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Millotat, Christian O.E.

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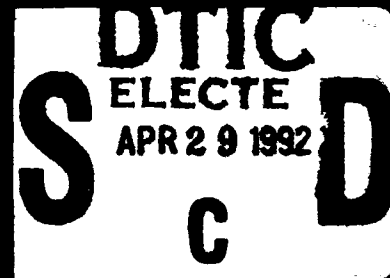


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**UNDERSTANDING THE PRUSSIAN-GERMAN  
GENERAL STAFF SYSTEM**



**Oberst i.G. Christian O.E. Millotat  
German Army**

**Foreword by Donald Abenheim  
Naval Postgraduate School**



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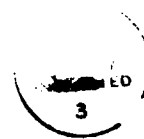
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UNDERSTANDING THE PRUSSIAN-GERMAN  
GENERAL STAFF SYSTEM

Oberst i.G. Christian O.E. Millotat  
German Army

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Colonel Jerome J. Comello of the Department of Military Strategy, Planning and Operations advised in the preparation of this essay. Dr. Thomas-Durell Young of the Strategic Studies Institute edited the draft manuscript and prepared it for publication.

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## FROM THE DIRECTOR

From time to time, an extraordinary manuscript comes to the attention of the Strategic Studies Institute which warrants consideration for publication. In addition to writing analyses of current international security developments, we also are charged with writing and publishing works which contribute to a greater understanding of military issues.

While a student here at the Army War College, Colonel Christian Millotat, of the German Army, wrote an excellent study of the Prussian-German General Staff system and its influence on the *Bundeswehr*. In addition to being a solid contemporary analysis of this key characteristic of successive German military structures, it was judged also to fit the criteria of contributing to the understanding of a little known aspect of an important ally's military. Professor Donald Abenheim, a well-respected expert on the *Bundeswehr*, has provided a foreword explaining the importance of the General Staff in the German Army, as well as its strong historical influence in U.S. military thinking.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer Colonel Millotat's essay as a contribution to an improved understanding of the *Bundeswehr*.



KARL W. ROBINSON  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
Director, Strategic Studies Institute

## FOREWORD

The Prussian-German General Staff has aroused strong emotions among Americans concerned with Germany and contemporary military affairs during this century and before. The men in their Prussian blue or field-gray uniforms with the crimson facings have earned such epithets as "brilliant militarists," "the brains of armies," "geniuses of war," "criminals against peace," "foes of democracy," and "technocrats of organized violence." This variety of generalizations suggests wide confusion in this country about an institution that has alternately fascinated and repelled Americans; such interest has, if anything, intensified since German unification in 1989-90 and subsequent fears about a rebirth of German world power. Such emotional phrases, however, tell little of the qualities that set the Prussian-German command apart from those of other armies in Europe and beyond, nor of its leading personalities, its political successes, and failures; neither do these generalizations say much about the specific characteristics of the Prussian-German General Staff that have endured into the strategic world of today. These latter aspects of the past and present are the subject of this study by Christian Millotat, a colonel of the *Bundeswehr*, a graduate of the U.S. Army War College and a brigade commander in eastern Germany. His education and his service in NATO and national staffs and line positions well equip him to describe the essence of the Prussian-German General Staff and interpret its legacy in the German military of the present. His pages treat these matters with more insight and brevity than can be found in the work of others; previous accounts are either now outdated or the product of those unfamiliar with the evolution of the Prussian-German staff and its legacy in the *Bundeswehr*.

The U.S. Army has long nurtured those concerned with the character of German military institutions; from its very beginnings, there existed in the U.S. Army those links to the European military experience that led to an exchange of American and European practices and customs in the 19th and



20th centuries. This generalization holds especially true for the era after 1870, when the Prussian-Germans emerged from the wars of unification as exemplars of professionalism and skill for those dissatisfied with the peacetime lot of the post-Civil War army. From Emory Upton in the 1870s until such figures as Truman Smith and Albert Wedemeyer in the epoch of the World Wars, U.S. Army officers gained first hand knowledge of German military institutions that had a profound impact on the U.S. Army in war and peace. The Second World War led to what today seems like a kind of permanent community of fate between the U.S. and German armies. The first phase in this development occurred with the cataclysmic antagonism of 1941-45 that has left its mark until today. The second, and perhaps most important alliance phase, began in the era of the Berlin Blockade in 1948-50 and the Korean War and extends into the post-1989 present. The allied decision during the Korean War to arm the Federal Republic of Germany and to station a large peace-time contingent of U.S. ground forces in the new Federal Republic of Germany ushered in four decades of cooperation between American and German soldiers for the defense of Europe.

The dynamic, yet poorly understood relationship between allies in NATO awaits its full scholarly interpretation for students of contemporary strategy. The interaction between German and American military experience since 1945 has been a major feature of the Alliance, but this interaction is generally unknown to those Americans who have not experienced it first-hand. Thankfully, Colonel Millotat's study casts light on past and present dimensions of German ideals of command, issues that impinge on our understanding of strategic and operational questions of alliance cohesion. He emphasizes the importance of the neglected historical roots of what one might call a German philosophy of command in war that had its genesis in the Prussian reform movement of the early 19th century; the following pages describe the institutional setting where these ideals of command flourished as well as how contemporary descendants of Scharnhorst, Clausewitz, and Moltke interpret this legacy in today's *Bundeswehr*. These issues deeply affect the cohesion of the Alliance and the blending of national styles of war that bulk

large in the NATO of 1992 and beyond with its emphasis upon multinational corps. The dynamics of coalition warfare and alliance cohesion require that those officers who serve with the U.S. Army in Europe better comprehend German ideas of command and control as they evolved over the past 200 years. One might also suggest, in conclusion, that as the nations of the vanished Warsaw Pact reorient their ideals of military professionalism and the institutions of command, the officers of the U.S. Army must deepen their knowledge of the respective national experience of command. Key to this process is an appreciation of the institutional dynamics of strategy and operations in those armies coping with the trauma of national upheaval and recovery. The German experience in this connection, as described by Colonel Millotat, has extraordinary relevance to the present and future dimensions of strategy in Europe and beyond.

DONALD ABENHEIM  
Naval Postgraduate School

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### **Military Staff Systems Today—A Result of Historical Processes.**

In 1887 the British military writer Spenser Wilkinson published his essay *The Brain of an Army, A Popular Account of the German General Staff*. In the introduction to the second edition of 1895, we find the following remarkable statement:

It may well be doubted whether this feature of the Prussian (General Staff) System is suitable for imitation elsewhere. The Germans themselves regard it as accidental rather than essential, for in organizing their Navy they have, after much experiment and deliberation, adopted a different plan.<sup>1</sup>

If one compares the allied armed forces in NATO superficially, it seems as if there was a complete consensus about the axioms of staff work and military leadership. In the center, there are the individual leaders at the different levels of command, internally independent men, who take decisions, commit themselves, and, by means of their example, lead their men in peace and war. The higher the levels of command, the greater the responsibility, and, in consequence, the bigger the staffs. These staffs relieve the military leaders of the load of administrative details of everyday business. They work up the facts for their decisions, then implement their orders and supervise the execution. However, if officers assigned to NATO take a closer look, they recognize that the views of military leadership and the roles and functions of staff officers and their relationship with their commanders differ considerably. These differences, as well as the staff organizations of the allied armed forces and their role as an instrument of military leadership, are the result of historical processes that took different courses. The correlation of leaders and staffs in armed forces can be assessed with

certainly only if one knows the roots of the different staff systems. These systems have developed for generations in the respective military political environment of the individual nations and, adapted to our times, continue to have an effect into the present.

When I was a student at the Canadian Forces Command and Staff College and later during my assignment to Headquarters, Allied Forces Central Europe, I was often asked about the Prussian-German General Staff System by allied comrades-in-arms. They wanted to know if it still had an effect on the *Bundeswehr* today. At the U.S. Army War College, I was asked the same questions. I realized that my fellow soldiers admired the efficiency of the Prussian-German General Staff as demonstrated in the German Unification Wars of the 19th century and in the two World Wars, even without knowing its peculiarities. The reason for this lack of knowledge obviously results from the following phenomenon.

In the introduction to his book, *The Imperial and Royal Austrian Army 1848-1914, The Lost Wehrmacht*. Christoph Allmeyer Beck, a famous Austrian military author, writes that it is an Austrian phenomenon that something that has been declared *de jure* nonexistent, simply continues to exist elsewhere in his country.<sup>2</sup> He further states that many things that came into being out of a fine tissue of historical events, intellectual trends and emotional attitudes, would often lead a strange underground existence, trickling up to the surface time and again, thus continuing to exist even into the present. Anyone who attempts to describe the characteristics of the Prussian-German General Staff System, its influence on everyday business and the way that *Bundeswehr* General Staff officers see themselves, will be reminded of this observation of Austrian reality.

The functions and responsibilities of the German General Staff officer were last compiled and issued as an order in the classified *Manual for General Staff Service in Wartime (Handbuch fuer den Generalstabsdienst im Kriege)* in 1939.<sup>3</sup> The methods and tasks described within were applied almost unchanged in the *Bundeswehr* until the publication of the second revised edition of the Army Regulation TF/G 73, HDv

100/100 "Command and Control of Armed Forces" (*Truppenfuehrung*) in September 1987. There appears in this regulation, for the first time, a concise paragraph which explains the functions and responsibilities of the *Bundeswehr* General Staff officer. Paragraph 615 states:

The commander must be supported by obedient, independent and critical advising General Staff officers ("*Fuehrergehilfen*"). They provide him with information and advice, prepare decisions, turn them into orders and measures and supervise their execution. If necessary, they urge the commander to decide and act. Their thinking and actions must be guided by his will and intentions and must be determined by his decisions and orders.<sup>4</sup>

Past authors who wrote about the Prussian-German General Staff System mostly concentrated on the macrocosm of the organization of the former German General Staffs, their leading figures, and their relationship with the highest military and political leadership. Analyses of the microcosm of the Prussian-German General Staff officers were not neglected, but never given the depth of research and attention as to its micro aspects. To date, there is no publication that analyzes the characteristics of the General Staff officers of the *Bundeswehr* in light of history, their work within NATO staffs and the current challenges which were initiated by the revolutionary developments in Eastern Europe and in Germany since 1989.<sup>5</sup> Many authors terminated their research with the unconditional surrender of the *Wehrmacht* in 1945.

This essay is designed to help remedy this unsatisfactory situation and to stimulate discussion. This seems to be necessary for two important reasons. First, Germany will stay in NATO. German General Staff officers will continue to work for allied superiors. Consequently, allied officers should have an understanding of the peculiarities of their German subordinates. This will become increasingly important since allied forces in Europe will consist overwhelmingly of multinational corps made up of national units.<sup>6</sup> This means that the degree of cooperation among German General Staff officers, their allied superiors, subordinates, and their fellow soldiers will increase. Second, in the *Bundeswehr* a diminution

in the education of young officers about German history can be observed. At the present time, Ernst Moritz Arndt's statement in his *Catechism for the German Warrior* (*Katechismus fuer den deutschen Kriegs-und Wehrmann*) of 1813 is therefore especially true for the German General Staff officer who exercises considerable power in the armed forces of today. "Where history is not available, man faces his present empty-handed. Thus, he hardly recognizes a way into the future because he has lost sight of where he came from."<sup>7</sup> Fundamentally, a professional group is only able to develop a concept of itself, introduce its peculiarities into everyday work and to act proactively, if it is aware of its roots and foundations, and recognizes how these influence the present. One who knows the foundations of his profession and is able to articulate them is invulnerable to misinterpretation and professional criticism.

These statements provide a guideline for the structure of this evaluation. After some reflections on the phenomenon of the Prussian-German General Staff System, the General Staff officers of the *Bundeswehr* will be portrayed. The organizational roots of these peculiarities will be pointed out by discussing their history. This discussion will include only examples of how the activities of former General Staff officers affect the *Bundeswehr* General Staff officers and how they see themselves and their working methods. In doing so there is a risk of "open flanks," as historical developments will only be shown insofar as they have had impact on the German General Staff officers of today. For example, this means that the *Wehrmacht* Air Force General Staff and German Admiral Staff officers will not be discussed in depth because the cradle of General Staff officer was in the German Armies of the past. In the concluding section a discussion of problem areas concerning deficits and demands which face the German General Staff officer today, and in the future, will be presented. A summary and some recommendations on a better use of the Prussian-German General Staff system to the benefit of a transformed NATO will conclude this evaluation.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE PRUSSIAN-GERMAN GENERAL STAFF SYSTEM

#### **Between Condemnation and Admiration.**

In the epilogue to his book *A Short History of the German General Staff* (*Kleine Geschichte des deutschen Generalstabs*) of 1967, Walter Goerlitz pointed out that the Prussian-German General Staff has remained a sociological and political phenomenon, despite the German loss in World War II. He is certainly right; there is hardly another military institution or group that has been looked upon with so much controversy.<sup>8</sup> For Germany's former enemies, the Prussian-German General Staff was an object of fear and revulsion, an organization which was considered to represent the kernel of professional militarism in which a selected group of officers worked in monkish isolation on the preparation of war plans.<sup>9</sup> They suspected the German General Staff to be one of those "dark forces," which was weaving the threads of the destiny of nations behind the scenes. Above all, many Americans viewed it as a "conspiracy" which is a crime within the common law legal system.<sup>10</sup> After 1945, noted Europeans spread similar interpretations. It may remain an open question whether these were uttered on the basis of conviction or were mere propaganda. Winston Churchill wrote in his memoirs after World War II: "If we arrest and shoot every General Staff officer, we will have peace for the next 50 years." Stalin went one step further; he wanted to liquidate every German Staff officer after the war.<sup>11</sup>

In the Treaty of Versailles, the victors of World War I banned the Great General Staff (*Grosser Generalstab*). The victors of World War II accused the German General Staff, the Armed Forces High Command (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*) of being criminal organizations and the leading

*Wehrmacht* generals of being criminals at the Nuernberg Trials. Thanks to the defense by Dr. Laternser, assisted by Field Marshal von Manstein, the General Staff and its officers were acquitted of this charge. The defense succeeded in proving that the German General Staff of World War II was only one of several operations staffs of the *Wehrmacht* and never had the immense power that had been ascribed to it in the indictment. The Soviets protested this acquittal.<sup>12</sup>

In East German military literature the Prussian-German General Staff was assessed unfavorably:

In the system of modern German militarism there is no institution since the end of the 19th Century which has played so disastrous a role as the General Staff. . . . The General Staff of the Prussian-German type represents in a most obvious way the anti-democratic and inhuman character of German militarism; this both in the past and in the Federal Republic of today.<sup>13</sup>

General Staff training was not excluded from the controversial discussion on the reorientation of *Bundeswehr* officer training in the 1970s. Officers and education reformers of entirely different intellectual and political backgrounds argued that a democratic state's army no longer needed General Staff officers. They said that training a small group of officers with special competencies within the officers corps was inconsistent with the principle of equality, promoted the development of a caste spirit, was elitist, and no longer tolerable in modern times.<sup>14</sup>

Authors of English military literature overwhelmingly admire the Prussian-German General Staff. They draw attention to the phenomenon that after Field Marshal Count Helmuth von Moltke's victories over Austria in 1866 and France in 1870-71, other countries tried to adopt the Prussian-German General Staff system for their armed forces. For example, Secretary of War Elihu Root failed to achieve this end in the United States of America from 1899 to 1904, because the American public opposed the establishment of a specially trained, small group of officers in the armed forces. However, Root was not completely unsuccessful; we find numerous elements of Prussian-German origin in the



American staff system of today. At the beginning of the 1980s a second year of training was introduced at the United States Army Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth for selected staff officers, which indicates that the U.S. Army is currently testing a 2-year training program for its future leadership. Elihu Root's plan has been revived. The British studied the Prussian-German organization carefully but went different ways. After the war of 1870-71, General Marie-Joseph Miribel established a new General Staff in France which was based to a certain extent on the Prussian-German organization and some of its command and control principles.

Walter Goerlitz pointed out that after World War II, the Americans were the first to use the methods of the Prussian-German General Staff for the benefit of their economy. Many elements that have become integral parts of managerial economics and organizing sciences can be traced back to the Prussian-German General Staff system.<sup>15</sup> In this light, the working method of the Prussian-German General Staff has been adopted in the German language as an idiom. A very accurately prepared and successfully executed project is frequently rated "general staff-like" (*generalstabsmaessig*).

### **General Staff Officers in the Bundeswehr.**

When the *Bundeswehr* was formed in the 1950s, the German military tradition had a negative connotation. The National Socialists had abused the traditional German military values, and, as a result, leading *Bundeswehr* officers wanted to distance themselves from past traditions. Thus, only certain periods of history considered to be "tradition-worthy" were selected. This approach has been called untenable by historians.<sup>16</sup> In light of this approach, it is astonishing that the whole tradition of the Prussian-German General Staff was declared to be binding for *Bundeswehr* General Staff officers. On May 15, 1957, the first Chief of Staff of the *Bundeswehr*, General Heusinger, delivered his opening speech at the newly founded Army Academy (*Heeresakademie*). In the presence of the Federal Minister of Defense he said:

Tradition obliges. . .when I am to reopen today. . .the recreated *Heeresakademie*. . . We (the General Staff officers) are only links in the long chain of the development of German military history. . . This chain goes back 147 years into the past. . . You, particularly, are in a most dedicated manner the defenders and guardians of the values of German military tradition. Thanks to these values it was held in high esteem in the past; slowly but constantly the postwar veils are being lifted from these values. . .<sup>17</sup>

After years of controversy surrounding *Bundeswehr* General Staff officer training, another Chief of Staff, General Brandt, summarized the tradition and the way *Bundeswehr* General Staff officers see themselves in his farewell speech to the General and Admiral Staff Course of 1977. Just as General Heusinger had done in 1957, General Brandt established a direct link between the present and the past:

Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Clausewitz created the General Staff and gave this instrument its objective and direction; the great Chiefs of Staff, Moltke and Schlieffen, developed the General Staff to high perfection; their successors Seeckt, Beck and Halder preserved their heritage. They personified the typical General Staff officer who is the first adviser of his commander, the '*Fuehrergehilfe*.' In this respect they are still exemplary for us today.<sup>18</sup>

There are General Staff officers in the *Bundeswehr*, but there is no General Staff officer branch or corps. And there is no General Staff division within the Federal Ministry of Defense that is in charge of the strategic operational planning of the *Bundeswehr*. The Chief of Staff of the Federal Armed Forces, the *Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr*, is not a Chief of the General Staff vested with the classical General Staff functions of contingency operations, campaign planning and the conduct of operations in time of war.

The German Federal Ministry of Defense exercises the function of a technical department for military national defense and executes with its military staffs the roles of a supreme headquarters of the Federal Armed Forces. It comprises five military staffs—the Armed Forces Staff, the Army, Air Force and Navy staffs, and the Office of the Surgeon General—and six ministerial divisions—the Budget Division, the Personnel Management Division, the Quartering, Real Estate and

Construction Division and the Social Services Division. The Chief of Staff of the Federal Armed Forces is the supreme military representative of the *Bundeswehr* and the military adviser to the Federal Government. He represents the *Bundeswehr* in international bodies in the position of a joint services Chief of Staff. Although he is not included in the chain of command between the Minister and the armed forces, he has been delegated by the Minister special responsibility for the overall concept of the *Bundeswehr*. His planning responsibility commits him to develop the structure, organization, command and control, education, training, and equipment within the scope of given political parameters.

In NATO staffs where the operational defense planning for the Federal Republic of Germany is developed, there are no divisions consisting exclusively of German General Staff officers. The Federal Republic of Germany is the only NATO country which in the event of war, relinquishes operational command over all combat units of her armed forces and a number of major formations of the Territorial Army to NATO commanders. This means that the *Generalinspekteur*, the Armed Forces Staff and the Army, Air Force and Navy service staffs of the *Bundeswehr* are not involved in operational defense planning, which was the classic task of former German General Staffs. As far as strategic-operational planning is concerned, they are involved in the coordination and approval processes of the NATO commanders' plans for the defense of German territory. This is again classic General Staff work. At present, the *Bundeswehr* forces on the territory of the former German Democratic Republic cannot be assigned to NATO in time of peace as long as Soviet forces are stationed there. Their operational planning must be executed by the *Bundeswehr* alone as a national endeavor. This does not exclude close cooperation with NATO authorities. It will be done within the established divisions of the Federal Ministry of Defense. There appears to be no need for a special General Staff planning agency.<sup>19</sup>

The General Staff officer service (*Generalstabdienst*) was defined in the so-called Heusinger-Directive of September 8, 1959. According to this directive, General Staff officer service

is duty in a General or Admiral Staff officer position. These positions are specifically designated in the Tables of Organization and Equipment.<sup>20</sup> Most General Staff officer positions will be filled with graduates of the Federal Armed Forces Command and General Staff Academy (*Fuehrungsakademie*) in Hamburg. It is also possible, however, that officers without General Staff officer training obtain temporary assignments to such positions. General Staff officers are frequently given line commands in order to keep them familiar with everyday unit problems. General Staff officers are entitled to add "in the General Staff Service" (*im Generalstabdienst*) or "in the General Staff" (*im Generalstab*, or simply, *i.G.*) after their rank. In the German language both terms are used synonymously.

### **Ranks of General Staff Officers and Size of the Service.**

The lowest "*i.G.*" rank is that of a captain, while the highest is colonel. Generals holding General Staff positions, e.g., the Chief of Staff of a Corps, do not bear the "*i.G.*" after the rank. The German Army and Air Force General Staff officers have special insignia: in the respective German manual the description of General Staff officer insignia reads, "Dull grey embroidery, stitched by hand, on a crimson underground, 2 x 11 small prongs on either side. The angles of the V-shaped embroidery point downwards. The epaulettes have a crimson underlay."<sup>21</sup> General Staff officers who hold positions which are not designated as General Staff positions wear the collar insignia of their branch of service and do not add the "*i.G.*" to their rank. Admiral Staff officers do not have special insignia in the *Bundeswehr*, and they never had any in the German navies of the past.

German General and Admiral Staff officers form a small group within the *Bundeswehr*. According to an unclassified source of the Personnel Management Division, 39,242 officers served in the *Bundeswehr* during the first half of the 1970s: 26,102 regular line officers (*Truppenoffiziere*), 1,615 medical officers and 11,525 officer specialists (*Offiziere des militaerfachlichen Dienstes*).<sup>22</sup> Only 1,453 of these officer positions were designated as General Staff or Admiral Staff

posts. Two hundred seventy-eight officers temporarily assigned to General Staff and Admiral Staff posts had not been trained as General Staff officers. Thus, only 3.8 percent of all officer posts were General Staff and Admiral Staff positions. A subdivision into the branches resulted in the following figures, which have not changed very much over time: with its 20,167 officers, the Army had available a total of 820 General Staff posts. The Navy has 3,337 officers, with 188 posts for Admiral Staff officers. Twelve thousand two hundred twenty-seven officers served in the Air Force. Four hundred and forty-five of the posts were designated as General Staff positions.

In the middle of the 1980s there were 1,523 trained General Staff and Admiral Staff officers in the *Bundeswehr*. Twenty percent of them were assigned to posts that were not marked as General Staff or Admiral Staff posts. They were mainly employed as commanding officers. *Bundeswehr* General and Admiral Staff officers are found throughout in the Ministry of Defense, in high-level aide-de-camp positions, in NATO, as attachés, in major formations of the Army and the Air Force, as well as in the Navy staffs.

Examples of General Staff assignments in the German Army and in NATO are as follows:

- The brigade is the first level where General Staff officers can be found. The G3, who is the first General Staff officer of a brigade, has the position of Chief of Staff. He may be compared to the *Wehrmacht's* division Ia officer, who was the first General Staff officer, functioning as the Chief of Staff. The *Bundeswehr* brigade is, as was the *Wehrmacht* division, the lowest unit level that can fight the combined arms battle. The brigade's 2nd General Staff officer is the G4. In contrast to other western armies conducting General Staff officer training, the remaining heads of staff sections of a brigade are not trained as General Staff officers.
- In a *Bundeswehr* division there are five General Staff officers; the Chief of Staff, the G1, G2, G3, and G4.

Divisions with special tasks have an additional General Staff officer, a G3 Operation's Officer (Ops) who deals with operational matters. In a German Army corps, the Chief of Staff, holding Brigadier General rank, oversees nine General Staff officers: the G1, G2, G2 Ops, the G3, G3 Planning and Exercises, the G3 Ops 1 and Ops 2, the G4 and the G4 Ops. Currently, the employment of a G6 officer at division and corps level is being evaluated in troop tests. This General Staff officer is envisaged to head a newly formed command, control, and communications section.

- At HQ AFCENT (Allied Forces, Central Europe) in Brunssum, Netherlands, for example, there are about 100 German officers. Only 17 of them are General Staff officers.

In contrast to the situation in many other armies, the *Bundeswehr* does not grant rapid career advancements only to General Staff officers. At the beginning of the 1980s, for example, 40 of the 202 German generals and admirals were not specifically trained as General Staff officers; that represents nearly 20 percent of the general officer corps. Additionally, 52.2 percent of the 1,087 *Bundeswehr* colonels and navy captains were not trained as General or Admiral Staff officers.

### **Selection and Training.**

After selection, *Bundeswehr* General and Admiral Staff officers are trained separately. Since the establishment of the *Bundeswehr*, the selection methods and the curricula of General and Admiral Staff officer training have changed several times. Despite criticism, the selection procedures and the special training have never been abandoned.<sup>23</sup>

The training of the Federal Armed Forces officers is conducted in three steps (see Figure 1). The first step includes studies at one of the two Federal Armed Forces Universities (*Universitaet der Bundeswehr*) in Hamburg or Munich. This is followed by several years of troop duty. When the officer has

**TRAINING AND SELECTION OF**

**- Career Officers**

- Regular Line Officers with 3-15 years of commissioning in the GE Federal Armed Forces

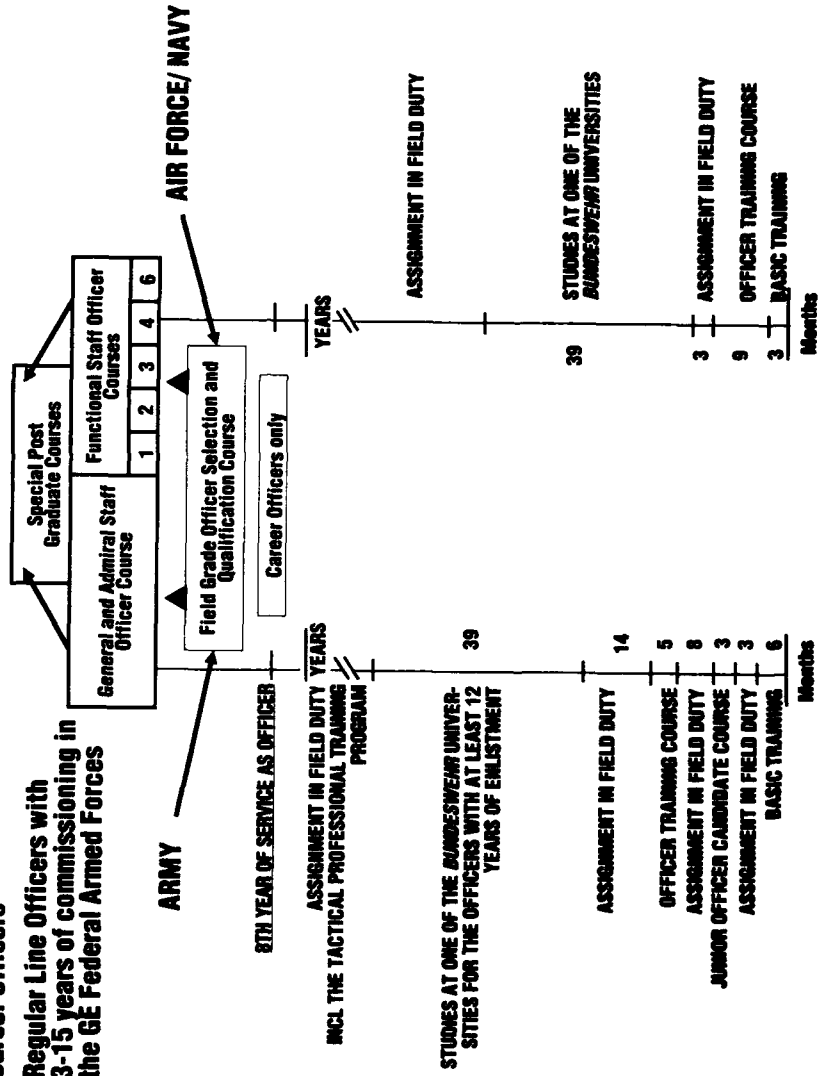


Figure 1.

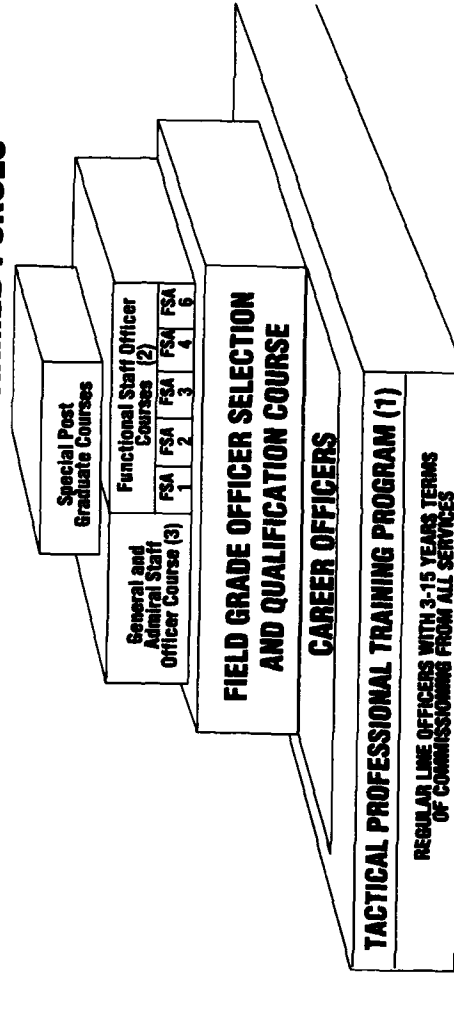
that status, his training for employment in field grade appointments begins at the Federal Armed Forces Command and General Staff Academy (*Fuehrungsakademie der Bundeswehr*) at Hamburg. His subsequent staff training is conducted at this institution. The Federal Armed Forces Command and General Staff Academy was established at Bad Ems in 1957 as the Army Academy (*Heeresakademie*) and was moved to Hamburg in 1958 where it became the Federal Armed Forces institution for future general and admiral staff duty in the Army, Air Force and Navy. In 1974, the Academy was given the task of training all regular officers of the three services for employment in field grade appointments as well as conducting advanced training for field grade officers and General Staff and Admiral Staff officers.<sup>24</sup> This is the second step of the Federal Armed Forces officer training. To date, the advanced training is conducted within a specific system consisting of three phases.

First, the German Armed Forces Command and General Staff Academy is required to train senior captains and Navy lieutenants of the three services normally during their eighth year of commissioned service in the 3 1/2-month Field Grade Officer Selection and Qualification Course (see Figure 2). According to regulations, every career officer must successfully complete this course before he can be promoted to the rank of major or lieutenant commander. The Field Grade Officer Selection and Qualification Course is a joint course for the three services. There, the students receive basic instruction common to all three services, in the areas of general command and leadership doctrine, security policy, the armed forces, and social sciences. In a fourth area, single service-oriented aspects are dealt with separately for army, air force and navy students. Each subject concludes with an examination. The results are summarized in a final grade.

Second, the Staff Officer Courses are the next phase of Advanced Officer training and education. All career officers who have graduated from the Field Grade Officer Selection and Qualification Course must attend one of the Staff Officer Courses. About 10 percent of a career officer age group are selected by a commission for the 24-month General and



# FIELD GRADE OFFICER EDUCATION IN THE GE FEDERAL ARMED FORCES



- (1) Army Officers Only**
- (2) Medical Officers and Officer Specialists are given different training. Officer Specialists cannot be promoted to field grade officers**
- (3) Army Officers additionally attend a 6 months language course**

Figure 2.

Admiral Staff training. The most important selection criteria are excellent performance in line service, outstanding results in the Field Grade Officer Selection and Qualification Course, and relevant assignment recommendations by senior commanders. Army officers, for example, must have commanded a company for 2 years and have achieved good ratings in the Tactical Professional Training Program which they have to undertake as a 1 year self-study course in their unit in the seventh year as a commissioned officer. It is controlled and administered by the division Chief of Staff and capped by a 2-week examination.<sup>25</sup> Ninety percent of a career officer age group are to attend a Special Staff Officer Course of 8 weeks duration. The course starts with fundamentals of staff work and then focuses on the specific staff work with which the officer has to be familiar later, when working in his particular staff area. After being promoted to the rank of major, the officer's training will be completed by a 3-week Advanced Education for Field Grade Officers in Security Policy.

The third training phase is designed to prepare field grade officers for special tasks and functions within the Federal Armed Forces and NATO. A number of these special post graduate courses are attended also by civil servants from both the Federal Ministry of Defense and Federal and state governmental agencies. At present, a number of different courses, with a duration up to 10 weeks, are offered.

The German Armed Forces Command and General Staff Academy is the central institution responsible for the training of field grade, and General and Admiral Staff officers of the *Bundeswehr*. An essential element of its task is the conviction that modern armed forces must be led in the field with scientific knowledge and by military leaders who know how to apply reasoning and methods. Thus, the philosophy of today's *Fuehrungsakademie* is governed by three elements: joint service training, alliance-oriented doctrinal instruction, character and open-mindedness. In order to illustrate these goals, every year since 1962 the Academy has also conducted a 10-month Army General Staff Officer Course for officers from non-NATO countries. In 1986, the Academy started to conduct a similar course for air force officers. The objective of the Army

Course is to familiarize non-NATO officers with General Staff officer duties, primarily at brigade and division levels of command in the *Bundeswehr* and the respective levels of command in the Air Force and Navy. About 600 foreign officers from 60 nations have completed this training.<sup>26</sup>

There is no doubt, however, that the 24-month General and Admiral Staff Courses form the nucleus of the German Command and General Staff Academy. The Army, Air Force and Navy General Staff Course is composed as follows:

- Army: Forty-five German and 12-15 allied NATO students organized in four syndicates or sections;
- Air Force: Twenty-four German and two-to-five allied NATO students;
- Navy: Fourteen German and four-to-six allied NATO students. The syndicates are the most important instructional group and remain unchanged throughout the entire course. They are supervised by a senior lieutenant colonel *i.G.*, who is a faculty class adviser, and a lecturer for the major subject of the respective single service-oriented instruction. He prepares an evaluation of his syndicate students at the end of the course. All syndicates are subordinate to one course director of colonel or navy captain's rank. An Army, Air Force and Navy General Staff Course starts every year at the beginning of October. It is preceded by a 6-month intensive language course at the Federal Office of Languages (*Bundessprachenamt*) at Huerth. A junior and one senior course is in progress simultaneously at the Academy at the same time.

Those fields of knowledge which are important for General and Admiral Staff officers of all three services are provided to all students, mostly in mixed working groups. Subjects dealing with the concept, organization, command and control and operations of the Army, Air Force and Navy are imparted only to the students of relevant individual services. This subdivision into two categories comes at the specific goal level: of the 2,200 broad-aim-oriented instructional hours, 1,000 (i.e., 45 percent), serve for joint-service-oriented training; 1,200 (i.e.,

55 percent), for single service-oriented training. During the entire course, the two categories continuously alternate in terms of conduct of instruction. The faculty is responsible for planning, conducting and evaluating of the instructional programs conducted at the Academy. There are about 130 military and 20 civilian lecturers.

The Army, Air Force and Navy General and Admiral Staff Officer Course is designed to enable Academy graduates to fulfill tasks in General and Admiral Staff duty in peacetime, crisis and war, independently and responsibly. This must be done within and outside their individual services, on national and integrated NATO staffs, at levels of command from brigade to army group, and in all staff functional areas.<sup>27</sup> The degree of desired ability is primarily oriented on the required qualifications for future assignments. The results of the instructional process are established by examinations and are taken into consideration in the assessment of contributions in the final evaluation by the faculty class adviser. Additionally, some young General and Admiral Staff officers will receive staff training abroad at staff colleges of a variety of NATO and non-NATO countries. *Bundeswehr* officers may take part in General and Admiral Staff officer qualification only once, and reserve officers are excluded from this type of career. Voluntary participation in General and Admiral Staff training is not possible.

The General and Admiral Staff Training at the German Forces Command and General Staff Academy imparts to relatively young officers a level of knowledge which their allied comrades-in-arms cannot acquire until a later stage of their career, usually as senior lieutenant colonels or colonels. British and Canadian officers, for example, do not receive training equivalent to that of the German General and Admiral Staff officers before they attend a senior service college.<sup>28</sup> When French officers start their higher staff training, they are, on the average, 6 to 7 years older than their German contemporaries. As a result, young German General and Admiral Staff officers in their early thirties already are trained to think and act at the operational and strategic military-political levels.

Following completion of studies, *Fuehrungsakademie* graduates pass through three *ab initio* assignments. These normally include General Staff posts at brigade, division or corps level, the respective levels of command in the air force and navy, in the Federal Ministry of Defense, or in a NATO headquarters. After an assignment as a battalion commander or in a similar position, the General Staff officer is supposed to work mainly in the staff functional area for which he is especially suited. This principle, however, is not rigidly applied. During these initial assignments, the young General Staff officer is controlled and managed by the same section of the Personnel Management Division that is responsible for generals and admirals. A field grade officer without General and Admiral Staff training normally retires holding the rank of lieutenant colonel. Career expectations for General and Admiral Staff officers include promotion to colonel or navy captain; however, this is not guaranteed.

#### **The General Staff Officer as the Commander's Adviser.**

A former director of doctrine and research at the *Bundeswehr* Command and General Staff Academy stated that General Staff officer training should be aimed at producing officers who are capable of occupying the position of Chief of Staff of a major formation or command agency, as the responsibilities for this assignment are representative of General Staff requirements. Therefore, General Staff training should be directed towards this objective.<sup>29</sup> This statement sheds light on the decisive peculiarity of the German General Staff officer, which distinguishes him from his colleagues of all other armed forces. He has a dual responsibility; specifically, as is the case in other armies, the General Staff officer relieves his commander from the technical details of staff work. However, in the German system, his main task is to advise his commander in all matters, and he is entitled to the commander's attention. The General Staff officer bears the shared responsibility for the relevance of his advice. Thus the General Staff officer has a position that makes him stand out from the rest of the staff officers. While all staff officers give advice to their senior officers, the General Staff officer

additionally provides advice to his commander in all relevant matters. He has the right to urge the commander to make a decision, and the commander must listen to him. The General Staff officer is entitled to articulate diverging opinions. He is the "alter ego" of his commander; moreover, he bears joint responsibility because he is accountable for the relevance of his advice.<sup>30</sup>

The first General Staff officer of a major unit or command has an especially elevated position. He actively participates in all stages of command and control. Together with his commander, he evaluates the mission, estimates the situation and develops the decision. After this process it is no longer possible to say who made the individual contributions. The commander alone, however, has the authority to make decisions on his own. Once a decision has been made, the General Staff officer loyally carries out his orders.

The following two examples from German military history are intended to underline this particularly close cooperation between commanders and their first General Staff officers. In his memoirs, Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg rendered a description of his relationship with his first General Staff officer, General of the Infantry Erich Ludendorff, during World War I. He said:

*I myself have often described my relationship with General Ludendorff as a happy marriage. How can an outside observer clearly differentiate the merits of the individual man within such a relationship. Thoughts and actions merge, and the words of one man are often just the expression of the thoughts and feelings of the other one.*<sup>31</sup>

Colonel General Hans von Seeckt, one of the "big Chiefs of Staff" of World War I, elaborated on the same subject pointing out that before the commander made a decision, he had to first listen to the advice of an assistant, his Chief of Staff:

*The decision is taken in private, and when the two men come out, there is only one decision. They have amalgamated it; they share one mind with each other. Should the opinions have differed, in the evening of this happy day in a military marriage the two halves will no longer know who gave in. The outside world and military history*

will not have knowledge of a domestic quarrel. The competence of command and control is based on this fusion of the two personalities. It does not matter if the order bears the commander's signature, or if the Chief of Staff has signed it for the High Command (today 'For the commander') according to our old custom. The commander always issues his orders through his Chief of Staff, and even the most senior subordinate leader must submit himself to his orders without objection, because his orders will always be given on behalf of the supreme commander.<sup>32</sup>

At higher command levels only the first General Staff officer, the G3 of the brigade or the Chief of Staff, has this particularly close relationship with his commander. Younger General Staff officers, however, cooperate with their respective superiors in just the same way. They have the right and the obligation to advise them. Theoretically, every General Staff officer is authorized to approach his commander and offer him advice.

The increasing trend within the *Bundeswehr* is that all subordinates are supposed to give advice to their superiors. The superior officer should listen to the advice of his subordinates—when it seems appropriate.<sup>33</sup> Up to now, however, it is only the German General Staff officer who has had the institutionalized right to press his advice upon his superior, who, in turn, is obligated to listen prior to making his decision. This is not always very easy for commanders. Thus, the German General Staff system bears the inherent potential for strong Chiefs of Staff to dominate weak superiors.<sup>34</sup> This inherent danger is one of the reasons why it is almost impossible to explain the peculiarities of the German General Staff system to foreigners. Allied commanders would not tolerate an officer at their side who has the institutionalized right to give advice, even when not solicited. This would be detrimental to their understanding of authority. Therefore, German General Staff officers serving in NATO staffs often meet with a total lack of understanding when they try to force their advice on their allied commanders. Such behavior is often interpreted as insubordination.

Even the French General Staff system does not provide for a jointly responsible adviser. In his *Réflexions sur l'art de la*

*guerre*, General de Serrigny, who was General Petain's chief of cabinet during the battle for Verdun, describes the relationship between the commander and the Chief of Staff as follows:

The general devises and directs his operations with his closest advisers including one or several tactically trained officers who take up his thoughts and cooperate in the closest way. (In France, these officers are called '*adjoints*'.) The Chief of Staff is responsible for feeding resources to the battle. He immediately directs all supply operations and issues orders to the respective agencies.<sup>35</sup>

The *adjoints* in the French staff system are integrated in the organization of the French commander's *Cabinet*. They work exclusively for him. They are personal staff officers who supply original ideas to their commanders and fulfill functions which are done within the Prussian-German General Staff System by the General Staff officers. They are, however, not advisers to their commanders in the German sense.<sup>36</sup>

### **Esprit de Corps of German General Staff Officers.**

The traits fostered by the German and Admiral Staff training are valor and veracity, critical judgment, objectivity and intellectual versatility, personal force, self control, and sound esteem.<sup>37</sup> Although there is no General and Admiral Staff corps in the *Bundeswehr*, selection, special status and ethical values within this small group of officers result in a strong esprit de corps. Former students of the *Fuehrungsakademie* classes frequently meet in class reunions. Former and active General and Admiral Staff officers are often members of the Clausewitz Society, an association that cultivates the General Staff officer tradition. General Staff officers of major units regularly hold meetings. It is a normal practice for a division's Chief of Staff to call together the General Staff officers of the brigades for the discussion of particular problems. The responsible commanders are informed later. The Chiefs of German corps staffs and service staffs work in a similar way. These meetings ensure that the German General and Admiral Staff officers possess great unity of thought. This makes them guardians of



the German leadership philosophy throughout the Federal Armed Forces.

### **Mission-Oriented Command and Control.**

The cornerstone of the German leadership philosophy in peace and war is mission-oriented command and control (*Auftragstaktik*). It was developed by the Prussian-German General Staff System and has long been a command method in the German Armed Forces. In the German Army Command and Control Regulation HDv 100/100, this principle is characterized as follows:

Mission-oriented command and control is the first and foremost command and control principle in the Army of relevance in war even more than in peace. It affords the subordinate commander freedom of action in the execution of his mission, the extent depending on the type of mission to be accomplished. The superior commander informs his subordinates of his intentions, designates clear objectives and provides the assets required. He gives orders concerning the details of mission execution only for the purpose of coordinating actions serving the same objective. Apart from that, he only intervenes if failure to execute the mission endangers the realization of his intentions. The subordinate commanders can thus act on their own in accordance with the superior commander's intentions; they can immediately react to developments in the situation and exploit favorable opportunities.<sup>38</sup>

The principle of mission-oriented command and control grants commanders at all levels a maximum of freedom of action. In the armed forces of German's allies, the beginnings of mission-oriented command and control are recognizable. Many other armed forces have adopted mission-oriented command and control based on the German experience.

### **Function Overrides Rank.**

In the *Bundeswehr*, the position weighs heavier than the rank. In both the Air Force and the Army, lower-rank officers are frequently superiors of higher-rank officers. This phenomenon has long been the practice with General Staff officers. In German staffs, captains *i.G.* are often direct

superiors of higher-ranking officers. This would be unthinkable in other armed forces, where function and rank must coincide. Therefore, a soldier in the American and British armed forces who is assigned to a higher position may be given an "acting rank" until he is properly installed in the higher-paid slot, or as long as he occupies the elevated position.<sup>39</sup> This procedure is not applied in the *Bundeswehr*. Senior non-General Staff officers often must accept working for General Staff officers who are junior in rank to them.

## CHAPTER 3

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE GENERAL STAFF CONCEPT

Thus far, the *Bundeswehr's* General Staff system has been presented descriptively and within functional categories. At the center of this exposition was the illustration of the peculiarities of the German General Staff officer as the commander's adviser. This chapter is intended to illustrate the way the *Bundeswehr* General Staff officers see themselves and their working methods through the discussion of historical milestones.

The term General Staff has gone through various changes of meaning. In the 16th century, it described a group of top-ranking generals. King Frederick the Great was his own Chief of Staff because officers functioning as advisers did not exist in his Army. He formed a corps of orderlies who reconnoitered the terrain and conveyed his personal orders to subordinate commanders. This corps was called the Quartermaster General Staff (*General-quartiermeisterstab*). In Frederick's major formations, brigadier majors served as staff officers. They wrote reports and gathered information for the battle.<sup>40</sup> Napoleon's General Staff can be described as a military office directed by the Chief of the General Staff. Napoleon did not tolerate officers who interfered with matters of command and control. Marshal Berthier, his Chief of the General Staff for many years, was only tasked to pass on his orders. Thus, he did not participate in command and control activities. Therefore, the historic roots of the Prussian-German General Staff system do not go back to Frederick the Great or Napoleon, as has often been falsely assumed.<sup>41</sup>

The man who created the Prussian-German General Staff was David Gerhard von Scharnhorst from Hannover. The son of a former noncommissioned officer of Schaumburg-Lippe

and tenant farmer, he was born in 1755 in Bordenau near Hannover at the lake Steinhuder Meer. He received his military education and training in the school of the Count von Schaumburg-Lippe, located in Castle Wilhelmstein at the Steinhuder Meer. In 1801 he applied to the King of Prussia, Frederick Wilhelm III, for employment in the Prussian service. He received the rank of lieutenant colonel and was raised to nobility.

Scharnhorst and a group of young Prussian officers had recognized early the sweeping changes in military affairs that had taken place in the course of the French Revolution and refined by Napoleon. They wanted to use them to good advantage for the renewal of Prussia as a military power. This was deemed necessary because the mass armies of the wars of the French Revolution and the demands for general conscription terminated the era of cabinet wars of King Frederick the Great's time. Initially soldiers driven by patriotic enthusiasm fought in the French revolutionary armies, thus differing greatly from the armies of mercenaries of the era of Frederick the Great. Consequently, the Prussian commanders around 1800 were no match for Napoleon's military genius. The new era called for scientifically trained officers, who were supposed to support the commanders as advisers. In Prussia, however, there were not very many of them.<sup>42</sup>

The General Staff dating back to the times of the Prussian King, Frederick the Great, was reorganized in 1803. General von Geusau established three brigades, each commanded by a lieutenant colonel. These lieutenant colonels were called quartermaster lieutenants (*Quartiermeisterleutnants*) and were supported by 18 officers holding major's or captain's rank. The new Quartermaster Staff did not have an effect on the Battle of Jena and Auerstaedt in 1806. By then, the staff's powers and methods of working had not been developed sufficiently. We can say, however, that the roots of today's General Staff officer go back to the Prussian Quartermaster General Staff of 1803.

In the fighting following the Battle of Jena and Auerstaedt, the relationship between the commander and the scientifically

trained General Staff officer typically found in later German armies came into being. When General von Bluecher withdrew from the pursuing French over the Harz mountain range, Scharnhorst assisted him as an adviser. Bluecher had a very high opinion of his educated adviser and accepted his advice regarding operations and command and control. It is justified to consider this as the birth of the "commander's adviser" (*Fuehrergehilfe*) of the Prussian-German General Staff System.

In 1808 the Prussian War Ministry was newly created. It was headed by Scharnhorst, who was at the same time the Chief of the General Staff. French protests forced Scharnhorst to give up his position as a War Minister. However, he remained the Quartermaster General, which was the Prussian title of the Chief of the General Staff. In 1807 King Frederick Wilhelm III appointed him to head the Military Reorganization Commission to reestablish Prussia's Army and to clear it of the officers who had failed in the 1806 campaign. He was assisted by 2 or 3 Quartermasters of major general or colonel rank, 3 to 5 Quartermaster lieutenants holding major rank and 12 adjutants of captain rank. On the whole the Quartermaster General Staff consisted of 21 officers. The staff was assigned to prepare the Prussian Army for wartime operations, as well as train the Prussian King's operations staff for wartime and support him in his capacity as the Commander in Chief.<sup>43</sup>

In 1804 Scharnhorst founded an academy for young officers who had emerged from a voluntary association of young, studious officers that had surrounded him. Among them was Carl von Clausewitz, a lieutenant at that time. After the lost Battle of Jena and Auerstaedt, the Academy was dissolved. In 1810 Scharnhorst laid the foundation for the General War School (*Allgemeine Kriegsschule*), which was supposed to be the counterpart of Humboldt University that opened the same year. First, this school was intended to prepare two classes of officer candidates for their officer's examination and to offer young officers an opportunity to receive higher, scientific training. Later King Frederick Wilhelm III founded three war schools for officer candidates and the General War School was reserved for senior officers.

From this time onwards, the school was to be an "educational establishment for all branches and was to replace those institutions that concentrate on the training of an officer for just one field of knowledge." The training objective of the General War School was stated in old fashioned language:

Although the training is tailored to teach the student the special knowledge and skills corresponding to his future assignments, great store is set by combining the studies with extended use of thinking in order to make the training of the mind the main subject of training.<sup>44</sup>

Training at the General War School lasted 3 years. The school's capacity permitted the training of 50 officers who first had to pass an entrance examination. From 1819 the Inspector General for Military Training and Education was placed in charge of the General War School. Henceforth, it was reserved for those officers who, after having acquired profound knowledge, wanted "to prepare themselves for higher and extraordinary tasks in the service," i.e., mainly for future General Staff officers. The number of officers registered for training every year was reduced to 40, and the subjects were taught in the form of lectures as in a university. For 3 years, the lectures were held from October 15 to July 15 of the respective year of training. In the interim, the students served in other branches of service

On October 1, 1859, the General War School was renamed the War Academy (*Kriegsakademie*). The War Academy was supervised by the Chief of the General Staff. The management of the Academy was split into a military directorate responsible for disciplinary affairs, and a studies directorate responsible for the scientific portion of the curriculum. General von Clausewitz, who was one of its military directors for many years, wrote his monumental work *On War (Vom Kriege)* during this assignment. Being the military director, he did not exert any influence on the curriculum of the Academy.<sup>45</sup> The War Academy was the precursor to the *Bundeswehr's* Command and General Staff Academy.

The far-reaching congruence of objectives of the Humboldt University and the training at the General War School shows that Scharnhorst and his fellow reformers wanted much more than military reforms. Their activities must always be considered within the framework of the overall Prussian reforms. Scharnhorst, who had advanced due to his brilliant abilities, wanted to open up all positions within the renewed Prussian Army for scientifically trained officers, without regard to their social background. The group of noble leaders who dominated the Prussian Army overwhelmingly disapproved of the necessity of scientific education for the officer. Scharnhorst wanted to force them to compete for their qualifications with a new academic elite. However, he was realistic enough to realize that it was not possible in Prussia to do away with a system that continued to select military leaders according to class and birth.<sup>46</sup>

He was right in his assessment. In the Prussian Army, and the federal contingents attached to the Imperial Army (*Reichsheer*) after 1870, soldiers of the higher nobility commanded armies up to the end of World War I without being properly trained for this task. There were, however, some notable exceptions such as the Bavarian Crown Prince during World War I. Scharnhorst wanted to diminish the weakness of this system by providing these army commanders with General Staff officers as their advisers. This, then, served as the decisive root to support the need for a "commander's first adviser," a concept whose effects are felt to this day. The need for a trained body of General Staff officers was the result of the increase in the size of the 19th century armies and their organization into separate divisions and corps. For both logistical and strategic reasons these formations usually marched separately and united only to do battle. The complex management of these forces required professionally trained General Staff officers. The founders of the Prussian-German General Staff pursued aims that went beyond military professional matters. The reformers' political and educational objective was to create a constitutional monarchy in which the best should have access to all functions and positions in the army. These new, basically middle-class qualification features were to be effective in the Prussian-German General Staff from

that day on. During the 19th century, conservative Prussian officers fought against the goal of the reformers that officer candidates should be high school or even college graduates and pass an officers' examination before graduation. They believed that by these requests, officer candidates from noble families would not be competitive with better academically trained candidates, from educated commoners' families, and that the nobility would lose influence in the officers' corps. This dispute never affected the General Staff officers and their recruitment and selection by means of examinations. Thus, qualification requirements based on merit alone were accepted in the General Staff earlier than in other social strata.<sup>47</sup> This phenomenon must certainly be considered a further important historic milestone for the *Bundeswehr's* General Staff officer.

In 1813 after Scharnhorst died from a septic wound, his fellow reformer, General Neidhardt August Wilhelm von Gneisenau, was assigned as the Quartermaster General, i.e., the chief of the General Staff. Gneisenau has been recognized as the first "great Chief of Staff" in the history of the Prussian-German General Staff. He institutionalized the right of the commander's adviser to take part in command and control by advising the commander until he makes a decision. He conceded to General Staff officers of major formations the right to contact directly the Chief of the General Staff in all matters of their functional areas. Not all of the Prussian military leaders agreed with the concept. General von York, for example, never wanted to accept Gneisenau's position as the first adviser to General von Bluecher. Nevertheless, the good harmony mentioned earlier between Bluecher and Scharnhorst during the withdrawal from the French Army, henceforth became the institutionalized right of Prussian-German General Staff officers; namely, to advise their commanders and assume joint responsibility for their actions. This resulted in joint responsibility for commanders' decisions and the exercise of command and control of General Staff chiefs from army corps level upwards. Up to 1938, it was an unwritten law that army corps Chiefs of General Staffs were permitted to enter in the war diaries their opinions when they differed from the responsible commander's decision. From 1938 the Chief of the General Staff of Army, General of the



Artillery Franz Halder, restricted this right in a sensible way, as will be argued later in this essay. The responsibility for the relevance of his advice has remained with the General Staff officer of the *Bundeswehr*.

Gneisenau also became the founder of *Auftragstaktik*. He was the first to develop command and control by directives, thus giving latitude to the subordinate commanders for the execution of operations.<sup>48</sup> Subordinate commanders were for the first time issued directives expressing the intent of the Royal headquarters in terms of clear objectives, but giving only general indications of the methods of their achievement. This enabled commanders and their General Staff officers to use initiative in taking advantage of unforeseen opportunities, provided that their actions were consistent with the main objective. Thus, Gneisenau laid the cornerstone of the German leadership philosophy: mission-oriented command and control.

### **Consolidation of the Prussian General Staff System.**

In the period between Napoleon's defeat in 1815 and the year 1857, when General Helmut von Moltke became Chief of the Prussian General Staff, the following historic milestones are of importance. In 1821 the Quartermaster General Staff was renamed the General Staff (*Generalstab*). Since the Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General von Mueffling, had more years in service than the Prussian War Minister, Major General Ruehle von Lilienstern, the Prussian King separated the General Staff from the Ministry of War.<sup>49</sup> The Chief of the General Staff, however, remained subordinate to the War Minister and continued to be his adviser in operational matters. This separation of the General Staff from the Ministry of War was the first step to the complete independence of the Prussian General Staff.

Starting in 1817, 16 General Staff officers served in the Prussian Ministry of War and 6 General Staff officers worked in the main embassies. Each army corps had one Chief of General Staff and two other General Staff officers. The Chief of the General Staff was the immediate superior of all General

Staff officers of the Prussian Army. The General Staff officers posted to the Ministry of War served in the "Great General Staff," (*Grosser Generalstab*), the General Staff officers of unit staffs were called "Line General Staff Officers," (*Truppengeneralstab*). In 1821 the General Staff officers received special uniform insignia which have been retained to the present day.<sup>50</sup>

Scharnhorst's aim to open up the top army careers to all scientifically trained officers without regard to their social background was initiated in the General Staff of the Prussian Army at a time when the concept of selection based on merit had not gained general acceptance in the Prussian officer corps and other state agencies. This opportunity allowed the induction of a number of outstanding officers. For instance, General von Clausewitz's nobility was based on a falsification by his step-grandfather. King Frederick Wilhelm III later acknowledged his nobility when the general and his brothers had attained great achievements. The nobility of Field Marshal Count von Gneisenau also was a falsification. The King nevertheless promoted him to Field Marshal and bestowed countship upon him. General von Krauseneck, who was the Chief of the General Staff from 1829 to 1848, was the son of a Brandenburg organ player and had been promoted from the ranks. General von Rheyser, Chief of the Prussian General Staff from 1848 to 1857 was a shepherd in his youth. Owing to his brilliant military achievements he became an officer and was later given a title of nobility.<sup>51</sup>

This phenomenon is also one of the historical roots of today's General Staff officer for, within the Federal Republic of Germany, academic titles take the place of the higher status inherited by noble birth in former times. In the *Bundeswehr*, where the Officers Corps is heterogeneous as far as origin and education are concerned, all regular officers have to pass through the same selective procedure to become a General Staff officer. Academic education and titles do not grant any visible advantages.

### **Prussian-German General Staff Under Moltke and Schlieffen.**

Under the command of Field Marshals Count Helmut von Moltke and Count Alfred von Schlieffen, the Prussian-German General Staff developed into the highest strategic authority in Prussia and, after 1871, in the German Empire. In the end, the political forces in Germany hardly participated in its strategic planning; rather, they were informed about them.<sup>52</sup> It is interesting to posit how this development came about. Owing to his personal merits in the campaigns against Denmark in 1864, Austria in 1866 and France in 1870-1871, Field Marshal Count Helmut von Moltke succeeded in emancipating the General Staff completely from the Prussian War Ministry.<sup>53</sup> As had been the case with Scharnhorst, who came from the Army of Hannover 20 years before, Helmut von Moltke changed from Danish into Prussian service, because he hoped to find better career chances there. In 1857, the monarch appointed him as Chief of the Prussian General Staff.

When the war against Denmark broke out in 1864, General von Moltke first remained in Berlin. According to regulations dating back to 1821, he had to submit his operational suggestions through the War Minister to the monarch. The commander in chief of the Prussian troops, Field Marshal von Wrangel, first had similar acceptance problems as had been the case with Gneisenau and General von York. Wrangel considered it beneath a Prussian Field Marshal's dignity to accept the advice of a Chief of the General Staff.<sup>54</sup> The Field Marshal changed his views only when Moltke was appointed as his Chief of the General Staff in the course of the campaign and directly cooperated with Wrangel. The separate deployment and advancement of four Prussian armies and the nearly successful envelopment of the Austrians near Konigsgraetz in the 1866 campaign were Moltke's personal achievement. The victory over Austria built up his reputation as a strategist. There he achieved Clausewitz's ideal of a decisive victory by means of a battle of annihilation. The railway network gave Moltke the means he needed to mobilize swiftly and concentrate the Prussian conscript army. In appreciation of Moltke's success, on June 2, 1866, King

Wilhelm elevated the importance of the Chief of the General Staff's position. In times of war he was granted the right to issue operational orders on behalf of the King. However, the sovereign had to be consulted before vital decisions were taken. Up to that time the Chief of the General Staff had only been the planner of operations, but this step entrusted him with their execution as well.<sup>55</sup> Henceforth he only had to inform the War Minister about his activities.

As early as the end of the 1864 War, the strength of the General Staff had to be increased because the wartime establishment of only 83 officers was simply insufficient. There were also plans for "raising a special budget for purely scientific purposes." Financial constraints and the War of 1866 prevented this reform. Resulting from the conclusion of the 1866 war, the following budget for the General Staff was decided upon on January 31, 1867: The "main budget" provided for 88 General Staff officers. Besides the Chief of the General Staff of the army, it included three division chiefs of the Great General Staff, officers in the Great General Staff, and the General Staff chiefs and General Staff officers of major formations. The "additional budget for scientific purposes" comprised 21 officers. Of the 109 General Staff officers, 46 were assigned to the Great General Staff and 53 were posted to the Line General Staff. The outbreak of the 1870 war showed that the wartime requirements of 161 General Staff officers were contrasted by a peacetime budget, which provided for 109 General Staff officers. At the beginning of the campaign of 1870, about 200 General Staff officers were posted to the mobile German armies. Their number was increased in the course of the war.

The phenomenon of the General Staff officers being only few in numbers already existed at the time of Moltke. The "Office of the Chief of the General Staff" was responsible for personnel management of General Staff officers and all organizational and economic affairs. The "main budget" formed three divisions which were tasked to keep track of all matters of military interest at home and abroad, plus a division for railroad matters. The first division was responsible for Sweden, Norway, Turkey and Austria. The second division's

responsibility was Germany, Italy and Switzerland. The third division was tasked to observe developments in France, England, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and America. Finally, the fourth division worked on any issues related to military rail transport. The "additional budget for scientific purposes" also allowed for the organization of a war history department, geographical-statistical studies, and a General Staff survey division.

Upon declaration of war against France in 1870, Moltke advanced to the battlefield with the Great Headquarters. The operations division was headed by Lieutenant Colonel Bronsart von Schellendorf, the political division by Lieutenant Colonel von Verdy du Vernois, and the railroad division by Lieutenant Colonel von Brandenstein. Moltke conducted the operations in France with only 13 General Staff officers. Owing to their wartime success they were called Moltke's "demigods" within the Prussian Army.<sup>56</sup> He repeated his outstanding performance of 1866 by annihilating the Army of the French Emperor Napoleon III at Sedan and by breaking the French armies which tried to bring the war to an end to the advantage of the French Republic.<sup>57</sup>

The complete emancipation of the General Staff from the War Ministry took place in 1883. A cabinet order dated May 24, 1883 placed the position of the Chief of the General Staff on a level with that of the War Ministry and the Military Cabinet. He was granted the right to contact the sovereign directly and to present his statements.<sup>58</sup> Moltke never had strived for this elevation of the General Staff. After the 1870-71 Unification War, in the course of a popular-nationalist heroizing of war, many Germans came to consider the General Staff as an almost mystic powerhouse. Numerous war memorials and artist's impressions depicted the Chief of the General Staff together with the "Architect of the Reich," Otto von Bismarck, Emperor Wilhelm I, the War Minister, Albrecht von Roon and the monarch and ruler of the German Empire. Field Marshal Count Helmut von Moltke had headed the General Staff for 31 years. When he stepped down from his post at the age of 88, 239 General Staff officers were serving in the Prussian Army and the Federal contingents of the German Imperial Army.

This included 197 Prussians, 25 members of the Bavarian Army, 15 of the Saxonian Army and 7 from the Wuerttemberg contingent. The Prussian Army and the Federal contingents included 21,981 officers, of which only 1 percent were General Staff officers.

The successor to Field Marshal Count von Moltke as the Chief of the General Staff was General Count von Waldersee. He occupied the post for only 3 years and had to resign due to disagreements with Emperor Wilhelm II. Emperor Wilhelm II appointed the General of the Cavalry, Count Alfred von Schlieffen as his successor, who held the post of Chief of the General Staff from 1891 to 1906. Under his command, the Prussian-German General Staff system reached its highest efficiency before the First World War.<sup>59</sup> Up to the present day Schlieffen's ideas and techniques of command and control have influenced various facets of the *Bundeswehr* and its General Staff training. This fact is hardly known or recognized today, as will be discussed later.

### **Towards Professional General Staff Training in Prussia: The Bavarian Approach.**

Prior to 1870, training at the War Academy was conducted in university-like lectures. The artillery general and military writer General Prince Kraft zu Hohenlohe-Ingelfingen attended the War Academy from 1851 to 1853. In his records he assessed the General Staff training at that time as follows:

Everything was dealt with in a theoretical and scientific way. Some of the lecturers did it brilliantly and in a fascinatingly ingenious manner, others, however, in as dry as dust, sometimes even sickening fashion. Besides a few exceptions the training was of no practical use for life and service at all. Everything remained mere theory and the blossoming life tree remained a secret to us. The teachers were not to be blamed for that, because they themselves did not know it any better.<sup>60</sup>

The students had to attend 20 hours of lectures per week. Lecturers were professors of Berlin University and General Staff officers. Nonmilitary subjects predominated. Thus the

War Academy training had more the character of studies in the classical academic disciplines than that of a preparatory course for General Staff officers.

In 1872 the War Academy was taken from the Inspector of Military Education and placed under the Chief of the General Staff. Its organization remained unchanged. The teachers at the Academy became mostly General Staff officers from the Great General Staff who had to teach in addition to their normal duties. Those young officers who wanted to become General Staff officers prepared voluntarily for the entrance examination. From hundreds, about 100 were accepted per year and went through a 3-year course at the Academy. At the end of the course they took their second examination. Only about 30 students passed this extremely difficult test. These were then ordered (*kommandiert*) into the Great General Staff. After 2 years they had to take their third and final examination. After that, between five to eight were permanently posted to the General Staff. Most of the former "ordered" found jobs—according to their qualifications—in the higher staff service (*Hoehere Adjutantur*), the G1 Branch of today, which did not belong to the General Staff at that time, or perhaps as teachers in an officers school; others simply in regular line service. The extremely small number of those who were finally posted to the General Staff is also due to the advanced retirement age during these decades.

The goal of the General Staff training was not to produce a genius, but to concentrate on the training of ordinary men who could display efficiency and common sense. Every General Staff officer had to be able, at any time, to take over the work of another and apply to it the same body of basic ideas and the same principles of operational and tactical thought. Today this is still a major goal of the General and Admiral Staff officer training at the German Command and General Staff Academy. The long and demanding training led to a great homogeneity of General Staff officers. At the time of their acceptance into the General Staff, most of them were holding the rank of a captain; first lieutenants were the exception and required 3 years of commissioned service with the troops. Then, as is the case today, the General Staff career began

generally in the Line General Staff, at division and army corps level. After a line command as a company commander, the General Staff officer was usually posted back to the army corps level. Afterwards, line commands alternated with assignments in the Great General Staff and the Line General Staff.

Refusal of entrance into General Staff training at the War Academy did not rule out a later call to the General Staff. It was possible for line officers without academy training to be ordered to the General Staff due to extraordinary achievements in a line command. Officers such as Field Marshal von Mackensen, and General Colonel von Einem, among others, became General Staff officers without this training. They were, however, rare exceptions. Here we see the origins of the Heusinger Directive of 1959 which offers the same opportunities for officers who have not been given General Staff officer training. In the old system, however, officers without academy training had to take the final examination after 2 years. This procedure was increasingly waived after the turn of the century because a sufficient number of War Academy graduates was available.<sup>61</sup>

The reorganization of General Staff training into a more technically oriented training scheme under Moltke and Schlieffen has been criticized by some historians. Critics often reproached Schlieffen's General Staff training for not having been sufficiently training-oriented. In addition, Schlieffen was criticized for involving young, future General Staff officers in map exercises at a very high level for which they were not senior enough due to age and experience. It was claimed that operational aspects had been stressed too much and technical details were totally neglected. It is simply the nature of General Staff training to be the subject of continuous criticism. It is quite interesting in this context to note how the qualification profiles of General Staff officers of the times of Schlieffen resemble those of the *Bundeswehr* as far as the military-technical knowledge is concerned.

After its defeat in the war against Prussia of 1866, Bavaria established its own War Academy and retained General Staff training of its own after the foundation of the German Empire in 1870. The number of general knowledge subjects in the



Bavarian General Staff training was greater than was the case at the Prussian War Academy in Berlin. The lectures were given by Munich University professors and General Staff officers, for whom teaching was the main profession. In contrast to the situation in Prussia, the chief of the General Staff and the War Academy were subordinate to the Bavarian Ministry of War, which set great store by foreign language instruction. While graduates of the Berlin War Academy were ordered to the Great General Staff and were immediately tasked with finding solutions to practical problems, their Bavarian counterparts first passed through a further 2 years of centralized training which provided them with an understanding of theory in the sciences of war.

A comparison of both academies' curricula shows that Bavarian General Staff training was oriented more strongly toward producing General Staff officers educated on a broad, scientific basis. The speculation of high level Bavarian officers and some Bavaria-loving historians after World War II supporting the claim that War Academy training in Munich had been generally superior to that of Prussia must be considered with caution.<sup>62</sup> Munich did not deal with tasks associated with the defense of the German Empire, and the Berlin War Academy graduate working in the Great General Staff gained a faster insight into the general context of war planning than his Bavarian counterpart. Furthermore, some young future Bavarian General Staff officers were ordered to the Great General Staff in Berlin after they too had successfully graduated from the Munich War Academy. In spite of all the Bavarian attempts for independence, in the end there was an underlying orientation of the Bavarian General Staff officers towards Prussian conditions due to the emperor's command, which was not to be misunderstood. Seen in this light, the emphasis on fundamental differences between the two systems appears artificial. The great number of able Bavarian General Staff officers who held high-level positions in the army after the First World War and in the *Wehrmacht* showed that the Bavarian General Staff officers were highly qualified.<sup>63</sup>

Before the outbreak of World War I, 625 officers served on the General Staff of the German Army which included 270

officers who were commanded or detached to the General Staff. Out of a total of 352 General Staff officers with a normal peacetime career, 295 came from the Prussian, 34 from the Bavarian and 23 from the Saxonian Armies. Only the Bavarian General Staff officers had been trained in Munich; all the others were instructed in the Berlin War Academy. The officers corps of the army of the German Empire had a peacetime strength of 36,693 officers, with 625 being General Staff officers, which amounted to 1.7 percent of the total officer corps. One hundred thirteen General Staff officers were employed in the Great General Staff. In 1914, France had available 950 graduates from the *Ecole Supérieure de Guerre*, the French General Staff Officers' School. The Austrian Army included 500 General Staff officers while the Russian Army had 1,000; but their function and independence were not comparable to those of their German opponents.<sup>64</sup> Under Schlieffen and his successor, Colonel General von Moltke, who was a nephew of the Field Marshal and later became Chief of the General Staff in 1906, General Staff officers already showed a great many of the characteristics still evident in the *Bundeswehr* of today: selection and special training; small number; main function as the commander's adviser; work according to the mission-oriented command and control principle; and special uniform insignia. The General Staff officer of the year 1914 wore on his 1910 field uniform crimson pipings or trouser stripes and a crimson stripe at the collar. In 1915 the crimson collar patches for General Staff officers' field uniforms were reintroduced as well. Generals, however, stopped wearing the General Staff officer collar patches, and have worn the gold embroidery on a flaming red background up to the present day.<sup>65</sup>

The emancipation from the War Ministry of the General Staff and the right to consult the monarch directly, which had been granted de facto to Moltke as early as 1883, however, led to an uneasy coexistence between military planning and political activities. This caused friction between Moltke and the Prussian Chancellor Otto von Bismarck in the wars of 1866 and 1870-71 and required the intervention of the monarch. When Field Marshal Count von Schlieffen planned to employ the bulk of German forces at the outbreak of war first in the

west, politicians reluctantly—if at all—participated in the planning process. By accepting this, the German Emperor, Wilhelm II, and the political leadership de facto invested in the Chief of the General Staff the power of a military dictator. This was contradictory to General von Clausewitz's axioms on the relationship of political and military powers in the process of policymaking and command and control in times of war. In his work, *On War*, Clausewitz had stated in this context:

. . . war is simply a continuation of political intercourse, with the addition of other means. . . war in itself does not suspend political intercourse or change it into something entirely different. . . war cannot be divorced from political life; and whenever this occurs in our thinking about war, the many links that connect the two elements are destroyed and we are left with something pointless and devoid of sense. . . if war is to be fully consonant with political objectives, and policy suited to the means available for war, then unless statesman and soldier are combined in one person, the only sound expedient is to make the commander-in-chief (i.e. the Chief of the General Staff in the German system) a member of the Cabinet, so that the Cabinet can share in the major aspects of his activities.<sup>66</sup>

Emperor Wilhelm II, unlike his grandfather Wilhelm I, the last German monarch, was not strong enough in leadership to give his Chief of the General Staff a position in the Clausewitzian sense, that is to say, under political control. This failure would result in fatal consequences for Germany in World War I.

### **The General Staff in World War I.**

The study of historical milestones reveals two striking characteristics of General Staff in the First World War that have not been repeated. First, in the course of the First World War, the General Staff became the strongest political power in Germany. The 3rd Supreme Army Command (*Oberste Heereleitung*) under Field Marshal von Hindenburg and his first Quartermaster General, i.e., his first General Staff officer, General of the Infantry Ludendorff, not only directed the operations at all fronts, but also increasingly determined the political destiny of the German Empire. This phenomenon

does not represent a remarkable historic milestone for *Bundeswehr* officers, since it is contradictory to the relationship of the political and military powers as described by Clausewitz.<sup>67</sup> Sheer military virtuosity cannot compensate for the lack of political direction and national strategic objectives. The second characteristic lies in the fact that the Chief of the General Staff of the 2nd Supreme Army Command, General of the Infantry von Falkenhayn, and after him General Ludendorff, the 1st Quartermaster General of the 3rd Supreme Army Command, went too far with the concept of the commander's adviser by putting him above the responsible military leader. In the literature this process is called the "Chief System."

As has already been discussed, the Prussian German General Staff system encourages a powerful adviser to the responsible superior. It was necessary to appoint strong personalities as Chiefs of the General Staff of World War I army commanders of high nobility. They in fact commanded the armies of the princes. This had been the expressed wish of Emperor Wilhelm II.<sup>68</sup> In the course of World War I, Generals von Falkenhayn and Ludendorff extended the powers of the Chiefs of General Staffs and increasingly dealt directly with them, and not with their responsible commanders. The Supreme Army Command increasingly called the first advisers to account for mistakes in the command and control of major formations, and not the commanders in chief of the army groups and armies. So-called "super chiefs" like Colonel von Lossberg, Colonel Bauer or Colonel von Seeckt were employed in every theater of war in critical situations. Their predecessors were simply removed from their posts and the Supreme Army Command did not always inform the respective commanders of this move in advance. The rank of the "super chief" was not important at all. The memoirs of Colonel General von Einem contain pertinent examples of the "Chief System." For instance, the former Prussian War Minister commanded the 3rd Army from the end of the 1st Marne battle in September 1914 to the armistice of 1918. During this time the Supreme Army Command replaced five of his chiefs of the General Staff. The commander in chief had never been consulted beforehand. The ranks of the Chiefs of General

Staff varied from lieutenant general to major.<sup>69</sup> General Colonel von Einem wrote in his memoirs that he had been upset, deeply hurt and angered about this behavior of the Supreme Army Command. Any other consequences of the army commander in chief are not known. It is quite obvious that the World War I army commanders accepted the "Chief System," even though it was detrimental to their authority.

Another case in point is that army commanders accepted orders of General Staff officers holding considerably lower ranks: Lieutenant Colonel Hentsch, who had been sent to the German armies in the 1st Marne battle by the Supreme Army Command, gave the order to break off the battle in September 1914. Consequently, the "Chief System" paralyzed the indivisible responsibility of high-ranking military commanders. Here we have another historic root of today's General Staff officers: function overrides rank. Orders issued by junior General Staff officers "for the commander" must be executed. In the revolutionary confusion of 1918, the General Staff and the Prussian Ministry of War remained the only organizations able to bring back the armed forces and to reestablish order in the German Empire. On November 9, the chairman of the Council of People's Representatives (*Rat der Volksbeauftragten*), Friedrich Ebert, called on the General Staff to assist in the fight against Bolshevism and to bring the army back home.<sup>70</sup> This alliance between the Social Democrats around Friedrich Ebert and the General Staff accounts for the fact that its reputation remained untouched in spite of the military defeat in the First World War.

### **The General Staff After the Treaty of Versailles, 1920-33.**

The Treaty of Versailles banned the Great General Staff and the War Academy, but not the Line General Staff. The army of the German Empire called the "*Reichswehr*," comprising 100,000 soldiers and 4,000 officers, was subordinate to the *Reichswehr* Minister, who, in turn, was responsible to the Parliament. It was by his order that the Chief of the Army Command (*Chef der Heeresleitung*) exercised command and control. Thus the Minister wore two hats: he was commander in chief and Chief of the General Staff rolled

in one. The first Chief of the Army Command, General-Colonel von Seeckt, succeeded in retaining largely unnoticed by the victorious powers the Great General Staff in the Armed Forces Office of the *Reichswehr* Ministry. The Armed Forces Office (*Truppenamt*) looked after the classical tasks of a General Staff. From 1919 to 1920 it was headed by Seeckt, before he assumed the position of Chief of the Army Command. Sixty officers, mostly General Staff officers, served in the Armed Forces Office. Line General Staff officers were employed in the major formations. For purposes of deception, they were called "Commander's staff officers" (*Fuehrerstabsoffiziere*). The special uniform insignia of the General Staff officers were maintained. Several sections of the Great General Staff itself were dispersed among the civil ministries. The Topographical Section, for example, went to the Ministry of the Interior, the Railway Section to the Ministry of Transport, and the Military History Section disappeared into the new Imperial Archives (*Reichsarchiv*).<sup>71</sup> In a directive signed on October 18, 1919, General von Seeckt showed that the General Staff Corps of the *Reichswehr* would uphold old traditions and set new standards of efficiency. He stated:

I expect every General Staff officer to ensure that by unremitting effort he acquires the highest possible degree of military ability and exerts upon the entire army an exemplary, inspiring and stimulating influence. Steadfast in concern for the troops. . . it will be his aim to make of them not only a reliable pillar of the state, but also a school for the teachers and leaders. (The General Staff officer). . . must stand above parties and factions. Only then we shall have our hands and our hearts free for work embracing the whole people.<sup>72</sup>

General von Seeckt broke new ground for the training of new generation officers: Every *Reichwehr* officer had to take part in military district examinations. The best 10 candidates then underwent a 2-year training course for "commander's staff officers" (*Fuehrerstabsoffiziere*) in the group commands. In this way General von Seeckt successfully tried to compensate for the lost centralized training facility of the War Academy. In the third year of training, the officers attended an obligatory training course in Berlin. Applied tactics was regarded as the most important subject of the military district

examination. It also included papers on tactical theory, weapons, field craft, engineering and eight general subjects including a foreign language. Three or four problems had to be answered in a period of 6 to 10 hours. They were usually based on the tactics of an infantry regiment reinforced with elements of other arms, and involved the presentation of the regimental commander's estimate of the situation and his orders to follow. Together with his examination results, the character of each candidate was assessed from the annual reports of his superiors.

The process of selection extended throughout the 3 years of training. Of approximately 70, only some 15 went to the third year's course. It ended with a 2-week tactical field exercise which was passed finally by 8 to 10 students. The objective of the program was to train assistants for the senior field commanders and the central command structure, and to produce officers to be advisers, assistants and executors of leaders' decisions.<sup>73</sup> The curriculum was much broader in scope than in the prewar War Academy. The *Bundeswehr* today maintains obligatory participation by all officers in a selective training course. Since that time, one cannot apply directly for general and admiral staff training in Germany.

### **The General Staff in the Third Reich, 1933-45.**

When Adolf Hitler came into power, many General Staff officers hoped he would reestablish the Great General Staff with its former powers. General of the Artillery Ludwig Beck, who was the chief of the Armed Forces Office from 1935, wanted to reintroduce the right of direct consultation of the head of state. This wish turned out to be an illusion in the Hitler state. In the *Reichswehr*, the chief of the Armed Forces Office ranked only fourth in the hierarchy after the *Reichswehr* Minister, the Ministry Office and the chief of the Army command. From 1935 there were four top-level staffs of the *Wehrmacht* which tended to General Staff tasks: The *Wehrmacht* Operations Staff—Hitler's personal working staff; and second, the Army General Staff under General Beck. (Coming from the Armed Forces Office, he personified the heritage of the old General Staff.) Third, the Air Force General

Staff was newly formed. And finally, the Navy High Command with its chief Admiral of Warfare formed the *Wehrmacht's* fourth operations staff. The divisions of the newly formed Army General Staff were headed by five Senior Quartermasters. In 1939 the German officer corps comprised 25,000 men, 500 of whom were General Staff officers.<sup>74</sup>

General Beck transformed the Armed Forces Office (*Truppenamt*) into the Army General Staff. He had the question of joint responsibility painstakingly and critically examined. The excesses of Ludendorff's "chief system" and the times of the princely commanders in chief were gone forever. The results of the examination showed that the right to joint command and control responsibility of chiefs of staff of high level commands had never been laid down in written form, but had been passed on orally, as had been the case with many institutions and working procedures of the General Staff. It was proposed to the Chief of the Army General Staff to state in the "Manual for the General Staff in Wartime" that the military commander alone was accountable for his area of responsibility.

The traditionalist Beck declined this proposal, because he did not want to give up an institution which had proved successful for so many years and had been used repeatedly by Moltke. His successor, General of the Artillery Franz Halder, explicitly dropped the joint responsibility of General Staff officers for command and control when the new manual for the General Staff in Wartime was written, for he considered it outdated. He decreed that the commander alone was responsible externally and internally, and that the General Staff officer had to take a share in everything and deal with the problems as if he had to bear the responsibility himself. However, the General Staff officer would only be internally responsible.<sup>75</sup> This resulted in the *Bundeswehr* General Staff officer of today having joint responsibility and accountability for the relevance of his advice. The former "General Staff channel" was thus reasonably restricted and took into consideration that most of the top-level military leaders of the *Wehrmacht* before World War II were General Staff officers. Army General Staff officers retained their special insignia.



Officers of the Armed Forces High Command (*Oberkommando der Wehrmacht*) received golden collar patches. Air Force General Staff officers wore the Air Force collar patches on crimson cloth. The Navy did not introduce special insignia for Admiral Staff officers.<sup>76</sup>

From the beginning of his work as the Chief of the General Staff of the Army, General Beck had to deal with many officers who were enthusiastic about National Socialism and demanded the "political soldier." The later chief of the *Wehrmacht* operations staff, General Alfred Jodl, demanded the abolition of the advising and jointly responsible General Staff officer. He and other officers took the view that, in the modern "*Fuehrer* State," the General Staff could only play the traditionally prominent role as a planning and training staff in peacetime, but would not be required as a leadership body in wartime. Furthermore, they claimed that in wartime the "*Fuehrer* Principle" had to take full effect and the General Staff officers' work was merely to assist the leaders in the planning and execution of operations, and independence had to be ruled out.<sup>77</sup>

On October 15, 1935, the 125th anniversary of Scharnhorst's General War School, the War Academy was reopened in Hitler's presence. The major address was given by War Minister, General Colonel von Blomberg. He praised Scharnhorst as the founder of the German General Staff and of the War Academy, and as a revolutionary who had established "the unity of the people, the state and the armed forces." The parallels between the revival of Prussia after its humiliating defeat at the hands of Napoleon in 1806 and the revival of Germany after the defeat of 1918 were enthusiastically stressed throughout Blomberg's speech. General of the Artillery Beck, the next speaker, also drew from history for his theme when he outlined the objectives of General Staff training. Some people were of the opinion that he wanted to point out the main differences between the General Staff officer as developed by Scharnhorst and Hitler's idea of the soldier within the "*Fuehrer* State" in the presence of the *Fuehrer* himself. Beck said, among other things:

. . .As the recognition of a correct thought does not always automatically mean the adherence to it, I would like to point out on the occasion of today's anniversary, too, that the transition from knowledge to skills, to the free, creative activity on a scientific basis, which is the case with a high level military leader, necessitates as its foremost prerequisite the education and training of the mind by means of the sciences of war. To grasp and deal with the connections of military problems profoundly by applying systematic brain work, step by step, . . .required careful studying and practice. Nothing would be more dangerous than to follow erratic, incomplete ideas, however prudent and ingenious they may appear, or carry on the basis of wishful thinking, however fervent it may be. We are in need of officers who systematically proceed on the way of logical reasoning to the end, whose character and nerves are strong enough to do what their reason dictates. . . .<sup>78</sup>

In 1938 General Beck resigned from his office in protest of Hitler's political activities against Czechoslovakia. Later on he was one of the leaders of the uprising against Hitler on July 20, 1944. Beck committed suicide on the evening of the unsuccessful revolt. For all time he exemplarily represents the responsible and intellectual General Staff officer who followed his conscience and sacrificed his life in the revolt against the criminal dictator Hitler when he had recognized that only the dictator's death would save Germany from total destruction.

In 1936 about 1,000 officers assembled at the military district headquarters to take the compulsory examination for future field grade officers. Out of these, about 150 entered the War Academy. In order to increase the output of the Academy between 1933 and 1937 the course was reduced to 2 years. The primary aim of the newly structured General Staff course was to train General Staff officers as advisers and assistants to major unit commanders or as members of the central command apparatus of the General Staff of the Army. The new course was not designated to train future senior commanders, nor to provide staff officers for Wehrmacht interservice or ministerial appointments.

Students were assessed by their tactics instructors throughout the course. There was no final examination. Borderline cases were, however, closely watched by their senior instructors. Candidates who did not qualify for General

Staff appointments were usually sent to the War Ministry or became senior adjutants or tactics instructors in military schools. Those who qualified went to a "probationary period" (*Probezeit*) of up to 18 months in a General Staff appointment. When this was successfully completed the candidates were entitled to add the "i.G." to their military rank and to wear the insignia of the General Staff officers. The qualities sought, in addition to military competence and knowledge, included quick mental perception, the ability to think logically, swiftness in decision making; insight for essentials and for coherence, the ability to be creative and not to cling to regulations.

In the battles of World War II, the German General Staff officer proved once again his exceptional skills and knowledge. During the campaigns in Poland and France, the chief of the Army General Staff still directed the successful operations to a great extent independently. This changed when Hitler increasingly interfered in the command and control of the operations. In the course of the war the Army General Staff remained responsible for the campaign in Russia under Hitler's direct command; the *Oberkommando der Wehrmacht* was responsible for the war theaters and occupied territories of Norway, Finland, Africa, France, Belgium, and the Netherlands and for the replacement army. Throughout World War II the German High Command suffered from the serious rivalry between the *Wehrmacht* High Command and the Army General Staff. Both staffs were drawn from the ranks of the General Staff Corps, and the rivalry between them was not initially over the question of support of Hitler's policies, but over the problem of the control of the *Wehrmacht* in war. The *Wehrmacht* High Command never assumed the role of a joint command over the services. Hitler failed to develop the *Wehrmacht* High Command into a functioning *Wehrmacht* General and Admiral Staff.

Many General Staff officers participated in the attempted assassination against Hitler on July 20, 1944, and took the bitter consequences which included penal liability of their whole families or executions by shooting or hanging, which were inflicted on them by the sentences of the People's Court (*Volkgerichtshof*). The aftermath of July 20, 1944 shattered

the General Staff officers as over 60 were arrested. The loss of many General Staff officers, including 24 hanged and 16 suicides, added to the heavy casualties suffered by the General Staff, which by the end of 1944 reached 166 killed in action, 10 from illness and 143 missing.<sup>79</sup> Unlike many other professional groups in Hitler Germany, many of the best General Staff officers participated in the "revolt of conscience" against the dictator and followed their code of ethics which ruled out tyranny and crimes. The German General and Admiral Staff officers can be proud of this heritage.

## CHAPTER 4

### EFFECTS AND WAYS, DEFICITS AND DEMANDS

In his farewell speech before the graduates of the General and Admiral Staff course in 1982 the *Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr*, General Brandt, by referring to his 1980 speech said:

The importance of General Staff training derives from the requirements of General Staff service with its multifaceted tasks, which, in principle, have not changed since it was established 200 years ago.<sup>80</sup>

Thus, General von Seeckt's maxim, which he had communicated to the General Staff officers in 1919 after taking over the post as the Chief of the General Staff when the stipulations of the Treaty of Versailles were not yet in effect, is still valid today:

The form changes, the spirit remains the same. It is the spirit of silent, unselfish performance of duty in the service of the armed forces. General Staff officers have no name.<sup>81</sup>

It is hardly possible to describe the past and contemporary history of German General Staff officers in a more precise way.

The far-reaching political and educational approach of General von Scharnhorst and the timelessly valid statements of General von Clausewitz on the interrelationship of political and military power rule out the politically insensitive General Staff officer. A high degree of professionalism and the performance-oriented selection procedures for General Staff officers were effective from the beginning of the 19th century, at a time when the leading positions in the armed forces and the civil service were mainly filled according to criteria of class and birth. In Prussia, and after the foundation of the German

Empire in 1870, it was a small group of officers who developed at the beginning of the industrialization working methods and operational-tactical views that are still valid in today's *Bundeswehr*, which has just crossed the threshold to the computer age.

Since the days of Field Marshal Count Helmut von Moltke, the German axioms of military leadership have always been implemented in directives and later on in regulations. Their development can be traced to their antecedents, which continued without interruption. Fortunately, the Chiefs of General Staffs of Prussian-German armed forces were very often masters of the German language. An analysis of German command-and-control regulations shows that the views and formulations of the Field Marshals Count von Moltke and Count von Schlieffen, General Ludendorff, and of the Colonel Generals von Seeckt and Beck, continue to have a tremendous effect on the aforementioned September 1987 Army Regulation *HDv 100/100*, "Command and Control of Armed Forces." The references to past experience are clearly perceptible in many passages.<sup>82</sup> The chapters "Military Command and Control" and "The Operation," as well as fundamentals in the chapters on "Types of Combat" have many passages taken almost directly from the tactical and operational views of these officers. The following examples illustrate this phenomenon:

- The nature of command and control of the armed forces as developed in German military history was first formulated by Moltke and is described in Paragraph 601 as follows: "Command and Control of armed forces is an art, a creative activity based on character, ability and mental power."<sup>83</sup>
- Paragraph 609 contains another credo of Moltke and his successors:

Resolute action is a must in war. . . . Commanders who merely wait for orders cannot seize favorable opportunities. They must always keep in mind that indecision and the failure to act might be just as fatal as action based on a wrong decision.

- The requirements of modern leadership based on the experience of German military tradition are described in Paragraphs 616-625. Matter of course obedience, discipline and courage, mutual confidence of commanders and subordinates and the necessary comradeship between the soldiers of all ranks are postulated as the bonds of soldierly togetherness. Great emphasis is placed on the commander's unwavering care for his men. As was discussed above, mission-oriented command and control is the fundamental operating principle and rules out routine and bureaucratic command in the military community.
- Numerous expositions of the *HDv* 100/100 on the allocation of forces in the enemy's flanks and rear, on deployment and reconnaissance, that is to say on operations, reflect Field Marshal Count von Schlieffen's operational concepts. They can be read in his writings which include the concise "Cannae Essay."<sup>84</sup>
- The German tactical principles of the types of combat go back to the regulations of the Supreme Army Command of 1917-18, which were elaborated on General Ludendorff's order. Examples are the "Defense in Position Warfare" and the "Attack in Position Warfare."<sup>85</sup>
- The Army Command Regulation of 1933 *HDv* 300/1, "Command and Control of Armed Forces" shows many parallels to the operational and tactical views that are still valid today.<sup>86</sup>

All this illustrates that the German views of military leadership are deeply rooted in the past. They were developed by generations of General Staff officers and tested in Germany's wars. *Bundeswehr* General Staff officers have made sure that the experience of past wars has been put in an up-to-date mold for our time. They continue to have an effect on the present. Against this background, the *Bundeswehr's* General Staff officer can look back on a tradition and heritage he can be proud of, and which affects his everyday military life

in a multitude of forms. His mission is to preserve this heritage and to make sure that it is permanently adapted to the changing environmental conditions of our time through his respective superiors.

### **Attempts to Abolish the Bundeswehr General Staff Officer Training.**

From today's point of view, it is understandable that the victors of both World Wars banned the Great General Staff and the War Academy and accused the German General Staff, together with the Armed Forces High Command, of criminal behavior at the Nuernberg Trials. During the World Wars, they had a bitter firsthand experience of the quality of German General Staff officers. Against this background another phenomenon can be understood. In the book, *The General Staff in the Process of Change (Generalstab im Wandel)*, Brigadier General Hans-Georg Model and Lieutenant Colonel Jens Prause described how the "Education Commission of the Minister of Defense" created in 1969 by the then Minister of Defense, Helmut Schmidt, had tried to reduce *Bundeswehr* General and Admiral Staff officer training to 5-12 months. The Commission was supported by politicians of that period who had been committed to the equal opportunities of Line and General Staff officers and had fought the traditional General Staff training overwhelmingly for that reason. This move, which was unsuccessful, would have virtually eliminated the German General Staff officer.

From today's perspective, it appears incomprehensible that the principle of equal opportunity and the neo-Marxist crusade against any "elite" would have almost been successful.<sup>87</sup> Obviously, it hardly played any role in the discussion that the reduced quality of the training of young German General and Admiral Staff officers would have possibly caused a loss of German influence in NATO staffs. There, as was shown, the operational planning for the German armed forces is executed.

Generations of German officers in General Staff and Line appointments have in NATO staffs gathered experience as equal partners and superiors, have been shaped in their



characters and have in turn influenced their allied comrades-in-arms. Up to now, no scientific study has been available on how professional unity of German and allied soldiers in everyday duty and exercises has contributed to the consolidation of the security-political infrastructure of the North Atlantic Alliance; nor has the effect of this unity been established on the Federal Armed Forces. It can be assumed, however, that the shaping by NATO had, and is having, a profound effect on the Federal Armed Forces. The cooperation with fellow soldiers of different armed forces has given many *Bundeswehr* officers stability in times of uncertainty and crisis of their self-image. Above all, it has contributed to the fact that the *Bundeswehr* General and Admiral Staff officers of today are cosmopolitan and move less in the narrow national paths than their predecessors.

Many German General and Admiral Staff officers have introduced original German approaches and ideas into the NATO Alliance. Thus, they have influenced considerably the tactical-operational opinions as well as the leadership training of their allies. In NATO they have learned that tolerance and mutual respect determine the working climate within an international environment. This network of relations would have been jeopardized by less qualified German General Staff officers in the NATO headquarters.<sup>88</sup> Fortunately, the discussion about justification and future of *Bundeswehr* General and Admiral Staff officer training has not resurfaced.

### **Challenges.**

Today, more than ever before, it is a necessity for General and Admiral Staff officers to deal with both technical matters and their own special position within the German officer corps and the Atlantic Alliance. The revolutionary developments in the former "German Democratic Republic" and the eastern countries since autumn 1989 have created a volatile security-political situation. They have questioned everything that has been valid up to now in the East-West confrontation and the present security structures. Even hitherto it has been difficult enough for the "commander's adviser" in the Federal Armed Forces to comprehend and put in its proper place

security policy as a complex array of diverging, continuously shifting forces and factors within the overall framework.

Many questions are rising today which require the General and Admiral Staff officer's innovative participation. The former "National People's Army" is being integrated into the Federal Armed Forces. A new European-North American security architecture is being developed. Many of its parameters are still uncertain. The NATO heads of state and government have tasked the military to implement its New Strategic Concept<sup>89</sup> which is to reflect force reductions which were agreed upon at the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe of November 1990 and the ever diminishing threat in the Central Region. In view of these developments, the challenges to today's General and Admiral Staff officers have increased considerably and will continue to do so in the future. Besides coping with his everyday tasks, the "commander's adviser" must take pains to analyze and actively reevaluate the shifting security-political phenomena of our time.

This touches upon the problem of the education and training of young General and Admiral Staff officers to be advisers of their commanders. The ignorance of many *Bundeswehr* officers about the peculiarities of the German General Staff service frequently causes friction where General Staff officers are employed as superiors of older staff officers. One often meets with the opinion that young General Staff officers have the moral duty to greater diligence in the office than other staff officers due to their better career prospects. It is often overlooked, however, that the junior General Staff officers must first be educated and trained as their "commander's advisers." This can only be successful if they are not only employed as particularly hard-working staff officers, but rather frequently get the opportunity to practice advising their superiors. Acting as deputies for their commanders, they learn the interaction of the staff functional areas.

Many a young General Staff officer, however, is not always sufficiently conscious of the fact that the *Fuehrungsakademie* can only teach him how to train and educate himself in his preparatory assignments to become a "commander's adviser."

e graduate of the assignment-oriented General and Admiral Staff course has not yet concluded his training and education. He is only in his following assignments in units, staffs and commands, the Federal Ministry of Defense and NATO that he is molded according to his professional image. This requires his own initiative. He has to go through a demanding self-educational process.

Critical observers of the Federal Armed Forces increasingly point out the fact that quite a few young General and Admiral Staff officers strive to follow certain career patterns which are designed to present as little offense as possible and to agree with their superiors' opinions in order to receive the best efficiency reports, thus proceeding easily up the career ladder. "Streamlined" and adaptable General Staff officers, however, are inappropriate, for they are unable to fulfill their main task of advising their commanders and urging them to make decisions. Here, senior General Staff officers are required to exercise an influence on the molding and education of junior General Staff officers. In doing so they must also explain the particularities of a "commander's adviser" to other staff officers and support the junior General Staff officers. It would be unacceptable if they did not tend to this task, for otherwise there may be unnecessary disagreements or unrest in the staffs.

It is uncontested at present that the 2-year General and Admiral Staff training is indispensable. It was discussed that General and Admiral Staff assignments in the Federal Armed Forces and in NATO are becoming increasingly complex, and go beyond the classic areas of responsibility in the tactical and operational fields. The curriculum at the Command and General Staff Academy must take this into consideration. More than ever before it is influenced by the rapidly changing military-political surroundings, by the developments within the united Germany, and by the daily practical cooperation in NATO staffs as well as by joint exercises with Germany's allies.

All this and the fact that an increasing number of students in the General and Admiral Staff training courses have a university education and are holding master's degrees—more than 90 percent of the course that ended in October

1989—makes the old dispute, whether General Staff training should be more technically or rather broadly, scientifically oriented, unnecessary.<sup>90</sup>

## CHAPTER 5

### OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSION

When talking with allied officers one very often hears the argument that the Prussian-German Staff system weakens the authority of the commanding officers because of the strong position of the German General and Admiral Staff officers. Others believe that the cohesion of an officer corps is lessened when most of the high staff jobs and commanding officers' positions are reserved for a specially trained group of officers.

The founders of the Prussian-German General Staff system wanted to increase the quality of command and control skills of commanding officers from the higher nobility with insufficient military training by providing them with General Staff officers as their advisers. Before the outbreak of World War II, the Chief of the Army General Staff, General of the Artillery Franz Halder, explicitly dropped the joint responsibility of General Staff officers for command and control. However, they were responsible and accountable for the relevance of their advice. This restriction was justified because most of the top-level military leaders of the *Wehrmacht* were General Staff officers. Neither in the *Wehrmacht* nor in the *Bundeswehr* have high-ranking leaders ever felt their authority to be limited by their General Staff officers. They have always considered the General Staff system as a tool to increase their command and control authority. The few General and Admiral Staff officers who work within their formations make sure that their decisions are executed in the best way possible and are professionally tailored to the requirements of the respective levels of command and control. Their qualified staff work makes it possible for commanding officers to concentrate on their main efforts in the fields of military education, training and command and control in battle. Qualified advice during the whole decision-making process by General and Admiral Staff officers improves the quality of their final decisions. The

commanding officers are to listen to their General Staff officers' advice. Since most of them are former General Staff officers themselves, they have no problems with this procedure and expect their General Staff officers to advise them. This cooperation, which was characterized as "military marriage," ensures that decisions are not based on wishful thinking but on qualified reasoning and thought. German commanding officers without General Staff officer training learn very quickly how the system works and use it to their benefit.

It is stressed again that no General and Admiral Staff officer is entitled to relieve his commanding officer from making a decision on his own and to develop the concept of operations. For both of these, he is alone responsible. Perhaps it can be said that the German-Prussian General Staff system permits the commanding general to make decisions more effectively. This is his most important task. It is felt that many allied armed forces still overestimate the role and function of commanding officers who make decisions without any advice, only based on their operational and strategic genius. Every insider knows that this is pure fiction. Commanding officers of today rely more than ever before on advice and proposals made by their subordinates. Military planning and command and control have become too complex to be handled by the leader on the top alone. In this light it seems to be an archaic facade if one maintains this fiction at all costs. *It is therefore recommended that other armed forces find out how they can benefit by introducing the "commander's adviser" into their systems.*

Another future development supports this recommendation. When German General and Admiral Staff officers come into the NATO headquarters, they are confronted by the following situation: The working methods are well-established and are more or less a copy of the staff procedures of those partners who dominate the respective headquarters. Still today, the SHAPE and CENTAG headquarters follow staff procedures of the United States Armed Forces, whereas NORTHAG headquarters is British dominated. In AFCENT Headquarters in Brunssum, the Netherlands, a mixture of American and British staff procedures are observable as well as some relics from the

period when the commander-in-chief of the Central Region was a French general. The German newcomers willingly accepted the working methods in the respective headquarters. Although the German General and Admiral Staff officers have gained and exercised influence within the NATO headquarters, they have never tried to introduce their elements of the Prussian-German General Staff system. This has never been considered to be a major problem, because their number was small, and since they always found ways to come to terms with the staff system they had to work in. The requirement for NATO to develop multinational corps for the future defense of the Alliance has changed this situation. In future multinational formations, more German General Staff officers will work with their allied comrades-in-arms than ever existed in NATO headquarters. They will work together in all military sectors at the tactical and operational levels. It should, therefore, *be a legitimate request from the German Armed Forces to consider elements of the Prussian-German General Staff system for inclusion in future staff organizations of these multinational corps.* This approach is considered to avoid friction between allied and German officers who will have to work closer together in these new formations. *It is therefore recommended that this request be considered as early as possible before implementation begins.*

It was shown that 52.2 percent of the German 1,087 colonels and Navy captains, and 20 percent of the 202 generals and admirals of the *Bundeswehr*, have no General and Admiral Staff officer training. In this context, it is also interesting that most of the German battalions and regiments are commanded by officers without General Staff officer training. Those who criticize that most of the higher staff and commanding officers' jobs in the *Bundeswehr* are reserved for General and Admiral Staff officers are not aware of the surprisingly high number of senior officers in the *Bundeswehr* without General and Admiral Staff officer training.

In addition they have no understanding of another major advantage of the German system. Many allied armed forces are trying hard to select their future commanding officers and high staff officers with operational and strategic vision. For the

selection of these officers, the Prussian-German General Staff system offers ways which have been effective for many generations. The selection for General and Admiral Staff officer training favors those officers who show talents early in these fields. The *Fuehrungsakademie der Bundeswehr* training gives them the tools for their future educational development. The most talented of them are given jobs early in their careers to provide exposure to the operational and strategic levels. These officers are about 10 years younger than many of their allied comrades-in-arms before these are trained to think and work at the operational and strategic levels. The future German generals and admirals are selected from this group. The 202 generals and admirals of the *Bundeswehr* are recruited from the best trained out of the 1,200 General and Admiral Staff officers. About 40 come from the group of the best officers without that training.

The Germans believe that this early selection process and the subsequent training of the future leading general officers who need operational and strategic vision are indispensable and have proved their value. The system ensures that "talented practitioners" without General and Admiral Staff officer training are given a fair chance to reach high positions of leadership as well. Personal positive experience with graduates of the "second year" at the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth shows that the U.S. Army has obviously adopted similar ways for some of its future general officers.

At the end of this evaluation the question is asked, as so often before, whether the Prussian-German General Staff system can be introduced in other armed forces. This question leads back to Spenser Wilkinson's statement of 1887 which was quoted at the beginning of this paper: "It may well be doubted whether this feature of the Prussian (General Staff) System is suitable for imitation elsewhere." It was shown that attempts to imitate the system were often doomed to failure because the staff organizations of armed forces and their role as an instrument of military leadership are the result of historical processes that took different courses. However, in a period when the military strategy of NATO is being redefined



and new challenges must be tackled, it is considered worthwhile to reflect on the elements of the Prussian-German General Staff system which could be used by Germany's allies to the benefit of all.

## ENDNOTES

1. Spenser Wilkinson, *The Brain of an Army, A Popular Account of the German General Staff System*, Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1895, reprint by the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, November 1983, p. 1f.

2. See Christoph Allmeyer Beck, *Die K. (u.) K.-Armee 1848-1914, Die versunkene Wehrmacht*, Prisma Verlag 1975, Introduction.

3. H. Dv.g 92, *Handbuch fur den Generalstabsdienst im Kriege*, Geheim, Berlin 1939, Teil I und II.

4. Army Regulation 100/100, "Command and Control of Armed Forces," Second Revised Edition of TF/G73, Army Staff III2, September 1987, translated by *Bundessprachenamt*, Huerth, No. 615.

5. For a history of the Prussian-German General Staff, the two most important works in English language are Walter Goerlitz's *History of the German General Staff, 1657-1945*, translated by Brian Battershaw, New York: Praeger, 1985; and Colonel T. N. Dupuy's, *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945*, Ingelwood Cliffs, N J: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1977. Colonel Bradley H. Petersen's Military Studies Program Paper, "Should the United States Army have a Professional General Staff?", Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1987, gives some insight of the *Bundeswehr* General Staff officers peculiarities, but does not discuss in sufficient detail the main characteristics of this officers group within the German Armed Forces. Barry Leach gives some details of the German General Staff officers' working methods in his book, *German General Staff*, New York: Balantine Books, Inc., August 1973. His analysis ends at 1945. From my point of view, the Prussian-German German General Staff System and its peculiarities were most clearly depicted by the obviously forgotten German World War II emigrant Herbert Rosinski, *The German Army*, New York: 1962, Chapter IX. It is in his writings that the term "General Staff System" appears for the first time. It even remained unchanged in the German translation of 1970.

6. See NATO Press Service, Press Communique M-PC/NPG-1 (91)38, "Final Communique," May 29, 1991. At this meeting the Defense Planning Committee announced the specifics concerning the creation of multinationals in the AFCENT region.

7. Ernst Moritz Arndt, *Katechismus fuer den deutschen Kriegs-und Wehrmann*, Berlin, 1813, p. 265.

8. See Walter Goerlitz, *Kleine Geschichte des deutschen Generalstabs*, in the following quoted as Goerlitz, *Generalstab*, Berlin 1967, p. 441f.

9. See Walter Millis, "Preface" to *History of the German General Staff*, v-x.

10. On conspiratorial theory see Caspar von Schrenck-Notzing, *Charakterwaesche*, Stuttgart: 1965, p. 54. See also, Christian Millotat, *Die Oberste Heeresleitung vom Ende des Weltkrieges bis zur Aufloesung des Kaiserlichen Heeres*, *Schriftenreihe Innere Fuehrung*, Heft 7, 1969/1970, p. 43.

11. Winston Churchill, *Memoiren*, Volume 2, Stuttgart - Hamburg: 1953, p. 47.

12. On the verdict of the Nuernberg Trial see, *Das Urteil von Nuernberg 1946*, published by Herbert Kraus; concerning the Defense of the General Staff by Dr. Laternser, refer to, *Verteidigung deutscher Soldaten, Plaedoyers vor alliierten Soldaten*, Bonn: 1950. On Field Marshal von Manstein's contribution see, Siegfried Westphal, *Der Deutsche Generalstab auf der Anklagebank*, Mainz: 1978, Chapter 5.

13. Foerster-Otto-Schnitter, *Der preussisch-deutsche Generalstab 1870-1963*, Berlin: (East) 1956, p. 5f.

14. On the criticism of General Staff training of the *Bundeswehr* see, Klaus Reinhardt, *Generalstabsausbildung in der Bundeswehr*, Herford, pp. 9-12. See also Hansgeorg Model, Jens Prause, *Generalstab im Wandel*, in the following quoted as Model/Prause, Muenchen 1982, pp. 87-120. On the neo-Marxist understanding of "Elites" and its effects on Germany in the 1960s and 1970s see Alfred Heuss, *Versagen und Verhaengnis*, Siedler Verlag, 1984.

15. On the influence of the Prussian-German General Staff abroad see Goerlitz, *Generalstab*, p. 97. See also Russell F. Weigley, *History of the United States Army*, New York: 1967, pp. 314-330.

16. On the attempt of early *Bundeswehr* leaders to continue the tradition of the Prussian reforms of the times of Scharnhorst, see Manfred Messerschmidt's introduction to the *Handbuch zur deutschen Militaergeschichte*, Munchen: 1979, Volume I, p. vi: "Those parts of the fledgeling *Bundeswehr* of the fifties who were interested in history, had the Prussian reforms in mind as the historical symbol of its new beginning. Yet this very manual has to prove that the reforms, despite the up-to-dateness of their inspirations, did not usher in a new era, but only remained a phase." See also the differentiated assessment of the Prussian reforms by Thomas Nipperdey, *Deutsche Geschichte 1800-1866*, Muenchen: 1983, Chapter I.

17. Text of the opening speech of General Heusinger on the occasion of the opening of the *Heeresakademie* in: *Model/Prause*, pp. 11-16.

18. General Juergen Brandt, *Abschiedsrede fuer den Genst-AdmStltg am 18 Juni 1979*, published by the *Fuehrungsakademie der Bundeswehr*, Bonn: 1980.

19. On the organization of the Federal Ministry of Defense see the Defense White Paper 1985, *The Situation and the Development of the Federal Armed Forces*, published by the Federal Minister of Defense on behalf of the Federal Government, Bonn, 1985, pp. 165-171. A still interesting, if outdated description of structure and function of the Federal Ministry of Defense is Siegfried Mann's *Das Bundesministerium der Verteidigung*, Bonn: 1971. In the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Regard to Germany, the "Two-plus-Four Treaty" of September 12, 1990, Germany has agreed not to deploy foreign troops on former "German Democratic Republic" terrain.

20. See "*Der Generalinspekteur*," *FueB I 1*, Az. 10-20-12 dated 8 September 1959. General Heusinger was the first Chief of Staff, Federal Armed Forces.

21. "*Anzugsordnung fuer die Bundeswehr*," Bonn, 1972, No. 2307. See *ZDV37/10*, (German Joint Services Regulation).

22. All figures are from the "Report by the Personnel Management Division 1982," Bonn, 1982.

23. See *Model/Prause*.

24. See Unpublished Briefing, "Organization and Tasks of the *Fuehrungsakademie der Bundeswehr*," *Fuehrungsakademie der Bundeswehr, Stab Ausbildung und Lehre, Arbeitsbereich 1*, dated August 21, 1989.

25. See Petersen, "Should the United States have a Professional General Staff?" pp. 16-26.

26. All figures are based on an interview which I had with the *Fuehrungsakademie* Chief of Staff on November 12, 1990.

27. See Endnote 24.

28. On high level leadership training of NATO countries see Gottfried Greiner, *Das Verhaeltnis von Politik und Militaer in der Ausbildung der hoeheren Fuehrungskraefte im NATO-Bereich*, in, *Freiheit ohne Krieg*, published by the Clausewitzgesellschaft, Bonn, 1980, pp. 301-312.

29. Brigadegeneral Dr. Greiner, quoted from *Model/Prause*, p. 137.
30. See Endnote 5 with my remarks on Herbert Rosinski.
31. Field Marshal Paul von Hindenburg, *Aus meinem Leben*, Leipzig: 1920, pp. 77-79.
32. General-Colonel Hans von Seeckt, *Gedanken eines Soldaten*, Berlin: 1929, pp. 163-167.
33. ZDv 10/5, Chapter 3, *Leitsatz*, No. 2.
34. On potential conflict between allied superiors and German General Staff officers subordinate to them see Christian Millotat, "Spannungsfelder im NATO-Stabsdienst," *Europaeische Wehrkunde*, February 1985.
35. On the French Staff System see General de Serrigny, *Reflexions sur l'art de la guerre*, p. 3, quoted according to Herbert Rosinski, *Die Deutsche Armee*, Duesseldorf and Wien, 1970, pp. 274-278.
36. On the position of the French "adjoints" see Correlli Barnett, *The Swordbearers*, Reprint of the 1964 ed., New York: Morrow, 1975, pp. 196-198. Correlli Barnett describes the relationship between General Petain and his Chief of Cabinet, General Serrigny in World War I.
37. See Petersen, p. 25.
38. Army Regulation 100/100, "Command and Control of Armed Forces," No. 604. Colonel T.N. Dupuy wrote a brilliant interpretation of *Auftragstaktik* from the American point of view in his book *A Genius for War*, pp. 116-117. John T. Nelson II also wrote a good analyses on *Auftragstaktik* in his analyses "Auftragstaktik: A Case for Decentralized Battle," *Parameters*, September 1987, pp. 21-34.
39. On the practice of use of "acting ranks" see numerous examples, Weigley, and Walter Millis, *Arms and Men, A Study of American History*, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1981. In this connection see also the partly exaggerated but accurate analysis of the American Armed Forces and the way they see themselves, written by Robert de Herte-Hans Juergen Nigra, *Die USA, Europas missratenes Kind*, Muenchen-Berlin, 1979, pp. 45-49.
40. See *Handbuch zur deutschen Militaergeschichte*, Volume II, p. 168 and Volume IX, p. 227. See also Goerlitz, *General Staff*, p. 5.
41. On the position of Marshal Berthier see *Handbuch zur deutschen Militaergeschichte*, Volume II, p. 155 and Volume IX, p. 228. In Bronsart von Schellendorf's writing *Der Dienst des Generalstabs* of 1875, he tried to

describe King Frederick the Great as the founder of the Prussian General Staff. The reasons are anyone's guess.

42. On General von Scharnhorst's objectives and reforms see Reinhard Hoehn, *Scharnhorst's Vermaechtnis*, Bonn, 1952. See also *Handbuch zur deutschen Militaergeschichte*, Volume II, p. 168; Dupuy, *Genius for War*, pp. 24-36; Carl Hermann, *Deutsche Militaergeschichte*, Frankfurt, 1968, pp. 142 and 162; and, Goerlitz, *General Staff*, pp. 33-36.

43. See Endnote 42.

44. On the following quotations and information on the Prussian General Staff up to 1815 see Bronsart von Schellendorf, *Der Dienst des Generalstabs*, Berlin, 1875. Obviously, this was the first treatise to describe the special working methods of the Prussian-German General Staff.

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62. See Herbert Rosinski, *The German Army*, p. 261.
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