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**Report date:** 5 April 1944

**Title:** Observer's Report No. 9 – Organization and employment of pathfinder units

**Author:** Allied Force Headquarters ETO

**Abstract:** The following observer's report is the navigation and employment of pathfinder units during operations in World War II.

**Number of pages:** 2 p.

**Notes:** From the MCoE HQ Donovan Research Library, Fort Benning, GA. Documents collection. Call #: D731.1 .E91 #11-Misc.

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Appendix "B"  
To GP Memo No. 12  
Dated 13 March 1944

## NAVIGATION AND EMPLOYMENT OF PATHFINDER UNITS

### 1. ORGANIZATION

#### A. Ground.

(1) Each airborne division will constitute, train and maintain eighteen parachute pathfinder teams. All teams will be trained to mark both drop zones and landing zones.

(2) Teams will consist of one officer and nine men as the technical party, and will be reinforced by such protective personnel as the division commander may deem necessary under the circumstances. The technical team will be equipped with 2 sets of EUREKA and appropriate lights.

#### B. Air

(1) 38 group RAF will have all crews trained for pathfinder operations, and approximately seventy-five per cent of its aircraft equipped with the necessary navigational aids.

(2) IX Troop Carrier Command will constitute, train and maintain a pathfinder force on the basis of 6 crews per group and 3 aircraft per group.

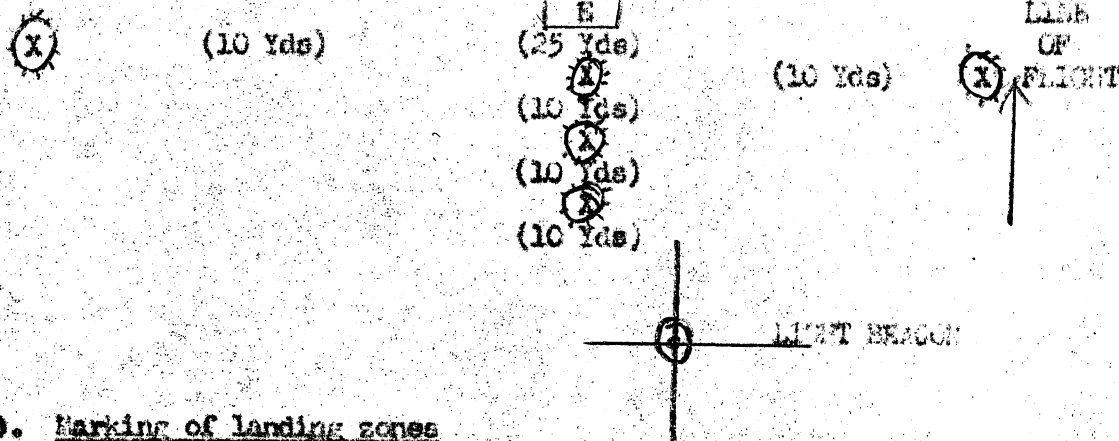
### 2. PROCEDURE

A. Pathfinder teams will precede the first serial of the main effort by 30 minutes or as agreed by both airborne and air commanders. The landing group of the 1st serial of the main effort will be prepared to drop as scheduled even though the pathfinder team may have been neutralised, and will, in addition, be prepared to re-establish pathfinder aids for subsequent groups.

#### B. Marking of drop zones

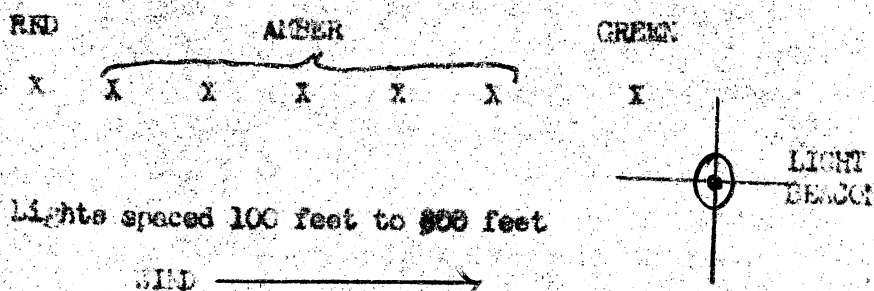
The standard marking for drop zones will consist of 5 lights forming a T. with a EUREKA installation at the head of the T. as illustrated in the diagram. The T and EUREKA installation will be positioned having regard to wind speed and direction, shape and size of DZ. The jump signal will be given when the leader of the group is over the head of the T.

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poor quality due to  
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the **original**.



### 6. Marking of landing zones

- (1) The marking of glider landing zones will consist of a row of seven lights through the major axis of the landing area. The light combinations are as shown in the diagrams here below.



- (2) The E installation is to be so positioned on the down wind end of the line of lights as to permit either a down wind run-in parallel to the lights or a cross-wind run in at  $90^\circ$  to the lights, the glider then turning through  $180^\circ$  or  $90^\circ$  respectively so as to come into the wind after release. Panel strips will be used to identify landing zones by the display of letters.

### D. Marking for subsequent groups

It will be the responsibility of the airborne unit commander to make provision for maintaining and securing pathfinder teams and their equipment in operation until all serials have arrived.

### 3. METHODS OF NAVIGATION

- A. Initial pathfinder aircraft will employ accurate dead reckoning (DR) and map reading closely checked by radar aids and the use of special maps for the location of drop zones and landing zones.

- B. Main serials will be led to the drop zones and landing zones by accurate DR and radar aids, and utilise REBECCA/ EUREKA for the exact location of the areas.

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HEADQUARTERS  
EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS  
UNITED STATES ARMY  
WD OBSERVERS BOARD, c/o G-3 SEC

ARO 887  
5 April 1944

SUBJECT: Observers Report No. 9 - Organization and Employment of Pathfinder Units.

TO : The Commanding General, Army Service Forces.  
Washington 25, D. C..  
(Attn: Chief Signal Officer)

SUBMITTED BY: Lt Col William A. Rocks, Sig C,  
Signal Corps Member,  
WD Observers Board.

1. The Cavalry Member of the WD observers Board, Colonel THOMAS T. THORNEBURCH, asked that I obtain data on the organization and operation of Pathfinder Units as the Army Ground Forces were interested in the Operation of such units. The matter was discussed with Lt. Col. Moorman, Signal Corps, Division Signal Officer, 82d Airborne Division, during visit of 28 March 1944. It was learned that outside of procuring and maintaining the equipment the Signal Corps has no part in the operation of Pathfinder units.

2. This report is furnished as a matter of general information, and it is requested that copy be furnished the Army Ground Forces.

3. For details as to Organization and Equipment of Pathfinder Units, attention is invited to Inclosure No. 1, Operation Instructions relative to Navigation and Employment of Pathfinder Units, dated 13 March 1944.

W. A. ROCKS,  
Lt. Col., Sig C.  
WD Observers Board.

1 Incl.

Navigation and Employment of Pathfinder Units.

C-Misc-11

24 Apr 47  
Classification cancelled on 15 Apr 47, 380-01 (106) GNCBI-8