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Generalship in War: The Principles  
of Operational Command

by

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Infantry

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In order to identify those attributes, this monograph begins with a review of theoretical comments on generalship from early philosophers through the 20th century. Next, modern views on the traits of senior warfighting generals are presented by examining the comments of German, Russian, British, and American writers since the beginning of World War II. These sections yield a taxonomy of the attributes of the operational commander.

The paper then verifies these qualities by reviewing the performance of three senior American commanders of the Second World War. Lieutenant General James Doolittle, Admiral William Halsey, and General George Patton are the subjects of this analysis which is intended to show that operational command is not limited to ground operations.

The monograph concludes that the traits of the operational commander are not those of the tactical leader. Furthermore, the qualities that characterize the warfighting general are not the same as those of the successful peacetime commander. Finally, the realities of the situation and the general's personality may mean that the best operational commander will not exhibit the more acceptable traits of the ideal senior manager.

These conclusions have a number of significant doctrinal implications. With the definition of the attributes of the operational commander the next and much more difficult step is to select officers to be the combat generals of the future. The evidence suggests that this is best done by focusing on traits of character as opposed to knowledge or experience. Once these men have been selected they can be developed in a program of focused training and experience.

The importance of developing a rigorous process for selecting and developing operational commanders is clear. In the next war we will have no time to sort through the Hookers and McClellans to get to a Grant. And we may not be able to recover from a disaster brought on by an officer like Fredendall whose peacetime brilliance belied his operational incompetence.

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**ABSTRACT**

GENERALSHIP IN WAR: THE PRINCIPLES OF OPERATIONAL COMMAND  
by MAJ Gregory C. Gardner, USA, 53 pages.

The recent interest in the operational level of war in American military circles has awakened a long dormant appreciation of the art of planning and conducting campaigns. Unfortunately, there has not been a thorough study of leadership at this level of command.

The Army's Senior Leadership manual falls short of adequately discussing operational command. It does not address, for example, the differences between peacetime and combat command or the changing leadership requirements at higher levels of command. These are critically important topics as we prepare to fight the next war. We must be able to identify the right man to execute the first campaign of that war. Historically we have been able to do little more than guess at whom what might be. This paper is intended to be a first step toward rectifying that shortfall. It defines the attributes of the operational commander.

In order to identify those attributes, this monograph begins with a review of theoretical comments on generalship from early philosophers through the 20th century. Next, modern views on the traits of senior warfighting generals are presented by examining the comments of German, Russian, British and American writers since the beginning of the World War II. These sections yield a taxonomy of the attributes of the operational commander.

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Table of contents	Page
I. Introduction . . . . .	1
II. The Theoretical View of Operational Command . .	4
III. Modern Perspectives On Operational Command . .	12
IV. Taxonomy For Operational Command in War . . .	20
V. Historical Review of Operational Commanders . .	26
VI. Conclusions . . . . .	35
VII. Doctrinal Implications . . . . .	38
Endnotes . . . . .	42
Bibliography . . . . .	49

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Over the past five years there has been a renewed interest in the art of war in American military circles, especially with regard to the operational level of warfare. A large number of critical articles and essays have accompanied the most recent revisions of the Army's basic warfighting publication, FM 100-5, Operations and have fostered a balanced discussion of a variety of topics.

Unfortunately, this interest in the operational art has not been accompanied by a thorough, systematic examination of leadership at corresponding levels of command. While writings on leadership abound and interest in the subject remains strong, very little work has been done on what is arguably the most important part of the operational art, the practice of generalship in war. (1) Most of the studies of senior leadership in combat are anecdotal and do very little to explain why or how, in similar circumstances, vastly different personalities and contrasting styles such as those of Bradley and Patton can both result in remarkable successes. (2)

This lack of a clear grasp of operational leadership is also reflected in Army doctrine. While the philosophy of leadership presented in the Army's Leadership and Senior Leadership manuals is generally sound, it is unacceptably vague when discussing the command of large formations in war. This doctrine is less than adequate for three reasons. First, it fails to delineate the way in which leadership requirements change at higher organizational levels. Secondly, it does not distinguish between leadership in

peace and command in war. And finally, it tends to attribute success to what we want leaders to be as opposed to addressing the realities of personality and situation. (3)

It is apparent, then, that a detailed study of the prerequisites for the successful command of large formations in combat is in order. This monograph, while limited in scope and depth and based solely on historical analysis, is intended to be a first step in that direction. It will focus specifically on the generalship required to translate strategic wartime aims into effective military operations and campaigns. (4) The words operational command, senior command and generalship are synonymous within the context of this definition. This paper's premise is that there are certain traits of generalship which are consistently exhibited by successful operational commanders. Accordingly, only command in war and, more specifically, only the personal actions of the commander will be addressed. The command and control system through which orders are executed will not be considered.

The methodology for defending this thesis begins with a review of the theoretical literature on high command in war. It continues with analyses by noted commanders and historians such as Field Marshal Slim and S.L.A. Marshall.

The findings yielded by the literature review will be compiled into a taxonomy in order to identify patterns of operational generalship. This is followed by a historical review of several American operational commanders of the Second World War. Although

obviously a limited view, this latter section examines the performance of a relevant group of generals in light of the model which was developed earlier and verifies the traits of the successful commander.

It is important here to note that while the cynic may contend that "virtually anything that can be said about leadership can be denied or disproven", (5) it is absolutely critical that we understand now exactly what it takes to be a successful operational commander in war. In our next conflict we simply will not have the time to sort through the McClellans and Hookers to get to a Grant. Thus, the implications of this and subsequent studies are very important. These works must form the theoretical base from which to develop a doctrine of generalship in war. We must be able to identify and develop in time of peace those senior officers who will be our next "warrior generals".

## II. THE THEORETICAL VIEW OF OPERATIONAL COMMAND

Our analysis of operational command begins with a brief review of the writings of a number of theorists. The purpose of this chapter is to show that opinions of what it takes to be a successful commander of large formations in combat have remained relatively constant over time. The writings of theorists are particularly valuable in this regard because they are not bound by age or society. By the completion of this section we will have laid the groundwork upon which further observations can be built.

Since there are a number of ways of expressing one's views on what it takes to be a successful general, we must develop a structure for our historical analysis that we can retain throughout the paper. The late Lieutenant Colonel Boyd Harris produced a taxonomy of attributes that addressed what junior leaders should be, know and do to be successful. This relationship is fully developed in FM 22-100, Military Leadership. (6) In order to make this taxonomy a more useful tool for analyzing generalship, Major Mitchell Zais modified it into three broad areas of personal attributes, a) character and temperament, b) knowledge and experience, and c) skills and ability. (7) Zais notes that cognitive ability or mental skills such as intelligence and creativity are interwoven into these other categories of leader attributes. (8) This paper will use the Zais model without modification. Now that we have a structure for our analysis we can begin to examine the theoretical view of generalship.

This section will review selected comments from a wide spectrum of theorists. The analysis will begin with the ancient writers of

both western and eastern cultures. In addition to Greek and Chinese philosophers we will discuss Machiavelli's views of the senior commander. Next, we will move into the 19th Century and examine the writings of Napoleon, Clausewitz, and Jomini that concern the command of large units. Finally, we will review the works of the 20th Century theorists, B. H. Liddell-Hart, J.F.C. Fuller and the Russian B.M. Teplov to determine their views on the subject. All of our findings will be summarized at the end of the chapter.

The writings of the Greek and Roman philosophers contain a surprisingly large number of references to the qualities of the great general. Socrates succinctly stated his opinion of the keys of generalship when he wrote in Memorabilia:

The general must know how to get his men their rations and every other kind of stores needed in war. He must have imagination to originate plans, practical sense and energy to carry them through ...he should also...know his tactics. (9)

In the Aeneid Virgil comments on the complex character of the general when he notes, "Who asks whether bravery or cunning really beat the enemy?" (10) Tacitus also addresses the general's character. He states that the proper arts of the general are judgment and prudence. (11) Interestingly, both Polybius and Vegetius recommend that the the commander know the character of the generals that oppose him. (12)

Much of the wisdom in the oriental approach to military operations is captured by Samuel Griffith in his translation of Sun Tzu's The Art of War. Griffith also includes the writings of

several other noted Chinese philosophers. One of them, Tu Mu, describes the five virtues of the general. They are wisdom, sincerity, humanity, courage and strictness. (13) Sun Tzu takes the opposite view and notes what he believes are the five most serious faults of the general. He names them as recklessness, cowardice, quick temper, excessive compassion and concern about one's reputation. (14) The Chinese scholar completes his comments on generalship by noting that the commander who is stupid and courageous is a calamity. (15)

Machiavelli, a somewhat more recent theorist, made a number of observations concerning the use of military power to achieve political ends. His comments on the qualities of the commander are insightful. Machiavelli lists bravery, alertness, terrain sense and dignity among the traits of the skilled commander and notes that he must be wise in his own right without relying on the counsel of others. The ambition of the general, he adds, should never be discounted. (16) In The Discourses, the Florentine theorist repeatedly stresses that the commander must know and judge human nature. (17) Machiavelli concludes that the stern and ruthless commander is preferable to one who is more pleasant as the former will more often persevere to the end of a campaign. (18)

Let us turn now to the popular Napoleonic theorists upon whose writings much of the current philosophy of war fighting has been based.

We start with the master, Napoleon. In his Maxims of War, written in 1831, Napoleon attempts to capture what to him are the

most important aspects of generalship. He writes:

It is exceptional and difficult to find in one man all the qualities necessary for a great general. What is most desirable, and which instantly sets a man apart, is that his intelligence or talent, are balanced by his character or courage. (19)

He later states that:

The first quality in a general is a cool head - that is, a head which receives accurate impressions and estimates things and objects at their real value. (20)

Napoleon had written earlier that, "The best generals are those who have served in the artillery." (21) We must assume that this is due to the gunner's greater familiarity with the technical and logistical details of warfare in that age.

Clausewitz' classic On War draws heavily on the personal example of Napoleon in its description of the characteristics of the general. This work contains the most complete theoretical treatment of generalship and senior command in war ever written. Accordingly, the passages that follow will only be brief summaries of Clausewitz' comments on the attributes of the general.

Boldness, writes Clausewitz, is the first prerequisite of the great military leader. But the higher up the chain of command, the greater is the need for boldness to be supported by the reflective mind. (22)

The two key qualities of the commander Clausewitz describes as coup d'oeil or vision and determination. The first allows a rapid and accurate decision, the second dispels doubt and fear; it is an expression of courage. (23)

The commander's will is also critically important for it is upon his will that the inertia of the whole army gradually comes to rest. In Clausewitz' opinion, the general must have tremendous strength of conviction to follow the path suggested by his intuition. The commander's determination proceeds from a strong mind rather than a brilliant one. Additionally, the general requires another quality, a presence of mind that will allow him to keep his head in times of stress and violent emotion. (24) Finally, Clausewitz points out that the fire behind the will of the great commander is fueled by a thirst for fame and honor. "History has not known a general who wasn't ambitious," he writes. (25)

Clausewitz also stresses the importance of intellect and creativity. He notes that the senior commander requires a power of judgment raised to a marvelous pitch of vision. (26) Yet he points out that at the highest levels of command almost all solutions require imaginative intellect. (27)

Leaving the area of character and temperament, we find that Clausewitz believes that the commander must know the character, feelings, and habits of those whom he is to command. His technical expertise does not have to be great, but the general must be able to accomplish those tasks associated with his role as commander. Finally, he must have the faculty of quickly and accurately grasping the topography of an area. (28)

Jomini's more scientific approach to the study of war led him to focus more on the function than the attributes of the commander. He does note in his Precis on the Art of War. "The character of the man is above all other requisites in the Commander-in-Chief." (29)

More specifically, he states that:

The most essential qualities of a general will always be: first, moral courage, capable of great resolution; second, physical courage which takes no account of danger. (30)

We can now move into the 20th Century and discuss two of the most prominent western theorists, B. H. Liddell-Hart and J.F.C. Fuller.

In his Thoughts on War, Liddell-Hart discusses the attributes of the general. He feels that, "Creative intelligence is and has always been the supreme requirement of the commander-coupled with moral courage." (31) He also states that:

These two qualities of mental initiative and a strong personality, or determination, go a long way towards the power of command in war - they are, indeed, the hall-mark of the Great Captains. (32)

Liddell-Hart notes that knowledge of tactics is not critical to the great leader as he is essentially an opportunist. (33) Rather the senior commander should, "...have a profound understanding of human nature." (34) He summarizes the skills required by the commander when he writes that, "A vital faculty of generalship is the power of grasping instantly the picture of the ground and the situation, of relating the one to the other." (35)

J.F.C. Fuller put rather more emphasis on the study of generalship; his book Generalship-Its Diseases and their Cure has long been considered a classic. In it Fuller develops his three pillars of generalship - courage, creative intelligence, and physical fitness. (36) By courage, Fuller means the blend of

physical and moral courage. To him, creative intelligence involves the originality of the commander's thought that lets him do something the enemy does not expect. Fitness, and frequently youth, are invaluable to the general as they allow his mind to remain fresh and clear. (37) Fuller sees a need for the commander to be a judge of character and human nature. In fact, for the general, psychological knowledge is far more important than a knowledge of operations. (38)

A final theorist is included to give the 20th Century Russian view of the qualities required of the operational commander. B.M. Teplov, described as a brilliant Soviet psychologist, has written a book entitled The Intellect of the Military Commander. In it he points out that a general must have two qualities, an outstanding mind and strong will power. (39) Teplov's analysis of the generalship of Napoleon and M.V. Frunze leads him to the conclusion that these qualities are balanced in the great commanders. (40)

In summary, this chapter has revealed what a number of theorists consider the key qualities and attributes of the operational commander.

Referring back to our structure for analysis, it is clear that a vast majority of the comments have concerned the commander's character and temperament. There seems to be universal agreement that the war fighting general must have exceptional mental abilities. While he need not be intellectually brilliant, the senior commander must be a man of common sense, vision, and creativity. The theorists agree that in the successful commander

mental ability is always balanced by strength of personality which exhibits courage, boldness, determination, and ambition. The picture thus emerges of the hard driving yet imaginative senior commander who has a very high degree of task or mission orientation.

There seems to be only slightly less agreement concerning the knowledge and experience required by the senior commander. There is a consensus that an understanding of human nature is far more important to the general than a knowledge of tactics. Additionally, the senior commander should have an appreciation for the intricacies of administration and logistics. There is some indication that the general should study the personality of his opponent.

In the area of skills and abilities there were two consistent observations. First, the commander must be able to read the ground quickly and accurately. Second, there is general agreement that the commander must be fit and in good health. If he is not his mental ability will slip and his courage and determination will drain away.

These findings are summarized and compared in Figure 1. This diagram is structured to show the similarities and differences between the various observations.

Now that our examination of the theorists is complete, we can see what experienced generals and their biographers have to say about the requirements of the operational commander.

FIGURE 1. THEORETICAL VIEWS OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE SUCCESSFUL GENERAL

ATTRIBUTES	EARLY				NAPOLEONIC				MODERN		
	GRECO-ROMAN	CHINESE	MACHIAVELLI	NAPOLEON	CLAUSEWITZ	JOMINI	LIDDELL-HART	FULLER	TEPLOV		
CHARACTER & TEMPERAMENT	<p>BRAVERY</p> <p>JUDGEMENT &amp; PRUDENCE</p> <p>PRACTICAL SENSE</p> <p>IMAGINATION</p> <p>CUNNING</p>	<p>COURAGE (WITH INTELLECT)</p> <p>WISDOM</p> <p>SINCERITY</p> <p>STRICTNESS</p>	<p>BRAVERY</p> <p>WISDOM</p> <p>'STERN'</p> <p>ALERTNESS</p> <p>AMBITION</p>	<p>COURAGE (WITH INTELLECT)</p> <p>'A COOL HEAD'</p>	<p>BOLDNESS (WITH A REFLECTIVE MIND)</p> <p>JUDGEMENT &amp; PRESENCE OF MIND</p> <p>IMAGINATION</p> <p>DETERMINATION &amp; WILL</p> <p>AMBITION</p> <p>VISION</p>	<p>COURAGE (BOTH MORAL &amp; PHYSICAL)</p>	<p>MORAL COURAGE</p> <p>CREATIVE INTELLECT</p>	<p>COURAGE</p> <p>CREATIVE INTELLECT</p>	<p>'A GREAT MIND'</p> <p>'A STRONG WILL'</p>		
KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE	<p>PROCURE RATIONS &amp; STORES</p> <p>TACTICS</p> <p>CHARACTER OF ENEMY GENERAL</p>	<p>HUMANITY</p>	<p>HUMAN NATURE</p>	<p>TECHNICAL &amp; LOGISTICAL DETAILS</p>	<p>KNOW THOSE HE COMMANDS</p>		<p>TACTICS ARE NOT IMPT.</p> <p>HUMAN NATURE</p>	<p>HUMAN NATURE</p>			
SKILLS & ABILITIES			<p>TERRAIN SENSE</p>		<p>GRASP OF TOPOGRAPHY</p> <p>'TASKS RECD. OF THE GENERAL'</p>		<p>GRASP OF GROUND &amp; SITUATION</p>	<p>FITNESS</p>			

### III. MODERN PERSPECTIVES ON OPERATIONAL COMMAND

As we noted in the introduction, there is no shortage of writings on the performance of generals in war. Thus while we have the luxury of a wide range of opinions, we are forced to select very carefully those which will be included here. The intention of this section is to provide a balanced, modern view of generalship. This perspective will focus on warfare as it exists in the mid-20th Century; it is offered to contrast and expand upon the writings of the theoreticians. The selected observations include comments by German, Russian, British and American authors. A naval perspective on operational command is also provided. Let us begin with the German view of generalship.

The standard of generalship in the German Army was perhaps never higher than in the Second World War. The Wehrmacht's lightning victories over Poland and France and its drive into Russia heralded the arrival of a style of warfare that placed new demands on the commanders of large formations. The most articulate description of the requirements of senior command in mobile operations is provided by Field Marshall Erwin Rommel.

Rommel makes a number of references to the qualities of the operational commander in his papers and notes. He recommends that the general have a blend of character and intelligence:

The...leader of the future...will need not only mental gifts of the highest order, but also great strength of character if he is to be a match for his task. (41)

He contends that bold decisions give the best promise of success.

## The commander

...must select that (course of action) which seems best and then pursue it resolutely and accept the consequences. Any compromise is bad. It is better to operate on a grand scale ...than anxiously taking security measures against all possible enemy options. (42)

A knowledge of human nature is tremendously important to the commander, notes Rommel. Additionally, the general must know his opponent and be capable of assessing his adversary's psychological reactions to various stimuli. (43)

Rommel, the talented commander of the "Ghost Division" and Panzer Armee Afrika, clearly appreciates the dynamics of modern maneuver warfare. He not only feels that the senior commander must have a comprehensive grasp of "technical matters", he must also be a creative thinker who can "adapt his ideas of warfare to the facts and possibilities of the moment." (44)

Finally, Rommel realizes the role of the commander in the increasingly complex arena of joint operations. He writes:

The greatest efforts must be made to counteract the separatist tendencies of the various services...Anything which may deflect from the unity of purpose must be utterly eradicated. (45)

Field Marshall Erich von Manstein, arguably the most proficient executor of the operational art in World War II, makes several references to the requirements of generalship in his book Lost Victories. He discusses the commander's need for vision, noting that far-reaching objectives and sequenced operations are the keys to a successful campaign. It takes great strength of will to look

that far into the future but, "anyone who is not prepared to accept such risks will never achieve decisive victory." (46) Manstein concludes that above all a general must appreciate human nature. Despite his focus on leadership at the highest levels, he is careful to point out that the decisive factor in all of his victories was the performance of the fighting soldier. (47)

The Russian view of generalship has a much different basis than that of the Germans. Not only were many of their lessons learned in the crucible of a near disastrous defeat, but they are founded on the Marxist-Leninist model of military science. This approach recognizes no distinct gap between past, present and future and subjects the development of war to close and logical scrutiny. Nevertheless, Russian comments on generalship sound strikingly familiar. General Rokossovsky describes the great military leader as a man of strong will and decisiveness, brilliant and gifted, demanding, firm and purposeful. (48)

Marshall Zhukov, the most famous Soviet general of the Second World War, is more specific in his comments on operational command. He notes that the successful commander strives for military glory, is not afraid to fight under unfavorable circumstances, and is capable of admitting and learning from his mistakes. (49) The modern commander must also be intelligent and devote much of his time to mastering military science and learning to sequence operations. (50) Interestingly, Zhukov echoes Rommel's comment on combined operations:

To achieve victory on any scale, it is important to secure cooperation between all arms of the service both in operational elements and in tactical forms on the terrain. (51)

Turning now to the British, we will first examine the observations of Sir Archibald Wavell. Wavell, then still relatively unknown, delivered a series of three lectures at Trinity College, Cambridge in the spring of 1939. In these discourses, entitled Generals and Generalship, he described in detail what he considered to be the qualifications of the higher commander. In the areas of character and temperament, Wavell asserted that the general must know what he wants and have the courage, determination and fighting spirit to get it. He must also have, "a spirit of adventure, a touch of the gambler in him." (52) Wavell uses the term "robustness" to describe the calm moral courage and the strength of will of the commander. He considers this to be the first essential of the general. (53) Concerning the knowledge required by the commander, Wavell notes that:

Topography, movement and supply...are the real foundations of military knowledge, not strategy and tactics as most people think. (54)

Additionally, a genuine interest in and a real knowledge of humanity is particularly important, according to Wavell. Health and fitness are only of relative value in his opinion as, "a great spirit can rule in a frail body." (55) The general concludes his initial lecture with a comment on the battlefield of the future. He contends that the commander in the next war must be able imaginatively to handle air forces with the same dexterity that he controls forces on land. Only the combination of those two elements will bring success. (56)

A British commander's impression of the requirements of operational generalship is offered by Field Marshall Sir William

Slim. The former leader of the 14th Army in Burma describes the five qualities of the commander as willpower, judgment, flexibility of mind, knowledge, and integrity. (57) To Slim, willpower or determination is based on moral courage and is the ability to drive through to one's goal. The judgment which allows the commander to set that goal comes from intellect and experience. Mental flexibility allows the commander to react to the constantly changing nature of war. This trait balances strength of will within the character of the officer. Knowledge entails an appreciation of the enemy, especially one's opposite number, and of logistics. According to Slim, the great field general is a talented judge of administrative risk, that is, he has a sense of how far his sustainment base can be stressed before it ceases to function. (58) Finally, integrity is closely associated with moral courage. In it is the spirit which revives the sagging will and restores confidence to the army.

For an American view of the prerequisites of the operational commander, we will turn first to the commentary of S.L.A. Marshall. After observing the performance of senior officers in three wars, Marshall concluded that:

Brilliance of intellect and high achievement in scholarship are an advantage, though in the end they have little or no payoff if character and courage are missing. (59)

The traits of character and moral courage that Marshall refers to involve quiet resolution, the hardihood to take risks, the will to take full responsibility for decisions, and the nerve to withstand uncertainty and disappointment. (60)

James Stokesbury, coauthor of Masters of the Art of Command, concludes from his study that:

The leader...not only has to believe in his men, and have that belief reciprocated; he has to be able to inspire them to risk their lives for some greater end...and he has to have himself the courage to demand that they do so. (61)

He adds that logistics and managerial skills are among the mechanics of warfare that all great leaders have mastered. (62)

A view of generalship from the perspective of the American operational commander is furnished by General of the Army Omar Bradley. While discussing the subject with the 1966 class at Fort Leavenworth, he noted that character, epitomized by the man of high ideals, was one of the most important qualities of the senior leader. The former Chief of Staff also felt that mental and physical energy were essential to effective leadership; the sick commander is of limited value. Human understanding and compassion are the marks of a sincere leader, according to Bradley, but the good general must fight stubbornly to defend his convictions. (63)

The final American view of operational command is offered by Admiral Richard Connolly, former President of the Naval War College. In his retirement address, Admiral Connolly clearly outlined those qualities which, in his opinion, characterized the commanders of large naval or land forces. First of all, the officer had to possess a sense of responsibility. He had to have the desire to succeed and the drive necessary to get things done. Decisiveness, persuasiveness, foresight, and sense of judgment were also important. Moral and physical courage allowed the

commander to surmount reverses and accept losses. In Connolly's view, the commander should be rugged, both physically and mentally, to withstand the strain of campaigning, but age is not a factor. Humanity, intelligence, competence, and fighting spirit round out the Admiral's rather lengthy list of the traits of the senior commander. (64)

This section has examined a wide variety of comments on operational command. In an effort to capture what appears to be a remarkable degree of similarity in these opinions, let us again return to our analytical structure.

The consensus of the surveyed authors is clearly that the commander must display intelligence combined with traits of character and courage if he is to be successful. Boldness, judgment, creativity, and vision are the intellectual traits found in the warrior general. He also exhibits the character traits of courage, responsibility, integrity, determination, and fighting spirit. The infrequent mention of physical courage may reflect the changing nature of warfare. Curiously, only Zhukov mentions the importance of ambition in the commander.

There is general agreement among the authors we have reviewed that the successful operational commander must be knowledgeable in several particular areas. Certainly, a knowledge of human nature is essential to the senior leader. Additionally, the increasingly technical nature of modern warfare requires today's commander to have a grasp of the technical capabilities and limitations of his forces. Furthermore, the rapid tempo of mobile operations makes the commander's appreciation of logistics even more important. It

is interesting to note that only Slim and Rommel, both of whom commanded in secondary theaters, contend that the commander should know the personality of the opposing general.

The modern commentators on operational command have observed that the general must have certain skills and abilities. Although there is some weak disagreement from Wavell, it seems clear that the successful commander must be physically and mentally fit to withstand the rigors of a campaign. A number of authors noted that the general must combine his knowledge of human nature with the ability persuasively to communicate his will to his subordinates. Finally, there is a consensus among a number of these writers that on the complex modern battlefield the senior commander must be able skillfully to synchronize his air, land, and naval forces to bring the campaign to a successful completion.

These observations are summarized and compared in Figure 2.

Now that we have added a modern perspective on generalship to our theoretical base we can develop a taxonomy for operational command in war.

#### IV. TAXONOMY FOR OPERATIONAL COMMAND IN WAR

In the last two sections we have examined some theoretical and practical views of what it takes to be a successful operational commander. Our challenge now is to take these findings and develop from them a taxonomy which accurately captures the attributes of the warfighting general. To do so we will again turn to the three broad areas of personal attributes which have thus far formed the framework for our discussion. The selection of particular traits for inclusion in our model will be based not only on the frequency with which those traits have been mentioned but also on the strength with which they were argued. We will also consider how these attributes contribute to a logical understanding of the way in which the modern general must plan, conduct, and sequence the battles which lead to a successful campaign. Once this taxonomy is complete, we will have a structure against which we can analyze the performance of operational commanders.

Let us begin with traits of character and temperament. As we follow the commander through his operational decision cycle it becomes obvious that he must exhibit certain attributes which will lead to a successful campaign.

To begin with, the commander must have the vision to see through the campaign to its endstate. Manstein noted that the operational commander

must be able to see through the veil in which the enemy's future operations are always wrapped. The greater ones sphere of command, the further ahead one must think. (65)

As he does this, the general must combine imagination and

FIGURE 2. MODERN PERSPECTIVES ON THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE SUCCESSFUL GENERAL

ATTRIBUTES	GERMAN		RUSSIAN		BRITISH		AMERICAN			
	ROMMEL	MANSTEIN	ROSSOKOVSKY	ZHUKOV	WAVELL	SLIM	MARSHALL	STOKESBURY	BRADLEY	COMOLLY
CHARACTER & TEMPERAMENT	STRENGTH OF CHARACTER				COURAGE	INTEGRITY (MORAL COURAGE)	COURAGE (WITH INTELLECT)	COURAGE TO DEMAND SACRIFICE	CHARACTER (HIGH IDEALS)	COURAGE (MORAL & PHYSICAL)
	DECISIVENESS		DECISIVENESS		KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS	JUDGEMENT	QUIET RESOLUTION			DECISIVE JUDGEMENT
	'CREATIVE THINKER'		'GIFTED'	LEARN FROM MISTAKES	'SPIRIT OF ADVENTURE	MENTALLY FLEXIBLE				
KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE	DETERMINATION	STRENGTH OF WILL	STRONG WILL, FIRM	STRIVES FOR GLORY	DETERMINATION	STRENGTH OF WILL	'NERVE'			DRIVE
		VISION								FORESIGHT
	CHARACTER OF ENEMY COMMANDER				MOVEMENT & SUPPLY	LOGISTICS & ADMIN.		LOGISTICS & MANAGEMENT		
SKILLS & ABILITIES	TECHNICAL MATTERS			MILITARY SCIENCE	TACTICS NOT IMPT	OPPOSING COMMANDER				
	HUMAN NATURE	HUMAN NATURE			HUMANITY			BELIEVE IN HIS MEN	HUMAN NATURE	HUMANITY
	KEEP ALL SERVICES FOCUSED		SECURE COOP. OF ALL ARMS		COMBINE AIR & LAND FORCES					
				ROBUSTNESS					MENTAL & PHYSICAL ENERGY	MENTALLY & PHYSICALLY ROBUST
								INSPIRE SOLDIERS		PERSUASIVE

judgment to find the solution to operational problems and establish his campaign plan. Perhaps one of the most clear examples of the application of these traits is the manner in which General MacArthur rapidly conceived the turning movement to Inchon during the Korean War. (66)

Once the commander has developed a campaign plan he must then display the dual traits of moral courage and intellectual acumen first to assess the risks involved in the operation and then to make the decision to execute the plan despite those risks. Again we are drawn to Manstein's comment "no decisive victory without risk", and MacArthur's apparently hazardous Inchon plan.

Finally, once the plan has been made, the successful general displays determination and will to stick to the plan and keep his eye on the objective despite any number of distractions. MacArthur persisted with his landing plans despite the objections of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Walker's pleas for more forces in Pusan, and the Navy's dire tidal predictions. The commander should, however, continue to observe and judge the developing situation and cancel or modify the operation if conditions dictate. By doing this the commander keeps his determination from deteriorating into obstinacy.

Supplementing the traits of character that are required of the successful warfighting general are the knowledge and experience that he must have in several different areas. First, he must know the technical capabilities of the equipment with which his forces are operating. This will allow him accurately to assess the

abilities of his subordinate elements and hence the risks associated with a particular course of action.

The commander must also have a very well developed appreciation for the logistical aspects of operations. FM 100-5 reminds us that at the operational level of war maneuver depends on the adequacy of a force's sustainment. (67) Thus, the general must have an almost intuitive feel for unit movement rates and supply requirements as well as the sustainment capabilities of his force. Any operation planned without these considerations will experience at best only limited tactical success.

Perhaps the most important knowledge that the commander must possess is an understanding of human nature. By this we mean that he knows how men will react in certain situations or conditions. This appreciation does two things. First, it will allow the commander accurately to assess the morale and capabilities of his own forces and determine, for example, if they need to be rested or can be pushed further. It will also allow him to understand the effect that previous operations have had on the enemy and how future actions will affect his opponent's will to fight. These considerations are a necessary part of the commander's risk assessment when he plans an operation.

Before moving on it is worth noting two areas in which the commander's knowledge and experience are not important.

Although a number of respected authors mention that the successful commander knows his opposite number, this information may well be misleading. If the enemy commander is not the

operational decision maker in that theater then a focus on his methods of operation and way of thinking can lead to a misunderstanding of the enemy's intentions and the neglect of obvious intelligence indicators. A classic example of this can be seen in the failure of the Allies to foresee the German attack from the Ardennes in 1944. The Allied intelligence effort focused on the personality of the elderly, conventional commander-in-chief Gerd von Rundstedt while in fact it was Hitler who directed the planning for the operation. (68)

It is also unimportant for the operational commander to retain a detailed knowledge of tactics. In fact, such expertise could be dangerous. It is easy to see how the commander with great tactical acumen may find himself drawn back to the levels at which he feels most comfortable to the neglect of important operational matters.

We are reminded of Clausewitz's comment:

There are commanders-in-chief who could not have led a cavalry regiment with distinction, and cavalry commanders who could not have led armies. (69)

The point here is not that the operational commander should have no understanding of tactics, but that he not remain fixated at the tactical level. He must synthesize the lessons he learned at lower levels of command with his ongoing study of operations. This will allow him to view the battlefield from the proper perspective.

The final part of our framework deals with the skills and abilities of the operational commander. In this area there are four specific attributes which the general should possess - some timeless, others important only late in this century.

The operational commander must have a sense of terrain and an appreciation for ground of tactical and operational importance. This skill helps the commander make an accurate estimate of the feasibility and risk involved in a particular operation. It is worth noting that this terrain sense must be loosely defined so that it can be equally applied to the corresponding natural aspects of naval or air operations.

It is not enough for the general simply to have a knowledge of human nature if he is to be successful. He must also be a persuasive communicator who can inspire his soldiers and subordinates. The operational commander who can articulately support his campaign plan will be able more effectively to ward off distractions and exert his will. More importantly, the warfighting general must be able to communicate with his soldiers in such a way that he convinces them that he is not risking their lives unnecessarily. He must be able to assure them that their privations have not gone unnoticed or unappreciated. As we recall Napoleon's dictum that the moral is to the physical as three is to one, we can begin to appreciate the overwhelming value of this skill.

The operational commander must be physically and mentally strong to project his personality on his organization and on the campaign. The physically robust general will be able to withstand the hardships of extended field duty and set an example for his soldiers. A high standard of mental fitness is also a necessity for the successful commander. His ability to think clearly despite the enormous pressures of the campaign is absolutely vital to

his ability to make decisions and influence the sequencing of operations. Although there are any number of ways of maintaining both types of fitness, it is apparent that the successful general must regard his health as a vital part of his operational ability.

Finally, today's commander must have the ability to focus the effects of air, land, and naval forces to achieve the aim of his campaign. It is clear that the days of the uniservice campaign are gone forever. Consequently, the successful commander must have an appreciation for the capabilities and limitations of his components and he must be able to combine and sequence their activities.

This chapter has presented a taxonomy of the attributes, traits, and skills of the successful operational commander. While the effects of these characteristics do overlap, their presentation as part of a framework makes them easier to identify and analyze. Figure 3 summarizes our classification of the general characteristics of the warfighting general.

**FIGURE 3. THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER**

**CHARACTER &  
TEMPERAMENT**

**VISION**  
CREATIVE IMAGINATION (W/ JUDGMENT)  
MORAL COURAGE (W/ INTELLECTUAL ACUMEN)  
DETERMINATION & STRENGTH OF WILL  
THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE

**KNOWLEDGE &  
EXPERIENCE**

**HUMAN NATURE**  
TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES OF EQPT AND UNITS  
LOGISTICAL REQUIREMENTS, CAPABILITIES,  
AND LIMITATIONS

**SKILLS &  
ABILITIES**

**SENSE OF TERRAIN**  
PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATOR  
PHYSICALLY & MENTALLY FIT  
ABLE TO COORDINATE LAND/SEA/AIR FORCES  
IN ONE CAMPAIGN

## V. HISTORICAL REVIEW OF OPERATIONAL COMMANDERS

Up to this point we have reviewed a number of opinions about operational command and from them we have developed a taxonomy of the attributes of the ideal warfighting general. It is now time to see how these characteristics appear in practice. The purpose of this chapter is briefly to review the performance of three senior American commanders to see how they embodied the theoretical traits that we have identified.

As we stated earlier, the focus of this paper is on operational commanders who are responsible for translating strategic goals into military operations and campaigns. Too often we misinterpret that definition as applying just to army generals. To avoid that pitfall we will include an officer of each of the three major services in our review. The intention is to show that the attributes of the successful commander apply to those who conduct naval and air operations as well as the commanders of ground forces. The subjects of our review of Second World War commanders will be Army Air Corps Lieutenant General James Doolittle, Admiral William Halsey, and General George Patton. We will briefly discuss the accomplishments of these officers paying special attention to the way in which they displayed the traits of character, knowledge and skill that we identified in the last chapter. Let us begin with Doolittle, at 47 the youngest lieutenant general of the war and the only reserve officer to reach that rank. (70)

An Army Air Corps pilot in World War I who became an air racer of international renown, Doolittle began his active service with the outbreak of the war. He is best remembered for his leadership

of the surprise strike by carrier based medium bombers on Tokyo in April 1942. For that action Doolittle was awarded the Medal of Honor. Then, over Eisenhower's strong objection, he was rapidly promoted and posted to command the Twelfth Air Force in the North Africa Campaign. He stayed in the Mediterranean to lead the Fifteenth Air Force in the invasions of Sicily and Italy. In December 1943, Doolittle moved to England to command the Eighth Air Force, the headquarters responsible for the strategic bombing of Germany. He retained that command until the end of the war. (71) Our analysis will focus on the general's performance in command of two operational units, the Tokyo Raiding Force and the Eighth Air Force.

Doolittle clearly demonstrated the character traits of the successful operational commander. His physical courage was unquestioned; he flew the lead aircraft in the Tokyo raid and frequently accompanied his crews on bombing missions over Europe. (72) He demonstrated creativity, vision, and moral courage not only during the planning and execution of the raid against the Japanese but also as executor of the strategic bombing campaign. Doolittle repeatedly fought those who would use his B-17s for tactical missions. (73) He made several decisions which had long term impact on the air war in Europe. After enforcing flying discipline and tightening bomber formations, Doolittle directed his fighters to stop escorting bombers and concentrate on the destruction of the Luftwaffe. He also extended the tour length for bomber crews from 20 to 25 missions. These initially unpopular directives dramatically increased the efficiency of the Eighth Air

Force. (74)

Doolittle's years of flying experience gave him an unparalleled knowledge of aircraft and their capabilities. Few others could have envisioned launching ungainly bombers from the pitching deck of an aircraft carrier. But Doolittle was also a man of "wisdom, humor, and warm humanity." (75) As Eighth Air Force commander he inspired his crews not with fiery oratory but by frequent visits to discuss their missions and responsibilities.

As a former "seat of the pants" flyer, Doolittle had an intuitive appreciation for weather. He quickly realized that the unpredictable continental cloud cover and winds were ruining the accuracy of his bombers and causing an inordinate number of collisions. Accordingly, he established the First Scouting Force to provide timely feedback on the conditions along the bombing corridors. Performance, and morale, improved significantly. (76)

Finally, although he never commanded naval or ground forces, Doolittle's concept for the raid on Tokyo shows that he realized the importance of all arms cooperation. In 1945 amidst much argument about which service had won the war he stated, "I believe that teamwork won the war and that each agency-land, sea, and air-did its job well." (77)

With that let us move on to our next subject, the man who commanded the task force that launched Doolittle's Tokyo raid, Admiral William Halsey.

A Naval Academy graduate and descendant of a long line of distinguished naval commanders, Halsey had seen almost 40 years of

active service when World War II began. He was an early convert to the concept of naval aviation having earned his wings in 1935 at age 53. Early in 1942 Halsey led carrier task forces in several raids against Japanese bases and, with Doolittle, against the home islands. As commander of the South Pacific Force, he worked closely with MacArthur to coordinate the campaign in the Solomons and New Guinea. Halsey commanded the Third Fleet from the summer of 1944 through the end of the war. After being hailed as "the greatest fighting admiral of this or any other war", Halsey received his fifth star in 1946. (78) We will consider the admiral's performance as an operational commander throughout the war.

In the interwar years, Halsey developed a reputation as a risk taker who welcomed hazardous missions. (79) His attack on Kwajelein Atoll in January 1942, the first American offensive action of the war, was an aggressive, audacious action designed to wrest the initiative from the Japanese. (80) His decision to launch the aircraft for the Tokyo raid despite high seas and terrible weather and his heated discussions with MacArthur over the operational employment of his naval forces are evidence of Halsey's moral courage and strength of will. The admiral's vision for development of the Pacific campaign included his plans to bypass the strong points at Rabaul, Yap and Palau to avoid bloodshed and hasten the end of the war. (81)

As the only carrier commander who was also a naval aviator, Halsey had a unique appreciation for the effectiveness and flexibility of this potent combination of sea and air power. His actions in the Solomons demonstrated his understanding of

logistics as well as his ability to handle surface forces. (82) But Halsey knew his men too. He continually credited the fleet's success to the performance of his sailors and subordinates and his exhortations to "Kill Japs" were aimed at destroying the myth of enemy invulnerability. (83) His ability to inspire the fleet led Admiral Nimitz to state that, "For his effect on morale Bill Halsey is worth a division of fast battleships." (84)

Finally, Halsey knew the importance of joint operations. In the Solomons he synchronized the ground operations of the Marines with the activities of the supporting air and naval forces. It's worth noting that when Halsey took command in the South Pacific he directed,

We work together...I don't want anyone even to be thinking in terms of Army, Navy or Marines. Every man must understand this and every man will understand it if I have to take off his uniform and issue coveralls with South Pacific Fighting Force on the seat. (85)

From that point on, operations in the region were remarkably well coordinated.

The last officer we will examine is certainly the most well known of the three. General George Patton, an avid military historian and proponent of mobile armored combat in the interwar years, was 57 years old when he landed in North Africa at the head of the 2d Armored Division. He took command of II Corps after the Kasserine disaster. Eisenhower chose Patton to lead the Seventh Army in the invasion of Sicily. His "race to Messina" with Montgomery during that campaign captured the imagination of the world and earned for the American army the respect of their British

allies. After the breakout from the Normandy beachhead, Patton commanded Third Army as part of Bradley's Twelfth Army Group. He led that army in the race across France and into Germany relinquishing command only three months before his death in December 1945. (86) Our analysis of Patton will focus on his performance as the commander of Seventh Army, for it was in that capacity, operating with a degree of independence as the only American ground force commander in the theater, that he was most clearly an operational commander.

It was during the Sicilian campaign that Patton's strength of character came to the fore. His clear vision of a successful end state - the American capture of Messina - drove his Army first to Palermo and then up the northern coast of the island. Patton's personal courage was apparent on the beach at Gela where his bravery under fire earned him the Distinguished Service Cross. (87) His three amphibious end runs, conducted over the objections of both his seniors and subordinates, demonstrated his willingness to take risks, strength of will and moral courage. Yet Patton candidly admitted in his memoirs that making unpopular decisions against the advice of one's staff is much harder than it might seem. (88)

Much of Patton's apparent self-confidence was based on years of study which honed his appreciation for mobile warfare. To one critic he remarked,

My military reactions are correct. Many people do not agree with me...they are wrong...I've been studying war for 40 odd years and my decisions are based on knowledge, experience and training. (89)

His understanding of human nature revolved around the soldier's

need for discipline. His insistence on high standards of dress and conduct, his motivational speeches, and his willingness to give praise where it was due created, "a field army in his own image, tenacious, bold, aggressive, and resourceful." (90) In these days before the "slapping incidents" tarnished his image, Patton's style of leadership instilled pride and a sense of purpose in the army. (91)

Patton's ability to coordinate naval support for this operation has been described as "outstanding." (92) Although the air-ground relationship was not well established during this campaign, Patton later ensured cooperation with the tactical air units supporting his army by insisting that senior representatives attended all staff conferences. (93) His penchant for mapping allowed Patton to to "see" three dimensions in a flat map. Nevertheless, he insisted that senior commanders should use only road and rail maps to avoid getting caught up in tactical decision making. (94) Finally, this man of enormous energy stressed the importance of exercise and pacing one's self throughout an operation. Tired officers, Patton noted, were pessimists. (95) He adhered rigorously to a daily schedule that included light meals, daily exercise and eight hours of sleep.

This short review of the performance of three American operational commanders yields some additional insights into the characteristics of senior warfighting leaders. Additionally, it allows us to place our theoretical traits of the commander in perspective.

The first observation we can make is that personality of the

individual commander is always unique. While that may be a fairly obvious comment, it is not trivial. It tells us that the operational commander is in effect an artist whose palette and brush are his character, training and experience. We must keep this in mind as we attempt to groom or select the senior warfighters of the future.

Our second observation concerns the differences between various types of command billets. The naval commander, for instance, has less personal flexibility than the air or ground commander. It is far more difficult, indeed often impossible, for him to "get forward" to speak personally with his subordinates. The fitness requirements of naval, air, and ground commanders are also somewhat different. But most importantly, the nature of warfare and therefore the nature of the commander's decisions are not the same. It is one thing to maneuver a finite number of ships over water or even aircraft through the sky. It is quite another to sequence the effects of large bodies of men and equipment moving on a limited road network. The point is not to judge which is more difficult, but rather to note that the two environments are not the same. Thus, while the services must develop commanders who are experts in their field, those officers must also have a deep appreciation for the operations of their sister services.

If we focus on the decisions made by the commanders we studied another observation comes to mind. All three were willing to accept short term risk for long term gain. Their humanity led them to avoid prolonged bloodshed by moving quickly, bypassing the enemy or massing against him quickly to remove the threat. Here we can

see the interaction of the traits of the operational commander. None exist in isolation. Although our subjects had spent years perfecting their craft, it was their traits of character that allowed them to apply their knowledge and experience so effectively.

In conclusion it is worth noting that all three of our subjects were involved in a major controversy of one kind or another. Doolittle's bombers caused over 700 American casualties, including Lieutenant General McNair, during the bombing at St Lo. Halsey left the invasion fleet at Leyte Gulf to pursue a decisive battle with a Japanese carrier task force that was only acting as a decoy. Patton physically assaulted two private soldiers. (96) Without reading too much into these incidents, they at least show that operational commanders are capable of making mistakes. Perhaps they also indicate that the risk taking commander cannot become conservative at will and that when he fails, personally or professionally, he will do so rather spectacularly.

## VI. CONCLUSIONS

The object of this paper was to develop a clear taxonomy of the attributes of the senior warfighting commander. The technique was the systematic review of writings on generalship and the consolidation of the resulting analysis into a theoretical model based on character traits, knowledge, and skills.

The last chapter has validated the taxonomy and brought it into perspective by using it as a tool with which to examine the operating styles of three successful commanders. This exercise, hopefully, has shown us that while it is useful to separate attributes for analysis, they are in reality inextricably mixed within the personality of the individual.

When we look closely at our study we come to several important conclusions.

First, it is obvious that the traits of the operational commander are not the same as those of the tactical leader. Although there are some apparent similarities, notably in the areas of human understanding and communication, the senior general must display more moral courage and must look farther ahead than commanders at lower levels. Additionally, he must have a much more detailed appreciation of technical and logistical systems. Yet the operational commander need not be a tactical expert. Indeed, such expertise could possibly hinder his performance. On the contrary, he must display a thirst for knowledge and an ability creatively to

synthesize the knowledge he acquires with his past experience. This ability allows him to leave the tactical realm and command at the operational level of war.

Secondly, the qualities of strength of will, boldness, and risk taking that characterize the successful warfighting general are not the same traits which lead to success in peace. The simple and quite understandable reason is that national values and the strategic situation are much different when war has not been declared. Peacetime generalship must be considerably more cautious and restrained in order to remain within the bounds of national policy objectives.

Finally, the traits which distinguish the operational commander may not be those which the military or the nation would ordinarily like to see in a general. That is, the man with the strength of conviction and daring to achieve great success in war may alarm both subordinates who are concerned with short term losses and superiors who are less willing to accept risk. The senior officer who motivates his soldiers by professing his desire to destroy the enemy, as Patton and Halsey did, may be considered ruthless and crude. There will be, therefore, a reluctance even in war to appoint to command those officers with the attributes of the successful combat general. But if ruthless, daring, strong willed generals win wars then they must be tolerated. If in their absence wars are lost then they must be championed. Not every senior commander can or should possess these traits. Those who do will not be "men for all seasons" but they will be our best warfighters.

Thus, while these men may not be acceptable as peacetime commanders, they should be in a position where they can be propelled into command if a war starts. Perhaps they should be assigned as deputies to the commanders of operational forces. In that position they would be familiar with the organization and its mission and prepared to assume command should the need arise.

As noted in this paper's introduction these conclusions all fall into areas which are not addressed in our doctrine. Accordingly, there are a number of implications which arise from this study. They are addressed in the next chapter.

## VII. DOCTRINAL IMPLICATIONS

This paper has defined the characteristics of the operational commander. It is intended to be the first step in a process which will allow us to select and develop the senior generals who will fight the next war. As such, this study must be the start point for a series of doctrinal developments.

Some would argue that this paper has only begun to define the characteristics of the senior general. They would say that its conclusions need to be expanded and the results compared with a scientifically based study of senior level leadership in war. Those critics are wrong. This subject is too important for endless equivocation. The results offered in this paper should be verified, and where appropriate, quickly adopted into our leadership doctrine as tenets of wartime generalship.

As an aside, we need to recognize that obviously not all general officers need to have these attributes. There are many general officer assignments other than that of commander in combat, such as technical or staff positions, which are equally important to the functioning of the army and which require completely different leadership and management skills. (97) In fact, it may be appropriate to ask if the U.S. Army's current focus on warfighting and developing risk takers will not in the long run have a detrimental effect on the development of high caliber officers to assume these more technical posts. Clearly, the attributes of senior military managers or staff officers must also be defined and

included in doctrine.

Once the goal of including the attributes of the operational commander in doctrine is achieved, the next step will be to find a way to select and then develop the warfighting generals of the future.

Selection is the first and more difficult challenge. The main reason that it is so perplexing is that the skill requirements change from the tactical to the operational level. There is little evidence, for example, that the best battalion commanders make the best corps commanders. (98)

Senior commander selection is also especially sensitive because there is so little historical precedent and because the implications are so far reaching. It is clear, however, that the selection of individuals for future operational command should be based on their character, not on their skills, knowledge or experience. (99) The difficulty comes in isolating those character traits and identifying officers who have the ability to grow and develop into operational level commanders. Some senior German generals of World War II were selected by a time-consuming process which looked into their private lives to determine their willingness to accept risk and other traits of character. (100) Also during that war American generals were promoted and selected for command based on their standing in the Chief of Staff's "black book". General Marshall made his assignment decisions based on his appreciation of an officer's integrity, courage, and fighting

spirit, all traits of character. (101)

Today, command selection boards are instructed to consider officers for their integrity, character and ability to conceptualize and communicate. (102) They are to be capable of commanding in peace or war. The selection of senior officers for wartime operational command must follow a different path. These men must be chosen not only on the traits of character that they currently possess but also on their ability and willingness to grow and develop into commanders who will win the next war.

Once a select group of officers has been identified for senior wartime command, their knowledge, experience and skill can be developed. They can be further groomed for command by placing them in positions which test their traits of character and develop their ability to deal with the uncertainty of war. (103) These generals may be considered a "war reserve" in that they may not receive operational command until war is declared.

The rigorous selection and development of senior officers for wartime command is a daunting challenge. This paper has taken only the first step along what is without a doubt a very long and winding path. But it is a path that must be traveled. In doing so we may find that we have to make significant changes in our officer career management process. So be it. We must be prepared to make hard decisions now to ensure success in time of war. If we persist in our fuzzy thinking about operational command and choose the wrong generals for combat command, the first battle of the next war

could well be a disaster. Consider our experience in North Africa. After the TORCH landings General Eisenhower selected as his first corps commander a man considered one of the brightest, most capable officers in the service. He was a tough-talking infantryman who had been at the top of his class at Leavenworth and who had performed brilliantly as a planner of the original GYMNAST operation. (104) Unfortunately, Major General Lloyd Fredendall was a dismal failure in combat, attempting to command his divisions from a bunker miles behind the front. His actions resulted in the disaster at the Kasserine Pass, one of the worst American defeats of the war. In the next war we may not have the time to recover from such a blow...

## ENDNOTES

1. Although Barbara Tuchman has estimated that more than twice as much has been written about leadership, command, and generalship than any other subject of military interest, Major John Vermillion points out the lack of specific comment on the leadership practiced by general officers in combat. (The Main Pillars of Generalship: A Different View, SAMS Monograph, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: CGSC, May 1986), pp. 1-2.) The general public's continued interest in wartime generalship is most evident in the Newsweek cover story, "Can We Fight a Modern War?", (July 9, 1984, pp. 34-48.) Much of this article is concerned with the preparation of our general officers to command in war.

2. Major Mitchell Zais, "Is Leadership At the Top a Neglected Art?", ARMY, March 1986, p. 52. The point here is that while Patton was clearly the more proficient practitioner of the operational art, both he and Bradley were successful commanders of large formations in wartime. Unfortunately, there exists no model for the comparative analysis of senior combat leaders and thus no method for determining the reasons for their success. Zais further develops his thoughts on this subject in his MMAS Thesis, Generalship and the Art of Senior Command: Historical and Scientific Perspectives. (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: CGSC, May 1985), pp. 2-11, 131-135, and 152-156. Edgar Puryear's 19 Stars. (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1981), pp. 395-401, does offer a pattern of successful senior leadership. His description, however, covers both operational and strategic leaders and his conclusion that this pattern of success is available to every officer seems open to question.

3. Major Mitchell Zais, "Strategic Vision and Strength of Will: Imperatives for Theater Command", Parameters, Winter 1985, pp. 59-60 and 62. Also see his article "Is Leadership At the Top a Neglected Art?", pp. 52-53 and Vermillion, pp. 3-4.

4. This definition of the operational level of war is taken from FM 100-5, Operations, (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 5 May 1986), p. 9.

5. Thomas Cronin, "Thinking About Leadership", In Robert L. Taylor and William E. Rosenbach (Eds.), Military Leadership: In Search of Excellence, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), p. 194.

6. Field Manual 22-100, Military Leadership. (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, October 1983), p. 1.

7. Zais, Generalship and the Art of Senior Command. p. 52.

8. Ibid., p. 53.

9. Robert D. Heintz, Jr. Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations, (Annapolis, MD: U.S. Naval Institute, 1966), p. 128.

10. Ibid., p. 130.

11. Ibid.
12. Ibid., p. 126.
13. Sun Tzu, The Art of War, translated by Samuel B. Griffith. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 65.
14. Ibid., p. 114-5.
15. Ibid.
16. Niccolo Machiavelli, "The Prince" and "The Discourses", in The Portable Machiavelli, edited and translated by Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa, (New York: Penguin Books, 1979), pp. 156, 350, 406, 409.
17. Machiavelli, "The Discourses", pp. 406-409.
18. Ibid., pp. 396-398.
19. Heint, p. 127.
20. Ibid., p. 131.
21. Ibid., p. 127.
22. Carl von Clausewitz, On War, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, (Princeton University: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 190-192.
23. Ibid., pp. 102-103.
24. Ibid., pp. 102-105.
25. Ibid., p. 105.
26. Ibid., p. 112.
27. Ibid., p. 140.
28. Ibid., p. 109 and Heint, p. 61.
29. Heint, p. 62.
30. Ibid., p. 127.
31. B. H. Liddell-Hart, Thoughts on War, (London: Faber and Faber LTD, 1944), p. 223.
32. Ibid., p. 222.
33. Ibid., p. 225.
34. Heint, p. 61.
35. Liddell-Hart, p. 223.

36. J.F.C. Fuller, Generalship: Its Diseases and Their Cure, (Harrisburg, PA: Military Service Publishing Company, 1936), p. 35.
37. Ibid., pp. 32-35.
38. Ibid., pp. 25-26.
39. M.A. Gareyev, M.V. Frunze-Military Theorist, translated by the Soviet Army Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, KS, (USSR: Military Publishers, 1984), p. 60.
40. B.M. Teplov, The Intellect of the Military Leader, translated by the Soviet Army Studies Office, Fort Leavenworth, KS, (USSR: Military Publishers, 1975), pp. 43-50.
41. Erwin Rommel, The Rommel Papers, edited by B.H. Liddell-Hart, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1953), p. 517.
42. Ibid., p. 201.
43. Ibid., pp. 518-519.
44. Ibid., p. 204.
45. Ibid., p. 519.
46. Erich von Manstein, Lost Victories, edited and translated by Anthony G.Powell, (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982), pp. 424 and 440.
47. Ibid., p. 18.
48. G.K. Zhukov, Marshall Zhukov's Greatest Battles, translated by G. Shabad, (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 13.
49. G.K. Zhukov, Reminiscences and Reflections, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1985), pp. 299 and 413.
50. Ibid., p. 173.
51. Ibid., p. 414.
52. Archibald Wavell, Generals and Generalship: The Lee Knowles Lectures Delivered at Trinity College, Cambridge in 1939, reprinted with other works for the Art of War Colloquium, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA., February 1983, p. 43. (Originally printed in The Times of London and subsequently published by the MacMillan Company, New York, 1941.)
53. Ibid., p. 41.
54. Ibid., p. 43.
55. Ibid., p. 42.

56. Ibid., p. 44.
57. William Slim, "Leadership", Canadian Army Journal, May 1950. p. 2 and audiotape of the Kermit Roosevelt Lecture, "High Command in War", delivered to the Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 8 April 1952. The content of these two references is basically the same despite being directed towards rather different audiences.
58. Slim, "High Command in War", audiotape.
59. S.L.A. Marshall, "Leaders and Leadership," in The Armed Forces Officer, (Washington: GPO, 1975), reprinted in Military Leadership: In Pursuit of Excellence, edited by R. Taylor and W. Rosenbach (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), p. 40.
60. Ibid., p. 44.
61. James Stokesbury, "Leadership as an Art". in Military Leadership: In Pursuit of Excellence, p. 17.
62. Ibid., p. 18.
63. Omar Bradley, "Leadership", Military Review, September 1966. pp. 52-53.
64. Richard Conolly, "Exercise of Command", an address delivered at the Naval War College in 1955, transcript on file with the CARL, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. pp. 3-9.
65. Manstein, Lost Victories, pp. 409, 503, 510. Manstein repeatedly criticizes Hitler for failing to take the long term view of operations and accept risk in some areas to achieve decisive results in others. On p. 422 he writes, "I considered it only right for an Army Group to think four to eight weeks ahead - unlike the Supreme Command which never seemed to look any further than the next three days."
66. D. Clayton James offers an excellent summary of MacArthur's decision to land at Inchon in The Years of MacArthur, Volume III 1945-1964. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985), pp. 464-476.
67. FM 100-5, Operations, p. 59.
68. Charles McDonald, A Time For Trumpets, (New York: Bantam Books, 1984), pp. 21-22 and 35-36. According to McDonald, Hitler reinforced the apparent conservatism of von Rundstedt by instructing him to conduct an economy of force in the Ardennes sector and by not informing him of the offensive until approximately a month before it kicked off.
69. On War, p. 149.
70. Lowell Thomas and Edward Jablonski, Doolittle, (New York: Doubleday, 1976), p. 314.

71. This summary of Lieutenant General Doolittle's career is taken from C.V. Gline's article, "Doolittle's Greatest Contributions", Air Force Magazine, September 1985, pp. 174-185.

72. Doolittle, p. 235.

73. Eighth Air Force did conduct the carpet bombing at St Lo that opened the door for the breakout. However, Doolittle often refused requests from ground commanders, like his friend George Patton, to use bombers to reduce strongpoints such as Fort Driant outside Metz. Ibid., pp. 289 and 294.

74. The tighter formations allowed the bombers to protect themselves and prevented the German fighters from jumping crippled aircraft. ("Doolittle's Greatest Contributions", p. 184) This increase in self defense allowed Doolittle to send his fighters to drive the German Air Force from the sky. Adolf Garland, the Luftwaffe fighter commander, confirmed the devastating effect of this decision. (Ibid.) By increasing tour length by 20%, Doolittle estimated that he increased crew effectiveness by 33% as he retained trained crews. Reduced loss rates and increased bombing accuracy validated his decision. (Doolittle, pp. 266 and 281) It is worth noting that all of these decisions accepted reduced short term capability for long term payoff, a tribute to Doolittle's vision and judgement.

75. Doolittle, p. ix. This appears to be Thomas' personal opinion.

76. Ibid., p. 265 and "Doolittle's Greatest Contributions", p. 184.

77. Doolittle, p. 314.

78. This brief summary of Admiral Halsey's career is condensed from J. M. Merrill's A Sailor's Admiral. (New York: T.Y. Crowell and Co, 1976), pp. 11-243.

79. Ibid., p. 22.

80. Ibid., p. 25.

81. Halsey argued for the envelopment of Rabaul almost from the first day of the war. The landing on Emirau Island which isolated Rabaul took place in March 1944 without the loss of a single life. Similarly, Halsey for over eight months urged Nimitz and King to bypass Yap and the Palaus to avoid a bloodbath like Tarawa. Unfortunately, he was only partially successful. (Ibid., pp. 104, 116, and 136.)

82. During actions in the Solomons when the Marine hold on Guadalcanal was still tentative, Halsey skillfully placed his squadrons to interdict the Japanese reinforcement convoys. As part of this operation he refused to let any ship return to Australia to refit or replenish. His fleet remained on station long past their doctrinal limit. Halsey then established a forward logistical base on the island of Manus (after an extended argument with MacArthur about the feasibility of forward support) and continued operations

from there. (Ibid., pp. 66 and 114)

83. Ibid., p. 53.

84. Ibid., p. 51.

85. Ibid., p. 84.

86. This summary of General Patton's career is from the jacket notes of his War As I Knew It (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1947).

87. Ibid., p. 379.

88. The resistance to Patton's amphibious operations is documented in Albert Garland and H.M. Smyth, Sicily and the Surrender of Italy, (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1965), pp. 388-390. Some other insights into Patton's personality: He noted that no military leader ever became great without audacity and that a good plan executed violently now is better than a careful plan next week. These comments, and his note on the weight of decision making, are from War As I Knew It, pp. 275, 279, and 379.

89. Patton's appreciation for the military art included an intimate knowledge of logistics. In Sicily he combined the use of naval amphibious craft with a detailed system of road priorities to keep his units supplied and moving forward. (Sicily..., p. 419 and War As I Knew It, p. 350). The quotation is from 19 Stars, pp. 362 and 382.

90. Sicily..., p. 426. Concerning the knowledge and skills required of the operational commander, Patton made this comment on the beach during the Sicily landings,

My theory is that an Army commander does what  
is necessary to accomplish his mission and nearly  
80% of that mission is to arouse morale in his men.

19 Stars, p. 260.

91. Martin Blumenson, Patton: The Man Behind the Legend, (New York: Morrow and Co, 1985), p. 183.

92. Sicily..., p. 419.

93. Ibid., p. 421 and War As I Knew It, p. 357.

94. The comment on Patton's ability to appreciate terrain is from 19 Stars, p. 383. His recommendations on the use of road maps is in War As I Knew It, p. 358.

95. Ibid., pp. 354 and 360.

96. The results of the St Lo carpet bombing are described by Russell Weigley in Eisenhower's Lieutenants, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981), pp. 151-154. Halsey's pursuit of Ozawa's carriers during the Battle of Leyte Gulf, an action he always defended as a calculated and acceptable risk, is discussed briefly

by M.H. Cannon in Leyte: Return to the Philippines. (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1954), pp. 88-92. A more detailed discussion of some of the particulars of the operations can be found in Captain Andrew Hamilton's article, "Where is Task Force 34?", U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings, October 1960, pp. 76-80. The details of Patton's confrontations with two hospitalized privates are presented in Sicily..., pp. 426-431.

97. H.M. Exton and F.B. Weiner, "What is a General?". Army, January 1958, pp. 37-47. In this article the authors present the view that there are five separate types of general officer duty positions. Only one involves the command of combat troops.

98. Mitchell Zais, "Is Leadership At The Top A Neglected Art?". Army, March 1966, p. 53.

99. A number of authors have stated that character traits should be the basis for senior command and many point out that they are born with many of these traits. Among them are; Bruce Clark, "Leadership, Commandership, Generalship, Followership", Armor, September-October 1963, p. 19. Ralph L. Allen, "Piercing The Veil Of The Operational Art," Parameters, Winter 1986, p. 27. C.N. Barclay, "The General and His Troops," The Army Quarterly and Defense Journal, October 1961, pp. 93-94. A.S. Newman, "What Are Generals Made Of?", Army, August 1969, p. 42. and Command and General Staff College, The Principles of Strategy for an Independent Corps or Army in a Theater of Operations. (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CGSC, 1936), p. 22.

100. D. Glantz, 1984 Art of War Symposium. (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College, 1984), pp. 293-294. These comments were made by visiting German generals. They stress the subjective nature of selecting men of character.

101. Forrest Pogue, George C. Marshall, Ordeal and Hope. (New York: Viking Press, 1966), pp. 95-96.

102. Department of the Army, U.S. Army Military Personnel Center, Lists of Colonels Designated by Department of the Army Selection Boards for Assignment to FY88 Colonel Command Designated Positions and Project Manager Positions. (Washington, D.C.: undated), Attachment 1 to Enclosure 2, pp. 1-2.

103. Some authors have suggested identifying officers for senior command early in their careers and then tracking them through repetitive command assignments to test their mettle and increase their judgement and experience. See for example, T.O. Blakeney, The Battlegroup Commander-1970. (Carlisle Barracks: Army War College, 1956), p. 31.

104. George C. Marshall..., p. 407.

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