



AND REFER TO

NAVY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

17 October 1945.

MEMORANDUM

From: Captain Stassen.
To : The Secretary of the Navy.
Subject: Awards and Decorations.

1. As directed, I conferred with Commodore Vardaman regarding awards and decorations, and thereafter with Captain Vosseler.

2. I do not consider that there is any justification for the complaint that Reserve officers as a whole were not decorated for their exceptional acts of heroism or service on the same relative basis as the Regular officers. It is only natural and right that those in command of ships on hazardous combat missions should be decorated and these officers of course with rare exceptions were the Regulars. But apart from this, I believe the awards were given for individual action regardless of the Reserve or Regular status of the officer.

3. I do believe, however, that the Navy has not given awards to its enlisted personnel to the degree that it should. It is frequently difficult to select the outstanding enlisted personnel who performed exceptional service which warrants recognition. But it is nevertheless very important that this be done. It is of course rather late to reconsider any phase of awards. But I would suggest consideration of a directive to all commanding officers to the effect that while it is recognized that naval service and the manning of ships by its very nature tends to be a closely knit team operation, with each man who is well trained performing excellent service, nevertheless it is important that the enlisted personnel who stand out for performance of exceptionally meritorious service and for individual heroism and leadership should be properly rewarded, and directing that all commanding officers in reviewing the wartime record of their personnel give special thought and consideration to this factor and make appropriate recommendations for awards.

4. Commodore Vardaman also complains that it is impossible to find out at BuPers what has happened to awards that have been turned down by boards of awards with the various fleets.

DECLASSIFIED
5240.30
Authority <i>DSO Directive</i>
By <i>DJH</i> NLE Date <i>4/4/80</i>

AND REFER TO

NAVY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
To: The Secretary of the Navy.

17 October 1945.

It has not been required that any record of awards rejected be forwarded to BuPers. Of course the commanding officer could have and should have made a notation on the respective fitness reports as to the letter recommending the individual for an award. I doubt whether this was done to any great extent. Usually the attitude was to await the action of the board of awards. It would appear that the fact that an officer's commanding officer recommended him for an award is an item worthy of appearing in the officer's jacket even though the award itself was not granted. I therefore suggest that consideration be given to directing all boards of award to forward lists of awards rejected. A simple statement of the award recommended, the dates of the duty for which the award was proposed, and the negative decision of the board of awards. This will be a sizeable clerical task, but I believe it is worthwhile and may also uncover some of the weak administration in the early days in the awards boards.

5. Commodore Vardaman also states that there is a tendency to grant awards to high-ranking Regular Navy officers upon their detachment, even though they have done a mediocre or generally unsatisfactory job. This is a point on which I am not in a position to judge except to say that I did not observe any such tendency in the South Pacific or with the Third Fleet, and to further comment that I doubt the qualification of anyone to pass judgment on the meritorious nature of the service of an officer having a position of major responsibility, except those who were his superiors at the time he performed the tasks. During the war these tasks were much more complicated and involved than the casual observer might think.

6. As to Commodore Vardaman's other complaints on awards, and those from other sources, I would suggest that it be routine practice to request the specific name and serial number of the individual involved, the period of time for which it was thought that the individual should have received an award, or was recommended for an award, and the command to which he was attached at that time. This will permit the tracing of the case even though it is necessary to write to the appropriate fleet or area command. There is entirely too much indication of a tendency to generalize from a few specific cases. The best solution is to check the exact facts of the individual cases.

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NAVY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

18 October 1945.



MEMORANDUM

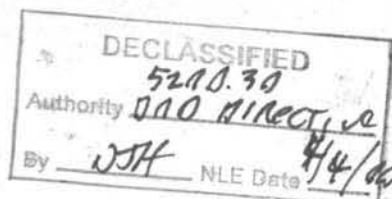
From: Captain Stassen.
To : The Secretary of the Navy.
Subject: Island Commands and Island Governments.

1. As directed I conferred with Admiral McCrea and Admiral Bieri on the subject of island command and island government and island planning.

2. Under the revised organization of the Office of Chief of Naval Operations, the office of the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, OP-09, is the point at which plans for the islands of the Pacific as to both their military use and their civilian governments should be coordinated in the final instance. To a major degree of course the DCNO for Administration, OP-02, and ACNO for Island Governments, OP-22, will coordinate directly with DCNO, Logistic Plans, OP-40.

3. I consider it to be important that the plans of all types for each island and group of islands, including the plans for the civilian population, even though small, and for economic problems of the islands, be coordinated and brought together under one cover as the plan for _____ Island. If this is not done there is a definite possibility of the splitting of administration of various phases of the problems on a single island by the departments of Federal government. In view of the small numbers of people involved on most of the islands and the predominant military and Naval problems, any such splitting of jurisdiction would be very unfortunate. I consider that it can be demonstrated that in the past Naval administration of islands and island peoples has actually been superior for the inhabitants' welfare. The Navy should not, however, rest only on its record of the past, but should show an alertness in future planning and anticipating questions that will be raised. Specifically, each island commander should have on his staff a reasonably senior officer experienced and trained in Naval military government.

H.E.S.



16 October 1945

To:

CAPTAIN STASSEN

J.F.

MR. FORRESTAL.

FIRST DRAFT

Proposed Statement by
The Secretary of the Navy
on
Single Department of Defense (S. 84)
before
Senate Military Affairs Committee
Monday, 22 October 1945
10 a.m.

I am opposed to precipitate action for the consolidation of the Armed Services as envisaged in the Bill now before your Committee for consideration.

I am entirely in agreement that the statutory organization for the assurance of our national security needs study and that there are changes in it arising out of the experience of this war which could be profitably adopted, but it seems to me that we are putting the cart before the horse in arriving at the conclusion that a single department of defense is the answer to all of our problems without a most thorough public and closely reasoned examination of our experience in this war.

I know the answer will be made that as a result of the hearings before the Woodrum Committee a year ago last spring a committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff was appointed to make such a study and that a majority of that committee arrived at the conclusion that consolidation was desirable. That study however was conducted in the middle

of a war. In my judgment it was somewhat superficial and by no means sufficiently searching and thorough, and the best that can be said for it I believe is that it undoubtedly could serve as a useful contribution to the full study that I believe should be made before final decision is made.

What we are asked to contemplate in this measure is one of the most far-reaching and important steps in Government organization since the founding of the Nation itself. It proposes a drastic and sweeping reorganization of a system for defense which we have had for 150 years -- which, incidentally, has won all the wars in which we have participated.

Let us examine the chief arguments that are made on behalf of the proposal:

First, it is said that it will result in great economies. As I said in my testimony before the Woodrum Committee, I think that this falls more into the category of an assertion rather than a proved conclusion. Undoubtedly there are economies that can be effected in the procurement of materials for the Army, Navy and Air Forces, but the claim of increased economy overlooks the fact that many joint procurement operations have been in effect during this war, that many more were instituted in the closing months of the war, and that the Joint Army-Navy Procurement Board has in the last six weeks produced recommendations for

many additional. Joint purchasing is now done in the following fields for all Services:

Petroleum by the Navy

Clothing by the Army

(Add other examples)

It is by no means clear to me from what I have seen of the operations of both the Army and Navy and Air Forces that a combination of the procurement functions of all three into a single agency would necessarily effect greatly increased economy. The Navy found, for example, early in the war that a concentration of purchasing through one medium was neither efficient nor economical, and one of the first steps I took in assuming the responsibility of Under Secretary in charge of procurement in the Navy was to disperse the procurement functions among the various Bureaus of the Department. Prior to that when I came into office I found that practically all contracts had to clear through one channel. This meant that the examination of those contracts took place at the end rather than the beginning of them. A very few weeks in my job convinced me that there was very little serious review that was worth much that could be given to these contracts after they had been processed up through the various echelons of command. I therefore moved to make our procurement effective at the

source of buying -- that is to say, we put trained, experienced business procurement people and attorneys into the Bureaus to supervise our purchasing, to read contracts, and to negotiate at the very beginning of these transactions. I am satisfied this resulted in savings of hundreds of millions of dollars.

It is said that a single department will insure greater efficiency. In this respect I make the observation that my experience in business has convinced me that size is no guarantee of efficiency. I have seen consolidations that were built on rosy prospects of increased earnings because of prospective economies fall far short of expectations for the simple reason that the promoters of such consolidations completely overlooked the limitations of human beings, and particularly their limitations of the administrative area to be covered. It is well known that many of our largest corporations which acquired franchise and momentum in the early days of a particular industry found great difficulty in preserving the vigor and freshness of approach which characterized their early life. That is the reason why in certain fields of industry new companies, vigorously run by younger executives and with a more compact organization, are able to get themselves established sometimes in the very back yards of the great monolithic competitors.

It is said that the consolidation would insure a greater unity of command. I hold this to be fallacious because it fails to take account of the fact that it has been possible to accomplish during the recent war unity of operational command in the field while at the same time preserving the administrative and constitutional integrity of the Departments in Washington. I would also, with all due deference to our sister Service, draw attention to the fact that there has not always been unity of command in that Department as between the Ground Forces and the Air Forces. In fact I think it is fair to say that in some areas the unity achieved between the Army and the Navy has been greater than that between those divisions of the Army itself.

The conception of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has proved successful in this war. It has been one of the great developments of the war, and I think that no one can gainsay the fact that from a look at the captured documents of the German Wehrmacht and the Japanese Imperial High Command it functioned considerably better than either of those.

I would make the following main arguments, not necessarily against consolidation, but to the point that we need to do a greater study and research and to think more closely than we have so far before taking this drastic step:

1. The system we now have worked -- it brought victory to our arms in one of the greatest wars this Country has ever been engaged in.

2. The proposed consolidation is a serious challenge to the genius of our institutions. The plan advanced by the War Department in effect amounts to an isolation and derogation of the civil authority. The office of the civilian Secretary under the proposed plan would, in my judgment, be largely one of form without any great degree of substance.

3. This is a corollary of the second point. I do not believe that any one man appointed from civil life would come to a sufficient mastery of the organization of which he was nominally the head to have any real understanding of its operations. Lacking that knowledge, his authority would be merely a shadow, because authority that is not informed authority cannot function.

4. The system which is proposed in this Bill is precisely the one under which our enemies, Japan and Germany and Italy, functioned before and during this war. We saw its most extreme application in Germany where at the end of the war Hitler was making decisions not merely on military matters but on the most minute details of civilian life, such as the allocation of minerals to the cosmetic industry.

5. The security problems of America are unique in the world. They are different from those of any other nation. Our defenses must be maintained over vast areas of water and through the air. I believe that the consolidation into a single service would do injury to our ability to think in terms of sea lanes, naval power, and the importance and the ability through the use of naval power to apply our strength wherever we choose.

6. The consolidation proposed in this Bill places power -- and as I have said above, I think it is power without adequate information -- in the hands of one man to decide on the balance of the allocations of strength as between Air, Army and Navy. I believe that no one short of the Country itself or its duly elected representatives -- that is to say, the President and the Congress -- should make such a determination. Certainly the Country should know fully upon what grounds such decisions are based. That is the function of the Congress. I believe the proposed Bill would deprive the Congress of its present ability to examine closely, as it now does, into the composition of our Armed Forces.

Congress is being asked to pass upon a conclusion which has not yet been proved. I therefore hope that this Committee will decide to reverse that process and examine the facts before it reaches its conclusion.

DISTRIBUTION:

Mr. Hensel
Admiral Coleclough
Captain Russell
Captain Stassen
Mr. Duffield
Major Correa

17 October 1945

TO:

CAPTAIN STASSEN

J.F.

MR. FORRESTAL.

ADDITION TO STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF THE NAVY BEFORE
SENATE MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, MONDAY, 22 OCTOBER 1945

The question of unification of the Services is always presented in the form of creation of a single Minister of Defense or Secretary for Defense. It seems to me that this again is leaping at a conclusion without sufficient supporting evidence. The first step, it seems to me, is to examine how much greater unification of policy and action and procurement can be accomplished through the existing forms of our Government. I am completely in agreement that there is a need for closer integration of those Departments of our Government which deal immediately with national security -- the War, State and Navy Departments.

Tremendous steps forward can be taken and some are now in process of being taken to accomplish this integration, which means unification. In the report made for me by Mr. Eberstadt it is his conception that there should be a National Security Council comprising the Secretaries of War, State and Navy and, under his plan, of Air, plus the Chairman of a Board called the National Security Resources Board, charged with the responsibility of establishing and keeping up to date in times of peace as well as war those policies and integrated programs for the maximum use of the Nation's natural and industrial

resources in the support of national security.

It seems to me that a structure of this character which could be accomplished without fundamental change in our Government structure should be examined before such a drastic step as the consolidation of two of the great Departments of Government into a single ministry is undertaken. In other words, I propose evolution rather than revolution. I am for gradual and not a drastic approach. I do not believe it is necessary to throw the patient into the air in order to cure him.

JF:HCO
10-17-45

TO:

Captain Stassen

M.F.C.

2020
MR. FORRESTAL.

18 October 1945

MEMORANDUM

A meeting was held in the Secretary's Office at which were present the following:

The Secretary
Fleet Admiral E. J. King
Mr. Sullivan
Mr. Hensel (for part of the meeting)
Admiral Colclough
Captain Stassen
Captain Russell
Major W. F. Correa

Discussion was had of the hearings presently being held by the Senate Military Affairs Committee on the proposed legislation for consolidation of the War and Navy Departments.

Consideration was first given to the witnesses who might possibly be called by the Committee either on the Committee's own motion or on the Navy's suggestion. It was decided that the following should be prepared to testify: Admiral Nimitz, Admiral Halsey, Admiral J. O. Richardson, Admiral Schoeffel, Admiral Towers, Admiral Forrest Sherman, Admiral Robinson, Admiral Moreell, Admiral Mitscher, General Vandegrift (it is understood that the Committee has already asked to hear the General) Mr. Gates, Mr. Hensel and Mr. Sullivan.

Consideration was also given to the suggestion that Mr. Eberstadt might be called as a witness and that Captain Stassen might be called to testify as a civilian. Captain Stassen said he would be willing to do this.

The Secretary stated that he had received clearance from the President to release the Eberstadt report if it were asked for. The Secretary stated that he was having Senator Walsh and Senator Vinson to lunch today and that it was quite probable that they would ask for the Eberstadt report. It was agreed that should the report be asked for, it would be sent with a letter of transmittal which would make clear the circumstances which led to the Secretary's request to Mr. Eberstadt to make an examination into the subject and at the same time make clear that Mr. Eberstadt's conclusions had not as yet been adopted as the official Navy Department view on the subject.

Captain Russell stated that Mr. Vinson had said that he was going to request the Senate Military Affairs Committee to hear him as a witness on this subject and had asked Captain Russell to prepare a statement for him. Captain Russell is preparing such a statement.

A general discussion was had of the various arguments that had been made for and against unification. A question was raised as to whether it was appropriate for the Secretary or some other Navy witness to point out the Army's experience with its own Air Force which started as an integral part of the Army's organization and became practically autonomous. It was Captain Stassen's view, with which the Secretary and Admiral King tended to concur, that this point would come with far greater effectiveness from a non-Navy source. Consideration was also given to the effectiveness of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the opportunity for the free exchange of conflicting points of view which that organization gave. In this connection, Admiral King cited experience in the early days of the war against Japan when it was due only to the insistent urging of the Navy's point of view through Admiral King on the Joint Chiefs of Staff that a substantial portion of the military effort of this country was directed against Japan. As evidence of the ability of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to reach important decisions speedily, Admiral King cited the instance of the Leyte invasion upon which agreement was reached and the orders implementing that agreement actually on their way to the Commanders of the field within 90 minutes after the matter had been submitted to the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Captain Stassen cited the decision to take Emirau to neutralize Rabaul rather than storming the latter position. This was a source of disagreement between Admiral Halsey and General MacArthur. It was finally decided in favor of Admiral Halsey's views by the Joint Chiefs of Staff. This turned out to be the sound view.

Captain Stassen also cited the fact that General Kenny had argued vigorously against long-range bombing of Japan from the Mariannas, although he was subsequently overruled on this point.

The Secretary indicated that he was clear in his mind that he was opposed to the notion of a single department of the Armed Forces headed by one man. On the general question of reorganization of the Armed Forces, he indicated that he felt that some further study should be made on that, preferably through the medium of a board, such as the Morrow Board.

19 October 1945

CAPTAIN STASSEN

2020

MR. FORRESTAL.

ADDITION TO STATEMENT BY SECRETARY OF THE NAVY BEFORE
SENATE MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, MONDAY, 22 OCTOBER 1945

I note that in Judge Patterson's testimony before this Committee he endeavored to dispose of this question of danger of concentration of power by the assertion that it was obvious to any sensible person there could be no danger in this Country of a highly militaristic system resulting. This, it seems to me, falls into the category of an "it-can't-happen-here" statement. I concur with Judge Patterson that the temper of our people today would reject any attempt at military control, and I have no present fear of its happening. I would remind him, however, that the oft-repeated warning of (General Washington -- or Jefferson ??), "Vigilance is the price of liberty," still holds true; that when the figure of Hitler first began to emerge in Germany he was ridiculed as a clown and a buffoon. That original view of him may still be true, but even a buffoon clothed with power can be a menace.

It seems to me this argument for concentration of authority -- what I call the "let-one-man-do-it" concept -- is one additional symptom in the tendency even in the great Democracies to escape the responsibility of thought by delegating authority to a single person.

The complexity of modern society and the speed of events and communications enhance this tendency. Governments cannot remain republican in character nor democratic in spirit unless the people maintain their powers and use them. We do not solve a problem which is by its very nature complex and difficult simply by dumping it into the lap of what we hope will turn out to be a superman, if not a god. You can get the momentary comfort of escapism out of that act but you don't necessarily get a solution.

There is a good deal of the return to Hitler again in the argument of efficiency. There was plenty of opportunity for efficiency in Germany, and I daresay there was efficiency in Germany, but it was an efficiency for which both Germany and the world have paid a terrible ultimate price.

I daresay that democracy itself is not the most efficient form of government. As Fisher Ames said in this Legislature over a century ago, a republic, like a dictatorship, may be likened to a swift vessel which, provided it has a good skipper and it doesn't hit a rock, will get you there faster, whereas a democracy is like being on a raft -- your feet are always wet but the thing never sinks.

Efficiency is an easy and seductive word. I believe there was a man named Bidault who sold it to a

good many American business people, but it turned out in the light of social and political results his system of speed-up yielded short-term results but in the long run it did not turn out to be a wise method of getting increased production.

General Marshall has stressed at some length the desirability of a single source of decision on both the military and civil side. Here again I think the argument is not entirely one-sided. It is my firm belief, for example, that the termination of the war in the Pacific was accelerated by many months and possibly by as much as a year as a result of the Navy's continuous and implacable insistence that a vigorous offensive against the Japanese could be prosecuted without doing injury to the success of our effort in Europe. General Marshall's eyes were inevitably and quite properly fixed on Europe as the great central plain of battle, but I submit that it was a wise thing that Admiral King's eyes were turned toward the East.

In midsummer of 1942 I went to the South Pacific just after the Marines had landed at Guadalcanal. That attack was one of the pivots of the war in the Pacific. It was undertaken with limited means because if we had not seized it then the Japs would have taken it and we would have paid a very high price later on to dislodge them.

I found on my visit that it was the estimate of Admiral Gormley and other commanders that it would be extremely difficult to hold our position on Guadalcanal with the limited air support available. They were gravely apprehensive that the ability of the Japanese to maintain superiority in the air and to apply their then superior naval forces might result in the complete isolation of Guadalcanal. I had planned to extend my trip by several weeks, but because of what I found and my own apprehension as to the ability to supply those embattled Marines on the Island I returned posthaste to Washington. I found what seemed to me a rather complacent assumption in some quarters that there was nothing particularly to worry about as far as the holding of Guadalcanal was concerned. I did my best to stir up an apprehension that I felt myself very deeply. That needed to be done, not that there was any negligence of duty or deliberate skimping of the means to fight the war in the Pacific, but you will remember that that was the summer in which the Germans had nearly driven the British out of North Africa, in which the attack on Dieppe on the French Coast had resulted in disastrous failure, and in which there was still doubt as to whether the Russians could withstand the assaults of the German army. It is quite natural that a little island in the South Pacific

should occupy a small amount of attention in the over-all global plans, but I submit that it was a good thing that one great department of Government was able to bring insistent and clamorous demand to the end that our position on Guadalcanal should be held. It was held, but like many other things in this war, by the thinnest of margins. We held onto it by the slenderest of threads and not until the night of November 14-15, 1942, when the late Vice Admiral Lee's battleships demolished and scattered the Japanese invading armada that was to administer the final coup de grace to the American Marines who held the island did I breathe easily.

JF:HGO
10-19-45



AND REFER TO

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NAVY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

26 October 1945.

MEMORANDUM

From: Captain Stassen.
To : The Secretary of the Navy.
Subject: General Court-Martial case of Copeland,
Milton, and Tompkins (Saipan murder case).

1. As directed, I have reviewed the proceedings in this case and submit my reactions.

2. There is absolutely no question of the guilt of the three defendants. Each gave complete confessions which were thoroughly corroborated and substantiated by a mass of independent evidence. Each of the three, regardless of color, would have been found guilty in civilian courts of murder and in many states, regardless of color, would have received greater punishment than the life sentences they are serving.

3. I have made no effort to study the legal question of limitation on court-martial procedure and assume that in due course the Judge Advocate General and the Attorney General will rule on this point. If, however, there is any question of the jurisdiction of a Naval court-martial over personnel on the beach under these circumstances, it should be promptly corrected by appropriate measures.

HAROLD E. STASSEN.

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Authority	DOD DIRECTIVE
By	DOH NLE Date 4/4/00



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