

A Study in Leadership:  
The 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

LENORA A. IVY, MAJ, USA  
B.S., University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1979

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
1995

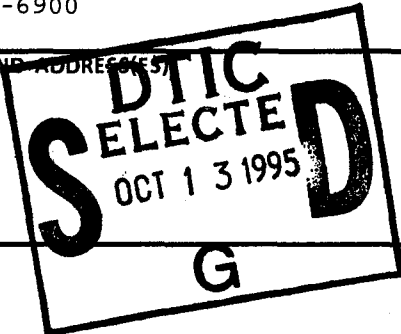
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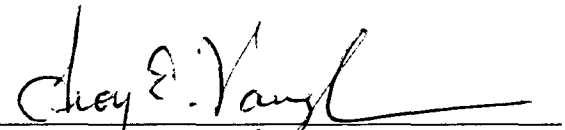
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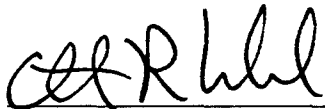
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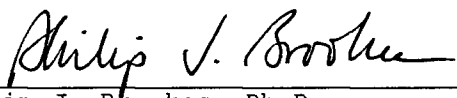
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other government agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

# ABSTRACT

A STUDY IN LEADERSHIP: THE 761ST TANK BATTALION AND THE 92D  
DIVISION IN WORLD WAR II by MAJ Lenora A. Ivy, USA,  
125 pages

This thesis evaluates leadership in the 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division, two black units during World War II. Leaders in each unit were evaluated on their ability to use the following leadership model: technical skills (job experience, technical competence, and the ability to correlate facts into meaningful information); conceptual skills (vision and the ability to task organize to accomplish the mission); and interpersonal skills (job related standards and the ability to foster mutual trust and respect) to influence combat effectiveness.

The analysis showed that the leaders in the 761st Tank Battalion demonstrated skills in the leadership model effectively and especially were successful in demonstrating interpersonal skills. Its successful combat record supports that its leaders were effective. On the other hand, the leaders in the 92d Division failed to properly demonstrate the skills of the leadership model. The lack of interpersonal skills used by leaders in the division (developing trust and mutual respect) was the major cause of the unit's combat failures.

This study showed that despite negative beliefs about Negro soldiers there were some leaders who effectively applied interpersonal leadership skills in the interest of mission accomplishment.

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I would like to thank the 761st Tank Battalion Monument Memorial Committee, the U.S Army Military History Institute, the Patton Museum of Armor and Cavalry, the Historians at the National Archives Reference Branch, and the staff at the Combined Arms Research Library for their professionalism and valued assistance.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|                                         | <u>Pages</u> |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------|
| APPROVAL PAGE.....                      | ii           |
| ABSTRACT.....                           | iii          |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....                    | iv           |
| CHAPTER                                 |              |
| 1. INTRODUCTION.....                    | 1            |
| 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....            | 16           |
| 3. THE LEADERSHIP FACTOR.....           | 20           |
| 4. THE 761ST TANK BATTALION.....        | 52           |
| 5. THE 92D DIVISION.....                | 79           |
| 6. ANALYSIS.....                        | 97           |
| 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS..... | 115          |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY.....                       | 121          |
| INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST.....          | 125          |

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

History provides the military professional with a perspective from which to evaluate his/her current situation. The in-depth study of historical examples also affords military professionals a safe vantage point from which to apply lessons learned. Leadership is no exception. The Army's keystone leadership manual, FM 22-100, quotes B.H. Liddell Hart: "The practical value of history is to throw the film of the past through the material projector of the present onto the screen of the future."<sup>1</sup> World War II, is a favorite and an appropriate historical backdrop to analyze a broad spectrum of studies. As is the case here where World War II was the backdrop that this thesis looked at leadership in two black combat units involved in combat in the European Theater.

Leadership in the Army during World War II was especially difficult in the racist social and political environment surrounding Negroes' equal rights, and the employment of Negro troops in the military. Today as the likelihood increases for American military leaders to become leaders of multicultural and multinational forces because of the United States' involvement in operations other than war (OOTW), leaders can learn from historical examples that appropriate leadership skills will ensure effective mission accomplishment, especially when leading different cultures and races. Two authors writing on leadership believed:

Effective leaders are sensitive to the changing conditions of their group and flexible in adapting their behavior to new

requirements. . . . Leadership is viewed as the performance of those acts which help the group achieve its preferred outcomes . . . nearly every conception of leadership contains the notion that a true leader exerts more influence on the group and its activities than does the average members.<sup>2</sup>

The Army has long recognized the relationship between leadership and combat effectiveness. The Army's leadership manual states that leadership is the most important element in combat effectiveness. A good leader will cause a unit to be successful; successful in combat and other tasks. In the military, successful mission accomplishment is determined by how well a unit will meet its training requirements or its combat objectives. Success in combat is easily determined by the end state. Effective leaders, and that which makes leaders successful, however, is not easily defined in concrete measures like combat effectiveness. So the dilemma becomes: What must the leader do to be effective? The journey to uncover a sure method of effective leadership is and has been the focus of many studies by psychologists, social scientists, professional scholars, military leaders, and other practitioners today and throughout history. What is the best method to lead and motivate people? Why are some leaders more successful than others? These two questions were the focus of the analysis of this thesis as they related to two black units in World War II.

The Army has been, and continues to be, a reflection of American society. Therefore, it is not surprising that the leadership principles and theories used to ensure effective leadership in the military were primarily adapted from leadership theories in the civilian sector. As leadership theories were adapted, similarly, in 1940 white society's beliefs and attitudes about Negroes and their potential competence as soldiers were also adapted by the military.

The employment of Negro troops in the World War II Army was a reflection of white society's social practices. The Army inherited its

problems with race relations, but was forced to address the race issue that the American society had created. There were generally two views. There were many people who saw the use of Negro troops in an equal status as a dangerous policy change threatening the status quo. On the other hand, there were those who felt that the Army should have eliminated any racial distinctions and felt the use of Negroes in World War II was overly conservative and highly ineffective.<sup>3</sup> The Army's policy as stated by Ulysses Lee, an author, was to use ten percent of Negroes in the Army as a figure, because Negroes constituted ten percent of American society. Yet on the eve of the United States' participation in World War II and premobilization, the employment of black soldiers in the Armed Forces was still an unresolved issue--unresolved since black soldiers' participation in World War I.

#### Background

What were the demographics of the Negro enlisted man and officer who served in World War II? Many white military leaders of the time would only point to the educational level and ratings Negroes received as reasons they were not widely used in the Armed Forces. Negroes comprised about 10 percent of the Army's population. From World War I to World War II, 86 percent of Negroes from the South and ninety-seven percent from the North had only some grade school education. By 1941 only 37 percent of Negroes from the South had only a grade school education, and the majority of Negroes from the North had attended high school.<sup>4</sup>

#### The Negro Enlisted Man

Compared to their white counterparts, the majority of Negroes' educational level was below whites; then also was their quality of education. Scores on the Army's General Classification Test for Negroes

were also lower.<sup>5</sup> While Negroes were assigned to every branch of the Army, it was the practice of the time to assign Negroes to the Service Forces, which included many unskilled labor jobs. The Service Forces had low ratings of which the low educational ratings of Negroes had them assigned there. Because of the low ratings of service units, the segregated Negro service units had fewer noncommissioned positions. In addition, Negroes with equal educational and test ratings as whites had less chance than whites to become officers. Policies regarding Negro officers in World War II began during World War I.<sup>6</sup>

### The Negro Officer

The legacy from World War I followed black officers into World War II. In late 1917 while the US prepared for war, the War Department also prepared to activate the all black 92d Division. This division was to be an all black unit, except the officers at the command level were to be white. According to Gerald W. Patton, author:

As the black officers left Fort Des Moines they entered a military system that had already adopted key policies affecting their future prospects and careers. It was a system that was at best, skeptical about their capabilities as officers, and it was a system receptive to political pressures from the South. By October 1917, these pressures had already led the Chief of Staff and the branch commanders to issue directives governing the assignment and use of black officers. Under these policies it was now established policy that black officers could expect to command only black soldiers, not white. It was also clear that higher levels of command within the contemplated 92d Division would be for whites.<sup>7</sup>

The Army's policy was not to use Negroes in command positions. The 92d Division commander followed this policy. William E. B. DuBois, editor of The Crisis, the official journal of the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), filed a protest to the War Department on the black community's behalf stating that there should be at least three thousand black officers and a number of them should be in the rank of captain. Despite this request, the 92d Division was

committed to combat in 1918 without black officers in command positions. A memorandum from Brigadier General Henry Jervy, a member of the Army Staff, commented to the Chief of Staff, "The use of white officers to command colored troops, was a policy dictated by the requirement of military efficiency."<sup>8</sup>

#### Leadership of Negro Troops in Preparation for War

After World War I, testimony on the efficiency and conduct of blacks came from all commanders associated with blacks. All of the testimony was unfavorable. Additionally, the testimony reflected that black officers should not command black or white soldiers. White officers espoused the need for white leadership. There was testimony by one white commander who stated that when white lieutenants replaced black lieutenants the efficiency of the unit improved. The reports that blacks gave of their performance was that any misfortune by black soldiers was the result of negative attitudes whites had toward them.<sup>9</sup>

In the years following the war, several classes at the Army War College researched the use of Negro manpower in the war. The negative reports about Negro performance and testimony to that effect were reflected in these reports. Colonel Thomas C. Hart analyzed reports of Negro soldiers and stated, "There is ample proof that Negroes are not satisfactory as officers, and enlisted men prefer white men to lead them."<sup>10</sup> Most of the information in these reports would not stand up under impartial analysis.

Many white Army leaders thought that blacks preferred to serve under white officers and that those white officers should be from the South. A study by S. A. Stouffer and a number of other social scientists researched this theory and found that Negroes preferred to

serve under black officers. Furthermore, if blacks were to serve under a white officer then they preferred the officer be from the North.<sup>11</sup>

By 1940, remembering what happened to the Negro Officer and enlisted man during World War I, a group of prominent Negro leaders drafted a seven point letter to president Roosevelt. The letter demanded:

That black officers and men be assigned duties according to their abilities. That provisions be made for training black officers. That Afro-Americans be allowed full participation in all branches and the Army Air Corps. That blacks take part in the administration and operation of the Selective Service System. That black women be permitted to serve as nurses in the Army and Navy as well as in the Red Cross. That existing units of the Army and units to be established should be required to accept and select officers and enlisted personnel without regard to race.<sup>12</sup>

President Roosevelt responded with promises to use Negro soldiers in numbers equivalent to the Negro population and in each branch of the service. He promised increased opportunities to blacks who qualified for commissions, but only in black units; however, segregation would remain Army policy in the use of Negro soldiers.

The military leadership thought there were many potential problems with leadership for Negro troops especially as it relates to combat effectiveness. Brigadier General Horace L. Whitaker was quoted as saying about the "handling" of Negro troops:

The most important aspect of leadership with white troops was knowing your work. . . . With colored troops it is the least important. The reaction of colored troops makes it more important that their officers convince them that they are getting a square deal. It is next to most important that they be convinced that their officer is interested in them.<sup>13</sup>

The ability of senior military leaders of the time were arguably the best of their era. It can be said that leaders throughout history who have achieved successful results in adverse situations have been above average. Therefore, it is logical to assume that the above

average leader during World Wars I and II would have been effective commanding Negro troops and the conditions of their employment.

Good leadership concerned the Army so when it activated black units, especially the 92d, the Secretary of War intended to select the best white officers for the unit. The policy was not fully followed, as the 92d Division was made the dumping grounds for less than capable whites and blacks.<sup>14</sup> The Army's actual prescription for commanding Negro troops in 1940 was to use white Southern officers.

World War I and earlier testimony had indicated that white officers were preferable to Negro officers. The white officers chosen should have some acquaintance with Negroes; therefore, it was often assumed that, since few individuals from other parts of the country had come into frequent contact with Negroes, they should be Southerners.<sup>15</sup>

Using white Southern officers to command Negro troops had a greater potential for failure than success. White Southern officers in particular held the attitude that Negroes were inferior. In many instances the need to accomplish the mission did not transcend these basic attitudes of the white officer in command. Therefore, motivation to accomplish the mission by the organization's Negro members did not exist. Motivation for effective leadership as defined by FM 22-100, states that:

It is the cause for action. It gives the soldiers the will to do what you know must be done to accomplish the mission. If your subordinates have confidence in themselves, each other, the unit and you, and they support the cause, they will be sincerely motivated.<sup>16</sup>

To understand what motivates an individual is an essential part of leadership. How to lead in the Army has not always been properly addressed. World War I and II leadership in relationship to Negro soldiers are examples. Today, the US Army defines leadership as the ability of leaders to provide motivation, purpose, and direction primarily in combat, but also in noncombat situations.<sup>17</sup> The importance

of leadership in peacetime may affect a unit's combat performance in war.

In the civilian sector, there are as many definitions of leadership as there are social scientists and psychologists writing in the area of organizational behavior and management. Some of them are:

Leadership is influencing people to follow in the achievement of a common goal. . . . Leadership is the process of influencing the activities of an individual or group in efforts toward goal achievement in a given situation. . . . The leadership process is a function of the leader, the follower, and the situation variables.<sup>18</sup>

### Evolution of Leadership and Management

Leadership and management techniques made a drastic change between the agricultural age and the industrial age. In the agricultural age, supervisors and managers did not give much thought to employee motivation. During the mid-1800s, units of production were small and production techniques were simple. Market processes were not as developed and did not handle large volumes of outputs. Although the work day was long, workers generally took it easy and the motivation to work was not an issue. In the latter part of the 1800s the industrial revolution came to the United States. Capital investments in machinery and factories increased and so did consumer demands. Factories were hard pressed to satisfy demands. All this activity began to focus attention on production and the worker.

The industrial age also ushered in the classical period of management. The classical concept of management in organizations is, "in their clearest application in military organizations and in railroads."<sup>19</sup> The hierarchical structure of the military organization with authority vested in the office is a typical classical organization. An account of the worker during the industrial era was one who was just another piece of the production process. Efficiency was best increased

by giving workers the single best method to do the job, or standardization, and the workers' best efforts were motivated by money.

The classical theory was based on the assumption that workers were inherently lazy and would work as long as the pay was good, the boss was fair, the task was simple, and that if people were controlled they would produce to standard. This theory was popular for many years until the efficiency of factories was becoming better and fewer workers were needed. Because of this and other factors, organizations began to examine their assumptions about people and what motivated them. With this the human relations model began to emerge.<sup>20</sup>

The Hawthorne Studies took a drastic departure from the classical method. These studies revealed that workers had been ignored by organizations operating under the classical model where supervisors dictated the mission and how it would be accomplished. Elton Mayo, a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, stated that, "informal groups could exert a far stronger pull on the workers' motivation than the combined strength of money, discipline and even job security."<sup>21</sup> Chapter 3 will address leadership and motivational theory in detail.

### Purpose

For as long as leadership has been considered an art or science, military leaders have been plagued with the question of what causes the quality and the quantity of performance of some military units to be excellent or good and other military units to be marginal or poor. In some instances, excellent units rapidly deteriorate on change of commanders.

The purpose of this thesis is to answer the question of whether leaders, especially the white leaders in the black units of the 761st

Tank Battalion and the 92d Division, applied sound leadership principles to ensure combat effectiveness. An important aspect of this thesis is to show how selected leadership principles and motivation will ensure success while leading soldiers.

This thesis will evaluate how well the leaders of the 761st and the 92d, two Negro units that fought in Europe during World War II, applied leadership techniques. The combat effectiveness of the 761st was outstanding, while the 92d Division had a poor combat record. The first question this thesis will answer is why did two military units with similar opportunities to train and similar pools of Negro soldiers and white officers, have vastly different outcomes in combat? The second question this thesis will answer is what were the leadership theories and principles leaders should have and must apply to ensure combat effectiveness, especially in multicultural environments?

#### Assumptions

The research findings, analysis, and conclusions are based on the following assumptions.

1. The military understood that there was a direct relationship between the effects of leadership in a unit and the unit's performance.
2. That today's terminology and theories can be applied to explain actions and results of historical examples cited throughout the thesis.
3. That comparing a tank battalion to an infantry division is feasible if the similarities between these units are used as a control measure.

### Definitions

There are several key terms and terms used in a specialized way that are integral to this research.

Combat effectiveness. The ability of a unit to successfully accomplish its mission with the minimum number of friendly casualties.

Leadership. Defined as all the attributes, actions, and responsibilities under the direction of a leader.

Motivation. That which is internal and external to an individual that results in some sort of action or inaction.

### Scope and Limitations

The focus of this thesis is World War II spanning premobilization through the end of the war, 1939 to 1945. It compares the 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division. The research includes the military, social and political issues affecting the formation, training, and employment of black troops and black units. It looks at the actions and results of these actions by the leaders of these black units and how they were able to motivate or not motivate their subordinates to accomplish the mission.

### Delimitations

There is inherent difficulty in drawing conclusions about why a unit was successful or unsuccessful because there are many dimensions to combat, human behavior not the least of them and clearly not fully understood. Nor does the scope of this thesis attempt to address in detail other theories of motivation and human behavior other than the impact of leadership and motivation in the context of the 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division; why similar units had different outcomes.

### Significance of the Problem

Because history is a great teacher, this thesis will examine the effects of leadership and motivation in the historical context of two black World War II combat units. The 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division had similar issues and problems as they trained and entered combat. The 761st Tank Battalion, however, compiled an impressive combat record while the 92d Division's performance received criticism steeped in controversy and disappointment in its combat effectiveness.

Factors that impact the success or failure of military units are significant to today's students and practitioners of military art and science. Clausewitz himself used the lessons of Napoleon to establish his study of military theory, theory that is still used today as a basis for common military studies. This historical study into the leadership skills demonstrated by the leaders of the 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division can provide lessons learned for leaders to consider when social issues distract from mission accomplishment; and it can provide contributions to the recognition of black service men and women during World War II.

The era in which this study took place puts the student in the position to neatly evaluate in today's leadership terms the successes and failures of these two units. Even though these terms were not fully developed in post World War I or World War II this thesis will show where leaders should apply these principles.

The composition of the 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division makes important another aspect of this study. The US military during World War II had a policy of segregation for blacks. Black officers and enlisted were organized primarily in segregated units. The leadership at the company commander level, captain and above, was staffed by white officers. Some black officers were platoon leaders and, later in these

black units, some were given company commands and even worked on battalion staffs. One can safely assume that segregation is no longer an issue for leaders today. Lessons learned from previous unfair treatment and lack of understanding about personnel from different cultures can be avoided. In this race conscious society, and especially because the United States' population continues to grow in terms of a mix of cultural and ethnic groups, and because the military is a representative sample of the United States, military leaders must know and understand the importance of their actions on mission accomplishment, and understand the sensitivities sometimes associated with leading people from different or unfamiliar cultural or ethnic make up from their own. In addition, lessons learned could also be of relevance to leaders responsible for new missions, in operations other than war (OOTW), where the military is involved with multicultural and multinational people and societies.

Finally, it is important to continue to recognize the contributions of black men and women during World War II especially this year, the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. There has been a recent boom in the interest of black Americans' contributions to the military fueled by the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell's interest in the history of blacks in the military. There have been several attempts by scholars to investigate why there were no black Medal of Honor recipients during World War II. Work continues in other areas to recognize the contributions of blacks in all services because it is assumed that the lack of recognition for heroic combat deeds and subsequent medals was in some part due to racism.

### Thesis Chapter Summary

This thesis will answer why the 761st Tank Battalion was not affected by the factors that caused the combat performance failures of the 92d Division. Chapter 2 will outline the research methodology. The research methodology used will be qualitative analysis using literature review for background information, personal interviews of members of the 761st Tank Battalion, and soldiers in general who were in the military during World War II. Chapter 3 focuses on the measurements of leadership and motivation in the context of current theories and practice in both the civilian and military sectors. Chapters 4 and 5 are accounts of the 761st Tank Battalion and 92d Division and the issues surrounding their training and employment in combat. Chapter 6 is an analysis of relevant information and its bearing on the question. Chapter 7 presents the conclusions and recommendations developed from the research and analysis.

#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Army, FM 22-100 Leadership (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1990), 9.

<sup>2</sup>Dorwin Cartwright and Alvin Zander, Group Dynamics: Research and Theory (Evanston, IL: Row-Peterson & Co., 1960), 492-493.

<sup>3</sup>S. A. Stouffer et al., The American Soldier, Combat and Its Aftermath Vol. II (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1949), 580.

<sup>4</sup>Ulysses Lee, The Employment of Negro Troops (Washington DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1966), 239-299.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 239-299.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 428-467.

<sup>7</sup>Gerald W. Patton, War and Race: The Black Officer in the American Military 1915-1941 (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1947), 68.

<sup>8</sup>Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, 175.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., 9.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., 175-180.

<sup>11</sup>Stouffer et al., The American Soldier, 580.

<sup>12</sup>Neil A. Wynn, The African American and the Second World War (New York: Holmes and Mier, 1976), 23-24.

<sup>13</sup>A. Russel Buchanan, Black American in World War II (Santa Barbara, CA: Clio Press, 1977), 78.

<sup>14</sup>Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, 18.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 180.

<sup>16</sup>FM 22-100, 49.

<sup>17</sup>FM 22-100,

<sup>18</sup>Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, Management of Organizational Behavior (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1988), 86.

<sup>19</sup>Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966), 72.

<sup>20</sup>M. D. Dunnette and W. K. Kirschner, Psychology Applied to Industry (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1965), 130.

<sup>21</sup>Saul W. Gellerman, Motivation and Productivity (New York: Vail-Ballou Press, 1963), 19-24.

## CHAPTER 2

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This thesis will compare the leadership in the 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division, two black units in World War II. It will determine what leadership factors, or leadership model, are best for military organizations, and it will show how these two units applied the leadership model and how the use of the leadership model influenced their combat effectiveness.

The 761st Tank Battalion earned a distinguished combat record during World War II. The 92d Division's combat record was not successful by many accounts. Both units had similar training experiences and composition of Negro soldiers, Negro officers, and white officers, but their combat records were drastically different.

The formula for successful organizations generated theories and leadership principles among organizational behaviorists, social psychologists studying human behavior, and the military study of leadership. In this debate, leadership as an art or science plays a key role in successful and unsuccessful organizations. The closer the military gets to the best formula for successful leaders the better its armed forces will be in accomplishing its goals. Because leadership theories today have developed to support the theory that effective leadership can be learned, military students and practitioners should strive to educate themselves in the right combination to ensure success.

Why one unit was successful and the other was not successful ultimately can be a result of the type of leadership within those units. The 761st Tank Battalion had a successful combat record while the 92d Division did not. How is it the 92d Division and the 761st Tank Battalion faced the same types of challenges such as negative attitudes concerning the abilities of black soldiers, leader roles, and combat in the European Theater, but had different combat records? What were the leadership factors that caused the failure of the 92d Division? Why was the 761st Tank Battalion not affected by the factors that caused failures in the 92d Division? These questions are explored in the framework of the research methodology: gathering historical background information on the combat records of each unit; analyzing the leaders' behaviors in each unit; evaluating the leadership demonstrated in these units against a leadership model that, if used correctly, will greatly influence success in units; and developing conclusions based on that analysis.

This chapter present the research design that addresses the thesis topic. The research methodology uses several techniques. These research techniques include exploring the leadership principles or theories that make up the study of leadership, defining the best theory or theories for a military organization, and comparing the leadership best suited for the military against these two black units.

Because successful and effective organizations are defined by the degree in which an organization realizes its goals, and leadership is the most important factor in the ability of the unit to accomplish its mission, the second technique is to look at the leadership style demonstrated by the leaders in each of these units.<sup>1</sup> This will entail a review of the unit's quality of leadership, its commanders, its staff officers, other key personnel, and a comparison to a leadership model.

The US Army attests to this theory and directly holds leaders responsible for the success of an organization.

The most essential dynamic of combat power is competent and confident officer and noncommissioned officer leadership. Leaders inspire soldiers with the will to win. They provide purpose, direction, and motivation in combat.<sup>2</sup>

The third part of the research technique includes gathering background information on the combat records of the 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division. The combat record of a unit usually speaks for itself; units are awarded unit citations, individual soldiers are awarded medals for bravery and service during combat.

Finally, the leadership demonstrated in the successful combat record of the 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division can be brought into focus with proper comparison. The last technique in this research methodology is to compare the leadership demonstrated in the 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division to the leadership model.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Richard H. Hall, Organizations Structure and Process (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), 96.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5, Operations (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Army, 1993), 2-11.

### CHAPTER 3

#### THE LEADERSHIP FACTOR

This thesis was developed to examine how leadership influenced the successes of the 761st Tank Battalion, and whether poor leadership caused the failures of the 92d Division during combat action in World War II. To do this, this chapter provides an overview of leadership theories including motivation. It provides background on the evolution of these leadership theories from the late 1930s through the period before World War II. It looks at military leadership thought during World War II and today, and finally outlines a leadership model as the framework to analyze the leadership of Negro combat troops in the 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division.

The views and definitions of leadership have changed over the years. Practical application, an understanding of what leadership is, how it works best, and the methods have also continued to evolve. Some of our many ideas of leadership have come from the great leaders themselves such as Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, Machiavelli, Napoleon Bonaparte, George Washington, James Madison, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Lee Iacocca.

To understand today's theories of leadership, a look at the development of some ideas on leadership is helpful. In the beginning, leaders were determined by deity or bloodline. Even today it is often heard that leaders feel they were destined to become leaders or that someone is a born or natural leader. These views of leadership are residuals left over from the earliest thoughts on leadership.

Next, historically great leaders were used as examples of good leaders. Thomas Carlyle developed the Great Man Theory of leadership. This theory said that the dynamic and charismatic qualities of the leader were the reasons they were successful.<sup>1</sup> This began the systematic development of lists of leadership characteristics, attributes, and traits. The feeling was that if these characteristics could be defined, then leaders could be selected or trained with these characteristics. The trait approach to leadership dominated the beginnings of formal leadership research. The US military used the trait leadership theory during World Wars I and II, when tests were developed to identify specific traits necessary for effective leadership. The problem with trait theory that dominated leadership study for so long was there were never any specific traits developed that applied to all leaders. For example, great military leaders such as Patton, Montgomery, and Napoleon were not known to be tactful, but tact was seen as a quality needed in leaders. Traits like honesty or unselfishness have similar problems when applied to all effective leaders.<sup>2</sup>

Max Weber, a German sociologist, developed a counter-theory to the Great Man Theory stating that leadership is impersonal using bureaucratic type leadership based on legitimate power or power by position. This was the beginning of situational leadership whose followers believed that the various aspects of the situation determined leader effectiveness and that anyone could become a leader if the right circumstances presented themselves. Situational leadership has developed into more contemporary thought which supports things like command climate, communication, and conflict and control as important parts of leadership. This theory, however, does not explain why some individuals can not lead in any situation, or why others can lead weak or ineffective organizations.<sup>3</sup>

The current trends in leadership study understandably use a combination of the trait and situational leadership theories. Next is a look at what modern day leadership theorists and practitioners say about leadership.

Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, psychologists and authors at the University of Southern California, stated:

Literally thousands of empirical investigations of leaders have been conducted since 1910, but no clear and unequivocal understanding exists as to what distinguishes leaders from non-leaders, and perhaps more important, what distinguishes effective leaders from ineffective leaders and effective organizations from ineffective organizations.<sup>4</sup>

The bounty of literature on leadership says in one way or another that leadership practices and techniques are without question the keystone to successful organizations. The Army's keystone manual on operations, FM 100-5, and FM 22-100 on leadership, state that leadership is the most important element of combat power. William A. Dimma, author on leadership, says that leadership is the crucial factor that determines the success of an organization. Fred E. Fiedler and Joseph E. Garcia, authors on leadership, state that the quality of leadership is one of the most important elements in successful organizations.

According to Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn, psychologists at the University of Michigan:

In practice management appears to be of two minds about the exercise of leadership. Many jobs are so specified in content and method that within very broad limits difference among individuals become irrelevant and acts of leadership are regarded as gratuitous at best and at worst insubordinate.<sup>5</sup>

In a practical sense, Katz and Kahn stated that appointing leaders in some organizations was without consideration of the individuals' abilities. These social psychologists believed that behavioral attributes of leaders that caused followers to be motivated to accomplish a mission was not a priority in many organizations. It

appeared that if an individual was selected as the leader because of popularity, longevity, or other attributes, this individual was expected to cause the organization to be successful. If unsuccessful, this individual was expected to incur the discipline of the organization. If successful, the organization would reward the individual. The management mind set at this time was that smaller units in an organization needed a leader. These and Kahn's leadership leaders were expected to make things work. Organizational charts implicitly recognized that organizations needed someone in charge. The qualifications to manage the organization was not an issue. Katz' theory was quite different from the leadership theories of Ralph M. Stogdill, a psychologist and author. Stogdill opposed the theory of appointing leaders that had no influence among followers. Stogdill concluded that:

Leadership is not a matter of passive status or of the mere possession of some combination of traits. It appears rather to be a working relationship among members of a group in which the leader acquires status through active participation and demonstration of his capacity for carrying tasks through to completion.<sup>6</sup>

Irvin Knickerbocker, author, in a journal article on leadership, said Stogdill's concepts on leadership lacked the ability to satisfy the needs of followers. Knickerbocker's concepts on leadership are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Knickerbocker's theory asserts two concepts of leadership: leadership and functional leadership. Leadership was explained in the paragraph on practical leadership as viewed as Katz and Kahn. Functional leadership theory places emphasis not on a fixed individual as the leader, but on circumstances in which groups of people integrate and organize their activities toward objectives, and the manner in which the integration is achieved. The central focus of functional

leadership is the dynamic relationship between the leader and the follower.<sup>7</sup>

Tread Ordway, author and social psychologist, said of the functional leadership theory:

A leader may acquire followers, or a group of people may create a leader, but the significant aspect of the process can only be understood in dynamic relationships terms. Evidence and speculation to date make it appear that this functional or operational conception of leadership provides a more useful approach.<sup>8</sup>

Ordway points out that people and our relationships with people constitute the means that we need to satisfy our needs. To the manager, the worker possesses the skill of labor. Through relationships with the worker as means, the manager hopes to obtain the means required to satisfy his needs. To the worker, the manager controls the means of job and pay. Therefore, all seek through relationships with others the means or the means for satisfying needs. This functional dynamic relationship is an actual process to procure through other people the means for need satisfaction.

Knickerbocker attempts to answer remaining pertinent questions about this functional leadership theory in the following passage:

He is the leader of a group and is only the leader in terms of his functional relationship to the group. . . . The leader is followed because he gets or promises to get his followers more nearly what they want than any one else. . . . The function of the leader is to organize the activities of the members of the group toward accomplishing some end through controlling means for the satisfaction of the relevant needs of the members of the group.<sup>9</sup>

Knickerbocker implies that the leader is selected only for his functional role and not because he is a popular member or possesses any other characteristic, and the members follow him because he is able to deliver what they need. Most importantly, Knickerbocker emphasizes the mission of the organization is being accomplished because the leader has the means to satisfy the followers' needs.

The functional leadership method can be used in military organizations, however it could cause some difficulties. The difficulty could come about because the unit's objectives may not always be the objectives of the appointed leader or the followers. Therefore, the success of the leader will depend on his/her ability to reconcile the objectives of the organization with the followers and his own. In this instance the leader must strive for mutuality of objectives and emphasize that the followers' needs can be satisfied through the organization's goals. An assumption here is that the leader's goals are in concert with those of the organization. Because of the ethics and values instilled in military leaders it is a reasonably valid assumption that the leader's objectives become one with the unit's.

Leadership theory as viewed by Katz and Kahn places organizational effectiveness and survival entirely on the behavior of formal leaders. This theory as previously explained is quite different from the concepts of Ordway, Stogdill, and Knickerbocker.

Katz and Kahn pointed out that:

Organizational theory is no less ambivalent. Many people who have studied organizations intensively explain organizational effectiveness and survival in terms of the behavior of formal leaders.<sup>10</sup>

In this regard, the behavior of the leader is a measurement of his/her influence. These social psychologists further state that, "leadership is a relational concept implying two terms, the influencing agent and the person influenced."<sup>11</sup> When the authors mention the "attributes of a position" they are implying that a certain amount of power or influence flows from positions within hierarchical organizations. The higher the positions in the hierarchy, the ability to influence also increases. In the military, more power or influence would flow from a battalion commander than from a squad leader. All

positions on the hierarchical organizational chart require routine organizational role performance from which a certain amount of legitimate power will flow. The legitimate power, like positions on the organizational chart, is equal. The characteristics of individuals (or personal traits) occupying positions on the organizational chart will cause varying amounts of power or influence to flow from these positions.

Katz and Kahn state with reference to power and influence that:

In other words, we consider the essence of organizational leadership to be the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization such an influential increment derives from the fact that human beings rather than computers are in positions of authority and power.<sup>12</sup>

Power and influence over and above the minimum required by a position is accomplished with the power and influence that the leader brings to the position in the organization. Katz and Kahn define five types of social power used by leaders: legitimate power, reward power, punishment power, referent power, and expert power. The basis of power described here is power available to the leader within the organization.

Legitimate power is the power that is afforded the leader by his/her hierarchical position in the organization rather than between persons. A battalion commander has more legitimate power by virtue of his position than a company commander, and a platoon leader has more legitimate power than a squad leader. Reward power is power whose basis is the ability to reward the follower or subordinate. The strength of the reward power between the leader and the follower increases with the magnitude of the reward, which the follower perceives the leader can award him. In many instances the range of reward power is specific to those areas within which the leader can reward the followers for conforming. The use of rewards to cause change, within the range of reward power, tends to increase reward power by increasing the

probability attached to future promise. However, unsuccessful attempts to exert reward power outside the range of power would tend to decrease the power. For example, if the leader offers to reward the follower for performing an impossible act, this will reduce for the follower the probability of receiving future rewards promised by the leader.

There are times when it is difficult to distinguish between reward power and punishment power. Is withholding a reward really equivalent to punishment? Is the withdrawal of punishment equivalent to a reward? The answer in part depends on the situation as it exists for the follower. A leader should understand the difference between conformity to group norms in order to gain reward power and conformity to avoid punishment. The leader must judiciously use punishment power because punishment power can reduce the effects of all other powers.

Referent power between the leader and the follower has its basis in the identification of the follower with the leader. Identification is a feeling of oneness of the follower with the leader, or a desire for such identity. If the leader commands an outstanding company the follower would have a desire to join the company. The stronger identification of the follower with the leader the greater the referent power.

The strength of the expert power of the leader varies with the knowledge or perception which the follower attributes to the leader in a given area. Accepting a battalion commander's advice in a tactical situation is a common example of expert influence. Whenever expert influence occurs it seems necessary for both the follower to think that the leader knows, and for the follower to trust that the leader is telling the truth rather than trying to deceive the follower. There is some evidence that the attempted exertion of expert power outside the

range of expert power will reduce expert power. An undermining of confidence will take place.

These five types of power: referent, expert, reward, punishment, and legitimate power are prevalent in this thesis. These distinct powers or the ability to influence will almost always lead to the following.

a. For all types of power, the stronger the basis of power the greater the power.

b. For any type of power the size and range may vary greatly, but in general referent power will have the broadest range.

c. Any attempt to use power outside the range of power will reduce the power.

d. The greater the punishment power the lesser the attraction of the follower toward the leader.

e. The more legitimate the punishment power the less it will produce resistance and decrease attraction.

#### Leadership Defined

Most research on leadership has varying angles but most theorists and practitioners believe that leadership is the key to achieving organizational goals. Therefore leaders are credited with both the successes and failures of the organization. Many theorists contend that the true virtues and faults are shared between the leader and the organization. There are other theorists who contend that organizations will rise or fall on the influence of the leader, consequently it is the leader who shares in the successes and failures.

The idea of the born leader is a popular idea of the past that has been discredited by modern research. It was no doubt perpetuated by those with hereditary authority and was given support by the frequency

with which their descendants succeeded the original leader. In the early days of our culture, leadership was confined to the few because knowledge and freedom were only available to the few.

The leader who achieves his role almost entirely through personal magnetism has attracted interest in writings of the past and still dominates history and the movie industry. This leader has been called the charismatic leader. Many a religion was founded by charismatic leaders, and politicians usually also possess charisma. These leaders are followed because of their attractiveness to their followers.

Leadership is a matter of positively influencing individuals to accomplish their assigned mission successfully. More specifically, leadership in the military today obviously weights heavily toward successfully accomplishing the mission using the human relations and behavioral approach. This approach is as follows: Leadership is the art of influencing individuals in a manner that will cause them to increase their feeling of personal worth, competence, and organizational pride, while accomplishing the assigned mission successfully.

#### The Leadership Model

The dimensions of leadership taken from the various theories and authors led to the leadership model that will be used to define what leadership should be for effective military leaders. This model is the ability of the leader to demonstrate the appropriate level of technical skills, the ability of the leader to use interpersonal skills using human relations to foster productive interpersonal interaction with the members of the organization, and the ability of the leader to use conceptual skills which focus on the tasks of the organization through internal and external factors.

Why are the leader's technical skills key to the success of the organization and what do technical skills in this model mean? A practical answer to this question stems from the typical type of questions asked in a job interviews: job experience, how much and what type, and what type of degree or background does the potential employee have relevant to the job at hand? Research has borne out that theorists pay little attention, in contrast to the military community, to the leader's technical, intelligence, and job related knowledge. But practitioners on the other hand use these qualifications to determine hiring and promotions.<sup>13</sup> In this leadership model, technical skills are those skills that require the leader to have the technical competence in relation to the military task at hand, the job related knowledge by formal training or experience, and the ability to correlate facts into meaningful information. Within the organization, technical skills are the expert power of the leader.

Both the civilian and military communities place emphasis on training to improve technical skills. It is estimated that \$30 to \$40 billion is spent on education and training each year.<sup>14</sup> The importance of technical skills in the military environment is seen in the emphasis placed on training to either raise or maintain the technical skills of soldiers. Training at basic officer courses, specialized training courses in maintenance and supply, advanced officer training courses, and the elaborate correspondence training program are examples. The National Training Center and the other combat training centers in Europe for example show the importance the military places on technical skills derived through training and job related experiences. The US military has developed standards to measure the technical skills of its soldiers through qualification testing for most military occupational skills. Soldiers and officers in technical specialties such as aviation and

demolition must take periodic skill qualification tests. In a profession that depends on the ability of its members to defend the country, it is without question that technical skills such as technical competence, job related knowledge, and the ability to synthesize facts into usable information are a significant piece of the leadership model.

The second dimension of the leadership model is interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skills of the leader defined here are derived from the theories of personality traits of leaders. Although the personality traits approach is not sufficient in predicting leadership effectiveness, it is useful instead to predict the effectiveness of a leader's behavior pattern. Interpersonal skills must focus on two aspects of the leader's behavior: those behaviors that are external or initiating and those that are internal or consideration. External or initiating behavior fosters job related relationships where the leader can define roles for the leader and follower, set realistic standards, and ensure that individual goals match those of the organization's.

Consideration or internal leader behavior involves those relationships that are person specific. These interpersonal relationships are similar to those between friends or within a family; relationships that foster mutual trust and respect.<sup>15</sup> The combination of external and internal relationships fostered by the leader has a direct bearing on the leader's ability to motivate subordinates to make their goals meet the goals of the organization. Referent power is the type of influence demonstrated in internal relationships. The importance of interpersonal skills is somewhat diminished in leadership theories; however, the importance of these skills in ensuring that followers accomplish the mission of the organization is the more important of the other two dimensions of this leadership model. This is so because the leader can not accomplish the mission alone, and the

organization can not accomplish the mission without its people. Therefore, the leader must be able to use interpersonal skills to motivate subordinates to accomplish the mission. They are important because subordinates must be motivated to accept direction, control, and coordination of their behavior. Motivation and its basis is covered in the following paragraphs.

The final dimension to this leadership model is the conceptual skills of the leader. Conceptual skills are those skills that allow leaders to look externally at how the environment affects the organization, and internally at the subsystems of the organization. In the civilian sector, external decisions important to leaders are decisions to merge or resist a merger, to make a major change in location or maintain the current location, or to develop a new line of products. Decisions such as these can make the difference for some organizations between success or failure and growth or stagnation.<sup>16</sup> In the US military, external perspective should be the ability of leaders to develop a vision for the organization. Vision then must be translated into realistic goals and objectives. In fact, vision for the commander is usually a document that battalion commanders and above are encouraged to develop and provide to their units with the purpose of defining a direction for the organization. The internal aspect of conceptual skills are those skills that allow leaders to harmonize the subsystems within the organization. A typical civilian business will have sales, marketing, or engineering departments. In military organizations the division of labor is separated by functional staffs: administration, intelligence, operations and others. A leader must understand the dynamics, needs, and potential of these subsystems. Peter Selznick, a theorist on leadership, states that:

The institutional leader is the unique possessor of system perspective and is the quality which distinguishes him from the

leader who is merely an interpersonal adept . . . he is concerned with the content as well as the process . . . he is concerned with the dynamic adaptation of the total organization to its own internal strivings and to its external pressures.<sup>17</sup>

The function of standard operating procedures, tactics, techniques, and procedures are all examples, internal and external, of the aspects of conceptual skills used to further the goals of the military organization. Although some of these are not the sole function of the leader to develop, the leader has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that these procedures are best for the organization so the mission can be accomplished.

#### The Motivation Connection

What causes an individual to perform? Additionally, what causes the quality and quantity of the performance to improve or deteriorate? These problems are constantly being addressed in civilian organizations starting with the Hawthorne studies.<sup>18</sup> Although since the 1960s the US Army has increased its attention toward the performance question, it has not thoroughly addressed this issue. The purpose here is to approach the performance issue by demonstrating that performance is linked to motivation and that the leader impacts directly on motivation.

The question of what causes an individual to improve or deteriorate has been a concern of both managers and researchers. One only has to consult first line managers or review the volumes of articles relating to motivation in management and leadership publications to see that the motivation problem exists in all organizations, civilian and military. There are many reasons that account for the increased attention of motivation in organizations. Managers and supervisors are becoming aware of the behavior of both the organization and its members. Additionally, increased attention is being given to the people that cause organizations to function in their

environment. Katz stated that organizations have three behavioral requirements: people must be induced not only to join the organization but also to remain in it; people must carry out the role assignment for which they are hired, and must do so in a dependable manner; and there must be innovative and spontaneous activity in achieving organizational objectives which go beyond the role specification. Therefore, in order for an organization to be effective, it must stimulate both the decision to participate and the decision to produce work.<sup>19</sup>

A second reason for the increased attention is the nature of the concept of motivation. The way people perform on the job interacts with the entire field of organizational variables. Consequently to understand motivation is essential to understanding various leadership styles and their effect on the organization.

#### Theories of Motivation

Motivation is often identified as having two characteristics or categories. The first of these characteristics is content which attempts to identify attributes of the individual, the environment, or behavior within the environment. These factors ask the question: What motivates people? The other characteristic of motivational theory investigates behavior from the view of expectancy and equity processes, of which behavior is influenced by content factors. This category asks the question: How do environmental factors and individual needs determine behavior? These two categories can be confusing, therefore they should not be theorized excessively because the separation is more of a degree than type. Where content theories emphasize the what of motivation, they also address the process. Process theories emphasize the how of motivation and also cover the content categories. These motivation theories are grouped as content and process theories.

### Need Hierarchy Theory (Content)

Maslow's need hierarchy theory was introduced to clinical psychologists in the late 1940s. To influence individuals in the work place, attention was focused on Maslow's need hierarchy as a popular model of motivation. He viewed humans as animals wanting to satisfy certain types of needs. Maslow placed these needs in the following order:

- a. Physiological needs: The need for food, water, air
- b. Safety needs: The need for security, stability and the absence of pain, threat, or illness
- c. Belongingness and love needs
- d. Esteem needs: The need for recognition or respect from others
- e. Self-actualization need: The need to feel self-fulfillment or the realization of one's potential<sup>20</sup>

It was Maslow's contention that unsatisfied needs would produce a tension within the individual which would lead them to act in a calculated way to reduce that tension. This calculated action by the individual would then restore equilibrium. Once a need is satisfied it loses its strength of motivation, until the need arises again. The hierarchy of needs could act on a person as follows: A person who has not eaten for a few days becomes obsessed with the thought of food to the extent that hunger is the prime motivation for all actions. After hunger needs have been met, a person may become aware of personal safety or freedom from extreme pain. Most importantly, only after the first two needs are satisfied will a person turn his/her attention and efforts to the "higher" needs of belongingness, esteem, and self-actualization. Therefore, the five need categories exist in a hierarchy of previously fulfilled needs, such that

the lower or more basic needs are inherently more important than the higher or less basic need.

Maslow's theory of needs received its share of attention over the years, although empirical verification did not come about for several years. Many theorists in the motivational field concluded that sufficient data was missing in Maslow's theory. The 1970 version of Maslow's theory indicates that it may take a lifetime to ascend the hierarchy of needs. D. T. Hall and K. E. Nougain, psychologists and authors, agreed it may take some individuals a lifetime to progress up through the hierarchy of needs and added certain needs become more important to some individuals as they mature. This happens not because their lower needs are satisfied, but in response to problems they have to solve. Relative to the order of needs satisfaction, Hall and Nougain stated:

If these career stages are in fact universal, it is not difficult to see how an observer might "read in" an hierarchical mechanism to aid in explaining the need changes which accompany them. If Maslow observed people at various stages in their careers, and he indicates that clinical observational data were important inputs in his model, he might have seen needs emerge, in the order he describes, and he might also see people express more satisfaction in the lower need area. However he could be incorrect in his inference that lower level gratification causes higher needs to emerge.<sup>21</sup>

After several attempts at testing Maslow's theory, Hall and Nougain found some positive correlation in the needs hierarchy but not enough to absolutely verify that lower level gratification causes higher needs to emerge.

#### Motivation-Hygiene Theory (Content)

The Associates, Department of Behavioral Science and Leadership, United States Army Military Academy, revealed that Frederick Herzberg asked the age old question: How do you motivate employees? During his research for a solution to his question, Herzberg pondered sensitivity

training, reduced time spent on the job, increased fringe benefits, human relations training, employee counseling, and efforts such as two way communications training and job participation. As a result of Herzberg's research with 200 engineers and accountants, he designed one of the most popular and most replicated studies in the field of job attitudes. Herzberg's theory is known as the Motivation-Hygiene Theory, Dual Factor Theory, and the Two Factor Theory. This thesis will use the title Motivation-Hygiene Theory.<sup>22</sup>

Herzberg and his associates proposed that job satisfaction is not the opposite of job dissatisfaction and vice versa. This proposal includes two categories of factors. One set concerns the animal nature of man and the built-in drive to avoid pain from the environment (dissatisfaction). The other factor concerns the human need to achieve and to experience psychological growth (satisfaction). Motivators or satisfiers:

- a. Achievement
- b. Recognition
- c. Work itself
- d. Responsibility
- e. Advancement
- f. Growth

Hygiene or dissatisfiers:

- a. Company policy and administration
- b. Supervision
- c. Relationship with supervisors
- d. Work conditions
- e. Salary
- f. Relationship with peers
- g. Personal life

- h. Relationship with subordinates
- i. Status
- j. Security

During the Herzberg interviews of the engineers and accountants, the interviewees were asked to describe instances when they felt exceptionally good or exceptionally bad about their jobs. Herzberg determined that the good critical incidents were dominated by reference to intrinsic aspects of the job (motivators) and the bad critical incidents were dominated by reference to extrinsic factors (hygiene).<sup>23</sup>

An understanding of Herzberg's motivators and hygiene factors will increase a leader's knowledge of his subordinates' motivation. The leader can get an understanding of the difference between factors that will increase performance from those that will not. However, these motivation theories can be difficult to understand when trying to identify motivator and hygiene factors of an individual. The zero point where there is no dissatisfaction and no satisfaction is sometimes unclear. It is quite clear that motivators are more important to job satisfaction than hygiene factors.

#### Expectancy-Valence Theory (Process)

Very simply stated, the expectancy model of motivation proposes that when a person has an expectation of an important reward, there is a noticeable increase in the amplitude and persistence of behavior directed toward that reward.<sup>24</sup> Psychologist and author V. H. Vroom's theory of motivation is the one most frequently cited. He begins with the basic assumption that at any given time a person prefers some outcome over others; that preference refers to a relationship between the strength of a person's desire for, or attraction toward, outcomes. Vroom further emphasized the distinction between valence and value, "An

individual may desire an object but derive little satisfaction from its attainment or he may strive to avoid an object which he later finds to be quite satisfying."<sup>25</sup> Vroom is actually explaining the importance that the worker or subordinate places on the reward. The reward outcome will have positive valence if the subordinate declares that the reward is worth his efforts. If the reward is of no value to the subordinate there will be a negative valence. Vroom continues to explain the meaning of expectancy, valence, and instrumentality, and the algebraic sum of the products of these variables. Vroom's two propositions are:

The valence of an outcome to a person is a monotonically increasing function of the algebraic sum of the products of the valence of all outcomes and his conceptions of its instrumentality for attainment of these outcomes.<sup>26</sup>

The force of a person to perform an act is a monotonically increasing function of the algebraic sum of the products of the valences of all outcomes and the strength of his expectancies that the act will be followed by the attainment of these outcomes.<sup>27</sup>

Vroom uses propositions one and two to explain motivated human behavior by visualizing components of the expectancy relationship. These components are expectancy which is between individual behaviors and performance outcomes. Instrumentality is between performance outcomes and reward outcomes (this component refers to the leader's reliability and credibility of coming through with the reward), and the value that the subordinate puts on the reward. Vroom also stated that when the value of any one of these variables, expectancy, instrumentality, or valence is zero then the algebraic sum will be zero. In this case the subordinate's performance would also be zero (theoretically) and hence be worthless to the organization's mission.

The expectancy theory of motivation is a functional relationship type of leadership between the leader and the subordinate. The performance level of the subordinate can be looked on as the expectancy, or belief that a given behavior will result in a particular performance

outcome. The expectancy model demonstrates that expectancies and instrumentalities are a function of how the subordinate perceives the connection between effort and outcomes and instrumentalities and reward. Leaders can build on these concerns to get individual behavior directed toward performance. Edward E. Lawler, a leading researcher on organizational behavior, pointed out that:

People develop expectancies and instrumentalities through three sources: communications with other people in similar situations; reliance on their own experiences in similar situations; and learning through trial and error the job.<sup>28</sup>

This explanation by Lawler should inspire leaders to become involved in the development of expectancies and instrumentalities of subordinates. The leader can influence the work environment to give subordinates the most desired path to performance goals. In this regard the leadership and expectancy model demonstrates the impact or influences that the leader has on the expectancy relationship.

Examined here were several major approaches to motivation; the needs hierarchy, the motivation hygiene, and finally the expectancy-valence theories. The motivational theory most applicable to the success of a military leader is the expectancy-valence theory because it maintains that the strength of a tendency to act in a certain way depends on the strength of a belief (expectancy) that the outcome will be followed by a certain outcome, the value (valence) or attractiveness of the outcome to that individual, and the confidence in the leader (instrumentality) that the leader can deliver on the outcome. This is of particular importance when combat situations dictate that soldiers have an expectation to succeed based on that if they do, in all likelihood the value of success means that they will not only accomplish the mission but in all likelihood increase pride in the organization, foster patriotism, self esteem, and reap a better life for self, family,

and as citizens of America. This theory should remind the leader that subordinates will intuitively ponder the why of a mission, "what's in it for me"? The needs hierarchy theory has not been as instrumental as the others because it is impossible for leaders to determine the "stage" of needs for each individual in the organization. It has also been shown that individuals do not progress along the hierarchy as Maslow believed. Motivation-hygiene is also less useful to the military leader in that the satisfiers and the dissatisfiers are issues and functions a leader may not and usually can not control in combat situations. The expectancy theory will best assist military leaders in using this inner intuition of subordinates in accomplishing organizational goals.

#### Leadership in the 1930s and the 1940s

Prior to the 1940s leadership in the US Army was usually an expression of desired attributes of the officer as a leader. Leadership traits such as knowledge of profession, decisiveness, force and aggressiveness, knowledge of your men, tact, energy, loyalty, initiative and humanity were often mentioned in this regard. It appears that very little emphasis was directed toward the attributes of subordinates. Social psychologists began experimenting and writing on the human relations aspects of leadership in the late 1920s. According to Saul W. Gellerman, a psychologist with the American Management Association, the champion was Elton Mayo, and his platform was the imminently respectable Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration. As a result of Mayo's research and writings, organizations began to re-examine their leadership and motivational assumptions along the lines of looking at employees as "whole persons," hence the development of the Human Relations Model. In this light, R. Bendix, a psychologist, concluded that, "failure to treat workers as human beings came to be regarded as

the cause of low morale, poor craftsmanship, unresponsiveness, and confusion.<sup>29</sup>

In the late 1940s, although the US Army did not fully adopt the human relations model of leadership until the 1960s, leadership philosophy was published using the human relations theories in several military publications. Many military leaders such as George S. Patton espoused the trait theory of leadership. During a speech on leadership at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, he said that the foremost trait of the military leader is the possession of a superiority complex. He went on to say:

Perhaps the attributes he should possess are best illustrated by a comparison to the ignition system of a gasoline motor. No matter how carefully designed and accurately machined and assembled it may be, the motor is but iron sloshed with oil until fired to powerful and harmonious activity by the electric spark - the soul of the leader.<sup>30</sup>

As the human relations model of leadership began to take hold in the Army, writings like those of Brigadier General Edmund L. Gruber, commandant, Command and General Staff School (CGSS), surfaced:

In the five Field Service Regulations that our Army has had in last forty years I don't think any of them, until this new addition, ever said anything about leadership. . . . You must have the confidence of those you expect to lead . . . you should be relentless for the welfare of the men who are to do the work and should look out for their interest and be moderate towards them.<sup>31</sup>

By 1940 the leadership doctrine at the CGSS began to recognize that the welfare of subordinates would be instrumental in winning any war. It is apparent that leadership taught at the CGSS to officers shifted from the trait theory to the human relations theory. Officers who either went to CGSS at that time or read leadership doctrine would be the officers and senior officers who would soon lead men in combat during World War II. Early military leadership theorists and practitioners understood the importance of leadership but did not use all the theoretical wording of the time, however they shared leadership techniques in their writings

about leadership. One such author was Lieutenant Colonel Edward Munson who stated in 1942:

Since morale is a mental state a psychological state, practical knowledge of the laws of that govern human behavior is essential to its successful development and maintenance. Study of the theoretical, nebulous, and abstract side of psychology is unnecessary, though any training in psychology that a leader may possess through education or reading is to his advantage. But if a leader knows the basic principles that control human behavior, if he grasps the realization that most men react in fixed and definite channels under a given stimulus or influence, if he can apply that knowledge intelligently to the individual problems he will possess the basic tools for managing men.<sup>32</sup>

Field Marshal Viscount Montgomery of Alamein another leader of the time although not an American, captured key elements to effective leadership. He contended that the study of human nature is important in one's ability to lead. Trust and confidence between a commander and his men fosters personal relationships, and the personal relationship between a commander and his men is the single most important factor in success in war. The power to lead men is based on how he viewed leadership. He defined leadership as, "the will to dominate, together with the character which inspires confidence."<sup>33</sup> The leader must be able to dominate his men and the events around him. The leader must get the most out of his men to achieve a goal. Second, leaders' character must be strong to inspire trust and confidence and enthusiasm in subordinates. Montgomery's personal lessons in history are the guidelines that he encourages others to use in commanding soldiers. Leaders must know the objective and he must let everyone else know what he wants. He must create "atmosphere" where his subordinates live and work. A commander must trust his men. A commander must use decentralization when possible as to not become embroiled in details, therefore enabling him to see the essentials of the problem. He sees morale as important as the personal relationships between commanders and soldiers in achieving success on the battlefield. Further he sees morale

as being based on discipline, self-respect, and the confidence of the soldier in his commander and his equipment. Montgomery states commanders should get to know their soldiers; soldiers in turn will want to know their leaders and leaders will then earn the confidence of their soldiers. Additionally, soldiers must know why they are being asked to do something since success in war is accomplished through teamwork. Montgomery identifies failure resulting from either poor command or poor staff work or both. Finally, Montgomery talks about the ability of leaders to be clear thinkers anticipating enemy reaction.<sup>34</sup>

In an effort to understand what it took to train and mobilize armed forces to prepare forces for World War II, L. A. Pennington, assistant professor of psychology, University of Illinois; Romeyn B. Hough, Jr., retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel and librarian, Army War College; and H. W. Case, assistant manager of engineering personnel, Douglas Aircraft, wrote on military psychology, military training, and military leadership. Their intent was to increase the effectiveness of the nation, especially when the speedy training of young officers was essential to victories in combat. The authors stated that to serve efficiently officers must acquire the techniques that make an effective organization, they must understand human engineering. Human engineering is that psychology that covers the prediction and control of man's behavior, or what was coined military psychology as it applies to military functions and operations. The purpose of the definition and study of military psychology was to speed the military officer toward greater proficiency in handling military men. Some of the techniques suggested were learn to criticize effectively, explain the "why" of training, and use rewards and punishments. The authors portray leadership as:

The first need of any group is leadership, whether the group be two men or a nation. Without leadership there can be no coordinated

action. . . . In time of war, army leadership is of greater importance than is leadership in certain other walks of life and in normal times. This is true because leadership in the armed forces determines the success or failure of the war. Although other factors are obviously involved, history is replete with illustrations of armed forces, inferior in number and equipment, who have triumphed by virtue of superior leadership. . . . Leadership accordingly, has often been said to be of more importance than any other single factor in winning wars.<sup>35</sup>

The leadership principles taught to officers at senior service schools, and especially at the Command and General Staff College, were principles for all troops. However, the application of these principles was different when they applied to the command of Negro troops.

According to a survey in 1941 on the integration of the Negro soldier into the Army by Judge William H. Hastie, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War, the traditional mores of the South had been widely accepted and adopted by the Army as the basis of policy and practice in matters affecting the Negro soldier.

It appeared that this philosophy and approach did not work. It advocated using the Negro soldier as an American fighting man, fighting the enemy on one hand, but a coward who would accept treatment as less than a man at home. Additionally, this policy could give some commanders an excuse for not accomplishing the mission.

Leadership of the Negro soldier was considered separately by the Army in the 1940s. Motivation had to be a tremendous problem for most white leaders; leadership especially in those instances where newly drafted Negro soldiers from the South viewed the Army as a social system different from that of the society from which they came. This viewpoint caused behavioral conflicts when it was discovered that the social traditions were the same as those back home.

Motivating Negro soldiers to raise expectations of performance outcomes was expected to be difficult. This statement from Leadership

and the Negro Soldier, a training manual on leadership and the Negro soldier referred to that observation:

Specifically, and for reasons stated later, the officer assigned to command Negro troops faces a greater challenge to his abilities as a leader than if he were assigned to command white troops. If he is indeed a leader, he should welcome the challenge. Two conditions are responsible for this greater challenge that confront him: a. Because of more limited opportunities in civilian experience, a much larger group of Negro than white soldiers can be expected at the outset to be skeptical of and to lack enthusiasm for the army venture. b. Certain situations will exist both in and out of the army, that inevitably will raise questions and doubts in the minds of many Negro soldiers as to the worth of the venture and the reality for them of the goal.<sup>36</sup>

In essence motivation to accomplish organizational goals presented a challenge to white leaders. The Army attempted to cross this barrier to effective leadership when it published the above manual. The manual offered guidance to white officers on handling Negro soldiers and outlined blacks' participation in previous wars.<sup>37</sup> Another manual, The Negro in the Armed Forces, cites two examples of good and bad leadership:

Colonel James A. Moss (white), a southerner, enjoyed the confidence and affection of his men because he believed with Lee, contrary to some southerners, that you should treat and handle the colored man as any other human being out of who you could make a good soldier. Other units were commanded by officers who did not respect their men. Much was the difficulty and the unhappiness to all. . . . It is very evident that such treatment of our own troops was far from conducive to good morale and undoubtedly lowered military efficiency, resulting in greater casualties of our white as well as black citizen soldiers . . . two examples of opposite commanding officers. . . . One is a builder of morale and can expect the highest performance from his troops. The other is a dangerous person to have in command, for his policy will result in poor performance by his troops endangering an entire military operation.<sup>38</sup>

Another view of the time about blacks was the study done by Samuel A. Stouffer, a social scientist, that found that nearly one-third of Negro soldiers came from the North and had educational opportunities about as good as Southern whites. Second, Negro attitudes indicated a basic racial orientation that was highly sensitive to racial

discrimination. In relation to Negro soldiers' hope for the future with respect to their participation in World War II, the research found that the majority of Negro officers and enlisted men believed that by helping win the war, this would be followed by reward outcomes. The theory that virtue will be rewarded is in consonance with the motivational aspect of the leadership model. Negro beliefs captured by Stouffer follow:

The war is as much my affair as anyone else's. The United States is fighting to give everyone a fair chance to make a decent living. The United States is fighting to protect the right of free speech for everyone. The United States is not fighting mainly for the benefit of rich people. Negroes will have more rights and privileges because of contributions to the war effort.<sup>39</sup>

How does the leadership style of the 1930s and the 1940s compare with the leadership model outlined in this chapter? As evidenced by the writings on leadership by the Army leaders of the time, they separately uncovered key aspects to effective leadership. What they did not have was a coherent philosophy of the time. They wrote of the need for definite goals, understanding human engineering or understanding the psychology of human behavior, the ability to influence men and foster trust and confidence through personal relationships, teamwork, the need for leaders who are clear thinkers who must possess confidence, and knowledge to govern the task of the unit. It would seem that using the above there is no clear cut process to effective leadership. Today's Army philosophy on leadership uses the "buck shot" approach to developing effective leaders.

A leader is expected to know himself and seek self-improvement, be technically and tactically proficient, seek and take responsibility, make sound, timely decisions, set the example, know and look out for soldiers, develop a sense of responsibility, understand the mission, build teamwork, employ the unit properly, be physically fit, have a historical perspective, and motivate soldiers, just to outline a few.<sup>40</sup>

In addition, military leaders of today do not hesitate to impart what leadership techniques should be considered the most important. Once again our leadership doctrine is like the apple orchard: there are many leadership techniques to choose from; just pick the best ones for the situation.

These ideas are not wrong; however, alone they do not assure effective military leadership because it takes the right combination of leadership factors to be successful. For this reason, leadership should be considered an art; however, even artists follow principles in their field. Therefore, the leadership model that should provide military leaders with the most effective framework for success uses the right mix of technical skills (technical know how, job related experience, and the ability to correlate facts), conceptual skills, and interpersonal skills. The key element of technical skills for leaders must be their ability to correlate facts in meaningful information. With this ability, the leader will be able to master the technical aspects of the job, and seek out the experience needed for the task at hand.

Conceptual skills require that leaders understand the mission at hand and chart a vision or path to accomplish the mission. In addition, leaders must be able to "task organize" the organization to make the most of available resources. Finally, leaders must develop interpersonal skills to motivate subordinates to ensure the goals of the subordinates are one with those of the organization.

Leadership is without question the single most important factor that determines whether an organization will be successful or not. A potent analogy to leadership and its effect on the organization is that incompetent doctors will have sick patients and incompetent leaders will have dysfunctional organizations.<sup>41</sup>

This chapter has shown leadership theory as it developed in the civilian sector and how it was adapted in the Army and applied during World War II to current day. It defines the proper combination of leadership theories into a leadership model that, if leaders use it properly, it provides the best framework to ensure effective leadership and an effective organization. This leadership model was used as the framework to evaluate leadership in the 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Associates, Leadership in Organizations (New York: Avery Publishing Inc., 1988), 4.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>4</sup>Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge (New York: Harper and Row, Inc., 1958), 4.

<sup>5</sup>Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1966), 300.

<sup>6</sup>Irvin Knickerbocker, "Leadership: A Conception and Some Implications" Journal of Social Issues, vol. 40 (Summer 1948): 23-40.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 35-71.

<sup>8</sup>Tead Ordway, The Art of Leadership (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1935), 20-61.

<sup>9</sup>Knickerbocker, 31-32.

<sup>10</sup>Katz and Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations, 300.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 316.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 302.

<sup>13</sup>Fred E. Fiedler and Joseph E. Garcia, New Approaches to Effective Leadership (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1987), 6.

<sup>14</sup>Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, Leaders: The Strategies for Taking Charge (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1985), 199.

<sup>15</sup>Associates, Leadership in Organizations, 229.

<sup>16</sup>Katz and Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations, 314.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 316.

<sup>18</sup>Paul Hersey and Kenneth H. Blanchard, Management of Organizational Behavior (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1972), 44.

<sup>19</sup>Daniel Katz, "The Motivational Basis of Organizational Behavior," Behavioral Science, (April 1943): 131-146.

<sup>20</sup>A. H. Maslow, "A Theory of Human Motivation" Psychological Review, vol. 50 (1943): 370-396.

<sup>21</sup>D. T. Hall and K. E. Nougain, "An Examination of Maslow's Need Hierarchy in an Organizational Setting" Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, Vol. 3 (1968): 12-35.

<sup>22</sup>Associates, Leadership in Organizations, 61-66.

- <sup>23</sup>Ibid., 88-99.
- <sup>24</sup>V. H. Vroom, Work and Motivation (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1948), 1-14.
- <sup>25</sup>Ibid., 15.
- <sup>26</sup>Ibid., 16.
- <sup>27</sup>Ibid., 18.
- <sup>28</sup>Edward E. Lawler, Motivation in Work Organizations (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole, 1973), 53-58.
- <sup>29</sup>R. Bendix, Work and Authority in Industry (New York: Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1956), 294.
- <sup>30</sup>Martin Blumenson, The Patton Papers (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972), 789.
- <sup>31</sup>Brigadier General Edward L. Gruber, "Leadership," Military Review (Fort Leavenworth, KS: CGSC, 1940), 5-7.
- <sup>32</sup>Colonel Edward L. Munson, Jr., Leadership for Army Leaders (Washington, D.C.: The Infantry Journal, 1942), 2.
- <sup>33</sup>Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, "Military Leadership," Lecture Delivered before the University of St. Andrew, 15 November 1945, Combined Arms Research Library, Fort Leavenworth, 9.
- <sup>34</sup>Ibid., 11.
- <sup>35</sup>L. A. Pennington, Romeyn B. Hough, Jr., and H. W. Case, The Psychology of Military Leadership (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1943), 101.
- <sup>36</sup>M5 (Training) Army Service Forces Manual, Leadership and the Negro Soldier (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1944), 357.
- <sup>37</sup>Neil A. Wynn, The Afro-American and the Second World War (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1975), 30.
- <sup>38</sup>Seymour J. Schoenfeld, The Negro in the Armed Forces (Washington, D.C.: The Associated Publishers, 1945), 19-20.
- <sup>39</sup>Samuel A. Stouffer, et al., The American Soldier: Combat and Its Aftermath (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1949), 580-599.
- <sup>40</sup>U.S. Army, FM 22-103 Leadership and Command at Senior Levels (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1987), 81.
- <sup>41</sup>Warren Bennis, Why Leaders Can't Lead (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990), 21.

## CHAPTER 4

### The 761st TANK BATTALION

Why did it take thirty-three years for the 761st Tank Battalion to receive the Presidential Unit Citation, the highest award a unit can earn during combat? The 761st Tank Battalion was recommended for this award shortly after combat ended in World War II. Only after an extensive research and letter writing campaign by the 761st Tank Battalion Veterans' Association came to the attention of Secretary of the Army Clifford Alexander did it become apparent that the combat record of the 761st Tank Battalion had gone unnoticed and without proper recognition.<sup>1</sup> On 19 April 1978 at Summerall Field, Fort Myer, Virginia, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Charles A. "Pop" Gates, president of the 761st Tank Battalion Association, and a host of other survivors and supporters accepted the Presidential Unit Citation from Clifford Alexander. In part the citation read:

The 761st Tank Battalion Distinguished itself by extraordinary gallantry, courage, professionalism and high esprit de corps displayed in the accomplishment of unusually difficult and hazardous operations in the European Theater of Operations from 31 October 1944 to 6 May 1945. During 183 days in combat, elements of the 761st-the first United States Army tank battalion committed to battle comprised of black soldiers. . . . The men of the 761st Tank Battalion, while serving as a separate battalion with the 26th, 71st, 79th, 87th, 95th, and the 103d Infantry Divisions, the 17th Airborne Division, and the 3d, 7th, and 9th Armies in 183 continuous days in battle fought major engagements in six European countries, participated in four major allied campaigns and on 6 May 1945, as the easternmost American soldiers in Austria, ended their combat missions by joining with the First Ukrainian Army (Russian) at the Enn River, Steyr, Austria. Throughout this period of combat, the courageous and professional actions of the members of the "Black Panther" battalion, coupled with their indomitable fighting spirit and devotion to duty, reflect great credit on the 761st Tank Battalion, and the United States Army, and this Nation.<sup>2</sup>

Part of the reason it took thirty-three years to recognize the accomplishments of the 761st is seen by many as a reflection of the general views held by whites of blacks in the World War II era. This attitude also prompted similar effort to posthumously award the Medal of Honor to Staff Sergeant Ruben Rivers of the 761st Tank Battalion for his heroism an effort still unsuccessful. The quest for Rivers' Medal of Honor was introduced in the form of bills to the US House of Representatives. The first bill, H.R. 4676, was introduced by Representative James Inhofe, US Congressman, in 1990. This bill failed because there was no original citation in Sergeant Rivers' official records, and the statute of limitations for World War II veterans' awards ended in 1952.<sup>3</sup> Another bill was introduced in 1993 by Representative George Miller, US Congressman, and remains without action in the House of Representatives.

Despite the thirty-three year delay in awarding the Presidential Unit Citation, and the continuing struggle for Sergeant Rivers' Medal of Honor, battalion personnel were awarded 11 Silver Stars, 69 Bronze Stars, and 296 Purple Hearts in World War II.

To understand some of the problems that could have influenced the combat effectiveness of the 761st Tank Battalion, it is important to review the mood of the nation in relationship to blacks in general and blacks in the Army in this pre-war period. Policy on Negroes in the military and the Army in 1940 was shaped by color barriers, segregation, and discrimination; by reports of white officers on Negro units' performance in World War I, primarily the 92d Division; and by the fact that segregation was a reflection of American life and therefore was also a reflection of military life. For example, the successful Negro singer of the time, Marian Anderson, was refused permission by the Daughters of the American Revolution to sing in Constitution Hall.<sup>4</sup>

Schools and eating establishments were more often than not separated by color, especially in the South. In the military, an official investigation initiated by the War Department, disclosed by the Kansas City Call, described the poor treatment of black soldiers in the 10th Cavalry Regiment, a unit stationed at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Racial injustice, particularly in the South, was rampant. Black defendants received harsher sentences for similar crimes than did whites. Police officers in the South usually "shot first" and asked questions later if the person was black.

In response to the raging war in Europe, the pressure from the Negro leadership of the time, and the desire for Negro support for Franklin D. Roosevelt's re-election the president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Walter T. White, the former Industrial Secretary of the Urban League, Arnold Hill, and President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, A. Philip Randolph, met with President Roosevelt on 27 September 1940 to voice concerns for all blacks. The basic demands were twofold: allow for the full integration of Negroes into the armed forces and equal participation by Negroes in all defense related industries. Although the White House responded with no significant policy change, it did agree to organize and train more black combat units and black aviators, but refused to end segregation.<sup>5</sup> One of the units established was an experimental training program for blacks in armored units. Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair, Chief of the Army Ground Forces, supported the idea of using black soldiers in the armored forces of the Army Ground Forces. This, along with the continued pressure from black leaders, eventually led to the formation of a black armored group (the 5th Armored Group), one of five in the US Army.

In March 1941, ninety-eight black enlisted men arrived at Fort Knox, Kentucky, to become the first ever black armor soldiers in the history of the US Army. Black soldiers continued to arrive at Fort Knox and in June 1941 the first tank battalion with Negro troops was designated the 758th Tank Battalion (Light). After several months of training at Fort Knox, the 758th moved to Camp Claiborne, Louisiana. There, more black tankers arrived from the Armored School, and eventually the 761st Tank Battalion (Light) was formed from officers and enlisted men from the 758th Tank Battalion (Light). The 761st Tank Battalion had an authorized strength of 36 officers and 593 enlisted men. On official activation, 1 April 1942, there were 27 officers and 313 enlisted men. All of the officers were white.<sup>6</sup> By July of that same year, the first black officers arrived in the unit from Officer Candidate School of the Armored Force, at Fort Knox. They were Second Lieutenants Charles H. Barbour, Samuel Brown, and Ivan H. Harrison. All were assigned as tank platoon leaders. In September, five additional black officers were assigned to the battalion, also as platoon leaders. By this time, the battalion had reached its authorized strength. Major Edward E. Cruise, battalion commander, was promoted to lieutenant colonel. In November 1942 Lieutenant Colonel Cruise relinquished command to Major John R. Wright, Jr.

Living and training conditions were a challenge for the entire unit, especially the black soldiers. Camp Claiborne was situated between Shreveport and Baton Rouge, a location known for its moccasin infested swamps and racial prejudice. News that an all black unit was coming to the area (especially with tanks and guns) did not do much to endear the unit to the local community in the nearby town of Alexandria. The town of Alexandria, the only social outlet for the black tankers, was often the scene of racial incidents, a town most of which remained

off-limits to the tankers. They could not shop, eat, or drink anywhere in the in town. Instead, the soldiers instead frequented the impoverished "all black community" known as Little Harlem, where there was little recreation except for one theater and the local bars. Bus transportation to town was a challenge for the black soldiers. The bus driver would let ten to twelve black soldiers board the bus, allowing them to sit only in the rear, then fill the remainder of the bus with white soldiers. This process forced black soldiers to wait in line for hours. E.C. McConnell, a northerner and a member of the 761st, making his first trip to the South, got a taste of what it would be like serving there:

The cars (train) were not integrated at all, and they put all the black cars at the front part of the train. As it was slowly climbing the hills in Kentucky, they came through our cars and ordered us to pull our shades down. I couldn't understand this. My curiosity got the best of me, so I went between the cars to see exactly what was happening, why we had to pull the shades down. I saw a bunch of hillbillies out there - this was real hillbilly, redneck country. And they were waiting alongside the tracks with rifles. I later found out that several troop trains were fired on. So they were ordering us to pull the shades down for our own safety. Yeah, and we were going to fight for the whole United States, not just for Harlem.<sup>7</sup>

Conflicts with local townspeople like the ones in Alexandria were common in areas where black soldiers were stationed. Often these conflicts erupted with military policemen, whether they were black or white. At Camp Stewart, Georgia, black soldiers took to the streets with guns based on a false rumor that a black woman had been raped. This incident along with the blacks' general dissatisfaction over their treatment, which generated over 100 grievances, sparked the unrest. Similar incidents happened at Camp McCain, Mississippi, where black soldiers sought to seek revenge for a series of altercations instigated by the local civilians.

The tankers of Camp Claiborne had their own near violent altercation with the local town of Alexandria fueled by several incidents. Several black tankers were injured in an unprovoked assault by local white policemen. Days later a black female civilian worker was threatened and hit by a white soldier at Camp Claiborne. Finally, outside a theater in Little Harlem, a white military policeman used undue force in attempting to arrest a black soldier. Enraged, the black tankers went back to Camp Claiborne to prepare an attack on Alexandria using their tanks.<sup>8</sup> The black tankers, who fully intended to engage their tanks with the local citizens of Alexandria were finally dispersed by the C Company commander, Captain Wingo. Captain Wingo, a white officer, according to eyewitness David J. Williams, a white lieutenant in the unit, stood firmly in front of the tanks attempting to leave the Camp and convinced the soldiers to return the tanks to the motorpark. Captain Wingo promised no stockade for soldiers involved in the incident as an incentive to get them to return to post.<sup>9</sup> The Army's assessment of the incident at Camp Claiborne was that it was started by soldiers who were primarily from the North. Johnnie Stevens of the 761st Tank Battalion says of service for black soldiers in the South:

To be a black soldier in the South in those days was one of the worst things that could happen to you. If you go to town, you would have to get off the sidewalk if a white person came by. If you went into the wrong neighborhood wearing your uniform, you got beat up. If you stumbled over a brick, you was drunk and got beat up. If off-post you was hungry and couldn't find a black restaurant or a black home you know, you know what? You would starve. And you were a soldier . . . out there wearing the uniform of your country, and you're getting treated like a dog! That happened all over the South.<sup>10</sup>

The treatment of blacks by the local white citizens in Alexandria was bad and so were the living conditions in the camps for the Negro soldiers. Even German prisoners of war brought to the United

States were treated better than the black tankers. Eddy Donald, a member of the 761st Tank Battalion remembers:

A number of German prisoners were in the camp in a special area, not swampland. They were given freedom of movement and had access to facilities denied black American soldiers. They were given passes to town when black soldiers were confined to the area. . . . This was one of the most repugnant things . . . that happened to Negro servicemen.<sup>11</sup>

Camp Claiborne's black section was located near the sewage treatment plant and infested with roaches. The white officers in the black units lived in the black section of the camp. White soldiers, on the other hand, were located at the other end of the camp on good ground, and near the highway which gave them good access to town. A letter signed by "A disgusted Negro Trooper" to the Cleveland Call & Post related some of his frustration about the general conditions as he saw them at Camp Claiborne:

The conditions for a Negro soldier down here is unbearable the morale of the boys is very low. Now right at this moment the woods surrounding the camp are swarming with Louisiana hoogies armed with riles and shot guns even the little kids have 22 cal. rifles and B & B guns filled with anxiety to shoot a Negro soldier. . . . This camp isn't run by government regulations its controlled by the state of Louisiana and white civilians. . . . I see things brewing down and I am afraid that we colored soldiers are going to be the goats or victims of a one side affair.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the conditions in the local community and at Camp Claiborne, the soldiers of the 761st maintained an elite unit. Singled out because of their above-average intelligence, they were able to train and progress in tank tactics. Opportunity to train as an entire unit came on 23 August 1942 when the 761st went on maneuvers at Camp Livingston, Louisiana. This week of maneuvers began with a thirty-two mile road march with full equipment. Reports of the maneuvers were satisfactory. By the end of 1942, the 761st Tank Battalion conducted intensive training at the direction of First Lieutenant Charles Gates. Gates recalls how he initially found the tankers training habits:

Immediately, we'd get in the field and the fellows would jump out of

the tanks and start building fires. I called all my platoon in and told them, 'Now, gentlemen, . . . the first thing for you to do is to concentrate on learning how best to use these things. My first order of the day is put out those . . . fires and getting those tanks. . . . When you see me working, that means you work.'<sup>13</sup>

April 1943 marked the one year anniversary of the activation of the 761st Tank Battalion. As a part of the 5th Tank Group, it was one of three Negro tank battalions formed by the War Department project. April was also the second phase of the Third Army maneuvers that lasted until June 1943. The 761st trained during this timeframe with the 85th Infantry Division, the all Negro 93rd Infantry Division, the 3rd Armored Corps, and the 100th Infantry Battalion, composed of Japanese-American troops. High ranking visitors to the training area included Lieutenant General Ben Lear, former commanding general of the Army Ground Force Reinforcement System of the European Theater of Operations (ETO), and later deputy theater commander of the ETO, and Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair, who pushed the War Department program for black tankers. General McNair commented about the battalion during the maneuvers: "Vehicles and weapons of the 761st Tank Battalion were in excellent condition and well-disposed in bivouac on May 12, 1943."<sup>14</sup>

In June of 1943 the battalion received a new battalion commander, Major Paul L. Bates. Major Bates stayed in command for the remainder of the combat actions of the 761st. Also in 1943 the battalion went from a light tank battalion to a medium tank battalion. The medium tanks were equipped with a 75 millimeter gun. The battalion organization went to three lettered companies, a light tank company of M-5s, Service Company, and Headquarters Company consisting of a 105 howitzer assault gun platoon, maintenance platoon, a reconnaissance platoon, and a mortar platoon.

In September the 761st Tank Battalion moved to Camp Hood, Texas. It arrived on 15 September 1943 with a battalion strength of 42 officers

and 601 enlisted men and was assigned to the Troop Training Brigade. The training brigade used tanks, tank destroyers, and artillery battalion mixes to give Army Ground Forces tests to tank destroyers. The commanding general of the Tank Destroyer Center, Brigadier General Ernest A. Dawley, spoke three times to the 761st about its performance. General Dawley expressed his great faith in the battalion and thought it would do great things in battle. On one occasion, before the unit was about to depart for Europe, General Dawley told the tankers to put an extra round of ammunition in, and fire it for him against the Germans. Throughout training, the 761st operated against tank destroyers and performed well in demonstrating aggressive, competitive attitudes in mechanized warfare tactics. During one inspection, Lieutenant General Lear singled out the officers and soldiers of the 761st and told them, "All the reports coming up to Washington about you have been of a superior nature, and we are expecting great things of your battalion in combat."<sup>15</sup>

The Army Ground Forces tests went well. Gun crews' fire tests were excellent. The mortar platoon led by Lieutenant Gates zeroed a target in one shot and destroyed it with a second under the observation of a Brazilian general watching the training. Leonard "Smitty" Smith of the 761st Tank Battalion said of the training routine at Claiborne and Camp Hood, Texas:

It was very intensive. We had so many seconds to get in and out of a tank. You had to learn each man's position . . . how to drive, how to be a bow gunner, how to load, how to shoot. We had to learn each other's positions so well that in case anything happened, the bow gunner could drive or the driver could be a gunner or a loader. We had to learn how to take weapons apart almost blindfolded. We shot 111s, 45s, machine guns, all type of weapons. We went to the range practically every week. We kept our tanks clean-they shone almost like they were Simonized. When we came back from any trip, you better believe we cleaned those tanks before we ate. On maneuvers, we had combat simulations. We were shooting live ammunition. We stayed out in the rain, we bivouacked, we ate out as thought we were in actual combat.<sup>16</sup>

Paul Bates, the commanding officer of the 761st and called the "The Great White Father" by his soldiers said:

I've always lived with the point of view that the rest of my life is the most important thing in the world-I don't give a damn about what happened before. Let's go from here. And if you're gonna go from here, and you're gonna make it, we got to do it together. So I made a point of being with them as much as I could, for better or worse. I always lived on the post where we were. And we just sort of came together, where if I told them to do something, they would do it. There were alot of little things. One was: 'Hey, you guys are not supposed to be as clean as other people, and there's a very simple answer to that: Make damn sure that you're cleaner than anybody else you ever saw in you life-particularly all those white bastards out there. I want your uniforms to look better, cleaner, than theirs do. I want your shoes and boots to shine better.' So they would set up their own tailor shops and everything, and man, we were the best-looking outfit you've ever seen.<sup>17</sup>

Regardless of the 761st Tank Battalion's successes in training, few of the battalion's officers and enlisted men, white or black, felt they would ever see combat. Most thought they would continue to be trainers for the white tank destroyer units being sent overseas. To add to this, the battalion became known as "Eleanor's Niggers" because of Eleanor Roosevelt's efforts to see blacks treated equally through their employment in the armed services and particularly in her efforts to resolve problems black soldiers were experiencing overseas with white soldiers. Although training continued to go well, the unit was still subjected to racial discrimination. The issue of limited access to bus transportation, military and civilian was the major cause of frustration. In June 1943 the Civilian Aide to the Secretary of War, Truman K. Gibson, who succeeded William H. Hastie as the civilian aide after Hastie resigned, reported that bus transportation was one of the most serious problems facing the Army. Gibson's recommendations on the issue included that black officers and soldiers be given the same accommodations as white officers and soldiers. A year later, on 8 July 1944, the Secretary of War directed that buses, trucks, or other transportation owned or operated by the government would be available to

all soldiers regardless of race, no matter what the local civilian customs. All this came too late for a member of the 761st Tank Battalion, Lieutenant Jackie Robinson, a four letter athlete at the University of California, Los Angeles, and future baseball Hall of Famer who would break the baseball color barrier in 1947. Lieutenant Robinson was assigned to the 761st Tank Battalion as the morale officer for A Company. Robinson's unfortunate encounter with the bus system began when on his way to the hospital from Camp Hood he entered the bus and sat four seats from the back of the bus. The driver demanded that he move to the back, which Robinson refused to do. Once he arrived at a bus transfer site, Robinson was arrested by ten white military policemen. Robinson's eventual reassignment from the 761st came when he was charged with insubordination, disturbing the peace, drunkenness, insulting a civilian woman, refusing to obey the commands of a superior officer, and conduct unbecoming an officer. All charges were finally dropped after a trial. Before the trial could proceed, the 761st Tank Battalion commander, by this time Lieutenant Colonel Bates, refused to give his consent to the charges (so Robinson was reassigned to a unit where the commanding officer agreed to accept the charges). During Robinson's trial Lieutenant Colonel Bates provided character testimony for Robinson. Bates' account of the trial included:

I got about five of my guys and told them, "I want you to look your best." We went to the Court. I said (to the Judges), "Look at 'em. See what kind of solders they are. Talk to them if you want to." And here are these guys, with polished boots and what not and they all stand up at attention and salute. I said, "These guys are ready to fight and die for their country, why should they have to work all day and then walk ten miles at night?"<sup>18</sup>

Bates' testimony included that Robinson's reputation was excellent as well as his abilities as a soldier, and that Bates had no reservations about going into combat with Robinson. All charges against Robinson were eventually dropped.

One of the other recommendations made to the War Department by Gibson, and by this time numerous supporters of blacks, soon came to pass when the War Department on 4 March 1944 decided to order black combat units into combat. Even with this announcement, General George C. Marshall, Chief of Staff of the Army, and his associates continued to view the employment of Black troops into combat as an experiment. Lieutenant General McNair, head of the Army Ground Forces, issued orders that, "if practicable," all leaders of black combat units who had not received "excellent" or higher in their efficiency ratings would be replaced before the units were scheduled for overseas deployment.<sup>19</sup>

#### Combat Operations in World War II

On 9 June 1944, three day after the Allied invasion of Europe, the 761st Tank Battalion received orders from the War Department alerting it for overseas deployment. Planning began to organize the unit for departure. The advance party left Camp Hood on 1 August 1944 for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, and the remainder of the battalion left Camp Hood on 9 August 1944 for Camp Shanks, New York. The battalion sailed for England on the H. M. S. Esperance Bay. The outstanding conduct of the 761st on the voyage was recognized by the transport commander, Captain Peter W. Jacoby, in a letter to Lieutenant Colonel Bates at the completion of the trip.

I wish to express my appreciation to you and your officers for your hearty cooperation in making this voyage most successful and pleasant. I commend your unit for its discipline, military courtesy, high morale and soldierly conduct throughout the voyage. It has been by far one of the best disciplined units of its kind on this ship since the undersigned has been Transport Commander. My Staff and I wish you Godspeed in your future missions, and the best of luck and success to final victory.<sup>20</sup>

Well mannered as the 761st tankers might have been, the voyage was not like the voyages on luxury liners. The tankers were now not at the back of the bus, but put in the bottom of the ship.

The battalion arrived in Avon-Mouth, England on 8 September, then traveled to Wimborne and Dorset, England and awaited equipment and further assignments. The battalion spent three weeks preparing for further orders and on 5 October 1944, was assigned to the Third US Army, commanded by General George S. Patton. On 7 October, the 761st received new Sherman tanks, and that same day left for Weymouth on the English Channel. It landed on Omaha Beach, France, on the Normandy Peninsula on 10 October. Johnnie Stevens and E. G. McConnell recall their impressions upon landing at Omaha Beach:

From what we saw we knew we were going into combat. . . . As we approached the coast, there were sunken ships and debris everywhere. I never saw so much devastation in my life. How could anyone lose this much and still wage a major war?<sup>21</sup>

The 12th US Army Group, in conjunction with its allies, had just completed its advance across France in September with the First and Third US Armies. On 13 October 1944, the 761st was assigned to the 26th Infantry Division of the XII Corps, Third US Army. It received orders on 22 October to join the 26th Infantry Division some 400 miles away at Saint Nicholas de-Port, just east of Nancy, France. The battalion lost only one tank on the trip for maintenance problems, and it arrived the next day. Prior to being employed in its first combat mission, the 761st was visited by two high level military leaders. The first visitor was Major General Willard S. Paul, the 26th Division Commander, who welcomed the battalion with these words:

I am damned glad to have you with us. We have been expecting you for a long time, and I am sure that you are going to give a good account of yourselves. I've got a big hill up there that I want you to take, and I believe that you are going to do a great job of it.<sup>22</sup>

Two days later, the Third Army Commander, General George S. Patton, Jr. addressed the battalion as he stood on top of a halftrack and told the tankers of the 761st:

Men, you're the first Negro tankers to ever fight in the American Army. I would never have asked for you if you weren't good. I have

nothing but the best in my Army. I don't care what color you are, so long as you go up there and kill those Kraut sonsabitches. Everyone has their eyes on you and is expecting great things from you. Most of all, your race is looking forward to you. Don't let them down, and damn you, don't let me down.<sup>23</sup>

Patton's inspection of the unit after his speech brought him to McConnell's tank where Patton climbed onto the tank and looked down at McConnell and told him that he wanted him to use his guns and shoot up everything he saw, to include churches, graveyards, houses, and haystacks. McConnell remembers being awestruck by this incident with the general. Patton, despite his comments and actions on this occasion, believed that blacks could not think fast enough to fight in armor and generally had no good words for any black unit.<sup>24</sup>

The day before the battalion was to depart, a black war correspondent, Trezzvant W. Anderson, joined the battalion and remained with it to write articles about the unit for publication the US. Black newspapers were the primary recipient of these articles while the rest of America remained mostly uninformed about the contributions made by blacks in World War II. Anderson was the 761st's self-appointed unit historian and in 1945 published a book titled Come Out Fighting (the motto of the 761st), used today as the unofficial history of the 761st Tank Battalion.

On 8 November, the battalion was organized for combat. The 26th Infantry was in two task forces. Its mission was to conduct an attack along a twelve kilometer front, into the German defenses, and push toward the town of Rodalbe, about thirty miles northeast of Nancy. In the first task force was A Company, along with engineers attached to the 104th Infantry Regiment, and one tank platoon from A Company attached to the 101st Infantry Regiment. Captain David J. Williams and First Lieutenant Charles H. Barbour commanded the tank elements. The remainder of the 761st was attached to the second task force. Captain

Williams, a white officer in the battalion and a graduate of Yale University, had been with the battalion since its days at Camp Claiborne, and talked to his tankers before moving to the objective: "Now look here, ya cats, we gotta hit it down the main drag, and hip some of them unhepped cats on the other side. So let's roll right on down ole Seventh Avenue, and knock'em Jack." This speech by Captain Williams, and his subsequent performance in combat convinced his black soldiers that he was worthy of their respect and confidence. Anderson recounts the thoughts of A Company:

And that guy surprised us, too, for we had our doubts about him, back in the US, but he came through, and proved that you can be wrong, and we found out that we were wrong, for Dave Williams was alright (sic). We found that out on the battlefield, when the Jerries were sending everything our way. In fact, we felt that Dave Williams actually liked killing up there, and it became a sort of secondary "sport" after the primary one, which of course, was "keeping from getting killed."<sup>25</sup>

Accounts from Anderson's writings show that from the first round of enemy fire on A Company, A Company showed the coordination of teamwork. Captain Williams would come over the "mike" at the right time directing the platoons. Company A, the first company into battle, was successful in gaining its objective. The one platoon from A Company, attached to the 101st Airborne Division, supported in taking the town of Moyenvic. Company C supported the 328th in taking the town of Bezange La Petite and Hill 253. Several acts of heroism in this first encounter were reported by Anderson in the history of the 761st. Staff Sergeant Ruben Rivers, of A Company, calmly dismounted his tank under heavy gun fire and affixed a wire to the block of his tank to remove an obstacle in his path. The battalion surgeon, Captain Garland N. Adamson, performed an operation on a wounded tanker while enemy shells fell all around him. During this day's battle, Lieutenant Colonel Bates was seriously wounded and had to be hospitalized. He would not return to

the battalion until February of the next year. The temporary commander of the 761st was Lieutenant Colonel Hollis E. Hunt, assigned from the 17th Armored Group, who on 9 November became Task Force A commander, because the task force commander had also been wounded. Colonel Hunt commanded both elements while wounded himself.

On 9 November the attack continued to the town of Morville. Enemy in the area were reported to be from the 11th and the 13th SS Panzer Divisions. This battle was characterized by heavy fighting and losses, one of whom the tankers of the 761st described as the best first sergeant in the battalion, Samuel C. Turley, and Second Lieutenant Kenneth W. Coleman. First Sergeant Turley and Second Lieutenant Coleman died while trying to direct their men to safety after the tanks in C Company ran into a tank ditch that completely immobilized the company. Subsequent to that, German fires hit the tankers' position. Turley and Coleman brought machine guns out of the tanks and placed fire on the enemy, while giving directions to their men to avoid enemy fire. Sergeant Turley was not a regular member of this tank crew, but was a substitute member who took the place of a soldier who had had the "jitters."

The next battles for the battalion were just as tough. The Germans were withdrawing as the Allies pushed forward, but not without a fight. The 761st became progressively more battle wise. It established standby trains from the battalion service company to maintain radio contact with the combat elements and to keep them well supplied. Sergeant Rivers continued to make a name for himself as always, leading the way. An account of his aggressiveness was when Rivers' platoon leader radioed him to not to go into the town, because it was too "hot," Rivers came back with "I'm sorry, Sir, but I'm already through that town."<sup>26</sup>

Continuing to its objectives the 26th Division fought for the town of Dieuze. The assault guns of the 761st defeated the biggest part of the German resistance there. Major General Paul stated that he had not seen a better demonstration of these types of weapons before. On 19 November this breach allowed Combat Command A, 4th Armored Division, to conduct a passage of lines. Following the seizure of objective Dieuze, units of the 761st along with the 26th Division set out to take Benestroff. The assault began with a platoon of light tanks from D Company that had been working with the reconnaissance troop from the 26th. The mission was to set up road blocks and perform a guard mission. The fighting of the 761st during this last part of November resembled the fighting at Merville. By this time C Company had sustained heavy losses and had a total strength of fifty-eight enlisted men. The new commander of C Company, Captain Gates, was ordered to take the town of Honskirch, and do it by going straight down the road. Gates tried to tell the infantry colonel that it was not the best tactic to accomplish the mission. Gates tried to delay the attack; he delayed it four hours until he was given a direct order from the infantry colonel to conduct the attack. The outcome was just as Gates predicted: as the company proceeded down the road shells were dropped to the front and the rear of the tanks and brought the column to a halt. Captain Gates himself served as a crew member and loader in an assault tank gun. His driver was killed, and Captain Gates was wounded. Numerous acts of bravery were demonstrated once again. Assault guns firing white phosphorous enabled elements of C Company to withdraw under fire when its ammunition was gone. Corporal Buddie V. Branch dismounted his B Company tank and, and under fire, aided the evacuation of the wounded from six disabled tanks. During this period Major John F. George became the battalion commander, and Colonel Hunt returned to the 17th Armored Division.

In early December, the next offensive for the unit was to penetrate the Maginot Line. Company B approached the defenses of the Maginot Line near Achen and Etting. Company A was near Oermingen, Germany. Finally, the companies were on line due east of Sarreguemines. On 9 December they crossed the Maginot Line at Woelfling. There were reports that the 12th Armored Division was to pass through however the 761st continued to push through some of the heaviest mined territory it had encountered to date. On 11 December, the 87th Infantry Division relieved the 26th Infantry Division. On 14 December three tank companies of the 761st crossed into Germany. Company C went to Reinheim, and Company A to Peppenheim, with Company B following. A SHAEF communiqué quoted by Anderson said: "Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's 3rd Army infantry and armor slammed into German territory at a new point after crossing the Blies River above Sarreguemines." That was the 761st, with the 87th Division.' A letter of commendation from Major General Eddy, XII Corps commander, to the 761st and endorsed by General Paul dated 9 and 14 December respectively stated:

I consider the 761st Tank Battalion to have entered combat with such conspicuous courage and success as to warrant special commendation. The speed with which they adapted themselves to the front line under most adverse weather conditions, the gallantry which with they faced some of Germany's finest troops, and the confident spirit with which they emerged from their recent engagements in the vicinity of Dieuze, Morville les Vic, and Guebling entitle them surely to consider themselves the veteran 761st.

It is with extreme gratification that the Corps Commander's commendation is forwarded to you. Your battalion has supported this division with great bravery under the most adverse weather and terrain conditions. You have my sincere wish that success may continue to follow your endeavors.<sup>27</sup>

As the bad weather increased in the month of December, so did the German resistance and subsequent battles for the 761st. The Germans mounted a counteroffensive operation, known as the Battle of the Bulge which created a bulge in the Allies' defenses. After fighting through

sixty-five miles of the heavily fortified Maginot Line, the 761st arrived at Offagne with the 87th Division. From Offagne it fought its way to Tillet. Enroute First Lieutenant Harold B. Gary led the attack that killed a hundred and fifty enemy infantry at Bonnerue and at Remagne Company C knocked out eight machine gun nests, killing seventeen gunners and capturing seventy prisoners. The light tanks of Company D were now being used as supply vehicles because the vehicles in Service Company were unable to use the snow laden roads and negotiate the hills. The battle at Tillet for the 761st was a series of tough fights. Companies A and C operations were being directed primarily by Captain Gates. Actual combat operations fell to several enlisted men who, before the end of the war, would receive battlefield commissions. Staff Sergeants Dade's, Cochrone's, and Windsor's platoons were responsible for destroying eight machine gun nests, one Mark IV tank, an ammunition dump, and three antitank guns, killing 106 Germans. Staff Sergeant Windsor's tank was shot from under him, killing his driver. He entered another tank with Sergeant William H. McBurney and Private Leonard J. Smith. This tank was also hit. All three left the tank under heavy fire and crawled 5,000 yards in snow covered woods, valleys, and ditches to safety.

After the battles in Tillet, the 761st began operations with the 17th Airborne Division. The operations from Tillet forward continued to push the enemy east as far as St. Vith cutting off the St. Vith-Bastogne salient at Thommen. Accounts of the relationship between the 761st and the 17th Airborne seemed to hold a special place in these soldiers' memories. Each had shown respect for the other. As related in Anderson:

Staff Sergeant Jack Gilbert . . . was engaged in the repair of a track on his M-5 light tank, in the snow of the Ardennes, just about dusk, and needing help, looked around and saw the figure of an American soldier standing near. Gilbert was hauling supplies to the

forward echelons then. Looking up, he spoke to the American, and said: "here, give me a hand with this thing, will you?" Without hesitation the American moved over, and bent down to help the sergeant, calling to two other Americans in the shadows nearby to also come and give a hand. Gilbert got the shock of his life when he took a closer look, and saw two glittering silver stars on the shoulders of his willing assistant. It was a Major General and the two other Americans were colonels wearing the eagle of their rank.<sup>28</sup>

The commander of the 17th Airborne Division remarked later that he would rather have five tanks from the 761st Tank Battalion than any larger number from another armored unit.

By February 3rd, the 761st had orders to begin movement into Holland. It had a short assignment with the 95th Division, then was attached to the 79th Infantry Division. Just previous to this movement the 761st received some two hundred new replacements. These replacements came from all types of army units, and all needed tank training. Captain Gates supervised the training program. Most were given two weeks of training, followed by minor parts in battles to acclimate them. Because the 761st had gained a reputation, most of the new replacements considered it to be an honor to serve in the unit. Recovered from his wounds received in November the previous year, Colonel Bates returned to the battalion from his hospital stay in England just prior to Company B's first mission with the 79th. In March the battalion task organized into three task forces along with the 79th Reconnaissance Group and the 79th Infantry Division. Their mission was to conduct diversionary attacks along the Roer River.

The next set of operations were with the 103rd Infantry Division. The 761st fought with the 103rd Infantry from Niederbronn to Lembach, to Boenthal. Nearing the Siegfried Line, the German defenses kept the Allies fighting hard for all advances. On 21 March Task Force Rhine was organized in an effort to penetrate the Siegfried Line. With Lieutenant Colonel Bates in command of the task force, it included

attachments to the 761st Tank Battalion, the 2nd Battalion, 409th Regiment, 103rd Division, a detachment of combat engineers, and a reconnaissance platoon from the 614th Tank Destroyer Battalion. Its mission was to break through the Siegfried Line and move to the Rhine River.

The task force had to advance through the Hardt Mountains and heavily wooded areas interlaced with defensive obstacles put in by the Germans. The task force fought through the towns of Reisdorf, Silz, Munchweiler, Klingenstein, and finally to Insheim. Enemy opposition was stiff the entire way. The fighting spirit of the task force was exemplified in several incidents throughout these battles. Platoon tank tactics were modified to assist in capturing the towns along the axis of advance. Two tanks would rush at high speed firing along the way, while the rest provided cover. This exercise would be repeated until they reached their objectives. Sergeant Ervin Latimore's tank crew was the lead tank in the task force, and his actions by other soldiers' accounts were those of cool, daring courage that aroused the admiration of all those who took part in the operation. He was awarded a Silver Star Medal for his work on the task force. A photographer with the 103rd Infantry Division shot pictures of Sergeant Warren Crecy in his tank between the opened hatches of the commander's turret. Crecy was seen with two hands gripping the trigger release of the 50 caliber machine-gun firing into a pillbox on a hill above him (few tank commanders go into battle with their hatch open). The gunner in Crecy's tank was said to have given up a first sergeant's job to ride with Crecy.

The quick thinking of Lieutenant Taylor's section saved Task Force Rhine's supply trains from being destroyed by an ambush. The supply trains' route to link up with the main body had been reoccupied by German troops. When the attack began Lieutenant Taylor dismounted to

survey the situation then, along with the battalion motor officer, the 761st operations sergeant, and a Sergeant Black, calmly turned the column around to the rear. All this happened while under protective fires from the half-track that had led the column.

Task Force Rhine was not without its problems even though it was successful in punching through the Siegfried Line to Insheim. Information given the task force about the location of friendly units was incorrect. For example, the 10th Armored Division was not in Silz, where the task force had been directed to linkup with it, hence the heavy resistance encountered; the 36th Division operating to the right flank of the task force had not taken Klingenmunster, and its artillery had to be called off because it was landing near the town that the task force was advancing on; and finally, the 14th Armored Division, following the 103rd, was to pass through the task force, but arrived a day late.

The entire operation by Task Force Rhine took just short of twenty-seven hours, and on 23 March the 14th Armored Division passed through the hole made by the task force. A sampling of the destruction wrought by the task force totaled: seven Siegfried towns taken, large numbers of enemy equipment and weapons captured, thirty-one pill boxes, forty-nine machine gun nests, twenty-nine anti-tank guns, eleven ammunition trucks, all destroyed, and 833 Germans killed and more than 3000 captured. A message by Major General Anthony C. McAuliffe, the commander of the 103rd, in the Daily News Summary from the Division Headquarters, said:

Credit for the sensational breakthrough which scattered the Siegfried's formidable mountain belt and enabled armored forces to pour through to the Rhine can be given to elements of the 2nd Battalion, of the 409th Infantry, and the 761st Tank Battalion. Those units formed a task force which overcame almost insuperable obstacles in shaking loose through the Siegfried's mountain barriers and then made a courageous dash deep into the plain, capturing town after town. The tankers softened up the resistance in the towns

with reconnaissance by fire and the infantrymen cleared out the towns and shattered German attempts to organize for a stand in the surrounding hills. This task force also accounted for the tremendous damage done to German motor and horse-drawn columns between Silz and Klingenmunster, in which hundreds of vehicles were destroyed.<sup>29</sup>

The next assignment for the 761st began on 30 March when it was directed to leave positions in Insheim and join the 71st Infantry Division in Langenselbold, Germany, some 132 miles to the southeast. As it crossed the Rhine, elements of the battalion were committed to combat almost immediately. The 761st supported the regiments of the 71st with its tank companies. As it fought its way across Germany, town after town fell. The resistance the 761st had encountered previously in the towns of Merville and Tillet was not as furious in these battles. Thousands of German soldiers surrendered during this push. Some were reluctant to surrender to black soldiers, as some German soldiers had never seen black men before and were frightened. Some committed suicide rather than surrender.

The 761st and the 71st Infantry Divisions fought along the line of Bayreuth, Amberg, Regensburg, crossing the Danube River heading for Austria. By 2 May 1945, elements of the battalion were on the Inn River in Germany. On 4 May the entire battalion crossed into Austria, striking along the Salzburg-Vienna Highway where it routed the defenders until it encountered enemy concentrations in the town of Wel, Austria. Despite the resistance, the tanks of Company C fired on the town, and were soon joined by the other companies. The town fell the same day. The attack moved south in the direction of Steyr, Austria. On the afternoon of 5 May, the 761st and its associated regiments of the 71st Infantry Division made it to the banks of the Enns River. At this juncture, the assault gun platoon commanded by Lieutenant Burgess lost a tank in the river. Lieutenant Burgess, without hesitation, jumped

fully clothed into the river, hooked a steel cable from another tank to the submerged vehicle, and pulled it to safety. Lieutenant Burgess had become known as a calm leader whose words were "Line up and follow me." On 6 May 1945 was the last day the 761st would expect to fight. The 761st Tank Battalion was the eastern most American unit in Austria and met up with the First Ukrainian Army Soviet on the Enn River.

Lieutenant Colonel Bates, while in Austria, wrote a letter to the officers and enlisted men of the 761st:

You have fought gallantly in all extremes of climate and terrain . . . (that) have all caused you intense discomfort and greatly tried your ingenuity and ability. . . . You have met every type of equipment in the German Army. . . . All have hurt you. All have destroyed some of your equipment. But all are behind you, useless, the German soldier defeated, his politician silent, and you are victorious.<sup>30</sup>

From Austria the battalion was ordered to Bissengen, Germany, where it stayed until its move to Teisendorf, Bavaria, on 2 August 1945. It policed six Bavarian towns as part of occupational forces after hostilities. Soon many of the battalion's enlisted men and white officers were reassigned to the US. Colonel Bates remained with the battalion until November of that year, when Captain Ivan Harrison assumed command, the first black commander of the unit.

During combat operations men of the 761st received six battlefield commissions, and two after hostilities ended. With 183 days in continuous combat, it lost only thirty-four men killed, but suffered many wounded. Anderson writes that the same jeeps and tanks the 761st went into combat with, it ended the war with. It received only a few replacement tanks to replace shot up ones.

Anderson writes that the story of the accomplishments of the 761st was compiled in his works and in a "Chart of Damages To The Enemy" and given to Major General E.S. Hughes, former personal aide to General Eisenhower, and later Special Assistant to the Deputy Theater Commander,

Lieutenant General Ben Lear. He states that this account and the recommendation for the Presidential Unit Citation were left on General Eisenhower's desk for final action in October 1945. In February 1946 the recommendation for the Distinguished Unit Citation was disapproved, citing that the accomplishments were commendable, but they do not meet the requirements for the award.

The 761st Tank Battalion was inactivated 1 June 1946 in Germany. It was assigned to the regular Army and activated on 24 November 1947 at Fort Knox, Kentucky, and finally inactivated on 15 March 1955 at Fort Knox. Its lineage and honors includes campaign participation in Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe. Its decorations now include the Presidential Unit Citation.<sup>31</sup>

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>The Pentagon News (Washington, D.C.), 27 April 1978.

<sup>2</sup>Department of the Army, The Presidential Unit Citation (Army), The Presidential Unit Citation (Army) for Extraordinary Heroism to the 761st Tank Battalion, United States Army, 24 January 1978.

<sup>3</sup>U.S Congress, House, To authorize the President to award the Medal of Honor posthumously to Ruben Rivers, 101th Cong., 2d sess., H.R. 4976, Congressional Record, Vol. 136, no. 70, daily ed. (6 June 1990).

<sup>4</sup>John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1967), 521.

<sup>5</sup>Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History, 1981), 22-23.

<sup>6</sup>Trezzvant W. Anderson, Come Out Fighting, The Epic Tale of the 761st Tank Battalion 1942-1945 (Salzburger Druckerei Und Verlag), 5.

<sup>7</sup>Lou Potter, Williams Miles, and Nina Rosenblum, Liberators, Fighting on Two Fronts in World War II (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1992), 58-59.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 74-75.

<sup>9</sup>David J. Williams, Hit Hard (New York: Bantam Books, 1983), 82-83.

<sup>10</sup>Potter, et al., Liberators, 58.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 87.

<sup>12</sup>Phillip McGurie, Taps for a Jim Crow Army (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-Clio, 1983), 196-197.

<sup>13</sup>Kathryn Browne Pfeifer, The 761st Tank Battalion (New York, NY: Twenty-First Century Books, 1994), 25.

<sup>14</sup>Anderson, Come Out Fighting, 9.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>16</sup>Potter, et al., Liberators, 85.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 85-86.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>19</sup>Morris J. MacGregor, Integration of the Armed Forces, 43-44.

<sup>20</sup>Anderson, Come Out Fighting, 17.

<sup>21</sup>Pfeifer, The 761st Tank Battalion, 38.

<sup>22</sup>Anderson, Come Out Fighting, 21.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>24</sup>Potter, The Liberators, 115-119.

<sup>25</sup>Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, 664-665.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 36.

<sup>27</sup>Anderson, Come Out Fighting, 39-44.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 53-54.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., 76.

<sup>30</sup>Pfeifer, The 761st Tank Battalion, 69.

<sup>31</sup>Department of the Army, Lineage and Honors, 761st Tank Battalion.

CHAPTER 5  
THE 92D DIVISION

Introduction

The 92d Division is the second of the two units discussed in this thesis on the influence of leadership on combat effectiveness. The main focus of discussion on the 92d Division will be its World War II performance; however, not to review the division's history up until then would be to ignore particularly significant events, social and historical, that affected the use of Negro officers and enlisted men in combat units.

The 92d Division in World War I

A look at the all black 92d Division will show that its combat effectiveness in World War II was in part a continuation of the factors that influenced its performance during World War I. President Woodrow Wilson and the Secretary of War, Newton Baker, approved the activation of the 92d Division in 1917 despite the objections of the Army General Staff.<sup>1</sup>

When America entered World War I, the Negro public was concerned over the use of Negro soldiers in the war. The US Army as a profession was important to Negroes because the military offered an honored career and economic opportunities not available to them in America as civilians. Negro families often recounted stories of bravery by Negro soldiers in previous wars. These stories were passed down through the generations.

Negroes were generally convinced of the unbroken record of loyalty and courage of their soldiers. They were certain of the benefits which participation in each of America's wars had brought them.<sup>2</sup> The Crisis, the official journal of the National Association for the

Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), was one of the principal journals that kept the American people informed about Negro matters and what the War Department said about the use of Negroes in World War I.

They say it is all well to be idealistic, but is it not true that while we have fought our country's battles for one hundred fifty years, we have not gained our rights? No we have gained them rapidly and effectively by our loyalty in time of trial. Five hundred thousand Negroes fought in the Revolution; the results were the emancipation of slaves in the North and the abolition of the African slave trade. At least three thousand Negro soldiers and sailors fought in the War of 1812; the results was the enfranchisement of the Negro in many Northern states and the beginning of a strong movement for general emancipation. Two hundred thousand Negroes enlisted in the Civil War, and the result was the emancipation of four million slave, and the enfranchisement of the black man. Some ten thousand Negroes fought in the Spanish American War, and in twenty years ensuing since that war, despite setbacks, we have doubled or quadrupled our accumulated wealth.<sup>3</sup>

Amidst this controversy, the 92d Division was activated and trained at several different military posts throughout the US. Recommendations on the composition of black to white officers within the division came from Colonel P. D. Lochridge, acting chief of the War College Division. Essentially, all officer positions above first lieutenant should be reserved for whites, and certain positions would be reserved only for whites. All generals and field grade officers were to be white, as all medical veterinarians, all officers assigned to division headquarters, all regimental adjutants and supply officers, all captains in field artillery and engineers, and aides to brigade commanders would be white. The proposal to use Negroes as battery commanders or engineer company commanders was thought to be impractical. Lochridge also recommended that whites assigned to the 92d Division should have had previous experience working with blacks. Usually this meant that the officers would be from the South.<sup>4</sup>

The division, commanded by Major General Charles C. Ballou, was assigned to Fort Riley, Kansas. It was dispersed in several locations to prevent friction with local civilians. Units were stationed at Camps Dodge, Grant, Sherman, Meade, Dix and Upton. The enlisted soldiers were all Negroes and mostly draftees.

The elements of the 92d Division at Fort Riley were often subjected to discrimination. In an effort to quiet the discontent among his Negro soldiers, General Ballou published Bulletin Number 35, and circulated it through the entire division. The bulletin, instead of addressing numerous complaints about discrimination, stimulated even more resentment throughout the division. The memorandum stated:

No matter how legally correct, the success of the division with all that success implies is dependent upon the good will of the public. That public is nine-tenths White. White men made the division and they can break it just as easily if it becomes a trouble maker.<sup>5</sup>

General Ballou's bulletin generally reflected the Army's views and approach to Negro matters. As a result of this bulletin, General Ballou never regained the confidence of the Negro soldiers. In response, Negro soldiers held mass meetings requesting that the division commander resign.

Meanwhile, The Crisis continued to publish what it could about the use of Negro soldiers. A series of War Department documents, not intended for the general public, published by The Crisis revealed the attitudes about the Army's position on Negroes. One of the documents advocated the removal of Negro officers from combat units before they could be tested in combat. Another document from a US Senator recommended that never again should a division with Negro officers be organized.<sup>6</sup>

In the midst of the lack of confidence in Negro officers and enlisted soldiers by the War Department General Staff, as well as

General Ballou, 92d Division commander, the division assembled at its port of debarkation to sail for France. W. E. B. DuBois, editor of The Crisis commented that it seemed as if the 92d Division was programmed for failure given the limitations and organization of the unit. On 7 June 1918 the 92d Division assembled for the first time as a whole unit. It arrived in Brest and St. Nazaire, France, on 16 and 18 June 1918.

On 23 August 1918, the 92d Division entered combat under the operational control of the French 38th Corps and the 87th French Division. The 92d's mission was to occupy and hold a sector twenty-five kilometers long at St. Die. It did this until 20 September though a series of patrolling actions, raids, and artillery operations. On 24 September the division, minus one regiment, received a new mission to become the reserve for the 1st (US) Corps. The 368th Regiment of the 92d moved to an adjoining area with the 38th Corps (French) to prepare for the Meuse-Argonne offensive. On 1 October the 368th was withdrawn from the sector and joined the remainder of the 92d Division as the French 38th Corps reserve.

The combat performance of the 368th Regiment, 92d Division was seen as a failure and resulted in the immediate relief of the remainder of the 92d Division from the Argonne front. Examples of cowardice and an inability of black officers to control the men were cited by white officers as examples of why the division performed poorly. Blacks on the other hand saw the problem as being improperly equipped for battle. Artillery support did not come into battle until the sixth day, and there were no grenades, signal flares, or shears to cut wire. The blacks felt that the failures were attributable to the white officers. For example, Major M.A. Elser, a battalion commander, was "lost" during a battle leaving no one in command. Major Elser was relieved and sent to the hospital for "psycho-neurosis", shell shock. The last operation

of the 92d Division was from 8 October to 11 November. At this juncture, many Negro officers had been eliminated and many white officers transferred. The only thing that remained constant was the unsatisfactory reports on Negro officers and enlisted men. Black observers felt that black officers and soldiers performed as well as they could under the circumstances. While the failures were widely publicized, it was felt that the successes were not.<sup>7</sup>

Lee's comments show that it was impossible for the Negro public to know how much derogatory information on Negro officers and enlisted men was contained in the War Department files.

The adverse testimony of most officers of the 92d Division was so preponderant that it was difficult for the Army General Staff to come to any conclusion other than the one widely held among them in the period between the wars: Negro combat troops in World War I failed to come up to Army standards.<sup>8</sup>

These beliefs were the ones that would shape policy on the use of Negro soldiers for World War II.

#### The 92d Division in World War II

In October of 1942, Major General Edward M. Almond, Assistant Division Commander of the all black 93d Division, was selected to command the 92d Division, another all black unit. The following were Lieutenant General (Retired) Almond's accounts of why he was selected as division commander:

I think that General Marshall (Army Chief of Staff) felt that General Hall, who was in command of the 92nd Division when I was Assistant Division Commander and was from Mississippi, understood the characteristics of the Negro and his habits and inclinations. The artilleryman at that time was General William Spence from North Carolina as I recall, who also had that understanding and I being from Virginia had an understanding of southern customs and Negro capabilities; the attitudes of Negroes in relationship thereto. I think my selection for the 93rd and the 92nd Divisions was of the same character.<sup>9</sup>

The Negro news media's perception of Major General Almond's appointment was:

The Negro news media's perception of Major General Almond's appointment was:

As he took command, he was seen by his soldiers and by black news reporters as a typical white Southern military commander, with the traditional concepts about black people, and there was widespread suspicion and misgivings over his selection to lead the 92nd Division.<sup>10</sup>

Another similarity between the World War I and World War II division was that each time it was scattered at several different locations on activation. The division headquarters, division artillery headquarters, the 600th Field Artillery Battalion (Medium), and the remainder of division special troops were at Fort McClellan, Alabama. The 365th Infantry, and the 597th Field Artillery, were at Camp Atterbury, Indiana. The 370th Infantry, and the 598th Field Artillery Battalion were at Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky, and the 371st Infantry and the 599th Field Artillery were at Camp Robinson, Arkansas. Training for the soldiers at these camps included basic training and advanced individual training. Additionally, the initial training included rigorous physical conditioning, and forced marches in full combat gear often culminating in a twenty-five mile road march. Night and day motor vehicle convoy training was emphasized during this training period.

At the end of April 1943, the division started its move to Fort Huachuca, Arizona. By the end of May, the entire division was in place in its new cantonment area. On arrival at Fort Huachuca the division, according to General Almond, had 700 officers, all white. Several months later, the officer composition changed to 400 white officers and 300 black officers. The Negro officers were mostly first and second lieutenants. Almond felt that many Negro officers were of low caliber and inexperienced. While commenting on the caliber of replacements, General Almond made special mention of one of the replacements by stating that he was employed as a boot black in civilian life.

On arriving at Fort Huachuca, all white officers of the 600th Field Artillery Battalion, to include the battalion commander, were replaced with Negro officers. The new black battalion commander was Lieutenant Colonel Marcus Ray. Command Sergeant Major (Retired) Elbert Ivy, Jr., a member of the 600th stated:

Although the division trained together at Fort Huachuca, a feeling of being in an infantry division was never realized. This strange relationship existed through our combat in Italy. While a member of the all Negro Field Artillery Battalion, the relationship seemed to have been an us against them syndrome. We were always on the defensive trying to defend our status of being an all Negro Field Artillery Battalion and completely missed the pride of being in an all black division . . . about General Almond, at one point he tried to unsuccessfully attempted to adjust fire from our 155mm howitzers on the enemy from the air. Hilarity and embarrassment ensued when he just couldn't get anything right. He eventually turned the task over to one of our forward observers who successfully accomplished the mission.<sup>11</sup>

As a division training exercise, the 92d participated in the Louisiana Maneuvers from February to April 1944. The division's rating after training was "satisfactory."

Soon after the division returned from training in April it was alerted to prepare for overseas movement. Hondon B. Hargrove, author of the Buffalo Soldiers In Italy, states that the 92d showed that the division had the best in modern equipment and a full complement of trained officers and men. Despite this, there was an undercurrent of resentment, bitterness, and even despair throughout the division. These feelings stemmed from segregation policies and discrimination against black soldiers. During the early months of training, officers and enlisted men never saw men in the other combat teams. There was segregation in the officers' mess and living areas. Open discrimination, in the form of racial remarks, was common. The division had a policy that no black officers could command companies, battalions, or regiments, and no black officers could be assigned at battalion level or above. A visit to the division by Brigadier General Benjamin O.

Davis, from the Army's Inspector General Office, resulted in two reports of the situation at Fort Huachuca. The first contradicted the second.

The first report in March 1943 stated:

The colored officers were especially profuse in their praise of him for his fairness and deep concern for their advancement and welfare. On all occasions, he showed a personal interest even in their comforts and entertainment.<sup>12</sup>

The second report in June 1943 stated:

General Almond had overlooked the human element in the training of the 92nd Division. Great stress has been placed upon the mechanical perfection in execution of training missions . . . and not enough consideration given to . . . maintenance of racial understanding between white and colored officers and men.<sup>13</sup>

Just prior to commitment to overseas deployment, General Almond was uncertain himself about how effective his division would be. He stated that the division had trained for nineteen months compared to twelve months for white divisions, that the division had adequate and complete equipment and knew how to handle it; however, he was unsure of its moral attitude.<sup>14</sup>

The 370th Infantry Regiment was the first to deploy to Italy. It was filled with what was supposed to be the best cross section of officers and enlisted men from the division. Initial accounts of the regiment's combat action were good. After forty-two days of combat the unit advanced almost thirty miles against increasing German resistance and had operated harmoniously with the white soldiers of the 1st Armored Division. The regiment was credited with making advances faster than more experienced units in its sector. Outstanding leadership by several officers and enlisted men during these initial battles resulted in the awarding of the Silver Star to Captain Charles F. Gandy, Lieutenant John Birdsong, Lieutenant Ralph Skinner, Lieutenant Frank Whisonant, Lieutenant Jake Chandler, Staff Sergeant Oscar Simpson, and Private Jake McInnis, all posthumously. According to Colonel Raymond G. Sherman,

commander of the combat team, the unit had developed high esprit de corps and was confident that it was better than the enemy.

Doubts about the 92d's abilities were still on the minds of the highest military leaders in the Army. The combat team received visitors like Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, Under Secretary of War Robert Patterson, Lieutenant General Lesley McNair, and dozens of other observers. Negro soldiers viewed this constant attention by high ranking military leaders as a lack of confidence in their fighting capabilities.<sup>15</sup>

On 23 and 24 August in the Serchio Valley area near Pontedero, a tragic accident occurred when the 370th Regimental Combat Team became confused and its soldiers began firing at each other. This incident resulted in four men killed and seven wounded. Additionally, a white sergeant from the 1st Armored Division was killed. According to reports, the sergeant failed to answer with the correct countersign to the password.<sup>16</sup>

The bravery of newly promoted Captain Charles F. Gandy overshadowed the two tragic accidents. Captain Gandy led a twenty-one man patrol across the Arno River on 30 August and destroyed two machine gun positions and captured two German prisoners. This incident marked the first capture of prisoners by Negro troops during World War II in Europe. During the advance of the regimental combat team and Fifth Army through the Gothic Line, the regimental combat team made satisfactory progress toward its objectives. It was instrumental in the liberation of Lucca and in crossing the Serchio River.<sup>17</sup>

The breakthrough at the Gothic Line brought the 370th to the foothills of the Apennines just before Massa. On 10 October the mission was to attack and hold Mountain Cauala, a commanding position just before Massa. After several attempts, the 370th failed to capture this

objective. Failure to seize and hold the ground around Mt. Cauala was the turning point for the 370th. During this attack, a number of the 370th's best officers and noncommissioned officers were either killed or wounded.

On 19 October, the balance of the 92d Division began to arrive from the US. By 31 October, the 371st Infantry Regiment moved on line to relieve the 370th. By 4 November, the entire 92d Division was under the direct control of Fifth Army with a twenty-three mile long sector of responsibility. Its mission was to protect the left flank of Fifth Army and conduct offensive operations to occupy any enemy areas.

On 10 November the division was employed initially against light enemy resistance. The 371st and the 365th experienced initial problems because of their newness to combat. To help resupply operations in the foothills of the Apennines, the 92d Division Pack Battalion (Provisional) was established. The pack battalion used local Italians as mule skimmers and porters.

The probing attacks of the division met with limited successes. Meanwhile there were individual acts of heroism as increased German resistance was encountered. In November the division had sixty-four killed, more than three hundred wounded, and more than one hundred missing. These figures included many outstanding officers and enlisted men with combat experience. The 92d Division was hampered by the series of cross attachments of its battalions and regiments to divisions along the Fifth Army sector. The 365th was removed and attached to the 88th Division in Bologna, the 370th had only one of its battalions still attached to it, and transfers into the division generally came from the processing centers that processed for shipment many soldiers who were AWOL from other units. Sometimes replacements were made in the dark and soldiers had no idea who was in command. These frequent shifts in

command relationships and in the replacement system was a routine occurrence in the division.<sup>18</sup>

Attachment of the 366th Infantry Regiment was ordered to fill the losses of the 92d. The 366th was an all black regiment (to include the commander) that had arrived in Italy in May 1944, and prior to its attachment to the 92d it was employed as security for the airfields on various Army Air Force installations. General Almond was not pleased with the attachment of the 366th. His comments to the unit when it arrived were an indication of his feelings, "Your Negro newspapers have seen fit to cause you to be brought over here; now I'm going to see that you suffer your share of the casualties."<sup>19</sup>

In December Colonel Howard D. Queen, regimental commander of the 366th, said the following:

The treatment the regiment and myself have received during the period of attachment to the 92nd Infantry division has been such as to disturb me mentally and has not been such as is usually given an officer of my grade. . . . I have at all times subscribed fully to the policy of higher authority and previously have received the proper courtesy and respect in return.<sup>20</sup>

Major Paul Goodman, author of "A Fragment of Victory" (accounts of the 92d Division in World War II), writes about the increasing frustration in the division:

It now became apparent that in the face of resistance, existing insecurities became pronounced as men began to realize that those to their immediate right might leave without notice. Confusion, disintegration, growing malaise, and failure became mixed with isolated displays of tenacity and heroism to establish the pattern for future operations by the 92nd Division.<sup>21</sup>

General Almond placed the blame for the failures on battalion commanders. However, these problems soon proved to be more involved than battalion command. Lee writes:

It was a problem of faith and the lack of it - the wavering faith of commanders in the ability and determination of subordinates and enlisted men, and the continuation in the minds of enlisted men of training period convictions that they could not trust their leaders.<sup>22</sup>

To further illustrate this, the 92d Division inspector general presented a letter to General Almond about how the staff viewed his actions. The staff asserted that General Almond issued oral instructions to the executive officers of divisional units who attended the 1700 daily briefings. The staff members explained that on some occasions for major attacks, the orders would specify the specific tank the troops would mount for the attack. These staff members also reported that seldom did participants in operations know what adjacent troops were doing. In worst cases, according to these staff members, detailed plans down to platoon level were prescribed by division headquarters. This procedure stifled the initiative of subordinate staffs.<sup>23</sup>

In light of this, the 92d Division's mission was to hold the coastal sector and continue to apply pressure along the front from the coast to the Serchio River. The 92d made limited mission type attacks along the frontal area from the coast near the Cinquale Canal to the Serchio River in the Serchio Valley. Most of these limited attacks added to the woes of the division because most of them were considered to be unsuccessful.

Major Oscar J. Magee was sent by the Secretary of War to report on the status of the 92d Division. Major Magee's observations included comments that, in some instances, units of the 92d infantry seemed to melt away in the face of intensive enemy fire. Other comments were that he felt infantry units were being nursed along, and the overall division's performance had been disappointing. It was Major Magee's opinion that efficiency and morale were not affected by the racial problems that were supposed to exist. He also noted that Negro officers were sensitive to racial injustices and the typical white officer was

distrustful of Negro soldiers' capabilities but that was less evident.

Major Magee went on to write:

Attitudes did not affect the work at hand, and no report of racial discrimination within the division should be accepted as a true reason for any tactical or administrative action taken by divisional leadership . . . complete trust should be placed in the integrity, ability, and impartiality of the Generals and their policy making officers whose decisions affect the 92nd Division.<sup>24</sup>

Major Magee's oral report back to Truman Gibson, aide to the Secretary of War, was quite different from the written report.

White officers of the 92nd Division generally dislike their assignments, had no confidence in their men and believed that the experiment of using Negroes in combat would fail. . . . Although (as noted by one key staff officer to Magee) there had been many examples of individual heroism on the part of Negro officers and soldiers in the 92nd Division, it was his belief that the Negro generally could not overcome or escape his background of no property ownership, irresponsibility and subservience. The Negro is panicky and his environment has not conditioned him to accept responsibility. . . . (another key officer stated). . . . I don't like my assignment, because I don't like Negroes.<sup>25</sup>

Lee writes about Gibson's thoughts on Major Magee's report:

The conclusions reached completely overlooked the effect on the man or the attitudes of the officers. Soldiers generally know how their officers feel. If they know their officers dislike them, have no confidence in them, or feel that they will not stand up for them under combat, the likelihood is that they will fail. . . . The problem is one of getting the whole story and that the segments that go to prove a conclusion. Enough exists in any Negro unit to prove just about anything.<sup>26</sup>

Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy said of Major Magee's report that there was the tendency to either report that Negroes were no good as soldiers or on the other hand that they were excellent.

Combat operations for the division continued. It maintained a defensive posture with patrols and probing action along its sector of responsibility.

Reports from captured enemy soldiers revealed that the Germans were preparing for an offensive operation in the Serchio Valley in late December. The 92d Division was immediately detached from Fifth Army and put in defenses to be ready to counterattack. The enemy attacked on 26

December and penetrated the positions of the 2d Battalion, 366th Infantry, and the 1st Battalion, 370th Infantry. The 8th Indian Division repelled the Germans on 1 January 1945. This series of battles in late December brought tough criticism from the Army leaders. Lieutenant General Mark Clark, Fifth Army commander, said after the war that: "It (92nd Division) did not come up to the test, and when the Germans struck down the Serchio Valley, the Regimental Commanders were unable to exercise sufficient control over their troops in an emergency."<sup>27</sup>

Lieutenant General Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., commanding general, 15th Army Group, said:

The Germans launched several limited objective attacks in the Serchio Valley, with forces involving five or six battalions which struck the First Battalion, 370th Infantry and the Second Battalion, 366th, both of which, "melted away"- a term which was to be frequently used in describing actions of colored troops.<sup>28</sup>

General Almond agreed with these findings. He offered no defense of his soldiers' actions even though in an investigation he ordered it uncovered that some of the reasons given for the division's problems in the Serchio Valley were: against sound German defenses, the small number of troops along a large frontage left both flanks open to attack except for a reconnaissance screen; the combat team was to attack as part of a larger force on 25 December, however, the 370th did not get word of an attack until the evening of 24 December; the combat team had conflicting orders, it was supposed to hold its positions at all costs; and coordination with the Indian units was vague.

At the end of February the division underwent a reorganization. The 366th Infantry was replaced with the all white 473rd Infantry Regiment and the famous 442nd, a Japanese-American infantry regiment. About this time, Truman Gibson paid a visit to Lieutenant General Joseph T. General McNarney, commander Mediterranean theater headquarters, to

discuss the 92d Division. General McNarney placed responsibility for the poor performance of the 92d on the Negro officers and enlisted men. According to Lee, the general did this without examining any possible underlying causes, and made it seem that all that could have been done for the division had been done and, despite this, the division was still a complete failure.<sup>29</sup>

Gibson held a press conference in Rome on 14 March 1945. He stated that his visit had shown that there were many withdrawals under panic as well as many acts of individual and group bravery. He brought to light that there had been an unfair promotion policy for Negro officers and that the command maintained a racist attitude. Gibson got both praise and condemnation for his comments.

The 92d Division went into the spring offensive of 1945 with a new character. It now had an all white regiment and the Japanese-American regiment, plus a new Negro regiment with a mix of black and white officers. General Marshall offered the new regiments to General Almond, and according to Almond, he welcomed any help Marshall could provide. Reports of fighting went well until the end of the war in May 1945. At that time, the 442nd and the 473rd Regiments were detached and the 365th and the 371st rejoined the division until inactivation at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, in November 1945.

General (Retired) Almond, when asked for his recommendation on the future of Negroes stated:

I would have agreed to the integration of combat units to the extent of utilizing Negro personnel in areas that did not require exposure and decision of individuals and bravery in offensive operations. . . . Combat battalions and the squads that composed the companies of the battalion would be jeopardized by integrating Negro elements into units that had to operate in combat areas. . . . The greatest problem . . . was the undependability of the average soldier to operate to his maximum capability, compared to his lassitude toward his performing a task assigned. While there were exceptions to this rule, the general tendency of the Negro soldiers is to avoid as much effort as possible. Those who doubt this have only to serve in the capacity of supervisor to such requirements to

determine for themselves what the results will be.<sup>30</sup>

Many of the comments and attitudes of the senior officers of the time were a general reflection of their beliefs, whether or not they openly stated so.

# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Ulysses Lee, The Employment of Negro Troops (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969), 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 4

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 217.

<sup>4</sup>Gerald W. Patton, War and Race: The Black Officer in the American Military 1915-1941 (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1947), 69-70.

<sup>5</sup>Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, 10.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 175.

<sup>7</sup>Patton, War and Race, 95-96.

<sup>8</sup>Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, 20.

<sup>9</sup>Edward M. Almond, Lieutenant General (Retired), Interviewd by Captain Thomas G. Fergusson, 27 March 1975, interview section three, transcript, Oral History, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

<sup>10</sup>Hondon B. Hargrove, Buffalo Soldiers In Italy: Black Americans in World War II (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Co., 1985), 5.

<sup>11</sup>CSM (Retired) Elbert Ivy, Jr., interviewd by author, 15 February 1995, personal interview, Olathe, Kansas.

<sup>12</sup>Hargrove, Buffalos Soldiers in Italy, 8-9.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 8-9.

<sup>14</sup>Fergusson, Interview with General Almond, 7-8.

<sup>15</sup>Hargrove, Buffalo Soldiers in Italy, 15-26.

<sup>16</sup>Paul Goodman and Staff, "A Fragment of Victory" (A Special Study, Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, 1952), 25.

<sup>17</sup>Hargrove, Buffalo Soldiers In Italy, 16.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 26-46.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 47-48.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., 48.

<sup>21</sup>Goodman, "A Fragment of Victory", 51.

<sup>22</sup>Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, 549.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 180.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 560-561.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 560-562.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 562.

<sup>27</sup>Hargrove, Buffalo Soldiers in Italy, 78.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 79.

<sup>29</sup>Lee, Employment of Negro Troops, 565.

<sup>30</sup>Fergusson, Interview with LTC Almond, 39-40.

## CHAPTER 6

### ANALYSIS

#### Introduction

Chapters 4 and 5 presented a synopsis of the social, political, and combat environments of the 761st Tank Battalion and the 92d Division. Using the leadership model outlined in chapter 3, this chapter will show through analysis how the successes and failures of these two units were effected by the proper or improper employment of this model.

A review of the leadership model shows that successful leaders must employ three techniques. First, the leader must be technically competent. Technical competence encompasses three areas: the technical proficiency of the leader to do the job at hand; the ability to correlate facts into meaningful information; and the leader must have the necessary job related experience to do a good job. In short, in a military environment, technical competence equals the ability of the leader to technically direct the unit in accomplishing its tactical mission.

The second dimension of the leadership model is the ability of the leader to provide vision (external factors) for the organization and the internal element which allows leaders to task organize to accomplish the mission.

In the third dimension of the leadership model, the leader must possess effective interpersonal skills. This is the ability to demonstrate behavior that will motivate individuals to ensure the

organization's goals are met. In World War II, behavioral skills seemed to be the most important of the three dimensions of leadership. The social and political issues affecting black soldiers made this aspect of leadership important in counterbalancing the negative aspects of race relations during that era.

#### Leaders in the 761st and the Leadership Model

All accounts of the 761st Tank Battalion's training and combat record show that it was a successful unit. Most reports were very positive and glowing with praise. Effective leadership was the principal reason it was successful. A look at the application of the leadership model by the leaders in the unit, both black and white officers (and many key enlisted men), will show why the unit was successful. This analysis overlays the leadership model (technical, conceptual, and interpersonal skills) on the unit's training and combat experiences.

Since political and social attitudes of the time affected both blacks and whites it is important to first review what the 761st was faced with. In the beginning, the unit was formed as an experiment. The men of the unit knew this; however, most black leaders and soldiers saw their assignment to this armored unit as an opportunity to prove that they were capable combat soldiers. Equally important was the credibility gained for their rights as Negroes in the military and as civilians derived from their performance as capable combat soldiers.

Discriminatory attitudes at the time toward black soldiers in the local communities of Louisiana and Texas where the unit trained and lived were difficult for most of the black soldiers to accept. White officers of the unit initially held similar views and were aware of the opinion that the unit would never see combat. Black soldiers also

believed that they would never see combat. Blacks felt they would only be used to train tank destroyer units preparing for overseas deployment.

Even though the unit had these detractors, how well did the 761st Tank Battalion's leaders demonstrate their technical competence in ensuring that training and combat missions were successful? On activation in April 1942 to employment in November 1944, the officers and men of 761st trained and lived together. In these two plus years, the 761st compiled praises for its training accomplishments. One of the training center commanders, General Ernest A. Dawley, was impressed by the unit and spoke to it on three occasions. The faith he expressed in the battalion was a reflection of its ability to accomplish its training mission successfully. The 761st was also visited by General Lear and General McNair. General McNair's unemotional comments about the unit's "excellent condition and good disposition in bivouac areas" may have said more to the unit's credit, since the general had nothing negative to report on. The tactical success of the unit can be attributed to the technical competence of its leaders like Captain Charles Gates. Gates was technically proficient. He served for sixteen months with the 10th Cavalry before going to the Armor School at Fort Knox. Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Gates characterized his training at Fort Knox as easy and said he slept during most of the classes.<sup>1</sup> In statements by Colonel (then captain) Gates, he recounted how he first found his company untrained in the use of tanks and what he did to correct this. When he arrived in the unit soldiers would drive their tanks to the field location, dismount, and build a fire to stay warm. He introduced standards to the tankers and was well respected by all soldiers and officers in the unit. According to Major (Retired) David J. Williams, Gates could have run the battalion.<sup>2</sup> According to Sergeant Leonard "Smitty" Smith, a member of the 761st, the training at Camps Claiborne

and Hood was very intensive. His accounts of tank drills, cross training with weapons, and the discipline instilled in the tankers on the maintenance of their tanks, showed that through the actions of these soldiers the leaders possessed the technical skills to accomplish the mission.

Although the unit's training record was good, the true test of its ability came as a result of its combat record. Major Williams believed that the important part to his unit's technical competence was the lessons it learned as it fought from day to day. He increased his knowledge based on how he observed the Germans acting or reacting to his unit's actions. This is an example of how leaders in the 761st were able to take information and make it useable. Captain Gates knew how to tactically employ his unit. In an unfortunate debate about his abilities, he was ordered by a lieutenant colonel he was supporting to attack along an open road. Gates stalled for four hours in an effort to get out of doing this mission, but was given a direct order to attack. The result was that Gates' column of tanks were immediately halted due to German fire to its front and rear. Gates promised that he would never endanger the lives of his soldiers again no matter what the consequences, especially if he was told to do something that he knew was not tactically sound.

Gates was known as the trainer for the battalion. When replacements were received he was responsible for preparing them for combat. Most replacements were from service units and had no combat training. Gates commented that he preferred soldiers who at least knew how to drive.<sup>3</sup> It certainly must have been important for these new replacements to understand that their leaders were technically competent. James Caldwell, a former member of the 761st, stated that

examples of good leadership in his unit came from "always discussing tactics, and possible emergency situations."<sup>4</sup>

Task Force Rhine, the only time the 761st fought as a battalion, was another example of the technical competence of the unit's leaders. The 103d Infantry Division commander chose Colonel Bates to command the task force. The division commander would not have done this if he had not had confidence in Colonel Bates' tactical skills, especially since the mission of the task force was to spearhead the attack through the Siegfried Line. Colonel Gates' said that Bates was a good tactician.

The above examples show that the leaders of the 761st had the tactical skills and ability to correlate information, and apply it successfully in combat. The two years of training together and 183 days of continuous combat enabled the leaders to develop "on the job" experience to be successful. The tactical successes achieved by this unit attest to that fact.

Did the leaders of the 761st apply conceptual skills (vision, internal and external organization structure) properly? First a look at the external element. The control of the 761st's external environment was beyond its immediate leaders' control while it was at Camps Claiborne and Hood. The unit's living conditions, the attitudes of the local white citizens, the laws that kept blacks segregated, and the mission to train tank destroyers were determined by leaders outside the battalion. If the Army leaders of the time had considered the negative effects of external factors such as these, they may have taken better steps than they did to alleviate some of the problems black soldiers experienced, especially in regard to discrimination. One such effort, as noted earlier, came too late, when the War Department required that black soldiers be given the same privileges on military transportation

that white soldiers had. This decision came in the midsts of Lieutenant Jackie Robinson's incident on a local bus where he was harassed for not sitting far enough to the back of the bus. Robinson was charged with several counts of misconduct, but all charges were eventually dropped. This decision also came during the time when black soldiers felt that this unfair bus practice was one of the biggest problems in the South. Unfortunately, the external elements while at these two training camps were issues that the leaders of the 761st had no control over, and the Army leadership that could have influenced the external elements had no desire to do so.

The nature of employment of a separate battalion like the 761st in combat was for its companies to be attached to infantry regiments within a division with its tanks in support of the infantry. The external structure of the battalion was not an element its leaders easily could influence. Higher headquarters dictated its attachments and detachments. During the unit's 183 days of combat, it was attached and detached to the following units: the 26th, 71st, 79th, 87th, 95th, 103d Infantry Divisions, and the 17th Airborne Division; the Third, Seventh, and Ninth Armies, while serving in six European countries. These constant changes could have been used as reasons for failure if the 761st had not been successful. It had no habitual relationships with these units that would have facilitated combat operations or fostered trust and mutual respect. The best example of a leader using the external element to conceptual skills was the establishment of Task Force Rhine. The 103d Infantry Division commander configured the task force with the 761st Tank Battalion, supported by infantry and engineers, to blast a hole in the Siegfried Line. This task force was a successful example of external configuration.

The second important element to the external environment is the leader's vision for the unit. The "vision" for the 761st was embodied in Colonel Bates' actions. Whether or not he knew vision as we know it today, he came closest to communicating a vision when he told his soldiers that he wanted them to be cleaner and have more military bearing than any white soldier.

The internal element of the leader's conceptual skills relies on his/her ability to organize the unit from within to effectively accomplish the mission. During combat this was a constant challenge because of the lack of qualified replacements. At one point C Company had only fifty-eight people. To counteract this problem, the replacement training program run by Captain Gates helped to alleviate this readiness deficiency. There were no new black lieutenants, only those with battlefield commissions. New white lieutenants came to the unit, but lieutenants, according to Major Williams, did not last long, because the Germans targeted officers.

An innovative new organization for the 761st came about when it used its light tanks instead of wheeled vehicles to carry supplies and equipment to forward units. The wheeled vehicles of C Company could not travel on the icy roads. The 761st used innovative tank platoon tactics when the tanks of the 761st alternated rushing forward with two tanks firing and the remainder covering.

The final dimension of the leadership model is interpersonal skills. These leader skills, especially in the social and political environment of the country (racism and discrimination) were the most important for leaders (especially white leaders) to demonstrate when leading black soldiers in World War II. Interpersonal skills of a leader must concentrate on the external, the establishment of standards for individual performance or job related behavior; and the internal,

those relationships that foster mutual trust and respect, feelings similar to those most family members share. Together these interpersonal skills provide the necessary motivation for soldiers to perform well.

When the battalion was first established, Colonel Bates demonstrated trust and respect towards his soldiers; all his soldiers, which included black soldiers and black and white officers. His behavior, however, was key to motivating blacks. The majority of the black soldiers in the 761st felt they had a chance to prove that they were capable of being combat soldiers and that they deserved to be treated equally as citizens in civilian life. Some of the behavior that fostered this trust and respect between Bates and the black soldiers in the unit included when Bates refused to prefer charges against Jackie Robinson. Bates felt the charges were unjust and told his soldiers that they should be better and cleaner than the average soldier, and especially white soldiers. His black soldiers referred to Colonel Bates as "The Great White Father." Colonel Bates stated that he always lived on post to be near his soldiers. This type of behavior was not the norm for most white officers assigned to Negro troop units.

Other unit leaders also demonstrated the type of leadership skills that developed respect and trust among black soldiers and leaders. Captain Williams repeatedly told his tankers that if they got hit, the whole company would ensure they got back to friendly lines. Even though Williams was white, in his best Negro dialect, he made a motivating speech just before the unit was committed to combat. Basically, he told his soldiers that he wanted them to get their mission underway and kill the enemy. Major Williams stated that he did not take any privileges that his soldiers did not have. He noted that he refused to go to the all white officers club.<sup>5</sup> Williams continues lobbying to

posthumously award Sergeant Ruben Rivers the Medal of Honor for his heroic deeds during combat. Paul Latimer, a white officer and former member of the 761st (assistant S4 and S4), said that Gates inspired his men by leading the way.

Captain Gates' training program was the single best example of internal interpersonal skills used to enforce individual job and tank related standards throughout the battalion. The confidence this training to standards gave the tankers did a lot to earn them the praises they received from senior Army leaders. The ultimate payoff for these standards was that the tankers were confident and competent while in combat.

Many high ranking Army leaders, outside the battalion, also demonstrated interpersonal skills to motivate the soldiers of the 761st. General Dawley spoke several times to the unit about how impressed he was with its training progress. He also told the tankers that he wanted them to put a round of ammunition on the Germans for him. The commander of the transport battalion wrote a letter to the unit stating how impressed he was with the tankers' behavior while they were enroute to England. Generals Paul and Patton both made comments to the tankers about how they believed in the tankers' abilities. Patton's speech to the unit has been widely quoted as having been especially motivating. His status as the Third Army commander and his reputation as an outstanding leader added to his credibility to the soldiers. Despite the fact that Patton did not believe in the abilities of black soldiers, he understood as a leader the type of behavior it took to motivate soldiers and ensure success in combat. Generals Eddy and Paul wrote letters of commendation to the battalion on its performance in combat. Their comments on the 761st's courage, confident spirit, gallantry, and

bravery displayed during combat were examples of ways leaders fostered trust and respect between themselves and the 761st.

The interpersonal skills demonstrated by the leaders of the 761st Tank Battalion, and other leaders incident to the combat operations of the unit, showed the soldiers that these leaders believed in their abilities and trusted and respected them. Because of these leaders' demonstrated behavior, the black soldiers in the 761st were able to stay motivated to accomplish the unit goals. The black soldiers stated that their primary motivation was to prove that they could do the job, and the accounts by Lee further define that black soldiers also expected to gain certain civil rights as they proved they were equal, if not better, in combat roles. Because the soldiers expected to get rewards for their behavior, they were motivated to perform in a manner conducive to mission accomplishment. The leaders made this possible by ensuring success was an attainable goal for the soldiers. In turn the soldiers saw the value of success in not letting themselves or the Negro public down.

761st Tank Battalion soldiers interviewed stated they had confidence in their immediate leaders, the battalion commander, and themselves, and they felt that they could not let the Negro public down. These feelings would not have been possible if it were not for the ability of the leaders to ensure that they could provide a purpose for these soldiers. This was especially true when it would have been very easy for black soldiers not to support their leaders because of their struggle for acceptance as equals in society and in the Army. The motivation for black soldiers was correctly translated in the interpersonal dimensions of leadership.

Leaders in the 761st were technically competent. They were less able to influence external organizational changes, but were able to

organize internally to facilitate successful combat operations. Finally, the leaders in the 761st along with several key senior Army leaders demonstrated interpersonal skills that motivated black soldiers and significantly contributed to the combat effectiveness of the battalion.

#### Leaders in the 92d Division and the Leadership Model

From the beginning, the appointment of General Almond as the division commander of the 92d Division was questioned by the Negro press. This in itself was the beginning of the mistrust fostered throughout the division. Black soldiers and the black public thought Almond to be just another Southerner with racist attitudes towards blacks.

In this environment, how did the 92d Division's leaders fare against the leadership model? Technical competence, the first dimension of the model, showed that they did not possess the necessary technical competence to lead the unit successfully in combat. General Almond was thought to have the job related experience to command the 92d because he was the assistant division commander of another all-black unit, the 93d Division. In addition, Almond believed with General Marshall, and most senior military leaders, believed that Southerners like himself were better suited to command Negro troops because Southern officers understood "what black soldiers needed." General Almond felt that 300 new black officers in the division did not possess the technical competence that his division had when all the officers were white. He used as an example a new Negro lieutenant who had been a former boot black before he entered the Army.

The combat record of the 92d illustrated the lack of technical competence of its leaders. Initial combat effectiveness of the 370th

Combat Team was good. However, in early October when the 370th moved to the west coast to prepare for an attack on the high ground near Massa the lack of technical skills of its leaders affected its combat performance. Poor relay of instructions to the 370th resulted in B Company missing its attack start time. The artillery prep had already begun and the company was still in its assembly area a mile and a half away. This battle, part of a six day attack, netted only two thousand yards. General Almond blamed the battalion commanders for the problems. Certainly when a unit misses its planned attack time, the leaders are at fault. The account by CSM (Retired) Elbert Ivy helped to clarify that a leader's technical competence is key. He recounted an incident when Almond took over as an artillery observer and made an unsuccessful attempt to adjust artillery fire on the enemy. Because Almond did not use the correct procedures his attempts failed. Almond, as the commander and knowledgeable about tactics, should have been able to influence the employment of the unit across its wide sector; but he did not. This lack of technical competence was a bad example to the very people he later criticized.

General Almond stated that the piecemeal employment of his unit along the Serchio Valley (or the tactical plan by higher) was one of the reasons the division did poorly there. The division also was ordered to attack against the high ground of the Apennines Mountains. Senior leaders must possess technical competence to ensure combat missions are feasible and suitable. In this instance, supported by General Almond's comments, the tactical plan did not show proper technical competence applied by leaders.

Comments by a captured German general also illustrates that leaders of the division did not apply proper technical skills. The German general stated that he considered the combat capabilities of the

division good, but it was not as aggressive as it could have been. In addition, he stated that the division was deployed on a front too large for it. The technical skills of the leaders of the 366th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 92d, were also in question. Prior to its attachment to the 92d, it had only performed security missions guarding air bases. Because of the importance of training the way you expect to fight, the security mission of this unit did not adequately prepare it for combat.

Because leaders determine the mission and how to conduct it, lack of technical competence handicaps a unit's ability to be successful in combat.

The ability of the leaders of the 92d to apply conceptual skills did not fare much better than their application of technical skills. The division, from its initial training locations in the US, to its deployment in Italy, was fragmented. General Almond stated he pleaded with General Marshall to allow the entire division to deploy once the 370th was alerted for overseas. Eventually, the entire division deployed, but only after a thirty day delay. The division rarely fought as a whole, but instead was often cross attached to units in the Fifth Army sector. The instability this provided did not foster trust and confidence among its leaders and soldiers.

In a final effort to improve the combat effectiveness of the division, several external organizational changes were made. The 366th Infantry Regiment (all black) was attached to the 92d Division in November 1944, and eventually released in March 1945. The 442d and the 473d Infantry Regiments were attached to the 92d Division in March and February 1945, respectively. The combat effectiveness of the 92d improved until the end of its employment. General Almond was against

the attachment of the 366th; however, he welcomed the attachments of the 442d and the 473d.

One successful internal organizational change in the division was the establishment of the Pack Mule Battalion (Provisional) to assist resupply operations. Local Italians were hired to serve in the provisional battalion.

The final dimension to the leadership model is interpersonal skills. The leaders in the 92d Division did not apply interpersonal skills to successfully motivate black soldiers or accomplish their combat missions. General Almond was seen as the personality that set the climate of the division, as most leaders do. His comments, written and spoken, were usually detrimental to trust and respect among his black officers and soldiers. He was seen by his subordinate leaders as micro-managing their responsibilities. He was reported to have often designated the tank that would be in the lead and he unsuccessfully attempted to take matters into his own hands like the incident where he tried to call for artillery fire but was unable to influence the combat employment of his division. General Almond certainly did not foster any trust between himself the black soldiers of the 366th. He told the unit on its attachment to the 92d that he did not want them and they would now take their share of the casualties. General Almond blamed the failures of the 370th to make any substantial gains at Massa on his battalion commanders. However, Goodman correctly stated that the problems of the division were the wavering faith of commanders in subordinates and subordinates' beliefs that they could not trust their leaders.

When leaders do not employ the proper interpersonal skills to develop trust and respect and develop individual standards will find their subordinates not motivated to accomplish the mission. The lack of

motivation on the part of the black soldiers and leaders of the 92d was directly the result of mistrust of their superiors. There was no overwhelming motivation for the soldiers to prove themselves as combat soldiers, there was no motivation to support each other or their leaders, and there was no motivation to succeed in combat. Command Sergeant Major Ivy's statements about the division were telling when he stated that the division trained but the feeling of a cohesive unit never materialized. The soldiers had no expectations of a reward. Goodman said that soldiers to the right and left were unsure that the other would be there in the face of an attack. If the black soldiers had been motivated to accomplish the mission the 92d Division would have had a better combat record than it did.

General Almond concentrated on the wrong type of leadership issues. Instead of directing what tank would lead in an attack, he would have been better served motivating his leaders and soldiers by trying to affect their behavior in the same direction as the unit goals. He and others would be able to do this only by first developing interpersonal relationships with the black soldiers.

The issues brought out by Major Magee, the special assistant to the Secretary of War, while he was in Italy, revealed the friction between blacks and whites in the division. White officers were said to have no confidence in their men and did not like their assignments. White officers felt that the Negro could not overcome his background to become a good combat soldier. Gibson commented that most of the attitudes of the white officers affected the attitudes of blacks. Magee's conclusions overlooked the fact that soldiers knew how their officers felt about them.

The 92d Division's combat effectiveness was primarily degraded by its leaders' improper use of interpersonal skills. The interpersonal

skills needed by the leaders did not surface because they allowed their attitudes about blacks to interfere with appropriate ways to foster trust. General Almond's attitudes about blacks shaped his interpersonal skills with blacks. His inability to foster feelings of trust and respect within the division was the single greatest factor contributing to the unit's combat failures. Though these stereotypes were in consonance with the culture of the period, it was poor judgment for any officer to project these attitudes on men they were to lead into combat. The other dimensions of the leadership model, technical and conceptual skills, were poorly applied as well. Given the improper use of the leadership model, the poor performance of the 92d could have been predicted.

Despite the difficulty in capturing good leadership, one thing these case studies have shown is that in order for leadership to be a combat multiplier, good leadership using this model, especially interpersonal skills, must be applied equally to all soldiers regardless of race, color, gender, or religion.

The leadership model as outlined above has three dimensions. Analysis shows that of the three, interpersonal skills, especially as they apply to motivation, were the most important skills for leaders to focus on to be successful in commanding Negro troops in the 761st and 92d. Negroes in these two combat units were motivated by better treatment in civilian life. In the case of the 92d the poor treatment of the soldiers negated the basis of the motivation.

The reward outcomes of the Negro officers and enlisted men of the 92d Division were obscured by poor interpersonal skills of senior leaders. The opposite effect was prevalent in the 761st Tank Battalion, whose senior leaders demonstrated outstanding interpersonal skills. It was obvious that the value or valence of the reward outcomes were high

for the 761st and positively affected individual behavior and performance. Because the leaders in the 761st showed trust and confidence in their soldiers--all interpersonal skills--they were successful. The 92d Division soldiers on the other hand lacked pride in the unit, lacked the trust and confidence of their leaders, and therefore their motivation was low because the expected outcome of their efforts, possibly death in combat, was undesirable.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Charles Gates, Lieutenant Colonel (Retired), interviewed by author, 12 December 1994, personal interview, Platte City, Missouri.

<sup>2</sup>David J. Williams, Major (Retired), interviewed by author, 22 February 1995, telephone interview, Olathe, Kansas.

<sup>3</sup>Gates, personal interview, December, 1994.

<sup>4</sup>James Caldwell, Sergeant (Retired), interview by author, 13 January 1995, written interview, Platte City, Missouri.

<sup>5</sup>Williams, interview, 22 February 1995.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Leadership, as the most important element in combat effectiveness, was critical to leading soldiers and winning battles in World War II. Effective leadership in black units during this time was hampered by the social and political attitudes and issues that restricted blacks from being equal partners in society and in the military. Leadership, as it was in the 1940's and as it is now, provides us with numerous techniques to be successful. The leadership model discussed in this thesis presented theories on leadership that exemplify the best combination for the military leader, for military leaders during World War II, and particularly for today's leaders, who may lead multinational and multicultural units in combat.

#### Conclusions

The Leadership model was built around a framework with three dimensions: technical, interpersonal, and conceptual skills. While leading Negro troops in combat during World War II, interpersonal leadership skills were the most important leadership influences. During World War II, the belief that Negroes were inferior caused white leaders to overlook the importance of the interpersonal aspect of leadership.

Based on the successful combat record of the 761st the behavior of its leaders effectively applied the leadership model as defined by this thesis. The interpersonal skills of the leaders and the attention they gave to what motivated their soldiers was key to their success.

Because of extreme racial discrimination that blacks were subjected to leaders were required to emphasize trust, mutual respect, and self esteem within the unit. Realizing the existing conditions, leaders of the 761st motivated their soldiers to overcome these detractors. To achieve and excel is a function of leadership, failing is also a function of leadership.

The 92d Division on the other hand was not as combat effective as the 761st Tank Battalion and often seen as mostly ineffective. Its failures were due primarily to ineffective interpersonal skills by its leaders, primarily the failure to demonstrate interpersonal skills to motivate subordinates. The lack of interpersonal skills resulted in mistrust, open dislike, and a lack of confidence in each other, especially by whites and blacks. Therefore, it is easy to understand that interpersonal leadership was the discriminator between the success and failure of these two units. Where the leaders of the 761st were able to either change their behavior or overcome their attitudes about blacks, the same was not true in the 92d Division.

History has shown that the Negro participated in all of this country's wars, each time gaining more freedoms and the hope for greater self-respect by society. During World War II, black soldiers subscribed to the doctrine that virtue would be rewarded, a cultural promise with deep historical roots in American society. Black soldiers hoped for greater opportunities for all blacks by doing their part in the war. The 761st and the 92d gave blacks the opportunity to participate in this doctrine. The struggle for blacks to serve as combatants in these two units was of paramount importance because of this nation's history of bestowing "prestige" on those who defend America's freedoms and beliefs.

In this fifty year anniversary of World War II it is an especially important period of reflection. In the case of the 761st

Tank Battalion, official records of its combat operations are few. What is increasingly being relied on to document its unit history are the personal interviews of the surviving soldiers from this unit. As the years go by the survivors become fewer and fewer. Such was the case with the taped interview requested of Colonel Bates for this thesis. Unfortunately, Colonel Bates died in February 1995 before he completed his interview.

The US Army Military History Institute is also trying to close the gap on the official history of small units like the 761st. It mailed out numerous questionnaires to members of the 761st in August 1994, and received only one response to date. Similar questionnaires were mailed in support of this thesis, only to experience limited responses. Without surviving members from these small units recording their own history, it will soon be lost forever.

Fortunately, the 761st Tank Battalion will not be forgotten because of the efforts of Beverly Taylor of Copperas Cove, Texas and many others. Ms. Taylor has involved the entire Fort Hood community in erecting a statue in honor of the 761st Tank Battalion at its old training station. Ms. Taylor writes:

The construction of the 761st Tank Battalion Memorial Monument Memorial will take place in the vicinity of Fort Hood's main gate entrance. This memorial will be constructed in bronze and polished granite by the famed and extremely talented sculptor and noted historian Eddie Dixon. Mr. Dixon's many works include the Buffalo Soldier Monument which stands at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. The 761st memorial promises to be of inspirational value to all Americans, young and old, military and civilian.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of leadership in the military will continue to be the focus of study and research. This thesis showed that leadership is indeed the most important element in combat effectiveness and if a unit or leader is to be successful, the application of leadership using the dimensions of the leadership model must be used for all subordinates.

This is especially true in the diverse American society, and has further implications as the US Army increasingly becomes involved in operations other than war involving multinational military organizations.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

A logical follow on to this thesis would be to evaluate the leaders of several other black units in World War II against the leadership model discussed in this thesis.

Since interpersonal skills command an important aspect of effective leadership, additional Army training for leaders in this area is needed. Training focused on practical application of interpersonal skills would be important because it involves modifying behavior and/or attitudes.

Leadership principles taught in today's Army do not give leaders the focus they need to be effective. In the "field" many leaders do not follow these principles, especially the motivational aspect of leadership. None-the-less many undeserving individuals are promoted and rewarded along with the ones who do. A common retort to leaders who do not follow the principles are, "Someday it will catch up with them." At times the Army pays lip service to leadership. Soldiers have heard many times, "mission first, and people always." The "people always" is not always the case.

Official combat records and unit histories of small units, like the 761st Tank Battalion, are needed. Records on units smaller than divisions are difficult to research without actually going to the National Archives.

The contributions of minorities in World War II history books are largely overlooked. History, whether written or debated, should recognize the contributions of minorities. The distinction blacks and

other minorities had because of segregationist policies make their contribution especially noteworthy. Therefore, minority contributions should be noted as part of historical accounts. Until this happens it will continue to be necessary for separate books, articles, and theses to recognize minority achievements in past wars, achievements often maintained in the memories of old soldiers.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Beverly Taylor, Chairperson & President 761st Tank Battalion Monument Memorial Committee. Letter to Major Lenora A. Ivy, November 1994.

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