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**Research Materials/Source Documents
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**FILE TITLE: Background Paper on the Establishment of the Loadmaster Crew
Position/Career Field**

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BACKGROUND PAPER
ON THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE LOADMASTER CREW POSITION/CAREER FIELD

The loadmaster is an aircrew member on a cargo plane, and is responsible for the loading/unloading of cargo, baggage, and mail. He or she also supervises passengers and conducts airdrop operations. As of 1992, loadmasters are assigned to nine different types of aircraft, but the majority fly C-130, C-141, and C-5 aircraft.

This paper will investigate the establishment of the loadmaster crew position and career field by examining airlift operations and personnel publications from World War II through the 1950s. It will continue to discuss personnel publications through the 1960s and 1970s.

I did not find the term "loadmaster" in World War II documents. Loadmaster duties, as we know them today, were performed during World War II, but not necessarily by any one designated crew position or MOS (Military Occupational Specialty). Army Air Force Regulation 35-46, dealt with MOSs, and did not list any cargo related crew position (7:2). Flight Engineers were not listed as a crew position or MOS either, but flight engineers were assigned to aircrews flying cargo aircraft (21:--)(16:1).

Loadmaster duties were seemingly divided up amongst a variety of specialties, both officer and enlisted, and without any

apparent uniformity. According to Oliver P. Beals, CMSgt, Retired, whoever was available, pitched in to do the loading. It might be the flight engineer, radio operator or crew chief (8:--). Crew Chiefs flew on "the Hump" (11:47). Crew chiefs were ordered to "check loading" of gliders, during operations in Tunisia (17:--). A weight and balance officer checked to make sure that cargo was distributed evenly and that airplanes weren't overloaded at Morrison Field, Florida (15:--). In the Pacific, the 5294th Air Freight Forwarding Squadron placed officers in charge of loading airplanes and assigned loading crews to them (12:2)(13:1). The closest use of personnel as "loadmasters" (in present day context) was in the China-Burma-India Theater (CBI).

Airlift units in the CBI were assigned to both Tenth Air Force and the India-China Division (ICD) of the Air Transport Command (ATC). Many different names were used for the forerunner of today's loadmaster, and they seem to have varied by mission.

On crews flying "the Hump", this person was the Flight Traffic Clerk. Chief Beals recalled that Flight Traffic Clerks were part of the crew, and that they were sometimes referred to as Flight Attendants, if carrying passengers (8:--). An official ICD-ATC photograph depicts the Flight Traffic Clerk performing the same duties as today's loadmaster (20:4) [attachment 1]. A photograph in the Hump Express (newspaper of the ATC), shows cargo being loaded under the supervision of the "enlisted cargo supervisor" (19:5) [attachment 2]. A different mission, "air dropping", produced yet a different name for the enlisted man in the back of the airplane.

The first air dropping in the CBI began 4 March 1943, by the Army Air Force Ferrying Command (later ATC), from Chabua, India (10:2). The monsoons prevented resupply of troops in the Naga Hills area of the India-Burma region; these first air drops were experimental (10:A1). An experimental air dropping detail was formed from the 60th Laundry Company and the 3477th Ordnance Company and thus was established the first "kicking" detail (10:2). The document containing this information carries a footnote defining the kicking detail as "Three or four enlisted men who push the cargo from the plane" (10:2). These experimental drops were so successful that the operation was immediately expanded.

"The establishment of a regular Air Dropping Organization was deemed necessary" and on 15 April 1943 the 3841st Quartermaster (QM) Truck Company commenced packing and dropping operations (10:A1). On 15 October 1943, the 518th Quartermaster Battalion (Mobile) was assigned the duty of packing all supplies for air dropping and the 3841st QM Truck Company only performed kicker duties (10:A2). Subsequently, all kicking crews were drawn from quartermaster units (10:A2).

Operations quickly expanded and records seem to indicate that flying units from Tenth Air Force eventually may have outnumbered those from ATC. The following are Tenth Air Force statistics: Between 15 April 1943 and 31 July 1943 kickers had over 93,664 hours of combat flying time to their credit. "The kickers have flown 45,997 combat missions over a like period of time". (10:A7) Thirty-nine kickers were killed. Three kickers received the

Distinguished Flying Cross; nineteen received the Air Medal; six received the Purple Heart; many more qualified for medals but hadn't received them. (10:A8) Kickers did not receive flight pay prior to 18 October 1943 (10:A7), the inference being that they were paid flight pay as of that date. Tenth Air Force records contain a photograph of three man kicker crew conducting a drop over Burma (10:F4) [attachment 3]. ATC records contain a different photograph of enlisted men in the back of the plane, but the caption (in the record's list of illustrations) refers to the men as "pushers" (21:--) [attachment 4].

Post war documents reveal that loadmaster duties were handled much the same way as in World War II. However, Army Air Force Manual 35-1, (revised through 1945, with changes dating to April 1947) lists the job description of the Flight Traffic Clerk. The job description is very, very similar to that of today's loadmaster, but no airdrop duties are mentioned. The MOS was 2967, and flying was specified. (6:239)

In his book, Over The Hump, General Tunner mentions "kickers" with respect to C-119 airdrop operations in Korea in 1950 (12).

By 1951, the MOS gave way to the Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC). AFR 35-400 listed; Senior Flight Steward, AFSC 60151; (5:19). The 434th Troop Carrier Group did not have any of the above AFSCs listed in their unit records (14:4), but a photograph shows an enlisted flyer performing loadmaster duties* (14:E2) [attachment 5].

* Original photo clearly shows enlisted man wearing wings.

Also, by 1951, the Air Force was receiving the first of its new C-124s. Two C-124s from the 62d Troop Carrier Group (Heavy) were committed to Operation Blue Jay, (airlift support of construction at Thule, Greenland) April-June 1951 (18:2). The after action report mentions one of the crew members as the "Douglas Loadmaster" (factory personnel were assigned to the crew) (18:4).

On 15 June 1951, Military Air Transport Service (MATS) Headquarters directed establishment of a C-124 transition unit. It further stated that the transition unit would conduct training to crews consisting of "one pilot, one co-pilot, one flight engineer, one flight mechanic technician, and one loadmaster" (9:127).

In 1953, the Aircraft Loadmaster appeared in AFM 35-1 as AFSC 60153, with a job description nearly identical to what it is today, except there was no mention of supervising passengers. But also in that manual was the Flight Traffic Specialist, AFSC 60151, whose duties included; supervising passengers, handling baggage, mail, customs information and manifests. (2:60-15) Also listed in the manual was the Aircraft Loadmaster Technician, AFSC 60173 (2:60-19). No seven level AFSC was shown for the Flight Traffic career field (2:60-3).

The 1962 version of AFM 35-1 made a few changes. The Flight Traffic career field was changed to 606X0 and a seven level appears. The Loadmaster AFSC was changed to 607X0, and the nine level Aircraft Loadmaster Superintendent was established (1:60-1).

Between 1962 and 1966, the Flight Traffic career field disappeared from Air Force manuals (3:20). In 1975, the Loadmaster

AFSC was changed from 607X0 to the present 114X0 (4:5-3).

From my research, I conclude that the Flight Traffic Clerks and "kickers" of World War II were in fact loadmasters. The Flight Traffic Clerks gave way to Flight Stewards for a short period in the 1950s. The Flight Traffic designation was returned to them in 1953, but with less responsibility for cargo as the loadmaster AFSC had arrived. The Flight Traffic Specialist disappeared in the 1960s and those duties were taken over by the Aircraft Loadmaster. The exploits of the "kickers" conducting airdrop operations brands them as loadmasters without a doubt. Kickers, pushers, Flight Traffic Clerks; Loadmasters, one and all.

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APPENDIX

Oliver P. Beals, CMSgt, Retired

Chief Beals retired in the early 1970s, from the 14th Military Airlift Squadron, Norton AFB, Ca. He is an Order of the Pelican recipient. Chief Beals spent his entire career as a Flight Engineer, starting out in The Air Transport Command flying the Hump. He spent his entire career in the Air Transport, Military Air Transport Service, and the Military Airlift Command. Some of the airplanes he flew include: C-47, C-54, C-97, C-124, and C-141.

PICTURE BELOW . . . Flight traffic clerk is shown signing a form which indicates that all supplies have been received and that passenger cabin has been inspected for cleanliness.



One More Drum Aboard



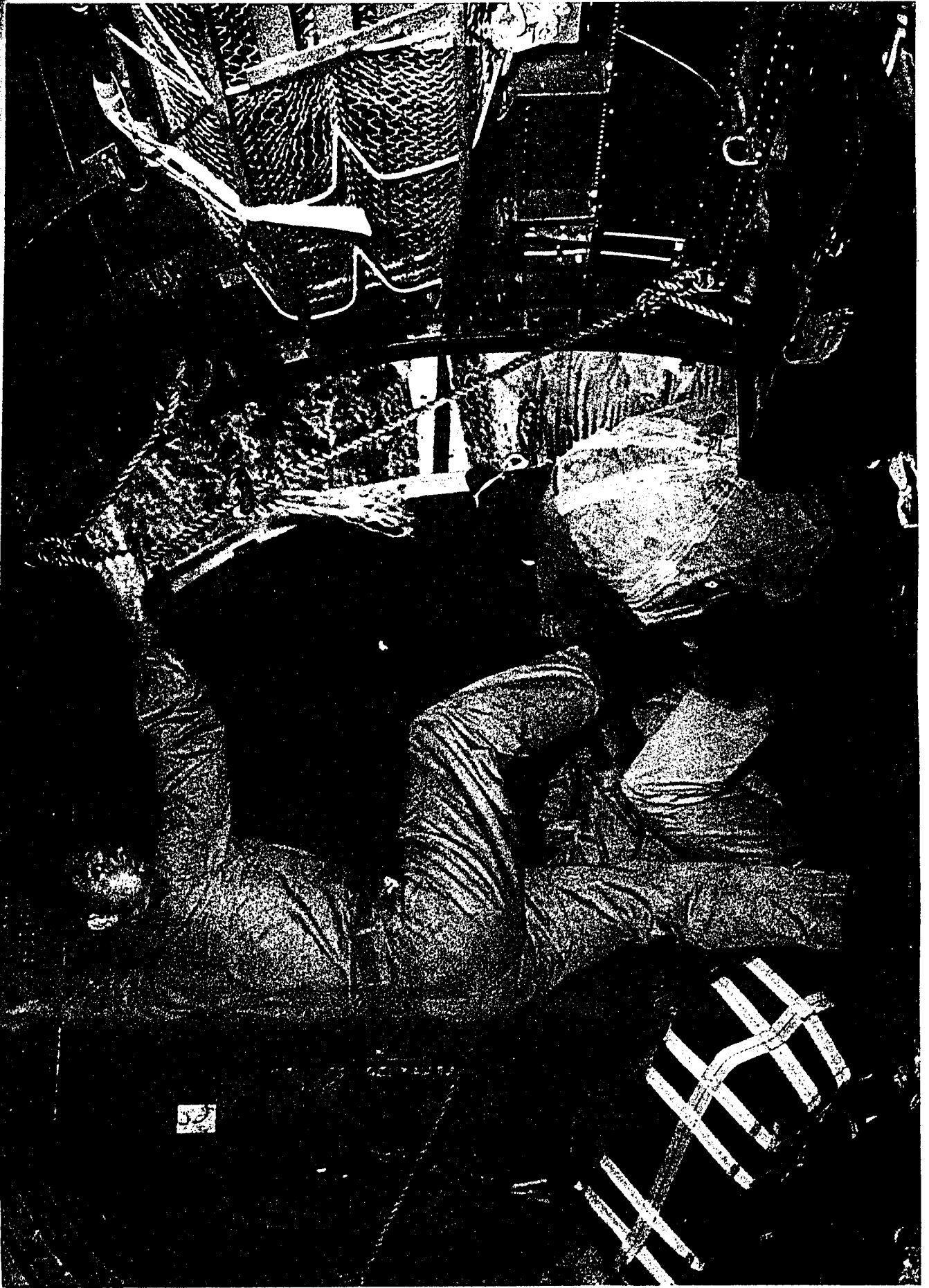
Coolies push and pull to get a drum of gasoline into a transport, where it will be tied down securely under the direction of the enlisted cargo supervisor at left, and checked out by the officer in charge of the loading, who stands behind him.



Fig. 4. Kickers pushing Free Drop Load
Plane, Burma

17 Feb 1945

10th AF



ATCH 4

~~RESTRICTED~~
~~EXHIBIT NO. 2~~

OPERATIONS AND TRAINING



LOADING AND LASHING, WEIGHT AND BALANCE

~~RESTRICTED~~

ATCH 5