

OPERATIONAL REPORT

BASE ORDNANCE DEPOT

N.Z.E.F.I.P.

1. The problems of the receipt, custody and issue of Ordnance Stores in the Pacific Area, is much greater than is imagined by the layman, and it is hoped that the following remarks may prove helpful should the occasion ever arise when an Ordnance Depot is again established in the Pacific.

2. One of the greatest problems which has to be overcome is the time lag which occurs between the placing of an order and the receipt of the stores. It was soon found that estimates had to be prepared covering supplies sufficient for six months, as this was the period which we could expect would elapse before stores would arrive. This occasionally brought about very large shipments which were more difficult to handle than would have been the case had stores arrived, say, at monthly intervals. The problem of shipping is one which would greatly improve, and I would suggest, that with a full Division to be serviced, there would be sufficient cargo to warrant the chartering of a small ship which would be at the sole disposal of NEW ZEALAND Forces. I mention this, as on numerous occasions, stores which were urgently required by us, were short shipped owing to priorities being placed on US Equipment. I would again point out, that any Ordnance Depot operating in the Island areas, should carry not less than six months supplies. For the information of any Ordnance Officers concerned, I will attach to this report, a schedule giving some idea of the quantities of popular items used by this Force. This may prove of some value both in the initial provisioning of a Depot and also in the preparation of maintenance demands.

3. STORAGE:

Early coverage of stores after receipt is one of the greatest importance. I fully appreciate the difficulty in providing permanent or pre-fabricated buildings, but I would emphasise the fact that this type of storage is essential if the Depot is to function for any length of time. The provision of a permanent building for the handling of M.T spares and other technical stores should be an urgent priority, as, in a humid climate such as rules in the Islands, it is essential to have some areas in which these stores can be opened and handled. Loss of M.T stores through decoration was relatively light in NECAL, but this could only be attributed to the acquiring of storage space at the Gendarmerie. However, until this building became available, we found it impossible to open and supply spare parts which were urgently required for the repair of trucks which were suffering heavy damage due to the atrocious condition of the road. I would recommend the use of stores wagons both for M.T. parts and Artillery, Engineer and Signal parts. These wagons could be parked in NEW ZEALAND with a selection of parts which it could be assumed would be required soon after landing. These stores would be available for immediate issue, and when permanent storage space was available, they could be used for the distribution of small stores to Divisional units. Temporary coverage should be available immediately stores are landed, and I would suggest the 2000, 18'x13' tarpaulins, together with a supply of timber, should be made available for the erection of temporary shelters and for the coverage of ammunition. Prior to leaving NEW ZEALAND, 1200 tarpaulins were ordered, 400 of these were received with an early consignment of stores, but the balance took many months to arrive, due either to the difficulty in obtaining these in NEW ZEALAND and the lack of shipping at that stage. Owing to this short delivery of tarpaulins, quite a quantity of precious stores suffered untold damage. This position was further aggravated by an order from a very responsible officer for the issue of a number of tarpaulins to A.S.C. It was pointed out that the only tarpaulins available were covering ammunition, with the result the considerable damage was done. Heavy repairs were necessary, and a certain amount of unserviceable ammunition had to be dumped.

Dependent on the availability of timber at the site where ammunition is to be stored, I would suggest that a large quantity of heavy dunnage should be provided from NEW ZEALAND for the purpose of correctly storing ammunition clear of ground contact. This dunnage could easily be used for the securing of M.T Trucks during the shipment.

When the Ordnance Depot arrived in NECAL, it was expected to establish itself and commence functioning with as little loss of time as possible, with the result that the Ordnance Depot was not well constructed as possible and that the men had insufficient opportunity to make themselves reasonably comfortable. Owing to the shortage of manpower, it took many months to have the same amenities as other units had in a few days. I would consequently suggest that the site for an Ordnance Depot should be levelled and roads prepared by the engineers so that the ordnance personnel could get on with the establishment their Depot. Assistance should be given by the Engineers in the erection of temporary shelters such as I have previously mentioned.

#### 4. PACKING OF STORES:

The packing and marking of stores received from NEW ZEALAND caused much concern to B.O.D whilst in NECAL. Some cases were much too light for the type of stores which they contained. These were mainly packages received direct from Contractors. As an example, Ever-ready Batteries invariably arrived in a damaged condition owing to the fact that they were packed in light cases. The ideal type of case is that used by the NZAOC for the packing of clothing. This is a standard case in three sizes which proved very satisfactory. The use of this principle should be extended to all types of stores being shipped overseas. It may appear costly to have to provide this type of case, but the amount of stores lost and damaged would be reduced, and would compensate for the outlay. Much damage was done to valuable stores due to faulty packing. For instance, where metal stores are being packed, care should be taken to see that bright surfaces are greased. Quite a number of shipments arrived from NEW ZEALAND in which Small Arms parts, Arty parts and other small items had been just put in a box, with the result that they arrived resembling a heap of rusty metal. Small part such as these, should be greased and packed in greased paper. Glass items such as Spirt Bubbles, should be carefully packed and not be permitted to roll in cases. The use of straw or wood-wool should not be permitted where metal items are being packed, as both of these substances attract moisture, with the result that they become damp and stores begin to sweat.

The marking of stores caused a lot of heartaches to B.O.D, the codesign "P" in a circle, was parked on each side of cases but the scheduled marking was, in many in instances only placed on the top of the case. From an identification point, the local method of marking is for the scheduled mark to be put on both ends of the case. If possible, this could also go on the top. In order to minimise the chance of pillage, I would suggest that the practice of indicating the contents on the outside of the case should cease.

Code signs were used, but were much too obvious to be misunderstood.

Good Paint should be used in marking, as cheap paint or stencil inks fade under tropical conditions. The position was complained of to D.M.T WELLINGTON and was rectified after the visit of D.M.T's Representatives. Things such as this may appear trivial, but really important to an Ordnance man for the easy identification of stores.

#### 5. SUB-DIVISION OF B.O.D:

Taking into account the type of operations to be expected in the Pacific where forces are liable to land on different islands, I am of the opinion that B.O.D. should not establish more than one forward base. In order to provide an Ordnance Detachment with both the 8<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Brigades and to have maintained an Advanced Ordnance Depot at GUADALCANAL, it would have been necessary if these establishments were to function efficiently, to have provided approximately twice the amount of stores and 80% more men. I am of the opinion that prior to leaving NEW ZEALAND, all units should be allowed to carry a reserve stock of, say, 10 to 20% of items such as Boots, Clothing, Camp Equipment and any items considered necessary. The ideal method of supply with an Amphibious Force would be to establish an Advanced Depot such as A.O.D GUADALCANAL. From then on, all units would work on their reserve stocks. This would allow units to requisition stores and still be able to provide the immediate needs of the man. This principle was tried by the Force in GREEN ISLAND and proved very successful. Units were permitted to carry forward this reserve and from then on submitted demands back to A.O.D GUADALCANAL, which was able to forward the stores required. Any time factor due to shipping was cared for by the reserve stores held by the unit. Regarding a move from NEW ZEALAND of a Force, no unit should move without being completely equipped. If for any reason units have to move without full equipment, then it is imperative that Ordnance stores and the Ordnance unit should be one of the first to move. During the move into NECAL, Ordnance received a huge quantity of stores which were landed prior to the arrival of the main body of B.O.D. This entailed many difficulties for the two officers and 30 O.R's of B.O.D. who had preceded the Main Body. Their worries were increased by units arriving incompletely equipped and requesting the delivery of stores direct from the Dump in the NEPOUI VALLEY. Some units arrived with men short of even clothing, and this alone should back my suggestion that, either unit's proceed fully equipped, or that the complete Ordnance unit be one of the earliest to move.

6. TRANSPORT & LIFTING GEAR:

Only in the later months of B.O.D's existence was ample transport available. This in itself is inclined to hamper the activities of a Depot, and I would recommend that transport should be allowed on a very liberal scale. I would also stress the necessity of having some heavy lifting equipment such as the Mobile Crane which arrived at B.O.D about three months prior to its return to NEW ZEALAND. Such items as Speedway Stoves, M.T Engines and other heavy equipment ranging from 3 or 4 cwt, had to be manhandled and this was much more apparent under the conditions in the islands. A mobile Crane should be one of the first items on any Ordnance Depots War Equipment Table.

7. INSPECTING ORDNANCE OFFICER:

I would strongly recommend the appointment of an Inspecting Ordnance Officer whose duties would take him to every unit, where he should be given the right to inspect equipment and report on it. A check could thus be kept on the state in which a unit kept its equipment and also on the fact that they had no more or less entitled to them.

I would also recommend that the return of unserviceable items to B.O.D should discontinue and that a travelling Board of Survey should visit units at pre-arranged times. The I.O.O could function on this board as a permanent member. Items of no Salvage value could be destroyed on the spot whilst items for repair or salvage could be returned to Ordnance. This would obviate the necessity of carting over many miles, large quantities of material whose only fate could be to end in fire. This would minimise the work of the Salvage Section of B.O.D. They would then be in a position to do more repair work than was ever accomplished.

8. LIASION WITH NEW ZEALAND:

Liaison with NEW ZEALAND or source of supply is an extremely desirable thing, but it is suggested that from an Ordnance point of view this can most successfully be carried out by someone conversant with Ordnance. Quite apart from the Divisional Liaison Officer who made several trips to NEW ZEALAND, I am of the opinion that Ordnance should have had closer contact with NEW ZEALAND. I would suggest that an Ordnance Officer should visit NEW ZEALAND or source of supply, at least every three months. I stipulate an Ordnance Officer, as he would be conversant with the general needs of the Depot. For our dealings with U.S. Forces both in NECAL and GUADALCANAL, use was made of two excellent Warrant Officers, and their appointment was more than warranted. Being in close contact with the U.S Forces, they were many times able to procure stores which were urgently required by our Forces.

9. D&E SECTION:

Much working time is lost in an Ordnance Depot due to the necessity of guards and fatigues. I would recommend that a D & E Section should be incorporated in the establishment. This Section need not be officered, but could be administered by Headquarters Section. under the Adjutant. The ideal section would be about 25 to 30 men strong and should include a carpenter and general maintenance man. This would allow Storemen and Clerks to continue with their duties, but I would suggest that any relief for the D & E Section should come from the general personnel during off duty periods.

10. AMMUNITION:

The type of boxes used for the packing of ammunition could be revised. It is common knowledge now, that timber suffers more than anything in the damp, humid conditions :found in the islands. I would recommend that all types of ammunition should be packed in metal containers. Not only do wooden boxes deteriorate, but in the number of times they are handled, they cannot stand up to the hard conditions. This is amply demonstrated by the condition in which small arms ammunition in particular, and 3.7 How Shell and some 25 pr Shell arrived back into NEW ZEALAND. Hardly any of the small arms ammunition is in fit condition to travel again.

11. SELECTION OF PERSONNEL:

The selection of personnel for an Ordnance Depot should be given the greatest thought, and every endeavour should be made to ensure that the right type of personnel should be available prior to the Depot's departure from NEW ZEALAND. The provision of a number of men to make up the full establishment is of no use if personnel with a knowledge of the duties they are expected to carry out are not available. This is stressed particularly in the Technical Sections of a Depot - namely, M. T, Arty, Sigs; Engs and Ammunition. The necessary knowledge to successfully carry out these jobs cannot be gained quickly enough whilst overseas, and an endeavour should be made to see that the bulk of each of these sections should be trained Ordnance personnel. In addition, care should be taken to ensure that men posted to an Ordnance Depot should be of good character and behaviour, as much trust has to be, of necessity, placed in them.

12. TRAINING OF NCO'S:

Of necessity, N.C.O's in an Ordnance unit are promoted for their ability to carry out the work which they are doing. This will sometimes result in an N.C.O. being extremely efficient at his work, but being a very poor disciplinarian. I would consequently recommend that N. C. O's in Ordnance be given a short course solely on drill and discipline.

13. AUTOMATIC MAINTENANCE:

The supply of spare parts under the system of Automatic Maintenance, is, in itself, an excellent idea. The scales, however, require a certain amount of modification, in that some items are provided for in either too large or too small quantities. Unfortunately, we did not operate the scales for a long enough period to be able to correct them, but in a new Force, this could quite easily be done after, say, six months' service. In the main, the principle is right, and only minor alterations are necessary.

CONCLUSION

I have read carefully the pamphlet prepared by the Australian Army on the "Condition of Service Material under Tropical Conditions in New Guinea". Everything contained in this pamphlet is applicable in a greater or lesser degree to conditions as found in NEW CALEDONIA and GUADALCANAL, and I would suggest that this pamphlet should be consulted and acted upon prior to any further Force leaving NEW ZEALAND for service in the tropics. This pamphlet was prepared by a Scientific Mission for the Scientific Liaison Bureau, Melbourne, Australia.

(sgd) H.McK. REID Major,  
Chief Ordnance Officer, B.O.D.

REPLACEMENT STORES ISSUED BY B.O.D. & A.O.D.  
OVER A PERIOD OF 1 YEAR; 9 MONTHS.

<u>CAMP EQUIPMENT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
AXES FELLING	1274
“ “ HELVES	3406
BOILERS I.G 8 GAL	956
CLOTH EMERY SHEETS	27961
COOKERS PORTABLE No 1 )	
COOKERS PORTABLE No 2 )	514
COOKERS PORTABLE No 3 )	
CORDAGE Fthms.	68235
COVERS WATERPROOF	4625
FORKS GS	8549
INSULATORS 6 GAL	1250
KETTLES CAMP OVAL	2296
KNIVES GS	9679
SUGS ST AND ENAMLE	6907
OIL	7527
PADLOCKS	927
PAINT	3773
PLATES DINNER	10130
SHOVELS GS, RE & RM	5336
SPOONS GS	9307
TENTS 180 lbs	4475
TENTS IPP	424
MARQUEE GS	134
TENTS PYRAMIDAL	255

REPLACEMENT STORES ISSUED BY B.O. D.  
AND A.O.D.  
OVER A PERIOD OF  
1 YEAR 9 MONTHS

<u>CLOTHING</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
BOOTS ANKLE R&F PAIRS	55580
BOOTS ANKLE OFFICER PAIRS	2344
CAPES WATERPROOF	15000
HATS S.S	25576
SHIRTS K.DSHORTS COTTON UNDER	60876
SHORTS KD	57108
SHOES CANVAS R.S Pairs	24773
SOLES LEATHER Pairs	75214
SOX WOLLEN Pairs	122747
TOWELS HAND LARGE	49157
TROUSERS K.D	69590
VESTS COTTON UNDER	44042
HATS SUN H.B.T & NZ CAMOUFLAGE	14392
SHIRTS NZ CAMOUFLAGE)	
)	20777
JACKETS H.B.T )	
TROUSERS CAMOUFLAGE)	
)	25100
TROUSERS H.B.T )	