STUDY PROJECT

NEEDED, DECISIVE AIRPOWER LEADERS: GENERAL GEORGE C. KENNEY, A ROLE MODEL

BY

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NEEDED, DECISIVE AIRPOWER LEADERS: GENERAL GEORGE C. KENNEY, A ROLE MODEL

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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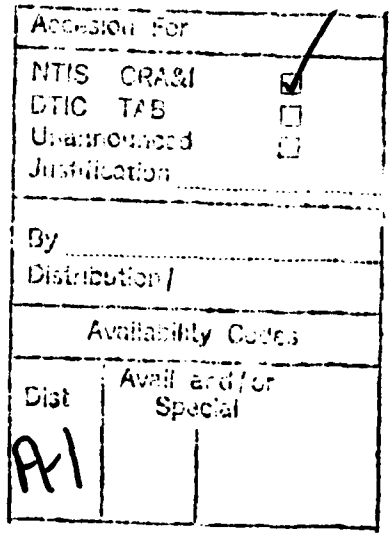

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ABSTRACT

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Today's USAF is the best. However, the international situation is changing and the future is unclear. USAF force structure will be cut. The risk of a future mismatch between strategy and forces available appears to be growing; especially, if limited forces are required for crisis action in more than one theater simultaneously. The decisive leadership, or lack thereof, provided by future Air Component Commanders--in a resource limited world--may make the difference between victory and defeat. I am concerned USAF emphasis on operation level leader development is inadequate. USAF-wide study of airpower and air campaigns is limited. Leadership doctrine needs refinement and leadership development programs, higher priority. This paper describes what decisive operational level leadership is by focusing on General George C. Kenney and the significant challenges he faced in the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA), during World War II. His leadership and mastery of operational art, demonstrate how decisive airpower leadership can turn a bad situation--defensive with inadequate resources--around and subsequently "pound out" victory. Kenney's background and preparation for operational command are compared to today's officers. There is also a comparison between Kenney's initial situation in SWPA and Lt. General Horner's today, in Southwest Asia. The paper closes with conclusions and recommendations.

INTRODUCTION

Our increasingly complex world will place greater demands on United States Air Force (USAF) leaders. Future scenarios may make airpower leadership a decisive factor in war. To successfully meet these challenges the USAF must fully mature the talents of its future operational level leaders and develop within them a deep, working understanding of airpower and visionary and courageous leadership. The purpose of this paper is to register a concern about and provide recommended solutions for two perceived problems. They are: One, the USAF lacks an energetic, institutional focus on the study, understanding and advocacy for airpower and, two, although the USAF recognizes the importance of command excellence and leadership, it needs to refine its leadership doctrine and make leadership development a higher priority.

In developing this paper, I will use an historical figure, General George C. Kenney, to help bridge the gap between theoretical discussions and real world circumstances. General Kenney exemplified what I and others believe are characteristics of a visionary and courageous operational level airpower leader. During World War II (WW II), Kenney proved to be both an airpower expert and an outstanding leader. His character, knowledge and skill were decisive elements contributing to victory. He, therefore, will serve as a centerpiece or a benchmark in this paper, against which to orient one's perspective of the issues.

Before starting this discussion, it's important readers understand a fundamental difference between leadership errors of omission or commission, at the operational versus the tactical level. At the tactical level, poor leadership can result in a failed tactical evaluation or the loss of life or equipment to operational or combat losses. During peacetime, a USAF tactical level commander would be relieved, if he lost pilot(s) or aircraft, and rightfully so, if it's for preventable operational losses. In war, poor tactical leadership can mean the loss of an engagement or battle. The consequences of wartime operational level leadership error or a lack of initiative are quite different. The decisions a combat operational leader make could result in the saving or loss of hundreds, possibly thousands of lives, winning or losing a campaign and even possibly influencing the outcome of a war, the future course of a nation or the fate of generations to come. The stakes and the knowledge and judgment required of operational leaders require military services to do everything possible to prepare them for these awesome responsibilities.

The USAF needs to develop <u>decisive operational level airpower leaders</u>--leaders who know the importance of airpower, where it fits within the art and science of war, how to build and maintain it, and how to use it in unified action to successfully accomplish theater and national objectives. These same leaders must possess vision and character to correctly make increasingly complex and difficult decisions. They must also possess qualities which make American war fighters want to do their best

and be willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for their country. I am concerned the USAF is not doing the best job it can to develop future decisive airpower leaders.

There is no doubt the USAF is the best the world today. At a 26 October 1990 presentation to the Air Force Association National Symposium, General McPeak, Air Force Chief of Staff stated:

> First of all, a blinding glimpse of the obvious: we have a lot going for us in the Air Force. We've got smart people--dedicated people--great people. Our readiness is sky high. Our equipment is the world's best. Our sustainability is good. Our operating tempo is right. Our training is realistic. We understand our tactics and doctrine. We have great leadership at the sharp end. We work well with sister services and allies. I don't say this in a boastful sense, but this is the wrong time to mess with the United States. Your Air Force is ready for combat.[1]

We are ready today, but how about three, six or ten years from now?

Our world is going through the greatest peaceful transition in history. Future power balances are unclear. The fate of the Soviet Union is unknown. Transition abounds. Among all this confusion, two things stand out quite clearly. One, the USAF is almost certain to get smaller. Two, throughout history, a multi-polar world or a world in which power balances are shifting, is a dangerous environment often dominated by war. Our Air Force must continue to be a viable deterrent force and ready to fight and win, despite our size.

One can easily conjure up a vision of the future, in which the United States tries to maintain its superpower stature and influence but must do so with significantly reduced military

forces. In such a scenario, future USAF leaders would face increasingly difficult challenges in two areas: One, how to best organize, train and equip the force in an austere economic environment and, two, how to best fight with a limited force, especially if called upon to employ in more than one theater simultaneously. The knowledge and leadership USAF leaders must apply in each arena overlap extensively. To be able to train and build a force, one must have a vision of how it should fight. To fight a force effectively, one must know its organization, capabilities, and limitations and how to direct this complex milieu to best achieve theater and national objectives. Even though this paper discusses both areas, its focus leans towards airpower leadership and its application to fighting our forces. One thing is clear, future airpower leaders will face increasingly difficult challenges and the USAF must do everything it can to prepare them. We must be developing world-class leaders who are world-class airpower experts.

This paper focuses at the operational level of war and fighting the force. It delves into the realm of the Service Component or Air Component Commander in a Joint or Combined Force. In order to understand the perspective I hope to communicate, the reader must understand the meaning of the three levels of war--strategic, operational and tactical. Briefly, the strategic level incorporates the broadest concerns of national policy, the operational focuses on campaigns and the tactical focuses on battles and engagements.[2] Though the paper overlaps into strategic and tactical levels, its central focus will be at

the operational level. In order to further ensure a common footing, the following AFM 1-1 Basic Aerospace Doctrine of the United States Air Force (Draft) definition of the operational level of war is included. It states:

> The operational level of war is concerned with employing military forces in a theater of war or theater of operations to obtain an advantage over the enemy and, thereby, to attain a national and theater military strategy (as defined by the NCA and theater commanders) through the design, organization, and conduct of campaigns and major operations. A campaign involves the employment of military forces in a series of related military operations to accomplish a common objective in a given time and space. Using operational art, commanders identify centers of gravity, orchestrate, coordinate, and exploit distinct tactical events to achieve objectives to support overall campaign objectives. Where and when to conduct a campaign is based on intelligence, objectives, the threat, and limitations imposed by geographical, economic, and cultural environments, as well as the numbers and types of military resources available, command and control including strategic coordination and deception.[3]

AFM 1-1 should be consulted if confusion exists concerning any terms or definitions used in this paper.

Before going further, some caveats are in order. My perspective on military professionalism and USAF airpower and leadership training has limits. First, I'm a promotable Lt.Col., so I have not experienced the training, operational, staff or command responsibility those of higher rank have gotten. My perspective comes from 20 years in the Air Force, mostly in operations as an F-4, and an F-16 pilot. I flew 110 combat missions in South East Asia (SEA), was a weapons and tactics officer in both the F-4 and the F-16, spent 3 1/2 years on the Air Staff, was an F-16 Operations Officer and Squadron

Commander and an F-16 Wing Assistant, Deputy Commander for Operations. I have not attended any USAF Professional Military Education (PME) school in residence, having completed Squadron Officer School (SOS) by correspondence, attended Armed Forces Staff College and now the Army War College. However, my perspective might be very useful, in that I view the USAF from somewhere in the middle of the chain of command. I am sensitive to and understand the culture "out there in the field," within fighter wings, and, yet, have some appreciation for the challenges and burdens executive leaders at higher levels must shoulder. With these preliminaries covered, it's time to move on to the guts of this paper.

The contents of this paper will be organized in the following manner: I will first describe the elements of General Kenney's leadership. They will serve as the paper's center of gravity. I will then provide a more detailed explanation of my concern--which is, the USAF can and should do more to develop world class airpower experts and leaders. Next, I will paint a relatively in-depth picture of what an effective airpower leader is and does by focusing on Kenney, describing the challenges he faced and how he decisively dealt with them. Having established this framework, we will then look at Kenney's background and experiences, before WW II and compare them to the training USAF officers get today. The paper will close with conclusions and recommendations.

THE ELEMENTS OF OUTSTANDING OPERATIONAL AIRPOWER LEADERSHIP

What are the characteristics of an outstanding operational airpower leader? George Kenney--the centerpiece of this paper--was an Air Component Commander for a Theater Commander in Chief (CINC) named Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur commanded the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA). General MacArthur's description of Kenney, at the conclusion of World War II, aptly defines what a decisive airpower leader is. He states:

> Of all the commanders of our major Air Forces engaged in World War II, none surpassed General Kenney in those three essentials of successful combat leadership: aggressive vision, mastery over air strategy and tactics, and the ability to exact the maximum in fighting qualities from both men and equipment.[4]

General Henry "Hap" Arnold, Chief of Staff, Army Air Corps, had similar feelings about Kenney's performance in World War II. On August 19, 1945, he cabled Kenney: "It may truthfully be said that no air commander ever did so much with so little."[5] It is important to note that the terms operational level of warfare and operational art were not used in World War II. Otherwise, in describing Kenney, MacArthur probably would have said the following about Kenney's understanding of air warfare... unsurpassed mastery over air strategy, operational art and tactics.... Keeping the definition of a great airpower leader in mind, it is time to expand the ideas of why we need such men in the future and what problems exist which might hinder the full development of their talents.

PERCEIVED PROBLEMS

The USAF is about to get smaller. In a recent Air Force Policy Letter for Commanders, General McPeak stated, "It is almost certain that we will be a smaller Air Force in the years ahead. But our purpose, our goal, our mission, will not change. The only reason any of us are in a blue suit is to produce combat capability to defend the nation." Congress's recent action to directly cap defense spending over the next three years and indirectly over the following two years, in itself, mandates a smaller force. What is distressing is that this type of action is taking place during a period of great uncertainty and volatility. To a relatively inexperienced and perhaps uninformed strategist such as myself, large and long-range force reductions can result in unforeseen risk, especially if the future does not evolve as predicted. My concern is that at some future date a strategy vs. "force-required" mismatch might occur in which military leaders are asked to do too much with too little. It has happened before. The likelihood of it occurring again could be increasing. Visionary operational level leaders have saved us in the past. It appears we may need such men again. Are we, the USAF, doing everything we can to prepare them?

PERCEIVED PROBLEM #1: Development of "Aggressive Vision and Mastery Over Air Strategy, (Operational Art) and Tactics"

From my experience, the tactical level (referring to tactical level of warfare--those who prepare for, support and fight battles and engagements--not just Tactical Air Command) of

the USAF lacks the required level of airpower expertise military professionals should possess. In my opinion, few tactical level officers can adequately describe what airpower is, its history, how it fits within the art and science of war and how it is employed at theater or operational levels. Fewer still, know the process by which airpower must be shaped to meet theater or national strategy. I suspect this same problem exists at higher levels within the Air Force, but hopefully to a much lesser extent.

Personal observation and the fate of Project Warrior have led me to the foregoing position. It surprised me, and many of my fellow Air Force students at the U.S. Army War College, how much more Army, Marine and Naval officers knew about their services' history and doctrine. True, their services have been in existence for more years than ours; however, this argument does not "hold water" when talking about current doctrine or Army Air Corps or USAF history after the beginning of World War I. Mid-level USAF officers, at the same experience level as their contemporaries in the Army, Navy or Marines, do not know as much about airpower's contributions to World War II as sister service officers do about land or sea power. Whereas Army or Marine officers can cite their doctrine "chapter and verse," many Air Force officers are reading their doctrine from cover-to-cover for the first time when they are getting to Senior Service School. This says something about our service's culture.

In 1982, General Lew Allen, then Chief of Staff of the Air Force, recognized a cultural problem within our service and

initiated Project Warrior. The following extract from the last Project Warrior, Profession Studies Support Booklet explains the program's intent. It states:

> Project WARRIOR was created to address two of our people-related shortcomings. The first of these was an attitude/identity problem. In the late 1970s there was concern that some Air Force people had come to view their work as an ordinary 8-5 job, unrelated to war-fighting. This erosion of professional values was manifested in many ways, including reluctance to sacrifice personal desires for unit goals, reduced commitment to excellence, and inability to recognize the unique nature of military service in the defense of the nation.
>
> Our second problem was a lack of knowledge about warfare among Air Force members. This is our professional subject, yet we had failed to emphasize it over the past few decades. Instead, we concentrated on important subareas like weapons procurement, resources management, and personnel pay/benefits.
>
> Project Warrior's first objective seeks to implant the professional values that have distinguished America's warriors of the past--'Duty, Honor, Country.' Warrior's second objective...improve our peoples' understanding of the theory and practice of war, with particular emphasis on the contribution of airpower... Upon initiating the project General Lew Allen, Jr., said, 'I believe that a continuing study of military history, combat leadership, the principles of war, and particularly the application of airpower, is necessary for us to meet the challenges that lie ahead'.[6]

Project Warrior officially died a quiet death August 1990. According to the Air Staff Office of Primary Responsibility for Project Warrior, nothing of consequence has been done with the program for the last several years. The program turned more into a recognizable theme for morale and welfare programs than the tool for which it was intended.[7] Although the Air Force is more combat ready today than it has even been, many of the problems Project Warrior intended to counter still exist. This

raises the question: if we are a ready force today, yet have been poor students of airpower during the past few decades--what is the big deal?

Because the world is changing, the USAF must change not only in size, but also in focus. Since the end of World War II the Air Force has prepared mainly to deter and counter the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. We have dealt with a "set piece" scenario which has not changed in over 40 years. The Air Force's role has been relatively consistent throughout--as has pertinent geography, adversary doctrine, force ratios, technology advantages, etc. During this period the USAF knew what part it had to play and effectively organized, trained and equipped to meet the challenge. The future may be one without a monolithic Soviet threat. It certainly will be more complex and resource limited. The dominant role airpower played in Desert Storm may lead DOD force planners and Congress to believe future national military strategies should depend more on airpower than has been the case in the past. Airpower expertise and visionary leadership are needed to effectively adapt our force.

MORE REASONS TO STUDY AIRPOWER

I believe there are at least three more important reasons USAF professionals must understand airpower. They are: retention, unity of spirit and the understanding of roles and mission throughout the USAF and development of future visionary leaders. Too many outstanding officers and pilots are leaving the USAF for other careers. Many have the talent to be

exceptional leaders. Most, if not all, are true patriots and would willingly lay their life on the line, if their country called. They consider themselves warriors and fighter pilots and they are. But, in the end, that ideal was not significant enough to make them want to be a part of the USAF for an entire career. Perhaps, some would still "be in" if they were raised in a climate in which airpower, and what it does for the nation, was the central theme of our organization's culture. The zeal and spirit of Billy Mitchell and his followers are gone forever, but some of it needs to return.

In my opinion, the Air Force is too fragmented. I believe we are too divided between disciplines and levels of command. Fighter pilots know little about what airlifters do for the entire war effort. Airlifters know little about what interdiction and close support are. Neither know much about what their General Officers do. An understanding of and belief in airpower can serve as a force to unify our service in both spirit and understanding. We have a tough problem. To explain, I must first describe the Army's more favorable unifying environment. The battlefield, for the Army, is an easily seen, unifying concept which draws all soldiers, no matter what their rank or job, together in a common, noble cause and understanding of purpose. All soldiers, whether in combat arms, combat support or combat service support, a Private or General Officer, must work in unison and support each other <u>on the battlefield</u>. Most in the Army know where they fit and how important they are to the whole institution.

The Air Force does not have one piece of geography, like the Army's battlefield, to bond the force and create that one common perspective. Our sophisticated equipment, diverse roles and missions, and the different environments in which we conduct wartime operations, make it difficult for our various disciplines to gain a true appreciation for each other's contributions. Since few officers at the tactical level understand how all elements of airpower come together, it is difficult for them to appreciate what higher levels of command or General Officers might be doing to foster it. However, all disciplines within the USAF and all levels of command do have a common ground--it is, the development and, if necessary, the direct application of airpower during armed conflict. A deep appreciation of what airpower is (and does), is the unifying element the battlefield (and landpower) is for the Army. Airpower is harder to visualize, but the validity and nobility of the cause is just as real and understanding it, in its totality, is vital for overall USAF cohesion and the development of future operational level airpower leaders.

The operational level of war is the first instance where <u>all</u> elements of the USAF come together at the theater level. Few would argue that the operational level of war and operational art are complex concepts to grasp. A lifetime of study is needed to be a world class expert in the field (as a historian, for instance). Exceptional native talent is also required to be a General Officer and an effective <u>practitioner</u> of the art--such a combination is rarely found; however, thank goodness it is. Few

would also challenge the argument that airpower is a complex concept.

My point is that when airpower is applied at the operational level, during war, it requires the blending of two highly sophisticated concepts which are brought together in the most ambiguous and stressful environment mankind can create. To do it effectively requires visionary operational level leaders who can never be sufficiently prepared for their task--after all, thousands of lives can depend on the outcome, not to mention the fate of future generations. Fifteen or 20 years of military service is too late to start developing an appreciation of these complex insights. Future USAF operational level leaders need to study the operational level of war and airpower throughout their career, not just during PME or in the later stages of their career.

PERCEIVED PROBLEM #2: Developing the "Ability to Extract Maximum in Fighting Qualities From Men and Equipment"

The USAF needs to refine its leadership doctrine and make leadership development a higher priority. There is no doubt the USAF values the importance of competent leaders. The best, brightest and most qualified men and women are selected for command positions. Career paths are tailored to develop the necessary background for select leadership jobs. Time, manpower and dollars are spent to make PME a leadership development tool. The best performers are selected for the most responsible jobs. However, I and others think more can be done to enhance USAF

leadership doctrine and training, especially, when you look at other service programs.

This discussion treats leadership development from two perspectives. The first views three service doctrines to compare qualitative differences in their vision of leadership. The second perspective, while also qualitative, will additionally encompass a quantitative comparison between USAF and Army leadership development programs.

A comparison of service leadership doctrine is enlightening. When reading them, note differences in tone, focus, emphasis on imagination and boldness and the priority given to the human element of leadership over other factors.

In my view, the USAF definition of leadership, though comprehensive, is antiseptic and does not adequately describe the character a leader must possess. The USAF definition focuses on the leadership process, intellectual requirements and skills. It leaves out "the man" and key human elements warfighting leaders must possess, such as courage and determination.

USAF Air Force Manual (AFM) 1-1 Vol. II (Draft) describes leadership as follows:

> Successful military leadership requires a professional mode of thinking and acting...military leaders must foster cohesion...specific intellectual prerequisites are required for sound employment of the military instrument. They include understanding the principles of war...the characteristics of their branch of service...and the enemy. Military leaders must have mental agility...think creatively. Although such thinking can not be taught, it can be developed by the individual and fostered by the military education system.[8]

Though it says the right words, as a combat veteran, I find the tone of the USAF definition flat, lacking inspiration and a warfighting spirit. It is written from the "head" and leaves out the subjective "heart and gut" that often separates the character of a combat leader from a peacetime manager.

While Air Force doctrine leaves out "the man," the Marine Corps focuses on the character and skill a leader must possess. Its emphasis on boldness highlights the fact that human imagination and spirit are often decisive in combat, especially if one's resources are limited. The Marine Corps' definition also recognizes the required environment future leaders must be brought up in.

U.S. Marine Corps FMFM-1, Warfighting, defines leadership as follows:

> Marine Corps doctrine demands professional competence among its leaders. As military professionals charged with the defense of the nation, Marine leaders must be true experts in the conduct of war. They must be men of action and of intellect both, skilled at "getting things done" while at the same time conversant in the military art. Resolute and self-reliant in their decisions, they must also be energetic and insistent in execution.
>
> The Marine Corps' style of warfare requires intelligent leaders with a penchant for boldness. Boldness is an essential moral trait...it generates combat power beyond the physical means at hand...it is a Marine's duty to take the initiative...Trust is...essential... among leaders--and is the product of confidence and familiarity. Relations among all leaders...should be based on honesty and frankness.[9]

The U.S. Army's definition of leadership not only focuses on the character and skills a leader must possess, but also

emphasizes the importance of leadership. Army FM 100-5 defines leadership as follows:

> The most essential element of combat power is competent and confident leadership. Leadership provides purpose, direction, and motivation in combat. It is the leader who will determine the degree to which maneuver, firepower, and protection are maximized; who will ensure these elements are effectively balanced; and who will decide how to bring them to bear against the enemy. Only excellence in the art and science of war will enable the commander to generate and apply combat power successfully... All leaders must be men of character; they must know and understand soldiers and the mateiral tools of war. They must act with courage and conviction in the uncertainty and confusion of battle.
>
> In the final analysis and once the force is engaged, superior combat power derives from the courage and competence of soldiers, the excellence of their training, the capability of their equipment, the soundness of their combined arms doctrine, and above all the quality of their leadership.[10]

The three service definitions have many elements in common, yet, it is obvious, there are differences in emphasis, focus and tone--especially, between the USAF and the Marines and the Army. What accounts for these differences? Factors which first come to mind are the basic characteristics which make each service unique. The USAF has the strongest focus and dependence on technology and material resources. The Marines, an expeditionary force, are always lightly equipped and must be able to cope with the great uncertainty of forced entry. Although a combined arms force, the Marines' primary fighting element is the man and the rifle. The Army, our most manpower intensive force, naturally highlights the human element of leadership.

I believe history and post-World War II experiences also create differences. Army and Marine leadership doctrine is based on ground and amphibious warfare--warfare whose basic characteristics have not changed in hundreds of years. There is no doubt the Air Force definition recognizes the nature of war in its broadest implications. Yet, in my view, there is something missing--an emphasis on the character and the importance of the leader. Why? I attribute the differences to USAF's experience since World War II. During the early days of World War II, the Army Air Corps was resource limited. Airpower leaders were forced to develop new concepts, take risks, and make daring moves to, at first, cope with enemy aggression and then take the initiative. Since World War II, airpower leaders have not had to fight a superior air force or one that has seized the initiative. A favorable correlation of forces during low or mid intensity conflicts (Vietnam, Iraq), political constraints (Vietnam) and the static, bi-polar environment of the Cold War have lessened the visibility or possibly the perceived requirement for leadership traits such as boldness and vision. Most within the USAF today would agree that our leaders have done a great job of building a modern, ready and sustainable force, on a scale that can effectively counter Soviet aggression and dominate anyone else. However, is the USAF doing an equally fine job of developing the kind of leadership that would be necessary to "carry the day" if imaginative, bold leadership were required in the future? I personally do not believe the USAF has focused on leadership development as much as it has on other elements of

combat capability, and that this has occurred because we have not had to in the last 40 plus years. I additionally believe our leadership doctrine, training programs and culture reflect this. Unfortunately, times are changing, resources will soon be extremely limited and we will need leaders who can do more with much less. As a result, the USAF needs to shift its thinking and place more emphasis on the human element of warfare, by refining its leadership doctrine and training and placing a higher priority on leadership development.

The U.S. Army places a great deal of emphasis on leadership development--much more than the USAF. The Army, since 1980, develops its force with a Concept Based Requirements System (CBRS). This process attempts to develop feasible solutions to resolve perceived deficiencies in the force by properly balancing material systems, organizations, training and doctrine. When developing the Army Program Objective Memorandum (POM), Army planners analyze the following areas to determine required funding levels: doctrine, organization, equipment, training and leadership development.[11] Simply put, the Army views leadership as a vital, discrete element of warfighting capability which must be consistently monitored, as an entity unto itself, and appropriately managed. As a result, leadership development is an enduring concept and imperative throughout the Army culture. How is this philosophy reflected in Army leadership development training and programs?

The Army, like the USAF, has PME courses for company, junior and senior field grade officers. Leadership training is

an essential element in each. The services "part company" when it comes to pre-command leadership training, leadership training during operational assignments and leadership training and feedback loops. The Army provides resident pre-command training, many times for wives, before an officer reports to a new command. As a squadron commander, I attended a course 7 months after taking command. By then, I had already learned too many lessons by trial and error. Many USAF squadron commanders never get an opportunity to attend a course. Army pre-command courses exist for all levels of command. The Army has also developed extensive feedback loops and information subsystems so lessons learned by commanders can be recorded and passed on to future leaders.

Army officers receive leadership training as a routine part of their operational assignments. During an interview, a past battalion commander informed me that he held leadership development training once a month for his officers. He noted that this was typical for Army commanders. The contents of these sessions ranged from operational tasks to professional development, ethics and officership. He also stated that approximately 70 percent of the discussions were related to generic leadership subjects and only 30 percent to the operational tasks specific to his unit.[12] There have not been specific unit leadership development meetings in organizations I have been in. After listening to Army students at the War College, I have concluded that Army officers are just as busy as USAF officers. They hold leadership development meetings because they believe they are an important priority and schedule them well in advance.

"Top-down" U.S. Army leadership development emphasis is articulated in the Army Chief of Staff's "Six Imperatives." This guidance is for Army planners to follow during the forthcoming "builddown." It states: "as the Army manages these reductions there are several imperatives that will be vigorously pursued... high unit readiness and quality force standards; tough, realistic training; high quality of life for soldiers and families; solid doctrine; force modernization and development of competent, confident leaders will be ensured."[13] It's interesting to note that the new USAF Chief of Staff also has three imperatives or themes for the future. They are: integrity, openness and restructuring.[14] I personally believe the USAF needs to add a fourth theme--enhanced airpower leadership development.

Having registered my concern about the USAF's insufficient focus on airpower and leadership development, it is time to illustrate, through an analysis of General Kenney's exploits, how important mastery over these factors are. Again, I will first describe the challenges General Kenney faced when he reported for duty in the SWPA. This will be followed by a description of his decisive leadership.

THE ULTIMATE AIRPOWER LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE: AGGRESSIVE VISION

General Kenney's initial situation in the SWPA probably constituted one of, if not the greatest, operational challenges a wartime air component commander has faced. This segment describes the enormity of that challenge and establishes a common frame of reference for understanding the types of issues senior

air leaders may have to resolve. It also provides the necessary background required to fully appreciate Kenney's talent and highly successful application of operational art. The scope of Kenney's problems might be best understood, if the reader, when contemplating Kenney's plight, compares Kenney's situation with the Allied Air Commander, Lt. General Horner, in South West Asia today. The contrast will be discussed later in the paper.

When Kenney arrived in the Pacific, his command was in a defensive posture. The United States and its Allies were unprepared for war in the Pacific. The Japanese were on the offense, trying to expand and consolidate their outer defense perimeter around the home islands. Washington had already adopted a Europe-first policy. The Strategic Bombing Survey, conducted after the war, noted that the Allies totally underestimated the Japanese. Allied strategy in the Pacific was still unclear. Planners thought Malaya and Singapore would hold. They also believed if we could engage Japanese naval forces in the mid-Pacific, we could immediately follow up with attacks directly on Japan.[15] Kenney's Allied Air Force had been poorly led. The organization was in disarray and had no strategic or operational direction. Personnel, logistics and supply problems were horrendous and there were insufficient operational planes to get the job done.

Kenney arrived in Brisbane, Australia, July 1942 to assume the role of Allied Air Commander for the South West Pacific area. He faced historic challenges. The enemy had the initiative. The Japanese had captured the Philippines, most of New Guinea, and

the islands north east of Australia--the Solomons and Guadalcanal. Their obvious intent was to close Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) between Australia and the West Coast of the United States. Some positive news did exist. The Navy had recently won both the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of midway. The prominence of U.S. airpower in naval warfare had made its first appearance.

In the air, the Japanese Army and Navy air arms had successfully done their part for the expansion of the Empire. They had won air superiority over the Philippines, Malaya, and the Netherland East Indies. An enormous Japanese naval and air base complex had been established on Rabaul. From it flowed ground forces, supplies and offensive air operations covering the Bismarck Archipelago, the north coast of New Guinea and the Solomons. Port Moresby and Northern Australian cities were subjected to Japanese bombing raids. On the ground, the Japanese landed forces on the north coast of New Guinea and they were advancing over the Owen Stanley Mountains towards Port Moresby. All feared Northern Australia was in jeopardy.[16]

The unique geography of the SWPA was a challenge for both Japanese and Allied forces. Areas in which forces could subsist in large numbers were essentially isolated by vast distances, rugged mountains, jungles and oceans. Kenney's first headquarters in Brisbane was 1,000 miles from the fighting in New Guinea. The supply centers for New Guinea-based B-17s were initially located 3,500 miles away in Southern Australia.[17] Large ground force movements and resupply were, most often,

accomplished by sea lift. The unique nature of Kenney's theater played heavily in the Allied strategy, operational planning, force structure, equipment modifications and logistics.

Kenney found Allied command lines divided and the Pacific strategy in a state of flux. The newly established Joint Chiefs had divided the Pacific into three commands--the SWPA commanded by General MacArthur, the South Pacific Area at first commanded by Vice Admiral Ghormley and subsequently Admiral Halsey and the Central Pacific commanded by Admiral Chester Nimitz (See Figure 1). MacArthur's initial operational concept focused on a ground campaign with a thrust from New Guinea to the Philippines in order to "open the door" for an invasion of the "home islands." Admiral Ghormley's initial objective was the reduction of Rabaul. Admiral Nimitz, with the support of Admiral King, the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO), wanted to avoid MacArthur's plan, claiming attrition would be too high. Instead, he proposed strikes across the Central Pacific, through the Marshall Islands, to the Marianas, and then to the Philippines, using fast carrier task forces, airpower and amphibious assault groups. They felt an island-hopping strategy could be adopted, by passing Japanese strong points. The Joint Chiefs compromised and adopted Nimitz's and MacArthur's strategy.[18]

Kenney was greeted by a hostile boss. MacArthur had just fired Kenney's predecessor, Lt. General George H. Brett, and had little use for senior Air Corps officers. He had real doubts about their competency and loyalty. MacArthur knew little about airpower. His experience was limited to witnessing the Japanese

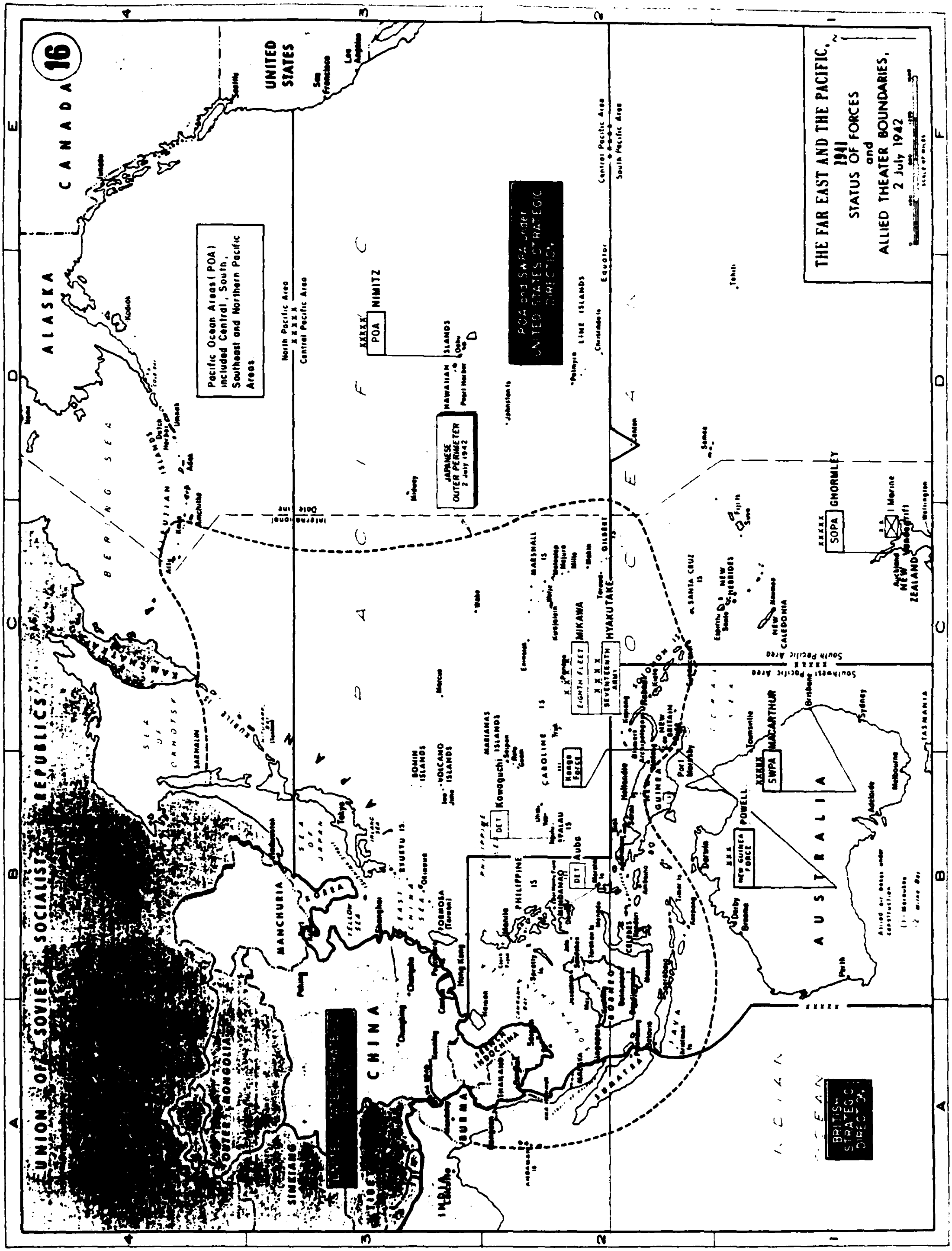
THE FAR EAST AND THE PACIFIC, 1941
STATUS OF FORCES
and
ALLIED THEATER BOUNDARIES,
2 July 1942
Pacific Ocean Areas (POA) included Central, South, Southeast and Northern Pacific Areas.
POA and SWPA under UNITED STATES STRATEGIC DIRECTION
BRITISH STRATEGIC DIRECTION
JAPANESE OUTER PERIMETER 2 July 1942
POA NIMITZ
SOPA GHORMLEY
SWPA MACARTHUR
NEW GUINEA FORCE
POWELL
EIGHTH FLEET MIKAWA
SEVENTEENTH ARMY HYAKUTAKE
UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS
CHINA
AUSTRALIA
ALASKA
CANADA
UNITED STATES

Figure 1

Air Force crush Allied air in the Philippines. He was not impressed with the occasional, ineffectual raids mounted by his SWPA Air Corps.[19]

MacArthur's staff knew little about airpower, yet attempted to autocratically run the Air Corps. Lt. General Richard Sutherland, MacArthur's Chief of Staff, for all practical purposes took over the reins of the SWPA Air Corps from a weak and unprepared leader--Brett. MacArthur and Brett never talked. Sutherland had flown a few missions in training planes and believed he knew how to task the Air Corps. In MacArthur's name, Sutherland issued extremely detailed orders to the Air Corps including targets, bomb loads, altitudes, formations and air speeds. Brett sheepishly complied as best he could.[20]

Kenney found the Air Corps staff poorly organized and motivated. A directorate system was used consisting of numerous duplicate functions. Kenny had difficulty getting good information or recommendations. Poor decisions were made at lower levels without his knowledge. Basically, it was an ineffective organization and hard to control. Things had to change and they did.[21]

Kenney's personnel problems were severe. His pilots were less experienced than the enemy and many were sick or had low morale. The Strategic Bombing Survey notes that Japanese Army pilots averaged 500 hours and Navy pilots 600 hours before combat.[22] American and Australian pilots averaged less than 450 hours. In The MacArthur I Knew, Kenney notes that conditions in New Guinea were terrible. Many of his pilots had lost 15-20

pounds because of malaria and dysentery. His pilots rarely got fresh meat, there were rat droppings in the food storage areas and the lack of screens on mess halls exposed men and food to insects and disease.[23]

Most of the men, and their commanders, were inherited from Brett and were tired veterans of the Java Campaign. Kenney noted in an interview that few had faith in their senior leaders because, "Brett never had the kids' confidence as a combat leader."[24] Throughout the command, discipline, morale, training and the maintenance of equipment were poor. Saluting, appearance and general behavior were the same.[25]

Kenney also found an interesting language and organizational problem. Australian and American personnel were totally integrated within the Air Corps. Australian weathermen briefed American pilots. American and Australian fighter pilots were mixed within the same formations. Even B-17 crews had a mixture of Australian and American crewmembers. It did not take Kenney long to observe that different cultural backgrounds and unique language phraseology were reducing mission effectiveness. As a result, Kenney created the purely American manned 5th Air Force and the Royal Australian Air Corps.[26]

On paper, the Japanese had approximately five times more aircraft available. Actually things were worse. Kenney's 5th Air Force inventory consisted of the following airplanes. (P-400s were the export model of the P-39):

Fighters		
P-39s	27	
P-40s	115	
P-400s	103	
Total		245
Light bombers		
A-20s	38	
A-24s	15	
Total		70
Medium bombers		
B-17s		62
Transports		
(all types)		36
Total tactical aircraft		466
Miscellaneous aircraft		51
Grand total		517

The Royal Australian Air Force had a total of 70 planes, mostly P-40s, plus a few Hudsons, Catalinas, Beauforts and Beaufighters.[27] About two-thirds of all these planes were unable to fly. They were awaiting parts, undergoing overhaul, needing gun installations or ready for salvage. Only four of 62 B-17s were able to fly--many were missing tail wells, props or needed new engines. In Kenney's words, "It was a hell of a mess."[28]

Kenney found a supply system that was improperly set up and poorly run. His supply centers were concentrated in Takomara, Australia, 3,500 miles from the fighting. According to Kenney,

> people wanted to keep the stuff and wouldn't forward requested items because they knew we were going to get thrown out of New Guinea and the war was going to be fought in Australia. Supply personnel wanted the stuff where it belonged. They'd deny requests saying the incoming request didn't include a part number, or that they were taking inventory...or not respond at all.[29]

Although things would start to improve in late 1943, Kenney found little comfort in the support he was getting from General "Hap" Arnold (the Air Corps Chief of Staff) during the early days

of the SWPA campaign. Arnold's direction to Kenney were: "conduct defensive operations with intermittent offensive strokes."[30] Because of a lack of radar, the terrain, limited forces, and the vast distances of the theater, Kenney felt the only good defense in the SWPA was a good offense. General MacArthur would soon side with his air commander.

The 5th Air Force lost 60 planes in November 1942 to enemy and operational causes. Kenney received 20 replacements from the states. He not only needed replacements, he needed significantly more fighters, bombers, reconnaissance aircraft as well as bombs and radars. Arnold's negative response to Kenney's requests complied with the Europe-first strategy. Arnold stated: "the U.S. needed to have enough forces concentrated in Europe for a quick, complete victory...can't go on offense in all theaters."[31] Fortunately, President Roosevelt had made aircraft production the nation's highest manufacturing priority.

DECISIVE AIRPOWER LEADERSHIP IN ACTION

"AGGRESSIVE VISION"

When Kenney arrived in the Pacific, he had to deal with one of the greatest challenges an operational airpower leader can face. This segment describes how Kenney "turned a bad situation around" and, in fact, became an important architect for building a strategy and forces that would be victorious in the Pacific. This section discusses overall Pacific strategy, MacArthur's SWPA strategy, MacArthur's and Kenney's relationship and how Kenney

built 5th Air Force. It concludes with a piece on Kenney's masterful application of operational art.

THE PACIFIC AND MACARTHUR'S SWPA STRATEGY

The goal (ends) of Allied Pacific strategy stayed the same throughout the war--unconditional surrender of Japan. As the war progressed, necessary courses of action (means) to achieve this end were modified as adversary capabilities changed and the Japanese and Allies responded to each other's actions. Throughout the war planners believed a direct attack and invasion of the Japanese home islands were necessary for decisive victory. As discussed earlier, the Central Pacific Command felt a predominantly naval thrust across the middle of the Pacific was the least expensive and most efficient means to penetrate to the heart of the empire. MacArthur, on the other hand, felt a ground campaign (through New Guinea and the Philippines) supported by naval and air forces, was the key to reaching the home islands. MacArthur's initial strategy gave little credence to airpower.

A synthesis of the Strategic Bombing Survey's analysis of the Pacific war attributes Japanese defeat to the following (my paraphrasing):

1. A direct attack on Japan was necessary, but first Allied forces had to weaken Japanese capability and will to resist.

2. Air superiority over the home islands was necessary.

3. The bomber line had to advance across the Pacific to eventually cover Japan.

4. The home islands had to be isolated.

5. The Japanese Air Force and merchant shipping had to be eliminated.

6. Japan's industry and fuel supply had to be degraded.

7. Japanese ground forces had to be isolated and not allowed to concentrate on the home islands.

What was MacArthur's initial vision and campaign strategy? The key elements of his plan were to: defend/keep Australia, establish control of Eastern New Guinea (Papua), contribute to the neutralization of Rabaul and New Britain, drive west along the North Coast of New Guinea and ultimately north to the Philippines. Thereafter, invade Japan.[32]

I believe Kenney's first major accomplishment was reshaping MacArthur's vision of his SWPA campaign strategy. MacArthur initially focused on a ground campaign. Kenney, and the capability he developed within 5th Air Force, influenced MacArthur's thinking and shifted his emphasis from a ground campaign to one with a heavy reliance on airpower.

The MacArthur-Kenney Relationship and The Evolution of SWPA Strategy

Kenney first met with MacArthur on 29 July 1942. Kenney later recalled:

> I listened to a lecture for approximately an hour on the shortcomings of the Air Force in general and the Allied Air Force in the South West Pacific in particular. The air forces had done nothing at all, and most air generals should never have held such high ranks in the first place. Kenney finally interrupted and told MacArthur candidly that he intended to run air operations. As for loyalty, if for any reason he found he couldn't work with him or be loyal, he would tell him so and do everything in his power to get relieved. MacArthur grinned and put his hand on Kenney's shoulder and said, 'I think we are going to get along all right.'[33]

That first meeting set the tone for the effective relationship which quickly developed. It immediately ensured Kenney's direct access to MacArthur and his sole control of the air arm. Sutherland, MacArthur's Chief of Staff, ceased running the air corps.

MacArthur and Kenney built a CINC/Air Commander relationship, a strategy and an air force that helped carry them successfully north west to Japan. The first thing Kenney made clear to MacArthur was the absolute requirement to control the air by going on the offensive. The most efficient means was to strike the Japanese Air Force on the ground by hitting aerodromes. He also explained that air must attack shipping and supply lines, support ground troops and hit enemy troop concentrations. MacArthur listened. During the next nine months Kenney and his air force accomplished the following:

1. Successfully supported the invasion of Guadalcanal by destroying 75 Japanese planes on the ground and eleven in the air on the morning of the assault.

2. Gained local air superiority over northern Australia and Eastern New Guinea.

3. Reinforced Port Moresby.

4. Helped turn back an attack on Port Moresby by Japanese ground forces infiltrating over the Owen Stanley Mountains--provided close support and interdirected enemy supplies.

5. Used air lift for the first time to help envelop an enemy force, at Buna, and resupply soldiers on the ground.

6. Used air to isolate (seige tactics) enemy ground forces by effectively interdicting enemy shipping.

Herman Wolk, in his piece on Kenney, noted:

Kenney grew to be 'sympatico' with his boss--MacArthur.

> Kenney's ideas were perfectly tailored to MacArthur's philosophy...Kenney supplied the air strategy, logistics and operational competence MacArthur needed.[34]

In his book, The MacArthur I Knew, Kenney had many complimentary words about his boss. They grew to trust each other's judgment and developed a loyal bond. Kenney states:

> MacArthur was fun to work for...he was loyal, if he trusted you, to a fault...he never gave direct orders...yet, his intent and direction were always crystal clear...I admired him as a general, liked him as a man and was inspired by his innate gift of leadership.[35]

Kenney also described their effective method of planning. Kenney notes the following:

> We would talk anywhere to clarify ideas. We would talk well ahead of time...weeks, often months. We would work out the ideas well ahead of time then give the concept to our staffs to work out the details. The plans were flexible and easily changed to capitalize on Japanese mistakes or take immediate advantage of any change in the situation.[36]

After the first 9 months, MacArthur had full confidence in his air commander and the 5th Air Force. On one occasion, a newsman asked MacArthur where his bombers were dropping their bombs. MacArthur replied, he didn't know, but he was sure they were in the right place. The newsman pressed the issue and MacArthur told him to find Kenney and ask him, since "he's in charge of the air corps."[37]

After arresting Japanese initiative, MacArthur and Kenney developed a strategy they would use, with one exception (Leyte Gulf), until VJ Day. It was keyed to offensive thrusts and linked to the radius of action of 5th Air Force planes. It included:

1. advancing air fields towards Japan for air control

2. bypassing strongpoints and isolating ground forces - "island hopping."

3. attacking shipping and supply lines

4. striking aerodromes and destroying enemy air planes on the ground.

5. supplying close support and striking troop concentrations.[38]

The method MacArthur, Kenney and MacArthur's ground and naval commanders used to advance the "bomb-line" often involved unified action and amphibious assaults. Kenney's air force would hit and neutralize enemy positions flanking the objective. Air and naval gunfire support would "soften" up enemy resistance. Carrier and land-based air would then provide close support to ground forces moving inland. Once control of the occupied territory was achieved, a new airfield was built and the process repeated.[39]

MacArthur's strategy worked and was used up to the invasion of the Philippines in October 1944. Allied forces relentlessly moved northwest. After neutralizing Rabaul and Wewal from the air, MacArthur's forces occupied Hollandia and its airfields. Allied forces took Wakde, Biak, Owi, Woendi, and Noemfoor islands, off the north coast of New Guiea, important for their airstrips. Sansapor and Moratai were also occupied. During the island hopping campaign, landings were virtually unopposed, although heavy fighting usually took place inland. Huge numbers of Japanese forces were left behind in New Guinea, New Britain,

New Ireland, Solomons and other isolated positions to "die on the vine."[40] The forces of the SWPA, South and Central Pacific were joined in the Philippines and thereafter fought together in the push towards Japan.

"EXACTING THE MAXIMUM IN FIGHTING QUALITIES FROM MEN AND EQUIPMENT"

One of Kenney's greatest achievement was the creation and development of 5th Air Force. The magnitude of this accomplishment is most clearly seen when considering that Kenney and the SWPA command accomplished this task while fighting for their lives. Kenney literally started from scratch and had minimal support from the United States. The SWPA, like the entire US military establishment, was strategically surprised at the beginning of the Pacific War and had no planning time. There was no advanced mobilization in the Pacific. As he organized, trained and better equipped his force, Kenney had to adapt his campaign planning to compensate for limited equippage and manning. He also had to modify his equipment to cope with the vast distances in his theater, his enemy vulnerabilities and the limited number of aircraft he possessed.

Kenney created the 5th Air Force within a few days of his arrival. The first thing he did, with MacArthur's support, was to get rid of "dead wood"--3 Generals and 40 LtCols and Cols. He subdivided the Air Force into the 5th Bomber Command under Brig-General Kenneth Walker and the 5th Fighter Command, Brig. General

Paul B. Wurtsmith, Commander. Kenney affectionately referred to Wurtsmith as a "reformed bad boy and thief."[41]

Kenney's headquarters in Brisbane was over 1,000 miles from the fighting in New Guinea. To compensate, he appointed Brig. General Ennis C. Whitehead, Commander 5th Air Force Advanced Echelon, in Port Moresby. Kenney had tremendous faith in Whitehead and thought he was the rough, aggressive operational type leader he needed. Kenney had observed Whitehead during the interwar years and liked what he saw. Kenney forwarded general operational-type directions, allowing his subordinate maximum flexibility. They talked daily and maintained a close personal and professional relationship throughout the war.[42]

Kenney quickly reorganized his staff and the logistic system. Personnel that did not agree with changes or did not do their part were fired. Kenney had MacArthur's and "Hap" Arnold's full support. Kenney reduced layering in his staff and made it very responsive to his directions. Supply centers were moved north to Brisbane and later to the North Coast of Australia.

Fresh pilots were brought to the SWPA. Living conditions improved with better food, lodging and messing facilities. Kenney initiated an "R and R" rotation policy to Sydney and stuck by his men when they got in trouble, "over-relaxing." An awards program was adopted to provide the appropriate recognition the men deserved for heroic deeds. MacArthur often participated. Kenney trained his pilots as best he could. After late 1943, he felt newly arriving pilots generally needed a 6-week work-up before entering combat. He had them practice with captured

Zeroes, flown by experts using Japanese maneuvers and tactics. Gun cameras were used to evaluate the training.[43]

Imaginative tactics and equipment modifications were adopted to compensate for drastic shortages. The 5th Air Force had insufficient bombers to depend on the inaccurate high altitude bombing technique used in Europe. Fortunately, the intensity of "flak" was lower in the Pacific. Kenney directed his bombers to use low altitude bombing deliveries. The greater accuracy achieved multiplied the effectiveness of his force. His people also developed a low altitude "skip bombing" technique--used against ships. A "parafrag" bomb was also developed. It had a parachute which opened immediately after release. The low flying plane was able to get away before the bomb, slowed by the parachute, hit the ground and exploded. Lt. Col. "Pappy" Gunn, one of Kenney's maintenance officers, developed modifications for placing heavy guns in the noses of B-25s, B-24s, and B-17s. This allowed bombers to suppress enemy anti-aircraft fire as they made low altitude bombing attacks on enemy shipping. This modification substantially increased the lethality and survivability of Kenney's bombers.[44]

Kenney also wanted to increase the range of all his aircraft. He contracted with Ford of Australia to build internal and external fuel tanks. He also invited Charles Lindbergh to the SWPA to teach his pilots how to best manage their fuel systems, to squeeze the maximum possible range from their aircraft. According to Kenney, P-38 combat radius went up from 350 to 550-600 miles.[45]

Kenney made two trips to Washington, D.C. in an effort to get more aircraft, bombs and racks. His first trip back was in March 1943. He briefed Marshall, King, Arnold and Leahy. He also spoke with the Secretary of War, Henry Stimson, and President Roosevelt, before leaving. The strength of Kenney's character and logic got more planes for the SWPA, even when limited production meant most planes went to Europe. By 1944, aircraft production was "on track" and he was getting what he needed. The one exception was the B-29. They went to China and the Central Pacific.

Within one month after his arrival, Kenney had formed good working relations with his boss and those who worked for him. He reshaped the strategy for the use of airpower in the Pacific. And, he created and started the development of what was to become one of the most distinguished fighting organizations in the war--the 5th Air Force.

One night, after the invasion of the Philippines, Kenney stopped by MacArthur's room. The Leyte invasion had been accomplished without land-based air cover and naval air was not pervasive enough to stop Japanese air attacks. 5th Air Force P-38s had just started arriving that afternoon and immediately went to work on gaining air superiority. Kenney notes:

> Before turning in that night I dropped into General MacArthur's room for a chat. He looked up as I came in and put down the book he had been reading. It was the life of General Robert E. Lee.
>
> 'George,' he said. 'I've been reading about a remarkable coincidence. When Stonewall Jackson was dying, the last words he said were, 'Tell A.P. Hill to bring up his infantry. Years later, when Lee died, his

last words were, 'Hill, bring up the infantry.' He paused, lit his pipe, took a few puffs, and continued, 'If I should die today, or tomorrow or any time, if you listen to my last words you'll hear me say, 'George, bring up the Fifth Air Force.'

For a few hours, like everyone else he had been worried. Everything was all right now. The Jap fleet was out of the way; his troops had some rough fighting ahead of them but that was not serious. Now the AF had arrived. He had a lot of faith in what the AF could do for him and he was not going to be concerned any longer about the Jap air attacks. He had returned and this time he was going to stay."[46]

The 5th Air Force wrote a new chapter in airpower. One of its fighter pilots, Richard Bong, became the leading U.S. ace of all times with 40 kills. Kenney knew how to "extract maximum fighting qualities from men and equipment."

"MASTERY OVER AIR STRATEGY (OPERATIONAL ART) AND TACTICS"

Kenney's unique mastery of operational art is illustrated in four ways. They are: One, his ability to accurately "read" and understand the military value of friendly and enemy capabilities, geography and the time and space considerations he was dealt; two, his ability to accurately identify enemy centers of gravity; three, his ability to disregard current norms or doctrine and look for new possibilities and four, the imaginative and novel ways he employed forces to compensate for limited resources.

Kenney quickly realized the SWPA was a unique theater in which suitable military bases were few and remote. The most economic means of supplying large forces was by ship. Ships, having relatively slow loading, transit and unload times, were at

risk when within range of air attack. Given the ranges and speeds of aircraft in the SWPA, no base or battlefield could be logistically supported without air superiority. Kenney understood that the SWPA was a maritime theater, but one that could be dominated by airpower.[47]

He also quickly identified the center of gravity for air superiority in the SWPA--the vulnerability of air bases. Neither Allied nor Japanese forces had enough early warning or sufficient depth to defend their airfields from attack. Both sides had bases near coastlines. In New Guinea, terrain and jungle made any radar warning network largely ineffective. Realizing this, Kenney perceived that the relative vulnerability of airbases was the key to controlling New Guinea, and persuaded MacArthur that a drive to establish new bases was a worthwhile theater aim.[48]

Kenney understood the strength of his enemy. The Japanese outnumbered him, had shorter supply lines, had the ability to mass forces and, at first, had the ability to strike him at will. He also observed the enemy's weaknesses--their piecemeal attacks, their inability to handle large formations, their resistance to follow-up a successful attack with more and their apparent inability to learn from past mistakes or surprises.[49]

In order to gain the advantage, Kenney frequently used reconnaissance aircraft to keep him abreast of enemy force dispositions. He tailored his missions, timed his strikes and ideally positioned his forces. He continually surprised the Japanese. His limited resources drove him to employ "economy of force" measures, attack only key centers of gravity and use mass

to inflict the maximum damage with minimal losses. As noted earlier, he modified equipment and tactics to do the best possible job with the modest equipment he had.

The 5th Air Force Commander did not allow current doctrine to inhibit his thinking or actions. In the United States Army Air Corps in 1942, the following assumptions were common:

> The critical task for an air commander was selecting targets for his bombers; fighters were effective primarily in the air defense role; air lift was for speeding critical resources to secure bases; and, because of the differences in their performance, transports, bombers, and fighters were best used separately. The circumstances Kenney faced compelled him to discard all these assumptions.[50]

It was also a commonly-held belief, in those days, that air superiority was won by fighters in a defensive counterair campaign (e.g., the Battle of Britain).

Kenney quickly "broke the mold." Within days of his arrival, he employed a new technique for winning air superiority. It appears his predecessor did not understand the importance of air superiority or how to achieve it with the resources he had. Brett made little progress in thwarting Japanese air attacks. His air defense was totally ineffective. He launched B-17s against enemy aerodromes but only four to six at a time, because of maintenance and supply problems. He sent his bombers without fighter escort. The results were pitiful. Many bombers were shot down, and the few which got through had minimal affect on Japanese capability.

MacArthur's new Air Commander took decisive action. He held his bombers on the ground until enough were ready to fly.

On August 7, 1942, 18 B-17s from the Nineteenth Bomb Group launched to strike Rabaul in support of the Marine landings at Guadalcanal. One crashed after takeoff and one had to turn back with engine problems. The B-17s had fighter escort. The formation was met over the target--Rabaul's largest bomber base, Vunakanau--by 20 Japanese Zeroes. One B-17 was shot down and 11 Zeroes met the same fate. They found Japanese bombers lined up wingtip-to-wingtip--75 were destroyed. The raid and destruction of Japanese forces eased enemy pressure on the Marines at Guadalcanal, significantly raised 5th Air Force morale and established the pattern Kenney would use to win air superiority in the SWPA.[51] It also exemplified Kenney's understanding of key centers of gravity, and the importance of offense and mass. He masterfully shaped the outcome of events by not attacking until the time was right and he had enough forces for decisive action. It also illustrated his ability to formulate new concepts--in this case, fighter escort--to preserve limited resources and maximize desired mission objectives.

The defense of Port Moresby, later in August, is another example of Kenney's unique application of airpower. In an excellent paper on Kenney, Charles Westenhoff notes that a Japanese infantry division was pushing south to take Port Moresby. Japanese air strength threatened maritime reinforcement. Realizing this, Kenney used every transport, bomber and civilian airplane available to fly reinforcements into Port Moresby. MacArthur's staff thought airlifting reinforcements was infeasible. As the Japanese forces closed on Port

Moresby, Kenney's fighters and bombers flew up to 12 sorties a day to interdict the attackers. In a 2-week battle, 32 miles from Port Moresby, Australian infantry stopped the Japanese offensive and counterattackers. The Japanese withdrew towards Buna. The airlift and interdiction efforts of Kenney's forces were essential components of this reversal.[52]

5th Air Force continued to change the shape of the war. As enemy forces in New Guinea withdrew to Buna, on the North Coast, Kenney established a forward resupply base less than 15 miles from the Japanese position. Again Westenhoff notes, the allied forces counterattacked, the Japanese held and the seige of Buna followed. Japanese air strength again threatened maritime resupply. Disease disabled Allied soldiers faster than they could be replaced. Kenney used every large plane he had, including bombers, to carry supplies to the troops. A technique was even developed to airdrop supplies when the weather was too bad to land. Unfortunately, so little airlift was available that Allied soldiers wasted away on as little as one-sixth of a C-ration a day. When the Allied ground force captured Buna in January 1943, they were exhausted.[53] At the same time, the Japanese high command chose to abandon Guadalcanal and concentrate forces for a major counterattack in New Guinea. Armed with superior intelligence and reconnaissance, Kenney's forces were prepared.

Sixteen ships, carrying an infantry division, assembled at Rabaul. It sailed shortly before midnight on 28 February. Kenney's air forces decisively struck the convoy on the morning

of March 3. In the Battle of the Bismarck the Allied airmen sank 12 of 16 ships. Westenhoff states the following:

> The Battle of the Bismarck Sea proved decisive, starting a complex chain of events leading to Allied control of New Guinea. Japanese naval authorities never risked another convoy near Kenney's air forces; instead they relied on destroyers, small boats, and submarines to replenish their forces in New Guinea. The army withered, and without bulk supplies Japanese air operations dwindled. Moreover, because Japan's submarines were performing priority supply missions, Allied shipping could build up bulk supplies for surface and air operations.[54]

Nine months after assuming command, Kenney was on the verge of gaining air superiority over New Guinea by engaging in a land defense (Port Moresby), a counter attack and siege on Buna, and a naval battle. The SWPA forces had arrested the Japanese initiative, it was now time to start moving the "bomb line" northwest.

There are other techniques Kenney used for the first time which are well worth mentioning. At first, Kenney's forces were significantly outnumbered. The Japanese could easily have concentrated their forces and struck decisively. Kenney's response was to disperse, camouflage and protect his forward-based aircraft.[55] Kenney also established a theater reserve--not only to reduce vulnerability, but also to enhance offensive potential. He usually kept approximately one-third of his forces at forward bases, another third in reserve and the remainder training or recovering from operations. For major efforts, reserves were moved from Australia to New Guinea for brief periods when every available airplane was needed.[56]

Kenney was a master of surprise and deceit. He was able to mystify, mislead and surprise his enemy, and used these elements decisively. In this example, MacArthur's forces were starting to move northwest to take the Huon Peninsula and Japanese positions at Lae, Finschafen and Salamuau. The Japanese moved a large number of planes into their big base at Wewak, 400 miles west of the Huon Peninsula and out of range of Allied fighters. If air superiority were to be maintained and extended, Kenney thought the reduction of Wewak was necessary. He could not do it with unescorted bombers. John Warden, in his book, The Air Campaign describes Kenney's brilliant resolution to the problem. He states:

> Using special overland troops and paratroops, Kenney started construction of two fake airfields close to the Japanese positions on the Huon Peninsula. At these fields, he deliberately created clouds of dust so the Japanese would see construction activity. They responded appropriately by periodically bombing the fields and apparently preventing occupation by American air units. Simultaneously, at Tsilli Tsilli, some 50 miles further inland, Kenney started construction of the real air field. He managed to move fighters into it before the Japanese discovered its existence. He then quickly mounted a mass attack on Wewak with his bombers that could now be escorted by fighters flying out of Tsilli Tsilli. He took the Japanese by surprise, because they were sure Wewak was beyond range of American fighters and therefore could not be attacked in strength. In two days of mass raids with nearly 200 aircraft in each attack, he won the decisive air battle of the southwest Pacific by destroying more than 200 Japanese aircraft. Of greater importance, he started the process that would shortly break the back of the Japanese Army Air Force. His forces killed so many pilots and technicians that the enemy became unable to mount serious opposition, even though he had plenty of aircraft--but aircraft that could not be flown or maintained.[57]

MacArthur and his combined command bypassed strongpoints, island hopped (at times were lucky--Leyte Gulf) and moved northwest until they were firmly ashore in the Philippines in January 1945. John Warden believes that the key lessons of these campaigns were significant (many attributable to Kenney's remarkable leadership):

- Air superiority can be an end in itself, at least on an intermediate basis.
- Ground and naval forces can serve as an adjunct to air forces in the battle for air superiority.
- Bypassing--ignoring pockets of great strength can be feasible when they are neutralized or isolated.
- And, penetrations on a huge operational scale can be made--MacArthur's was over 2,000 miles deep and very narrow--if flanks can be covered by air, or sea.[58]

Kenney used air, for the first time, to cover the major flanks of ground forces.

The story of Kenney in SWPA is one of a decisive operational airpower leader in action. In July 1942, MacArthur quickly recognized that his new air commander knew his business--building and fighting airpower--and was a leader who could accomplish his mission. Kenney earned MacArthur's trust and showed him what airpower could do for him in the Pacific. Together, they developed an offensive strategy that led to victory, probably at the least possible cost in lives and material. Kenney's understanding of airpower and operational art, his ability to think creatively, his courage to take risks and his consummate skill to organize and lead men make him an airman's role model for generations to come.

PLACING THE DECISIVENESS OF KENNEY'S AIRPOWER LEADERSHIP IN CONTEXT WITH A CURRENT SCENARIO

It's enlightening to compare Kenney's situation, in the early days of the SWPA campaign, to the "air" situation in South West Asia today. The stark difference probably represents the opposite ends of a "combat readiness" spectrum an Air Component Commander can face. Kenney's initial strategic guidance was ambiguous. His commander did not believe in airpower and, at first, did not trust him. His forces were poorly organized, trained and equipped. He was outnumbered and on the defense with little external help on the way. Conversely, Lt. General Chuck Horner, started his operation with a superior force. He had sufficient time to mobilize, plan and exercise before hostilities started. Desert Storm commenced with a powerful Allied air offensive, to be sustained until all elements of the air and ground campaign are concluded victoriously. Lt. General Horner's strategic and operational guidance are clear, as are lines of command. He is leading the best Air Force the world has ever known. U.S. Navy, Marine and Army air elements are the best the United States has ever produced. If he needs more airpower, there are reserves waiting. Basically, the United States' unified airpower (and coalition) forces far outclass their adversary in every conceivable measure of merit.

Please think back to earlier discussions about airpower expertise and leadership. Consider the contrasting situations faced by Generals Kenney and Horner. General Horner has a complex and demanding job and from my perspective, his

performance is setting historic standards. My point in this discussion is that General Horner has been dealt a far better "hand of cards" to play than Kenney was. He is probably the recipient of the best "hand" any Air Component Commander has ever received. Conversely, Kenney, at first, did not have the men, material or the organization to get the job done. Kenney's character, knowledge and skill were decisive elements of airpower in SWPA. What about future air component commanders? My guess is their "hand" will lie somewhere between General Kenney's and Horner's. Naturally, our leaders will do their best to ensure it's much closer to the latter. However, there is little doubt future operational airpower leaders must possess the airpower expertise and visionary leadership to accomplish what is required, with much fewer resources. Their leadership could be the decisive factor in a future war.

PREPARATION OF DECISIVE AIRPOWER LEADERS

Kenney was a decisive airpower leader. I believe future USAF leaders will have to be too. The question is, does the preparation we give them adequately prepare them to be a decisive element in a future conflict?

Kenney's experiences prior to World War II provided the perfect prelude for air command of the SWPA (See Appendix). He experienced combat as a commander, early in his career. He held jobs in which he learned about the material aspects of war and how technology can be used to increase military effectiveness. He became familiar with the equipment modification process. As a

student, then an instructor, at the Air Corps Tactical School, he participated in the evolution of air doctrine, strategy and tactics. He personally developed ideas and perfected tactics for low altitude attack. Having earned the respect of key Air Corps general officers, he was posted to the War Plans Division, in Washington, where he further refined his thoughts about airpower, bombardment and fighter tactics. He then was assigned the task of organizing and training what is essentially the equivalent of today's Tactical Air Command. In France, Kenney observed the Luftwaffe and brought home many ideas that were quickly adapted to our aircraft--bulletproof glass in fighters, powered gun turrets, and plans for demand oxygen systems. He also attended all the right schools and benefited from the learning one gets from being an instructor.[59] Compared to today, Kenney was part of a smaller, less complex Air Force. The broad range of jobs he held and the schools he attended allowed him to develop the "frame of reference" necessary to be a decisive leader. He essentially spent his entire career building the broad background required of an operational level commander. He grew up with and helped build airpower. He knew all its elements and how to apply them. Kenney's varied jobs also allowed him to master organizational dynamics, leadership and command. Few men were better prepared to command SWPA air.

Tomorrow's operational leaders have a tremendous challenge. Their future command, in all likelihood, will be even more complex than Kenney's SWPA. Unfortunately, today's officer does not have the same opportunity to build a broad "frame of

reference," in the same manner or over the extended period of time, like Kenney did. The USAF is bigger and more complex than the Air Corps of the 1930s and '40s. Officers specialize. They spend the first 15-20 years of their career focused mainly at the tactical level of warfare, often tied to one weapons system and/or career field. PME and the new joint assignment policy help, but, are they enough? I believe tomorrow's USAF operational leaders are forced to "come up to speed" as practitioners of operational art too rapidly--basically after Senior Service School--because today's USAF does not emphasize airpower study and leadership development enough throughout an officer's career.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

1. The world is increasingly complex and the USAF is getting smaller. The dominant role airpower is playing in Desert Storm may lead force planners and Congress to base future national military strategies more on airpower. A strategy vs. "force required" mismatch may become more of a risk; especially, if U.S. forces are required in more than one theater simultaneously. This possibility places more potential demands on operational leadership. In all likelihood, leadership will increasingly become a decisive factor in air warfare.

2. General George C. Kenney's actions in the early days of the SWPA Campaign exemplify a case in which operational level leadership is a decisive factor. Fortunately, his career was perfectly tailored to prepare him for the task.

3. I believe current USAF programs (or lack thereof) force potential operational level leaders to master operational art too quickly--basically, after Senior Service School. Today's officers do not have the luxury of building the same leadership "frame of reference" Kenney did, by experiencing a broad range of jobs. The USAF is large and complex. Officers now specialize. The Air Force must use a different method of "rounding out" its future leaders. It needs to increase its emphasis on the study of airpower and leadership development--throughout officers' careers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The USAF recognize that its future leaders will increasingly be forced to become a decisive element of airpower.

2. The USAF develop a "Top Down" initiated airpower education program. It must be supported by leaders and followers, at all levels, and must become part of our culture. This measure is necessary to enhance the cohesion of our service and provide future leaders a pattern of thought, a foundation of values and a required body of knowledge that can only be acquired through a career-long study and belief in airpower.

3. The USAF develop a "top Down" initiated, enhanced leadership development program.

a. First, create a clear vision of what a USAF leader should be--his or her required character as well as the knowledge and skills needed.

b. Promulgate this vision. It must not be buried in a doctrine manual--everyone in the USAF must know the details.

c. Modify, create programs at all levels to support this program.

d. Keep leadership philosophy consistent at all levels of command.

e. Give leadership development a higher priority for money, manpower, time and unit mission orientation. There needs to be a renewed focus, in our attitude and culture, on the human dimension of warfare. The virtues, as expressed in Marine Corps doctrine, of trust, honesty and frankness must be fostered at all levels in order to build an even better climate in which leaders can grow. Commanders must be allowed to take some risks and, at appropriate times, even accept reduced organization performance, to allow young leaders the opportunity to mature. Our goal is the development of combat airpower leaders who possess aggressive vision, mastery of operational art and the ability to exact the maximum in fighting qualities from both men and equipment. We need to develop decisive airpower leaders like George C. Kenney.

APPENDIX

1907-1911	Student, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (no degree)
1911-1916	Worked as railroad surveyor and engineer
1917	Enlisted in the army and attended flight training
1917-1919	**2Lt/1Lt.** Pilot and Commander, 91st Aero Squadron in France during World War I. Flew 75 missions and downed 2 German planes.
1919-1920	**Captain.** Pilot in the 8th Aero Squadron, McAllen, TX
1920-1921	Student, Air Service Engineering School, McCook Field, OH
1921-1923	Air service representative and test pilot, Curtiss Aircraft factory, Garden City, Long Island
1923-1925	Assigned to the inspection and contract sections of production engineering at the Air Service Engineering Division, McCook Field, OH
1925-1926	Student, Air Corps Tactical School, Langley Field, VA
1926-1927	Student, Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, KS
1927-1932	Instructor at the Air Corps Tactical School, Langley Field, VA
1932-1933	Student, Army War College, Washington, D.C.
1933-1935	**Major.** Assigned to the office of the Chief of the Air Corps
1935-1936	**LtCol.** Chief of Operations and Training, Headquarters, GHQ, Air Force, Langley Field, VA
1936-1938	Instructor, Infantry School, Fort Benning, GA
1938-1939	**Colonel.** Commander 97th Observation Squadron, Mitchell Field, NY
1939	**BrigGen.** Assistant Military Attache for Air, Paris, France
1940-1941	Chief of the Production Engineering Section of the Air Corps, Material Division, Wright Field, OH
1941-1942	**MajGen.** Commander, Fourth Air Force, March Field, CA
1942-1945	**LtGen.** Allied Air Commander, Allied Air Forces Southwest Pacific and Commander, Fifth Air Force
1945	**General.** Commander, Allied Air Forces, Pacific

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