

Command and Control in Large-Scale Conflict: Leadership Analysis of the United States VI Corps in World War II

A Monograph

by

MAJ Graham H. Williams

US Army



School of Advanced Military Studies
US Army Command and General Staff College
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Approved by:

/S/ 9 April 2020: Ricardo A. Herrera
Ricardo A. Herrera, PhD
Monograph Director

X

Seminar Leader

X

Brian A. Payne
Director, SAMS

5/1/2020

X

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Prisco R. Hernandez, PhD
Acting Director, Graduate Degree Programs
Signed by: WILLIAMS.GRAHAM.HERVEY.1276892068

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Abstract

Command and Control in large-scale conflict: leadership analysis of the United States VI Corps in World War II, by MAJ Graham H. Williams, 51 pages.

With the Army's recent change in focus to large-scale ground combat, there comes a necessary shift in Army leadership doctrine. Despite this revision, it is difficult for leadership doctrine to impart the complexity and friction associated with large-scale combat. This includes managing large organizations like corps in complex combat environments.

The command and control warfighting function encompass tasks that help a commander manage complexity. However, some commanders do this better than others. There are other factors that influence how a corps commander command and controls their element.

Historical examples assist leaders in understanding the complexity of large-scale combat. The leadership of the American VI Corps during World War II are examples of this. From September 1943 to August 1944, elements of the corps conducted three amphibious assaults in the Mediterranean theater. During this time, the unit also went through significant corps leadership change over while in combat. In a six-month period, VI Corps had three commanders. Each of these commanders adopted a different method to command and control in combat. However, only one was able to synchronize command and control task to fight through the fog and friction of battle.

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Abbreviations

ADP Army Doctrine Publication

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Introduction

In 2017, the United States Army revised Field Manual 3-0 *Operations* to focus on large-scale combat. The new doctrinal approach strayed from the stability operating environments in Iraq and Afghanistan to the highly contested, large-scale environment against opponents who employ capabilities comparable to those of the United States Army.¹ In essence, the Army recognized the need to return to conventional forms of warfighting to meet possible threats. As part of this shift, the Army transitioned from emphasizing brigade operations to focus on larger elements such as divisions and corps. In turn, the Army revised its leadership doctrine to reflect these changes and orient towards large unit leadership.

Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0 *Mission Command* represents the Army's leadership approach to the range of combat operations. This approach balances the mission command lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan with the need to nest within joint doctrine for future operations. Part of the change is the reintroduction of the command and control warfighting function. This revision does not imply that the concept of mission command has gone away; rather, ADP 6-0 identifies mission command as the Army's approach to command and control.² Mission command is an operating concept that allows leaders to empower subordinates to make timely decisions during decentralized execution.³ Command and control is fundamental to operations where the commander exercises authority and synchronizes the warfighting functions and the elements of combat power.⁴

¹ US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), n.p.

² US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2019), 1-16.

³ US Army, ADP 6-0, x.

⁴ Ibid.

The challenge for leadership doctrine is conveying the scope, scale, complexity, and friction associated with large-scale conflict. Some of these challenges include considerations for commanding large elements across an array of operating environments, conducting joint and multinational operations, and serving as the headquarters that bridges the gap between strategic and operational objectives and tactical actions. Aside from simulated corps level training exercises, the complex nature of large-scale combat is an unfamiliar world to corps commanders and their staffs. This is largely due to their long experience in stability focused environments, rather than large-scale combat operations.

There are any number of factors that influence the ways in which leaders command and control their elements in large-scale combat. Carl von Clausewitz recognized that in war, the commander is affected by friction derived from the accumulation of countless minor incidents.⁵ In the 1930s, the Army's large unit operations manual recognized that the commander must concern himself with three overlapping considerations: the human nature of the war-making machine, the conditions under which he is operating, and the enemy's reaction.⁶ ADP 6-0 highlights that the nature of conflict is a human endeavor, conducted in dynamic and uncertain environments, designed to achieve political purposes.⁷ Over time, the complexity of the battlefield, involving communication, information, and multidimensional aspects, add to the friction commanders face.

While the command and control warfighting function assists commanders with managing friction, there are other factors that affect mission accomplishment in large-scale combat. The

⁵ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 119.

⁶ US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 100-15, *A Manual for Commanders of Large Units* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1930), 1-1.

⁷ US Army, ADP 6-0, 1-1.

commander attempts to overcome some of these factors based on his leadership approach. ADP 6-0 imparts some of the necessary characteristics all commander must possess such as reputation, skill, education, experience, knowledge, and judgement.⁸ Aside from these traits, other variables, both internal and external to the organization, act as impediments to success for commanders. These variables can result in commanders becoming overwhelmed by leadership responsibilities. For example, in World War II the American VI Corps had three commanders within a six-month period. The commander who integrated command, control, and systems was better suited to work through friction, remove uncertainty, and facilitate the staff and subordinates to accomplish the mission. Conversely, the commanders who did not recognize inherent issues with command and control tasks became overwhelmed by friction and faltered under the burden of command.

Some corps commanders in World War II were well versed in command and control in large-scale combat. For example, over a two-year period, the VI Corps conducted three amphibious assaults in the Mediterranean theater to include operations in Salerno, Anzio, and Southern France. Each of these operations encompassed different amounts and types of friction that influenced the commanders' actions. Each commander varied his approach to command and control, in the different operating environments, in order to account for the challenges presented to each of them in combat. Clausewitz informs us that a good general is one who understands friction, but the best general is the one who takes it most to heart.⁹

Viewed through the modern command and control warfighting function, the tasks of command, control, and the systems that tie the components together, are as relevant today as they were in World War II. Commanders must simultaneously lead their element, control operations, and synchronize their command and control systems. These three aspects stand out as an immense challenge for corps commanders. While the mission command aspect is important in

⁸ US Army, ADP 6-0, 1-17.

⁹ Clausewitz, *On War*, 120.

combat, the variables that are present on the battlefield provide an incredible amount of friction that influence how a commander leads such a large organization.

Doctrine Review

The recent shift in leadership doctrine focuses on the reemergence of the Army command and control warfighting function for large-scale conflict. One of the primary reasons for this shift was that Army leadership recognized the importance of joint interoperability and the need to align leadership doctrine with the joint forces. This is especially so if the leadership focus is on larger elements, such as corps, which could serve as a multinational and joint headquarters for a joint task force. The Army recognized that over time, the leadership concept of mission command took on many forms and definitions that eroded the importance of this leadership concept.¹⁰ The separation of mission command and command and control represents a delineation between a command philosophy and the commander's duties and responsibilities in combat. ADP 6-0 takes a holistic approach to describe how a commander, with input from their staff, perform the command and control tasks of command forces, control operation, drive the operations process, and establish command and control systems.¹¹

Commanders cannot manage just one aspect of the command and control tasks. Command and control are inherently interrelated concepts. The command and control warfighting function speaks towards both art and science in warfare.¹² Specifically, it is the interplay between the commander as the focal point with influence from the staff, higher command, and subordinate elements. Command and control tasks encompass the enterprise that allow the commander to

¹⁰ US Army, ADP 6-0, vii.

¹¹ Ibid., x.

¹² Ibid., 1-16.

exercise authority and direction as well as manage the friction associated with combat (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Command and Control Warfighting Function. US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2019), x.

The command aspect of the warfighting function pertains to the exercise of authority by virtue of rank or assignment.¹³ Command breaks down further into the elements of responsibility, decision making, and leadership. Decision making includes both the art and science of war, with the science portion involving the qualitative and quantitative aspects of operations. Art encompasses intangible facets such as the complexity of operations and the uncertainty of the enemy.¹⁴ The commander has the burden of making decisions that affect the course of action and mission accomplishment. Planning decisions are based off experience, intuition, or both. Regardless of how commanders make decisions, they must have a certain amount of situational understating of subordinates' actions and knowledge of the variables that affect operations. The

¹³ US Army, ADP 6-0, 1-17.

¹⁴ Ibid., 2-3.

understanding process involves managing data, analyzing information, and applying judgement based off knowledge.¹⁵ While achieving understanding is both a command and staff responsibility, the commander is the primary agent for promoting shared understanding as a leadership responsibility.

Two other important aspects of command are judgement and leadership. Despite being an integral part of understanding, judgement is an influential factor that facilitates command decisions. Judgement is closely connected to the leadership intuition aspect based off experience, training, and study. Commanders use judgement in situations to lead, assign missions, prioritize efforts and, most importantly, manage risk.¹⁶ The commander and staff interaction is a cyclical, reinforcing process, whereby the staff attempts to understand the variables in operations to inform and facilitate decisions. The commander applies judgement, based on experience, education, and understanding to make informed decisions and balance when to drive or lead operations. Paramount in this process is the ability of the commander to understand, visualize, describe, and direct during the operations process. Ultimately, the commander, not the staff, is responsible for the unit's action and the mission's accomplishment.

A second and equally important aspect of the command and control warfighting function is control. Control is the aspect of leadership that bridges the gap between regulating forces and synchronizing warfighting functions to accomplish the mission. Control is important during the conduct of operations as it allows the commander to understand the relationship between operating conditions and the end state, thereby allowing him to adjust the plan based off the situation.¹⁷ The science aspect of control involves the analysis of constraints, physical

¹⁵ US Army, ADP 6-0, 2-4.

¹⁶ Ibid., 2-6.

¹⁷ Ibid., 3-1.

capabilities, understanding points of friction, and other aspects of operations that are impediments to or enablers of success. The commander exercises command by providing direction, gaining and eliciting feedback, processing information, and communicating intent.¹⁸ One method that allows a commander to apply command and control is through the establishment of command and control systems.

Command and control systems involve the arrangement of people, processes, networks, and a command post to enable decision making and facilitate operations.¹⁹ People, in this sense, pertain to the human realm and the arraying of personalities. This includes not just staff, but subordinate leaders, multinational partners, and superiors. The processes are the procedures and actions that facilitate orders production, analysis, and processing information that allow the commander to make risk informed decisions. A network does not necessarily relate to the technological aspect of a command posts. Rather, it involves the systems which collect, processes, store, display, disseminate, and protect information.²⁰ With networks, commanders must be cognizant of the system that exists within their command post and understand associated flaws. The command post is central to the processing of information. It is the hub that allows a commander, through his staff, to conduct information management, maintain situational understanding, and assess operations.²¹ Therefore, the location of the command post on a battlefield must facilitate information flow and collaboration.

The concept of friction is an important theoretical aspect of war that impacts how a commander leads. Clausewitz writes extensively on the topic to understand the complexity of

¹⁸ US Army, ADP 6-0, 3-3.

¹⁹ Ibid., 4-1.

²⁰ Ibid., 4-8.

²¹ Ibid., 4-9.

war. He maintained that while everything in war is simple, the simplest thing is difficult.²² During the conduct of war, these difficulties begin to build on each other and produce a friction that is almost inconceivable.²³ As problems build, the commander's level of performance can decrease, causing one to "fall short of their intended goal."²⁴ Actions on the battlefield are not singular events. They are dynamic interactions that cause unanticipated results.²⁵ Moreover, as war becomes increasingly complex, the more nonlinear the battlefield becomes. This nonlinear phenomenon changes the character of battle making analytical prediction less likely.²⁶ Thus, leaders must balance the art and science of command to overcome friction. Clausewitz goes on to state that are two notions to help overcome this friction. The first involves will power that allows *spirit* to dominate the art of war.²⁷ The second is the military machine, or army, that is not one component, but made up of many pieces.²⁸ Armies are made up of many individuals that work toward overcoming friction.

A commander must recognize the existence of friction and develop a plan to work through it. The concept of friction is important as it relates to the dynamics and uncertainty of conflict. ADP 6-0 states that in the chaos of war, a command and control approach cannot impose perfect order. Rather, commanders must make allowances for the uncertainty that chance and

²² Clausewitz, *On War*, 119.

²³ Clausewitz, *On War*, 119.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Alan Beyerchen, "Clausewitz, Nonlinearity, and the Unpredictability of War," *International Security* 17, no. 3 (Winter 1992-1993): 73.

²⁶ Ibid., 62.

²⁷ Clausewitz, *On War*, 119.

²⁸ Ibid.

friction create.²⁹ Friction, command, control, and systems were very much present for the VI Corps commanders as they operated in Italy and France during World War II.

Historical Context

Background to Operation Shingle

Following the North African Campaigns, the VI Corps was a primary unit operating in the Mediterranean theater. Once the Allies secured Northern Africa, they planned successive invasions of Italy beginning with Operation Husky, the assault on Sicily, and Operation Avalanche, focusing on Salerno. Prior to executing these campaigns, strategic leadership directed the commander of Mediterranean forces to prepare plans for the invasion of the Italian mainland in order to tie down German forces and eliminate Italy from the war.³⁰ The VI Corps, initially comprised of the 34th and 36th Infantry Divisions, 1st Armored Division, and 82nd Airborne Division, was part of the task force that conducted an amphibious attack on one of seven predetermined mainland locations.³¹ In September 1943, the corps sailed from Tunisia and Sicily to capture Naples and surrounding airfields.³² These actions, although not covered in depth here, are important for a few reasons. The first is that Operation Avalanche represented the first of many amphibious assaults on the Italian mainland designed to engage German units. This operation focused on limited objectives, seizing the Port of Naples, and establishing bases for future operations. Sixth Corps served as the spearhead for the amphibious assault and it faced stiff German resistance. Despite not meeting the strategic objectives, the VI Corps' soldiers and

²⁹ US Army, ADP 6-0, 1-2.

³⁰ US Fifth Army History, *Part I: From Activation to the Fall of Naples* (Florence: L'Impronta Press, 1944), 16.

³¹ Ibid., 16.

³² Ibid., 18.

leadership gained a tremendous amount of experience in amphibious operations and had a better grasp of how the German forces fought as they got closer to mainland Europe. The corps also developed an understanding of conducting operations under the American 5th Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Mark Clark, and conducting operations with British forces.

Other events from Operation Avalanche were significant for the future of VI Corps. One was the firing of the VI Corps commander, Major General Ernest Dawley. Born on 17 February 1886, Dawley was 57 years old at the time of the Salerno operation. He commanded the VI Corps from April 1942 to 20 September 1943.³³ A United States Military Academy graduate, Dawley commissioned a field artillery officer, and served in the Philippines, Mexico, and then France in World War I.³⁴ During World War I, Dawley, then a company grade officer, attended the French Artillery School at Fontainebleau, planned the artillery operations for the Saint Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne offensive, and earned a Silver Star.³⁵ In the Philippines and during World War I, Dawley earned the respect of General George Marshall. In 1943, Lieutenant General Dwight Eisenhower, the commander of Mediterranean Allied forces, recommended Dawley to command a corps based on his performance and potential.³⁶

Twelve days after the assault on Salerno, Clark relieved Dawley and replaced him with Major General John Lucas. Prior to the assault, Clark held reservations about Dawley's leadership abilities. While initially pleased with the battlefield results of the units, Clark observed

³³ Robert Berlin, *U.S. Army World War II Corps Commanders: A Composite Biography* (Fort Leavenworth: Combat Studies Institute, 1989), 19.

³⁴ Roger Spiller, Joseph Dawson, and Harry Williams, *The Dictionary of American Military Biography*, vol. 1, A-G (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 244.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Dwight Eisenhower. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, vol. 2, *The War Years*, ed. Alfred Chandler (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 1354.

that his corps commander was indecisive, became overwhelmed with the tactical situation, and appeared “in over his head.”³⁷ Clark considered removing him prior to the invasion, but other senior officers intervened. General Harold Alexander soon reinforced the assessment of Clark. Alexander, a British officer serving as the theater commander, became a significant actor with VI Corps for future operations. He too recognized that Dawley could not maintain his bearing in stressful situations.³⁸ The decision finally came on 20 September. Clark wrote to Eisenhower, stating that he had removed Dawley due to his failure to initiate a deep reconnaissance, his inability to protect his beachhead flanks, and failing to provide viable counterattack options.³⁹ In a letter to Marshall, Eisenhower wrote that Dawley was of “splendid character, earnest, faithful, and well informed,” but he could not exercise high battle command due to nervousness and indecisiveness.⁴⁰ Eisenhower concluded his missive stating that battle leadership was the test for trained professional officers.⁴¹

Another influential event for VI Corps transpired at the strategic level involving Allied leadership. A few months after the Salerno invasion, Allied leaders wrestled with the current state of operations. They desired to plan for future campaigns. At the Tehran Sextant conference in November 1943, the British Chiefs of Staff proposed that Italy “should be nourished and maintained until we have secured the Pisa-Rimini line.”⁴² The timeline and sequence of plans for Italy were not only tied to a proposed Southern France front, but involved the cross-channel

³⁷ Jon Mikolashek, *General Mark Clark: Command of American Fifth Army in World War II and Liberator of Rome* (Haverton, PA: Casemate Publishers, 2013), 63.

³⁸ Mikolashek, *General Mark Clark.*, 64.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Eisenhower, *Papers*, 2: 1436.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Combined Chiefs of Staff, *Sextant and Eureka Conferences, November-December 1943: Papers and Minutes of Meetings* (Washington, DC: Joint History Office, 2001), 235.

invasion of northern France. The assumptions from the conference notes highlighted that a proposed assault in Anzio (Operation Shingle) would apply pressure on German forces located south of Rome. Prime Minister Winston Churchill drove these assumptions largely by his thoughts on the Mediterranean theater. The timing was not right for an invasion of France, especially if the allies desired to build up forces for such an undertaking. Rather, the goal of operations on the Italian mainland was to distract Germany, to attrite its forces, and pose a threat to the southern flank.⁴³ The British aimed at exploiting the political situation there and potentially acting as a springboard into the Balkans.⁴⁴ As a result, the allies proposed numerous operations to include focusing on Anzio and Rome. But competing resources were constantly a factor with future large-scale operations. Commanders, planners, and political leaders realized that the invasion of France and Italy could not occur simultaneously due to the lack of landing craft in the European theater. Conference planners agreed to prioritize the Rome campaign and that sixty-eight landing ships remained in the Mediterranean to support operations until 15 January 1944. After that date, the allocation of landing craft would shift to support an invasion of northern France..⁴⁵

These decisions had an impact on the conduct of future Italian campaigns. The plan for Italy, and the proposed operations on the mainland, displayed a lack of awareness for the complexity of operations. Moreover, the vague Allied strategy for Italy translated into significant operational friction..⁴⁶ Allied planners and leadership did not consider the lack of progress in Salerno as a forecast for future amphibious operations. Rather, they looked at the success of

⁴³ Douglas Porch, *The Path to Victory: The Mediterranean Theater in World War II* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2004), 453.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 454.

⁴⁵ Combined Chiefs of Staff, *Sextant and Eureka Conferences*, 302.

⁴⁶ Porch, *The Path to Victory*, 457.

Operation Avalanche as an example of interservice and inter-Allied success. This included viewing amphibious landings as the model for planning.⁴⁷ Additionally, subsequent campaigns in Italy had significant British influence from Churchill and Alexander who applied pressure on Clark and other tactical level leaders.

Once the slow progress of Operation Avalanche in Salerno became apparent, planners aimed to bypass the German defensive lines by conducting amphibious turning movements. Alexander saw the capture of Rome as "the principle objective," and that the continuation of frontal assaults would be as "costly and relatively unproductive" as they had been to date.⁴⁸ Alexander gave the order on 8 November 1943 to begin planning for the operation.⁴⁹ Sixth Corps' task for Operation Shingle was simple enough: to seize and secure a beachhead in the vicinity of Anzio.⁵⁰ Specifically, VI Corps was to focus on the Colli Laziali, a section of the Alban Hills of operational importance, that would set the conditions for the seizure of Rome and the Pisa-Rimini line to the north of the capital.⁵¹

Lucas Takes Command

After taking command of VI Corps, Major General John Lucas inherited the strategic pressure and operational and tactical problems in the Italian theater. Lucas was born in Kearneysville, West Virginia in 1890. Just four years junior to Dawley, Lucas was fifty-three years old when he assumed command. Lucas, like Dawley, was a West Point Graduate, but he earned his commission in cavalry and later accepted a commission in field artillery.⁵² Following

⁴⁷ Ibid., 449.

⁴⁸ US Fifth Army History, *Part III: The Winter Line* (Florence, Italy: L'Impronta Press, 1944), 12.

⁴⁹ US Fifth Army History, *Part IV: Cassino and Anzio*, 9.

⁵⁰ US Army, Fifth Army, *Operation Shingle Outline Plan* (N.p. [Italy], 1944), 11.

⁵¹ US Fifth Army History, *Part III: The Winter Line*, 12.

⁵² Roger J. Spiller, Joseph Dawson, and Harry Williams, *The Dictionary of American Military*

commission, Lucas served in the Philippines and was later sent to the Mexican border where he commanded a machine gun troop to fight Pancho Villa's forces.⁵³ Following this, Lucas served in the western theater of World War I, was wounded, and returned to the United States to command the Field Artillery School. In the interwar period, Lucas earned his master's degree, held various levels of artillery commands, and graduated from the necessary army professional schools. Lucas was unique in that he was regarded as an amphibious landing expert for the army. This reputation was based on his command of the 3rd Infantry Division and the amphibious training the unit conducted on the Puget Sound in Washington.⁵⁴

Despite his previous combat experience, Eisenhower, one of Lucas' West Point classmates, had reservations about placing him in command of a corps. Just prior to assuming command, Lucas served a tour in the African Theater where he worked closely with Eisenhower. When making recommendations to Marshall for general officer potential and command, Eisenhower gave a "special word about Lucas" in that he had combat experience, but lacked combat responsibility.⁵⁵ Eisenhower explained to Marshall that Lucas spent several months in Sicily acquainting himself with the operational environment and that he would make a successful corps commander.⁵⁶ Despite Lucas' experiences, they proved not to be enough to enable him to lead VI Corps in accomplishing their mission.

Planning for Operation Shingle

Biography, vol. 2, *H-P* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1984), 665.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Spiller, *Dictionary of American Military Biography*, 2: 666.

⁵⁵ Eisenhower, *Papers*, 2: 1354.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 1357.

The Operation Shingle plan from Fifth Army served as the guiding document for Lucas and his corps while they prepared for battle. The initial assumptions made by Clark were that the Germans would easily repel additional frontal attacks, therefore getting to the objective required an amphibious landing. The VI Corps' mission was to seize and secure a beachhead in the vicinity of Anzio and then to advance to the Colli Laziali. The Colli Laziali was part of the Alban Hills, a commanding hill mass near the vital communication route that the German XIV Panzer Corps used to resupply units south of Rome.⁵⁷ During Phase I, forces were to assault the beaches north and southeast of Anzio to establish a beachhead. Phase II involved an attack in the direction of Colli Laziali. An hour prior to the mainland assault on D-Day, the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion and a Ranger Force would airdrop to prevent the enemy from reinforcing and resisting the amphibious forces. The 1st Armored Division served as a follow-on force to be dispatched few days after the invasion.

⁵⁷ US Fifth Army History, *Part IV: Cassino and Anzio*, 12.

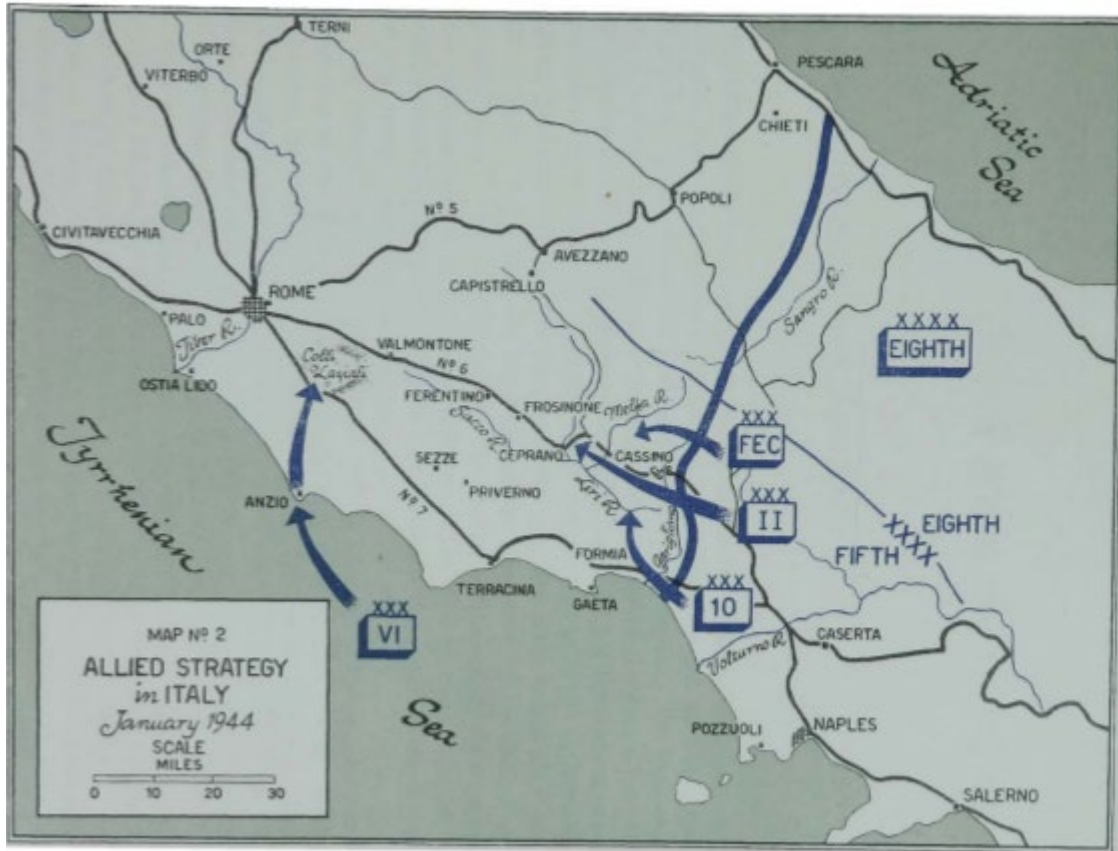


Figure 2. Allied Strategy in Italy. US Fifth Army History, *Part IV: Cassino and Anzio* (Florence: L'Impronta Press, 1944), 26.

Anzio, and its sister town to the south Nettuno, were small port and resort towns thirty miles south of Rome on the Tyrrhenian Sea. Railroads and other avenues of approach linked the coastal plain to Rome. The area surrounding Anzio was primarily farmland except for a small patch of dense regrowth pine woods on the eastern side.⁵⁸ Also on the eastern side of the beachhead was the Mussolini Canal that acted as a natural barrier with marshes to the southeast along the coast. Initially, the planned beachhead area would be seven miles deep and fifteen miles wide.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Lucian K. Truscott, *Command Missions: A Personal Story* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1954), 308.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

After examining the essential elements of intelligence and requested information from the initial 5th Army G-2 estimate, planners were not sure how the Germans would react to the invasion. There was initially no knowledge of inland defensive works, passive or active defenses, air or naval elements, or the disposition of the German reserves.⁶⁰ While there were some aerial reconnaissance missions dedicated for the ground commander, the corps had a laundry list of report criteria to relay "as soon as determined" by ground units.⁶¹ This uncertainty was reduced with a number of initial reconnaissance reports, but these only determined the suitability of the beach landing sites as well as disposition of forces in the immediate coastal areas.

A later G-2 estimate, issued on November 1943, provided a disposition of major German units in the vicinity of Rome. This included the Herman Göring Division, the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division, the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division, the 44th Division, the 94th Division, and the 5th Mountain Division. Despite the overmatch, the G-2 assessment highlighted that the German divisions covered a wide area and they varied with regards to composition and combat readiness. There was initially one false assumption that is worth noting from the G-2 assessment. The assumption was that while the VI Corps would at first only engage a division and other smaller combat elements, the assault would cause the Germans to "withdraw from their defensive position after they appreciated the magnitude of that operation."⁶² By D+1, the G-2 assessed that the Germans would realize they were facing an attack from their defensive lines to the south (II Corps) as well as an assault from their flank in Anzio (VI Corps), causing units to withdraw north to Rome. Then VI Corps would cut the German railroad supply lines that were "within

⁶⁰ Fifth US Army, *Operation Shingle Outline Plan*, 2.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Fifth US Army, *Operation Shingle Outline Plan: G-2 Annex 1*, n.p.

striking distance of the landing force," causing the German command to reevaluate the situation.⁶³

The Fifth Army G-2 created an additional supplementary intelligence estimate at the end of December that revised the enemy disposition and course of action. This estimate stated that once the German commander understood the magnitude of the amphibious landing, he would concentrate forces to defeat the Allied force. If there were not enough forces available, or the Germans were unable to defeat VI Corps, they would mass elements to isolate the landing force to prevent further build up and advances inland. A concerning aspect of the estimate for the VI Corps commander was that if the Germans viewed the landing as an emergency, then two infantry divisions could mobilize to isolate the landing forces. The estimated time for dedication of these infantry divisions was anywhere up to D+16. Therefore, the potential combined strength for D+16 was templated at about 61,300 German personnel.⁶⁴

Just prior to execution, the Allied strategic leadership influence began to bear on Operation Shingle. One example was at a key leader planning conference where coordination before the operation occurred. Present were Churchill, Clark, Lucas, Truscott, and other British and American officers and planners. At the conference, Churchill set the date of execution for 25 January 1944. When informed that it would benefit all units involved to conduct a rehearsal, Churchill stated that well trained junior leaders with combat experience could supplement the need for a rehearsal.⁶⁵ The concern for Lucas, who had experience in amphibious operations, was that army and navy landings were a command and control challenge. Adding the element of surprise, and operating with a British division, would complicate the matter. Clark granted the

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 299.

rehearsal partially due to a rare act of insistence by Lucas. The rehearsal, Operation Webfoot, occurred near Naples with Lucas as a primary observer from the beach. Truscott, as the 3rd Infantry Division commander, observed a poor performance by the units during this rehearsal. The issues Truscott noted were that units missed beaches and objectives, units lost DUKWs and artillery pieces in the sea, and there were little to no communication between elements. The scene on the beaches was chaotic and only a small number of infantry battalions made it to their objectives.⁶⁶ Lucas and Truscott were most concerned that these issues happened without any German opposition. Despite Lucas' appeal, Clark denied a second rehearsal.

Prior to the invasion, the relationship between Lucas and other commanders became strained. When Clark inquired about the rehearsal, Lucas informed him that it was a success. Truscott overheard this and decided to bypass his commander and express his frustration directly to Clark. Truscott wrote the 5th Army commander of the issues and losses of equipment and pleaded for another rehearsal.⁶⁷ Truscott also confronted Lucas on his lack of honest feedback to Clark. Lucas replied that he was in a difficult position with Clark, therefore he did not press the matter.⁶⁸ Despite all the misgivings and concern for the assault, the fleet sailed from Naples on January 21, 1944.

Operation Shingle

The forces that Lucas had available were 3rd Infantry Division, the British 1st Division, the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 83rd Chemical Battalion, British commandos, an American Ranger Force comprised of the 1st, 3rd, and 4th Battalions, and the 509th Parachute

⁶⁶ Ibid., 303.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 304.

Infantry Battalion.⁶⁹ From D-Day to D+3, the 45th Infantry Division and the 1st Armored Division served as the corps reserve and follow on strike force. The amphibious assault force was initially under the naval commander, Rear Admiral Frank Lowry, who was located on the command ship U.S.S. *Biscayne* with Lucas. The ships loaded and sailed in a pattern that would not give their initial cardinal direction by anyone observing from Naples. Twelve cruisers, twenty-four fleet destroyers, three gunboats, thirty-eight minesweepers, a radar ship, and other small boats made up amphibious fleet.⁷⁰ The first landing group contained eighteen large landing ships, three amphibious tank landing crafts, four supply vessels with 19,000 tons of material, and 700 vehicles and 100 DUKW all-wheel drive amphibious vehicles.⁷¹ The unloading and assaults began at 0200 on the 22nd and lasted well into the morning. The units surprised the only German elements in the vicinity of the beaches. Present were two depleted coast watching battalions from the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division.⁷²

The Operation Shingle landing was characterized as a nonevent due to the orderly and unopposed ship to shore movements.⁷³ The Ranger Force and the 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion easily moved towards their Anzio and Nettuno objectives, and seized the towns by 0800.⁷⁴ Allied Air Forces conducted 1,200 sorties on 22 January to isolate the beachhead and interdict German units.⁷⁵ After clearing some of the approaches for mines, other landing craft

⁶⁹ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 301.

⁷⁰ Ennio Silvestri, *The Long Road to Rome* (N.p. [Italy]: Il Gabbiano, 1994), 154.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² US Fifth Army History, *Part IV: Cassino and Anzio*, 63.

⁷³ Carlo D'Este, *Fatal Decision: Anzio and the Battle for Rome* (New York: HarperCollins, 1991), 120.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 120.

⁷⁵ D'Este, *Fatal Decision*, 121.

unloaded that afternoon. While the Luftwaffe initially had little impact, its eventual presence confirmed that the German command was aware of the landing. Lucas knew the lull was a false sense of security and that German forces could rapidly transition to orient on the landing forces.⁷⁶ Subordinate units easily attained their assigned objectives. The 3rd Infantry Division pushed east towards a bridge over the Mussolini Canal and the British 1st Division controlled a seven mile stretch of the Anzio-Albano road.⁷⁷

Despite initial successes, time and security were foremost in Lucas' mind. He had to strike the balance between pushing units too far east and exposing weak flanks that German elements might exploit. Two days after the landing, on 24 January, the Germans had a better understanding of the situation, and they sent armored patrols to the beachhead. Both Lucas and Clark feared a "German counter thrust," which caused Clark to order the 1st Armored Division and 45th Infantry Division to be dispatched to support VI Corps.⁷⁸ The addition of these forces gave Lucas four divisions under his command, which boosted his confidence leading to an attack on the towns of Campoleone and Cisterna.

While Lucas understood that he was facing an increasingly complex problem, he had to make decisions in a timely manner in order to accomplish his assigned task. The first twenty-four to forty-eight hours were critical for Lucas with regards to his assessment of the tactical situation. Initially, minimal German resistance and the ability of his forces to seize intermediate objectives, satisfied the VI Corps task given to them by 5th Army. Both Alexander and Clark's presence on 22 January only reinforced Lucas' assessment. Alexander and Clark praised Lucas for the success of the assault and they agreed with Lucas' decision to not push to the Alban Hills (Colli

⁷⁶ Ibid., 122.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 124.

⁷⁸ US Fifth Army History, *Part IV: Cassino and Anzio*, 68.

Laziali).⁷⁹ Between the 22nd and the 27th, Lucas balanced limited attacks to expand the defensive perimeter with building up the beachhead. He understood that a German offensive would eventually arrive, and the port of Anzio was his only way to withdraw. Lucas planned for a series of beachhead expansion operations that involved the newly arrived 1st Armored Division. These operations engaged the initial German forces tasked to contain the allied thrust.

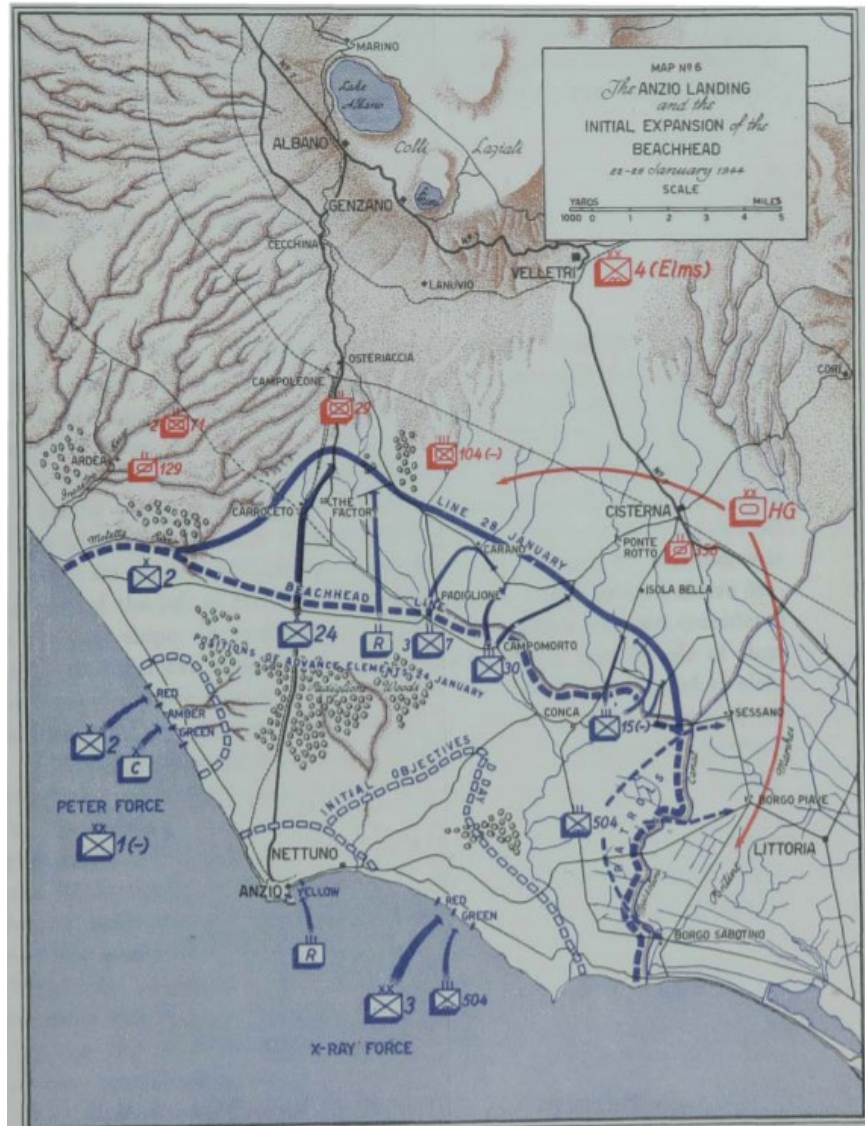


Figure 3. The Anzio landing and the initial expansion of the beachhead. US Fifth Army History, *Part IV: Cassino and Anzio* (Florence: L'Impronta Press, 1944), 72.

⁷⁹ D'Este, *Fatal Decision*, 134.

By the beginning of February, the German resistance increased. On 3 February, VI Corps was facing an estimated four German divisions. Some of these units were in route from the Gustav Line to the south and diverted to face the Allied threat on Rome.⁸⁰ Lucas ordered his forces into defensive positions to repel the German assault.⁸¹ Lucas had two primary concerns. The first was that the VI Corps forces were vulnerable with their back to the Tyrrhenian Sea, in that a major German counterattack could separate the units from their escape route. The second was Lucas had to balance extending the beachhead, weak defensive flanks, and ensuring the beachhead was out of range of German long-range artillery. As the Anzio force settled into the defense, it sustained 6,787 casualties in a short two weeks of hard fighting.⁸² Despite being the most significant gain in Italy since Salerno, the Anzio thrust was grinding to a halt.

In the defense, Lucas positioned his divisions between two obstacles on the northwest and southeast: the Moletta River and the Mussolini Canal. Clark visited the forward positions and although he was pleased with the units' disposition, he determined the corps required more combat power to launch an offensive. At a minimum, Lucas required a British brigade or an American regimental combat team and a 155mm gun battalion to replace lost combat power.⁸³ The German forces aggressively targeted the corps' rear area with long range fires and Luftwaffe sorties. This included positioning 170mm guns on the slopes of the Colli Laziali, which was one of the objectives of the plan.⁸⁴ Although the long-range fire was often inaccurate, targeting the congested beachhead allowed the Germans to easily disrupt operations. At one point, the German

⁸⁰ US Fifth Army History, *Part IV: Cassino and Anzio*, 85.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 86.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 107.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 110.

Luftwaffe dropped bombs near the corps headquarters in Nettuno inflicted heavy casualties, destroying ammunition vehicles and two landing craft in the harbor.⁸⁵

Throughout February, the German resistance was so intense Lucas committed the 1st Armored Division, despite being reduced to 50 percent effective strength.⁸⁶ Lucas was under immense pressure to break the stalemate, but the British 1st Division and the 3rd Infantry Division had limited success. Clark again realized the need to increase forces to allow VI Corps to go on the offensive. There was also the issue of the British 1st Division that was taking heavily casualties.⁸⁷ The Germans kept pressing in the center of the line attempting to push units back to their last line of defense.⁸⁸ Despite this, VI Corps developed a plan to counter the German attack. The plan called for two separate thrusts to pinch off the German advance into the 45th Infantry Division defensive line. By the end of February, it appeared that the corps' push achieved limited success.⁸⁹ Sixth Corps also attempted to counter the German long-range artillery by concentrating batteries and integrating air support during good weather.⁹⁰

February turned into March, which the 5th Army history dubbed the "period of local attacks."⁹¹ The smaller local attacks were out of necessity for both VI Corps and the German forces. Both sides felt the manpower drain from continuous combat as well as effects from

⁸⁵ US Fifth Army History, *Part IV: Cassino and Anzio*, 110.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 118.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 126.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 140-141.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 143.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 144.

⁹¹ Ibid., 148.

adverse weather conditions. Lucas balanced maintaining the beachhead defense and rotating units ensuring there was a ready and available corps reserve.

At the end of February, following limited action on both sides, two events transpired that shaped the future of the Italian campaign. The first was a German offensive that attempted to penetrate the vulnerable defensive line of VI Corps. While the German penetrated some zones, the attack produced little gain and only added to the unit's exhaustion. The second was the replacement of Lucas with Major General Lucian Truscott. In mid-February, Clark ordered Truscott, the 3rd Infantry Division commander, to turn over his command and assume the duty as the deputy of VI Corps.⁹² Initially, Truscott resented this since he had no prior knowledge of this significant officer move.⁹³ Truscott and Lucas worked together since the Sicilian campaign. Truscott was also an understandable pick as the deputy, and later commander, since he had extensive knowledge of the terrain, operations, and subordinate units. Although these command moves were not initially known by the officers involved, the idea was set into motion for some time. The impetus to relieve Lucas came not just from Clark, but from Alexander. Some seven days after becoming the deputy, Truscott inherited the corps' stagnant front.

At the strategic level, the overall purpose of the amphibious landing was to turn the German flank, make assailable passage to Rome, to threaten German lines of communication, and to divide the forces in Italy.⁹⁴ As British planners saw it, VI Corps was one part of the larger operation to advance inland to the high ground near the Colli Laziali and to allow other forces (II

⁹² Truscott, *Command Missions*, 319.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Harold Alexander, *Report of the Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Italian Campaign: 8 January 1944 to 10 May 1944* (Government Printing Office, 1946), 1.

Corps) to advance to Rome.⁹⁵ The combined chiefs instructed Alexander to prioritize the Italian campaign using all land, sea, and air resources in the theater. Alexander, in turn, instructed Clark to expand the beachhead with the task to "link up the beachhead and to take Rome."⁹⁶ Clark tasked Lucas to conduct an offensive to take the village of Cisterna, but Lucas had to balance enemy counterattacks with beachhead security. The pressure on Lucas was immense. Lucas weighed the risk to mission, and the risk to his forces, by conducting limited action to not over-expose the flanks of his defensive line.

Another important aspect of Lucas' firing was the British and American leadership's view of him as a tactical commander. The recommendation to make Lucas the VI Corps' commander came from Eisenhower prior to his departure as the commander of the Mediterranean theater. In a note to Marshall about general officer performance and potential, Eisenhower recommended Lucas, but included a caveat that he had little combat responsibility.⁹⁷ Lucas' experience was gained from his month long observation of the Sicilian campaign acquainting himself with the battlefield conditions and requirements.⁹⁸ Prior to the invasion, Clark had made some effort to protect Lucas from British scrutiny. Before executing the operations in Anzio, Clark wrote a letter to Lucas urging him not to "stick his neck out" as Clark had done in Salerno.⁹⁹ As his superior, Clark's influence added to Lucas' cautious approach. Clark regularly visited Lucas and by February, he lost faith in his ability to command. This was primarily due to

⁹⁵ Ibid., 6.

⁹⁶ Alexander, *Report*, 28.

⁹⁷ Eisenhower, *Papers*, 2: 1354.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Mikolashek, *General Mark Clark*, 84.

mental and physical exhaustion and lack of aggressiveness.¹⁰⁰ Ultimately, Clark could not afford a potential disaster in Anzio by leaving Lucas in command.¹⁰¹

Truscott Takes Command

After Lucas was relieved, Lucian Truscott became the third VI Corps commander in just six months. Truscott was born in Texas in 1895 and was five years younger than Lucas. Truscott enlisted in the Army when war broke out in 1917 and was selected as a cavalry officer.¹⁰² Truscott attended the Army Command and General Staff College and, at the beginning of World War II, was selected by Marshall to serve on Admiral Louis Mountbatten's Combined Headquarters in London.¹⁰³ Truscott was part of the western task force for the invasion of north Africa and was the 3rd Infantry Division commander during the Sicilian and Salerno operations. Unlike Dawley and Lucas, Truscott was unique in that he rose from the rank of colonel to general all through battle commands.¹⁰⁴ There was little doubt that he exemplified the battle leadership, as the test for professional officers, that Eisenhower mentioned to Marshall when Dawley was relieved.¹⁰⁵

Truscott understood the severity of the situation for VI Corps during the stalemate. He understood the corps' issues and got to work beginning with an organizational and tactical assessment of the situation. Organizationally, Truscott saw that Lucas relied too heavily on his

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 108.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Roger J. Spiller, Joseph Dawson, and Harry Williams, *The Dictionary of American Military Biography*, vol. 2, H-P, 1110.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 1111.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 1110.

¹⁰⁵ Dwight Eisenhower. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower*, vol. 3, *The War Years*, ed. Alfred Chandler (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 1436.

staff, the tactical assessment of superiors, and lacked confidence with subordinates and the British forces.¹⁰⁶ Overtime, Lucas' ability to understand and accept risk affected his judgement. There were also issues with the corps staff that needed improvement. Truscott observed that Lucas made command decisions based on lengthy debate and conferences and not staff analysis.¹⁰⁷ This democratic approach greatly influenced Lucas' judgement since he was prone to accepting the staff's assessment of situations. The staff produced operations orders based on poor map reconnaissance and lacked a clear intelligence picture.¹⁰⁸ Ultimately, the staff was unable to assist the commander in controlling operations and synchronizing command and control systems.

Truscott also assessed the tactical situation. He sensed that there was little trust between the corps headquarters and the British command. The corps' staff had not worked with British units previously; therefore, they were unfamiliar with the organization, staff procedures, tactics, and cultural nuances. Truscott observed the corps staff's frustration and impatience during operations.¹⁰⁹ Truscott realized that the commander spent a considerable amount of time balancing the defensive front as well as port operations. He leveraged the 5th Army staff to provide a rear area commander to control port operations and to serve as the commander of support units to allow the corps to focus on combat operations.¹¹⁰ His greatest concern was for anti-aircraft battery utilization and counterbattery fires to remove the German long-range fire threat. Addressing the German artillery involved the development of a corps' counterbattery system to target enemy gun positions on a rotational basis using time-on-target fuses in

¹⁰⁶ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 320.

¹⁰⁷ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 328.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 329.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

conjunction with American aircraft.¹¹¹ The easing of German artillery on the beachhead would allow rear units to process supplies and personnel more rapidly. Most importantly Truscott realized that despite these issues, the corps had repulsed every German counterattack and had the resources needed to conduct operations.

Truscott made a concerted effort to visualize the battlefield, create a shared understanding, control operations, and reduce friction. This included adding a British general staff officer as liaison to the corps to bolster the American-British command relationship.¹¹² Truscott left the corps headquarters in their bunker for their protection, but created a war room on the surface as a location to conduct battle updates.¹¹³ From the war room, Truscott called on the subordinate division chiefs of staff for regular update briefings. Truscott wanted the chiefs of staff to understand the situation on the beachhead, provide battle updates as an opportunity to inform the corps staff, and assist the flow of information to and from the commanders. Truscott also verified they understood the tactical situation of their units.¹¹⁴ He constantly visited the divisions and, upon returning to his command post, relayed pertinent information to the 5th Army staff and Clark.

While February and March saw little change to the front, significant operational and organizational changes took place. Operation Panther was a planning effort for a two phased attack that involved elements of VI Corps supporting II Corps' breakthrough in the south. Although cancelled, the operation highlighted some important aspects of recent organizational changes. The planning process solidified the relationship between the corps, 5th Army, and

¹¹¹ US Fifth Army History, *Part IV: Cassino and Anzio*, 168.

¹¹² Truscott, *Command Missions*, 332

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 334.

British staffs, and bolstered the offensive spirit and defeatist attitude that lingered from months in the defense.¹¹⁵ Lastly, it displayed that Truscott, as the commander, was the integrator of controlling operations and synchronizing command and control systems.

The battle in Anzio during April and May of 1944 settled into a stalemate for the allies and the Germans. On the German side, it was an issue of competing requirements in Europe and finding a way to disengage from the defense of Rome.¹¹⁶ For Clark, it was a search for the right approach to Rome. The VI Corps forces grew to include two British divisions and four American divisions.¹¹⁷ Truscott set his staff to work generating options to break the stalemate. He assessed that the German disposition was defensive in nature and the advantage the Allied forces had come from combat power arriving into the Anzio port. Any planned offensive action aimed to improve the corps' position by expanding the beachhead, or as a major offensive in conjunction with other forces in Italy.¹¹⁸ The corps staff developed options in the form of Operations Grasshopper, Buffalo, Turtle, and Crawdad.¹¹⁹ On 23 May, Clark gave the go-ahead for Operation Buffalo. Buffalo involved a forty-five minute artillery barrage, three groups of fighters and light bombers, and infantry units advancing towards the town of Cisterna.¹²⁰ This action was part of the breakthrough from 23 May to 4 June when elements of VI Corps drove German units north and east to link up with II Corps. The breakthrough was costly on both men and equipment with

¹¹⁵ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 348.

¹¹⁶ Martin Blumenson, *Anzio: The Gamble That Failed* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2001), 170.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 171.

¹¹⁸ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 365.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 366.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 371.

casualties around 4,000 and the 1st Armored Division lost sixty-eight tanks and tank destroyers in the first few days.¹²¹

Operation Dragoon

On June 6, 1944, two significant events happened in the European theater. The first was Operation Overlord, the invasion of northern France, as a fulfillment of the Allied commitment to a second front in Europe. The second was the taking of Rome by the 5th Army. This victory, and the respite associated with it, were short-lived for Truscott and VI Corps. On June 15, 1944, they received the operations order for Operation Dragoon and the invasion of Southern France.¹²²

Once the order was issued, the planning for Operation Dragoon began. The operation tasked VI Corps with a three-division assault on the beaches of Toulon in southern France. Upon securing the beaches, a French Corps would land, move inland, and followed-up by four subsequent French Divisions. Sixth Corps was tasked to hold the beachhead to protect the right flank of the French elements capturing Toulon, and then drive west to capture the town of Marseilles.¹²³ The primary objective was Marseilles, northwest of Toulon along the coast, to allow the French to build up combat power for the push into southern France.

Truscott immediately applied lessons learned from Operation Shingle to the future amphibious assault. His primary concerns were unity of command, unity of effort, and shared understanding. In the Anzio operation, Lucas' forces consisted of British and American army divisions, American and British naval forces, and an American naval amphibious assault command. Truscott insisted that VI Corps' staff work with navy, army, and air planners at a joint

¹²¹ US Army, *American Forces in Action Series: Anzio Beachhead 22 January-25 May 1944* (Washington, DC: Center for Military History, 1947), 119.

¹²² Truscott, *Command Missions*, 382.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 384.

headquarters in Naples to collaborate on plan development and build a training plan.¹²⁴ Similar to Operation Shingle, issues with Allied forces added to complexity to the planning process. One example involved Charles de Gaulle who insisted that the French forces serve under their own commander for the liberation of France. The resolution involved allowing a French deputy and other staff to be located with the 5th Army in Italy.¹²⁵

Another of Truscott's concerns stemmed from Operation Shingle and the tactical task assigned to the corps. Was it to clear the area or to secure a beachhead? If it was to secure a beachhead, for what purpose? And how long? Truscott admits that Lucas told him the task was to hold the beachhead before initiating an advance to the Colli Laziali.¹²⁶ Leaders at the strategic level might argue that the ultimate objective was Rome. When reflecting on the Anzio operation, Truscott contends that there was "a tendency to blame the initial failure on poor intelligence, or poor leadership, or failure to understand the enemy, and on poor planning."¹²⁷ This is an important consideration since there is a tremendous amount of risk associated with amphibious operations in contested theaters. An intelligence planner could not accurately predict the German response to contest the beachhead over time, but the commander on the ground is able to assess the situation and make risk informed decisions. Truscott realized that the German command had a contingency plan for such an invasion. It involved responding with a reaction force within hours to gain time for a larger intervention force, which would move from other parts of Italy, France, and Germany.¹²⁸ Truscott deduced that the southern France elements would face a similar German plan. Therefore, VI Corps would have to advance inland as rapidly as possible and be

¹²⁴ Ibid., 385.

¹²⁵ Truscott, *Command Missions* 386.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 306.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 305.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 307.

prepared to defend against multiple elements. Additionally, the subordinate divisions needed a clear task and purpose to help set the conditions for follow on operations.

Nonetheless, Truscott's staff continued planning only to run into friction with the amphibious and ground force command and staff relationship. In writing to his superiors, Truscott insisted that the amphibious and assault element commanders be located aboard the same vessel in order not to relegate the assault commander to a spectator role.¹²⁹ Truscott also insisted that the VI Corps planners did not dominate the planning process. Rather, he ensured the army and navy developed a joint approach to the amphibious assault. Truscott highlighted not only lessons learned from Anzio, but from the operation in Salerno as well. In Salerno, the VI Corps commander landed on the beachhead without communication or transportation to command the assault forces.¹³⁰ Essentially, the commander lacked situational awareness of the units for whom he was responsible. Looking back, Truscott stated he had "no doubt that much of the difficulty with the Salerno landing was due to the confused command organization during the assault phases."¹³¹

There were other aspects that Truscott examined to facilitate the amphibious operation planning process. He was concerned with the complexity of conducting operations with a motley mix of airborne battalions, special forces units, French elements, naval long-range fires, army air wings, and naval landing forces. Like Operation Shingle, Truscott recognized the need to conduct a rehearsal and to develop a pre-invasion training plan. One part of the plan involved conducting unit training focusing on physical preparation, marching, individual combat, weapon familiarization, and combat preparation. Sixth corps created an Invasion Training Center in Italy.

¹²⁹ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 389.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 390.

¹³¹ Ibid., 390.

This center facilitated training for the 45th and 36th Infantry Divisions from 27 June to 22 July 1944. Training involved instruction from Navy special staff cadre and engineers to familiarize troops with types of shipping, landing craft, vehicle loading and unloading procedures for beach assaults. Soldiers drilled in landing craft mockups with the training culminating in a graduation exercise that served as a division full scale rehearsal.¹³²

Truscott grew concern about the command and staff relationship with the French units. He feared that once the French elements landed during the assault, there would be command and control issues stemming from strategic French leadership interference. To mitigate this potential risk to mission, Truscott flew to North Africa to collaborate with Brigadier General Aimé Sudre, the Commander of the French 1st Armored Division to discuss employment of his armored element.¹³³ Truscott needed to clarify the actions of the French follow on armored force and discuss the addition of a French staff officer to be attached to his corps staff. Despite his effort, Truscott still had anxiety about the influence French leadership had on the mission critical French armored element. Truscott was concerned when de Gaulle stated that the armored elements were on loan to the American command and should be available to the French commander around D+3.¹³⁴

Truscott was concerned about potential risk to the mission with losing French combat power. To mitigate this risk, he established a provisional armored group made up of American forces. The provisional group fell under the command of Brigadier General Fred Butler, VI Corps deputy commander, and dubbed Task Force Butler. Task Force Butler was comprised of a cavalry squadron, a field artillery battalion, a tank battalion (minus), a tank destroyer company, an

¹³² Truscott, *Command Missions*, 400-401.

¹³³ Ibid., 401.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 404.

infantry battalion, an engineer battalion, and elements of the corps staff.¹³⁵ The task force was created based on the realization that a successful amphibious assault might result in a disorganized enemy force and that units required rapid mobility to exploit the initiative.

The transition from Operation Shingle and Operation Dragoon shows how a corps' commander applied the appropriate amount of command and control to reduce friction during the planning process. Truscott's efforts leading up to Operation Dragoon were based on experience, training, and intuition. Truscott's assumptions about the French were correct. Just four days into battle, General Sudre's armored element was placed under the French II Corps and removed from VI Corps control.¹³⁶ The loss was not a surprise to Truscott and the corps staff since they had anticipated this friction by creating Task Force Butler.

Leadership Analysis

Both operation Shingle and Dragoon had similar characteristics in that they involved planning and execution with multinational partners, had a significant amount of strategic influence that effected the conduct of operations, and required commanders to lead their staffs and subordinate units through detailed planning and execution of amphibious assaults. Moreover, the ultimate challenge for the corps commanders was leading their element, controlling operations, and synchronizing command and control systems.

Lucas Command and Control Analysis

As a commander, Lucas exercised certain aspects of command and control but struggled to orchestrate them with command and control systems. This resulted in Lucas failing to develop

¹³⁵ Ibid., 407.

¹³⁶ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 422.

a system that synchronized operations and converged the elements of combat power during the friction associated with large-scale combat.

Throughout the initial days of Operation Shingle, Lucas' ability to command was evident with his situational understanding and decision making. Lucas was able to visualize the battlefield based off personal observations and feedback from subordinate units. For example, just three days into the assault, Truscott, as the 3rd Infantry Division commander, met with Lucas to try and convince him to go on the offensive to expand the beachhead. Concurrently, Alexander expressed his concern to Clark about the slowness of the attack.¹³⁷ Despite this, Lucas understood that the German Herman Göring Division, an armored unit, was the primary force opposing beachhead expansion. Lucas denied the request for an offensive based on the desire to first build up combat power with the arrival of the 1st Armored Division.¹³⁸ Two days later, Lucas again conferred with his commanders to discuss an attack plan that incorporated the newly arrived armored division. Despite the pressure to act from his higher command and subordinates, Lucas' decision was a combination of analytic and intuitive judgement. Analytically, he wanted to compare options and seek an optimal solution and create a shared understanding. Intuitively, he knew from experience that while it might have seemed like an ideal time to attack, he had a different assessment of the situation. Based off judgement, he decided that the acceptable course of action was to wait until more combat power was available.

In the initial phases of the assault, Lucas began to understand the conditions, constraints, and friction his corps faced. Lucas continually assessed the tactical situation and exercised control through direction, feedback, and communication. Two weeks into the assault, Lucas realized he needed to adjust his objectives based on the conditions. Capability wise, Lucas balanced force build up and the preservation of his perimeter. He weighed the risk of advancing to the Colli

¹³⁷ Mikolashek, *General Mark Clark*, 98.

¹³⁸ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 312

Laziali and expanding the beachhead since doing so might result in exposed flanks and potential penetration. By mid-February, VI Corps went on the offensive to expand the perimeter and seize the key towns northeast of the beachhead line. Lucas informed 5th Army that the directed offensive would have to wait until an anticipated German counterattack had been repulsed.¹³⁹ While 5th Army assessed that the conditions were right to act, Lucas understood that the tactical situation would not produce the desired results. Lucas was able to evaluate his capabilities against his constraints and relay the tactical risk to Clark.

As the battle continued, Lucas wavered in judgement due to his inability to incorporate direction and feedback into his command and control enterprise. One example was with Clark, Lucas, and Truscott discussing the corps' next move. Lucas had previously been risk averse with offensive action, especially if it involved committing the corps reserve. Clark, who lacked the situational understanding that Lucas had, recommended a counterattack involving all available units. Lucas reluctantly agreed and accepted Clark's assessment of the situation and the proposal for an offensive.¹⁴⁰ At the time, Lucas was not able to state his intent or relay alternative courses of action to his superior. Lucas and his staff lacked the tactical understanding of the battlefield and were unable to relay the risk associated with such an operation. This was partially due to the lack of coordination between the corps headquarters and subordinate units resulting from the constant shelling in the corps' rear area.

Where Lucas struggled as a commander was his inability to link command and control through systems over the duration of the battle. During planning and the initial stages of the operation, Lucas established systems within the command that allowed him to assess operations and make timely decisions. One such example, during planning, was his insistence of a rehearsal prior to the assault. Lucas based his assessment on his experience with the complexity of

¹³⁹ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 318.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 323.

amphibious operations. He expressed his concern to his higher command regarding potential friction with command and control between the amphibious (navy) and assault commander (army). To mitigate this, he established a command post on the *U.S.S. Biscayne* with the amphibious commander prior to setting sail. Once ashore, he quickly established the corps command post and began monitoring operations. During the first few days of the operation, Lucas was constantly conferring with his subordinate commanders in a command dialogue to gain information and feedback. Meeting with subordinate commanders allowed Lucas to better understand their assessment of the tactical situation, process information to inform the staff, and facilitate decision making.

The pressure from the tactical situation and the friction of battle caused the corps' command and control systems to eventually break down. Evidence for this is in the VI Corps command and staff relationship. The staff struggled to assist the commander in understanding, visualizing, and describing the battlefield as they operated from a bunker in the rear area. Their analysis was based on the subordinate commanders who sporadically went to the corps command post to update the commander. The command post also lacked an accurate intelligence picture and Lucas was not made aware of Ultra codebreaking intelligence reports, leading to a false impression of German strength in the operating area.¹⁴¹ At a minimum, situational awareness could have been gained if the commander conducted battlefield circulation. However, Lucas rarely left the command post to visit the front-line elements and confer with the divisions.

Another failure with command and control systems for Lucas involved the *people* aspect. More specifically, with appreciating and understanding the British 1st Division under his command with. As the battle progressed, Lucas was unable to develop a clear picture of the complexities associated with having a British division as one of his combat elements. While Lucas understood

¹⁴¹ D'Este, *Fatal Decision*, 145.

the 1st Division was vulnerable to counterattacks, he was constantly questioning the assessment of their commander, General Penney. It wasn't until Lucas finally visited the unit that he developed an appreciation of their situation. Soon after, Alexander visited Penney who expressed his frustration and lack of concern by his American leadership.¹⁴² The VI Corps staff, and their commander, neglected to better understand British organization, methods, and characteristics to minimize friction as well as tie them into the corps' command and control systems.

As the battle at Anzio intensified, and the pressure on Lucas increased, it became clear that the climate of war influenced his leadership ability. The danger of combat manifested itself in the enemy's ability to relentlessly target the corps' rear area. This danger, compounded with continuous battle conditions, put Lucas' strength of will to the test. There are accounts that show that as a commander, Lucas became emotionally unbalanced stemming from the burden of command. Martin Blumenson relays from Lucas' diary that he struggled with the idea of giving orders that would send men to their death. Lucas also believed he was too compassionate and that he prayed for a minimal loss of life.¹⁴³ While commanders should always keep the wellness of Soldiers in mind, the issue is when this focus dominates a commander's decision-making abilities. A commander's responsibility is to make tough choices and accurately measure the risk to force and mission. Additionally, commanders must have knowledge of the tactical situation allowing them to realize that inaction could be just as costly as action. With the disconnect between command and control tasks, Lucas could not manage the systems that facilitate shared understanding. Over time, he was unable to keep his organization informed, build trust, and relay

¹⁴² D'Este, *Fatal Decision*, 184.

¹⁴³ Blumenson, *Anzio: The Gamble That Failed*, 60.

decisions to subordinates and superiors.¹⁴⁴ Not being able to work through battlefield friction, and remove variables leading to uncertainty, only compounded Lucas' leadership predicament.

Truscott Command and Control Analysis

During his time as the commander of VI Corps, Truscott was able to effectively synchronize the tasks of the command and control warfighting function. Some of the changes Truscott made following his assumption of command, serve as evidence of his ability to understand friction and apply the appropriate amount of leadership, judgement, and decision making. An example of this is Truscott's ability to understand the battlefield conditions and maintain situational understanding. Truscott did so by leaving the command post and conducting battlefield circulation. This approach came from lessons he learned as a cavalry officer and observing that Lucas never left his command post. Truscott stated that there was "no substitute for personal reconnaissance in battle command" and that "reports were subject to errors of observation, interpretation, and exaggeration."¹⁴⁵ There are numerous occasions when Truscott left his command post, conferred with a division commander, and returned to send a report to 5th Army. The level of understanding of the battlefield that Truscott achieved from personal observation allowed him to develop his staff into a planning cell that was more capable of creating options. An example for this is when his staff developed four counterattack plans - Buffalo, Grasshopper, Turtle, and Crawdad - to present to the 5th Army commander for approval. This was a change from the democratic decision-making style previously used by Lucas. During the train-up and planning for Operation Dragoon, Truscott's judgement and experience were also

¹⁴⁴ US Department of the Army. Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-22, *Army Leadership and the Profession* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), 5-15.

¹⁴⁵ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 536.

apparent with the creation of the amphibious training center, mandating division level rehearsals, and imparting command and control lessons learned from Operation Shingle.

Truscott combined the critical aspects of command to his approach to controlling operations. One such example is with the recognition of the friction associated with German aircraft and artillery targeting the corps' rear area. Truscott learned that the Germans were unaffected by the corps' anti-aircraft guns. The German long artillery units avoided counterbattery by withdrawing prior to counterfire. Truscott analyzed the situation and learned that the Germans had been jamming anti-aircraft guns leaving the corps fire direction center too slow to respond. Truscott empowered his corps artillery officer to solve the problem. The result was a reorganization of the anti-aircraft capabilities and counterfire batteries. Truscott's staff conducted a thorough analysis of potential German points of artillery, had batteries oriented on these points, and then had *ready* guns to bring fire to bear.¹⁴⁶

There were other occasions when Truscott confronted impediments to success which caused the adjustment of plans. One example was in Anzio at the end of February when the corps learned of an impending German attack. Truscott and his staff began working through an analysis of the problem. First, the staff requested air assets to conduct aerial reconnaissance to confirm the attack. Then, the corps artillery officer developed a fires plan focusing on German maneuver assets. The next morning, Truscott met with the divisions engaged in the fight, issued necessary guidance, and returned to the command post to report the situation to 5th Army. Over the course of the battle, Truscott moved between command posts, communicated and requested assets from higher command, and gave guidance to his staff.

Where Truscott excelled was in his ability to recognize the importance of the corps' command post as the primary integrator of command and control systems. After taking command,

¹⁴⁶ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 338.

Truscott realized that the corps command post could not effectively perform its functions from an underground bunker. He also knew that being underground did not instill confidence with subordinate units. Truscott created an above ground war room to serve as a location where he would meet with division representatives. He also recognized the staff lacked situational awareness across the battlefield and that subordinate units lacked awareness of adjacent units. To improve this, Truscott implemented daily update briefs from the division chiefs of staff to inform each other of their actions, inform the corps staff, and improve the corps information network. This also allowed the division commander time to 'fight the fight' and gave Truscott the chance to assess if the chiefs of staff had an understanding of the issues in their units. Truscott also used this opportunity to personally issue orders to the divisions. During battle, Truscott produced few field orders and gave the commanders broad general missions. Truscott desired to direct the corps operations based on "oral orders to the commanders."¹⁴⁷

Another important aspect of command and control systems is with Truscott's ability to share information with his multinational partners. Truscott applied his experience with what he had previously learned on Lord Mountbatten's staff. He knew that there were things that the British, and even the French, did better than the Americans. He understood each of the country's services had a certain amount of pride and, at times, animosity towards each other. This problem was not mutually exclusive to Americans and each army lacked an appreciation for how the other operated.¹⁴⁸ Despite this, Truscott recognized that in a multinational command, each country should be employed in accordance with their own direction, manner, and procedures. Truscott also assessed that the issue was with the lack of communications between organizations. The solution involved bringing the British and French into planning sessions and creating liaison officers between staffs.

¹⁴⁷ Truscott, *Command Missions*, 420.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 537.

Conclusion

ADP 6-0 does an adequate job relaying the command challenges for large-scale combat such as friction, uncertainty, and chance. The challenge for leadership doctrine is in relaying the complexity of combat operations and the variables that impact a leader's command approach. Doctrine cannot impart the multitude of variables that will influence a commander's decision making in combat. Some of the variables that influence decision making from the case studies include enemy actions, terrain, friction, higher headquarters, and personal risk of danger.

ADP 6-0 attempts to determine the different approaches commanders take while leading their element in combat. Command is a personal matter that allows leaders to exercise authority through timely decision making. This is what makes the art of command so important. The art aspect breaks down into judgement that is rooted in intuition, common sense, and experience.¹⁴⁹ Truscott's actions show that experience was the variable that, more than any other, had a bearing on his approach to command and control. These include his early military career experiences, his recent battle commands in Sicily and Salerno, working with the British general staff, observing Eisenhower during operations in Africa, and partaking in operations in Salerno and Anzio.

The two case studies show how commanders, who appear to have similar careers, can take different command and control approaches. The case studies also show that Clausewitz's element of friction that makes up the battlefield is present in large scale conflict. Additionally, the way to overcome friction is to keep one's head during times of exceptional stress and violence.¹⁵⁰ Truscott serves as an example of this. Despite the operating environment, he synchronized command and control tasks and allowed his corps to persevere through the friction of combat. While both chance and friction were present on the battlefield, Truscott's command and control

¹⁴⁹ Beyerchen, "Clausewitz", 79.

¹⁵⁰ Clausewitz, *On War*, 105.

approach balanced the art and science of command and allowed him to manage the uncertainty and dynamics of large-scale conflict.

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