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18 NOV 1916

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF STAFF:

SUBJECT: Training of Weaponsmen.

1. The capability of the AAF to perform effectively and promptly VME offensive operations in the event of emergency is impaired by the present very limited availability of weaponsmen and bomb commanders. By separate communications, the Air Forces has recommended to the Director of Plans and Operations that pertinent directives be issued to achieve the training of certain personnel, to be made available by the AAF, to fill an immediate requirement in connection with the above mentioned air combat crew positions.

2. While the AAF interposes no objection to the action of the Manhattan Project under which twenty-seven (27) Engineer officers are being trained, it holds the firm conviction that the technician serving as a weaponsman on a combat mission must be a member of the air combat crew, and properly trained as such, as has been the accepted procedure for the bomb commander.

3. The pre-combat conditioning of members of air combat crews involves their frequent participation as a team in gaining experience in high altitude long-range operation of multi-engined aircraft and in acquiring that experience in operational missions which will minimize the human error in the ultimate placement of the bomb on its target. In the development of such teamwork, considerations of experience gained in World War II make it mandatory that all crewmen be assigned members of an air unit of the Army Air Forces.

4. It is realized that from time to time weaponsmen and bomb commanders will require refresher technical training. This can be achieved on a temporary duty basis by rotation through Manhattan Project installations.

5. I recommend that the position of the Army Air Forces as expressly indicated in paragraphs 2 and 3 above be approved as War Department policy and appropriate agencies advised thereof.

cc: Office of Signature

DECLASSIFIED
By: Air Force Declassification Office
10 June 2010

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