Captain Darling will pump you thoroughly in the debriefing room.

An Overview of the (Military) Staff Officer

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AN OVERVIEW OF THE (MILITARY) STAFF OFFICER

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1.0   Introduction

"In essence, staff officers prepare armed forces for what they have to do." (Coombs, 2012, p.50).

Central to any understanding of a professional military is an awareness of the role of the staff officer in devising solutions to military problems on behalf of a nation (Coombs, 2012). Staffs have existed since ancient times, and assist senior commanders in carrying out national direction. In its most rudimentary form the staff can consist of personal assistants to a commander.

However, in modern times, staffs have become large and highly specialised organisations. The staff forms the intellectual core of any military organisation and have continually evolved since the Napoleonic Wars, when nations mobilised in order to meet the threat imposed upon Europe by the armies of post-revolutionary France. Since that time, the scope and complexity of conflict has expanded and staffs have developed to deal with all aspects of military activities, from operations to administration.

This article is divided into 10 Sections for easier reading. Section 1 provides the introduction whilst Section 2 provides a definition of a staff officer, and outlines the difference between command and staff appointments. Section 3 looks at how to become a staff officer, including the various grades and the role of a staff assistant. Section 4 outlines the role of a staff officer, including standards and the art and science of military planning. Section 5 focuses on the staff officer branches as well as some new prefixes, before discussing civil-military cooperation and providing some examples of staff officer appointments. Section 6 explains the doctrine of completed staff work, then advice on promoting and coaching it. Section 7 highlights the publications available to staff officers, as well as the concept of the electronic battle box. Section 8 provides a condensed version of the evolution of staff systems in use over the last two centuries. The penultimate section, Section 9, provides some perspectives on staff officers before moving on to Section 10 which delivers some useful documents, further reading and references.

2.0   What is a Staff Officer?

A (military) staff officer is a commissioned officer serving on the staff of a Commander, Service, or Formation or Central Headquarters (HQ).

2.1   Command Officer versus Staff Officer

In simple, broad, terms there are two main types of duties to which officers in the military can be assigned:

- **Command (Command Appointments)**: command officers are responsible for leading troops, units (e.g. Squadron/Company, Battalion or Regiment) or formations (e.g. Brigade, Division, Corps or Army) into battle; and
- **Command Support (Staff Appointments)**: staff officers assist commanders in the planning of their orders and the co-ordination of effort of multiple units and/or formations.

At the unit level (individual battalions of infantry, or regiments of cavalry, artillery, engineers, armour, etc.), HQs are generally staffed by officers of the branch that the unit belongs to, in some cases having been promoted/appointed from within the same unit. At higher levels, i.e. formation level, staff officers are specially prepared for their duties and will contain a mix of branches.

It is important to make the distinction that a staff officer is an appointment and not a rank. Further, with one exception (the Prussian staff system), it is common practice for officers to rotate between command and staff appointments.

2.2 The Three Dimensional Commander

According to Hamel (2005) successful commanders must be able to deal with situations by projecting themselves into the three domains of:

- **Time**: current, next and future dimensions.
- **Space**: deep, close and rear dimensions (similar to x, y and z axes on a graph).
- **Information**: has a multitude of dimensions.

A commander must be able to analyse issues by understanding the situation in all three domains. In the continental staff system the command support process is fragmented around the many information domains (resulting in the staff branches G1 to G6).

In recent times there has been a proliferation of staff divisions to accommodate the ever expanding information dimensions relevant to operations. This is seen by the recent addition of the G5 and G6 Branches (Section 5.0) to the traditional tactical staff framework and the creation by the American and British joint communities of an unwieldy J1 to J9 staff structure (Hamel, 2005).

It is important to note that the chief of staff (the principal staff officer) and the other branch staff officers must also, at the least, be aware of these three dimensions.

Finally, I direct the reader to a paragraph written by James S Corun (1992, p.xiii) which speaks for itself:

"Even though a great commander might provide the vision and set the army's grand strategy, all of his efforts would be for naught unless the framework of his grand vision were fleshed out by the detailed work of capable staff officers and military specialists. Great commanders and military theorists are useful only to a point. A brilliant theory is useless if the officers who have to make it a reality are mediocre."

3.0 How to Become a Staff Officer

Coombs (2012, p.4) suggests that "In order to become a member of a military staff, officers must demonstrate that they are proficient in their metier [occupation/profession]." However, some may disagree with that statement (discussed in Section 9.0, Perspectives on Staff Officers).

Officers, regardless of appointment (i.e. command or staff), must also "successfully complete rigorous programmes of studies that provide them with specific intellectual competencies." (Coombs, 2012, p.4), on courses which are delivered by institutions known as staff colleges.

Within the British system the Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC), a part of the Defence Academy of the United Kingdom (DAUK), delivers the command and staff training mandated for officers as part of their career development, and courses include:

- **Higher Command and Staff Course (HCSC)**: The aim of which is to prepare selected officers for higher command and staff appointments.

- **Advanced Command and Staff Course (ACSC) and ACSC (Reserves)**: provides command and staff training in preparation for command and staff appointments as an SO1/OF-4.
- **Intermediate Command and Staff Course (ICSC)**: Land; Land Reserve; Air; Air Reserves; Maritime; and Maritime Reserve: to prepare individuals for SO2/OF-3 Command, Charge and Staff appointments.

Further information on these and other officer career development courses can be found here: http://bootcampmilitaryfitnessinstitute.com/military-training/armed-forces-of-the-united-kingdom/uk-military-officer-career-development-programmes/

With this in mind, officer jobs are grouped in two categories:

- E-1: which is a job requiring specific arm (branch) or service (corps) skills; and
- E-2: which is open to all officers without restriction.

Since the British Army is still strongly founded on the regimental system, the focus of the early development and assignment of its junior officers is with their arms and services.

Since subunit command (i.e. Company/Squadron) is at the rank of Major (OF-3), the majority of an officer's assignments through about age 38 including the early years as a Major, are in E-1 posts. After completing subunit command and appropriate staff college courses, as outlined above, Majors and those in higher ranks will find themselves in increasingly more E-2 jobs and return to their arms and services (i.e. E-1 posts) either for:

- Commands at Unit-level (i.e. Regiment/Battalion) as Lieutenant Colonels (OF-4) and at Brigade-level as Brigadiers (OF-6); or
- Staff officer assignments, which require their specific arm or service.

Performance in E-2 posts is generally considered more important to promotion and appointment boards, particularly for Majors and higher ranks, than E-1 posts since the former reflects the all-arms nature of these posts. Officers are prepared for staff officer appointments at three distinct levels (Table 1) through attendance and completion of appropriate education culminating at a staff college which qualifies officers for SO2 posts and, lastly, promotion to Lieutenant Colonel with SO2 qualification and experience, which produces SO1 qualification.

3.1 Staff Officer Grades

There are a number of grades of staff officer within the current British staff system, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Staff Officer Grades and Rank				
Level	**Rank Title by Service**			**NATO Rank Code**
	British Army/ Royal Marines	**RAF**	**Royal Navy**	
Chief of Staff (COS), Deputy COS or Assistant COS.	Lieutenant General	Air Marshal	Vice Admiral	OF-8
	Major General	Air Vice Marshal	Rear Admiral	OF-7
	Brigadier	Air Commodore	Commodore	OF-6
	Colonel	Group Captain	Captain	OF-5
Staff Officer Grade 1 (SO1), high-level staff (above Brigade)	Lieutenant Colonel	Wing Commander	Commander	OF-4
Staff Officer Grade 2 (SO2), mid-level staff	Major	Squadron Leader	Lieutenant Commander	OF-3
Staff Officer Grade 3 (SO3), unit staff	Captain	Flight Lieutenant	Lieutenant	OF-2

Rank for the COS, DCOS and ACOS positions is dependent on the level of the formation. For example, at the Divisional level the COS will typically be a Brigadier (or Service equivalent), in contrast at the Brigade level the COS will typically be a Colonel (or Service equivalent).

The military organisations of other countries follow a broadly similar process to the one highlighted above.

3.2   Abbreviation

A staff officer's grade is usually abbreviated and followed by their functional specialisation. For example, a Major in the Royal Army Physical Training Corps with responsibility for Physical Development policy would be titled: SO2 (Physical Development) or SO2 (PD).

3.3   Staff Assistants (Other Ranks and Enlisted Personnel)

Within the various military organisations other ranks (enlisted personnel in the US vernacular) will typically play an important role in supporting staff officers. Non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and Warrant Officers (WOs) will fulfil either branch specific-functions or more general roles in what can be broadly termed 'Staff Assistant'. Just like a staff officer, the role and title of an NCO/WO will be dependent on the level of formation and its function. For example Warrant Officer Class One, Sergeant-Major Instructor in a branch specific Training and Development Team (abbreviated as WO1 (SMI) TDT).

I should take a moment to mention what a 'staff assistant' should not be? US Sergeant-Major Dennis Paxton, Deputy Programme Manager of the Training Analysis Feedback Team, acerbically informs us (Stupp, 2015, p.1) "Do not place yourself in a position where your only function is to stand at the map board and move icons. Ensure you are a master of your job and take charge!"

Document: The Staff Non-commissioned Officers' Handbook (Stupp, 2015)

4.0 The Role of a Staff Officer

"…staff officers look ahead, attempt to foresee what is to come and organize their services for the roles that they will be assigned by government. In this fashion they remove the burden of minutia from military commanders in order to allow those leaders to guide and manage their forces. The earliest iteration of the British Army staff manual from 1912 exhorted staff officers to act in concert with the wishes of their commander…" *(Coombs, 2012, p.3)*

Modern Armed Forces are highly polyvalent and mobile organisations that are involved, on the national as well as international scene, on a wide variety of operations, including armed conflicts, peace-making and peacekeeping, humanitarian relief and aid to civil authorities' missions.

These operations require important planning efforts from staff officers and include:

- Mission analysis;
- Development of courses of action (COA, including determining resources requirements);
  - COA Wargaming and Positive Risks
- Decision or COA selection; and
- Plan development.

The above activities require from staff officers a good knowledge of the doctrine, military organisations and equipment characteristics. They also necessitate familiarity with a wide variety of complex calculation formulas (found in staff officers' handbooks) used to determine logistic, supply and construction requirements.

Although certain computerised planning tools (discussed later) are utilised in modern military organisations, these tools only partly support the operational planning process. A large proportion of the planning work is done manually or with generic tools (e.g. Microsoft Office) which may be poorly adapted to the tasks to be performed. Further, the planning process requires good synchronisation between the various staff officers (both internally and externally), but sometimes information sharing is difficult and some tasks are duplicated.

4.1 Standards

The Canadian army, as articulated by Coombs (2012, p.377) in his thesis, suggests that to carry out their duties staff officers must:

- Possess a thorough knowledge of the organisation, characteristics and employment of all elements of the division or similar field formation; this includes all likely to be available to the formation.
- Possess an understanding of how a theatre of war is organised and knowledge of how the division fits into the higher echelons of organisation.
- Possess a thorough knowledge of the principles of war and be practiced in their application to the division and its elements under all conditions.
- Possess an understanding of the techniques of command and how these techniques are employed by a divisional commander and their subordinate commanders.
- Possess the knowledge of the methods and skills necessary to co-ordinate and direct the activities of the elements of the division to carry out the commander's orders in all conditions of war.
- Possess a knowledge of how to translate a GOC's (General Officer Commanding) direction on training into an effective training programme.

- Possess sufficient knowledge of the forces of friendly powers to enable them to work successfully with elements of these forces.
- Possess a good knowledge of the organisation of likely enemy forces and their methods of operation in the field insofar as these might affect the division.
- Possess a good knowledge of the physical and political aspects of the various parts of the world in which their forces may operate.

4.2   The Art and Science of Military Planning

"Military forces excel at complex problem-solving in a chaotic environment." (Martin, 2007).

Planning and organising operations are the responsibility of staff officers within a HQ. Staff officers are the brains behind any military operation. It is their job to take the commander's intent and concept of operations and to convert them into actionable plans, with assignment of responsibilities, tasks, and resources for subordinate organisations. These are then issued as orders and tracked by other operations staff officers, who help the commander control and coordinate operations.

There is a method to the madness, and military organisations the world over have developed a variety of means for group problem-solving and planning in support of field commanders, variously known as:

- The Operational Planning Process (OPP);
- Joint Operational Planning Process (JOPP);
- Military Decision Making Process (MDMP);
- The commander's estimate;
- The estimate of the situation;
- The combat estimate; and
- The Seven Question's.

Staff officers are highly trained in the art and science of planning and conducting operations, and most military organisations devote a considerable amount of time and effort in the formal training to future staff officers. This is not surprising given the high complexity of modern military operations.

"When in contact with immeasurable events it is always dangerous to have fixed opinions."
(Churchill, 2003, p.99).

The basic approach to military planning involves a sequential analysis of the situation and problem at hand. The aim, simplistically, is to:

- Identify factors affecting the outcome;
- Key deductions with their full implications;
- Likely scenarios and COA to respond to them; and
- Then a final decision by the commander on which course of action to take, along with a detailed plan for its execution.

The above is expanded in the following document: The Seven Questions (2015-04-26).

With this in mind, much of the education and training of staff officers involves making calculations so that supplies, transportation, and maintenance can be planned and stockpiles can be created. Staff officers quickly learn that most activities and tasks can be broken down into component parts and that each of these components can be quantified in various ways.

For example, there are fairly standard rates of movement by troops on foot over rough terrain, in forest, desert, or on roads and trails. These standard rates can be used to calculate speed of movement, and then integrated into a tactical battle plan. If a commander needs to lead their infantry platoon on foot through a dense wooded area, a staff officer could calculate the duration of the movement with great exactness, simply from knowing these standard rates of movement and the distance to be crossed. Conversely, it is possible to calculate distances by the time it takes and multiplying by the known rate of movement. This type of dead reckoning is used all the time by military planners to calculate expected ammunition usage, movement times, vehicle usage and consequently requirements for spare parts.

The standardised rates are consigned into 'staff tables' that then provide the basis for making calculations. No military planning can occur without these basic calculations. There are tables for speed of movement, ammunition usage, expected casualty rates, vehicle spare parts, etc. Most of these 'staff tables' are now built in to an Electronic Battle Box or database (discussed later), but they can still be found in the 'Staff Officers' Handbook,' or some variant thereof.

The point is that anything and everything that can be quantified in military processes and activities, as well as anything and everything that can be standardised, is analysed and put into a readily accessible format for planning and estimation purposes. However, this does not obviate the requirement for intuition and experience, but it certainly helps in overcoming the lack of detailed and specific information needed to create effective plans, especially their support aspects.

> *"Men, horses, and machines all need to be fuelled, rested, possibly repaired, and mileage is mileage. The defence planner needs to beware of apparent comforting certainties which, though undoubtedly true in themselves, are necessarily flawed if they are expected to explain more than they are able. Bread, fodder, and oil all have calculable meaning for practicable military action. But, human will (morale), and skill (strategic, operational, and tactical), vary widely."* (Gray, 2014, p.35).

Ibanga Ipke, writing in the Journal of Cognition and Neuroethics, discusses reasoning and the military decision making process from both the commander's and staff officer's perspective: Reasoning & the Military Decision Making Process (Ikpe, 2014).

5.0   Staff Officer Branches

Most NATO countries have adopted the continental staff system (also known as the general staff system) in structuring their militaries' staff functions. In this system, which is based on one originally employed by the French Army in the 1800s, each staff position in a HQ or unit is assigned a letter-prefix corresponding to the formation's element and one or more numbers specifying a role.

The staff numbers are assigned according to custom not hierarchy, traceable back to French practice; i.e., 1 is not 'higher ranking' than 2.

The staff branches that you would expect to find at every military HQ from the MOD down to Brigade level are highlighted in Table 2 (exact responsibilities depend on the formation).

Table 2: Staff Officer Branches		
Branch	**Area**	**Description**
Commander	Overall Policy, Strategy, Vision & Direction	Usually a General (OF-7 to OF-9) (or Brigadier (OF-6)) who commands the formation. Due to downsizing and restructuring in some European military systems a Colonel (OF-5) may be in command.
Chief of Staff	The officer who runs the HQ on a day-to-day basis.	• Often acts as a second-in-command (2IC). • Generally known as the COS (at unit level, Executive Officer or XO in the US vernacular). • Their supporting tasks include both support to current operations and peacetime HQ functions. • Is responsible for executing the Commander's primary role; the planning and execution of operations. • Responsibility for the coordination, prioritisation and coherence of all staff effort within the HQ.
G1	Personnel & Administration	Responsible for personnel matters including manning, discipline and personnel services.
G2	Intelligence and Security	Provides authoritative, relevant, and timely, fused intelligence and security product that identifies campaign risks and opportunities to the Commander and subordinate Commanders to support, inform and influence operational decision-making.
G3	Operations	Responsibilities include: • Staff duties; • Exercise planning; • Training; • Operational requirements; • Combat development; • Tactical doctrine; • Theatre Operational Assessment; • Force Protection; • Operational Risk Analysis; and • Theatre Capability reviews.
G4	Logistics	Is responsible for Logistics, Medical and Infrastructure; all logistic aspects of the planning, deployment, sustainment and recovery of UK, UK-led joint, potentially joint, combined and multinational operations.
G5	Plans & Policy	Responsibilities include: • Carrying out Crisis and Contingency Planning; • HQ operational-level deliberate and contingency planning; • Campaign development; and • Provision of Operational Analysis support to operations and planning.
G6	Signals (Communications and IT)	Is responsible for Communication and Information Systems (CIS), planning, directing, deploying, sustaining and recovery of G6 capabilities in support of the mission.

G7	Doctrine & Training	Responsibilities include: • Collective Training and Preparation; • Delivery of Force training; • Delivery of continuation training; and • Delivery of Mission Preparation for forces deploying on operations to meet the standards prescribed by the Commander.
G8	Resource Management (Finance and Contracts)	Is responsible for financial support and advice on all aspects of operational finance.
G9	CIMIC (Civil and Military Co-operation)	Responsibilities include: • Policy, Legal and Media; • Providing politically aware advice in support of current and future operations; • Ensuring that Ministers/Commanders are kept fully informed of all operational developments; and • Ensuring that all operational HQ activity takes account of policy aspects, including operational legal advice and public presentation implications.

Notes

- An operational HQ in the field will almost certainly be a tri-Service organisation with branches from the Army, Naval Service and Air Force represented.
- The Staff Branches are the same for all three Services.
- Since the original continental staff system only covered branches 1 through 6, it is not uncommon to see 7 through 9 omitted, having various meanings or merged with other branches.
- Common variations include:
    - Merging of 3 and 5 to 3, Operations and Plans;
    - Omitting the training branch and utilising 7 for engineering (as seen in US Military Sealift Command and Multinational Forces-Iraq (MNF-I); and
    - Replacing 9 with a legal-branch (making CIMIC a part of another branch, i.e. 2 or 4) as seen with the UK Permanent Joint Headquarters.

Hamel (2005) suggests there must be a redefinition of staff functions and they can be reduced to managing information, planning and control. Liles and Kambic (2014, p.330) suggest that "Closer observation of the continental staff system reveals that its rigidity and compartmentalization, formerly benefits of that system, can, in the current information age, lead to unanticipated and negative consequences." They argue that due to the 'Cyber threat' that the continental staff system needs to be updated to counter this, something the Canadians started to assess in 2004 and the Indian Army in 2011 (Section 8.6).

5.1   'New' Staff Officer Prefixes

Derived from the Prussian Große Generalstab (Great General Staff), traditionally the staff functions were prefixed by a 'G', which is retained in place for modern army usage. With the increasing complexity of modern armies, not to speak of the spread of the 'Staff' concept to naval

and other elements, there has been a demand for the addition of new prefixes. These element prefixes are highlighted in Table 3.

Table 3: New Staff Officer Prefixes	
Branch	**Description**
A	For Air Force HQs.
C	For combined HQs (i.e. multiple nations HQs).
E	On some occasions the letter E can also be observed, though it is not an official term. In that case it is for element and it will be used to identify a small independent element, that is a part of a non-staff organisation, i.e. an E3 is an operational element on a logistics site or an E4 is a logistics element on a forward medical support site.
F	For certain forward or deployable HQs.
G	For Army or USMC general staff sections within HQs of organisations commanded by a general officer and having a chief of staff to coordinate the actions of the general staff, such as divisions or equivalent organisations (e.g., USMC Marine Aircraft Wing and Marine Logistics Group) and separate (i.e., non-divisional) brigade level (USMC MEB) and above.
J	For Joint HQs (i.e. multiple Services).
N	For Navy HQs.
S	For Army or USMC executive staff sections within headquarters of organisations commanded by a field grade officer (i.e., major through colonel) and having an executive officer to coordinate the actions of the executive staff (e.g., divisional brigades, regiments, groups, battalions, and squadrons; not used by all countries).

Thus, the personnel officer of a naval HQ would be referred to as N1. In practice, in large organisations, each of these staff functions will require the support of its own large staff, so N1 refers both to the office and the officer in charge of it.

The continental staff system can be carried down to the next level: J1.3 (or J13 - sometimes the dot-separator is omitted) is thus the operations officer of the personnel office of a joint HQ, but the exact definition of the roles at this level may vary.

Below this, numbers can be attached following a hyphen, but these are usually only positional numbers assigned arbitrarily to identify individuals. For example, G2.3-2 could be the budget officer in the operations section of the intelligence department, whilst A1.1-1-1 might simply be a receptionist.

5.2   Civil-Military Cooperation

Joint Staffs will inevitably contain a mix of military and civilian personnel, and Joint Staff Exercises provide a key vehicle for developing a shared understanding of the comprehensive approach and delivering unity of purpose across civil and military communities. The demands of contemporary operations require joint civil/military solutions, and such exercises examine a formation's ability to harness this and deliver improved operational capability.

Modern Joint Staff exercises aim to step beyond civil-military coordination in the contemporary operating environment, and develop new ways of integrated assessment, planning, execution and

monitoring between all key civilian actors and the military as part of a comprehensive approach, enabling coherent crisis management. Typically held in a fictional landscape, but real world location, these exercises transplant the complexities of real life conflicts such as Afghanistan and Iraq.

5.3   Examples of Staff Officer Appointments

Table 4 provides a number of examples of staff officer appointments by grade.

Table 4: Examples of Staff Officer Appointments by Grade		
SO1	**SO2**	**SO3**
• Business Development • Training • Training Development • Accreditation • Training Strategy • Training Support • Plans • Logistic Development • Capability Development • Training Policy • Training Policy and Assurance • Training Plans • Training Capability Strategy • Commitments (Logistic Operations) • Strategy/Governance • Individual Training Capability • Force Protection Training • Physical Education • Pre and Post Deployment Training Wing • ISTAR Training	• Engagement • Air Infrastructure • Policy and Plans • Physical Development • PEd (Physical Education) Delivery • SERE • Training Development • Synthetic Training Delivery • Adventurous Training and Sport • Weapons • Cyber Operations and Plans • Infantry • Supply • CIED • Design Programme • Plans and Resources	• Capability Development • Ammunition • Manning and Logistics • Force Development • Operational Training • Air Safety Assurance and Regulation • Training Development • Operations • Training • Operations and Commitments • Military Cyber Effects • Accreditation

6.0   The Doctrine of Completed Staff Work

In the early 1940s Colonel Archer L. Lerch, then US Army Deputy Provost Marshal General, wrote a memorandum 'Completed Staff Work' in which he clearly and succinctly laid down the principles of completed staff work. The memorandum is notable because:

- It established a working basis for officers of the staff; and
- Also enunciated principles of procedures which can apply to the performance of any officer, whether on staff duty or not.

Professor Johnson writing his memoirs stated that, as a General in Korea, Lerch (1971, p.156):

"…expected that every paper forwarded to him would be ready for his signature, or, if he ought not sign it, the reasons should be so convincingly stated that he needed only to note his concurrence. It was my responsibility to see that the staff work that went to General Lerch was "completed.""

Colonel Lerch's memorandum, reprinted in the Army and Navy Journal, 13 January 1942 (p.582), is reproduced below:

COMPLETED STAFF WORK

1.   The doctrine of completed staff work is a doctrine of this office.

2.   Completed staff work is complete study of a problem, and presentation of a completed action in such form that it simply allows the decision maker to either approve or disapprove it. The emphasis is on completed, because the more difficult the problem, the more the tendency to present it in piece-meal fashion. It's your duty as a staff officer to work out the details. You should not consult your chief in determining those details, no matter how perplexing they may be. Instead, uncover the details yourself and consult with other staff officers.

3.   When faced with a difficult problem, the first impulse of an inexperienced and frustrated staff officer is to ask the chief what to do. It's so easy to ask, and it seems so easy for him to answer. Resist that impulse. You'll succumb to it only if you don't know your job. Your job is to advise the chief what he ought to do, not to ask him what you ought to do. He needs answers, not questions. Your job is to study, write, restudy, rewrite, and arrive at a single proposed action.

4.   Don't worry your chief with long explanations and memoranda. Writing a memorandum to your chief doesn't constitute completed staff work. Writing one for the chief to send to someone else does. Place your views before him in finished form, so he can make them his views simply by signing his name. If your solution is proper, the chief will recognise it at once. If he wants explanation, he'll ask for it.

5.   The theory of completed staff work doesn't preclude a rough draft, but it must not be half-baked. Except for final touches, it must be complete. It need not be neat. But don't use a rough draft to shift the burden of completing the action onto the chief.

6.   The completed staff work theory may cause work for the staff officer, but it results in more freedom for the chief. This is as it should be. Further, it

    - protects the chief from half-baked ideas, voluminous memoranda, and immature oral presentations.
    - enables the staff officer who has a real idea to sell to find a market.

7.   When you've finished your completed staff work, the final test is this: If you were the chief, would you be willing to sign the paper you've prepared and stake your reputation on being right? If the answer is no, then take it back and do it over, because it is not yet completed staff work.

- Stephen Covey (2004) provides a good outline of this concept from a civilian/business perspective: Power of Completed Staff Work, The (Covey, 2004).
- Donna Lopiano (2009) further expands on the concept outlined by Stephen Covey, providing a comprehensive article: Professional Development: Doctrine of Completed Staffwork (Lopiano, 2009).

- The concept of completed staff work with an update for the modern military context can be found in Lesson 2: Module A – An Action Officer's World (CAR, 2013) and Lesson 2: Staff Work (Walt, 2002).

6.1 Promoting and Coaching Completed Staff Work

In promoting the concept of completed staff work Jerry Bishop (2011a) suggests that along with introducing Completed Staff Work to a team or teams, that organisations may also find it necessary to provide some coaching on how to organise their work products especially when it comes to writing a business case or project justification. Jerry also states there are several simple approaches which can be used depending on the situation to provide structure:

- Problem -> Solution.
- Current State -> Desired State -> Gap Analysis -> Action Plan.
- Recommendation -> Rationale -> Supporting Background.
- What? -> So What? -> Now What?

Jerry also states that developing staff, including junior and middle managers, can be one of the most satisfying aspects of leadership.

Finally, Jerry (2011b) also recommends the reader looks at his associated article 'Who's Got the Monkey?' relating to a conversation with a colleague who seemed overwhelmed by the backlog of tasks that had accumulated and not having a clear plan for getting caught up (based on an old Harvard Business Review article from their management series entitled 'Who's Got the Monkey', now published as a HBR Classic): Management Time: Who's Got The Monkey? (Oncken, Jr & Wass, 1974).

7.0 Publications

7.1 Staff Officers' Handbook

There are a number of publications that aid the officer in their general role as a staff officer and within their specific functional specialty, and examples include:

- **Obsolete**:
  - Field Service Regulations 1909 (the first manual of its kind that covered the organisation of the army in the field) (Spiers, 2010):
    - Part 1, Operations.
    - Part 2, Organisation and Administration.
  - Staff Manual War Provisional 1912 issued by the War Office: "The earliest iteration of the British Army staff manual from 1912 exhorted staff officers to act in concert with the wishes of their commander..." (Coombs, 2012, p.3).
- **Contemporary**:
  - British Army Staff Officers' Handbook, Army Code Number 71038. Reference book for military planning.
    - Course of Action Wargaming section for the Staff Officers' Handbook (Professional Wargaming, 2013).
  - British Army Command and Staff Procedures'.

All NATO countries' military organisations produce a Staff Officers' Handbook (SOHB), or some variant thereof, which provides insight into the major staff issues an individual may face. They are

published in order to establish and promote a common staffing process, and to maintain a high level of quality staff work.

However, individuals must realise that a SOHB will not solve every challenge that they face when working in a complex environment, such as a single-Service, joint or multinational HQ, but it will provide insight into the major staff processes.

Although the content of SOHBs will vary, they typically contain:

- The Commander's vision/mission/philosophy;
- Overview of HQ/higher command structure;
- Supporting staff processes and procedures;
- What directorates/branches/section/departments are responsible for;
- Specific roles and responsibilities of staff officers and staff assistants;
- Overview and templates for every staff product; electronic toolbox (discussed next);
- Advice in the form of 'best practice'; and
- HQ/higher command routine and routine meetings, who attends and when they are held.

7.2   The Electronic Battle Box

The name 'Battle Box' refers to the suitcase in which officers put the various SOHBs and Field Manuals (FM) when they deploy their tactical command posts (CPs).

The Electronic Battle Box (EBB) is an integrated collection of staff data and software planning tools used, in various guises, by a number of military organisations. The EBB concept was developed to provide automated facilities to support the planning process by providing digital versions of these various documents and software tools, implementing the various planning calculations, found in SOHBs and FMs. An EBB will typically be distributed in one of two ways:

- **Website**: the authority for all published documents and the latest versions and any amendments will be published here, invariably on a restricted LAN interconnect (RLI) address.
- **CD-Rom/DVD Set**: is usually published annually as a snapshot of the information held on the website. Examples of Documents held on CD-Rom/DVD Set.

The tools in the EBB are designed to help the user as much as possible. Highly graphical and user-friendly interfaces have been implemented; complex calculations have been automated and integrated to offer efficient and productive tools; electronic versions of doctrinal and SOHBs facilitate the search for information. As well as the above documents, an EBB will likely include other functionality such as:

- Equipment browser;
- Orbat browser;
- Task browser;
- Logistic planner;
- Lift planner;
- Road movement planner;
- Air movement planner; and
- Rail movement planner;

PPT Doc: Battle Box Presentation, Electronic (Gouin, 1999)

An EBB is an efficient set of planning tools for military organisations and has tangible benefits for staff officers. Examples of these benefits include:

> The concept of a staff officer had been known, in some form, since the early 1700s, but for a long period remained a fairly flexible term, often only applying to a general's aide or entourage rather than to a trained professional.

1. It can diminish, considerably, the time required for the various planning tasks necessitated on modern operations. Tasks that used to require 12 hours to carry out can now be done within an hour with an EBB.
2. As the tools are integrated into a coherent suite, and as the complex calculations have been automated, the risk for errors is significantly reduced.
3. Staff officers can now focus on essential military planning activities rather than on clerical work.

The manual planning process (which requires considerable investment by the staff officer(s)) has a number of constraints, the most obvious being that only one planning option is often considered, which may not be optimal. In contrast, the EBB tools enable staff officers to consider various options, perform some 'what if' scenarios and then select the best option (all in a reduced timeframe). An EBB also provides facilities to share the results of some options with other staff officers, diminishing duplication of work and ensuring a better coordination of effort/work.

Finally, staff officers in military training centres and staff colleges are better equipped to provide training on military doctrine and the operational planning process. They can better rely on information technology (IT), prepare and reuse, more easily, military scenarios and exercises and can focus on the real training objectives. Having access to a central repository of doctrinal data on a compact and easily accessed medium (for example the doctrinal documents on EBB CD-ROM/DVD) also facilitates the task of the training staff.

8.0   Types of Staff System

This section will provide an overview of the major national- and field-level staff systems utilised by select countries, it will not be an all-encompassing history. If it was, it would need 2500-3000 pages, if we use Walter Goerlitz's book, '*History of the German General Staff, 1657-1945*', at 500 pages as an example; therefore consider this an abridged version with convenient points for easy reading!

In most cases, the national- and field-level staff systems evolved together, and staff structures of the field units are typically smaller versions of the national systems. All armies also developed sets of abbreviations, acronyms, and symbols as a method of shorthand for more efficient communications. For example, the operations officer of a WW2 corps may have been the G3 in the US Army, the GSOI in the British Army, and the Ia in the German Army. In the divisions and corps of those armies today, however, that same officer is now uniformly called the G3. This section provides the reader with a guide to understanding those various systems, and a general understanding of how they evolved to where they are today.

Prior to the late 1800s, there was generally no organisational support for staff functions such as: military intelligence; logistics; planning; or personnel. Unit commanders handled such functions for their units, with informal help from subordinates who were usually not trained for such tasks. And, although all of the Great Powers in the early 1800s had an elementary form of (what would

become known as) General Staff or officers who conducted staff work, the prestige, quality and training (if it occurred) varied amongst them (Seaton, 1973b; Lynn, 2002; Millar, 2003).

Gray (2014, p.31) informs us that:

"It is necessary to recognise that the concept of the defence planning function was not invented in nineteenth century Prussia, even though military planning changed radically then, and continued to expand in quantity, if not always in quality, for the next two centuries."

Gray then informs us that military planning staffs, inspired by the Prussian model, became the norm by the late 1800s. However, "Belatedly the United States, and even more belatedly Britain, bowed somewhat reluctantly to the need for professional planning revealed in the British case by the evidence of experience in the Boer War." (Gray, 2014, p.32).

A history of command and staff systems generally can be found here: Staff Systems and the Canadian Air Force: Part 1, History of the Western Staff System (Johnston, 2008).

8.1   The Genesis of Modern Staff Systems

Gustavus Adolphus, the King of Sweden from 1611 to 1632, initiated a number of civil and military reforms which transformed Sweden into a major European power. As part of these reforms, not only did Gustavus standardise his regimental staffs, which his HQ staff mirrored, he also had branch chiefs and an early form of chief of staff (Zabecki, 2008). Staff posts included:

- A Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, Major and a chief quartermaster.
- Two chaplains and judge advocates.
- Four surgeons and provost marshals (and one assistant provost marshal).
- Various clerks and a hangman!
- Branch chiefs included: artillery, engineers and scouts.

Thus the 1600s witnessed the arrival of permanently organised military forces, or standing armies, marking "the beginning of the modern era of military thought and procedure." (Zabecki, 2008, p.3).

A number of nations, such as America, Russia and the European countries, during this period (1600s and 1700s) introduced reforms which established officer training schools (aka staff colleges, along with other innovations) with the intention of creating an officer corps founded on the principle of military professionalism rather than (just) the concept of noble birth.

And, as a result Zabecki, a former US Army Major General, (2008, p.3) states that "All modern European staff systems trace their origins to Gustavus Adolphus." However, it was not until the French Revolutionary Wars that the concept of the modern staff system would truly emerge.

8.2   The French Staff System

The general consensus for the first modern use of a staff is the French Revolutionary Wars of 1792 to 1802, and is credited to Marshal (then General) Louis Alexandre Berthier when he was assigned as Chief of Staff to the French Army of Italy in 1795.

Marshal Berthier was able to establish a well-organised staff support team which Napoleon Bonaparte, who took command of the Army of Italy on 02 February 1796, rapidly came to

appreciate. As part of military reforms Napoleon ensured French Corps had a permanent staff attached (Fisher, 2001) and also made extensive use of staff officers within his various armies (Chandler, 1996).

In brief, Marshal Berthier organised his Army General Staff (Etat-Major General) in to three sections, each headed by an Assistant Major-General of general officer rank (Pawly, 2004):

- Section 1: First Assistant Major-General, acted as chief of staff, biggest branch:
  - First division: Adjutant-commandant (rank of Colonel): troop movements, passwords, transmission of orders etc.
  - Second division: quarters of the general staff, police duties, supplies and hospitals.
  - Third division: POWs and deserters, requisitioning and conscripts, councils of war and laws.
- Section 2: Second Assistant Major-General (Deputy Assistant-Major and Lodging Marshal of the Army), responsible for military camps, marches and billeting.
- Section 3: Third Assistant Major-General: maps and intelligence.

However, Zabecki (2008a, p.31) describes four "divisions" in contrast to Pawly's (2004) three sections:

- First division: responsible for action requiring Berthier's immediate attention;
- Second division: provided equipment of many sorts;
- Third division: provided inspections for forage and food, reconnaissance, and intelligence; and
- Fourth division: responsible for liaison, quartering the troops and provost marshal matters.

Only the French command and control system had evolved its capabilities significantly since the Seven Years War (1756-1763) and it is no coincidence that other countries would basically adopt the Napoleonic model as the (French Revolutionary and then Napoleonic) wars continued.

Fisher (2001, p.23) tells us that "The much-vaunted Prussian staff system of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries grew directly out of the failures of 1806, such that the later armies of Bismarck and the Kaiser could be said to trace a more direct lineage to Napoleon than to Frederick."

The various staff systems that have been used since the 1800s have been given a variety of names, and include the:

- French staff system.
- Napoleonic model.
- French model.
- British staff system (utilised by the UK and her Commonwealth allies until a move to the continental staff system).
- US staff system (is a modification of the continental staff system).
- Continental staff system (common term for the French staff system).
- Continental general staff system.
- The general staff system.
- The NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) staff system, heavily influenced by the Americans. It is essentially the US staff system.

Despite the differences in organisation, the above systems recognised the same major staff functions and provided officers with broadly equivalent responsibilities.

8.3   The Prussian/German Staff System

Without deviating from the raison d'être of the article, it is important to understand the historical background to the formation of the German Empire. It is also important to note that Prussia and Germany can be used interchangeably during the time period discussed.

Before 1746 military reforms meant officers conducting staff work undertook additional duties which included the management of intelligence and contingency planning. At some point, the practice of rotating officers from command to staff assignments and back to familiarise them with both aspects of military operations was initiated, a practice that, with the addition of staff assistants, continues to be used.

By 1772, under King Friedrich II (Frederick the Great), Prussia consisted of the provinces of Brandenburg, Pomerania, Danzig, West Prussia and East Prussia (modern day East Germany, northern Poland, and a small portion of the Soviet Union).

During the Napoleonic Wars (1805-1815) the Prussians lacked a modern General Staff, although they were no different from any other country in that respect (Fisher, 2001). During the following years Prussia adopted a system similar to Berthier's, initially assigning a limited number of technical expert officers to support field commanders. After 1806, Prussia's military academies trained mid-level officers in specialist staff skills and in 1814, Prussia formally established by law a central military command - the Prussian General Staff - and a separate staff for each division and corps.

When the Prussian military further developed the modern staff system, it created a separate career stream for prospective staff officers. Those selected as staff officers wore red stripes on their trousers as a sign of their status, and remained in staff positions throughout their careers. They also served in parallel to commanders, and bore equal responsibility as their counterparts for the success or failure of the formations or units they were assigned to. A staff officer unhappy with a decision made by a commander could take up their grievance with a staff officer of their branch at the next highest HQ.

If we assume that Napoleon was the last 'Great Captain' of warfare, then Helmuth von Moltke can be considered the first 'Great Manager' of the modern military era.

> *"Moltke was a military intellectual and reformer who sought improvements in the Prussian Army's management, administration, organisation and education as a means to increase the force's effectiveness."* (Palazzo, 2008, p.13).

In 1857 Field Marshal, then General, Helmuth von Moltke was appointed Chief of the Prussian General Staff, after 1871 the Great General Staff (Große Generalstab), and remained in post until 1888. "Moltke, through his control of the General Staff, articulated, disseminated and inculcated a doctrine of warfighting that imbued the Prussian Army with heightened effectiveness and capability. In so doing, Moltke ushered in the modern era of military command, control and management." (Palazzo, 2008, p.12). During his tenure as Chief, Moltke concentrated on establishing the Prussian General Staff as a technical and administrative professional elite carrying out detailed peacetime planning for future wars, dealing with how to recall large numbers of reservists quickly in case of war, and creating a special railway section to plan transporting the

forces by rail to their locations "that later became a model for the rest of the world." (Badsey, 2003, p.20). "Under Moltke, General Staff officers became known in the Prussian Army by the nickname 'Demigods,' with no great affection." (Badsey, 2003, p.19).

The Austro-Prussian War of 1866, known as the 'Seven Weeks War', was won by Prussia and some credit for the swift victory was due to the "effectiveness of the Prussian staffwork", particularly Moltke's skill in military bureaucracy and administration (Badsey, 2003, p.19). "As a full-time career staff officer, until he [Moltke] led the Prussian Army into war in 1866 he had never commanded a military unit of any size." (Badsey, 2003, p.20). It was said that "The war would be decided largely by greater numbers and Prussian staff training, and won by the side that made the fewest mistakes." (Badsey, 2003, p.32).

From 1868 on, Bismarck (Otto Eduard Leopold von Bismarck, 01 April 1815 to 30 July 1898) Chancellor of the North German Confederation, prepared to accomplish the unification of the German Protestant states of the north and the German Catholic south through a provoked war with France (the Franco-Prussian War of July 1870 to May 1871). Such a war would unite the German states quickly rather than the years or decades it might otherwise take to accomplish. The Germans were divided culturally and politically, but they were united in their hatred for France since the Napoleonic Wars, when France had looted the German states and pressed an estimated 250,000 Germans into the French armies.

Most countries had kept up citizen militias, usually separate from the regular forces. However, the Prussians had begun to build up large trained reserves which were integrated into the army. By 1867 Bismarck had made Prussia supreme in Germany through victories against Denmark (1864) and Austria (1866).

On 18 January 1871, at Versailles, King William I (King of Prussia) was proclaimed the German Kaiser (Emperor), with Bismarck as Chancellor. The creation of a unified German Empire destroyed the balance of power that had been created with the Congress of Vienna after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and thus Germany became a Great (or World) Power.

Under the new constitution the south German states were essentially annexed by the North German Federation. There were 25 states in the new German Empire: 4 kingdoms (Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg); 6 grand duchies; 5 duchies; 7 principalities; and 3 free cities. The Kingdoms of Prussia, Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg each had their own armies which formed the German army under the emperor's command in time of war.

"In direct imitation of Germany, by 1914 all European powers had a general staff…" (Badsey, 2003, p.91) and staff officers would play a significant role in World War I (Simkins et al., 2003).

8.4   The British Staff System

Although the British did have staff officers as far back as the Crimean War (October 1853 to February 1856), staff work was looked at with great disdain in the British Army and only became acceptable after the terrible hardships of the Crimean war, brought on by disorganisation.

The late 1800s was a period of great change for the British Army, for example, the abolition of the purchase system in 1871 (a century-old method by which the aristocracy had maintained its control over the Army. It regulated entry into, and promotion within, the officer corps by purchase, each rank having a rising value).

A beneficiary of this abolition was Field Marshal Sir William Robertson who gazetted as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 3rd Dragoons in 1887, although he entered the Army as a common soldier in the 16th Lancers in November 1877. He later went on to pass the staff college exam becoming the first man from the ranks ever to gain entry to the staff college (Saddington, 2013).

Saddington (2013) informs us that Robertson's change of direction (a move to India) provides us with the opportunity to note an important aspect of the growing professionalism of the British Army, the emergence of the general staff system.

Having a pool of officers highly trained in military administration, intelligence analysis, operational planning and logistics was vital to the functioning of any modern army, and such roles were undertaken by staff officers. However, for much of the 1800s, like many other aspects of the Army, the system for training staff officers had been badly neglected. Nor was the Army run by a general staff system comparable to that developed by continental armies.

The result of this neglect had been the disasters associated with the Crimean war, after which there was a gradual improvement in the training of staff officers, yet it took the further disasters during the Boer War half a century later to bring about the introduction of the general staff system. Robertson reaped the benefit of the rising importance of trained staff officers, graduating from the staff college on the eve of the Boer War, to further his career.

Although the British had prevailed in the Boer War (October 1899 to May 1902), the conflict had proved a harrowing and costly experience. After the shock of early defeats, the British Army had reorganised itself, poured in additional resources (ultimately 448,435 British and colonial soldiers took part) and eventually defeated the Boers after a protracted counter-guerrilla war. Both the cost of the war (some £201 million) and a toll of 5,774 men killed in action, with another 16,168 deaths from disease or wounds, prompted demands for army reform (Spiers, 2010).

Some adjustments in training and new drill books followed, as well as the introduction of a new service rifle for the infantry and cavalry, and the rearmament of the horse and field artillery. Yet the demands for reform were revived after the publication of two royal commissions in 1903 and 1904. The first exposed the many failings during the war and prompted a subsequent committee under Lord Esher (in 1904) to advocate extensive reforms in higher defence management, including the creation of a general staff, an army council and a secretariat for the interdepartmental Committee of Imperial Defence.

The General Staff was formed in November 1905 based, mainly, on the growing understanding that throwing together a higher HQ in time of need (from whomever was available) was not a practice suited to modern warfare. Special Army Order 233 issued on 12 September 1906 set out its purpose (French & Reid, 2002, p.10):

- To give advice on the strategic distribution of the army;
- To supervise the education of officers and the training and preparation of the army for war;
- To study military schemes, both offensive and defensive;
- To collect and collate military intelligence; and
- To direct the general policy in army matters and to secure continuity of action in the execution of that policy.

The staff was subsequently reorganised in 1908.

In contrast to the Prussia staff system, the British Army was considered too small to support separate staff and command career streams, and such a system would in any case have been unacceptable to the British military ethos. The British staff would remain subordinate to command, and officers would not advance by merit in only one stream; they would alternate between the staff and command appointments, needing recommendations in both spheres to gain promotion. A major reason for this approach was the serious rifts between staff and line units caused by the enormous losses witnessed during WW1, which meant that British senior officers decided that thenceforth all officers would rotate between staff and line responsibilities, preventing the development of a separate general staff corps (Beevor, 1991).

Major-General Henry Wilson as director of military operations (1910-14) overhauled all aspects of mobilisation, including staff, rail, naval, and horse-supply arrangements (Spiers, 2010).

In 1923 the British formed a rudimentary joint staff with the establishment of the Chiefs of Staff Committee. The committee was made up of the three Service Chiefs:

- The Chief of the Imperial General Staff;
- The Chief of the Air Staff; and
- The First Sea Lord.

In the British system, 'staff' officers are outranked by 'command' officers. The staff cannot in theory (and largely in practice) say 'no' to a subordinate unit; only the Commander has that ability. The principal staff officers at any HQ were always outranked by the subordinate commanders.

As initially evolved under first Marlborough and then Wellington (Zabecki, 2008), British staffs at divisional level and above were organised into three principal branches:

- General Staff (G Branch): Intelligence, Planning and Operations.
- Adjutant General's Staff (A Branch): Personnel and Administration.
- Quartermaster General's Staff (Q Branch): Supply and Transportation

As under the German system, the British Chief of the General Staff was essentially a super operations officer. Although the post holder coordinated the work of the entire staff, it was in collaboration with the chief administrative officer who directly supervised both the A and Q branches. The chief administrative officer still had direct access to the commander. The British Army never really had an all-encompassing chief of staff until Field Marshal Montgomery started using General Francis de Guingand in that role, following the American model, during WW2. British General Staff officers during the period of both the world wars held a variety of job titles that were confusing to outsiders, as were the abbreviations for those positions:

- General Staff Officer I (GSOI), the head of G Branch, typically Lieutenant Colonels (OF-4).
- General Staff Officer II (GSOII), the head of a staff division, intelligence, operations, and so on, typically Majors (OF-3).
- General Staff Officer III (GSOIII), an assistant division chief, typically Captains (OF-2).
- Brigade Major, the GSOI of a brigade, co-ordinated the work of the entire HQ, concentrating mainly on 'G' matters, while the GSO III deputy generally dealt with all non-operational matters, such as courses, war diary, reports and returns, leaving the BM free to concentrate on operational matters. The GSO III acted in the Brigade Major's capacity if the latter was unavailable. The GSO III position was added to the Brigade HQ staff in early 1944.
- Brigadier, General Staff (BGS), the senior G officer on corps staff.
- Major General, General Staff (MGGS), the senior G officer on army staff.

- Assistant Adjutant General or Assistant Quartermaster General (AAG or AQMG), Lieutenant Colonel, or in some cases Colonels, heading sections of the A or Q Branch.
- Deputy Assistant Adjutant General or Deputy Assistant Quartermaster General (DAAG or DAQMG), Majors as assistant section heads of the A or Q Branch.
- Staff Captain A or Q (SCA or SCQ), captains assigned to the A or Q Branches.

Picture: divhqstaff

Following the Arcadia Conference in 1942, the UK and the US broke new ground in coalition warfare by establishing a bi-national Combined Chiefs of Staff. This combined staff model eventually extended down to the highest level of operational HQs (in today's parlance, 'joint' means more than one service and 'combined' means more than one country).

US General Eisenhower's two staffs, Allied Forces Headquarters (AFHQ) in North Africa, and later, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) in Europe, were hybrid organisations that basically followed the French/American model. The primary addition was the creation of a G5 for civil affairs. Under Eisenhower's staff at SHAEF, the G1, G3, and G4 were American officers and the G2 and G5 were British. Each staff principal had an assistant from the opposite army. The chief of staff, US Lieutenant General Walter Bedell Smith, had three British deputies: one for air; one for operations and intelligence; and one for the adjutant general and quartermaster general functions. Following WW2, the British also adopted the French/American staff organisation, which also became the basis for all NATO military staffs.

Despite the lessons learnt during both wars, and the subsequent emergencies and conflicts, officers' courses of instruction in the British Army stressed staff duties rather than the development of strategic thinking and operational concepts on war college lines (Mallick, 2011). It was not until the 1970s that the British titled their principal course as command and staff.

Two significant developments occurred in the 1980s:

1. In 1981 the British Army, reluctantly states Mallick (2011), adopted the continental staff nomenclature but "little in substance changed in either the organisation or running of the staff." (Mallick, 2011, p.11).
2. Another development in 1988 witnessed the introduction of the British Army's Higher Command and Staff Course, later becoming a fully 'Joint' course (tri-Service in the British vernacular) in 1998.

Today the British military is headed by a joint Defence Staff headed by a Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) and the three Service Chiefs: the Chief of the General Staff; the Chief of the Air Staff; and the Chief of the Naval Staff (and First Sea Lord). In 1996 the British established a Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ).

8.5   The US Staff System

Elihu Root, Secretary of War, instituted reforms which manifested in the modern US staff system. In 1903 he established a system that gave the US Army separate staff sections (Mallick, 2011) responsible for administration, logistics, intelligence, and planning, which became a model for staffs throughout the remainder of the century; a hybrid of the continental system.

In 1918, General Pershing issued General Order No. 31, adopting a modified version of the French staff organisational structure for the American Expeditionary Force (AEF). Lower-command

echelons, however, only had three staff sections, eliminating logistics. But at the General HQ level, the Americans added a fifth principal staff section for training, which reflected the realities of having to train a massively expanded mobilisation army in the shortest time possible. To provide crash training for 500 General Staff officers, the AEF established a staff college at Langres, France. Since 1918, the doctrine and organisation of the US Army has changed significantly and repeatedly; yet, the staff structure has remained remarkably consistent.

When Pershing became the chief of staff of the US Army (1921-1924), he established a staff reorganisation board under his former AEF chief of staff, Major General James Harbord. The result was a reorganisation of the War Department staff along the same lines as the AEF. Under the chief of staff of the Army, the new General Staff had five divisions:

- G1: Personnel and Administration;
- G2: Intelligence;
- G3: Operations and Training;
- G4: Logistics; and
- War Plans Division.

It was not until 1932 that "the first manual for staff officers was published under the authority of General (later General of the Army) Douglas MacArthur." (Mallick, 2011, p.9).

During WW2 the War Plans Division became the Operations Division. The four G sections dealt with policy, while the Operations Division oversaw operations worldwide. In 1942 President Roosevelt established the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), as an informal co-ordinating body to synchronise the war effort across the Services. That prototype JCS consisted of the Chief of Staff of the Army, the chief of Naval Operations, and the Commanding General of the Army Air Forces - even through the air service was still technically part of the Army. Presiding over the group was chief of staff to the president, Admiral William D. Lahey. In 1942 the British and Americans also established the Combined Chiefs of Staff, with its base of operations in Washington.

As well as the General Staff, the staff organisation of lower echelons were further refined and the strength of HQ staffs increased significantly. For example, the staff of an infantry division headquarters in 1941 was authorised 27 officers; in 1945, the allocation rose to 45 officers (Mallick, 2011).

Following WW2 the National Security Ace of 1947 merged America's military forces for the first time (ditching the general staff concept), establishing the Department of Defence (DOD) and creating the US Air Force as a separate Service. The JCS was also established as a formalised body, supported by a joint staff, called the 'J-Staff.' The Joint Staff was organised along the same lines as the Army Staff, but the designation for each staff section started with the letter J. In 1949 the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) was established, with General Omar Bradley the first officer to hold that position.

Perhaps the most significant feature of the new national military architecture was the grouping of most American military forces under a series of joint, 'unified commands.', and Service staffs were also removed from the management of direct military operations. Essentially, the military services became force providers to the commanders in chief of the unified commands, with the Joint Chiefs of Staff planning and coordinating American military operations worldwide. The JCS, however, was not in the direct operational chain of command, which ran from the war-fighting commander in chief directly to the secretary of defence and the president - collectively called the National

Command Authority (NCA). The Joint Chiefs, collectively, were the military advisors to the secretary of defence and the president.

In 1952 the commandant of the US Marine Corps; became a member of the JCS, for Marine Corps matters only. In 1978 the Marine commandant became a full member of the JCS.

Following the major revision of Title 10 of the United States Code by the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganisation Act in 1986, the Joint Staff of today works directly for the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff rather than the corporate Joint Chiefs of Staff, as they did from 1947 to 1986. Under this scheme, operational command and control of military forces are not the province of the Joint Staff, but that of Combatant Commanders, who report through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff unless otherwise directed, to the Secretary of Defence. The Act also established the position of Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and significantly strengthened the position of the chairman by designating that officer as the primary military advisor to the president and the secretary of defence. The national-level Joint Staff is limited to 1,627 military and civilian personnel. Presided over by the director of the Joint Staff, it is organised into eight principal directorates:

- J1: Manpower and Personnel;
- J2: Intelligence;
- J3: Operations;
- J4: Logistics;
- J5: Strategic Plans and Policy;
- J6: Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems;
- J7: Operational Plans and Interoperability; and
- J8: Force Structure, Resources and Assessment.

At the level of the unified commands, each commander in chief is supported by a J-Staff organised similarly to the Joint Staff, but presided over by a chief of staff. In late 2002 secretary of defence Donald Rumsfeld directed that only the president of the United States of America held the tide of Commander in Chief, and henceforth the commanders of the unified commands simply would be called commanding generals, or combatant commanders.

Below the national level, the staffs of current-day US Army units commanded by a general officer are organised into three primary groupings. The heart of the staff is the Coordinating Staff Group, which is generally uniform in its composition from unit to unit. Also called the 'G-Staff,' the coordinating staff consists of the G1, G2 and G3 etc. The senior officer in charge of each of these sections normally has the title of Assistant Chief of Staff or Deputy Chief of Staff.

The Special Staff Group varies, from unit to unit, but generally includes the command's surgeon, provost marshal, engineer, safety officer, chemical officer, fire-support coordinator, and the headquarters commandant. The chief of staff directly supervises both the Coordinating and the Special Staff groups. The Personal Staff Group consists of those staff members who report directly to the commander, including the command sergeant major, inspector general, staff judge advocate, chaplain and the aides-de-camp.

Commanders, however, do have considerable latitude to modify the reporting arrangements within their staffs. In some organisations, for example, the public affairs officer might be a part of the Personal Staff Group, while in others they might be part of the Special Staff Group. In other units, the fire-support coordinator and chemical officer might be detailed to work directly under the G3.

Every staff, then, has its unique characteristics that reflect how the commander and the chief of staff want it to operate.

8.6 The Canadian Staff System

Canada quickly adopted the British staff system for the Canadian Army, and utilised and developed it up until Unification in 1968; although it remained the primary command and staff system until the late 1970s (Hamel, 2005). However, American influence over the decades witnessed a paradigm shift (Coombs, 2010) and during the early 1980s, the Canadians adopted a modified version of the continental system - although Hamel (2005) states it was nothing more than a renaming of the old staff positions - in order to better coordinate with other NATO forces.

With the advent of the ISTAR concept (Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance) that has been adopted by most, if not all, NATO allies the Canadians developed a further concept as to how it would fight to guarantee success in operations. The, then, new Land Force Employment Concept was based on five operational functions (later capability domains), which were:

1. **Command (nexus/lead of the other 4/5 domains)**: is the creative expression of the 'human will' necessary to accomplish a mission through the exercise of the authority vested by the national government and the chain of command for the direction, coordination and control of military forces. Personnel, facilities and processes support the exercise of command, in a grouping known collectively as The Command Support System (or Command Support); "A system that is eclipsing the previous commander and staff relationship." (Dube & Thibault, 2004, p.3).
2. **Sense**: is the inextricable companion of Command and provides the commander with knowledge. The Sense operational function ensures that relevant data from all sources is collected and analysed in order to enable mission success. The understanding a commander has of the situation is directly related to the ability to collect the relevant information and have it presented in a manner that is both timely and suitable (a single comprehensive entity that collects, collates, analyses, and displays data, information, and knowledge at all levels. Tactical, operational, and strategic assets are integrated into a single continuum).
3. **Act**: The use of a capability to influence events across the spectrum of conflict and in either or both of the physical and moral domains. Act reflects an integration of capabilities from a variety of sources – tactical, operational, or strategic.
4. **Shield**: Force protection measures taken to contribute to mission success by preserving freedom of action and operational effectiveness through managing risks and minimising vulnerabilities to personnel, information, materiel, facilities and activities from all threats.
5. **Sustain**: A grouping of all functions necessary to generate, deploy, employ, and redeploy a force. As an operational function, the term is to be taken in it broadest possible context. Sustainment concerns are loosely grouped into three subordinate functions: materiel, personnel, and engineering.
6. **Generate (added later)**: The process by which military forces are assembled, equipped, trained, certified, and deployed to meet a force employment requirement.

In their paper, Dube and Thibault (2004, p.3) argue that "the traditional division into staff and signals [in respect of ISTAR] is being blurred through the effects of digitization." Therefore, "The dilemma of commanders is now largely a problem of data collection, storage, retrieval, manipulation and comparison. In short, it is a problem of information management if the commander does not want to be overwhelmed with information." (2004, p.3).

Dube and Thibault (2004) then suggest that the staff and HQ structure must be designed around the five capability domains, identified above, which would be possible with the establishment of five main HQ cells: Command, Current, Sense, Effects and Plans. The Indian Army has also been considering the idea of modifying the current staff system (Mallick, 2011).

- Read their paper: Info-Centric Collaborative Workspace from an Organizational Perspective, The (2004-09) for further details on the capability domains and HQ cells.
- The Canadian Army, through the Royal Military College of Canada (2015), has developed a number of programmes designed to facilitate this concept, an example of which is the Army Technical Staff Officer Programme (ATSOP): https://www.rmc.ca/en/applied-military-science/programmes-department-applied-military-science-royal-military-college
- Word Doc: Obsolescence Challenges, Part 4, Future Capabilities & Technologies (Brent Hobson, Canadian Naval Review, 5(1), art5 (Spring, 2009))
- An introduction to Intelligence Preparation of the Corporate Battlefield by Fred Aubin, President and CEO of Strategic Red Team Consulting uploaded in 2014.
- Staff System in the Indian Army: Time for Change (Mallick, 2011).

9.0 Perspectives on Staff Officers

There are varying views on staff officers ranging from the polite to impolite, and below are some examples of this dichotomised viewpoint.

Napoleon Bonaparte understood the need for, and value of, competent staff officers in the planning of warfare. However, he also understood that being a good planner of war did not necessarily translate into being a good conductor of war, as noted when Napoleon talked about one of his Marshal's (Chandler, 1996, p.26):

"There was not in the world a better Chief of Staff; that is where his true talent lay, for he was not capable of commanding 500 men."

Leroy Thompson (1985, p.2) states:

"It was the Prussian Army, however, which created a unique type of elite soldier during the latter nineteenth century. Historically, the elite soldier has been highly skilled as a fighting man, but the Prussian elite were the members of the General Staff - desk soldiers, planners who fought their battles over maps."

However, as one draws closer to WW1, in which staff officers played a significant role (Simkins et al., 2003), the opinion of frontline soldiers and officers became especially resentful of staff officers (Coombs, 2010) resulting in the phenomenon of 'officer hate'. When one examines the reasons why these were opinions were formed - such as the wide differences in rations, pay, leave etc. - it becomes difficult not to copy their vitriol.

Although German Lieutenants were generally well-regarded by their own troops, middle ranking officers (Captains or Hauptleute and staff officers) became the focus of 'officer hate' (Watson, 2007), creating a front/rear divide. A British solution to officer hate was to ban the creation of a separate staff officer stream based on the model of the Germans and stipulate that officers must rotate between command and staff appointments so as not to lose touch. The Canadians did not hold staff officers in high regard either, despite their contribution, as told by Tim Cook (2014):

> *"The brigadiers had little time to train their men during the chaos of Valcartier, Québec, where 35,000 Canadians converged on the army camp in the hope of being sent overseas. But the brigadiers gathered together some experienced staff officers who assisted in the critical, if seemingly mundane, administrative work. These staff officers, later derided by the soldiers because they were not in the front lines battling the enemy, were vital at Valcartier and later, on the Western Front, in ensuring proper training, the efficient movement of men and matériel, and the taking of a commander's orders and translating them into actionable duties."*

Even the Americans were not immune to this phenomenon, who experienced "a smouldering resentment" against officers in rear areas and inactive theatres (Stouffer et al. 1949, p.369).

David Stirling, 'father' of the Special Air Service (SAS), "had a visceral dislike of staff officers, a species he termed 'fossilised shit' on account of their outdated ideas as to how a war should be run" (Mortimer, 2011, p.2). Stirling (1948) therefore:

> *"…insisted with the C-in-C that the unit must be responsible for its own training and operational planning and that, therefore, the commander of the unit must come directly under the C-in-C. I emphasized how fatal it would be for the proposed unit to be put under any existing Branch or formation for administration."*

However, despite Stirling's view, at least one SAS officer did serve as a staff officer with the Greeks in 1947-1948 (Warner, 1971).

Not being overly fond of staff officers appears to be a perennial issue for the SAS as Lieutenant Colonel Richard Williams, a former commander of the SAS, demonstrates (Carty, 2015):

> *"One of the reasons that our senior military leaders were so poor in Basra [and] Helmand… was that many of them had got promoted to those leadership roles based on their ability to do good staff work, or to be adept at playing compromise politics at the MoD as opposed to demonstrating the ability to lead men, machines and organisations in tough times with incomplete information and under huge pressure. Staff officers masquerading as military leaders typically give in to politicians, whereas real military leaders stand up to them and provide good advice. In my experience the Prime Ministers that I knew preferred the latter, but were consistently exposed to the former. These staff officers masquerading as leaders were great at arguing points or playing agendas, but totally useless at making the right decisions."*

However, it is ironic to note that SAS officers, like their conventional counterparts, must rotate through staff officer appointments as part of their career development; in fact it is compulsory!

Further, it has been said "that a good staff could often save even the most incompetent commander, but given the complexity of modern warfare, a commander was no longer likely to prevail without a competent staff." (English, 1991, p.90). Another viewpoint suggests that if an officer has not gained war experience they cannot be a good senior commander, with the dichotomy that having had previous war experience it makes the officer a good senior commander. Some senior commanders due to timing and postings may have missed out on 'war experience' through no fault of their own. Experience under fire is important but should it exclude individuals from command appointments just because they lacked it. Some commentators suggest that some senior officers are more politicians than soldiers, it is not either or, in the modern environment they must be both; Iraq and Afghanistan are noteworthy examples.

Finally, it is important to place the SASs words in context. If your organisation consists of 500-600 personnel, divided in to smaller operational units of 4-8 men, then military planning can be conducted by one individual relatively easily. In contrast, image a single individual having to organise a 'fighting' Corps of 25,000(ish) personnel (with all their equipment, food, transport etc.). Modern conventional forces would find it particularly difficult to operate without staff officers.

10.0 Miscellaneous

10.1 TV Series

For a tongue-in-cheek parody of a staff officer then look no further than Blackadder Goes Forth, a six-part comedy series first aired by the BBC in 1989. Tim McInnerny plays the officious Staff Officer Captain Kevin Darling working for General Sir Anthony Cecil Hogmanay Melchett, played by Stephen Fry.

10.2 Useful Documents

- Word Doc: Chapter 6, Service Papers (AFCSC, 2011)
- PDF Doc: ATTP 5-0.1 - Commander and Staff Officer Guide (2011-09)
- PDF Doc: Battle Staff SMARTBook v4.0 (2012)
- PDF Doc: C2 Journal 4(3) (2010)
- PDF Doc: Commander's Battle Staff Handbook (with Garrison Duties) (1993-05-15)
- PDF Doc: FM 5-0 (FM 101-5) Army Planning and Orders Production (2005-01)
- PDF Doc: FM 6-0 – Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces (2003-08)
- PDF Doc: FM 101-5 – Staff Organisation and Operations (1997-05-31)
- PDF Doc: FM 101-10-1/2 – Staff Officers' Field Manual: Organisational, Technical and Logistical Data Planning Factors (Volume 2) (1987-10-07)
- PDF Doc: HQ NRDC Greece Staff Handbook (2014-02-24)
- PDF Doc: Joint Officer Handbook (JOH): Staffing and Action Guide, 1st Edition (Joint Staff, J-7 JETD, 2010-08)
- PDF Doc: The Joint Staff Officers' Guide 2000 (JFSC, 2000)
- PDF Doc: SEEBRIG Staff Officers' Handbook (2003-03-20)
- PDF Doc: TM 30-410 – Handbook on the British Army (1942-09-30)
- PDF Doc: Battle Staff Guide: A Reference Tool for Commanders and Battle Staffs (Army National Guide, 2010-08)
- PPT Doc: Brigade Command and Battle Staff Training (Weisz, 1997-10-16)
- PDF Doc: UN STM Military Staff Officers, 1ed (UN, 2011)
- PDF Doc: The Case of the Prussian General Staff (Thompson, n.d.)
- PDF Doc: Understanding the Prussian/German General Staff System (Millotat, 1992)
- PDF Doc: US Brigade Commander's Battle Staff Handbook (1996-08)
- PDF Doc: We Have Been Here Before: The Evolution of the Doctrine of Decentralised Command in the British Army 1905-1989 (Pugsley, 2011)
- PDF Doc: Working in a Military Headquarters (Stabilisation Unit, 2015)

10.3 Further Reading

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