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Stability Operations in WWII: Insights and Lessons

Raymond A. Millen

ABSTRACT: The stability achieved by the US military in the European Theater of Operations after D-Day was the direct result of good military governance concurrently deployed with combat operations. The role of civil affairs in securing this stability has been under-emphasized in analyses of these operations. But an examination of the historical record of these events reveals the necessity of a skilled, effective civil-military effort through civil affairs/military government detachments, civil affairs specialty pools, and G-5 staff sections.

During the Second World War, the US Army gained extensive knowledge of stability operations as it fought through France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Germany. While stability operations do not receive the same attention as other features of the war, they were instrumental to Allied military victory. Indeed, stability in the rear areas, largely a function of good military governance, was important because it allowed the Allies to maximize combat power at the front.¹

The US Department of War began preparations for military government in 1942, recruiting and training thousands of civil affairs soldiers for the liberation of Axis-occupied Europe and the invasion of Germany. For the vast majority of soldiers with backgrounds in civil administration, the training only further enhanced their skill sets for civil-military operations. They served in civil affairs staff sections (G-5) within all major headquarters, provided specialty expertise in large civil affairs pools, and implemented military government in task-organized detachments.²

Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower keenly appreciated the value of the civil-military mission for the war effort. Speaking to civil affairs soldiers a month before D-Day, he explained:

You have got to get the rear areas organized—electric lights, roads, and supply—and you must keep them working and get them restored as quickly as possible to some semblance of peacetime standards, so that they can support to the utmost the armies that are fighting at the front. You must take that responsibility for dealing with civilian affairs, whether it is restoring public utilities or helping a nursing mother who cannot get milk, and *if you*

1. Raymond A. Millen, “*Bury the Dead, Feed the Living?*” *The History of Civil Affairs/Military Government in the Mediterranean and European Theaters of Operation during World War II* (Carlisle, PA: Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute, US Army War College, February 2019).

2. F. S. V. Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government in North-West Europe, 1944–1946* (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1961), 21; and Raymond Joseph Parrott, “An Education for Occupation: Army Civil Affairs Training and Military Planning for Postwar Germany” (thesis, University of Virginia, 2008), 58–59.

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don't do your job, the armies will fail [emphasis added]. A modern army is of great depth in the field. The fighting front of an army is a fringe of a tremendous organization. . . . You are part of an Allied team. Always remember that. Because your section of the army is called "Civil Affairs" you must not make the mistake of thinking you are politicians.³

With three major campaigns as Supreme Allied Commander behind him, Eisenhower understood that creating stability throughout the great breadth and depth of northwest Europe would be a colossal effort—and it was. During active combat operations, security activities largely defined stability operations though the line between security and stability often became blurred. For instance, restoring governance, law and order, and the economy in local communities enhanced stability, but at the same time it secured military lines of communication and supplies from civilian interference. Regardless, the establishment of military government was the most assured means for achieving stability in the theater rear zone.⁴

This article explores the nexus between military government and the achievement of stability in the European Theater of Operations. First, it recounts the War Department's rationale for stability as it related to military necessity. Second, the article reviews task organization considerations, which justified the investment in military government. Last, it examines the implementation of stability tasks by civil affairs/military government (CA/MG) detachments. Accordingly, this article argues stability was not a by-product of combat operations; rather, it was the fulfillment of a considerable civil-military effort.

The Rationale for Stability

As the War Department recognized early, the war would lead to the occupation of territory resulting from the liberation of enemy-controlled countries and direct invasions of Italy, Germany, and Japan. The War Department reasoned that military necessity, along with international law and humanitarian obligations, prescribed the employment of military government for occupied territories. Doctrinally, military necessity encompassed all activities in occupied territories that facilitated the successful prosecution of military operations and swift termination of the war.⁵

Since a military invasion disrupted local civil government, international law obligated occupation forces to assume the functions of civil authority, including the establishment of security and public

3. Cited in Harry L. Coles and Albert K. Weinberg, *United States Army in World War II: Special Studies, Civil Affairs: Soldiers Become Governors*, US Army Center of Military History Publication 11–3 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1964), 679.

4. Earl F. Ziemke, *The U.S. Army in the Occupation of Germany, 1944–1946*, US Army Center of Military History Publication 30–6 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1990), 11; and F. P. Huddle, *Military Government of Occupied Territory* (Washington, DC: CQ Press, 1943), 7.

5. For a definition of military necessity from 1943, see: US Army and US Navy, *Manual of Military Government and Civil Affairs*, War Department Field Manual 27-5/Navy Department Office of the Chief of Naval Operations 50E-3 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 22 December 1943), 5.

order; resumption of essential services; the provision of sustenance, potable water, and medical care; and the restoration of the local economy.⁶ Due to political sensitivities, the Allies described stabilization activities in liberated countries as “civil affairs,” and in enemy countries as “military government.”⁷ But in execution, these activities were virtually indistinguishable.

While the Franklin D. Roosevelt administration initially wanted civilian agencies to administer occupied territories, senior War Department leaders and Eisenhower successfully argued the overlapping authorities of multiple civilian agencies undermined efficiency and unity of effort, thereby compromising military necessity.⁸ The purpose of military government was to impose temporary control of the populace in order to prevent civilian interference in military operations, disruptions to the lines of communication, pilferage of supplies, and civil unrest.⁹ In the end, both the Roosevelt administration and the War Department agreed once hostilities ended, military government would transition to civil control at the earliest opportunity.¹⁰

For Operation Overlord, Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) adopted a different organizational approach to civil-military operations than in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations, where Allied military governments were ad hoc arrangements, meager in numbers, and underresourced. Informed by these experiences, SHAEF created a sophisticated civil-military mechanism: numerous, well-organized CA/MG detachments; civil affairs staff sections (G-5) in each division, corps, army, and army group headquarters as well as at SHAEF; and a large civil affairs specialty pool.

On a practical level, the establishment of military government permitted Eisenhower to optimize ground forces at the front thereby reducing the traditional need to detach units for garrison and security duties along the lines of communication.¹¹ Additionally, military government pursued two supporting goals. First, it sought to minimize the diversion of military supplies and resources to indigenous populations by restoring self-government, public safety, and the local economy.

6. US Forces European Theater (USFET), The General Board, *Civil Affairs and Military Government Organization and Operations*, Study No. 32 (Headquarters, USFET, Frankfurt, Germany, May 15, 1946), 3; Joseph P. Harris, “Selection and Training of Civil Affairs Officers,” *Public Opinion Quarterly* 7, no. 4 (Winter 1943): 700; and Robert W. Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government in the Mediterranean Theater* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, US Army, 1950), I-3, I-7.

7. John J. Maginnis, *Military Government Journal: Normandy to Berlin* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971), viii; Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 3n2; Cristen Oehrig, *Civil Affairs in World War II* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2009), 2; and USFET, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 1.

8. Parrott, “Education for Occupation,” 15, 58–59; USFET, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 3; Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, Chapter 22n20, 56, 139–41, 214n7, 215, 315; Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 11, 13, 15–16; Huddle, *Military Government*, 7; Oehrig, *Civil Affairs*, 7; and Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 1-3.

9. Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, I-3; and Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 77.

10. Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 11; and Huddle, *Military Government*, 3, 7–8.

11. Harris, “Selection and Training,” 697; and Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, II-12–II-13.

Second, it sought to utilize indigenous resources to support military activities, such as abandoned supplies and equipment, local labor, and human intelligence. Arguably, these efforts in combination contributed to the massing of sufficient combat power along the German frontier for the final offensive.

Task Organization Considerations

Graduates of the US School of Military Government and the Civil Affairs Training Schools program reported to the European Civil Affairs Division in Shrivenham, England, for assignments to CA/MG detachments, G-5 staffs, and the specialty pools. For field deployments on the continent, the European Civil Affairs Division assigned detachments to companies within three European Civil Affairs Regiments (ECAR). Designating the 1st ECAR for France, SHAEF then earmarked 2nd and 3rd ECAR for Germany.¹² Experience in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations demonstrated CA/MG detachments should receive logistical support directly from tactical units operating in their areas of operation. This proved prudent since the ECARs were unable to provide logistical and often other support due to the geographic separation between ECAR companies and their assigned CA/MG detachments, especially during fluid operations.¹³

To underscore military government as a command responsibility, SHAEF established civil affairs staff sections (G-5) throughout the military echelons of command to administer the following functional areas:¹⁴

- internal affairs: local government and civil administration; public safety; education and religion; postal, telephone, and telegraph services; public health; information and public relations; and monuments, fine arts, and archives
- economics: food and administration, civilian requirements and allocations, price control and internal trade, imports and exports, labor (manpower), transportation, and public utilities
- dislocated persons, refugees, and welfare: liaison officers and welfare agencies (that is, international organizations,

12. USFET, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 25–29, 35, 107–8; and H. McE. Pendleton, “The European Civil Affairs Division,” *Military Review* 26, no. 1 (April 1946): 49–50.

13. Pendleton, “European Civil Affairs Division,” 49–50; and Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 31.

14. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 677–78.

nongovernmental organizations, and indigenous populations and institutions if available)

- legal: counsel, courts, and prisons
- finance: public finance, financial institutions, currency, foreign exchange, financial intelligence, accounts and audits, and property control
- reparations and restitutions¹⁵

The G-5 staff advised commanders on stability policy; issued theater stability policy directives, proclamations, and ordinances; formulated and reviewed stability plans; and supervised the implementation of plans and policies.¹⁶ Further, the G-5 staff harmonized stability activities with military plans, ensuring tactical units interacted with and supported CA/MG detachments operating in their immediate areas of operation.¹⁷

The CA/MG detachments were the workhorses of military government, operating in local communities, districts, and provinces. Commanded by either a major, lieutenant colonel, or colonel, they were tasked and organized for local conditions, focusing on the following functions:

- local government administration
- public safety: police, fire, and civil defense
- public health: medical facilities, casualty evacuation, burial, and disease prevention
- public utilities: energy, water, sewage, communications (for example, postal and telephone), transportation, and refuse disposal
- public welfare: food, water, shelter, and refugee control
- legal: judiciary, claims, and prisons
- fiscal: banks, post offices, and depositories
- labor: burial, road clearance, building repairs, and supply in support of military operations¹⁸

The size of a CA/MG detachment varied according to the level of government administration and the size of the population. While the average size was eight soldiers for towns, detachments for major cities

15. USFET, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 6–10; and Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 1–11.

16. USFET, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 48–49; Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, II-13–II-14; and US Army and US Navy, FM 27-5, 15–16, 45–50.

17. Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 22.

18. Harris, “Selection and Training,” 703; Rebecca Patterson, *Revisiting a School of Military Government: How Reanimating a World War II-Era Institution Could Professionalize Military Nation Building*, Kauffman Foundation Research Series: Expeditionary Economics no. 3 (Kansas City, MO: Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, June 2011), 7; and Harold Zink, *American Military Government in Germany* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), 59.

would number well over 100 personnel.¹⁹ For Operation Overlord, initial CA/MG detachments received pinpoint assignments in the Normandy beachhead. As the beachhead developed, detachments expanded their jurisdictions to cover several towns within a district.²⁰ Once the front moved onward, particularly after the breakout of Normandy (Operation Cobra), specific CA/MG detachments remained in their assigned areas, serving in the corps and army rear zones and eventually the theater Communications Zone.²¹ Follow-on CA/MG detachments staged in the beachhead, observing and assisting deployed CA/MG detachments, and then followed along in the wake of the US military to establish immediate stability along the lines of communication.²²

To create efficiencies, the SHAEF G-5 staff established a specialist pool for temporary assistance to CA/MG detachments and SHAEF country missions. The pool of personnel possessed unique skills of particular concern to the occupied country as a whole or a region of the country. Some specialists deployed to address technical problems beyond the expertise of CA/MG detachments and returned to the pool once they had rendered assistance. Through the SHAEF country missions, other civil affairs specialists helped provisional governments reestablish national functions.²³

Designed by SHAEF, country missions assisted provisional governments of liberated countries and later imposed military government on Germany.²⁴ Incidentally, Italy had no country mission. After Italy surrendered and joined the Allies, Allied military government regarded those portions of Italy under Allied control as liberated. Since the Italian government lacked ministers and civil servants until the liberation of Rome, Allied military government administered the government. Also, SHAEF country missions published country handbooks to familiarize CA/MG detachments with Allied policies and facts about the assigned country. SHAEF expected the country missions to govern assigned countries until a national government assumed responsibility or, in the case of Germany, until civilian agencies assumed responsibility. As long as the conflict raged, their primary mission was to support the war effort with host-country resources. As an index of greater tactical cooperation, country missions fell under the command and control of the senior military headquarters in the area of operations.²⁵

19. USFET, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 29, app. 1, 1; and Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 678, 742–45.

20. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 725; and Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 17, 66, 89–90, 95–96.

21. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 721.

22. Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 149–53.

23. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 14–15, 17, 769, 790; Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 18–20; and Zink, *American Military Government*, 59.

24. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 225–26, 229; and Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, III–13, III–15, III–17.

25. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 677–78; Donnison, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 13–14, 18, 26; and USFET, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 50.

For the final offensive into Germany, SHAEF envisioned the need for hundreds of military government detachments following closely behind the Allied offensive and deploying into predesignated towns and cities like the unfurling of a giant carpet—the Carpet Plan.²⁶ In addition to the regular military government detachments, special mobile teams (that is, I detachments) comprised of three officers and five enlisted soldiers in two jeeps with trailers, accompanied divisions to establish immediate stability in urban areas as a stopgap measure.²⁷ They were followed by temporary military government detachments during the duration of the invasion and then by permanent MG detachments for the postwar period.

Following Germany's surrender on May 7, 1945, the widely dispersed US military units and military government detachments in northern and eastern Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Austria withdrew to the US zone of occupation under the Static Plan. Under the authority of SHAEF's successor, US Forces European Theater, the Third and Seventh Armies became the Eastern and Western Military Districts, and their G-5 staff sections transformed into the Office of Military Government for Bavaria and for Baden-Württemberg, respectively.²⁸ In accordance with occupation policy, US Forces European Theater reduced the number of military government detachments (to a total of 269 detachments) and enlarged the size of detachments commensurate to their new mission.²⁹

It is noteworthy no civilian agency ever relieved the US military government of the occupation mission during or after the war. Accordingly, the Office of Military Government for Germany, United States “civilianized” the mission by separating military government from the US military command and replacing military personnel with civilians—many of them demobilized civil affairs personnel.³⁰

Implementation of Stability Tasks

Civil affairs/MG detachments served as the primary instrument for the establishment of local order and security while tactical units focused on combat operations. These detachments accompanied combat troops in the initial waves of the invasion, establishing immediate stability in ports, towns, and cities. This section explores the manifold security tasks CA/MG detachments undertook to stabilize their assigned areas.

26. USFET, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 96, 98, 111, 116–17; Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 164, 193–94, 310; and Zink, *American Military Government*, 58–60.

27. Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 186–87.

28. USFET, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 38–39, 94, 98–100, 124–27; Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 321; Zink, *American Military Government*, 52; and Lucian K. Truscott, *Command Missions: A Personal Story* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Company, 1954), Kindle.

29. USFET, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 117, 122; and Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 310.

30. Robert Murphy, *Diplomat among Warriors* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1964), 228–29; Parrott, “Education for Occupation,” 85; Truscott, *Command Missions*, 546; Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 423; and Lucius D. Clay, *Decision in Germany* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1950), 65–66.

Aerial bombing, indirect fire, and ground combat inflicted significant damage and casualties in towns and cities and caused psychological paralysis among the inhabitants. As a result, the initial task of CA/MG detachments was to spur local authorities into action and to prioritize emergency efforts.³¹ Just as important, the implicit aim of detachments was to provide a psychological boost to the citizens, restoring confidence, optimism, morale, and hope for the future. Accordingly detachments sought to avoid the appearance of charity; instead they strove to create economic self-reliance and preserve self-dignity.³² In this manner, military government minimized the diversion of supplies, funding, and other resources from the primary military effort.

An incoming CA/MG detachment established its military government headquarters in the town hall or a suitable nearby facility and raised the American flag to designate its presence. The detachment commander met with or appointed a new mayor, directing him to disseminate the theater commander's proclamations, directives, and ordinances, as well as prompting the resumption of local government. At the same time, the public safety officer met with or appointed a new chief of police to reestablish police authority. As a principle, military government governed indirectly whenever possible, limiting its activities to supervising empowered officials.³³

Upon entering a town, the CA/MG detachment would conduct surveys on the state of local government, shelter problems, medical issues, food conditions, and available potable water as part of its initial report to the parent G-5 staff. In response, the G-5 would dispatch medical personnel, rations, material, and civil affairs technical specialists to the communities most in need.³⁴ This approach sought to minimize waste and optimize the use of limited resources.

Identifying the availability of human capital was essential for local recovery as well as supporting military operations. The CA/MG detachment conducted a census to determine population size, available labor, and important professionals such as doctors, nurses, lawyers, judges, and bankers. The issuance of ration cards for food distribution provided detachments with an accurate way to gather census information. Establishing a labor pool by age, gender, and skills, all under the control of the mayor, provided a readily available resource for myriad tasks in support of the war effort. Greater knowledge of the local

31. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 198.

32. Parrott, "Education for Occupation," 48n134, 49; Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 67; and Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 435.

33. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 193–95, 213, 735; Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 10, 13–14, 20–28, 33; Zink, *American Military Government*, 225–26; Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, II-13–II-14, II-17, II-35–II-36; and Oehrig, *Civil Affairs*, 5–6.

34. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 338; and Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 9–10, 20–28.

professionals permitted the CA/MG detachment to draw upon their capabilities as well.³⁵

The CA/MG detachment identified, organized, and supervised the labor details, such as longshoremen, burial parties, infrastructure repairs, and rubble clearance, in support of military activities. While the detachment provided funds from local banks or G-5 currency reserves, it was important in terms of legitimacy for the local government to pay the salaries of officials and labor details.³⁶

Disease and potential epidemics presented a major risk to Allied soldiers, the populace, displaced persons, and refugees. Civil affairs/MG detachments conducted health inspections to determine medical needs and identify diseases. Infectious diseases such as typhus, malaria, venereal disease, and cholera were prevalent during the war, so quick responses to outbreaks stanching epidemics. From the experiences in the Mediterranean Theater of Operations, medical specialists undertook preventive measures such as inoculations and DDT dusting stations to kill lice. Civil affairs/MG detachments sought out local doctors to assist in preventive measures and prompted the G-5 staffs to search for doctors in prisoner of war camps to obtain their immediate release.³⁷

Reestablishing law enforcement in local communities was critical in order to relieve tactical units and military police of security tasks. Under the supervision of the CA/MG detachment, the chief of police reestablished an active police presence in the community. The detachment vetted all police to eliminate Fascist, Nazi, corrupt, and incompetent police officers. Often, the detachment authorized the recruitment of police auxiliaries to secure banks, government facilities, post offices, cultural facilities, enemy supplies and equipment, and anything of value or importance from looting or wanton destruction.

Police provided traffic control and posted road signs for military traffic transiting the urban area in order to forestall congestion and wrong turns. Only in dire circumstances would the detachment request tactical units or military police for security tasks. A recurring problem was Allied soldiers disarming local police, so detachments requested tactical commands inform their soldiers the police were under Allied

35. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 193–95, 338, 723–24, 730–31, 733, 737, 758, 792, 794; Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, II-35–II-36; Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 13–15, 17, 19–20, 38; and Damon M. Gunn, “The Civil Affairs Detachment,” *Military Review* 25, no. 6 (September 1945): 77.

36. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 777; Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 19–20, 38; and Gunn, “Civil Affairs Detachment,” 77.

37. Malcolm Gladwell, “The Mosquito Killer,” *The New Yorker* 77, no. 17 (July 2, 2001): 1–2, 4–5, 42; Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 307, 322–27, 325n10, 336, 338, 742, 758, 758n3, 792, 794, 813–14, 859; Keith Lowe, *Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2012), 7–8; Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 103, 134, 300, 344–45; Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 53, 195–96, 279, 293, 347; Norman Lewis, *Naples ’44: A World War II Diary of Occupied Italy* (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 1978), 47–48; Rick Atkinson, *The Day of Battle: The War in Sicily and Italy, 1943–1944* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2007), 247; and Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, II-41.

control.³⁸ Also, CA/MG detachments established curfews and placed movement limitations on civilians.

Further, the detachments established police checkpoints on surrounding roads to enforce security ordinances. They issued instructions for civilians to turn in weapons, cameras, binoculars, carrier pigeons, and radio transmitters, which the local police collected and secured. Detachments issued receipts for such items with the assurance that civilians could recover them once hostilities ended. These ordinances were necessary to limit civilian congestion on roads and to deter espionage. Once the security situation permitted, detachments instituted a pass system for civilians needing to conduct authorized business such as commuting to work and labor details. Detachments also ordered civilians to provide information on enemy weapons caches or armories, supply depots, abandoned equipment, and unexploded ordnance.³⁹

Generally prison conditions were atrocious, so CA/MG detachments inspected prisons and jails to ensure they conformed to international law and norms. As such, detachment leaders retained the prerogative to replace corrupt or incompetent wardens and guards. Additionally detachments issued instructions to tactical commands, forbidding units from arbitrarily liberating prisoners held in jails and prisons out of a misperception they were all political prisoners.⁴⁰

The CA/MG detachments and the G-5 staff sections also revived the judicial system, opening criminal and civil courts as quickly as possible. They sought out lawyers, judges, and legal clerks in local communities and scoured prisoner of war camps for such individuals. United States military tribunals focused on cases that affected the military effort, such as the black market, curfew violations, theft of military supplies, and attacks on the military. The civil courts handled the majority of criminal and civil cases.⁴¹

As a matter of policy, CA/MG detachments closed banks, post offices, and other financial institutions to prevent withdrawals by the enemy government, criminal organizations, and anxious civilians. Once detachments accounted for the financial assets, they reopened these facilities at the earliest opportunity for the resumption of local government and economic activities. Accordingly, local governments renewed revenue collection as the local economy recovered. Often, detachments advanced money to pay the salaries for civil servants, police, firemen, and labor, so as to keep government running and to

38. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 193–96, 198–99, 377, 383, 459–60, 725, 730; Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 146, 146n24; Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, II-35–II-36, II-43–II-44; and Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 9–11, 19–20, 99.

39. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 193–94, 735–36, 814–15, 817.

40. Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, II-39–II-40.

41. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 206–7, 701–2, 772–73; Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, II-38–II-39; and Zink, *American Military Government*, 109.

restart the local economy. Nonetheless, this “seed money” was only a temporary expedient until banking and revenue collection resumed.⁴²

The black market proved to be a significant and continual problem throughout the war. Theft of army supplies deprived the military of scarce resources for the war effort. For example in Italy, an estimated 30 percent of incoming supplies were pilfered and sold on the black market.⁴³ Detachments discovered Axis governments had disrupted local economies by diverting food, livestock, and equipment for their war effort. Farmers in particular hoarded food and sold it on the black market.

Thus the main goal for detachments was to create economic self-sufficiency in order to ameliorate humanitarian assistance. Detachments undertook measures to regenerate local economies, such as ensuring farmers and fishermen could get their products to markets, fixing prices temporarily to combat black market prices, and discouraging hoarding. Further, local police and military police executed raids on suspected black market rings to curb that practice.⁴⁴

As a matter of restoring self-sufficiency and local economies, CA/MG detachments inspected public utilities, such as water, electricity, gas, and sewage, for damage and repair. At times, repairs were easily done once parts became available. In other instances, damage was more extensive and required expertise from the specialist pool. Nonetheless, these detachments sought to exhaust local resources and solutions before requesting assistance from the G-5 staff to limit dependency on the Allies and minimize a drain on Allied resources.⁴⁵

Detachments inventoried captured supplies to determine the value of these supplies for supporting military operations, provided the G-5 staff section with the inventory lists, and notified the Counter Intelligence Corps of captured documents and mail. Generally, tactical commands placed the highest value on fuel and cargo trucks for immediate use. Detachments provided all other captured supplies and material not needed for the military effort, such as rations and medical supplies, to the local communities. It is noteworthy that detachments sold abandoned and captured equipment and tools to local farmers and business owners to prevent their use in the black market and also to give such items intrinsic value to the users. Detachments sent the proceeds for such sales to the US government to defray war costs.⁴⁶

Detachments organized motor pools from abandoned vehicles to assist civilians with transportation or cargo lift needs. These motor

42. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 196–97.

43. Atkinson, *Day of Battle*, 246–47; and Lewis, *Naples '44*, 70, 82–84, 109–10, 116–17, 122–23, 125–30, 153, 164–66, 181.

44. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 463, 725; and Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 54–56.

45. Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 149–54, 253–54; Komer, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, II-41; Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 321–22, 338, 792; and Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 13, 99–105.

46. Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 18, 60, 95, 103, 110, 150; Gunn, “Civil Affairs Detachment,” 77–78; and Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 147, 775, 810.

pools featured fuel points, garages, and mechanics at minimum cost. Additionally, detachments arranged for the repair of public transportation—buses, streetcars, and trains—as quickly as possible for commuters, and CA organized motor pools in Italy as well.⁴⁷

Local police intelligence on enemy officials, collaborators, criminals, and friendly resistance groups proved invaluable for CA/MG detachments and the Counter Intelligence Corps. Detachments met with resistance groups to gain their cooperation and assistance with the war effort. Paradoxically, while they provided invaluable assistance to the Allies, resistance groups proved the most disruptive to stability because they appropriated civilian property and undermined law and order in liberated areas. Hence, detachments and provisional government liaison officers persuaded these groups to disarm and demobilize. As a matter of patriotism, quite a few of them enlisted in the French and Belgian armies during the war.⁴⁸

Detachments interfaced with the fire chief, inspected fire equipment, and supervised the extinguishing of fires and rescue of people trapped in damaged buildings. Frequently detachment personnel prioritized firefighting to save lives, critical infrastructure, and issues of military necessity. As a matter of course, detachments arranged for the repair or replacement of fire equipment through the G-5 staff.⁴⁹

Detachments also assisted military units transiting through urban areas on the way to the combat front with temporary accommodations. Accordingly, they coordinated with the local authorities to identify facilities such as abandoned military posts, warehouses, and dormitories and established billeting offices to accommodate units. This service limited the displacement of civilians, potential looting, and incidental damage to civilian property.⁵⁰

Naturally the war resulted in the inevitable loss of and damage to civilian property, so CA/MG detachments duly investigated and provided restitution for valid claims. Often, Allied troops “requisitioned” civilian property, which prompted detachments and G-5 staffs to admonish tactical commands that such actions undermined relations between civilians and Allied forces. After all, civilian cooperation rested on the premise Allied liberators acted better than the Axis occupiers.

Going further, G-5 staff sections marked some towns in rear areas as off-limits, established joint police and military police patrols, and publicized the prosecution of miscreant soldiers to curb misconduct. As the agent of Army provost marshal authority, detachments also marked certain urban areas off-limits such as bordellos and bars, banned the consumption of alcohol in towns, and prohibited soldiers on rest

47. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 204, 207–8, 463, 810.

48. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 737, 770–71, 797, 802–6, 811; and Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 129, 131, 134–38, 166–69, 176–77, 180–81, 193.

49. Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 9–10, 14, 158; Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 338, 813; and Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 253.

50. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 792; Zink, *American Military Government*, 79–87; and Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 14–15, 30, 36, 49.

and recreation from carrying weapons. Prompt attention to civilian sensibilities not only promoted good relations between civilians and the military but also supported economic recovery.⁵¹

Another problem threatening military operations was the sudden multitude of refugees and displaced persons on roads. Many civilians simply sought to escape the fighting, but German troops also contributed to the congestion by deliberately forcing refugees and displaced persons toward Allied lines for the purpose of disrupting Allied offensive operations. In response, G-5 staffs diverted dozens of CA/MG detachments for refugee control, care, and swift repatriation. These detachments guided refugees and displaced persons to roads away from military lines of communication and accommodated them in abandoned military garrisons or temporary camps with shelters. There, refugees received rations, medical care, clothing, and transportation back to their home communities.

Whenever the security situation and transportation allowed, detachments collaborated with civilian agencies such as the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration to assist in refugee care. But generally detachments performed the lion's share of processing for these people. Literally millions of refugees and displaced persons returned to their homes quickly as a result of the organizational abilities of these detailed detachments.⁵² Achievements of the CA/MG detachments were unassuming and largely unremarked upon by historians who devoted more attention to military operations and strategy. But the myriad problems they proved capable of resolving kept tactical units on task, maintained the demands of military necessity, and facilitated spectacular tactical and operational accomplishments by the US military.

Conclusions

While future conflicts are unlikely to match the magnitude of the Second World War, certain practices of military government are worthy of consideration. Foremost, task organized CA/MG detachments, CA specialty pools, and multifaceted G-5 staff sections were notable achievements.

The War Department initiated US training programs early in the war for civil affairs personnel earmarked for northwest Europe, highlighting not only military government and technical skills, but also language and cultural proficiency. In England, the European Civil Affairs Division continued their training, ran practical exercises, and task organized the CA/MG detachments for the anticipated missions.

51. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 377; Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 25–28, 33, 49; and Gunn, "Civil Affairs Detachment," 77.

52. Coles and Weinberg, *Civil Affairs*, 307–8, 317, 327–33, 553, 729–30, 813–14, 816–17, 849–50, 854, 856, 858; Maginnis, *Military Government Journal*, 94, 114–16, 120, 122–23, 127, 144; Ziemke, *Occupation of Germany*, 168–69, 200–202, 239; USFET, *Civil Affairs and Military Government*, 66–67, 70–71, 114–15; and Oehrig, *Civil Affairs*, 3, 6.

By deliberately deploying CA/MG detachments with the invasion forces (both airborne and amphibious), US units were able to establish stability on the beachhead immediately. While control of the population was the immediate concern of CA/MG detachments, they also restored local governance, public order, essential services, and the economy. This approach prompted self-sufficiency, thereby minimizing the drain on Allied personnel, supplies, and equipment. Moreover, the detachments provided local labor, captured supplies and equipment, and intelligence to military operations. They served as Allied representatives to the local populace so as to bolster legitimacy and civil relations.

As the first responders for most nontactical incidents, CA/MG detachments addressed labor disputes, the care of refugees and displaced persons, and potential pandemics. International organizations (the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration and the International Red Cross Joint Relief Committee) and local government organizations could not operate on the continent due to the nonpermissive environment and logistical priorities. Thus CA/MG detachments repatriated the vast majority of refugees and displaced persons on their own. Today, the United States should anticipate circumstances, similar to those experienced by CA/MG detachments in World War II, will prevent the participation of international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and US Government departments and agencies.

Lastly, military government set the conditions for the postwar occupation of Germany and the recovery of Europe in general. While the postwar conditions in Germany presented a host of new challenges, the experiences and activities of existing military government entities provided a practical foundation for the next phase of postwar reconstruction. As such, military government conducted reconstruction, economic recovery, law and order activities, and political reforms. These long-term activities set the conditions for the European Recovery Program—the Marshall Plan—and Germany's rehabilitation as a constructive European partner.