

OPERATIONAL AND STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP:
WHAT ARE THE DISTINCTIONS?

BY

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A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY OF
THE SCHOOL OF ADVANCED AIR AND SPACE STUDIES
FOR COMPLETION OF GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED AIR AND SPACE STUDIES

AIR UNIVERSITY

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

JUNE 2016

APPROVAL

The undersigned certify that this thesis meets master's-level standards of research, argumentation, and expression.

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DISCLAIMER

The conclusions and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author. They do not reflect the official position of the US Government, Department of Defense, the United States Air Force, or Air University.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge those without whose support would have made this project impossible. I want to thank Dr. Harold Winton for his insightful and prompt feedback as this study developed. I also want to thank Dr. Thomas Hughes for his support in identifying additional sources on the topic material. Finally, I want to thank my family for their understanding in the time I spent away from them to complete this requirement.



ABSTRACT

This thesis studied senior military leadership. It identifies the distinctions between the qualities and skills necessary for successful operational leadership and those required for successful strategic leadership.

This study begins with a summary of the existing literature regarding military leadership. Following sections examine the leadership of two operational commanders, Generals George S. Patton, and James “Jimmy” Doolittle. After identifying the qualities and skills that enabled these leaders’ successes, a similar investigation is conducted for Generals Ulysses S. Grant and David H. Petraeus. The qualities and skills that empowered these men are then compared to those that enabled Patton and Doolittle.

The study finds that there are fewer distinctions in the qualities necessary at the two levels of war than in the skills. At the operational level, risk-taking contributed significantly to success, while this quality assisted little at the strategic level. Conversely, intellectual qualities were more prominent in successful strategic leaders. While many leadership qualities were common between operational and strategic leaders, there was more variance in the skills that most appropriately suited each level of command. Technical comprehension of forces’ capabilities and resource management were two skills that significantly impacted success at the operational level while not greatly affecting strategic performance. Conversely, written communication and political awareness contributed to strategic success while making little or no difference at the operational level.

This topic is relevant to the military community as the past 15 years of war have seen their share of successful and unsuccessful strategic leaders. Military leaders must recognize that the characteristics responsible for past successes may not be relevant in future assignments. The study also implies that if an officer successfully leads at the operational level, he probably possesses the inherent qualities to succeed at the strategic level. He must, however, learn the skills necessary for the next stage of leadership because they are not as transferrable.

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Introduction

Over the course of their careers, military officers must exercise leadership at various levels of war. After they demonstrate competence at the tactical level—the lowest level of war—they may be promoted to positions in which they must lead at the operational level. When the nation deems them fit for further responsibility, some officers are made strategic leaders. The skills required for each of these levels of war, however, may not be the same. While some necessary leadership qualities may be common at all levels, experience indicates that as one progresses new skills are required.

Historically, some leaders have been promoted beyond their potential. Abraham Lincoln appointed many generals who demonstrated competence at lower levels of responsibility to lead the Army of the Potomac, only to see them flounder in this position of high authority.¹ Omar Bradley earned a solid reputation while serving as a corps commander under George Patton, yet historians have criticized his leadership of the 12th Army Group.² Based on his successful past performance, William Westmoreland was assigned as commander of Military Assistance Command, Vietnam, but he was unable to develop a winning strategy for the Vietnam War.³ More recently, several generals George W. Bush assigned to lead the occupation of Iraq proved unable to develop and implement an effective strategy.⁴ These generals had previously demonstrated impressive tactical and operational leadership. In each of these instances, leaders were promoted because they were

¹ T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and his Generals* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1952), 182, 186, 197, 214, 240.

² Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 643.

³ Lewis Sorley, *Westmoreland: The General Who Lost Vietnam* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2011), 302.

⁴ Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2006), 410.

thought to have demonstrated the potential for higher positions of leadership. Thus, one has to suppose that successful tactical and operational leadership does not reliably indicate an ability to lead well strategically.

Based on the above proposition, this thesis seeks to answer the following question: What distinctions, if any, exist between the qualities and skills required for effective leadership in the operational and strategic realms of war? This introduction defines key terms, outlines the scope of the work, and details the method employed to answer the research question.

Definitions

Many sources offer differing definitions regarding the delineations among tactics, operations, and strategy. This section will define these key terms to help provide clarity.

Tactics is the use of armed forces in battles or engagements. This definition aligns closely with the one Clausewitz expressed.⁵ The focus of tactics is the employment of fire and maneuver. While some military doctrines have attempted to define the delineation between tactics and higher levels of war by the size of the unit participating, time and space play a much greater role than the echelon of the military unit. Divisions may engage in tactical battles, but brigades are just as capable of directing operations. Battles and engagements, the components of the tactical level of war, are confined in time and space. Units involved in tactical engagements also tend to rely more on rehearsed drills than extensive planning. Indeed, many battles and engagements have taken place unexpectedly. Tactics primarily concerns the maneuvering of combat troops in contact with enemy forces.

⁵ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 128.

The operational art is the preparation, arrangement, and employment of tactical forces for strategic effect.⁶ The operational level of war is difficult to define because it has received the least amount of devoted literature. John Andreas Olsen and Martin van Creveld argue, “For most countries...the Second World War provides the most significant departure for contemporary studies of operational art.”⁷ Since that time, military theorists have paid increasing attention to operational art. Shimon Naveh, a veteran of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), explains, “The operational level, not only bridges between the strategic and the tactical levels, but also combines the unique qualities and characteristics of each of these levels.”⁸ He elaborates that operational actions should be synergistic.⁹ That is, the operation “should yield a general product that is significantly greater than the linear arithmetic sum of its components’ accomplishments.”¹⁰ General Sir Rupert Smith also spoke of operations shaping tactical success when he argued operations consist of arranging matters to one’s advantage before battle.¹¹ This includes proficiency in logistics, administration, engineering, intelligence, and information warfare.¹² Campaigns, series of military actions aimed at accomplishing a strategic objective, are also a defining characteristic of

⁶ Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997), 10.

⁷ John Andreas Olsen and Martin van Creveld, ed., *The Evolution of Operational Art: From Napoleon to the Present* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2.

⁸ Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997), 8.

⁹ Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997), 13.

¹⁰ Shimon Naveh, *In Pursuit of Military Excellence: The Evolution of Operational Theory* (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997), 13.

¹¹ Sir Rupert Smith, “Epilogue,” in *The Evolution of Operational Art: From Napoleon to the Present*, edited by John Andreas Olsen and Martin van Creveld (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 226.

¹² Sir Rupert Smith, “Epilogue,” in *The Evolution of Operational Art: From Napoleon to the Present*, edited by John Andreas Olsen and Martin van Creveld (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 228.

the operational level of war.¹³ Van Creveld defined the operational art as “the use of the available means in order to win campaigns.”¹⁴ Thus the operational level of war consists of both shaping conditions for battles and connecting the outcomes thereof to strategic goals.

Strategy is “the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the ends of policy.”¹⁵ Liddell Hart’s exposition effectively captures the essence of military strategy. J.C. Wylie defines strategy as: “A plan of action designed in order to achieve some end.”¹⁶ While simple and clear, this analysis must use a more specific definition of military strategy. Liddell Hart’s conception and Wylie’s formulations both suggest that military strategy is the link between operational objectives and desired political outcomes. This definition will be useful for the thesis.

This work only examines the qualities and skills of military leadership. This is not a study of grand strategy, which is conducted at the national levels. Some strategic leaders may be given non-military tools to achieve their objectives, such as supporting governmental agencies like the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). A leader’s use of such augmentation, however, does not equate to the practice of grand strategy in which a leader wields all elements of national power. At the military-strategic level, the historical examples examine leaders who received direct guidance from political leaders and then had to translate those desires into military objectives. At the operational level, the historical examples analyze leaders who were responsible for the synchronization of various tactical commands across

¹³ Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-0: Operations* (Department of the Army, Washington, D.C.: February 2008), 6-3.

¹⁴ Martin Van Creveld, “Introduction,” in *The Evolution of Operational Art: From Napoleon to the Present*, edited by John Andreas Olsen and Martin van Creveld (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 9.

¹⁵ B.H. Liddell Hart, *Strategy: The Classic Book on Military Strategy* (New York, NY: Penguin Publishing Group, 1991), 321.

¹⁶ J.C. Wylie, *Military Strategy: A General Theory of Power Control* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1967), 14.

time and space to accomplish tasks that would yield strategic effect. This work will not analyze tactical leadership.

Scope

This thesis seeks to examine the qualities and skills of leaders who successfully conducted operational art and compare them with the qualities and skills of successful military strategic leaders. It will then compare the qualities to determine what distinctions, if any, exist among them. To introduce the reader to the general characteristics of military leadership, the first chapter examines writings on the subject. These works present important ideas regarding the traits that military leaders previously demonstrated without attempting to distinguish among those that apply to the realms of tactics, operations, or strategy. This brief introduction into the major themes of military leadership will allow the reader to formulate a useful frame of reference for the detailed studies that follow.

Chapter 2 seeks to identify the qualities that enable successful operational leadership by analyzing two historical operational-level commanders: George S. Patton, Jr., and Jimmy Doolittle. Both men conducted major military operations during World War II. The analysis will focus on those operations that best illuminate their leadership qualities.

The third chapter analyzes the leadership qualities of two military-strategic leaders, Ulysses S. Grant and David Petraeus. Both received direct guidance from the President of the United States and were responsible for translating that political guidance into military objectives. They also had to compose plans that incorporated the various tools that their political leaders gave them. While many of the particular circumstances of these two leaders were quite different, their general situations were comparable with respect to the scope of their responsibilities.

Methodology

This work seeks to answer a number of questions that illuminate the leadership qualities that enabled these generals to perform successfully. First, the analysis should identify how an officer's influence affected a particular operation or strategy. This influence may take many forms. The research could determine that a leader intervened and gave critical direction to subordinate units. The leader's influence may come in the form of routine written guidance or verbal commands. Analysis of the effectiveness of such communications should provide insight into the skills required to perform at that level.

How a leader influenced an operation or strategy should become clear after an analysis of the relationship with the leader and his subordinates. The research should discover how a leader enabled the successful performance of his subordinate commanders. Studying how much the leader trusted subordinate commanders might offer insight into his leadership qualities and skills. A leader's clarity in communicating might also demonstrate important skills.

This study will analyze the leaders' processes for information collection and decision making. Those processes will assess the way the officer organized his staff. The thesis will examine both the military aspects of information collection, such as cavalry, scouts, or unmanned aerial vehicles, and at the less tangible systems that the leader emplaced to ensure he received pertinent information. How the leader translated the reception of information into a decision for action should also provide insight into why the leader was successful in a particular endeavor.

While information is certainly a key aspect of the planning process, the systems and controls that officers emplaced to ensure that their staffs conducted sound military planning are also worth examining. The amount of direction and involvement in which the leader participated in the planning process may have implications, for better or for worse. Analyzing the leader's planning process may lead to valuable insights into the leader's personality and leadership tendencies.

Finally, this analysis will study how the leader related his actions to the realities he and his subordinates faced and the imperatives he received from his superiors. The enemy force always receives a vote in the conduct of military operations. A well-designed plan is not sufficient to carry a leader to victory. The leader must implement that plan against a reasoning and evolving enemy force. Additionally, leaders must adjust to the demands of their superior authorities. Adaptation, then, is potentially an important characteristic in explaining a military leader's success.

These issues will serve to guide the research as it analyzes the leadership qualities of these operational and strategic leaders. Important in comparing the qualities and skills between the two levels of leaders is determining whether those necessary for effective operational leadership are necessary and sufficient for sound strategic leadership. It is possible that the skills necessary for effective operational leadership are not at all necessary for strategic leadership. The skills required for strategic leadership may, in fact, be entirely distinct. It is possible that the skills and qualities that enable effective operational leadership are, in fact, necessary for sound strategic leadership, but that they are simply insufficient. Finally, it is possible that the qualities and skills necessary for sound operational leadership are necessary and sufficient for effective strategic leadership—that there is no distinction between them. The research could demonstrate the validity of any one of the possible outcomes.

The following chapter discusses the writings of some of the more prominent students of military literature. The concepts in Chapter 1 are not intended to produce a model with which to analyze the historical examples. Rather, these ideas serve to provide the reader a foundation from which to approach the leadership styles of the chosen officers. The selected arguments should help the reader to understand the basic

nature of military leadership and should render the examples more comprehensible.

Chapter 1

A Classical Approach to Military Leadership

Many students of war have written about the qualities and skills that enable successful military leadership. Socrates, one of the earliest to write on this subject, proclaimed, “The general . . . must be observant, untiring, shrewd; kindly and cruel; simple and crafty.”¹ Some have argued that mental powers rank highest in importance. Other writers have emphasized personal and moral qualities. Some, arguing that good leaders are made and not born, imply that acquired skills rather than inherent qualities are deciding factors. Others argue exactly the opposite. An analysis of classical military writers, however, also demonstrates some commonality of outlook. Regarding qualities, most of these authors group important military leadership characteristics into moral, intellectual, and physical spheres. J.F.C. Fuller argues the three pillars of generalship are courage, creative intelligence, and physical fitness.² Similarly, Marshal Saxe posits, “The first quality a general should possess is courage . . . the second is brains, and the third good health.”³ Thus, the qualities that enable successful military leadership can usually be grouped into these three categories. Classical writers in military leadership generally find that leaders must possess moral, intellectual, and physical attributes in order to attain success in war.

¹ Archibald Wavell, *Generals and Generalship: The Lees Knowles Lectures Delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1939 by General Sir Archibald Wavell* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1943), 2.

² J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 35.

³ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 31.

Qualities are those attributes inherent in an individual's personality, while skills are competencies a leader has acquired through experience, training, or study. Both are important to military leadership. While a person may inherently possess the personality traits common to great leaders, they must learn how best to apply their talents to their trade. Concurrently, while administrative, technical, and managerial skills are generally common to good leaders, these skills would avail nothing without a leader who can inspire others to follow him. As William Slim contends, "You have . . . got to have a personality to project."⁴ Qualities and skills are complementary. While there are distinctions between the two, in practice the relationship is often symbiotic. For example, a leader cannot acquire sufficient delegation skills if he lacks the courage to accept responsibility for his subordinate's failures. In sum, both qualities and skills compose the make-up of great military leaders.

Defining Leadership

This section will present a practical definition of leadership before proceeding into a discussion of the qualities and skills that enable its successful exercise. While many authors write about the topic of leadership, few scope the term. William Slim offers a compelling explanation: "Leadership is that mixture of example, persuasion and compulsion which makes men do what you want them to do. If I were asked to define leadership, I should say it is the Projection of Personality."⁵ Lord Moran captures Slim's call for persuasiveness, but he goes a bit farther. He argues that, "Leadership . . . is the capacity to frame plans which will succeed and the faculty of persuading others to

⁴ William Slim, *Courage and Other Broadcasts* (London, England: Cassell and Company LTD, 1957), 38.

⁵ William Slim, *Courage and Other Broadcasts* (London, England: Cassell and Company LTD, 1957), 38.

carry them out in the face of death.”⁶ While Slim’s exposition certainly captures the emotional and moral implications of leadership, Lord Moran’s further includes the intellectual aspect. Thus Moran’s definition is the most useful for the following analysis.

Qualities

Qualities are those attributes that derive from an individual’s personality. They combine to produce a person’s character. Qualities define more of what a leader is rather than what a leader does, though an individual’s actions ultimately are a reflection of his character. Qualities are relatively fixed, though they can be shaped over time. Qualities are best organized into moral, intellectual, and physical spheres.

Moral Qualities

Most military writers agree that certain moral attributes are common to great military leaders. The preeminent of these is courage. The notion that soldiers must be brave is not novel. War is a dangerous activity. Its participants must be able to overcome natural fear. The soldier must be able to place himself in the way of physical harm to complete his mission. Physical courage alone, however, is not sufficient for military leaders. Leaders must also possess a more ephemeral courage—what writers often call moral courage. Carl von Clausewitz explains, “Courage is of two kinds: courage in the face of personal danger, and courage to accept responsibility.”⁷ Good leaders must possess both. While leaders must possess courage, they must also have the determination to carry their plans to completion against the opposition of both enemy and friendly forces.

⁶ Lord Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage: The Classic WWI Account of the Psychological Effects of War* (New York, NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2007), 190.

⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 101.

Physical courage entails the willingness of a warrior to expose himself to harm. Lord Moran explained, “Fighting in war creates an environment where fear is prevalent.”⁸ Warfighters must possess courage to overcome this fear or, as Lord Moran reasoned, “all is lost.”⁹ While all warriors must possess this quality, leaders must harness reservoirs of courage. Leaders must inspire their subordinates to follow their example rather than compel them. J.F.C. Fuller argued that leadership from the rear was a leading cause of unnecessary casualties the First World War, and he warned of generals who possessed the “rear-spirit.”¹⁰ If military leaders are in fact to lead, they must possess the physical courage to inspire others to brave hazardous situations.

Of physical courage, Clausewitz argues there are two types. One is a permanent condition, the other non-permanent.¹¹ The permanent type springs from either habit or precondition. A person could be born with an indifference to danger or be accustomed to esteeming his life of little value. The other type, non-permanent, owes its existence to transitory motives such as “ambition, patriotism, or enthusiasm of any kind.”¹² Of the two, neither is more important—each has its benefits and drawbacks. One is more reliable while the other bolder.¹³ One is more dependable, while the other will achieve more.¹⁴ Also, the two produce contradicting effects. The innate courage calms the mind while the transitory

⁸ Lord Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage: The Classic WWI Account of the Psychological Effects of War* (New York, NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2007), ix.

⁹ Lord Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage: The Classic WWI Account of the Psychological Effects of War* (New York, NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2007), ix.

¹⁰ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 67.

¹¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 101.

¹² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 101.

¹³ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 101.

¹⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 101.

stimulates it.¹⁵ Clausewitz finally concludes, “The highest kind of courage is a compound of both.”¹⁶

Many of the great military leaders of the past possessed pronounced physical courage. J.F.C. Fuller says both Ulysses Grant and Robert Lee possessed exemplary physical courage during the Civil War. Of Grant, Fuller records, “There was no turning away from danger, he always faced it.”¹⁷ Fuller cites several examples of Grant’s courage. During fighting in the Wilderness campaign, Federal troops descended into a panic as the line was pushed back. When prompted to retreat by an excited officer, Grant coolly responded that it would be better to stay and defend the present position.¹⁸ Fuller recounts one of the more notable instances of Grant’s courage under fire when, in the midst of supervising an attack, Grant sat near a tree writing a message. When an artillery shell exploded in front of him, Grant made little notice of the shell and continued to compose his missive. His men saw this and recognized Grant’s ability to control his fear.¹⁹

Fuller also praised Lee for the same attributes. Fuller writes that at Gettysburg, after the failed attempt to drive through the Federal’s center, Lee “was engaged in rallying and in encouraging the broken troops, and was riding about a little in front of the wood, quite alone.”²⁰ At Spotsylvania, when Federals broke through the Confederate works, Lee rode to the front of his army with the intent of leading the charge. His officers and men, however, refused to allow him to remain at the

¹⁵ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 101.

¹⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 101.

¹⁷ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 46.

¹⁸ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 46.

¹⁹ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 47.

²⁰ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 48.

front.”²¹ Fuller argues that Grant and Lee shared one important trait: “Their scorn of danger.”²² Physical courage is important to military leaders because many soldiers emulate their attributes. A brave leader spawns brave men. Leaders who demonstrate physical courage also garner the credibility needed to lead men in combat. With regard to Grant and Lee, Fuller explains, “It is such generals who can lead men, who can win victories and not merely machine them out.”²³ Physical courage is one of the most basic qualities of a military leader.

The second manifestation of courage is moral courage. Sir William Slim describes moral courage as, “A more reasoning attitude which enables [a man] coolly to stake career, happiness, his whole future on his judgment of what he thinks either right or worthwhile.”²⁴ Because it is relatively undemonstrative, many fail to recognize the importance of moral courage. Slim explains, “I have never met a man with moral courage who would not . . . face bodily danger. . . . Moral courage is a higher and rarer virtue than physical courage.”²⁵ Captain S.W. Roskill says of the relationship between moral and physical courage, “Certainly there is a connection between physical and moral courage; but whereas the possessor of the latter will, I am sure, never be found wanting in the former, I do not think the converse is by any means so assured.”²⁶ Interestingly, Slim argues that “so few, if any, have [moral courage] naturally.”²⁷ Roskill seems to agree. “Without proper training moral

²¹ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 49-50.

²² J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 43.

²³ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 47.

²⁴ William Slim, *Courage and Other Broadcasts* (London, England: Cassell and Company LTD, 1957), 5.

²⁵ William Slim, *Courage and Other Broadcasts* (London, England: Cassell and Company LTD, 1957), 6.

²⁶ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 45.

²⁷ William Slim, *Courage and Other Broadcasts* (London, England: Cassell and Company LTD, 1957), 9.

courage is almost unattainable.”²⁸ Lord Moran says of this attribute, “Courage is a moral quality; it is not a chance gift of nature like an aptitude for games . . . It is a fixed resolve not to quit.”²⁹ Thus, while moral courage is a higher virtue than physical courage, observers of leadership seem to agree that it must be cultivated to flourish.

The absence of moral courage can prove devastating to military forces. To emphasize the importance of moral courage, Slim details the lack of this quality in the Japanese army. “No other army has ever possessed massed physical courage as the Japanese did . . . but they lacked, almost to a man, moral courage.”³⁰ The defect for the Japanese army, Slim explains, was the inability to challenge orders, admit defeat and change plans, or retreat.³¹ Roskill argues, “One finds similar failings among the German generals, who would not or could not take a firm stand against Hitler’s often impossible orders.”³² While these soldiers possessed tremendous physical courage, their lack of the moral counterpart proved devastating.

Conversely, history is replete with examples of those who have possessed formidable moral courage. Roskill holds up Admiral Sir Arthur Cunningham’s actions in June 1940 as an example. The British government was beset by great anxiety over the threat posed by the French Mediterranean fleet. Assuming the worst, the government applied pressure to Cunningham to attack the fleet. Cunningham was convinced, however, that with time he could resolve the situation by negotiation. “He therefore stood firmly for what he believed to be right . . . and he persisted in his purpose without regard to the possible

²⁸ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 45.

²⁹ Lord Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage: The Classic WWI Account of the Psychological Effects of War* (New York, NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2007), 67.

³⁰ William Slim, *Courage and Other Broadcasts* (London, England: Cassell and Company LTD, 1957), 6.

³¹ William Slim, *Courage and Other Broadcasts* (London, England: Cassell and Company LTD, 1957), 6.

³² S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 46.

consequences to himself.”³³ Cunningham’s plan succeeded as the French disarmed their vessels. Roskill also recounts an instance of Field Marshal Douglas Haig’s conduct during the final offensive in World War I. Though told that the responsibility for heavy casualties would reside with him, and though he knew that Lloyd George was anxious to replace him, Lord Haig “went ahead with his plans unperturbed; and so was launched the offensive which led to the defeat of the German armies.”³⁴ Moral courage, then, concerns the ability of a military leader to pursue the course of action he believes correct regardless of pressures to the contrary. The above examples demonstrate that success in war requires leaders who possess moral courage.

Many writers have spoken of the need for a leader to make personal contact with his forces. Leaders should appear among their subordinates for morale reasons. Napoleon remarked, “The personality of the general is indispensable. . . . The Gauls were not conquered by the Roman legions, but by Caesar. It was not before the Carthaginian soldiers that Rome was made to tremble, but before Hannibal.”³⁵ Fuller argues, “We see that without the personal contact of the commander with his men . . . enthusiasm cannot be created.”³⁶ A leader must also comprehend the condition of his men, which is sometimes best observed at first hand. Fuller states, “Should the general consistently live outside the realm of danger . . . by his never being called upon to breathe the atmosphere of danger his men are breathing . . . he will seldom experience the moral influences his men are experiencing.”³⁷ Frequently visiting the front lines helps a leader remain in touch with the reality of

³³ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 47.

³⁴ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 48.

³⁵ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 30.

³⁶ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 31.

³⁷ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 29.

war. Wavell cautions that a leader “should not see everything simply through the eyes of his staff. The less time a general spends in his office and the more with his troops the better.”³⁸ Finally, leaders may need to position themselves with weak or inexperienced subordinate commanders. Wavell cautions, “There are many generals who are excellent executive commanders as long as they are controlled by a higher commander, but who get out of depth at once, and sometimes lose their nerve, if given an independent command.”³⁹ Such direction can be crucial to the battle. For these reasons, a successful leader must frequently visit the fighting men and his subordinate commanders.

Military historians have written a number of accounts demonstrating the truth of this principle. The absence of this quality was of great consternation to Fuller, who argued that limited personal contact between leader and soldier was wholly regrettable during the First World War. Fuller writes most condemningly of Passchendaele, “This hideous turmoil will go down to history as the most soulless battle fought in the annals of the British Army. . . . All contact between the half-drowned front and the wholly dry rear was lost.”⁴⁰ Leaders in that war failed to imbue their soldiers with the necessary enthusiasm because of their lack of presence. “[I saw] an army sliding backwards downhill, because . . . no one of the higher commanders thought . . . of rushing forward and kicking a moral stone under the backward skidding wheels.”⁴¹ On occasion, leaders must be physically present with their

³⁸ Archibald Wavell, *Generals and Generalship: The Lees Knowles Lectures Delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1939 by General Sir Archibald Wavell* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1943), 15.

³⁹ Archibald Wavell, *Generals and Generalship: The Lees Knowles Lectures Delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1939 by General Sir Archibald Wavell* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1943), 17.

⁴⁰ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 18.

⁴¹ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 18-19.

men in order for their leadership—as opposed to their plans—to have a desired effect.

The final moral quality most writers commonly discuss is a leader's determination to follow through with his convictions. Of the inner light that Clausewitz discusses, he elaborates that the second indispensable moral quality a leader must possess is the determination "to follow this faint light wherever it may lead."⁴² In an address to West Point cadets, Sir William Slim charged, "Your job as an officer is to make decisions and to see them carried out; to force them through against the opposition not only of the enemy . . . but against that of your own men."⁴³ Helmuth von Moltke argued that in war "one thing must be certain: one's own decision. One must adhere to it and not allow oneself to be dissuaded . . . until this has become unavoidably necessary."⁴⁴ The moral capacity to be decisive springs from a mind that is strong rather than brilliant.⁴⁵ Military leaders must possess the self-confidence to pursue the course of action to which they have committed.

Courage is the supreme moral quality. It enables others such as honesty, resoluteness, and self-confidence. As leaders attain more responsibility, the need for physical courage fades and moral courage gains in importance. Possessing courage, however, is not enough. Leaders must pass this quality to their subordinates through their personal example and interaction. Finally, leaders must possess the will to see their designs carried through to completion, against the opposition of enemy and, possibly, friendly influences. While moral qualities may be

⁴² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 102.

⁴³ William Slim, *Courage and Other Broadcasts* (London, England: Cassell and Company LTD, 1957), 40.

⁴⁴ Helmuth von Moltke, *Moltke on the Art of War: Selected Writings*, edited by Daniel J. Hughes, translated by Daniel J. Hughes and Harry Bell (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1993), 173.

⁴⁵ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 103.

the most relevant in war, a leader's intellectual qualities also help account for success or failure.

Intellectual Qualities

Authors of classical works on military leadership agree that leaders must possess formidable intellects. While these authors do not necessarily agree on whether intellectual or moral attributes are more important, all discuss to some degree the mental capacities leaders must possess in order to lead successfully in war. They generally concur that imagination is one such mental quality that enables successful military leadership. The ability to think clearly, even when under external stress or pressure, is another necessary intellectual attribute.

Imagination is one aspect of intellectual talent that most classical writers of military leadership indicate is necessary for success. Military leaders need an active imagination to solve problems effectively. Archibald Wavell indicates that as the form of military forces changes, "The commander with the imagination . . . to use the new forces may have his name written among the great captains."⁴⁶ Roskill elaborates on this sentiment. He recalls Alfred Thayer Mahan's observation that "in a period of slight material progress . . . 'advance in the practice of any profession is effected in the realm of ideas.'"⁴⁷ Further, Roskill affirms, "Mahan's warning that a period of great material changes will tend to produce ossification in the realm of ideas seems even more relevant than when he propounded his thesis."⁴⁸ In discussing the art of war, Roskill praised leaders "who possessed the gift of imagination, which is, after all, the key to success in every art. By making full use of that gift they showed themselves to be excellent leaders."⁴⁹ Roskill qualifies his

⁴⁶ Archibald Wavell, *Generals and Generalship: The Lees Knowles Lectures Delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1939 by General Sir Archibald Wavell* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1943), 13.

⁴⁷ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 106.

⁴⁸ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 106.

⁴⁹ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 103.

statement, however, by explaining that imagination must be coupled with experience for its application to be effective. “The tragedy of the world is that those who are imaginative have but slight experience, and those who are experienced have feeble imaginations.”⁵⁰ Military leaders must possess imagination to manage the ever-changing character of war effectively.

J.F.C. Fuller also extols the virtues of imagination. Fuller pointedly remarks, “Originality, not conventionality, is one of the main pillars of generalship.”⁵¹ Fuller quotes from Baron von der Goltz, “One of the most important talents of a general we would call that of a ‘creative mind.’”⁵² Drawing from other military leaders, Fuller explains that the reason many generals lack a creative mind is because they become too entangled in the minutiae of mundane activities and neglect the larger imperatives. These individuals too often emphasize trivial matters, interfere too much in the work of their subordinates, and stymie subordinate development.⁵³ “When war arises the small minds, worn out by attention to trifles, are incapable of effort, and fail miserably.”⁵⁴ Marshal Saxe also provides insight into the type of individual who lacks the creative mind. “Many generals in the day of battle busy themselves in regulating the marching of their troops, in hurrying aides-de-camp to and fro, in galloping about incessantly. They wish to do everything and as a result do nothing.”⁵⁵ Thus a symptom of leaders who lack creativity is the industrious engagement in either pointless ventures or their

⁵⁰ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 105.

⁵¹ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 32.

⁵² J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 32.

⁵³ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 32.

⁵⁴ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 33.

⁵⁵ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 34.

subordinates' affairs. Unable to orchestrate the affairs of their forces artfully toward the solving of an important problem, these leaders simply find something busy to do.

In his book *Fiasco*, Thomas Ricks paints the portrait of a leader who lacked this important attribute. As described by his peers, General Ricardo Sanchez, commander of the U.S. ground forces in Iraq immediately after the invasion, "was a fine battalion commander who never should have commanded a division, let alone a corps or a nationwide occupation mission."⁵⁶ Ricks argues that Sanchez's most damning flaw was "his relentless focus on minutiae."⁵⁷ Rather than formulating a creative strategy, Sanchez preferred to focus on metrics that represented progress.⁵⁸ Sanchez's self-proclaimed penetrative leadership style failed to provide the guidance obliged by his position. An Army intelligence officer in Iraq during Sanchez's tenure recalled, "For the first year of the war . . . there was no campaign plan issued to military personnel . . . to deal with the reconstruction of Iraq and to deal with the growing insurgency."⁵⁹ Sanchez's inability to grasp not only what was happening in Iraq, but also his own role in assembling various efforts and directing them toward a common goal left subordinate units pursuing different approaches across the theater. "Failure to define at the strategic levels the kind of war we were actually fighting . . . unintentionally left many . . . local efforts without a higher, guiding, and legitimizing purpose."⁶⁰ Thus Ricks demonstrates the truth of Marshal

⁵⁶ Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2006), 173.

⁵⁷ Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2006), 173.

⁵⁸ Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2006), 176.

⁵⁹ Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2006), 226.

⁶⁰ Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2006), 227-228.

Saxe's observation: there is more to the art of war than the drilling of troops.⁶¹

Clausewitz warns, however, that imagination can impede a commander's success, as well. He states that imagination "in most military affairs is liable to do more harm than good."⁶² Clausewitz refers to an imagination that is overactive and thus impedes an officer's better judgment. He further explains, "In the dreadful presence of suffering and danger, emotion can easily overwhelm intellectual conviction. . . . New impressions are too powerful, too vivid, and always assault the emotions as well as the intellect."⁶³ So while imagination can be a useful attribute, it has also the potential to degrade performance.

The ability of military leaders to think clearly and purposefully under pressure is another intellectual aspect of military leadership. Clausewitz refers to this quality as "strength of mind . . . the ability to keep one's head at times of exceptional stress and violent emotion."⁶⁴ Voltaire speaks of "that serenity of soul in danger . . . which is the greatest gift of nature for command."⁶⁵ While this quality may seem closely related to courage, Roskill indicates it is actually a mental attribute. He calls this attribute "equanimity—the ability to remain calm and clear-headed in times of stress and danger: and that quality, which one finds in all the great leaders, must surely, once again, be largely a matter of mental discipline."⁶⁶ Clausewitz also concludes that this is an intellectual quality. He argues that for a leader's mind to operate

⁶¹ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 34.

⁶² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 110.

⁶³ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 108.

⁶⁴ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 105.

⁶⁵ Archibald Wavell, *Generals and Generalship: The Lees Knowles Lectures Delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1939 by General Sir Archibald Wavell* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1943), 6.

⁶⁶ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 86.

successfully in battle, he must possess “an intellect that, even in the darkest hour, retains some of the glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth.”⁶⁷ Roskill also emphasizes why leaders must possess equanimity when he posits, “Seeing clearly they can decide promptly, and deciding promptly they can act immediately.”⁶⁸ Leaders must be able to envision the plan of action in an orderly and clear fashion. Roskill exclaims, “One can find in every period of our history a lavish supply of instances where operations of war have been ruined by obscure or ambiguous orders.”⁶⁹ Although Roskill is addressing obscurity caused by poor communication, the first requirement for unambiguous communication is clear thinking. Clarity of mind also implies a certain mental fortitude. During the chaos and confusion that is war, leaders must be able to calm their minds and clearly recognize the actions that will most probably lead to victory. Fuller says of this clarity of mind, “A man who cannot think clearly and act rationally in the bullet zone is more suited for a monastery than the battlefield.”⁷⁰

Historical examples also indicate that a common quality among great military leaders is their ability to retain a calm and clear mind during combat. J.F.C. Fuller tells the account of Grant’s actions at Fort Donelson. While momentarily away from the battle, Grant’s army was attacked and nearly routed. Fuller records, “It cannot be doubted that he saw with painful distinctness the effect of the disaster to his right wing. . . . In his ordinary quiet voice he said . . . ‘Gentlemen, the position on the right must be retaken.’”⁷¹ Grant may have been tempted to take a less resolute and more cautious approach to correcting the problem. Yet

⁶⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 102.

⁶⁸ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 85.

⁶⁹ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 111.

⁷⁰ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 63.

⁷¹ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 44.

his still, iron mind allowed him to see clearly the correct path to follow. Of Wellington, Roskill writes, "In everything that he wrote or said one finds, firstly, absolute clarity of thought."⁷² Roskill examines Wellington's decision making shortly before the battle of Assaye. In danger of becoming overwhelmed by a superior enemy force, Wellington recognized that the only way to save his army was to withdraw over a nearby river. His guides, however, informed him that no crossing sites existed. Convinced that there must be a crossing site as two nearby towns occupied opposite banks of the river, Wellington dismissed his subordinates' negative reports and pressed his army toward the river. Wellington, it turned out, was right.⁷³ Despite the fog of war and its attendant distractions, Wellington clearly recognized the course of action that would best enable his army to survive and eventually prevail. "It was the clarity and simple directness of his processes of thought that led to the victory of Assaye."⁷⁴

Physical Qualities

Finally, classical writers on military leadership indicate that certain physical qualities are required for leaders to be successful in war. Leaders must have the physical stamina to withstand the hardships of war.

A military leader must possess the constitution to withstand the infirmities of war. Stamina is an important physical aspect of military leadership. Archibald Wavell argues that the first essential quality of a military leader is "the quality of robustness, the ability to stand the shocks of war."⁷⁵ Military leaders must be able to bear the weight of war. Fuller elaborates on Wavell's edicts, "In war time the physical,

⁷² S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 84.

⁷³ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 85.

⁷⁴ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 85.

⁷⁵ Archibald Wavell, *Generals and Generalship: The Lees Knowles Lectures Delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1939 by General Sir Archibald Wavell* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1943), 3.

intellectual, and moral stresses which are at once set up immediately discover the weak links in a general's harness."⁷⁶ Roskill further states, "Physical fitness is, of course, essential in a fighting service. . . . The leader must set an example in this respect."⁷⁷ The condition of the body is intricately linked with that of the mind. War is a wearisome business. If the body is not prepared to endure war's strain, the mind will likewise become incapable of making sound decisions. Baron von der Goltz explains, "In a sick body, the mind cannot possibly remain permanently fresh and clear. It is stunted by the selfish body from the great things to which it should be entirely devoted."⁷⁸

Fuller takes the argument a step further to argue that youth correlates to an individual's robustness. "Physically an old man is unable to share with his men the rough and tumble of war; instinctively he shuns discomfort, he fears sleeping under dripping hedges . . . he instinctively fears that [were he to do these things] he will not be himself."⁷⁹ Fuller cites Napoleon as an example of a leader whose faculties diminished with age. At the age of 48, Napoleon declared, "I have to perform the labors of a Hercules at an age when strength forsakes me, debility increases, in one word when hope, the comforter of the distressed, begins to fail me."⁸⁰ Fuller also asserts that age makes a man more cautious and less mentally flexible. Cautiousness leads a man to remove himself further from the front line.⁸¹ Inflexibility of mind makes a man less imaginative. "Youth is not only more elastic than old

⁷⁶ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 55.

⁷⁷ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 76.

⁷⁸ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 35.

⁷⁹ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 56.

⁸⁰ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 57-58.

⁸¹ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 63.

age, but less cautious and far more energetic.”⁸² Fuller argues that the most successful generals are those that have been relatively young when in the prime of their service. “In the American Civil War...the average age of twenty Federal and Confederate officers who, as generals, played leading parts in the war, was thirty-eight and a half years.”⁸³ Wavell agrees with Fuller when he comments on policy regarding trends in the British army. “The recent lowering of age of our generals is undoubtedly a step in the right direction.”⁸⁴ Age is not an automatic disqualifier for great military leadership. There are numerous instances of older men performing heroically in battle. But, because of the effects on the leader’s mind and spirit, the physical effects of age tend to diminish the qualities that render such leaders effective.

Skills

While leaders must possess various qualities to enable them to succeed, they must also acquire a set of skills that help them employ their talents. Officers may acquire these skills through formal education or occupational experience. Lord Moran cited Charles DeGaulle on his opinion regarding the value of education, “‘At the root of Alexander’s victories,’ he declares, ‘one will always find Aristotle.’”⁸⁵ This statement implies that there is more to great military leaders than natural talent. The necessary skills may differ at various levels of leadership, but commonality exists among the previously mentioned writers.

Administration

Administrative skills are necessary for successful military leaders, especially at high levels of responsibility. Wavell laments,

⁸² J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 56.

⁸³ J.F.C. Fuller, *Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Co., 1936), 54.

⁸⁴ Archibald Wavell, *Generals and Generalship: The Lees Knowles Lectures Delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1939 by General Sir Archibald Wavell* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1943), 8.

⁸⁵ Lord Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage: The Classic WWI Account of the Psychological Effects of War* (New York, NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2007), 196.

“Unfortunately, in most military books strategy and tactics are emphasized at the expense of the administrative factors.”⁸⁶

Administrative skills are those that enable the successful preparation and management of battle. Leaders, therefore, must be capable of determining what is reasonable and possible. Wavell explains that determining where to go is easy—the difficult part is figuring out how to get there using the available resources.⁸⁷ Skill in administration includes the ability to link the *what* with the *how*. Administrative skills are also those that affect the effectiveness of an organization. A poorly administered unit will not fight well regardless of the strategy its leader adopts. Roskill posits that “the leader must study the administrative aspects of his duties from the very beginning of his career; he must completely master all their intricacies, and . . . he must make sure that his organization runs as smoothly as possible.”⁸⁸ Administrative skills enable a leader to pursue the strategy he deems appropriate.

Communication

Communication is another skill classical writers often identify. Communication includes both written and verbal direction. Roskill elucidates this skill in some depth. He cautions “one can find in every period of our history a lavish supply of instances where operations of war have been ruined by obscure or ambiguous orders.”⁸⁹ While leaders must invest a great amount of time to planning and developing strategies, they must be clear in the presentation of such orders or those plans will not achieve the desired effect. “When it comes to issuing his orders he must be certain that they are clearly understood by all the

⁸⁶ Archibald Wavell, *Generals and Generalship: The Lees Knowles Lectures Delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1939 by General Sir Archibald Wavell* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1943), 11.

⁸⁷ Archibald Wavell, *Generals and Generalship: The Lees Knowles Lectures Delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1939 by General Sir Archibald Wavell* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1943), 10.

⁸⁸ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 73.

⁸⁹ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 111.

subordinates who will have to carry them out.”⁹⁰ He explains that Napoleon also emphasized direct and simple communication. “‘Be clear,’ he wrote, ‘and all the rest will follow.’”⁹¹ Roskill recalls Admiral Philip Vian’s convoy to Malta in March 1942, during which the Second Battle of Sirte took place, as an example of clear communication. Vian “had made his intentions in the event of battle so clear that when the Italian fleet was encountered the only signal he made was the prearranged one to ‘carry out diversionary tactics using smoke to cover the escape of the convoy.’”⁹² While intelligence and imagination are qualities necessary to develop fortuitous plans, leaders must communicate those plans clearly to their subordinates.

Positioning

The ability to recognize where a leader must position himself so as to influence his organization most effectively is another skill that leaders must learn. Generally, the leader must position himself where he can best control his organization. This location may be his headquarters, or it may be near his organization’s decisive effort. Conversely, a given situation may not demand a leader’s control, but his spirit or personality. In such a case, the front—where his men are engaged—may be the best location to position himself.

Leaders generally must be able to position themselves where they can remain the most informed and exercise the greatest influence over their organization. Often, leaders will find that they must collocate with their headquarters and staff. As the staff exists to help a leader make decisions, a good staff will be able to acquire the information his commander identifies as lacking. The headquarters staff ideally possesses the most information on friendly and enemy units, and can communicate most effectively with subordinate units. Thus, there are

⁹⁰ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 165.

⁹¹ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 120.

⁹² S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 166.

compelling reasons for a commander to locate with his headquarters. For reasons previously mentioned, however, the leader may need to position himself with his troops on the fighting line. He may also deem it necessary to visit subordinate command posts. Recognizing the location from which a leader's influence will have the most decisive influence in a battle is a skill that complements the qualities a leader may call upon to succeed in war.

Technical Competence

In addition to imagination and mental clarity, many analysts argue that technical knowledge is an important attribute in military leadership. While great captains must avoid entangling themselves too deeply in their subordinates' affairs, military leaders must have a sound understanding of the capabilities and limitations of the forces they employ. Roskill argues that a leader's professional qualities "obviously include a clear understanding of the capabilities, also the limitations of the equipment provided to his forces."⁹³ He continues, "With the ever-increasing complication of equipment this must surely require a corresponding increase in technical knowledge."⁹⁴ This technical expertise applies not only to weapons, but also all the available technology that affects warfare. The ability or inability of military leaders to appreciate the effects of technology has directly influenced their capacity to achieve success. During the early years of the Civil War, many leaders failed to grasp the implications of new weaponry. General Burnside's failed assault on Fredericksburg is representative of the lack of appreciation for contemporary technology generally shared by military leaders at that time. With fixed bayonets, Burnside's troops attempted to close with defending Confederate forces.⁹⁵ An officer in the Sixth New

⁹³ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 164.

⁹⁴ S.W. Roskill, *The Art of Leadership* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), 164.

⁹⁵ James K. Bryant II, *The Battle of Fredericksburg: We Cannot Escape History* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2010), 136.

Hampshire recalls, “The boys hugged mother earth that afternoon.”⁹⁶ Civil War armies came to rely much less on the bayonet charge as leaders learned of the devastating effects of contemporary technology. In trying to explain the failures of World War I, “General Fuller has ascribed the dearth of leaders in those years to the need of a new type of general with the mental outfit to master new forms of warfare.”⁹⁷ Regarding the inability of the allies to achieve decision, Lord Moran asks, “Were the means not available . . . or was there no general then in France with the wits to make use of the new machinery?”⁹⁸ To lead effectively in war, commanders must have an understanding of the capabilities and limitations of new technological instruments.

Conclusion

Classical philosophers of military leadership agree that leaders must possess certain attributes and skills to achieve success in war. Regarding qualities, many authors concur that there are moral, intellectual, and physical qualities that leaders should possess. The majority of these writers concede that moral qualities are the most important, while a few hold that intellectual qualities carry the day. As war is a physically demanding quality, physical qualities are requisite.

Leadership qualities, however, are insufficient. Military leaders must also possess various leadership skills to succeed in war. While raw talent generally is necessary in a great captain, natural qualities are empty without certain skills. Administration, communication, strategic positioning, and technical expertise are skills that many classic theorists agree are hallmarks of sound military leadership. These skills are normally acquired through experience or instruction.

⁹⁶ James K. Bryant II, *The Battle of Fredericksburg: We Cannot Escape History* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2010), 144.

⁹⁷ Lord Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage: The Classic WWI Account of the Psychological Effects of War* (New York, NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2007), 191.

⁹⁸ Lord Moran, *The Anatomy of Courage: The Classic WWI Account of the Psychological Effects of War* (New York, NY: Carroll and Graf Publishers, 2007), 191.

Importantly, the relationship between qualities and skills is complementary. Neither is sufficient in isolation. In practice, the one aids the other. A leader cannot inspire confidence in his subordinates if he fails to recognize when his presence can have that effect. Clarity of mind and determination may enable a leader to recognize what must be done, but if he is unable to communicate such a plan effectively, the leader will not find success. A leader who refuses to accept responsibility may find that his subordinates do not fully act on his well-communicated orders. Qualities and skills are both necessary for successful military leadership. In many ways, strong leadership qualities promote the development of certain skills.

This chapter sets the foundation for a detailed examination of the leadership qualities of specific operational and strategic leaders. The research may validate the claims of these classic writers, or it may discover several attributes not previously unidentified. The next chapter studies the operational leadership of Generals George S. Patton, Jr., and Jimmy Doolittle.

Chapter 2

Patton and Doolittle – Operational Leadership

This chapter analyzes the operational leadership of George S. Patton, Jr., and Jimmy Doolittle. The study of Patton will focus on his breakout campaign in France, generally constituting events during the month of August 1944. While many operations capture Patton's leadership qualities, for brevity this chapter focuses only on the breakout from Avranches and the subsequent pursuit of the German army. The chapter will then examine the leadership qualities of Jimmy Doolittle. While Doolittle participated in a number of campaigns and operations throughout the war, this chapter focuses on his tenure as the Eighth Air Force Commander from January-June 1944, highlighting his preparation for the Normandy invasion.

Both sections will begin with a general narrative covering the operations examined and will analyze each leader's qualities and skills. The leadership traits presented below do not conform to any model or framework. Rather, they are those attributes deemed most influential in enabling Patton and Doolittle to accomplish their missions.

Patton

George S. Patton, Jr., is one of the most critically acclaimed operational leaders in American military history. Patton's Third Army was activated at a critical moment during the campaign in Northwest

Europe. His accomplishments with the Third Army gave the Allies the ability to capitalize on Hitler's desperate and arguably misguided counteroffensives. The Allies were thus able to inflict devastating losses on the German army in France and capture Paris with little resistance.

Breakout

The breakout from France began with Operation Cobra—five days before Patton's Third Army was activated. The Third Army became operational on 1 August 1944.¹ Third Army consisted of four corps—the VIII, XII, XV, and XX. Additionally, the XIX Tactical Air Force was placed in support of Third Army.² Patton immediately sent his corps in four different directions. He sent VIII Corps to Brest and the tip of the Brittany Peninsula; he sent XII Corps southwest to cut Brittany off from the rest of the country; he sent XV Corps east; and finally, he ordered XX Corps to drive toward the southeast of Paris.³

As Patton sent his forces through the narrow gap near Avranches, Hitler thought he saw an opportunity to cut Patton off from the rest of the Allied forces by attacking through Mortain.⁴ Although warned of a possible attack, Patton recorded, "I think it is a German bluff to cover a withdrawal."⁵ In actuality, it was a daring and desperate bid to cut Patton off from remaining Allied force by striking the narrow corridor through which he was sending his forces.⁶ Still, Patton was not caught off guard. Nor did the attack by the German Seventh Army discourage Patton from continuing to drive east. XV Corps, which had attacked

¹ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 626.

² Harry H. Semmes, *Portrait of Patton* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), 192.

³ Harry H. Semmes, *Portrait of Patton* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), 194.

⁴ J. Lawton Collins, *Lightning Joe: An Autobiography* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1994), 251.

⁵ Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 503.

⁶ Harry H. Semmes, *Portrait of Patton* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), 196.

Seventh Army's exposed southern flank, was trapping the entire formation.⁷ Meanwhile, Patton continued to push XX Corps east.⁸ His remaining two corps were supposed to remain in Brittany, but Patton recognized that at that point the Allies faced a great opportunity.

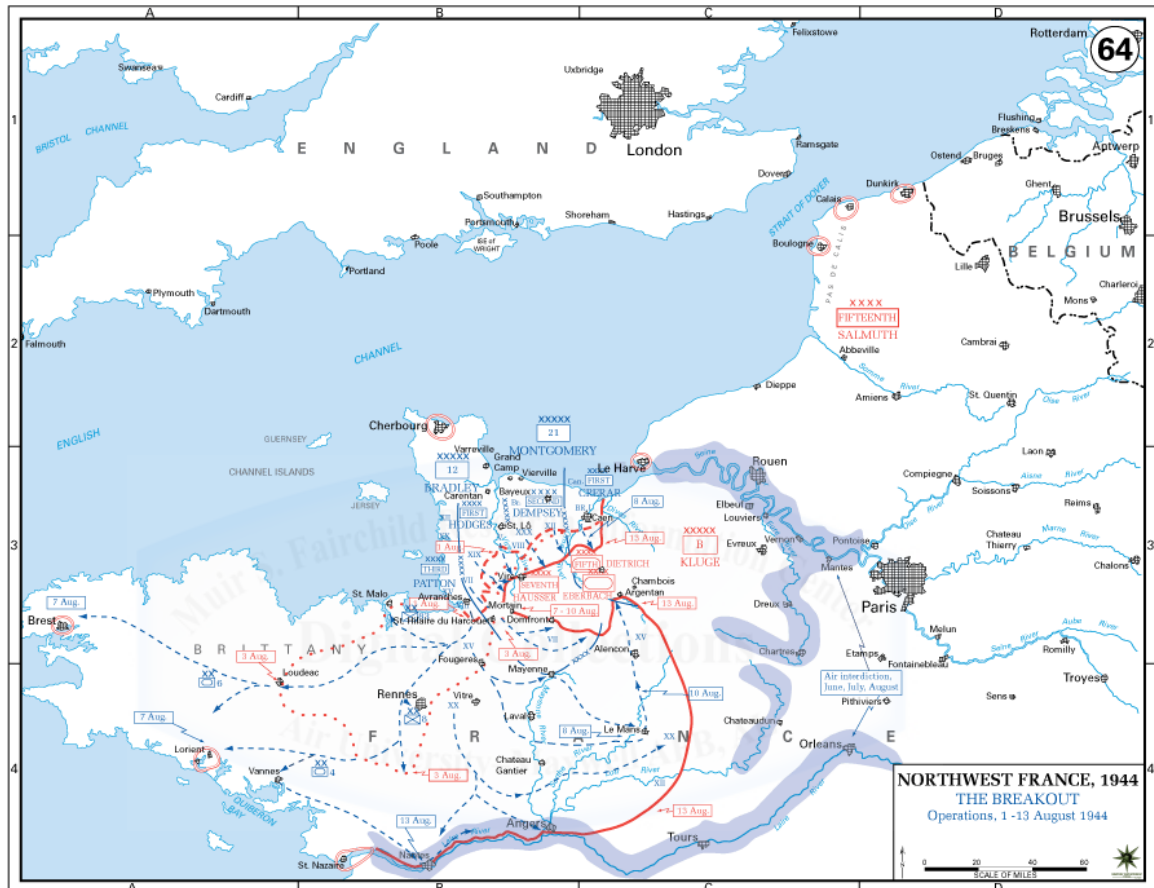


Figure 1: Northwest France, The Breakout (1-13 August 1944)
Source: Department of History, United States Military Academy, "The Breakout, 1-13 August 1944," <http://www.usma.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/World%20War%20II%20Europe/WWIIEurope64.gif>. (Chicago, 17.356)

Patton sensed that by attacking west Hitler had driven the German Fifth and Seventh armies into a noose (see Figure 1). With Patton's forces able to swing south and east, and with Montgomery's forces now

⁷ Harry H. Semmes, *Portrait of Patton* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), 196.

⁸ Headquarters, Third United States Army, *After Action Report, Third U.S. Army: 1 August 1944 – 9 May 1945*, Vol. I, Operations (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Third United States Army), 24. Document is now declassified.

finally able to push south, the German armies in the west were in danger of envelopment and isolation. The Americans, however, were not yet fully focused on driving east because Brittany had yet to fall. Bradley ordered Patton to clear Brittany before turning everyone east. Knowing from past indiscretions that he could not withstand another professional faux pas, Patton obliged Bradley by keeping VIII Corps in Brittany and continuing the siege of Brest.⁹ As Carlo D'Este explains, "Patton was simply unwilling to jeopardize his future as the Third Army Commander."¹⁰

Although Patton was leery of overtly resisting Bradley's orders, he felt he was wasting time in Brittany and should push as many forces east as possible. While leaving VIII Corps behind, he sent XII Corps east.¹¹ He said, "I am sure he [Bradley] would think it too risky. It is slightly risky, but so is war."¹²

Bradley eventually realized what the Allies had to do. On 6 August he ordered Third Army to leave only minimum forces in Brittany.¹³ Patton had already begun to enact this plan when he received the order.¹⁴ He and Montgomery wanted to push their forces all the way to the Seine River and block passage across, thereby trapping German Army Group B. This intended plan was the "long hook."¹⁵ Bradley, ever cautious, opted for a "short hook" in which Montgomery would maneuver

⁹ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 633.

¹⁰ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 634.

¹¹ Harry H. Semmes, *Portrait of Patton* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), 198.

¹² Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 629.

¹³ Headquarters, Third United States Army, *After Action Report, Third U.S. Army: 1 August 1944 – 9 May 1945*, Vol. I, Operations (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Third United States Army), 21. Document is now declassified.

¹⁴ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 640.

¹⁵ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 640.

south to Falaise and Patton would push north towards Argentan.¹⁶ While Patton's XV Corps closed on Argentan quickly, German forces successfully delayed Montgomery's attack. Afraid that the Allies would be unable to close the gap quickly, Patton ordered XV Corps to push on to Falaise after capturing Argentan.¹⁷ Bradley, however, ordered XV Corps to remain at Argentan because he feared a collision between American and Canadian forces.¹⁸ Bradley recalled, "By the time George called me, Haislip's tanks had already started across the gap. So uncompromising were my instructions, however, that George recalled Haislip's troops without a word."¹⁹ Although many Germans escaped, they sustained terrible losses. D'Este summarizes, "Of the fifty [German] divisions in action in June [1944], only ten could now even be called fighting units."²⁰

Patton's operational leadership enabled the Allies to inflict a crushing blow to the Axis forces in France. Although the Allies failed to achieve a total victory by enveloping both the Fifth and Seventh German Armies, Patton's foresight enabled the Allies to take advantage of an "opportunity that comes to a commander not more than once in a century."²¹ The following sections analyze the qualities and skills that enabled Patton to achieve this victory.

Patton's Qualities

¹⁶ Richard Rohmer, *Patton's Gap: An Account of the Battle of Normandy 1944* (New York, NY: Beaufort Books, Inc., 1981), 180.

¹⁷ Headquarters, Third United States Army, *After Action Report, Third U.S. Army: 1 August 1944 – 9 May 1945*, Vol. I, Operations (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Third United States Army), 26. Document is now declassified.

¹⁸ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 641.

¹⁹ Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1951), 376.

²⁰ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 642.

²¹ Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1951), 375.

Patton's leadership proved a crucial element in the breakout campaign. Not only did he design an effective plan, but his leadership qualities also empowered his army to accomplish his objective. Patton's aggressiveness, coupled with his willingness to take risks, drove his army to lengths that overwhelmed the Germans' ability to react. His insistence on leading from the front also helped the Third Army stay on course and maintain the momentum that he envisioned.

Aggressiveness. The first and most notable of Patton's qualities was his aggressiveness. Patton loathed the defense. For him, the only way to win a war was to continue to attack. He had little sympathy for subordinates who did not share this trait. When VIII Corps ran into stiff resistance at St. Malo, Patton dismissed his unit's failure to capture the city as weakness. "Apparently it is simply the fact that the people are so damn slow, mentally and physically, and lack self-confidence. Am disgusted with human frailty."²² One of Patton's biographers explained his aggressive conduct, "In the days to come, Patton would continue to exert his influence over his commanders to keep them moving, insisting that to attack, attack, attack would keep the enemy unbalanced."²³

Several specific examples demonstrate Patton's aggressiveness during the breakout. Patton sought to race across Brittany rather than methodically reduce its defenders. His advance resembled a game of leapfrog.²⁴ Advance units that encountered enemy forces would surround and isolate them. While those forces worked on removing the threat, another advance guard would push forward and do the same.²⁵ Harry Semmes asserts, "This method was typical of Patton for he believed

²² Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 501.

²³ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 629.

²⁴ Harry H. Semmes, *Portrait of Patton* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), 191.

²⁵ Harry H. Semmes, *Portrait of Patton* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), 191.

that the enemy should be kept so busy retreating that he could not marshal his forces for counterattack.”²⁶ One of his staff officers recalled, “The speed of our advance and the maneuverability of our forces left the Germans bewildered, never sure just where we were.”²⁷

During the Mortain counterattack, Patton refused to halt his advance. Farago states, “At no time during the counterattack did he slow or stop his own drives.”²⁸ While despondently accepting Bradley’s vision of a “short hook” in closing the gap at Falaise, Patton instructed General Wade Haislip, the XV Corps Commander, that after he attained the objectives that Bradley had designated, he should be “prepared for further advance.”²⁹ Patton eventually ordered this advance when Canadian forces proved unable to capture Falaise; Bradley, however, impeded the order by calling for Patton to halt at Argentan.³⁰

His aggressiveness permeated his units, as well. When General John Wood, one of Patton’s division commanders, found Rennes heavily defended, he bypassed the city so that he could rapidly attack to the east.³¹ When Haislip started his drive east toward Le Mans, he ordered his commanders to “push all personnel to the limit of human endurance.”³² Patton embodied aggressiveness, and his subordinates came to adopt Patton’s offensive style. His obsession with attack was perhaps the quality the Germans most respected about him.³³

²⁶ Harry H. Semmes, *Portrait of Patton* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), 191.

²⁷ Brenton G. Wallace, *Patton and His Third Army* (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Company, 1946), 43.

²⁸ Ladislav Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* (New York, NY: Astor-Honor, Inc., 1964), 520.

²⁹ Ladislav Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* (New York, NY: Astor-Honor, Inc., 1964), 533.

³⁰ Carlo D’Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 641.

³¹ Carlo D’Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 631.

³² Ladislav Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* (New York, NY: Astor-Honor, Inc., 1964), 528.

³³ Ladislav Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* (New York, NY: Astor-Honor, Inc., 1964), 505.

Risk-Taking. Closely related to his aggressiveness, Patton was also an ardent risk taker. His decisions during the breakout were risky in many respects; even so, Patton felt that Bradley constrained him too much. He wrote to his wife in early August, "If I were on my own, I would take bigger risks than I am now permitted to take. Three times I have suggested risks and been turned down and each time the risk was warranted."³⁴

While his aggressiveness may have created the impression that Patton was arrogant or blind to threats, Patton was fully aware of the risks he took. For example, many officers accused Patton of foolhardiness for leaving his flanks exposed during this campaign. When Eddy first received the order to attack east with XII Corps, he asked Patton how much he should worry about his flanks. D'Este notes, "Patton replied that it all depended on how nervous he was."³⁵ One of his frequent remarks was, "Let the enemy worry about his flanks."³⁶ Patton did not, however, assume unmitigated risks. When Generals "Hap" Arnold and Carl Spaatz asked Patton if he worried about his flanks, he replied, "No worries...The Air Force takes care of my flanks."³⁷ While it appeared that he simply left his flanks vulnerable, Patton was in fact relying on other means of protection. Such a decision was risky, but it was not impetuous. As his line became increasingly stretched, Patton admitted that his flanks were becoming a liability. He recorded in his diary on 10 August, "I became worried because there was a big hole in the American flank from St. Hilaire to Mayenne; also a second gap

³⁴ Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 505.

³⁵ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 637.

³⁶ Ladislav Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* (New York, NY: Astor-Honor, Inc., 1964), 490.

³⁷ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 638.

southwest of Alencon. The only thing I could do to safeguard these gaps was to assemble the 7th Armored at Fougères.”³⁸

Patton also assumed risk by sending Haislip’s and Walker’s corps east during the initial stages of the breakout. Farago argues, “There was little, if any, accurate information about the German forces in the area into which Patton was sending his two corps.”³⁹ Concentrating his forces in such a small area also presented the enemy a lucrative target. However, Patton recognized and accepted these risks. His diary entry on 1 August reads, “It was very evident that if a jam occurred, our losses, particularly with truck-borne infantry, would be terrific, and I had to say to myself, ‘Do not take counsel of your fears.’”⁴⁰

By sending so many forces through such a small gap—which constituted the only route for their resupply—Patton assumed the risk of an enemy counterattack cutting off his forces. Again, Patton mitigated this risk. Although he believed the chances small, Patton recognized the possibility of such a counterattack. He explained, “Since there is a gap, and a large one, between Mayenne and LeMans [between First and Third Armies], we moved the 80th Division . . . into it as a precautionary measure.”⁴¹ He even went as far as to prepare his own counter-offensive upon completion of a successful defense. The Third Army AAR reads, “He also ordered the corps to make plans for a possible attack in the direction of ST HILAIRE DU HARCOUET (T40) – FLERS (T82) in anticipation of a strong hostile counterattack on AVRANCHES (T21).”⁴²

³⁸ George S. Patton, Jr., *War As I Knew It*, annotated by Colonel Paul D. Harkins (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), 103.

³⁹ Ladislav Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* (New York, NY: Astor-Honor, Inc., 1964), 527.

⁴⁰ George S. Patton, Jr., *War As I Knew It*, annotated by Colonel Paul D. Harkins (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), 98.

⁴¹ Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 505.

⁴² Headquarters, Third United States Army, *After Action Report, Third U.S. Army: 1 August 1944 – 9 May 1945*, Vol. I, Operations (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Third United States Army), 22. Document is now declassified.

Clearly, Patton's risk mitigation was not cursory. Even when he believed that enemy actions bore little probability, he still planned to counter them. His risk-taking in this campaign paid off, however, for without sending two corps forward before Bradley's order to do so, the Allies would not have been in a position to inflict a crippling blow to the German armies at Falaise.⁴³

Leading from the Front. While Patton's aggressiveness and willingness to take risks enabled him to succeed in France, his particular style of leading from the front also contributed significantly to Allied victory. He made frequent personal contact with commanders and troops engaging the enemy. Patton explained why he felt it necessary to visit the front by using his now-famous spaghetti analogy. "An army is like a piece of spaghetti. You can't push a piece of spaghetti, you've got to pull it."⁴⁴ By visiting the front, Patton could motivate his subordinates. This belief is manifest in a letter he wrote to his wife on 5 August of a particular battle, "It is going fine except at one town we have failed to take . . . I am going there in a minute to kick some ones [sic] ass."⁴⁵ He also made regular trips to the front to reassure his commanders. "They all get scared and then I appear and they feel better."⁴⁶ On 8 August he visited the leading regiment of the 83rd Division during the battle for St. Malo. When the division commander, General Robert Macon, saw him, he thought he was going to be relieved. Patton reassured him by telling him that he was doing a good job. He recalled, "At the moment he needs more praise than blame."⁴⁷

⁴³ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 640.

⁴⁴ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 636.

⁴⁵ Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 501.

⁴⁶ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 635.

⁴⁷ Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 504.

His frequent trips to the front also inspired his soldiers to greater bravery. D'Este explains, "The word spread that if Patton was not afraid there was no reason for anyone else to be either."⁴⁸ Patton recalled some of his experiences at the front in his diary. On 2 August, he wrote, "I saw a young officer and his driver leap wildly out of a jeep and into a ditch. I went up to find out what was the matter and they said an enemy plane was overhead."⁴⁹ Colonel Charles Codman, his aide, recalled Patton's reaction. "'Inexcusable,' he yelled. 'Do you want to give your men the idea that the enemy is dangerous?'"⁵⁰ Patton writes, "They got back into the car even faster than they got out."⁵¹ He wrote of another occasion, "I got out and walked the column for about two miles, talking to the men. Some were getting rides on guns. . . . I called them babies and they dismounted."⁵² Patton's visits to the front helped to inspire his soldiers and reassured them that their leader was often in their midst.

Patton's Skills

While Patton's personal leadership style affected the Third Army's performance, he also possessed a number of leadership skills that complemented those qualities. His ability to manage his staff and provide the correct level of supervision to his subordinate commanders enhanced the effectiveness of Third Army. His understanding of modern warfare systems further allowed him to conduct the type of warfare that best suited his personal leadership style.

Administration. Patton's effective administration enabled synchronization among his staff and subordinate commanders and

⁴⁸ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 636.

⁴⁹ George S. Patton, Jr., *War As I Knew It*, annotated by Colonel Paul D. Harkins (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), 99-100.

⁵⁰ Charles R. Codman, *Drive* (Boston, MA: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1957), 158.

⁵¹ George S. Patton, Jr., *War As I Knew It*, annotated by Colonel Paul D. Harkins (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), 100.

⁵² Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 497.

helped Patton ensure that he possessed up-to-date intelligence. Managing large numbers of people is inherently difficult. Robert Allen, one of Patton's staff officers, explained, "A major problem on every staff . . . is maintaining closely meshed collaboration among its components. This is particularly true on high-level staffs."⁵³ Patton was adept, however, at managing this large staff and ensuring that he and the other important players received the necessary information to conduct operations. Patton began his days with a special briefing to which he invited only a few individuals. The intelligence section was robustly represented at these meetings. Allen attests, "The G-2 preponderance on this inner group was indicative of Patton's vigorous Intelligence consciousness. He was distinctive among high commanders in this regard."⁵⁴ These briefings helped develop a common understanding of the enemy situation.⁵⁵ Typical daily staff briefs involving all of the staff sections followed these special meetings.⁵⁶ Patton placed a high premium on his staff's input. Allen said, "Patton never made a move without first consulting G-2. In planning, G-2 always had the first say."⁵⁷ Patton was adamant that these sessions occur daily, regardless of circumstances. As Allen recalled, "Beginning D-Day they went on a daily basis, and thereafter until May 9, 1945, not one day was missed."⁵⁸

Selective Supervision. Patton's selective supervision also contributed to his success in the breakout campaign. Patton knew when to intervene in the affairs of his subordinates as well as when not to do

⁵³ Robert S. Allen, *Lucky Forward: The History of Patton's Third U.S. Army* (New York, NY: The Vanguard Press, Inc., 1947), 67-68.

⁵⁴ Robert S. Allen, *Lucky Forward: The History of Patton's Third U.S. Army* (New York, NY: The Vanguard Press, Inc., 1947), 68.

⁵⁵ Harry H. Semmes, *Portrait of Patton* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), 193.

⁵⁶ Harry H. Semmes, *Portrait of Patton* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1955), 193.

⁵⁷ Robert S. Allen, *Lucky Forward: The History of Patton's Third U.S. Army* (New York, NY: The Vanguard Press, Inc., 1947), 68.

⁵⁸ Robert S. Allen, *Lucky Forward: The History of Patton's Third U.S. Army* (New York, NY: The Vanguard Press, Inc., 1947), 67.

so. Generally, he would provide broad guidance to his subordinates and allow them to determine how to conduct their operations. When giving instruction to General Robert Grow, 6th Armored Division Commander, prior to the attack on Brittany, Patton told Grow to take Brest.⁵⁹ When Grow asked about his intermediate objectives, Patton replied with minimal instruction, "I want you to bypass resistance."⁶⁰ Farago claims that he further "abandoned the conduct of battle to Middleton's firm hands."⁶¹

Patton was not afraid, however, to intervene when he believed that his subordinates were going astray. He wrote in his diary of visiting an armored division in Coutances, "I asked why they had not crossed the Sienne. They told me they were making a study of it at the moment, but could not find a place where it could be forded. I . . . asked them why in the hell they had not gone down to the river personally. They learned the lesson and from then on were a very great division."⁶² When Wood struck further east than his orders permitted, Patton cut short his initiative and ordered him to remain at Rennes. He recorded, "P. Wood got bull headed and turned east after passing Rennes, and we had to turn him back on his objectives . . . his overenthusiasm wasted a day."⁶³ Patton was able to keep the overall momentum moving east at an acceptable rate until Bradley realized the full magnitude of the situation. Not normally one to stifle aggressiveness or initiative, Patton would still intervene in his subordinates' plans if he felt they needed redirection.

⁵⁹ Ladislav Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* (New York, NY: Astor-Honor, Inc., 1964), 487.

⁶⁰ Ladislav Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* (New York, NY: Astor-Honor, Inc., 1964), 487.

⁶¹ Ladislav Farago, *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* (New York, NY: Astor-Honor, Inc., 1964), 458.

⁶² George S. Patton, Jr., *War As I Knew It*, annotated by Colonel Paul D. Harkins (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), 96-97.

⁶³ Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 499.

Modern Force Employment. Finally, Patton's understanding of modern war machines and their employment undergirded his advance. Specifically, Patton's knowledge of two new vehicles of war, the tank and the airplane, enabled him to conduct the rapid operations to which he was so well suited. Patton employed these instruments in a way that allowed him to take risks and accomplish aggressive advances. He recorded his thoughts on armor and air integration in his diary, "Armor can move fast enough to prevent the enemy having time to deploy off the roads, and so long as he stays on the roads the fighter-bomber is one of his most deadly opponents."⁶⁴

Patton used airpower to protect his flanks, thus enabling a rapid ground advance. He instructed General Otto P. Weyland, commander of the XIX Tactical Air Command, "You guard the right flank. I can't be bothered...everything south of the Loire River is yours. You hit it with air and watch it; we are going straight east."⁶⁵ Codman recalled Patton's response to a worried division commander, "You have nothing to worry about. If anything develops—and it won't—our tactical Air will know before you do, and will clobber it."⁶⁶ So effective was Patton's employment of airpower that 20,000 Germans once surrendered to an infantry platoon rather than face continued air attack.⁶⁷ Patton understood how to employ armored and air forces effectively. By taking advantages of their strengths, he was able to advance further than any other Allied army commander.

Summary

⁶⁴ George S. Patton, Jr., *War As I Knew It*, annotated by Colonel Paul D. Harkins (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), 108.

⁶⁵ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 638.

⁶⁶ Charles R. Codman, *Drive* (Boston, MA: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1957), 160.

⁶⁷ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 638.

Patton's leadership qualities and skills were complementary. In many ways, they were symbiotic. He capitalized on his aggressive style of offensive-focused warfare by taking advantage of new weapon platforms that allowed him to assume risk and cover ground rapidly. His desire to be at the front of his forces not only inspired his commanders and soldiers, but also allowed him to observe the progress of his senior commanders and redirect them as necessary. Through skillful administration, Patton conveyed his way of thinking so that staffs and commanders alike understood what their boss would expect without having to receive detailed instruction. This combination of qualities and skills earned Patton a place in history as one of the American army's most proficient operational leaders.

Doolittle

Few writers address the exploits of Jimmy Doolittle's operational leadership. Most accounts of Doolittle focus on his leadership at lower levels. As the commander of the Eighth Air Force, however, Doolittle oversaw air operations during a critical period of World War II. Doolittle's leadership helped bring about Allied air superiority over Normandy prior to Operation Overlord—an absolute prerequisite for success. He also dealt a smashing defeat to the Luftwaffe, from which it did not recover.

The Mighty Eighth

Doolittle assumed command of Eighth Air Force in January 1944. In taking command of the Eighth Air Force, he faced a significant learning curve in administration. Doolittle had never been in command of such a large organization. He once confessed his anxiety to Patton, comparing his new command to the old one in North Africa, "Up here it requires an equal or greater amount of ingenuity to effectively utilize the

almost unlimited resources at our disposal...Up here miracles are confidently anticipated.”⁶⁸

His primary mission as the new commander was to gain air superiority over Europe with which to support Operation Overlord. This mission came directly from General “Hap” Arnold. Allied leaders had agreed earlier to the mid-1944 invasion of continental Europe, and air superiority was a prerequisite for success. Arnold sent Doolittle a letter exclaiming, “My personal message to you—this is a MUST—is to destroy the enemy air force wherever you find them, in the air, on the ground and in the factories.”⁶⁹

Shortly after arriving, Doolittle made a number of changes. Most significantly, he reoriented his fighter command’s focus from protecting bombers to attacking the Luftwaffe. General Ira Eaker, the previous commander, had used fighters to protect the bomber formation. When Doolittle first visited the office of his fighter commander, General William Kepner, he observed on the wall a sign that read, “The first duty of the Eighth Air Force is to bring the bombers back alive.”⁷⁰ Doolittle told Kepner, “From now on that no longer holds. Your mission is to destroy the German Air Force.”⁷¹ He wanted fighters to act offensively. He said, “If the German fighters didn’t come up to the bomber formations to give battle, I wanted our fighters to go after them, picking out airfields, transportation, and other ground targets to strafe and bomb.”⁷² The bomber crews, however, were not very happy about the change, and this

⁶⁸ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski, *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 262.

⁶⁹ Benjamin Bishop, *Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend*, Drew Paper No. 17 (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 36.

⁷⁰ James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 380.

⁷¹ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski, *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 267.

⁷² James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 381.

“decision earned Doolittle the epithet ‘killer.’”⁷³ Nevertheless, Doolittle stuck to his plan.

Doolittle also made changes in how bombers conducted their missions. He directed that bomber formations had to be tighter, meaning less distance between aircraft. Tighter formations “afforded ‘mutual fire support.’”⁷⁴ Such formations also made offensive fighter tactics easier to implement.⁷⁵ Doolittle further directed that bomber formations had to maintain the speed of their slowest members. Lovell Thomas explains, “The tendency was to bomb and ‘get the hell out.’ Aircraft unable to keep up with the formation were left behind, generally to be finished off by the Luftwaffe.”⁷⁶

Doolittle also instituted a series of unpopular administrative policies. He established two policies that enabled the Eighth Air Force to hit the Germans more frequently. First, he “abolished the practice of group rotation and declared that nonoperational periods due to poor weather were sufficient for recuperation.”⁷⁷ Eaker had instituted group rotation in order to prevent the loss of too many bombers on a single mission.⁷⁸ There were formidable reasons for such a policy relating to the morale of the unit. Nevertheless, Doolittle instituted policies of “maximum effort” and “maximum continuous” effort—the Eighth would use every available aircraft during critical periods, and during non-

⁷³ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski, *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 266.

⁷⁴ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski, *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 261.

⁷⁵ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski, *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 261.

⁷⁶ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski, *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 261-2.

⁷⁷ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 38.

⁷⁸ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 37.

critical periods it would push its limits by employing 40 percent of the force.⁷⁹

Because Doolittle intended to employ more airplanes than had been employed in the past, he needed more crews. This led to his second administrative change, extending the length of an operational tour from 25 missions to 30.⁸⁰ Doolittle recalled, “Later, I increased the bomber crew sortie requirement to 35.”⁸¹ Normally, crews would return to the zone of the interior after completing an operational tour.⁸² With heavy losses and the reception of additional aircraft, Doolittle needed more experienced crews to maintain a high tempo of operations.⁸³

The first major operation in which Doolittle participated was Operation Argument, which came to be known as “The Big Week.”⁸⁴ This series of attacks, which occurred in February 1944, focused on German aircraft industry.⁸⁵ With 1,000 bombers positioned for attack, Doolittle launched “the largest allied air mission up to that time.”⁸⁶ Although much of the enemy aircraft industry survived, General Haywood Hansell recalled, “The German Air Force never rose again to its past performance.”⁸⁷ General Carl Spaatz similarly claimed, “German aircraft production recovered; but the Allies retained control of the air

⁷⁹ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 38.

⁸⁰ James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 387.

⁸¹ James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 388.

⁸² Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 41.

⁸³ James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 387.

⁸⁴ James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 394.

⁸⁵ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski. *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 269.

⁸⁶ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski. *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 270.

⁸⁷ Haywood Hansell, *The Air Plan that Defeated Hitler* (Atlanta, GA: Higgins-McArthur/Longino & Porter, Inc., 1972), 183.

throughout the remaining 14 months of hostilities.”⁸⁸ Doolittle asserted, “What hurt the Germans the most was the deterioration in the experience level of their pilots.”⁸⁹ The commander of the German fighters, Adolf Galland, argued that the loss in pilots was destroying the Luftwaffe, “Each incursion of the enemy is costing us some fifty aircrew. The time has come when our weapon [the Luftwaffe] is in sight of collapse.”⁹⁰

As Overlord approached, Doolittle shifted the focus away from strategic bombing to accommodate four competing missions. These missions included continuing to attack the Luftwaffe, isolating northern France by attacking rail centers, attacking coastal batteries and V-bomb sites, and interdicting airfields near Normandy.⁹¹ Although Doolittle had to balance his resources among these various targets, he sent forces against aircraft-related targets as frequently as possible.

Despite balancing four missions in preparation for the invasion, Doolittle cleared the skies and enabled Overlord to commence with Allied air superiority. While the Germans still had planes in France, they did not interfere with the landing sites.

While Doolittle’s leadership was crucial in achieving air dominance over Europe, he benefited from certain advantages his predecessor lacked. He benefited from the introduction of long-range aircraft that afforded the Eighth Air Force the ability to fight the Luftwaffe with more than just bombers. Arnold wrote, “When . . . I was able to get the long-range fighters to the Eighth Air Force . . . most notably, the P-51’s, the

⁸⁸ Carl Spaatz, “Strategic Airpower: Fulfillment of a Concept,” *Foreign Affairs*, 1 April 1946, 392.

⁸⁹ James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 396.

⁹⁰ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski. *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 272.

⁹¹ James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 401.

Luftwaffe was finished.”⁹² Doolittle also possessed more total aircraft than did Eaker. General Carl Spaatz claimed, “At the peak of our strength, in 1944, there were nearly 80,000 airplanes of all types under control of the A.A.F., of which more than half were in combat.”⁹³ These advantages, however, were offset somewhat by the increase in German fighter production. Galland wrote, “The year 1944 became the year with the highest output for the aircraft production.”⁹⁴ Haywood Hansell explained, “There were reportedly 25,000 single engine fighters produced in 1944.”⁹⁵ Thus the Eighth’s success was not inevitable; Doolittle’s leadership was a critical factor in the outcome of the air war over Germany.

Doolittle’s Qualities

Jimmy Doolittle effectively achieved air superiority over France, thus securing Overlord’s success. As a leader, Doolittle’s aggressiveness and moral courage helped the Eighth Air Force accomplish its mission.

Aggressiveness. Doolittle was successful as an operational commander because he was aggressive. Aggressiveness was a characteristic he developed in his youth as a boxer.⁹⁶ This quality was evident in the policies and strategy he established for the Eighth Air Force. Benjamin Bishop posits, “His concept of attrition through maximum effort indicates a predisposition to aggressive action.”⁹⁷ The scale of Doolittle’s attacks indicated his offensive spirit. Galland wrote, “In the previous months of January and February, 1944, the Eighth AAF

⁹² H.H. Arnold, *Global Mission* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1949), 488.

⁹³ Carl Spaatz, “Strategic Airpower: Fulfillment of a Concept,” *Foreign Affairs*, 1 April 1946, 390.

⁹⁴ Adolf Galland, *The First and the Last: The Rise and Fall of the German Fighter Forces, 1938-1945* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1954), 246.

⁹⁵ Haywood Hansell, *The Air Plan that Defeated Hitler* (Atlanta, GA: Higgins-McArthur/Longino & Porter, Inc., 1972), 208.

⁹⁶ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 9.

⁹⁷ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 52.

in many large-scale raids had dropped 48,335 tons of bombs on German cities. This is a considerable increase in the monthly average compared with the approximate 150,000 tons of the year 1943.”⁹⁸ As Doolittle’s force size increased, so did the Eighth’s effort. Galland described the following months, “The combined Anglo-American air offensive grew constantly in extent and intensity.”⁹⁹ In May, the Eighth dropped 36,000 tons; it then dropped 60,000 tons in June.¹⁰⁰ Importantly, Doolittle continued to increase attacks despite heavy losses. In 1944, the Eighth lost 18,000 aircraft.¹⁰¹ Doolittle’s aggressiveness, however, led to a dramatic reduction in Luftwaffe strength. In Operation Argument, the Eighth claimed 600 enemy kills in addition to dropping 8,340.5 tons of munitions on aircraft industry targets.¹⁰² Doolittle’s incessant pressure on the German air force ensured that enemy planes did not interfere with Overlord, and it ultimately defeated the Luftwaffe over Germany.

Moral Courage. Doolittle’s moral courage to trust his instinct also contributed to his operational success. Doolittle enacted administrative policies that allowed the Eighth Air Force to defeat the Germans in a war of attrition, but he did so with the full knowledge that his policies would not be popular.¹⁰³ Similarly, he changed the mission of the fighters from protecting the bombers to attacking the Luftwaffe. While a popular decision with the fighter pilots, the bombers “were all very distressed,”

⁹⁸ Adolf Galland, *The First and the Last: The Rise and Fall of the German Fighter Forces, 1938-1945* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1954), 245.

⁹⁹ Adolf Galland, *The First and the Last: The Rise and Fall of the German Fighter Forces, 1938-1945* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1954), 246.

¹⁰⁰ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 39.

¹⁰¹ Adolf Galland, *The First and the Last: The Rise and Fall of the German Fighter Forces, 1938-1945* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1954), 246.

¹⁰² Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 39.

¹⁰³ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 87.

[Doolittle] remembers, and they approached him ‘individually and in groups to tell me I was a killer.’”¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, Doolittle’s order stood.

Because of these changes, the Eighth suffered substantial morale issues during the middle of 1944. John Fagg writes, “The intensive scale of operations, high operational losses and wastage, the absence on occasions of sufficient fighters for escort, and the almost unbearable pace of missions on consecutive days all contributed to fatigue and a pessimistic outlook on the part of the flyers.”¹⁰⁵ Doolittle did not, however, adjust his guidance.

Doolittle was not oblivious to the moral issues his unit faced. Indeed, these issues concerned him deeply. Bishop recounts the minutes from a meeting on 22 March, “He made improving his Airmen’s facilities a ‘main point’ in his efforts to sustain morale.”¹⁰⁶ He appointed a special services officer to develop extracurricular activities for his men.¹⁰⁷ He even promised extended leave in the United States for those who completed their tours.¹⁰⁸ Doolittle did not callously propel his men into hopeless situations. But he did not alter the orders he believed necessary.

Although losses for the Eighth were initially heavy after Doolittle’s taking command, losses fell as the Allies gained air superiority.¹⁰⁹ In September 1944, an inquiry provided Arnold data that confirmed that morale had improved—no doubt due to the success that Eighth Air Force

¹⁰⁴ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski. *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 268.

¹⁰⁵ John E. Fagg, “The Strategic Bomber Strikes Ahead,” in *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, ed. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate (Washington, D.C.: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 306.

¹⁰⁶ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 91.

¹⁰⁷ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 92.

¹⁰⁸ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 88.

¹⁰⁹ Dik Alan Daso, *Doolittle: Aerospace Visionary* (Washington, D.C.: Brassey’s, 2003), 89.

enjoyed.¹¹⁰ Through all the morale issues, and the accompanying pressure upon the unit's commander, Doolittle stuck by his position. Trusting his instinct allowed Doolittle to achieve air superiority and thus in the long run reduce the risks to bomber crews.

Doolittle's Skills

Doolittle was an aggressive leader who possessed the courage to follow through with the changes that he believed would accomplish Arnold's strategic goals. He had also developed a number of leadership skills that helped him defeat the Luftwaffe in support of the Allied land invasion. Doolittle translated strategic guidance into operational objectives effectively and managed his resources efficiently. He was also able to recognize when his personal intervention was necessary to facilitate victory. Finally, Doolittle implemented effective doctrinal practices because he was intimately familiar with his aircrafts' capabilities and limitations.

Translating Guidance. Doolittle succeeded operationally because he was able to develop operational objectives that contributed to the strategic goal. Arnold indicated that Doolittle's mission was to destroy the German air force in preparation for Overlord.¹¹¹ To succeed, Doolittle had to determine what targets and methods would best lead to the Luftwaffe's destruction. Doolittle correctly assessed, "The most formidable weapon was still the German single-engine fighter," dismissing other weapons as supporting the fighters.¹¹² Operation Argument is one example of Doolittle's plan to gain air superiority over

¹¹⁰ John E. Fagg, "The Strategic Bomber Strikes Ahead," in *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, ed. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate (Washington, D.C.: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 306-307.

¹¹¹ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski. *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 261.

¹¹² Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski. *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 261.

France.¹¹³ His objectives were to defeat fighters in the sky and destroy their means of production on the ground. The U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey determined the roughly 4,000 bombs dropped on aircraft industry during this week destroyed 75 percent of plants that accounted for 90 percent of aircraft production.¹¹⁴ Arguably, the effect of the air battles during this week had a greater impact than the industry bombing.¹¹⁵ The Eighth claimed to have destroyed over 400 fighter aircraft during this week.¹¹⁶ So dramatic was the shock of these losses that the German air force would no more attempt full-scale opposition to daylight bombing raids.¹¹⁷ Galland wrote to his superiors that by April, the ratio of German to American fighters was one to seven.¹¹⁸ By focusing on the German aircraft industry and by forcing the Luftwaffe into the skies, Doolittle accomplished his commander's intent.

Effective Resource Management. Doolittle's ability to manage resources contributed noticeably to Eighth Air Force's success.¹¹⁹ The Eighth Air Force was far larger than any formation that Doolittle had previously commanded. Most importantly, he had to manage aircrews to capitalize on combat experience.¹²⁰ By amending the rotation policy,

¹¹³ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski. *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 269.

¹¹⁴ Arthur B. Ferguson, "Big Week," in *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, ed. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate (Washington, D.C.: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 44.

¹¹⁵ Arthur B. Ferguson, "Big Week," in *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, ed. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate (Washington, D.C.: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 46.

¹¹⁶ Arthur B. Ferguson, "Big Week," in *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, ed. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate (Washington, D.C.: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 46.

¹¹⁷ Arthur B. Ferguson, "Big Week," in *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, ed. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate (Washington, D.C.: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 47.

¹¹⁸ Adolf Galland, *The First and the Last: The Rise and Fall of the German Fighter Forces, 1938-1945* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1954), 250.

¹¹⁹ Benjamin Bishop, "Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend," *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 53.

¹²⁰ Quentin Reynolds, *The Amazing Mr. Doolittle* (New York, NY: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1953), 276.

Bishop argues, “it is clear that Doolittle’s decision led to an increase of average crew experience in the Eighth.”¹²¹ The increased crew experience led to improved bombing accuracy. Bishop reports, “Bombing accuracy [improved] from 29 percent hitting within 1,000 feet of the designated target to 40 percent in June and 45 percent by the end of summer.”¹²² Doolittle stated, “It took a while to prove, but the survival rate improved in direct proportion to bombing accuracy.”¹²³

The primary obstacle to Doolittle’s restructuring aircrews was the effect of operations on morale. Initially, Doolittle had serious concerns to overcome. By firmly effecting his decision, however, the increased experience of his crews paid off. The morale problem subsided as his unit gained increasing air superiority, demonstrated by Arnold’s informal investigation.¹²⁴ His appropriation of resources allowed Doolittle to achieve the goal of “maximum effort” while meeting the needs for three demanding missions.

Selective Intervention. Doolittle’s ability to recognize when his personal involvement was necessary also helped him to succeed operationally. Doolittle directly influenced his unit’s tactics by changing the fighter and bomber orientation and formations.¹²⁵ He admitted his decision to free the fighters from bomber defense led to greater losses initially, but “we not only eventually reduced our own losses from six percent to six-tenths of a percent, but had the Germans out of the sky

¹²¹ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 44.

¹²² Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 44.

¹²³ James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 388.

¹²⁴ John E. Fagg, “The Strategic Bomber Strikes Ahead,” in *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, ed. Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate (Washington, D.C.: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 306-307.

¹²⁵ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 61.

for the invasion.”¹²⁶ He also personally intervened in bomber formation practices by making them fly closer together and at the same speed.¹²⁷ Bishop writes, “Doolittle explained how a loose bomber formation exponentially increased the area fighters had to defend.”¹²⁸ His decisions led to reduced losses, which in turn led to more bombs dropped on target.

Notably, Doolittle is not solely to credit for recognizing that reduction in losses would alleviate concerns about his changes. Arnold had told Doolittle before the changes were implemented, “The life expectancy of our crews will improve with the increase in our Air Forces and the decrease in strength of our enemies.”¹²⁹ Nevertheless, German fighter reduction resulted from Doolittle’s reorientation. His decision to change course helps account for the Eighth’s reduced losses.

Technological Awareness. Doolittle’s understanding of his aircrafts’ capabilities enabled him to implement several doctrinal changes in the Eighth Air Force. Thomas states, “Doolittle made it a practice to fly every type of aircraft in his command.”¹³⁰ By testing his various aircraft, he became intimately familiar with each platform’s capabilities. Thomas further proclaims, “He also personally checked out any aircraft which was giving any trouble.”¹³¹ When the Eighth recognized that the P-38 tended to catch fire, Doolittle piloted one of these aircraft to see if he could identify the problem. Though he was able to land it safely, his

¹²⁶ James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 381.

¹²⁷ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 63.

¹²⁸ Benjamin Bishop, “Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend,” *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 63.

¹²⁹ James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 387.

¹³⁰ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski. *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 272.

¹³¹ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski. *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 272.

craft caught fire mid-flight.¹³² He recalled, “The problem was quickly resolved by our engine specialists.”¹³³ Doolittle also spent a considerable amount of time becoming familiar with the firearms of his aircraft. His identified doctrinal problems related to these weapons’ technical limitations. Upon recognizing that the machineguns could only handle a certain rate of fire and that the weapons became useless after this point, Doolittle directed that crews must hold their fire until German aircraft came within short range. He also insisted that crews force-cool their guns by exposing the bolt carriers periodically.¹³⁴ Doolittle’s familiarization with the technical aspects of his command helped him to enact policies that would further increase his operational effectiveness.

Doolittle’s qualities and skills worked symbiotically and facilitated his leadership of the Eighth Air Force. His aggressiveness coupled with his ability to translate strategic guidance into operational objectives assisted Doolittle in devising a plan that defeated the Luftwaffe. He possessed the moral courage to intervene in his subordinates’ conduct, and his ability to manage resources enabled him to effectively pressure the German air force while sustaining his own combat power.

Conclusion

George Patton’s effectiveness as an operational commander is evident in the fact that his direction and motivation situated his forces so as to capitalize on an exceptional situation. His knowledge of armored and air warfare enabled him to conduct the rapid, violent advance that naturally suited his aggressive style of warfare. His willingness to take risks led Third Army to bypass enemy defenses swiftly and left them bewildered and confused until it was nearly too late to escape. His

¹³² Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski. *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 273.

¹³³ James H. “Jimmy” Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 398.

¹³⁴ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski. *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 274.

frequent presence at the front, coupled with his periodic intervention in subordinates' decisions allowed the Third Army to move where he envisioned it. By managing his organization effectively, Patton ensured that his team understood his intent and could act as he would have wished. His meetings also promoted sound situational awareness, which proved particularly useful when integrating air support.

Jimmy Doolittle was also a successful operational commander. Like Patton, Doolittle's aggressiveness led to a strategy that unmistakably left the German air force in desperation. His technical and conceptual understanding of airpower and aircraft enabled him to make administrative and doctrinal changes in the Eighth Air Force that proved more effective than previous policy. Despite his general lack of experience at high-level leadership, Doolittle effectively managed his resources to accomplish operational objectives that contributed meaningfully to strategic success.

Patton and Doolittle have much in common that speaks to the qualities and skills that enable successful operational leadership. Both were very aggressive. While their approach to waging war may not have always been popular with their subordinates, they both believed that by hitting the enemy hard the war would be over sooner—thus more lives would be saved. Both were ardent risk takers. Patton often sent his units into the unknown, without flank support, admitting that even he would get nervous about such undertakings. As the bomber pilots would attest, Doolittle assumed risk by sending the fighters away from the bomber formations. While neither leader controlled all aspects of his operations, both were engaged in their units' affairs and redirected subordinates when they felt it necessary.

There were differences, as well. Of the two, Doolittle demonstrated more moral courage. Despite the protests of his subordinates and his lack of experience in bombing Germany, Doolittle held out in his judgment to alter the fighter and bomber formations and to adjust the

rotation schedule. Ultimately, he was vindicated as bombing accuracy improved and casualties dropped. Patton, on the other hand, proved unwilling to jeopardize his career by contending with Bradley. Although he knew that Bradley was allowing a great opportunity to escape by opting for the “short hook,” Patton acquiesced. He also prevented his units from advancing too far earlier in the campaign. Wood may have gained significant advantage over the enemy had Patton allowed him to continue his drive east. But afraid to confront Bradley, Patton halted him.

The next chapter will analyze the qualities and skills that enable successful strategic leadership by examining Generals Ulysses S. Grant and David Petraeus.

Chapter 3

Grant and Petraeus – Strategic Leadership

This chapter examines strategic leadership. It analyzes the leadership of Generals Ulysses S. Grant and David Petraeus. These generals were selected because of the similarity of the civil-military situations in which they were placed. Both leaders communicated directly with the President of the United States. Their tasks were to translate the president’s political aims into military goals and achieve them. Grant and Petraeus were thus both quintessential practitioners of military strategy.

This chapter begins with an examination of Grant’s leadership. As in the previous chapter, the analyses begin with a brief narrative describing the periods in which the two leaders commanded. The study then transitions into an analysis of Grant’s leadership qualities and skills. The examination of Petraeus’s leadership will follow the same format. After assessing Petraeus’s leadership attributes and capabilities, this chapter will summarize the findings and compare Grant and Petraeus as military-strategic leaders.

Ulysses S. Grant

Despite his victory in one of the most important wars in US history, Ulysses S. Grant is one of the most underrated of American senior military commanders. J.F.C. Fuller argues that while a myth persists of Grant's butcher-like approach to war, he was actually the man who saved the Union from disaster.¹ Grant proved to be the leader who achieved the military successes that led to accomplishment the president's political objectives.²

The American Civil War, April 1864 – April 1865

When Abraham Lincoln assumed office on 4 March 1861, seven states had seceded and the Confederacy was organized.³ Lincoln indicated the war's primary aim to Horace Greely on 22 August 1862, "My paramount objective in this struggle *is* to save the Union, and is *not* either to save or destroy slavery."⁴ Nevertheless, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1 January 1863 made freeing the slaves an important secondary objective.⁵ Although preserving the Union was the goal to which Lincoln was willing to subordinate all others, his later correspondence indicated his desire to finally end the practice of slavery. He wrote to Albert G. Hodges on 4 April 1864, "I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong."⁶

Lincoln appointed Grant general-in-chief of the Union armies on 9 March 1864. A presidential election was coming, and the Union's inability to make real progress had empowered opposition against

¹ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 7.

² T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 312.

³ Richard N. Current, ed., *The Political Thought of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, NY: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), 168.

⁴ Richard N. Current, ed., *The Political Thought of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, NY: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), 215. Emphasis in original.

⁵ Richard N. Current, ed., *The Political Thought of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, NY: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), 238-240.

⁶ Richard N. Current, ed., *The Political Thought of Abraham Lincoln* (New York, NY: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1967), 297-298.

Lincoln.⁷ Lincoln informed Grant that he wanted a commander who would take control and act adding that, to this point, he had been disappointed.⁸ Grant recognized that Lincoln needed victories to improve his political standing. He also understood the National capital's vulnerability represented a political liability.⁹ He therefore rejected the idea of an amphibious assault on Virginia and instead opted for an overland campaign. This would ensure he could move toward General Robert Lee and protect Washington, D.C., simultaneously.¹⁰

In planning his strategy, Grant accurately identified the South's fielded forces as its source of power. He therefore decided upon his object as being the destruction of the Army of Northern Virginia.¹¹ Grant's resolve is evident in his orders to Meade, "Lee's army will be your objective point. Wherever Lee's army goes you will go also."¹²

Grant directed all military operations toward defeating the Confederate forces in the field. Although General Joseph Johnston's Army of Tennessee represented a significant threat, Grant recognized that the Army of Northern Virginia was the most important object. Grant recalled, "Lee, with the capital of the Confederacy, was the main end to which all were working."¹³ He explained to General Benjamin Butler, "Lee's army and Richmond being the greater objects toward which our

⁷ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 207.

⁸ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 370.

⁹ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, prepared by Robert N. Scott, Series I, vol. 33 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 795.

¹⁰ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 207.

¹¹ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 207.

¹² *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, prepared by Robert N. Scott, Series I, vol. 33 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 828.

¹³ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 383.

attention must be directed in the next campaign, it is desirable to unite all the force against them.”¹⁴

Grant coordinated the movements of all forces of the Union army, a novel feat in the war thus far. He explained, “Before this time these various armies had acted separately and independently of each other. . . . I determined to stop this. . . . Concentration was the order of the day.”¹⁵ He further stated, “Accordingly I arranged for a simultaneous movement all along the line.”¹⁶ Sherman’s enthusiasm regarding Grant’s plan was evident in correspondence to his commander, “Your two letters of April 4th are now before me and afford me infinite satisfaction. That we are now all to act in a common plan on a common center, looks like enlightened war.”¹⁷

Grant provided further instructions to his commanders in April 1864 (see Figure 2). He intended for General George Meade’s Army of the Potomac to march south along the Atlantic coast to fix Lee.¹⁸ General Benjamin Butler’s Army of the James would flank Meade’s on the east with Richmond as its object.¹⁹ Of General Franz Sigel, Grant said, “He was to advance up the valley, covering the North from an invasion through that channel.”²⁰ Finally, General William Sherman would march to the sea from Atlanta, thus closing in on Lee’s southern flank while

¹⁴ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, prepared by Robert N. Scott, Series I, vol. 33 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 794-795.

¹⁵ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 374.

¹⁶ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 375.

¹⁷ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 208.

¹⁸ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, prepared by Robert N. Scott, Series I, vol. 33 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 828.

¹⁹ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, prepared by Robert N. Scott, Series I, vol. 33 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 795.

²⁰ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 375.

defeating General Joseph Johnston's army.²¹ Grant stated, "Sherman was to move from Chattanooga, Johnston's army and Atlanta being his objective points."²²

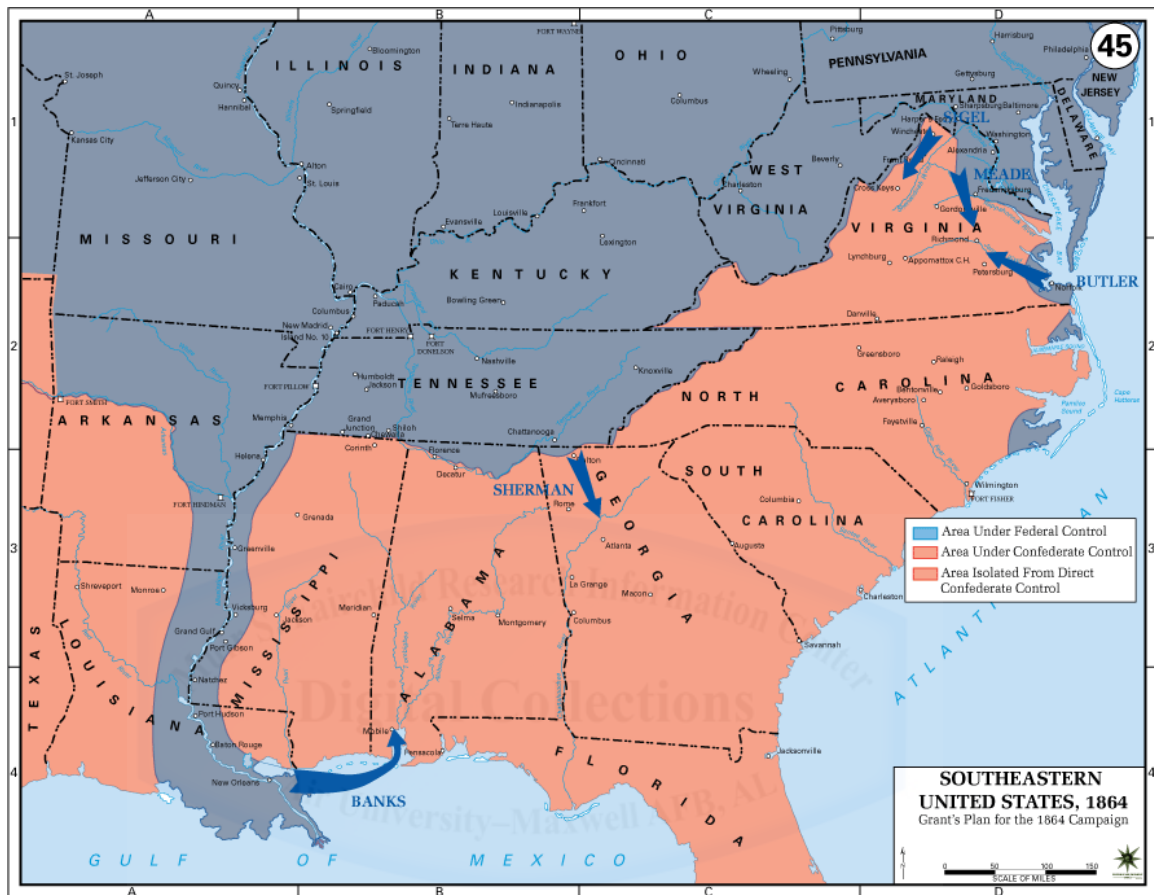


Figure 2: Southeastern United States, 1864: Grant's Plan
Source: Department of History, United States Military Academy, "Grant's Plan for the 1864 Campaign," <http://www.usma.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/American%20Civil%20War/ACW45.gif>. (Chicago, 17.356)

Although Meade officially commanded the Army of the Potomac, Grant collocated his headquarters with Meade's army.²³ Grant outlined his plan for that army as follows, "It was my plan then, as it was on all other occasions, to take the initiative whenever the enemy could be

²¹ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, prepared by Robert N. Scott, Series I, vol. 36, 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 39.

²² Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 375.

²³ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 209.

drawn from his intrenchments [sic] if we were not intrenched [sic] ourselves.”²⁴ In the Wilderness campaign, the Union suffered heavily.²⁵ Although Lee believed that Grant would retire, Grant pressed on.²⁶ After a failed attack at Spotsylvania, Grant ordered Meade’s army to maneuver further to the south.²⁷

The two armies next met at Cold Harbor. Having been recently reinforced, Lee believed he could delay Grant’s advance there.²⁸ The Union had special interest in this location, as well. Grant explained, “New Cold Harbor was important to us because while there we both covered the roads back to White house (where our supplies came from), and the roads southeast over which we would have to pass to get to the James River below the Richmond defenses.”²⁹ Though casualties were equivalent for both sides, the Union failure at this battle induced a heavy political toll.³⁰ Grant said of Cold Harbor, “I have always regretted that the last assault at Cold Harbor was ever made. . . . No advantage whatever was gained to compensate for the heavy loss we sustained.”³¹ Still, Grant would not withdraw—he was determined to pursue his strategic objective despite his own tactical misjudgment in having forced an ill-advised assault.

Grant eventually placed General Philip Sheridan in command in the Shenandoah Valley.³² Grant told General Henry Halleck, “I want

²⁴ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 413.

²⁵ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, prepared by Robert N. Scott, Series I, vol. 36, 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 133.

²⁶ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 217.

²⁷ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 443.

²⁸ J.F.C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant* (New York, NY: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 275.

²⁹ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 451.

³⁰ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 221.

³¹ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 462.

³² J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 230.

Sheridan put in command of all the troops in the field, with instructions to put himself south of the enemy and follow him to the death. Wherever the enemy goes let our troops go also.”³³ Sheridan won a series of victories over Early and took a great deal of pressure off Washington.³⁴

Sherman, further south, continued to advance as ordered. As General Johnston lost ground to Sherman, the Confederate government replaced him with General John Hood.³⁵ Hood’s failed attacks against Sherman allowed Union forces to capture Atlanta, thus securing for Lincoln much needed political capital.³⁶ He would win reelection before the year was out.³⁷ Unable to engage Hood in a decisive battle, Sherman resumed his march to the sea. General George Thomas, one of Sherman’s subordinate commanders, would, at Grant’s prodding, finally defeat Hood at Nashville.³⁸

Although Grant suffered a political defeat at Cold Harbor, he did not cease to pressure Lee. Rather than continuing to attack him head-on, Grant crossed Meade’s army over the James River and attacked Lee from the rear by advancing on Petersburg (see Figure 3).³⁹ Despite significant errors by many of his subordinates in executing this plan, Grant was eventually able to lay siege to Petersburg.⁴⁰ He feared that Lee would reinforce the valley and challenge Sheridan, or that he would send reinforcements to the Carolinas. He fixed Lee by continually threatening Petersburg but never fully committing to battle.⁴¹

³³ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 484.

³⁴ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 230.

³⁵ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 395.

³⁶ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 464.

³⁷ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 234.

³⁸ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 520.

³⁹ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 464.

⁴⁰ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 474.

⁴¹ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 486.

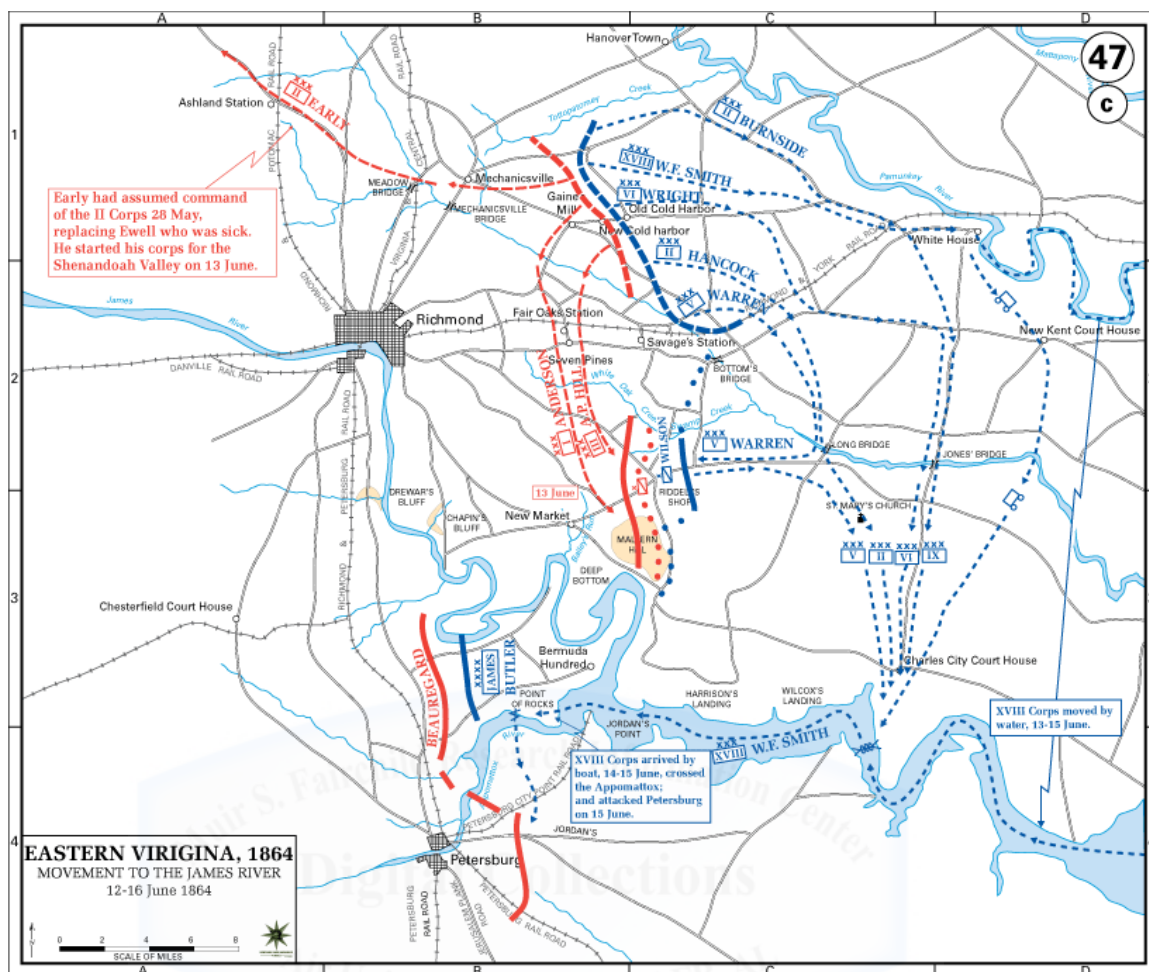


Figure 3: Union Maneuver to Siege Petersburg

Source: Department of History, United States Military Academy, "Movement to the James River, 12-16 June 1864,"

<http://www.usma.edu/history/SiteAssets/SitePages/American%20Civil%20War/ACW47C.gif>. (Chicago, 17.356)

After laying siege to Petersburg, Grant converged his forces on Lee's position. So long as his lines of supply remained intact, Lee could remain in Petersburg and deny the Union victory. Grant understood, however, that he had to bring the war to an end, so he ordered Sherman to move against Lee's supply lines. "We would then have Lee so surrounded that his supplies would be cut off entirely, making it impossible for him to support his army."⁴² Sherman advanced north in

⁴² Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 498.

an overland campaign through the Carolinas to fulfill this order.⁴³ Grant originally planned to bring Sherman's army in through the James River.⁴⁴ However, he later said of Sherman's recommendation for an overland route, "I was only too happy to approve this; for if successful, it promised every advantage."⁴⁵ Federal forces also occupied the remaining ports at Charleston, Mobile, and Wilmington.⁴⁶ Sheridan, who had defeated Early in the Valley, was now able to assist Meade directly, as well.⁴⁷

Grant opted to attack without waiting for Sherman.⁴⁸ He later admitted that he was very anxious during the Petersburg siege. "I felt that the situation of the Confederate army was such that they would try to make an escape at the earliest practical moment, and I was afraid, every morning, that I would awake from my sleep to hear that Lee had gone, and that nothing was left but a picket line."⁴⁹ He attacked Petersburg on a broad front, thus allowing Sheridan to seize the southern railroads and seal the city's fate.⁵⁰

Lee abandoned Petersburg and attempted to escape south.⁵¹ Grant later recalled, "It now became a life and death struggle with Lee to get south to his provisions."⁵² Grant used Meade's army to harass Lee's rear and Sheridan's to cut Lee off and drive him back toward Meade. Finally, Lee's army was trapped. Shortly after meeting him at Appomattox Court House on 9 April 1865, Lee wrote Grant, "I received

⁴³ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 238.

⁴⁴ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 529.

⁴⁵ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 530.

⁴⁶ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 236-7.

⁴⁷ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 496.

⁴⁸ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 561.

⁴⁹ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 542.

⁵⁰ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 239.

⁵¹ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 545.

⁵² Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 565.

your letter of this date containing the terms of the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia as proposed by you. . . . They are accepted.”⁵³

Qualities

Grant possessed several leadership qualities that enabled his success in the last year of the Civil War. First and foremost, Grant was a man of aggressive action. This quality, above all others, induced Lincoln to give Grant the appointment. Perhaps not as readily apparent, Grant was also perspicacious. Finally, Grant had the ability to recognize the amount of talent in his various subordinates relative to their situations.

Aggressiveness. Grant was aggressive. This attribute served him well as general-in-chief, as he did not allow Confederate forces any respite. Although Grant took 17,666 casualties in the Wilderness, he pressed on.⁵⁴ After this battle, Union soldiers believed the army would retire north as it had after Chancellorsville.⁵⁵ Instead, Grant led the army south. Bruce Catton wrote, “The road was crowded, and nobody could see much, but as the men trudged along it suddenly came to them that this march was different.”⁵⁶ As Grant rode to the front of the column, “a wild cheer broke the night and men tossed their caps in the darkness.”⁵⁷ At Spotsylvania, Grant lost another 14,322 men.⁵⁸ Still, Grant continued to pursue Lee.

While the Army of the Potomac clashed with the main element of Lee’s forces, Grant directed his other commanders to keep pressure on the Confederacy. He ordered Butler to bring his forces rapidly to

⁵³ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 582.

⁵⁴ J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 217.

⁵⁵ Bruce Catton, *A Stillness at Appomattox* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1954), 91.

⁵⁶ Bruce Catton, *A Stillness at Appomattox* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1954), 91.

⁵⁷ Bruce Catton, *A Stillness at Appomattox* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1954), 92.

⁵⁸ J.F.C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant* (New York, NY: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 254.

Petersburg, while directing Sheridan to attack Early's troops in the Valley. When these actions were complete, he ordered Sheridan to Lynchburg to keep pressure on Lee.⁵⁹ He worked to persuade Sherman to continue attacking Hood before marching to the sea. He wrote to Sherman, "If you can see a chance of destroying Hood's army, attend to that first, and make your other move secondary."⁶⁰ Sherman, however, persuaded him otherwise.⁶¹ J.F.C. Fuller said of the necessary strategies for Union and Confederate forces, "The one side had to press; the other—to resist."⁶² Grant's aggressiveness fit the strategy that best enabled the Union army to conquer the Confederacy.

Perspicacity. Although Grant was aggressive, his maneuvers did not lack thoughtfulness. On the contrary, Grant possessed a keen mind. He was able to see the Union effort holistically in a way that previous commanders had not. Grant's coordinating the efforts of all theaters toward a common end indicated his talent for being able to see how various military campaigns contributed to a national strategy.⁶³ He perceived the importance of Lee's army to the Confederate cause, both materially and psychologically. He wrote, "Lee . . . was a very highly esteemed man in the Confederate army and States, and filled also a very high place in the estimation of the people and press of the Northern States."⁶⁴ His awareness of the value of Lee's surrender is evident in his recommendation to Lee after his surrender, "I then suggested to General Lee . . . that if he would now advise the surrender of all the armies I had

⁵⁹ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 534.

⁶⁰ William Tecumseh Sherman, *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman* (New York, NY: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1990), 639.

⁶¹ William Tecumseh Sherman, *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman* (New York, NY: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1990), 639-641.

⁶² J.F.C. Fuller, *Grant and Lee: A Study in Personality and Generalship* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1957), 259.

⁶³ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 375-379.

⁶⁴ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 471.

no doubt his advice would be followed with alacrity.”⁶⁵ Grant correctly derived a major source of Southern strength and directed his armies against it.

Assessing Talent and Situations. Grant had the ability to recognize talent, or the lack thereof, in his subordinates. Just as importantly, he was also able to discern whether a subordinate’s talents were appropriate to his situation. This leadership quality is evident in the manner with which he treated his commanders. Notably, he did not treat them equally. He valued the counsel of some more than others, and he directed certain commanders more closely than he did others.

Sherman and Sheridan are examples of commanders who Grant believed competent in their positions. After he recommended that Sherman pursue Hood instead of marching through Georgia, Sherman replied, “If I turn back, the whole effect of my campaign will be lost. . . . I am clearly of opinion that the best results will follow my contemplated movement through Georgia.”⁶⁶ Grant replied, “Go on as you propose.”⁶⁷ Grant gave Sherman permission to go forward with his plan despite his own misgivings and the uneasiness of his commander-in-chief concerning the maneuver.⁶⁸ Grant would not have placed that same trust in any commander, but he recognized and appreciated Sherman’s competence and insight. His trust in Sherman is also evident in another letter he sent during the Savannah campaign, “In this letter I do not intend to give you anything like directions for future action, but will state a general idea I have, and will get your views after you have established yourself on the sea-coast.”⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 584.

⁶⁶ William Tecumseh Sherman, *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman* (New York, NY: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1990), 640.

⁶⁷ William Tecumseh Sherman, *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman* (New York, NY: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1990), 641.

⁶⁸ T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), 340.

⁶⁹ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 513.

Grant's correspondence also indicated his confidence in Sheridan. During Sheridan's campaign against Early, Grant wrote to him, "What I want is for you to threaten the Virginia Central Railroad and canal in the manner your judgment tells you is best," indicating his trust in Sheridan's intuition.⁷⁰ Grant provided less direct supervision over commanders who he believed possessed the capacity to thrive in their circumstances.

Grant's treatment of other commanders indicated that he tailored his leadership style to the individual he directed. Symptomatic of his lack of full confidence in Meade, Grant endeavored to replace him with General Winfield Scott Hancock in July 1864. In an attempt to assign Meade to another command near Washington, Grant wrote to Lincoln, "I would suggest General Hancock for command of the Army of the Potomac."⁷¹ Frequently, Grant gave Meade explicit instruction regarding the placement of tactical units. At Spotsylvania, he ordered Meade, "Make all preparations during the day for a night march to take position at Spotsylvania C.H. with one army corps, at Todd's Tavern with one, and another near the intersection of the Piney Branch and Spotsylvania road with the road from Alsop's to Old Court House."⁷² Grant's orders to Meade demonstrate a level of detail absent his orders to Sherman and Sheridan. The differences in Grant's leadership toward his various subordinates indicate that he had the ability to assess the strengths and weaknesses of his leaders and direct them accordingly.

Skills

While Grant possessed several valuable qualities that helped him succeed in the Civil War, he also possessed certain skills without which he might have failed. Grant's understanding of Lincoln's political goals,

⁷⁰ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 495.

⁷¹ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, prepared by Robert N. Scott, Series I, vol. 37, 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 433.

⁷² Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 421.

noteworthy administrative competence, and cogent communication skills empowered his success as general-in-chief.

Political Awareness. Most importantly, Grant possessed a thorough understanding of Lincoln's objectives, and he recognized the means he would have to employ in order to achieve those ends. Lincoln's two primary objectives were to preserve the Union and end slavery. Grant's understanding of these goals is evident in a letter he addressed to Elihu Washburne on 30 August 1863, "It become patent to my mind early in the rebellion that the North & South could never live at peace with each other except as one nation, and that without Slavery. As anxious as I am to see peace reestablished I would not therefore be willing to see any settlement until this question is forever settled."⁷³ Further, Adam Badeau, one of Grant's staff officers, concluded, "From the beginning of the war Grant had been firmly convinced that no stable peace could be obtained, none which would really conduce to the happiness of the whole people, North and South, until the military power of the rebellion was entirely broken."⁷⁴ Grant thus structured his campaign to utterly defeat the Confederate army.

His orchestration of all Union armies toward the Southern army's destruction indicated his understanding of that necessity. Badeau wrote, "This was the primal idea—to employ all the force of all the armies continually and concurrently, so that there should be no recuperation on the part of the rebels."⁷⁵ He elaborated, "Only this policy of unceasing and untiring aggression, this wearing out and crushing out, this war upon all the resources and all the armies of the rebellion, could now

⁷³ Ulysses S. Grant, *Memoirs and Selected Letters: Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, Selected Letters 1839-1865* (New York, NY: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1990), 1033-1034.

⁷⁴ Adam Badeau, *Military History of Ulysses S. Grant: From April, 1861, to April, 1865*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1885), 9.

⁷⁵ Adam Badeau, *Military History of Ulysses S. Grant: From April, 1861, to April, 1865*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1885), 9.

succeed.”⁷⁶ Grant aggressively pursued the destruction of Lee’s army, and his direction to his subordinate commanders indicated that he wanted no distractions. “Lee, with the capital of the Confederacy, was the main end to which all were working.”⁷⁷

Grant was also sensitive to the political pressures under which Lincoln worked. Specifically, Grant knew that military failure would prove a significant challenge to Lincoln’s reelection. Fuller explained, “Had Grant been certain of Lincoln’s reelection, his problem would have been a less difficult one; but not knowing this, his aim in May, 1864, was to end the war before the presidential elections took place. Throughout this period . . . politics dominated strategy as strongly as topography dominated tactics.”⁷⁸

Grant knew that Lincoln needed a general who would advance. He was careful to reassure the commander-in-chief when he felt that progress was slow. During the battle of Spotsylvania, when weather was impeding his movement, he wrote to Halleck, “You can assure the President and Secretary of War that the elements alone have suspended hostilities, and that it is in no manner due to weakness or exhaustion on our part.”⁷⁹ Grant’s frequent communication with his political leaders helped to alleviate their fears and confirm that the general was acting in the spirit of their aims.

Administration. Grant’s administrative skills also proved vital in his command as general-in-chief. While he had demonstrated tactical competence in previous campaigns, as commander of the Union army he had to consider logistical conditions more fully. His awareness of logistical concerns is evident in his war plans. He remarked in his

⁷⁶ Adam Badeau, *Military History of Ulysses S. Grant: From April, 1861, to April, 1865*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1885), 10.

⁷⁷ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 383.

⁷⁸ J.F.C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant* (New York, NY: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 362.

⁷⁹ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 439.

memoirs, “To provision an army, campaigning against so formidable a foe through such a country, from wagons alone seemed almost impossible. System and discipline were both essential to its accomplishment.”⁸⁰ Logistical considerations drove his decision on how to employ the Army of the Potomac. Grant wrote in his report after the war that he faced a dilemma regarding how that army should move against Lee’s forces.⁸¹ He deemed the more direct route to Richmond infeasible. Because of the limited road networks, he wrote, “If we took this route all we did would have to be done while the rations we started with held out.”⁸² He confirmed in his memoirs, “All idea of adopting this latter plan was abandoned when the limited quantity of supplies possible to take with us was considered.”⁸³ He therefore chose to advance as close to the coast as possible to allow for more rapid and certain resupply.

This was not the only time Grant would subordinate tactics to logistics. During the battle of Spotsylvania Court House, Grant ordered vast numbers of cannon to be sent back to Washington. He later noted, “This relieved the roads over which we were to march of more than two hundred six-horse teams. . . . In fact, before reaching the James River I again reduced the artillery with the army largely.”⁸⁴ While Grant argued that he still had sufficient artillery, this action did entail some tactical risk.⁸⁵ Yet it provided a significant logistical advantage in that the freer roads allowed for more rapid movement and reallocation of resources. Grant’s willingness to subordinate tactics to logistics indicates that he

⁸⁰ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 373.

⁸¹ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, prepared by Robert N. Scott, Series I, vol. 36, 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 15.

⁸² *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, prepared by Robert N. Scott, Series I, vol. 36, 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 133.

⁸³ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 377.

⁸⁴ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 441.

⁸⁵ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 441.

was thinking as a strategist and not merely as an operational or tactical commander.

Communication. Finally, Grant was also an exceptionally effective communicator. Written communication was for him an important skill. When he first sat down to pen the surrender terms to Lee, he recalled, “When I put my pen to the paper I did not know the first word that I should make use of in writing the terms. I only knew what was in my mind, and I wished to express it clearly.”⁸⁶ Such was the case with all Grant’s communications.

His clarity in writing is evidenced by the way he conveyed his intent to his subordinate commanders. To Butler, he wrote, “Lee’s army and Richmond being the greater objects toward which our attention must be directed in the next campaign, it is desirable to unite all the force we can against them.”⁸⁷ To Meade, “Lee’s army will be your objective point. Wherever Lee’s army goes you will go also.”⁸⁸ He directed Sherman, “To move against Johnston’s army, to break it up, and to go into the interior of the enemy’s country as far as he could, inflicting all the damage he could upon their war resources.”⁸⁹ Grant’s communication regarding his intent was clear and unambiguous.

Grant also supplemented his written communications with personal liaisons to ensure confirmation. On 11 May 1864, during the battle of Spotsylvania Court House, Grant wrote to General Ambrose Burnside, “I send two of my staff officers . . . in whom I have great confidence and who are acquainted with the direction the attack is to be

⁸⁶ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 581.

⁸⁷ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, prepared by Robert N. Scott, Series I, vol. 36, 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 16.

⁸⁸ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, prepared by Robert N. Scott, Series I, vol. 33 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 828.

⁸⁹ *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, prepared by Robert N. Scott, Series I, vol. 36, 1 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1891), 14.

made from here.”⁹⁰ On 12 September 1864, Grant wrote to Sherman, “I send Lieutenant-Colonel Porter, of my staff, with this. Colonel Porter will explain to you the exact condition of affairs here better than I can do in the limits of a letter.”⁹¹ Grant made use of both the telegraph and liaison officer to ensure effective communication with his subordinate commanders. As a result, his commanders had little difficulty divining his intent.

Grant’s success as the general-in-chief in the Civil War contributed greatly to Union victory. His attributes were complementary. His political awareness helped him see the importance of expedience, and this mindfulness suited his aggressive approach to war. His insightfulness regarding the objectives his armies should pursue only proved valuable so far as he could communicate such intent to his commanders. His awareness of logistical considerations and his political sensitivity demonstrate his ability to perform beyond the level of tactical commander and fulfill the role of military strategist. Lincoln’s appointing Grant as general-in-chief is evidence that he too saw these virtues.

David H. Petraeus

David Petraeus assumed command of Multi-National Forces-Iraq (MNF-I) on 10 February 2007.⁹² Bradley Gericke compares Petraeus’s situation with that of Grant’s, “The president needed a winning general. . . [Petraeus’s] situation was much like the one that his hero, General Grant, had encountered in 1864, when he too traveled to Washington to take direct control of the nation’s war effort.”⁹³ Petraeus would have to turn around a war that had brought the George W. Bush Administration to a point of desperation.

⁹⁰ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 581.

⁹¹ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 501.

⁹² Bradley T. Gericke, *David Petraeus: A Biography* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 124.

⁹³ Bradley T. Gericke, *David Petraeus: A Biography* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 124.

Operation Iraqi Freedom, 2007-2008

During 2006, Iraq had descended into civil war. Linda Robinson, of RAND, observed that in Baghdad, “Corpses with bound hands and gunshots to the head littered the streets, which were barricaded with torn-up concrete, barbed wire, and vehicles.”⁹⁴ Marine Colonel Pete Devlin, an intelligence officer, wrote in September 2006, “The social and political situation has deteriorated to a point that MNF and ISF [Iraqi Security Forces] are no longer capable of militarily defeating the insurgency in al-Anbar.”⁹⁵ Petraeus wrote, “When I returned to Baghdad in early February 2007, I found the conditions there to be even worse than I had expected.”⁹⁶

President Bush gave a speech on 10 January 2007 detailing the deteriorating situation in Iraq and his vision for the way forward. On the state of affairs, Bush said, “The situation in Iraq is unacceptable to the American people—and it is unacceptable to me.”⁹⁷ In discussing his objectives, he explained, “The most urgent priority for success in Iraq is security, especially in Baghdad.”⁹⁸ To that end, he authorized the deployment of an additional five brigades to Iraq—a strategy now referred to as the surge.⁹⁹ His concluding remarks most pointedly indicated his political objectives. He summarized, “Victory in Iraq will bring something new in the Arab world—a functioning democracy that polices its territory,

⁹⁴ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 14.

⁹⁵ Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2009), 331.

⁹⁶ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), ix.

⁹⁷ Alfonso Serrano, “Full Transcript of Bush’s Iraq Speech,” *CBS News*, 10 January 2007, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/full-transcript-of-bushs-iraq-speech>, (accessed 9 April 2016).

⁹⁸ Alfonso Serrano, “Full Transcript of Bush’s Iraq Speech,” *CBS News*, 10 January 2007, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/full-transcript-of-bushs-iraq-speech>, (accessed 9 April 2016).

⁹⁹ Alfonso Serrano, “Full Transcript of Bush’s Iraq Speech,” *CBS News*, 10 January 2007, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/full-transcript-of-bushs-iraq-speech>, (accessed 9 April 2016).

upholds the rule of law, respects fundamental human liberties and answers to its people.”¹⁰⁰ This speech set the stage for the change in strategy that Petraeus implemented.

At his confirmation hearing, Petraeus observed that there was no military solution to Iraq’s problems.¹⁰¹ Nevertheless, he emphasized the importance of military operations. “[It is] exceedingly difficult for the Iraqi Government to come to grips with the toughest issues it must resolve while survival is the primary concern.”¹⁰² He projected taking a multi-dimensional approach that would coordinate the efforts of political, military, and economic means.¹⁰³ Finally, he closed optimistically by stating that the situation in Iraq was not hopeless.¹⁰⁴

Petraeus’s strategy depended on pursuing military, economic, infrastructural, and—most importantly—political gains. Petraeus realized that he did not have time to conduct a sequential strategy. Rather, he would have to pursue all goals at once.¹⁰⁵ He would seek to kill or capture hardened, irreconcilable insurgents, and he would strive to improve infrastructure to enhance the likelihood of reconciliation between Sunni and Shi’a Iraqis.

The surge was an important factor in Petraeus’s strategy. When first introduced, many policy makers did not approve of this increase in troop levels. Secretary Donald Rumsfeld objected, “The goal is not to have U.S. forces do the heavy lifting in Baghdad. There are many, many

¹⁰⁰ Alfonso Serrano, “Full Transcript of Bush’s Iraq Speech,” *CBS News*, 10 January 2007, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/full-transcript-of-bushs-iraq-speech>, (accessed 9 April 2016).

¹⁰¹ David H. Petraeus, “Transcript: General Petraeus on the Way Ahead in Iraq,” in *Military Review* 87, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 2007): 3.

¹⁰² David H. Petraeus, “Transcript: General Petraeus on the Way Ahead in Iraq,” in *Military Review* 87, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 2007): 3.

¹⁰³ David H. Petraeus, “Transcript: General Petraeus on the Way Ahead in Iraq,” in *Military Review* 87, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 2007): 3.

¹⁰⁴ David H. Petraeus, “Transcript: General Petraeus on the Way Ahead in Iraq,” in *Military Review* 87, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 2007): 4.

¹⁰⁵ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 141.

more Iraqi forces in Baghdad.”¹⁰⁶ Bush, however, declared in his speech, “If we increase our support at this crucial moment, and help the Iraqis break the current cycle of violence, we can hasten the day our troops begin coming home.”¹⁰⁷ Petraeus indicated that he was “all in” for the surge, and these troops would prove critical in his ability to bring security to Baghdad.¹⁰⁸

Protecting the Population. Petraeus knew that if security did not improve, no other gains would be possible. He stated to Congress in his confirmation hearing, “Military action to improve security, while not wholly sufficient to solve Iraq’s problems, is certainly necessary.”¹⁰⁹ To improve security, he educated his soldiers on proper counterinsurgency practices and altered the manner in which forces were deployed.

Petraeus’s education program in counterinsurgency (COIN) began with publication of formal command guidance. The general theme of this guidance was protecting the population. Entitled “Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander’s Counterinsurgency Guidance,” the document was written simply and meant for distribution to the lowest ranks.¹¹⁰ Many of his points represented a dramatic departure from conventional thinking. He directed units to “live among the people;” “walk” among the neighborhoods, establishing face-to-face contact; “build relationships;” “promote reconciliation;” and “fight the information war relentlessly.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2009), 84.

¹⁰⁷ Alfonso Serrano, “Full Transcript of Bush’s Iraq Speech,” *CBS News*, 10 January 2007, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/full-transcript-of-bushs-iraq-speech>, (accessed 9 April 2016).

¹⁰⁸ Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2009), 179.

¹⁰⁹ David H. Petraeus, “Transcript: General Petraeus on the Way Ahead in Iraq,” in *Military Review*, no. 87, 2 (Mar/Apr 2007), 3.

¹¹⁰ Bradley T. Gericke, *David Petraeus: A Biography* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 142.

¹¹¹ David Petraeus, “Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander’s Counterinsurgency Guidance,” in *Military Review* 88, no. 5 (Sep/Oct 2008), 2-4.

“Clear-hold-build” became the conceptual framework for force employment.¹¹²

Petraeus also sought to improve security in Iraq by appropriately allocating forces. This included relocating soldiers and Marines into the cities and emplacing brigade combat teams (BCT) where they would do the most good. He wrote, “Improved security could be achieved only by moving our forces into urban neighborhoods and rural population centers.”¹¹³ General Raymond Odierno, Petraeus’s operational commander, began pushing forces out of large forward operations bases, or FOBs, and into the cities and villages.¹¹⁴ This resulted in the establishment of over 100 smaller outposts and joint security stations across Iraq.¹¹⁵ Odierno also began emplacing brigade combat teams (BCT) around Baghdad’s perimeter. He recalled, “Our Iraqi allies also believed that controlling the belts [or support zones] was essential to securing Baghdad.”¹¹⁶

MNF-I conducted its first large-scale operation in June, when the five surge brigades were in place.¹¹⁷ While the arrival of the surge brigades was not decisive itself, Petraeus believed, “The surge forces *enabled* more rapid implementation of the new strategy.”¹¹⁸ Operation Phantom Thunder, which began on 15 June 2007, was the first of a series of operations around Baghdad and in Diyala in the north.¹¹⁹

¹¹² Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), xi.

¹¹³ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), x.

¹¹⁴ Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2009), 165.

¹¹⁵ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 71.

¹¹⁶ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 67.

¹¹⁷ Bradley T. Gericke, *David Petraeus: A Biography* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 152.

¹¹⁸ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), xi. Emphasis in original.

¹¹⁹ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 179.

Petraeus concentrated forces not only in Baghdad, but also in the surrounding neighborhoods in which many of the insurgents resided. Fighting there was ferocious during the summer, and American casualties rose. Petraeus recollected, “Violence rose throughout the first five months of the surge, reaching a crescendo in May and June, to well over two hundred attacks per day.”¹²⁰ He told his commanders to stay the course despite the rising casualties. He also encouraged them to take risks, believing that the summer of 2007 was the last opportunity US forces would have to stabilize Iraq.¹²¹

Reconciliation. While security was a prerequisite for political progress in Iraq, Petraeus recognized that reconciliation was necessary for long-term stability. He observed that “Beyond securing the people by living with them, foremost among the elements of the new strategy was promoting reconciliation between disaffected Sunni Arabs and our forces—and then with the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government.”¹²² He believed that until the Sunnis felt included in the political process, instability and violence would plague the country. Fortunately, Ambassador Ryan Crocker proved to be a competent partner. He agreed to work for reconciliation from the top-down while Petraeus would work on the issue from the bottom-up.¹²³

Petraeus sought reconciliation from the ground up by enlisting the help of former insurgents who were willing to change sides. A revolt of Sunnis against Al Qaeda in Anbar Province became a model for reconciliation. Petraeus noted, “We were fortunate to be able to build on

¹²⁰ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), xx.

¹²¹ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 238.

¹²² Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), xii.

¹²³ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 169-170.

what ultimately became known to us as the Sunni Awakening.”¹²⁴ He added, “I quickly resolved that we would do all that we could to support the tribal rebellion there and also to foster its spread through other Sunni areas of Iraq.”¹²⁵ Sunni volunteers came forward in other places, as well. In Ameriya, Sunni civilians approached US forces in an attempt to rid their village of extremists.¹²⁶ Petraeus urged commanders there to take risks and explore opportunities. The pattern of Ameriya spread as local militias—the most noteworthy of which was a group called the Sons of Iraq—formed to defeat violent extremists.¹²⁷ Linda Robinson noted, “By the end of August, seven thousand Iraqis had come forward in Baghdad and eight thousand more in the surrounding ‘belts.’”¹²⁸ Petraeus worked to persuade Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to integrate these local militias into the formal security apparatus. Sunnis would then realize they had a stake in the future of Iraq.¹²⁹

Petraeus and Crocker worked with top government officials to achieve such reconciliation, but there remained significant distrust of Sunni militias by the Iraqi government. Al-Maliki hesitated to give them an official status as he feared they might one day be used against the government itself.¹³⁰ Petraeus recalled, “[Al-Maliki] was not at all enthusiastic initially about providing Iraqi resources and assistance for what came to be known as the ‘Sons of Iraq.’”¹³¹ Eventually, Maliki

¹²⁴ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), xii.

¹²⁵ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), xiii.

¹²⁶ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 239.

¹²⁷ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 252.

¹²⁸ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 252.

¹²⁹ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 254.

¹³⁰ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 253.

¹³¹ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), xiii.

prudently relented and slowly began to allow Sunni recruits into the police force.¹³² Crocker made progress in achieving top-down reconciliation as accords between the various political parties were signed on 26 August. This agreement allowed for the release of Sunni prisoners being held without charge or evidence.¹³³ The accords also simplified political procedures, thus creating a more efficient legislative process.¹³⁴

Dealing with Irreconcilables. Petraeus understood that certain elements in society would not be willing to support the government cause and assist security forces. Thus, “killing or capturing the most important of the ‘irreconcilables’ was an inescapable and hugely important element of our strategy.”¹³⁵ General Stanley McChrystal led the targeted operations, commanding the Joint Special Operations Command. Petraeus noted that McChrystal’s command would conduct up to 15 targeted raids per night.¹³⁶ Petraeus observed in his September 2007 report to Congress that “In the past 6 months, we have also targeted Shia militia extremists, killing or capturing over 1,400 rank-and-file and senior leaders.”¹³⁷ These operations were supported by various maneuver and intelligence assets and, while not decisive, provided a key element in Petraeus’s comprehensive approach.

Legitimacy. Petraeus and Crocker encouraged Al-Maliki to take actions that would bolster his legitimacy. Political victories developed over the summer. On 28 August, Shiite militias attacked the Imam

¹³² Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 261.

¹³³ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 280.

¹³⁴ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 281.

¹³⁵ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), xiv.

¹³⁶ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), xv.

¹³⁷ Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 110th Congress, First Session, 11 September 2007, “Iraq: The Crocker-Petraeus Report,” 19.

Hussein shrine in Karbala during the annual Sunni pilgrimage.¹³⁸ Maliki seized upon this opportunity to crush militias that he had been reticent to challenge. He made another important stride when he abruptly attacked the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) militia in Basra in an operation dubbed the Charge of the Knights.¹³⁹ While the operation was only marginally successful from a military standpoint, the political gain was enormous. These actions demonstrated that Maliki would place the well being of Iraq above his own Shia identity.¹⁴⁰ Maliki had finally demonstrated his willingness to allow considerations of national unity to take precedence over sectarian loyalty.

Infrastructure and Economic Improvement. Petraeus also sought to consolidate gains by improving the infrastructure and economy. He believed that these efforts would enhance the chances for reconciliation.¹⁴¹ He noted, “While not determinative, such improvements gave Iraqi citizens tangible reasons to support the new Iraq and reject the extremists . . . who had caused such hardship for them.”¹⁴² He assembled teams of experts that could provide solutions on how to restore essential services. His executive officer, Colonel Peter Mansoor, explained, “Each week staff officers would brief General Petraeus on progress or lack thereof in improving electricity and oil production, job creation, agricultural concerns . . . and the like.”¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Bradley T. Gericke, *David Petraeus: A Biography* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 152.

¹³⁹ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 233.

¹⁴⁰ Bradley T. Gericke, *David Petraeus: A Biography* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 153.

¹⁴¹ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 213.

¹⁴² Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), xvii.

¹⁴³ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 213.

Results. Petraeus formally relinquished command of MNF-I on 16 September 2008.¹⁴⁴ By then, Iraq was noticeably less violent than it had been since 2004.¹⁴⁵ Reconciliation was well under way. Petraeus stated, “A year and a half into the surge, we had on our payroll more than 100,000 ‘Sons of Iraq’ (more than 20,000 of them Shi’a).”¹⁴⁶ While the economy was not making significant gains, it was not getting worse.¹⁴⁷ There was still much progress to be made, but the country seemed to be generally going in the right direction. For what it was designed to do, Petraeus’s implementation of the surge was successful. His leadership helped bring an end to the violence that raged across the country and improved Iraq’s governance, infrastructure, and economy.

Qualities

While Iraq was still in need of much reform and progress when Petraeus left command, there was no doubt that his strategy, augmented by the surge forces, greatly improved a dire situation in Iraq. He possessed several qualities that enabled this successful leadership. First, Petraeus exercised great moral courage throughout his tenure of command. He also demonstrated determination by refusing to change his strategy. Finally, his inquisitiveness led him to an accurate understanding of the problems in Iraq.

Moral Courage. Petraeus’s most notable leadership quality was his moral courage. He demonstrated this quality by accepting responsibility for a failing mission. He knew his name would be tied to Iraq’s fate. He told Congress, “I know how heavy a rucksack I will have to shoulder in

¹⁴⁴ Thom Shanker and Stephen Farrell (September 16, 2008). “Gates Praises Petraeus on Eve of Duty Transfer”. *The New York Times*.

¹⁴⁵ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 345.

¹⁴⁶ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), xiv.

¹⁴⁷ Bradley T. Gericke, *David Petraeus: A Biography* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 164.

Iraq if confirmed. I am willing to take on the position for which I have been nominated because I believe in serving one's nation when asked."¹⁴⁸

Petraeus also demonstrated moral courage in preserving the integrity of his recommendations for a Congressional hearing on 11 September 2007 in which he reported on progress in Iraq. The joint staff attempted to dilute Petraeus's findings by proposing that Petraeus submit a variety of options that they would then brief to the president.¹⁴⁹ He did not want his recommendations to be altered, influenced, or leaked. He therefore resisted the efforts of the joint staff to interfere with his recommendations. On 11 September 2007, Petraeus briefed the Senate on the status of Iraq. He opened his testimony to Congress by stating, "Although I have briefed my assessment and recommendations to my chain of command, I wrote this myself, and did not clear it with anyone in the Pentagon, the White House, or Congress."¹⁵⁰ He was able to make this statement in good faith because he had resisted pressure to allow others to influence his findings.

Determination. Petraeus's determination to adhere to his strategy also enabled his success in Iraq. Many senior officers were wary of Petraeus's strategy. Both General George Casey and Admiral "Fox" Fallon voiced their concerns regarding Petraeus's strategy. Prior to Petraeus's testimony, Fallon had sent Admiral James Winnefeld to Iraq to determine how best to begin withdrawing troops. Mansoor recalled the MNF-I team's reaction to Winnefeld's findings, "The admiral stunned us by announcing that he would recommend a significant reduction of U.S. forces in Iraq and a shift in focus to training Iraqi security forces."¹⁵¹ In

¹⁴⁸ David H. Petraeus, "Transcript: General Petraeus on the Way Ahead in Iraq," in *Military Review* 87, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 2007): 4.

¹⁴⁹ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 294-295.

¹⁵⁰ Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 110th Congress, First Session, 11 September 2007, "Iraq: The Crocker-Petraeus Report," 16.

¹⁵¹ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 178-179.

the September hearings, Senator Barbara Boxer referred to Casey's comments about the surge, stating, "He says, in essence, the surge has only a temporary tactical effect."¹⁵² Senator Jim Webb also mentioned Fallon's comments, implying that the surge troops were unnecessary.¹⁵³ Retired General Barry McCaffrey further sought to undermine popular support for Petraeus's strategy.¹⁵⁴

In addition to influential members of the armed forces challenging Petraeus's strategy, several members of Congress made clear they believed his strategy was failing. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid proclaimed in July 2007, "The president and the Senate Republicans need to understand that Democrats are absolutely committed to forcing the president to change the mission, bring our troops home responsibly and refocus our resources on Al Qaeda and the real threat that it poses."¹⁵⁵ In his opening statement at the September report, Senator Chris Dodd said, "It pains me to say that this administration's Iraq policy, including the surge tactic, is a failure—and that failure is reconfirmed everyday by unfolding events in Iraq."¹⁵⁶ Dodd called on fellow senators to reject continuation of Petraeus's strategy and begin redeploying troops.¹⁵⁷ Senator Boxer expounded this sentiment. She asked, "Who wants to keep this course? Not the Iraqis. Not the American people. Not the majority of the Senate and the House. Seventy percent of the Iraqis say the surge is making matters worse."¹⁵⁸ Despite

¹⁵² Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 110th Congress, First Session, 11 September 2007, "Iraq: The Crocker-Petraeus Report," 75.

¹⁵³ Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 110th Congress, First Session, 11 September 2007, "Iraq: The Crocker-Petraeus Report," 102.

¹⁵⁴ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 42.

¹⁵⁵ Jeff Zeleny, "G.O.P. Senators Press to Change Strategy in Iraq," *New York Times*, July 14, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/14/washington/14capital.html>.

¹⁵⁶ Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 110th Congress, First Session, 11 September 2007, "Iraq: The Crocker-Petraeus Report," 46.

¹⁵⁷ Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 110th Congress, First Session, 11 September 2007, "Iraq: The Crocker-Petraeus Report," 47.

¹⁵⁸ Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 110th Congress, First Session, 11 September 2007, "Iraq: The Crocker-Petraeus Report," 75.

the opposition, Petraeus held his ground. He said, “A rapid withdrawal would result in the further release of the strong centrifugal forces in Iraq, and produce a number of dangerous results.”¹⁵⁹ His confidence and determination to hold fast to the approved strategy held the day and bought him enough time to prove that his strategy was the right one.

Inquisitiveness. Petraeus’s inquisitiveness enabled him to better comprehend the problems in Iraq. Emma Sky, Odierno’s political advisor, said of Petraeus, “He had an insatiable appetite for information.”¹⁶⁰ She noted that in staff meetings, Petraeus wanted to know details on topics that normally would not concern four-star generals, such as the building of electricity towers, swimming pool construction, and obscure supply problems.¹⁶¹ Such information provided Petraeus a holistic understanding of the country.

Another method Petraeus used to improve his understanding of the situation in Iraq was to develop the Joint Strategic Assessment Team (JSAT) to challenge his assumptions.¹⁶² The JSAT was his private think-tank. As Robinson explains, “This outside group would examine the war, its causes, and the current juncture with fresh eyes.”¹⁶³ The group included a number of military and civilian experts—Colonel H.R. McMaster and David Kilcullen being two of the more notable.¹⁶⁴ The JSAT was important to Petraeus’s knowledge of the situation.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁹ Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 110th Congress, First Session, 11 September 2007, “Iraq: The Crocker-Petraeus Report,” 22.

¹⁶⁰ Emma Sky, *The Unraveling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2015), 257.

¹⁶¹ Emma Sky, *The Unraveling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2015), 257-258.

¹⁶² Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 98.

¹⁶³ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 98.

¹⁶⁴ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 98.

¹⁶⁵ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 99.

Petraeus also broadened his understanding of the situation by regularly engaging with officers fighting at the ground level. He would engage with troops by, among other things, having lunch with company commanders during his visits to subordinate units.¹⁶⁶ Petraeus also conducted weekly runs on Camp Victory with battalion commanders and their staff officers.¹⁶⁷ Mansoor explained that Petraeus also used email as an information-gathering tool. He said, “General Petraeus also used e-mail to flatten the organization. He would accept messages from anyone with something valuable to say—even occasionally from a soldier or a noncommissioned officer in the ranks.”¹⁶⁸

Petraeus further demonstrated his inquisitiveness through his reading habits. Mansoor noted, “Despite long days and limited time, General Petraeus managed to read a number of books in Iraq, among them Bruce Catton’s *Grant Takes Command*. . . . He focused his study on how other military leaders such as Ulysses S. Grant (Civil War), William Slim (Burma campaign in World War II), and Matthew Ridgway (Korean War) took command in trying times and turned around flagging war efforts.”¹⁶⁹ His desire for information emboldened his ability to understand the war around him and how to best manipulate it.

Skills

In addition to his leadership qualities, Petraeus had also developed a set of leadership skills that facilitated his success. The most noteworthy of these skills included his ability to conduct analysis, communicate, and understand the political environment.

¹⁶⁶ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 93.

¹⁶⁷ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 99.

¹⁶⁸ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 94.

¹⁶⁹ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 95.

Accurate Assessments. The skill that most empowered Petraeus as MNF-I commander was his ability to assess circumstances accurately. Petraeus proved successful in Iraq because he was able to diagnose correctly the causes of violence in Iraq and determine how to counteract them. In his report to Congress, Petraeus affirmed, “The fundamental source of conflict in Iraq is competition among ethnic and sectarian communities for power and resources.”¹⁷⁰ So long as the Sunnis did not feel a part of the political process, such competitiveness would continue to fester. Additionally, he believed that no political progress would be made as long as security was absent.¹⁷¹ He also developed counterinsurgency guidance to solve the problem of security, thus enabling a political solution.

Petraeus grasped his role as military strategist. He told an interviewer, “What I . . . sought to do was establish the big ideas. An example is the counterinsurgency guidance. Those were the big ideas that guided us in Iraq.”¹⁷² His ability to recognize the big ideas enabled his forces to exercise initiative and succeed. He clearly sensed that effective tactics alone could not salvage a poor strategy.

Communicating. While assessment proved to be Petraeus’s most important skill, his ability to communicate the remedies to the problems he identified was almost as valuable. Petraeus said of his ideas, “You have to be able to communicate them effectively. . . . And you just echo it and re-echo it in every forum, in every communications opportunity you have.”¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 110th Congress, First Session, 11 September 2007, “Iraq: The Crocker-Petraeus Report,” 17.

¹⁷¹ David H. Petraeus, “Transcript: General Petraeus on the Way Ahead in Iraq,” in *Military Review* 87, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 2007): 3.

¹⁷² Bradley T. Gericke, *David Petraeus: A Biography* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 142.

¹⁷³ Bradley T. Gericke, *David Petraeus: A Biography* (Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2011), 142.

In addition to meeting soldiers personally during visits with subordinates, Petraeus communicated to his soldiers in writing. His guidance on counterinsurgency, which he produced upon assuming command, presented his troops with a new approach to fighting insurgents.¹⁷⁴ He wrote the guidance so clearly that everyone from private to general could understand it. He also provided his soldiers with regular updates on how the war was progressing. For example, in a letter to his soldiers dated 7 September 2007, Petraeus admitted, “Progress has not, to be sure, been uniform across Baghdad or Iraq. Accomplishments in some areas—for example, in Ramadi and in Anbar Province—have been greater than any of us might have predicted. . . . The achievements in other areas . . . have not been as dramatic.”¹⁷⁵ He did this because he wanted to soldiers to understand how their efforts were making a difference.

Petraeus also communicated effectively with Congress. During the September 2007 hearing, he deftly assuaged the fears and skepticism of the more angst-ridden senators and bought additional time to implement his strategy. In his opening statement during the September report, Petraeus produced a series of quantitative data detailing the drastic decrease in civilian deaths. Using this data to validate his claim, he reported, “Civilian deaths of all categories, less natural causes, have also declined considerably, by over 45 percent Iraqwide . . . since December.”¹⁷⁶ He further demonstrated improvements in ethno-sectarian death rates, cache and arms seizures, average attacks per day, and car bombing and suicide attack rates.¹⁷⁷ Mansoor recalled that after the hearing, he told Petraeus, “Sir, you just bought us six more

¹⁷⁴ David Petraeus, “Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander’s Counterinsurgency Guidance,” in *Military Review* 88, no. 5 (Sep/Oct 2008), 2-4.

¹⁷⁵ David H. Petraeus, Letter to the Soldiers of MNF-I, 7 September 2007.

¹⁷⁶ Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 110th Congress, First Session, 11 September 2007, “Iraq: The Crocker-Petraeus Report,” 18.

¹⁷⁷ Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 110th Congress, First Session, 11 September 2007, “Iraq: The Crocker-Petraeus Report,” 19.

months.”¹⁷⁸ While Petraeus did not shy from presenting discouraging information, he couched his analysis in terms of hope that convinced skeptical members to hold on a little longer. His successful communication gave the new strategy breathing room.

Finally, Petraeus also communicated effectively with the media—a practice his predecessors tended to avoid. Robinson says, “In sharp contrast to Gen. George Casey, his philosophy was the more information the better.”¹⁷⁹ Mansoor explained of Petraeus, “He demanded that the Multi-National Force-Iraq public affairs apparatus become more agile to allow the command to be ‘first with the truth.’”¹⁸⁰ Not only did Petraeus give frequent interviews to the media, but also he frequently pushed media down to front-line units.¹⁸¹ By providing regular press coverage, Petraeus enhanced his policy of transparency and helped prevent the development of inaccurate rumors.

Political Awareness. Finally, Petraeus understood the political atmosphere in Washington. This skill enabled him to adopt a posture that would best ensure continuation of his strategy. Understanding that he was working in a hostile political environment in which the Congress and the president were at odds, he presented himself to Congress as a neutral party. To demonstrate his bipartisanship, he said in his confirmation hearing, “I want to assure you that should I determine that the new strategy cannot succeed, I will provide such an assessment.”¹⁸²

He realized, however, that he also had to support the commander-in-chief. If President Bush lost too much political capital, Petraeus’s

¹⁷⁸ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 208.

¹⁷⁹ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 178.

¹⁸⁰ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 159.

¹⁸¹ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 178.

¹⁸² David H. Petraeus, “Transcript: General Petraeus on the Way Ahead in Iraq,” in *Military Review* 87, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 2007): 4.

strategy would suffer, as well. He supported the president by arguing that Bush's strategy was the right one. He stated in his confirmation hearing, "I applaud the recent announcement to expand our country's ground forces. . . . If we are to carry out the Multi-National Force-Iraq mission in accordance with the new strategy, the additional forces that have been directed to move to Iraq will be essential."¹⁸³ By maintaining political neutrality, Petraeus gained time for his strategy until success proved him accurate.

Petraeus succeeded in curbing the violence in Iraq because of his particular personal attributes and the skills that he had developed throughout his career. Those qualities and skills worked in unison. His was able to maneuver through the political battlefield because he recognized how to cast himself as a neutral party, but he was also able to portray that image effectively because he was a skilled communicator. He understood how to conduct sound analysis supported by solid data. Perhaps most important of all, Petraeus succeeded because he had the moral courage to stand for the approach he knew to be correct.

Conclusions

Grant and Petraeus found themselves in similar situations. They both assumed command during times of crisis. Their presidents relied on their military expertise to snatch potential victory from the jaws of possible defeat by creating a military situation that would facilitate accomplishment of their political objectives. These leaders shared certain leadership qualities. Both were insightful and possessed analytical minds. The Confederacy's source of strength seems obvious in hindsight, yet Grant's predecessors did not understand that Lee's army should be their object. Petraeus correctly identified as his objects security and reconciliation, in contrast to predecessors who had become

¹⁸³ David H. Petraeus, "Transcript: General Petraeus on the Way Ahead in Iraq," in *Military Review* 87, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 2007): 4.

fixated on transition and drawdown. Grant's aggressiveness and Petraeus's determination are similarly related. Both qualities demonstrated relentlessness and an unwillingness to hold back.

These leaders shared more commonality in skills, however, than in qualities. Both were effective communicators. Grant focused on providing a central object to which all armies should concentrate, while Petraeus focused on communicating to his soldiers the big ideas. Both impressed their visions on subordinates. Grant augmented his writing by sending personal staff. Petraeus wrote in a manner such that his entire command could understand, and he frequently interfaced with young leaders. Both leaders also possessed a sound understanding of the political environment in which they fought. This led them to pursue their strategies urgently in order to achieve tangible results in time to have political value.



Chapter 4

Comparative Analysis

This chapter compares the qualities and skills of operational and strategic leaders. It begins by recapitulating the qualities and skills required for successful leadership at the operational and strategic levels of war. A discussion of the similarities and differences between the qualities and skills of operational and strategic leaders follows.

Operational Qualities and Skills

This study analyzed the qualities and skills of two operational leaders, Generals George S. Patton, Jr., and James “Jimmy” Doolittle. Some qualities and skills proved more pertinent to the specific contexts in which the two leaders operated. There also were degrees of variance in the attributes they possessed. Overall, however, these leaders demonstrated that certain qualities and skills are generally important for leadership at the operational level.

Qualities

Examining Patton’s leadership in the Battle of France demonstrates that the qualities most responsible for his success were aggressiveness, risk-taking, and leading at the front. Doolittle’s leadership as the Eighth Air Force commander illustrated that his aggressiveness and moral courage most significantly influenced his operational success. These leaders were both aggressive risk-takers.

Aggressiveness. A comparison of these two leaders makes clear that at the operational level of war aggressiveness is an important factor in leadership. In Patton's case, his aggressive leadership overwhelmed the decision-making capacity of the German forces. By driving his units east, he sought to envelop the Germans before they could realize their peril and reorient their troops.¹ A more moderate approach by US forces would have provided the enemy with time to regroup and retreat toward the Seine. Similarly, Doolittle sought to keep constant pressure on the German air force by forcing it into the skies.² He believed any pause in his relentless tactics would allow the Luftwaffe to reconstitute its forces and continue to threaten the invasion sites. Both leaders adopted courses that provided the enemy no respite.

Risk-Taking. Just as Patton and Doolittle adopted aggressive approaches to their campaigns, they both assumed risks. Patton risked the Germans cutting off his forces by attacking through Mortain.³ Doolittle took risks by increasing the number of flights his crews had to complete to qualify for rotation.⁴ Given the high casualty rates among bomber crews, morale was a serious concern. Additionally, pilots in his command believed his decision to free the fighters from the bomber formations to be unnecessarily risky.⁵

While Patton and Doolittle took risks, their decisions did not result in catastrophe because the attendant hazards were mitigated. In some instances, the leaders mitigated the risks themselves. Other times, circumstances helped create mitigating factors. Patton maintained units

¹ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 640.

² James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 381.

³ J. Lawton Collins, *Lightning Joe: An Autobiography* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1994), 251.

⁴ James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 387-388.

⁵ Lovell Thomas and Edward Jablonski, *Doolittle: A Biography* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1976), 266.

in defensive postures along likely counterattack routes in case such an event occurred.⁶ Doolittle implemented programs and policies to improve morale, but the dramatic increase in the Eighth Army's materiel also helped to alleviate Doolittle's morale risks.⁷ Patton's and Doolittle's leadership indicates that while leaders must mitigate risks, the willingness to assume risk contributes to successful leadership at the operational level.

Moral Courage. Moral courage enabled Doolittle's success more so than it did Patton's, given that Patton acquiesced to some extent to Bradley's wishes during the campaign.⁸ If Doolittle had not possessed the courage to stand by his policy decisions, he might have sacrificed his unit's effectiveness. Had Patton been in a position to exercise greater moral courage in challenging his superior, he arguably would have driven to the Seine and achieved an even greater victory. Nevertheless, Patton's actions were not cowardly. He did push the limits of what he believed Bradley would allow him to do.⁹ Moral courage is clearly a necessary quality in operational leadership.

Leading Personally. Personally leading from the front was a quality that proved decisive for Patton but played a less prominent role for Doolittle. This is largely because Spaatz prohibited Doolittle from flying over enemy territory due to his knowledge of Ultra information.¹⁰ Patton's visits to the front enabled him to gain first-hand knowledge of the conditions in which his men were fighting, and they also allowed him

⁶ Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 505.

⁷ Carl Spaatz, "Strategic Airpower: Fulfillment of a Concept," *Foreign Affairs*, 1 April 1946, 390.

⁸ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 634.

⁹ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 629.

¹⁰ James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 396-397.

to lead and inspire his soldiers through personal contact.¹¹ Despite Spaatz's restrictions, Doolittle did what he could to gain an understanding of the conditions in which his pilots flew. He personally piloted every model of aircraft in his unit, and he was the first eyewitness to report to Eisenhower the conditions of the beaches on D-Day.¹² Nevertheless, Doolittle was not able to experience combat as his aircrews did. This dynamic indicates that leading from the front may improve operational leadership, but it may not be necessary to be effective.

Thus, aggressiveness, risk-taking, and moral courage are necessary qualities for successful operational leadership, while personally leading from the front may also contribute to efficacious leadership at that level.

Skills

Various skills also enabled Patton and Doolittle to succeed at the operational level. Those skills that proved most crucial to Patton during the breakout were knowledge of how to employ modern forces, administrative abilities, and astute selective supervision. For Doolittle, his ability to translate strategic guidance into operational objectives, manage resources, selectively intervene in his subordinates' affairs, and understand contemporary technology were the skills that most helped him succeed as Eighth Air Force commander.

Understanding the Tools of War. Patton and Doolittle demonstrated that understanding the capabilities and limitations of the tools of war is perhaps the most important skill for operational commanders. Patton's understanding of tank employment enabled him to achieve rapid advances on the ground, while his grasp of close-air

¹¹ Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 497.

¹² James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 404.

engagement permitted him to take risks with his flanks.¹³ While Doolittle sought to understand the technical aspects of his aircraft, this insight was not as vital as comprehending how those craft should be employed. Doolittle recognized that fighter aircraft were best employed in an offensive role.¹⁴ He therefore rescinded the fighters' mission of protecting the bombers and directed them instead to hunt the Luftwaffe. His comprehension of how to employ his forces facilitated the Allies' attaining air superiority over France.

Selective Intervention. Another important skill in operational leadership is intervening in the affairs of subordinates as necessary. Both Patton and Doolittle redirected subordinates to keep them in accord with higher vision. Patton's intercession not only kept his forces moving, but also restrained them when needed.¹⁵ Doolittle's direct intervention resulted in changes that were well suited to accomplishing the task of securing air superiority over France.¹⁶ As the commanders of their organizations, Patton and Doolittle possessed comprehensive understanding of how to achieve their operational objectives. Operational leaders must intervene occasionally to maximize their subordinates' effectiveness.

Resource Management. Resource management proved important to both leaders. Patton's fruitful resource management is apparent in his withholding enough forces from the attack to defend against a possible German counterattack at Mortain.¹⁷ He also demonstrated effective resource management in his employment of airpower. By focusing the

¹³ George S. Patton, Jr., *War As I Knew It*, annotated by Colonel Paul D. Harkins (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), 108.

¹⁴ James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 381.

¹⁵ Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 499.

¹⁶ James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle with Carroll V. Glines, *I Could Never Be So Lucky Again* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 1991), 381.

¹⁷ Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1974), 505.

air formations on his flanks, he optimized the performance of his ground units.¹⁸ This skill was a more decisive factor in Doolittle's leadership, though. In order to maintain sufficient morale while maximizing combat power, Doolittle had to walk a fine line between breaking his unit and optimizing its performance. His skillful and insightful policies struck a balance that kept experienced crews in the air, defeated the Luftwaffe, and maintained the combat integrity of a powerful air formation.¹⁹ As operational commanders become stewards of vast resources, the management of those resources becomes an important skill.

Conceptual understanding of technology, periodic intervention into subordinates' affairs, and resource management are skills that enable successful operational leadership.

Patton and Doolittle were remarkably similar individuals, and this commonality is evident in the qualities and skills that helped them achieve their operational objectives. The next section compares and contrasts the leadership characteristics of Generals Ulysses Grant and David Petraeus.

Strategic Qualities and Skills

The circumstances in which Grant and Petraeus led were remarkably similar. In fact, Petraeus read about Grant while in Iraq to help him understand the breadth and complexity of his responsibilities.²⁰ An examination of the leadership of these two historic figures demonstrates they shared many attributes.

Qualities

A study of Grant's leadership as general-in-chief reveals that aggressiveness, perspicacity, and an ability to assess talent and

¹⁸ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 638.

¹⁹ Benjamin Bishop, "Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend," *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 38.

²⁰ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 95.

situations were the qualities that most significantly enabled his victory over the Confederate Army. Petraeus succeeded because he was morally courageous, determined, and inquisitive. While all these qualities were important to both leaders, some were more significant in supporting strategic success than others.

Determination. Both leaders exhibited determination, though it was manifest differently in each leader. Grant's determination was evident in his unrelenting pursuit of General Robert E. Lee. Anecdotally, Grant's resolve is best captured in Bruce Catton's account of Grant's sending the Army of the Potomac south at the road junction near Fredericksburg.²¹ While Grant's determination was marked by his relationship with the enemy, Petraeus's determination was evident in his relations with both enemy and friendly forces. Key political and military personalities sought to diminish the value of his strategy and did not conceal their desire to end the surge of troops.²² Petraeus' determination to sustain the surge and pursue an approach that focused on protecting the population ultimately helped him acquire the time necessary to demonstrate that his strategy was working.

Intellectual Qualities—Perspicacity and Inquisitiveness. These leaders also demonstrated the importance of intellectual qualities. While the battle at Cold Harbor gave rise to the myth of Grant being a butcher, he was not callous in his strategy.²³ He was rather demonstrating his clear grasp of the realities of the Civil War.²⁴ Grant knew he had to bring the war to an end relatively rapidly. His failure to make real progress could result in political defeat for Lincoln and, as a result, the war effort

²¹ Bruce Catton, *A Stillness at Appomattox* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1954), 91-92.

²² Jeff Zeleny, "G.O.P. Senators Press to Change Strategy in Iraq," *New York Times*, July 14, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/14/washington/14capital.html>.

²³ Edward H. Bonekemper III, *A Victor, Not a Butcher: Ulysses S. Grant's Overlooked Military Genius* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2004), 186.

²⁴ Adam Badeau, *Military History of Ulysses S. Grant: From April, 1861, to April, 1865*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1885), 9.

would almost certainly be jeopardized. Grant's plan to end the war as soon as practicable was the result of deep insight and political calculation.

Petraeus's inquisitiveness was the most notable of his intellectual qualities. It was apparent in his battlefield circulation, interactions with his staff, and his bibliophilic habits.²⁵ At a time when most senior military leaders proved unable to ascertain the foundational causes of violence in Iraq, Petraeus prophetically diagnosed the war's fundamental problems and their solution.²⁶ Both Grant and Petraeus demonstrated keen intellectual attributes that facilitated their success.

Moral Courage. While both leaders possessed moral courage, this quality appeared to weigh more heavily in Petraeus's conflict. Petraeus had to resist pressures from Admiral Fallon and the Joint Staff to undermine his recommendations to Congress.²⁷ Complicating his situation, Petraeus was accountable to multiple authorities—the president, Congress, and his military leaders. He exhibited moral courage in successfully resisting the demands of leaders whose actions would cast doubt on his strategy in the minds of Congress. This strength of character enabled him to preserve the integrity of his report to Congress and improve his chances of saving his strategy.

Grant's moral courage was of a different kind. His courage was manifest in his relentlessness despite the heavy fighting that occurred during his campaign.²⁸ The emotional toll exacted on a commander through such devastation cannot be discarded.

Assessing Talent and Situations. An assessment of subordinate commanders played a more important role in Grant's situation than it

²⁵ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 93-99.

²⁶ David H. Petraeus, "Transcript: General Petraeus on the Way Ahead in Iraq," in *Military Review* 87, no. 2 (Mar/Apr 2007): 3.

²⁷ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 294-295.

²⁸ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 401.

did in Petraeus's. This is mostly due to the context of Grant's situation. Grant was responsible for more numerous military forces and was required to rely on a greater number of subordinate commanders than was Petraeus. Additionally, not all of Grant's subordinates were highly competent. Petraeus dealt directly with fewer subordinate military commanders. General Ray Odierno, a highly competent officer, was Petraeus's sole operational commander.²⁹ While Petraeus would counsel and advise tactical leaders with whom he interacted, his exertion of control over subordinate commanders did not prove greatly significant in his generalship. For Grant, this supervision mattered tremendously.

Grant and Petraeus's success demonstrates that determination and intellectual qualities such as perspicacity and inquisitiveness are necessary for effective leadership at the strategic level. It also implies that moral courage and the ability to assess subordinate talent in given situations may be necessary but are circumstantially dependent.

Skills

While these leaders both possessed similar leadership qualities, the skills that enabled their successful leadership proved even more alike. The present examination has demonstrated that political awareness, administrative competence, and communication skills most facilitated Grant's leadership. For Petraeus, being able to make accurate assessments, communicate, and recognize political imperatives proved to be the skills that most enabled his success.

Political Awareness and Assessments. Both leaders were politically aware. Grant fully understood Lincoln's objectives for the war. More importantly, he recognized the means necessary to achieve those goals.³⁰ He comprehended that the Confederate forces had to be

²⁹ Thomas E. Ricks, *The Gamble: General David Petraeus and the American Military Adventure in Iraq, 2006-2008* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2009), 165.

³⁰ Ulysses S. Grant, *Memoirs and Selected Letters: Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant, Selected Letters 1839-1865* (New York, NY: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1990), 1033-1034.

destroyed.³¹ Petraeus's efforts to understand the political environment—an environment that was more complex than at Grant's time—also capture his ability to conduct assessments. Petraeus accurately grasped the military objectives that he had to accomplish in Iraq in order to meet the president's political aims.³² Petraeus not only had to derive military goals from President Bush's political objectives, but he had to work with the Iraqi government to meet political goals. Petraeus also served in a hostile domestic political environment in which contempt for the president was reflected in Congress's attitude toward Petraeus' strategy.³³ Petraeus had the ability to translate political goals into military objectives and to interact successfully with and influence political leaders of various persuasions. His political skill was more encompassing than Grant's, but they both demonstrated an understanding of political imperatives.

Communication Skills. Communication skills were central to both Grant and Petraeus. Because Grant had to rely primarily on the telegraph, the clarity of his prose was critical. To ensure his subordinates understood his intent, he often sent staff officers to elaborate upon his communiqués.³⁴ Although Petraeus assumed command at a time when communication technologies flourished, educating soldiers in a war zone on how to conduct counterinsurgency was a daunting task. Petraeus demonstrated formidable writing skill by crafting his counterinsurgency guidance in a manner that targeted all ranks and personnel.³⁵ His frequent contact with his soldiers and the

³¹ Adam Badeau, *Military History of Ulysses S. Grant: From April, 1861, to April, 1865*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1885), 10.

³² Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), xi.

³³ Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 110th Congress, First Session, 11 September 2007, "Iraq: The Crocker-Petraeus Report," 47.

³⁴ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 581.

³⁵ David Petraeus, "Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance," in *Military Review* 88, no. 5 (Sep/Oct 2008), 2-4.

media helped keep target audiences informed of progress.³⁶ The actions of these leaders demonstrate that communicative prowess is a vital skill for strategic leaders.

Administrative Skill. Administrative skills played a larger role in Grant's campaign than in Petraeus's. While administrative ability cannot be discounted from Petraeus's leadership, the capacity to manage non-tactical affairs effectively was more important for Grant. Grant had to take logistical matters into account in developing his strategy. Technological limitations restricted the avenues through which supply trains could maneuver. Thus, Grant opted for a route of advance that provided him access to shorter logistical paths.³⁷ While Petraeus had to manage logistical and personnel affairs, there is no real indication that for him this skill was of great significance.

In sum, Grant's and Petraeus's leadership skills demonstrate that strategic leaders must be aware of political implications as they relate to military matters, assess the means necessary to accomplish those political aims, and communicate effectively. The study indicates that administrative skills could be decisive in certain situations. It does not, however, indicate that all strategists must possess this skill.

The next section compares the qualities and skills determined necessary for operational and strategic leadership.

Operational and Strategic Attributes – Commonalities

This section examines the qualities and skills common to both successful operational and strategic leadership. It indicates that certain characteristics are essential to leadership at both levels of war.

Qualities

³⁶ Peter R. Mansoor, *Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), 159.

³⁷ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 377.

The study of operational and strategic leaders demonstrates that aggressiveness and moral courage and qualities necessary for both operational and strategic leadership.

Aggressiveness. The need for aggressiveness was common at both levels of war. Both Patton and Doolittle overwhelmed their adversaries without allowing them any opportunity for respite. This aggressiveness was also characteristic of Grant, whose campaign plan was designed to give the Confederacy no rest.³⁸ Petraeus's aggressiveness assumed a less concrete form, but it was nevertheless present. His aggressiveness was evident in the fact that he sought to accomplish military, political, and economic objectives simultaneously.³⁹ Being under acute time pressure, he actively pursued progress in all areas.

Thus, aggressiveness is a necessary quality for both operational and strategic leadership. The relentless pursuit of objectives is essential to accomplish military goals.

Moral Courage. The analysis of operational and strategic commanders indicates that moral courage is a necessary quality for both operational and strategic leaders. Although Patton demonstrated courage by pushing to the edge of what he believed Bradley would tolerate, Doolittle proved a better example of exercising moral courage as he stood by his decisions despite the pressure he faced from subordinates. Grant and Petraeus also demonstrated moral courage. Grant displayed moral courage in his willingness as a commander to endure high casualty levels in pursuit of what he knew to be both a just and necessary war. Petraeus also demonstrated moral courage in

³⁸ Adam Badeau, *Military History of Ulysses S. Grant: From April, 1861, to April, 1865*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1885), 9.

³⁹ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 141.

resisting pressure from multiple sources to dilute his strategic recommendations.⁴⁰

A comparison of the qualities that enabled successful operational and strategic leadership indicates that aggressiveness and moral courage are qualities common to both. Although moral courage is a common necessity for both operational and strategic leaders, the analysis indicates that this attribute may be slightly more significant at the strategic level as the weight of command—and therefore the stakes—become heavier.

Skills

Commonality among skills is not as robust as it is among qualities, indicating that few operational skills are required at the strategic level. Of the skills that helped Patton and Doolittle succeed, only administrative skills may have had an important effect at the strategic level.

Administration. Administration was clearly a necessary skill in Patton and Doolittle's leadership. Patton's effective management of his staff and Doolittle's skillful supervision of his aircrews both led to attainment of their operational objectives. Administrative skills also proved imperative for Grant. While the maneuvering of an army is an important aspect for a strategic leader, its care and maintenance are equally if not more important. In Petraeus's case, however, administrative skills were not as noteworthy. Administration was still important, but compared to the other three leaders its exercise was not as crucial. The study therefore suggests that while administration may be a necessary skill for leaders to succeed at both the operational and strategic levels, broader research is necessary to validate this claim.

⁴⁰ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 294-295.

To summarize, the evidence here presented indicates more commonality in the qualities necessary for operational and strategic leadership than in the skills. Aggressiveness and moral courage are necessary qualities for leaders at both levels of war, while administrative skills are most likely necessary, as well.

Operational and Strategic Attributes – Differences

There is little commonality between the skills necessary for operational leadership and those needed for its strategic counterpart. Accordingly, in comparing operational and strategic leaders' attributes, there are fewer differences in the necessary qualities than in the required skills.

Qualities

While there was more commonality in qualities than skills between those attributes operational and strategic leaders should possess, there were some notable differences in the characteristics that were most important. Specifically, the intellectual qualities that the strategic leaders demonstrated did not seem as vital at the operational level. Additionally, while Grant and Petraeus did take risks, the value of taking such risks was not as high as it was for the operational-level commanders

Intellectual Qualities. Grant's and Petraeus's most notable qualities were those of the intellect. Grant possessed a perspicacity that enabled him to recognize what the Union had to do to win the war.⁴¹ Petraeus had an inquisitiveness that propelled him to discover the societal dynamics underpinning the violence in Iraq.⁴² His comprehension of the situation further enabled him to prescribe a solution. In both cases, intellectual qualities were dominant in

⁴¹ Adam Badeau, *Military History of Ulysses S. Grant: From April, 1861, to April, 1865*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: D. Appleton and Company, 1885), 9.

⁴² Emma Sky, *The Unraveling: High Hopes and Missed Opportunities in Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2015), 257.

accounting for their successes. While Patton and Doolittle certainly possessed keen minds, their intellectual prowess was not as decisive in their successes. Thus, the strategic level of war places a premium on qualities of the mind. According to the examination, an officer's mind becomes more important as he progresses into seniority.

Risk-Taking. Grant and Petraeus certainly took risks. Grant assumed risk in allowing Sherman to march across Georgia without first dealing with Hood's Army of the Tennessee.⁴³ Petraeus took risks by working with and employing local militias without the consent of the federal Iraqi government.⁴⁴ But taking these risks were not as important to their successes as such behavior was for the operational commanders. Patton would not have achieved such exemplary gains in France had he not relied on airpower to protect his flanks while sending his units rapidly east.⁴⁵ Doolittle may not have been able to crush the Luftwaffe if he had not risked collapse of his unit's morale to achieve concentration of power.⁴⁶ Without risk-taking, the operational commanders' ability to accomplish their objectives would have been in doubt. The same cannot necessarily be said of the strategic commanders.

Thus, intellectual qualities are more valuable at the strategic level, while risk-taking behaviors are more vital at the operational level. These qualities had value for leaders at both levels of war, but their relative importance depended on the general's level of responsibility.

Skills

The present analysis has identified two skills that were noticeably more important at the strategic level than at the operational level: written

⁴³ William Tecumseh Sherman, *Memoirs of General W.T. Sherman* (New York, NY: Literary Classics of the United States, Inc., 1990), 641.

⁴⁴ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 238.

⁴⁵ Carlo D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1995), 638.

⁴⁶ Benjamin Bishop, "Jimmy Doolittle: The Commander behind the Legend," *Drew Paper No. 17* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 2015), 38.

communication and political awareness. Neither of these skills registered as influencing the operational leaders' effectiveness decisively, yet both significantly contributed to the strategic leaders' successes.

Written Communication. Although communication proved important for leaders at both the operational and strategic level, written communication specifically was a more decisive factor in the strategic campaigns of Grant and Petraeus. Being restricted in technology, Grant's primary means of communication was the telegraph. His clear, concise messages provided enough direction to his subordinates to ensure they understood his intent, but also gave them freedom to make decisions within their areas of operations.⁴⁷ Despite having more advanced technology, however, Petraeus also communicated with his soldiers primarily in writing. His ability to direct practices in his succinct counterinsurgency guidance contributed to his soldiers' efforts to protect the population.⁴⁸ While Grant would send staff liaisons for clarification and while Petraeus would circulate the battlefield to conduct personal interactions, these leaders had to rely much more heavily on written orders. Although only a subset of communicative skills, the ability to communicate effectively in writing is a necessary skill for successful strategic leaders.

Political Awareness. The ability to grasp political imperatives and translate political guidance into meaningful military instructions is a skill that did not appear significant for operational success but was imperative for both Grant and Petraeus. Political realities determined Grant's strategy and led him to understand that he had to end the war quickly.⁴⁹ Similarly, Petraeus realized that politics necessitated an approach that would achieve rapid results. His strategy was

⁴⁷ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs* (New York, NY: The Modern Library, 1999), 495.

⁴⁸ David Petraeus, "Multi-National Force-Iraq Commander's Counterinsurgency Guidance," in *Military Review* 88, no. 5 (Sep/Oct 2008), 2-4.

⁴⁹ J.F.C. Fuller, *The Generalship of Ulysses S. Grant* (New York, NY: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), 362.

simultaneous, rather than sequential, in that it sought simultaneously to achieve political, economic, and military objectives.⁵⁰ Both Grant and Petraeus's political astuteness contributed to their successes, but this skill did not play an important role in Patton or Doolittle's leadership. The study therefore indicates that this skill is necessary for successful strategic leadership but not for operational leadership.

In sum, the present study has identified written communication and political awareness as skills that played a negligible role in the success of operational leaders but were imperative at the strategic level. This discovery provides a more definitive verdict than the contrast of qualities, for although intellectual qualities were more important for Grant and Petraeus, they were not insignificant for Patton and Doolittle. Conversely, while risk-taking proved essential for the operational commanders and not for the strategic leaders, Grant and Petraeus still took risks. The most distinct differences between the attributes essential for operational and strategic leadership are found in the necessary skills rather than in the required qualities.

Conclusion

There are fewer distinctions between the qualities that enable operational and strategic leadership than there are between the skills. The evidence here presented demonstrates that risk-taking greatly contributed to the operational commanders' success but did not qualify as a significant leadership quality for Grant and Petraeus. Intellectual prowess, on the other hand, proved more important at the strategic than at the operational level. Besides these distinctions, many leadership qualities proved transferrable between the two levels of war.

There were greater distinctions among leadership skills than among qualities at the two levels of command. For operational

⁵⁰ Linda Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: General David Petraeus and the Search for a Way Out of Iraq* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), 141.

commanders, technical comprehension and resource management stood out as imperative skills while appearing not to be important for strategic leaders. Grant and Petraeus's leadership, however, revealed that written communication and political awareness were essential for strategic commanders. The study did not find these skills to be important at the operational level.

The following chapter will summarize the findings, identify insights about military leadership, implications for the lessons themselves, and fruitful areas for future research.



Conclusions

This chapter summarizes the study's major findings and presents insights about military leadership, implications for military leaders, and suggested areas for further research.

Summary

This thesis has sought to determine what distinctions, if any, exist between the qualities and skills necessary for successful operational leadership and those necessary for strategic leadership. In examining two successful operational and strategic leaders, it demonstrates that intellectual qualities matter more at the strategic than operational level, while risk-taking is not quite as important at the strategic level. It

further posits that political awareness and written communication skills are imperative at the strategic level while not as significant at the operational level.

Insights about Military Leadership

This analysis arrived at several conclusions that were not very surprising. Other results, however, were unexpected.

Some findings were anticipated. At the operational level, a sound understanding of how to employ contemporary forces was suspected of playing an important role in a leader's success. Additionally, being able to manage resources was expected as operational commanders receive materiel that must be wisely apportioned. At the strategic level, the need for political awareness was not particularly unforeseen, nor was the necessity for leaders to maintain their determination.

The thesis did, however, identify some areas that were surprising. The relevance of an aggressive nature at the operational level was more important than initially believed. Indeed, it was a premier quality among the operational commanders analyzed. Further, the relatively minor role that intellectual acumen played at the operational level was unanticipated. The qualities that enabled operational commanders were more personality than mentally oriented. Also surprising at the operational level was the relative importance of risk taking. Like aggressiveness, the operational commanders' willingness to take risks can largely be credited for their successes. Equally unforeseen was the relative unimportance of risk taking at the strategic level. Military literature often discusses the prominence of taking risks, yet this quality factored little in the successes of either Grant or Petraeus.

While many of the results of this analysis were logical, several proved counterintuitive.

Implications for Military Leaders

If the findings in this analysis are accurate, military leaders should foremost recognize that the qualities and skills that proved successful in

the middle years of a career might not be transferrable to the latter. Successful officers cannot remain stagnant in their proficiencies and expect to stay competent. Each new assignment will require a set of attributes that may be particular to that specific duty. Military leaders must therefore remain proactive in discovering the keys that made previous officers successful in their endeavors.

Certain leadership qualities may be universal in their relevance. This study demonstrated that some qualities are, in fact, transferrable from the operational to the strategic realm. An individual's qualities, however, are generally more permanent than his skills. Adapting new leadership qualities is a daunting task, but it is not impossible. Ulysses S. Grant was well known for his lack of fear of the enemy, but it was not always so. Grant changed his perspective when he recognized that the enemy had just as much reason to fear him.¹ Thus, by self-awareness, military leaders may alter their leadership qualities.

The findings of this study imply that if a leader is successful at the operational level, he probably possesses the raw talent needed to flourish at the strategic level. The leader must develop new skills, however, as few of the skills that enable operational success are still relevant at the higher echelon.

In sum, military leaders must recognize that the attributes that helped them to be successful in the past may not be pertinent at higher levels of leadership. Officers must maintain the humility necessary to recognize this truth and the determination and energy to keep learning.

Areas for Further Research

While this study has answered the research question, the results are not final. They were based on what is arguably only a small set of the most significant qualities and skills required to succeed at these two

¹ Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant*, 2 vols: 1885; reprint (New York: Bonanza Books nd), 1:249-250.

levels of war. Only two leaders at each level were examined, and all four leaders succeeded in achieving their goals. The scope of this work is therefore limited, and the findings should not be considered definitive.

To validate, amend, or refute these findings, additional research is necessary. Because only American generals were chosen for analysis, the breadth of the research is limited. Consideration of military leaders from other nations and at other time periods would help to flesh out these findings. Finally, and perhaps most important, an exploration of military leaders who failed at the operational and strategic levels would provide insight regarding the soundness of this study's findings.

Further research into these areas would help to determine whether the answers uncovered in this study are valid or are too specific to the contexts in which these leaders served.



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