus Sector II would become responsible for local stocking and the distribution of both common and technical items to its own forces engaged in cemetery maintenance and beautification, as well as to units of the Second Field Command conducting search operations within the sector's territorial jurisdiction.

In the absence of such assistance from any sector establishment in Germany, the First Field Command improvised a supply service which observers likened to that of an infantry regiment. A description of this service is given in connection with the narration of First Field Command operations.⁷⁸

Perhaps the most baffling problem encountered by AGRC headquarters during its planning activities of 1945 was the one concerned with development of an instructional program for field units. In the first place, the assignment of such units was delayed until late in August. Then the rapid turnover of personnel precluded the possibility of initiating any useful system of training. Furthermore, the inroads of redeployment on experienced technicians, together with delay in providing for an automatic plan of replacements, diminished in number the type of persons best qualified to serve as instructors and at the same time withheld those who would be in need of instruction. Meanwhile, the gap between knowledge and ignorance widened in the depleted units. Reporting the situation at TSF Headquarters on 27 December, Brig. Gen. John B.

⁷⁶ Ltr, Hq, USFET, AG 322 GDS-AGO, 26 Nov 45, sub: Mission and Responsibilities of the Theater Graves Registration Command.

⁷⁷ Chart, Transp Br, Sup Div, AGRC, Estimated Motor Transportation and Equipment Requirements.

⁷⁸ See above.

Franks stated that there were currently no trained personnel. Ninety percent of the Occupation Troop Basis (OTB) units, he estimated, would be made up of recruits.⁷⁹ He declared that—

The liquidation force units will be filled primarily from the line; they will be unskilled and unfamiliar with our work. We plan on having a small school in the Isle of St. Germain to train a limited number of officers and enlisted men. These in turn will go back to the Field Headquarters and Sectors where like schools will be maintained. If we secure all our recruits for the OTB by the end of January it will be at least two or three months before all of the officers and men will be capable of performing their duties in the field successfully.⁸⁰

The planned system briefly described by General Franks included four types of schools. Regarded as the nucleus of the system, the American Graves Registration Command School, Isle St. Germain, had as its primary objective the “instruction of instructors and . . . the training of various specialists either as instructors or as technicians.”⁸¹

With classroom accommodations for 60 students, the Command School offered a Basic Field of Operations course (7 days), two operational courses—Sweeping and Evacuation (14 days) and Development of Temporary Cemeteries (6 days)—together with four specialist courses—Identification (7 days), Records and Reports (6 days), Area Searching (6 days) Cemetery Maintenance, Operation and Supply (6 days).⁸² The Versailles Branch School was to have a maximum capacity of 30 students and would be concerned primarily with the orientation of incoming students.

The Field Headquarters schools would, according to plan, be located by the commanders in their respective areas, three being allotted to the First Field Command and one each to the Second and Third Field Commands. Like the Command School at Isle de St. Germain, these schools were to concentrate on the training aspects of instructors and specialists.⁸³

The Group Training schools completed the system. Included to provide on-the-job training for all personnel, the schools of this

⁷⁹ As explained in the following section of this chapter, “OTB” (Occupation Troop Basis) units comprised approximately 35 percent of the troop basis assigned on 6 December to AGRC, while the “liquidation force” units which were to be disbanded on or before 1 Jul 46, comprised the remainder.

⁸⁰ Brig Gen J. B. Franks, CofS, AGRC, in Presentation of Plans and Problems of the American Graves Registration Command to C/S of TSFET and Chiefs of his General Staff, Thursday, 27 Dec 45, 1500 hours.

⁸¹ Technical Operating Bulletin No. 12, 9 Jan 46, p. 2.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 8, Annexes B-H.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

category were not to exceed 30 in number and were to be divided into—

- (a) Group Training Schools, Mobile, in Field Areas.
- (b) Group Training Schools, Static, in Sector Areas.⁸⁴

Anticipating the turmoil that would attend strenuous efforts to hasten the organization of field and sector operating units, AGRC Headquarters urged that, while operational requirements frequently make the release of the best qualified personnel inconvenient from the commander's viewpoint, "every effort be made to obtain the best instructor material at the schools and that the maximum capacity of each school be used for the development of instructors." It was further insisted that—

The efficiency of these instructors will determine the standard of proficiency of the American Graves Registration Command. Similarly, specialists must be released from operations to assure the necessary standardization and coordination of technical procedures.⁸⁵

Determination of AGRC Troop Basis

As described in a subsequent chapter, the transformation of the Third Field Command from the paper establishment announced on 7 December to an operating organization appears to have been somewhat of a spectacular performance when compared to the time involved in putting the Second Field Command on an operational basis. But the achievements of both commands in this regard should be viewed, not from their respective dates of activation but rather from the day on which Theater Service Forces headquarters finally determined a firm troop basis for the graves registration command. Taken on 5–6 December, this determination provided the means for a flow of replacements to fill the depleted ranks of previously assigned units and, in addition, to man a specified number of provisional units that, in the opinion of General Littlejohn, must be added to his command if 6 months of talk about objectives was to be translated into action.⁸⁶

Aware during the whole process of pyramiding his paper organization that the scheme was meaningless without an adequate allot-

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁸⁶ This and related decisions concerning TGRS personnel allotments emerged from TSF staff conferences of 5–6 Dec 45 and appear in statements for the record prepared by the CofS, TSF. Dates excepted, both statements bear the same title—DRAFT Dictated by General Magruder at Staff Conference . . . (Present: G-1, G-3 and General Littlejohn). Hereinafter these documents will be cited as Draft, TSF Conf, 5 Dec 45, etc.

ment of manpower, General Littlejohn prepared a detailed analysis of the personnel problem. Five exhibits illustrated in tabular form the step-by-step presentation of textual argument. Appearing on 5 December at a prearranged staff conference, he presented the paper to Maj. Gen. Carter B. Magruder, Chief of Staff, TSF ET. After pointing out that his plan was prompted largely by the urgent necessity of initiating search and recovery operations throughout a geographical region roughly equivalent to the area of the United States west of the Mississippi River,⁸⁷ he further observed that—

. . . personnel has not yet been made available to carry out this mission at the same time the deadline dates for completion of the Casualty Clearance Plan and sweeping operations have been advanced. Furthermore, it is certain that as soon as Congress determines the policy on repatriation there will be an instant demand that the repatriation start immediately and continue to the maximum extent of the transportation available.⁸⁸

This emergency, he submitted, justified the overall personnel allotment of 6,915 itemized in Exhibit "A." The overall allotment, he continued, should include the allocation of 2,500 which the War Department and theater headquarters seemed disposed to grant AGRC as an item of the permanent Occupation Troop Basis (OTB) for USFET. The problem, then, involved the merging of units already assigned with the list of OTB units set forth in Exhibit "B" and reserving the difference between OTB strength (2,500) and the overall allotment (6,915), or 4,415 for the organization of provisional units. These units were to be assigned to AGRC with the understanding that they would be disbanded on or before 1 July 1946. According to current expectations, search and recovery of isolated remains would have been completed at that date and the hard core of OTB personnel, with the assistance of civilian technicians procured in the United States and locally recruited labor forces, would complete the program.

The integration of currently assigned units in the OTB force presented a special problem. While an excess of certain units in the former category could be absorbed in the overall allotment, a

⁸⁷ Littlejohn put his estimate of the search area at 1,600,000 square miles, "equivalent to a territory greater than half continental United States." Memo, Littlejohn for Maj Gen Carter B. Magruder, CofS, TSFET, 5 Dec 45, sub: Personnel Requirements for the American Graves Registration Service.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.* It will be noted that Littlejohn employs the designation given his command in GO No. 259, Hq USFET, 22 Sep 45. His plea that the term "command" be substituted for "service" in the wording of WD GO No. 125, 29 Dec 45, which authorized establishment of AGRS area and separate zone commands was approved by the War Department, with the result that the designation of 22 Sep 45 was restored while all other overseas AGRS major commands were officially designated as services.

large discrepancy between currently assigned and listed OTB units should, he thought, be compensated by the formal activation of additional units on a permanent basis.⁸⁹

With these conditioning factors in mind General Littlejohn offered the following recommendations:

1. That the OTB basis of 2,500 set forth in Exhibit "B" be immediately approved and that the units required to complete the list be immediately activated and assigned to AGRC.

2. That recruits or re-enlisted men to the number of 2,500 be immediately assigned to AGRC to bring the listed OTB units to full strength and to permit the training of recruits prior to departure of high point technicians.

3. That the overall troop basis of 6,915 set forth in Exhibit "A" be immediately approved and that units not yet assigned to AGRC be immediately assigned.

4. That currently assigned units in excess of those included in the permanent troop basis be immediately brought to full strength and made available for service at least until 1 July 1946.

5. That assignment orders and other matters pertaining to AGRC personnel be kept separate from the Quartermaster Service, European Theater.⁹⁰

The readiness with which General Magruder and his staff colleagues assented on 5-6 December to the substance of Littlejohn's recommendations would indicate that either a convincing presentation had overcome the inertia that had hitherto obstructed action, or that an accumulation of circumstances which no one in authority could longer ignore pressed for immediate action. The latter supposition would suggest that everyone realized that the problem of getting AGRC on its feet amounted to nothing less than a crash program.

General Magruder agreed without demur to the overall troop basis of 6,915 and the OTB troop basis of 2,500. Furthermore, he gave assurance that "the overall troop basis . . . will be approved for activation as provisional units with a view toward their inactivation on or before 1 July 1946."⁹¹ The Chief of Staff was unable, how-

⁸⁹ For these surplus and deficient units, see Littlejohn to Magruder, 5 Dec 45, *Ibid.*, Exhibit "E."

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* Actually, Littlejohn offered six recommendations, the fifth in his list referring to several currently assigned units in excess of the OTB basis. He proposed an arrangement whereby these units, while assigned to the overall allotment, should, like other OTB units, be brought to full strength at once and retained under OTB after 1 Jul 46. Like every good organizer, Littlejohn was reluctant to relinquish anything in his possession; he defended his position with a plausible bookkeeping quibble. Magruder, a meticulous administrator, while not rejecting Littlejohn's contention, replied with a quibble of equal subtlety.

⁹¹ Draft, TSF Conf, 5 Dec 45.

ever, to make a definite commitment in regard to the immediate assignment of 2,500 recruits, as requested by Littlejohn, for building up to full strength his listed OTB units. Magruder offered the following explanation:

Upon assumption . . . that we will receive during December one-half of our requirements for recruits, then not less than 1,250 from these recruits . . . will be assigned to the Graves Registration Command as soon as their basic training is complete. We will provide . . . an estimate of when the first 1,250 will actually be delivered, and a second estimate of when the remaining 1,250 will be delivered.⁹²

Meeting again on 6 December, the conferees examined the problem of activating new units in reference to the probable supply of recruits. In this connection, General Magruder applied the term "liquidation force" to all elements other than OTB units within the overall troop basis. This term was later translated into the convenient designation Liquidation Troop Basis (LTB). It was agreed that the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, would seek authority for the immediate activation as provisional units of all LTB units, and would take the necessary steps to activate as provisional units under standard tables of organization all listed OTB units. Furthermore, G-3 would "request authority for the formal activation of these units, but the actual formation of the units will not be delayed awaiting approval for their activation as permanent units."⁹³

With an insufficient flow of replacements to permit a rapid build-up of OTB units, the manning of LTB units presented another problem. Solutions discussed on 6 December tend to confirm the supposition that the conferees were indeed discussing a crash program. General Magruder suggested the possibility of assigning an infantry regiment "as a temporary expedient until the liquidation force portion of the Graves Registration Service can be organized." Failing the availability of an infantry regiment, he considered the possibility of assigning "any organized and trained military units that are capable of field operations up to approximately 3,000 to serve the same purpose for which the infantry regiment was intended."⁹⁴

Meanwhile, the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, was to do his best in seeking the assignment of 198 officers and a sufficient number of enlisted men to attain the total liquidation force quota. This personnel, it was stated, will be sought for immediate assignment "regardless of the availability of an infantry regiment or other field

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ Draft, TSF Conf, 7 Dec 45.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

units, which are a temporary expedient pending the organization of the units of the Graves Registration Service."⁹⁵

Organization of Assigned Units

Acting in accordance with verbal instructions from TSF headquarters, General Littlejohn pushed the program of organizing new units authorized under the OTB and LTB bases as rapidly as the flow of recruits permitted. By 27 December, G-1, TSF, had furnished some 3,000 replacements from the line to fill the LTB allotment of 4,415. "This personnel," stated Lt. Col. E. M. Tolliver, Chief of Personnel, AGRC, "began reporting to our various commands several days ago and by now all but a few are on hand."⁹⁶

Meanwhile, unforeseen obstacles impeded the organization of OTB units; the War Department not only refused to permit the activation of these units on a permanent basis, but prohibited the assignment of replacements from the line to man these units. In other words, all military forces assigned to AGRC were to be organized as provisional units. Skeptical as to the benefits of concessions which would permit AGRC "to draw equipment against their T/E's and by certain bookkeeping manipulations, promotion of personnel," Colonel Tolliver complained that:

This makeshift arrangement of utilizing provisional units involves many administrative difficulties. We find it difficult to become enthusiastic over such an arrangement, especially since we understand that this is to be the permanent situation. We hope that you [General Magruder] will find it desirable to revise the overall Occupational Troop Basis in such a manner as to include our personnel requirements as permanent type units. In the meantime our immediate problem is to get our Occupational Troop Basis units organized and operating. We need activation orders. We need authority for grades and ratings to permit proper organization. We need our approved allocation of 2,200 replacements from the U. S. as quickly as possible.⁹⁷

Whether urged by Colonel Tolliver's complaint or impelled by the logic of the situation, TSF secured clearance from Theater Headquarters for issuance by Headquarters, AGRC of GO Nos. 4 and 5, dated 7 and 11 January 1946, respectively. Promulgated under authority of TSF Organization Order No. 160, dated 29 December 1945, GO No. 4, Liquidation Troop Basis—American Graves Regis-

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Tolliver, Presentation of Manpower Program, in Presentation of the Plans and Problems of the American Graves Registration Command to CofS, TSFET and chiefs of his General Staff, Thursday, 27 Dec 45, 1500 hours. Hereinafter cited as TSF Conf Notes, 27 Dec 45.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

tration Command, assigned to five of the six major AGRC subordinate commands the list of LTB units itemized in Exhibit "E,"⁹⁸ with instructions to the designated commands to organize all such assigned units. GO No. 5, Occupational Troop Basis—American Graves Registration Command, authorized under messageform, Headquarters, TSFET, dated 29 December 1945 and TWX No. 2, Headquarters, TSFET, dated 9 January 1946, the organization of listed OTB units "as provisional troop units." The organization of these units was to be accomplished by the six major subordinate commands to which they were assigned. The commands enumerated in this connection were: (1) First Field Command, (2) Second Field Command, (3) Third Field Command, (4) the 534th QM Group, acting as co-ordinating headquarters of the sectors during the process of organization, (5) the 560th QM Group (Supply), (6) the 305th QM Battalion (Training).

Including previously assigned units, GO Nos. 4 and 5 made an allocation of 21 types of provisional TO units—19 Quartermaster and 2 Ordnance—to the major subordinate commands. This allotment fell into three general classifications. First, there were four Quartermaster-type units—Groups, Battalions (with and without medical detachments) and Headquarters QM composite units—which were concerned with supervisory functions ranging from staff direction to activities similar to those performed by the "straw boss" of a small labor party. The second classification included field-operating units and consisted of 25 QM GR companies (20 LTB and 5 OTB), together with 49 QM GR detachments (GA) and 53 GR detachments (GB). The third category embraced company units and detachments identified with indirect and direct logistical support of field operating units. Four QM company units—1 Depot Supply Company, 1 Gas Supply Company, 1 Truck Company and 1 Refrigeration Company, together with several detachments numbering from 2 to 49 persons each were assigned to the 560th QM Group (Supply). The remaining detachments went to field and sector commands for direct support of operations in the field. A more graphic view of the varying numerical strength and method of distributing these ZI-type units may be obtained from inspection of the following tables, one indicating the overall distribution, the other depicting the situation of the First Field Command as typical of the other five commands.

It will be noted that the First Field Command retained its ascendancy in point of strength. With 803 units mustering 2,890 officers

⁹⁸ Exhibit "E" of Ltr, Littlejohn to Magruder, 5 Dec 45, sub: Personnel Requirements for the American Graves Registration Command, European Theater.

TABLE 4.—*Distribution of Units*

Distribution of LTB and OTB units to First Field Command

Type of unit	LTB units		OTB units		Strength of units
	No. assigned	Strength	No. assigned	Strength	
Hq/Hq, Det. QM Group			*3	105	105
Hq/Hq, Det. QM Bn (Mob) w/Med.			3	84	84
Hq/Hq, Det. QM Bn (Mob) w/o Med	4		4	80	80
QM Comp. Hq (AC)	*1	10	13	130	140
QM GR Co	†14	1,625	†2	250	1,875
QMGR Det. (GA)	26	286			286
QMGR Det. (GB)	26	156			156
QMGR Car Det. (CA)	8	72			72
QM Truck Det. (CG)			1	12	12
Ord. Maintenance Det. (DA)	1	29			29
Ord. Maintenance Det. (DB)	1	45			45
QM Mess Det. (AF)	1	6			6
Totals	82	2,229	26	661	2,890

*Assigned or attached previous to issuance of General Orders, Nos. 4 and 5, 1946.

†Of the 14 GR Companies (LTB), 5 had been previously assigned or attached. One of the 2 GR Companies (OTB) had been previously assigned. It is noted that the number of GR Companies (8) reported to have been assigned to First Field Command on 1 October 1945 falls short by one company of the number given above. It would appear that one of the company units assigned on 1 October had been reassigned elsewhere.

and enlisted personnel, it surpassed the combined manpower of the Second Field Command (1,143) and the Third Field Command (1,077). Total assigned strength of the sector commands (709), the logistical organization (946), the training command (28), together with the assignment of a QM Battalion and 412 non-TO personnel from the OTB strength to main headquarters, added to the three field commands, gave an aggregate of 7,242 (2,523 OTB—4,719 LTB). Somewhat in excess of the approved troop basis of 6,913, the discrepancy may have arisen from miscalculations of certain TOs. Nevertheless, the assigned troop basis of First Field Command was slightly more than one-third of the overall troop strength.

As indicated by Colonel Tolliver, the organization of provisional units began shortly after approval of the AGRC troop basis and continued through December and January of the following year as rapidly as permitted by the flow of recruits. Publication of General Orders Nos. 4 and 5 early in January merely formalized activities already in progress.⁹⁹ Formalization of such procedures, however, did little toward mitigating various hardships imposed by the War Department's refusal to permit the organization of OTB units on a

⁹⁹ Detailed accounts of the organization accomplished by the field command are offered in the chapters narrating the operations of these commands.

permanent basis. Paragraph 17 of GO No. 5 required that "all personnel on OTB provisional troop units will be assigned to Detachment 'B' [Headquarters] American Graves Registration Command . . . and placed on 'Detached Service' to provisional units," and that "necessary orders will be published by Major Subordinate Commands to accomplish compliance with this paragraph." The "bookkeeping manipulations" governing assignment of personnel on LTB units were indeed calculated to restrain enthusiasm on the part of AGRC officers over the whole scheme of organization. Paragraph 16 of GO No. 4 stated that since no authority exists for assigning personnel to provisional units, "personnel now assigned to Major Subordinate Commands and placed on 'Detached Service' to provisional troop units . . . will be immediately reassigned by Major Subordinate Commands as indicated below."

Four artillery battalions—the 896th AAA AW Bn., the 740th AAA Gun Bn. (SM), the 277th FA Bn., 240th How., the 114th AAA Gun Bn. (SM) were designated as the units to which the reassignments were to be made. For instance, the First Field Command would reassign personnel of 5 of its 6 QM GR Companies to three of the above-named artillery formations, while the personnel of all of its QM GR detachments (GA) were to go to the 740th AAA AW Bn. (SM). Seven sub-paragraphs were devoted to the reassignment of First Field Command LTB units alone.¹⁰⁰

After completion of these bookkeeping manipulations, the personnel of "reassigned units" were considered to be on detached service to AGRC. The major subordinate commands were then authorized "to relieve personnel from 'Detached Service' to one provisional troop unit and place them on 'Detached Service' to another troop unit."¹⁰¹

By February 1946, when the Second and Third Field Commands began large-scale sweeping operations in their respective areas (the First Field Command initiated its first sweep in November 1945), the organization of AGRC may be regarded as having attained a degree of stability that assured firm administrative and operational control. Such stability, however, was only relative at any given time to the long-range mission of the command. Organization of the LTB force was in itself a temporary expedient and intended primarily to bring the search and recovery phase to completion by midyear of 1946. Then the shift of emphasis toward exhumation and shipment of remains to the homeland, or reinterment in permanent overseas cemeteries, foreshadowed an extensive reorganization. Three or more zone commands, it was thought, would replace the Second and

¹⁰⁰ See paragraph 16, GO No. 4, AGRC, 7 Jan 46.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, paragraph 17.

Third Field Commands and move in over the sectors to initiate planning for supervision of operations incidental to the final disposition of remains. At the same time, a progressive close-out of the base commands would necessitate the development of a supply command capable of supporting AGRC as a self-contained organization. Finally, developments not as yet disclosed by the experience of search and recovery were to suggest the advantage of a central identification laboratory where highly trained technicians employing the most advanced scientific equipment and methods of body identification would replace the somewhat limited process heretofore employed in the field.

In the last analysis, it may be said that when General Littlejohn relinquished command of the organization he had built up during the course of 8 hectic months, he left an establishment that permitted extensive alterations without endangering its solid foundations or impairing the *esprit de corps* he had inspired by his presence.