

History of the US ARMY Inspector General

Relevance

The U.S. Army Inspector General (IG) system emerged and developed during A time of war – The Revolutionary War in 1778. The Army IG system that enhanced the warfighting and readiness capabilities of the Continental Army in 1778 is still serving that same critical purpose in today’s 21st Century Global War on Terror (GWOT). The overall concept of the Army IG system has remained constant through more than two centuries of war and peace. The major changes have occurred in how we execute and apply the IG system to today’s transforming and operationally oriented Army.

Today’s Army IG – like the Army IG of the past – is an extension of the Commander’s eyes, ears, voice, and conscience. IGs serve their Commanders; their commands; and the Soldiers, Civilians, and Family members that comprise that command. For nearly 228 years, IGs have served their commanders and commands thru four functions: Teaching and training, inspecting, assisting, investigating – and sometimes adding auditing. These four functions define the Army IG system.

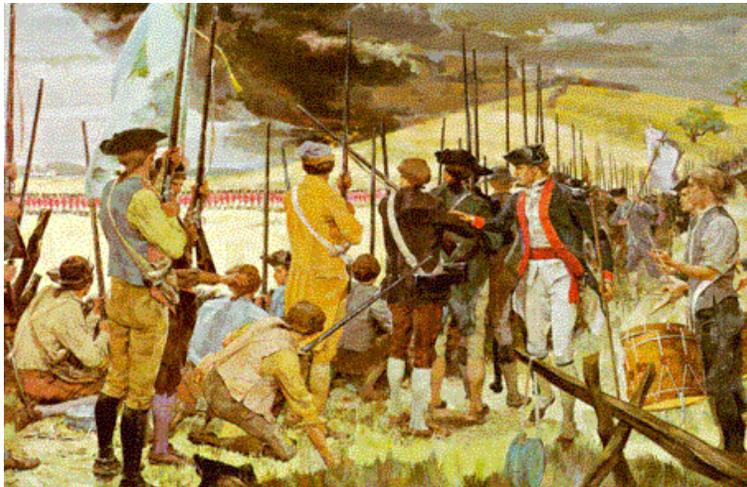
Origins

The French Army provides us with the first examples of IGs in Western culture. In 1668, an inspector general of infantry and an inspector general of cavalry were appointed, with the principal duties of reviewing the troops and reporting to the king. Louis XIV expanded the system to include geographical

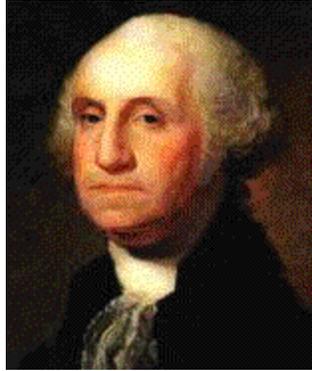
inspectors. They examined everything within their sphere of influence. Soon, military inspection became an essential aspect of all modern armies.

1775-1783

The U.S. Army Inspector General System was born during the Revolutionary War. The Continental Army, when formed in 1775, was a disorganized array of militia from different states, with no uniformity in organizations, procedures, drills, appearance, or equipment. The Continental Army's leadership was not comparable to the good, solid officer leadership of the British Army, and General Washington was not satisfied with the training and readiness of his diversified forces



On 29 October 1777, General Washington met with 14 general officers and decided among other things that an Inspector General for the Army was desirable. The Inspector General would superintend the training of the entire Army in order to ensure troop proficiency and common tactics. He would be the commander's agent to ensure tactical efficiency of the troops, that of tactical competence. The duties envisioned were those of a "drill master general" or a "muster-master general."



At the same time, the Continental Congress recognized the need for an inspector general to provide it with information concerning a significant public investment. Therefore, the Congress understandably wanted an agent in the Army to help in accountability for the military investments. It also wanted assurances the military would remain subordinate to its authority.

On 13 December 1777, Congress created the Inspector General of the Army. The Congressional resolution directed that the Inspector General would:

- Review the troops**
- See that officers and soldiers are instructed in exercise maneuvers established by the Board of War**
- Ensure that discipline be strictly observed**
- Ensure that officers command properly and treat soldiers with justice**

The first Inspector General of the Army was MG Thomas Conway. Conway, an Irish soldier of fortune, resigned shortly after his appointment because he couldn't get along with anyone in the American Army, to include General Washington.

The first effective U.S. Army Inspector General was Baron Frederick William Augustus Von Steuben. Von Steuben was a former captain in the Prussian Army. He was recruited for the American Army in Paris

by Benjamin Franklin in 1777. Franklin recognized that quality of von Steuben but was concerned that Congress wouldn't accept only a captain for such a position of responsibility. So Franklin "doctored" von Steuben's resume in order to present him as a former lieutenant general, a grade he knew would be acceptable to Congress

Von Steuben was accepted as the Inspector General of the Army on a trial basis by General Washington. He reported to duty at Valley Forge in February 1778. He spoke no English but learned quickly and impressed everyone with his hard work to improve the training, drills, discipline, and organization of the Continental Army.

