

# MILITARY<sup>3</sup> REVIEW *H29*



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# Organization for an Airlift

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**F**ROM the start of the Korean hostilities, it was apparent that considerable reliance would have to be placed on aerial transportation to supply the rapidly moving combat elements, and to overcome the deficiencies of other means of transportation. The campaign continued, to a large measure, to be dependent upon air transportation, particularly in the northern areas where a lack of seaports made it one of the most important mediums of supply.

When the campaign started, there was no logistical organization in the theater for the operation of aerial ports of embarkation. At Matsushima, an Air Transportability Training Center had been organized from the 11th Airborne Parachute Training Center to give tactical air-transportability training to Eighth Army units. This organization was an Eighth Army school, under the supervision of its G3, and its instruction emphasized, primarily, airborne doctrine concerned with teaching units to load their own equipment and supplies into aircraft as well as the proper method of unloading the matériel. In order to establish an aerial transportation system, the Air Transportability Training Center was attached to the 374th Troop Carrier Wing. Detachments of the center were set up at the Tachikawa, Brady, and

Ashiya Air Force Bases and were charged with the dual mission of loading and unloading aircraft and of conducting aerial resupply.

During the first 2 months of the campaign, the center operated in this manner, primarily in the status of an air freight terminal on the air base. It is interesting to note that, during this same period, the Ashiya Detachment conducted five or six aerial resupply drops to units which had been isolated in the retreat to the Pusan perimeter.

## Combat Cargo Command Established

When the rear area logistical elements of the Eighth Army were combined into the Japan Logistical Command, General Headquarters directed it to assume the responsibility for the operation of the aerial ports of embarkation established within Japan, and the operating detachments of the Air Transportability Training Center were transferred to its command. At this time, the general nature of the airlift was changed from that of tactical support to that of a logistical supply medium for the forces in Korea. Several additional units, notably the 314th Troop Carrier Group and the 46th and 21st Squadrons, were added to the airlift and a command echelon for their opera-

***A system of allocating priorities, the scheduling of the work load to provide maximum effectiveness, and its establishment as a major command are three prerequisites for an efficient airlift organization***

tion, the Combat Cargo Command, was established directly under Headquarters, Far East Air Force. In order to handle this change in concept, it became necessary for the Japan Logistical Command to organize complete aerial ports of embarkation and the necessary command structure to handle its responsibility.

### A New Command Structure

Under the Japan Logistical Command, the Air Transportability Training Center was assigned the additional mission of operating the required aerial ports of embarkation. The technical supervision of this operation was delegated to the Transportation Officer of the Japan Logistical Command who added an Air Division to his organization to handle this responsibility.

The Air Division, Japan Logistical Command, primarily was concerned with representing the Air Transportability Training Center in dealings with the various staff divisions of the Japan Logistical Command, particularly in the matter of co-ordinating the flow of supplies and equipment, to be air-transported, to the various ports of embarkation to meet forecasted airlifts. It was also responsible for keeping the Air Transportability Training Center advised as to the policies and requirements of both the Japan Logistical Command and General Headquarters for the use of the airlift, and the general allocation of priorities. Because of the geographical situation, the Air Division also took action directly with Tachikawa Air Force Base to release cargo for the airlift shuttle service for inter-Japan moves.

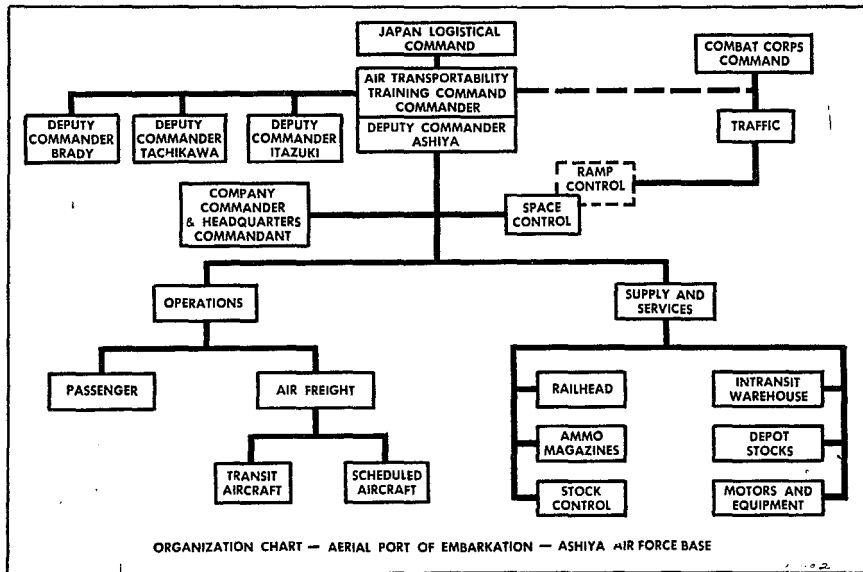
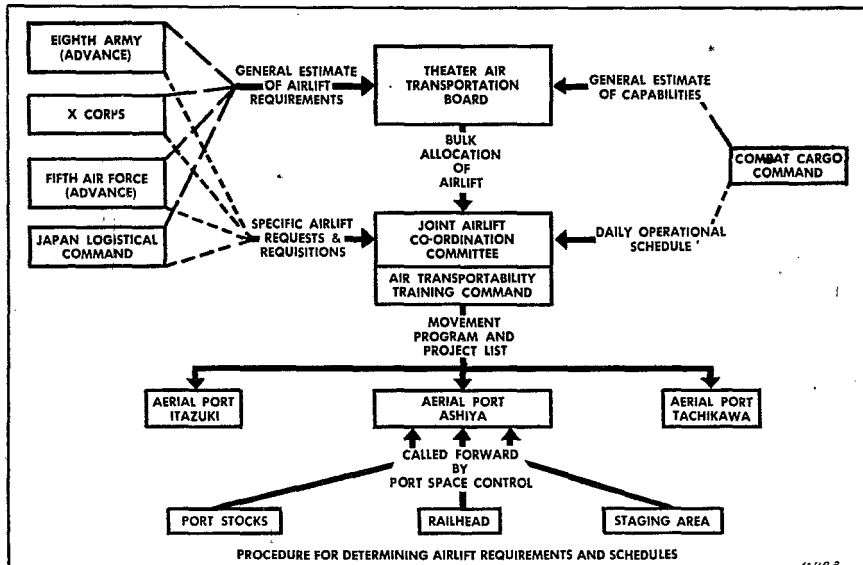
The Air Transportability Training Center Headquarters was established at the Ashiya Air Force Base, in the same location as the Combat Cargo Command. This was necessary in order that the

over-all operational plans of the Combat Cargo Command and those of the aerial ports could be integrated daily. In addition, the Commanding Officer, Air Transportability Training Center, also acted as the Japan Logistical Command representative to the Combat Cargo Command on matters of mutual interest.

### Aerial Ports

Aerial ports of the Air Transportability Training Center were established at Ashiya, Tachikawa, Itazuki, and Brady airfields. Their detailed organization varied considerably, between the several airfields, due to the number of aircraft based there and other local conditions. At Tachikawa Air Force Base, which had been an aerial port for a considerable time, the army headquarters was superimposed on the existing air force organization, and the detailed operations were performed by the same personnel as had been operating the Air Force Air Freight and Passenger Sections. This was considered desirable inasmuch as port-type operations there would continue after the cessation of the campaign and the base commander was reluctant to have his personnel temporarily dispossessed and then have to replace them when the army port was withdrawn. At the Brady airfield, the operation was quite small since the aircraft based there, *C-47s*, were used only in the minor local lifts and as couriers. At Itazuki, the establishment, likewise, was small since the already existing air freight operation of the Fifth Air Force and the Air Evacuation Squadron, at this field, continued to handle most of the port work.

The Ashiya Air Force Base, which was responsible for supplying a major portion of the airlift from Japan to Korean stations, was completely organized as a ground force operated aerial port of embarkation. The organization was divided



into two main divisions, an Operations Division and a Supply and Facilities Division. The former was responsible for loading and unloading aircraft and for handling cargo between the aircraft and warehouse hangars. The latter was responsible for the operation of marshalling camps, supply points, and ammunition magazines and other facilities for the stock-piling of airlift supplies. In addition, it was charged with the operation of the railhead, the stock control of intransit and stock-piled materials, and the operation and maintenance of the mechanical equipment required by the port.

#### Space Control Officer

Co-ordination between the activities of the Operations and the Supply and Facilities Divisions was obtained by establishing a Space Control Section as an executive function of the port commander. The Space Control Officer was responsible for establishing the loading program for the Operations Division, including the documentation of shipments and maintenance of records of aircraft being loaded and time of loading. The Space Control Officer also was the point of contact between the port and air force operations. Working directly with the Combat Cargo Command Ramp Control Officer, he received information as to the aircraft to be loaded, allowable loads, and other operating instructions. He, in turn, advised the air force operations personnel, through the Ramp Control Officer, of the load which was being placed aboard the aircraft, its destination, and the time it would be available for take off. By working closely with the Supply and Facilities Division, he programmed daily movement schedules in order to take advantage, insofar as possible, of movements directly from the railhead to aircraft, thereby avoiding double handling of intransit cargo. Since

there were no designated passenger flights in this operation, the Space Control Officer was responsible for keeping in close contact with the Passenger Section to ensure that aircraft, as required, for passengers were made available and for contacting the groups, through the Ramp Control Office, in order that proper personal safety equipment could be placed aboard the aircraft.

#### Air Shipment Priorities

Priorities for air shipment to Korea were prescribed by the General Headquarters Air Priorities Board. The Combat Cargo Command submitted a weekly estimate of its capabilities for transport to various Korean areas and, at the same time, the major commands in Japan and Korea submitted their estimates of requirements for airlift for the ensuing week. Based on these data, the theater Air Priorities Board issued a bulk tonnage allocation to each major command on a weekly basis, leaving to the Commanding Officer, Air Transportability Training Center, the prerogative of making daily adjustments between claimants and the responsibility for the collection of detailed requirements.

A daily program meeting was held at Combat Cargo Command headquarters, attended by representatives of the claimant shippers, the Air Force, and the Air Transportability Training Center operations staffs. At this time, a project list for airlift for the following day was formulated, within the broad allocation framework, giving detailed assignments by aircraft types and destinations for the lift required. This list became a movement

\* This procedure established an informal operating agency designated the Joint Airlift Co-ordinating Committee which, using the bulk allocations of the theater, considered specific airlift requirements and the air force and aerial port operating capabilities.

directive to the space control officers for their next day's operation. At this meeting, local arrangements were made, when required, between the claimants' representatives to meet urgent requirements and operational restrictions. Because of the time element and the rapidly changing situation, quite frequently the program bore little or no relation to the general priorities allocation pattern.

The Space Control Officer was responsible for keeping the Air Transportability Training Center commander currently advised as to the availability of cargo or units for air shipment so that he could request their inclusion in the daily program. Upon receipt of the daily program, the Space Control Officer then prepared his detailed schedule of operations in conjunction with operations and supply officers. He took the necessary action to have units alerted and available for loading. The Supply and Facilities Division Officer then arranged for railhead operations in order to meet the detailed program of outloading and prepared mobile loads, on trucks, for the program.

#### Plane Loading Procedures

The Ramp Control Officer secured from the operating groups the numbers and the locations of aircraft available for loading, and advised the Space Control Officer who entered them on his space control record. The Space Control Officer then assigned one of his programmed loads to the aircraft and advised the Operations Officer. Actual loading operations were conducted by teams consisting of a noncommissioned officer loading foreman, a noncommissioned officer checker, and 10 Japanese laborers. Since only small 2-ton (Japanese built) trucks were available, three truck loads were required for most aircraft. This team, together with fork-

lift trucks or other materials handling equipment required by the particular load in question, was dispatched to the plane sites by the Operations Officer together with two copies of a prepared manifest of the load.

The port loading team was fully responsible for the loading and the lashing of cargo, and then turned a copy of the manifest over to a representative of the plane crew who was stationed at the aircraft during loading operations. Loading operations were supervised by two ramp officers of the Operations Division who cruised the loading area in jeeps. It was discovered that their effectiveness was increased considerably by issuing them radio-equipped jeeps so that they were in constant contact with the operations desk. The average time for loading and lashing general cargo aboard a plane was approximately 40 minutes, and the objective of the port was to have every aircraft loaded at least 30 minutes prior to its scheduled departure.

After loading, the crew returned to the space control headquarters and turned back a copy of the manifest, indicating the time the loading was completed, signed by the noncommissioned officer in charge of the loading operation. The time of loading indicated on the space control records, however, was shown as the entire time between the dispatch and return of the crew or the time the aircraft was held by the port operations.

#### Operational Responsibilities

As the authority of the Japan Logistical Command was restricted to the Japanese Islands, and as personnel for port operations was seriously limited through most of the campaign, the Air Transportability Training Center did not supply

personnel for the operation of the airheads. The Combat Cargo Command formed provisional support units from its own personnel, consisting of 4 or 5 officers and 50 to 100 enlisted men, to operate the ports of debarkation. These units were equipped with essential equipment by drawing from the air base and the Fifth Air Force. After the situation had been stabilized somewhat, responsibility for the ports of debarkation operation was assigned, by General Headquarters directive, to the ground force commands functioning in these areas.

During the initial operations at every airhead, the supplies being shipped were in such demand that the tactical units being served were quite willing to assist in unloading and clearing the airfield. After the situation stabilized, however, some difficulty was experienced in securing support for the operations of the airfield. This became particularly apparent when one of the Korean airheads was changed to a port of embarkation to serve another more advanced field.

In view of the close relationship between the activities of aerial ports of embarkation and debarkation served by the same transport command, and the direct interrelationship of volume of traffic between the fields, it appears that the operation would have been improved considerably had the Air Transportability Training Center been assigned the mission of operating all aerial ports of embarkation and debarkation served by the Combat Cargo Command. Further, the command relationship between the Army and the Air Force for this operation would have been improved considerably if the Air Transportability Training Center were placed on a level parallel to the Combat Cargo Command as a major command in the theater, rather than on a local level for each area.

### Conclusion

Of the factors effecting, most seriously, the efficient utilization of the available air transportation, the most important was, undoubtedly, a complete absence of an efficient method of determining priorities. All shipments and requisitions were marked and sponsored as "first priority," which forced the Air Transportability Training Center commander to make his own decision as to the relative urgency of each shipment when weather, diversions, or other factors decreased the total available airlift. While, normally, the airlift is reserved for high priority shipments, it is still perfectly feasible to ascribe a relative degree of urgency so that the port may expedite the proper item for shipment. In this same connection, requirements for airlift, particularly from the Army, fluctuated violently, and while it often required several times its assigned allocation, at other times it could not use the available lift.

There seemed to be a general lack of appreciation, in Army supply agencies, of the necessity for maintaining the air transportation system at or near peak production in order to ensure its instant availability for high priority shipments in emergencies. Precision pattern flying requires continuous operation, in order that procedures and air traffic patterns can be stabilized and flying personnel retain a high degree of efficiency. In the same manner, the aerial ports must have a fairly uniform work load, requiring near maximum exertion, in order to be able, instantly, to meet emergency developments. If air transportation is reserved entirely for emergency shipments of the first priority, a sudden unforeseen emergency will find the system either in disuse or already loaded to capacity and, in neither case, will it be able to react instantly to meet the new requirements.

In addition to emergency requirements, supply agencies should have an airlift

program of lower priority which will use the air transportation system for decreasing stock piles and pipe-line inventories of high unit value supplies, such as medical and signal equipment. This

program then will serve as a base load factor which can be used to absorb the slack between peak emergency requirements and thereby keep the system operating smoothly between emergencies.

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The success of our ground operations in any future war will depend more than ever before upon the degree of air support that is provided. Given air transports in sufficient quantity, our infantry divisions can assume greater strategic importance in the far-flung operations of a global war. With the necessary gliders and other specialized equipment, our airborne divisions can go over the enemy's lines to strike vital targets which otherwise could be taken only at great loss in men and equipment. And with the increased fire power afforded by tactical air support to isolate the enemy and drive him to cover, our ground units can gain the freedom of movement quickly to overcome the enemy.

*General J. Lawton Collins*

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An efficient army cannot be a static organism. Its evolution must keep pace with and is, in large part, dependent upon constantly evolving changes in the industrial, scientific, social, and political fields. Adherence to out-moded tools, methods, and organization spells obsolescence, one of the most insidious and at the same time one of the most disabling diseases that can attack an army.

*General of the Army Douglas MacArthur*