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## ABSTRACT

FORGING THE FIGHTING SPIRIT: THE OPERATIONAL COMMANDER'S ROLE IN REBUILDING COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS. by MAJ Harry C. Glenn, III, USA, 48 pages.

This monograph examines the role of the operational level commander in rebuilding combat effectiveness in the force. For the purpose of this monograph, the author defined combat effectiveness as the ability of an army to impose its will on enemy forces through combat actions. The loss of morale in an army significantly impacts on the commander's ability to impose his will on the enemy.

This monograph investigates Field Manual 22-103, *Senior Level Leadership and Command* and TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1, *Battle Command*, to determine if the doctrine sufficiently addresses this leadership challenge. Support for this study was gained through the detailed analysis of the role of Lieutenant General William Slim, commander Fourteenth Army in Burma and Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway, commander Eighth Army in Korea. Both assumed command of defeated armies in complete retreat. Both commanders were successful in rebuilding the fighting spirit of their armies.

Finally, this monograph concludes both commanders developed an organizational vision which focused on rebuilding confidence through training, patrolling, calculated low risk offensive operations, and a visible direct commander presence at all levels. Success in these operations led to larger combat actions. Recommendations for the manuals include discussion of organizational vision and operational vision in the context of a campaign. This monograph also recommends that more emphasis be placed on the operational commander's use of direct leadership to enhance morale. Lastly, this monograph recommends more emphasis be placed on the operational commander's leadership role with combined forces.

**FORGING THE FIGHTING SPIRIT: THE  
OPERATIONAL COMMANDER'S ROLE  
IN REBUILDING COMBAT  
EFFECTIVENESS**

**A MONOGRAPH  
BY  
Major Harry C. Glenn III  
Infantry**



**School of Advanced Military Studies  
United States Army Command and General Staff  
College  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

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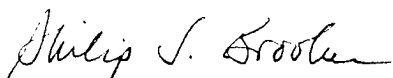
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# **Forging The Fighting Spirit**

A Monograph  
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Second Term AY 96-97

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## I. Introduction

*It was a ...defeated army...disintegrating army. It was an army not in retreat [but] in flight. It was something bordering on disgrace.<sup>1</sup>*

*Johnny Johnson - 8<sup>th</sup> Cav Commander*

FM 100-5 states operational art allows the commander to determine “when, where, and for what purpose major forces will fight. Operational art helps commanders to understand the conditions necessary for victory before seeking battle, thus avoiding unnecessary battles.”<sup>2</sup> The operational art allows commanders to conduct a campaign by sequencing tactical battles and engagements in time, space, and purpose. While operational art may allow the commander to determine the conditions necessary for success in the upcoming fight, history has shown that the commander has not always been so fortunate to plan his campaign on a clean and tidy battlefield.

Operations Desert Storm and Just Cause provide the best possible scenarios for recent operational commanders to determine the conditions for success. U. S. Forces were superior in doctrine, training, quality of soldiers and equipment, and had an overwhelming logistic capability. History, however, is replete with examples when forces have not had this advantage.

Two such examples are Lieutenant General William Slim, Burma Corps and Fourteenth Army commander from 1942 to 1945, and Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway, Eighth United States Army commander from 1950 to 1951. Both commanders took over operational units in the midst of retreat when the enemy had the initiative. Their soldiers’ morale and fighting spirit were ebbing low.

LTG William Slim arrived in Burma and assumed command of the Burma Corps in March 1942. At that time, the Burma Corps consisted of two battered and beaten infantry divisions -- the 1<sup>st</sup> Burma Division and the 17<sup>th</sup> Indian Division. The 7<sup>th</sup> Armored Brigade Group comprised the final large combat formation of Slim's corps. Slim assumed command of a corps in which the troops were poorly trained and equipped with little experience in jungle fighting. Slim and the Burma Corps withdrew under pressure for nearly three and a half months from Rangoon, Burma to Imphal, India -- a distance of over a thousand miles.<sup>3</sup>

Although the official history claims the Burma Corps withdrew without losing cohesion, Japanese official records show just how close the Burma Corps came to falling apart. In describing the 1<sup>st</sup> Burma Division after the withdrawal through Yenangyaung, the Japanese Official History states, "The enemy's fighting spirit suddenly collapsed. He abandoned his vehicles and retreated northwards. Soon he went to pieces. It was a rout."<sup>4</sup> Although Slim's Burma Corps was badly wounded and beaten, it was not destroyed. Slim proudly notes in *Defeat Into Victory* that as his corps marched into Imphal, the fighting troops "came out in their disciplined ranks, every man with his weapons and little else."<sup>5</sup> Slim's monumental task from this point forward would be to rebuild his shattered force, regain troop morale and fighting spirit, and prepare to move back to Burma and defeat the Japanese Army.

General Matthew B. Ridgway faced a similar situation. General Ridgway arrived in Korea on 26 December 1950 replacing General Walton H. Walker who had been killed in a jeep accident several days prior. Like Slim, Ridgway joined his army in retreat. Communist Chinese Forces (CCF) began its First Phase Offensive at Unsan on 1

November 1950.<sup>6</sup> The Eighth Army under Walker had suffered through the humiliating retreat into the Pusan Perimeter, Inchon, breakout from Pusan and the advance to the Yalu. The Chinese Second Phase Offensive issued in another round of destruction for the Eighth Army. Chinese forces, who controlled the high ground while blocking escape routes at the rear of withdrawing units, continually pressed Eighth Army units. 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division suffered the most during their withdrawal from Kunu-Ri. The division suffered nearly 3000 casualties and had to be pulled to the rear because they were combat ineffective. In two weeks of fighting, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division had suffered thirty-three percent casualties. Yet, it was not just the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division who suffered. A tremendous psychological blow had been dealt to the Eighth Army. As Clay Blair wrote in the *Forgotten War*:

It seemed hopeless. Morale in the Eighth Army was plunging out of control. There was real doubt in Walker's mind that his men had the spirit for a defense of Pyongyang in the face of a concerted CCF attack. *The entire army might panic and run.*[emphasis added]<sup>7</sup>

Ridgway assumed command of this dispirited army while under continuous pressure from attacking Chinese forces.

Both commanders regained combat effectiveness and instilled a fighting spirit into their armies. By 1945, Slim had destroyed the Japanese Burma Area Army as an effective fighting force. In early January 1951, the Eighth Army began limited offensive operations. By the end of March, the Eighth Army had once again liberated Seoul and established positions along the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

Both Slim and Ridgway, as operational commanders, made a significant contribution to restoring the morale and fighting spirit to their respective army. They

provided the impetus to regain the combat effectiveness of the organization to impart the commander's will on the enemy. Both commanders proved instrumental in providing the necessary leadership to allow their armies to successfully prosecute their campaigns. Their experience offers valuable lessons for today's leaders.

The purpose of this monograph is to analyze Slim and Ridgway and determine if Filed Manual 22-103, *Leadership and Command at Senior Levels* and TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1, *Battle Command* adequately address the operational commander's role in restoring and maintaining the combat effectiveness of the fighting organization. I will first address the key doctrinal issues of leadership and battle command at the operational level. Section III will provide the historical basis for the study and address specifically Slim as the Fourteenth Army commander and Ridgway as the Eighth Army commander. Section IV analyzes and compares both commanders' characteristics with the current operational level leadership doctrine. Section V presents the conclusion of the research project.

## II. Army Leadership and Battle Command Doctrine

*We conclude that the conduct of war is ultimately an art, an activity of human creativity, and intuition powered by the strength of the human will.<sup>8</sup>*  
*USMC FMFM 1 Warfighting*

Prior to addressing the Army's leadership doctrine, it is necessary to define combat effectiveness in the context of this monograph. Effectiveness is defined as the ability of "having the intended or expected effect; serving the purpose."<sup>9</sup> What is the army's purpose in war? Clausewitz, in *On War*, proposed that the political purpose of war in its purest form "is an act of violence meant to force the enemy to do our will."<sup>10</sup> The primary means of forcing an enemy to do our will is through combat.

The ability of an army to impose its will on the enemy is the essence of combat. Imposition of will results in achievement of the object. Short term, this implies that the army overcomes an enemy force in the immediate tactical engagement. Long term, this implies that the army achieves the campaign's objective by forcing its will on the enemy. Just having will; however, is not enough to win. The will of the army must be focused.

The commander provides the focus of the army's will. In its basest form, the army's will flows from the commander himself. He focuses his will on the enemy by providing the army with an operational vision. As James J. Schneider states in "The Theory of the Operational Art," "Will is the engine of all action."... "Armies continue to fight because they have the will to fight."<sup>11</sup> In order for an army to be effective, it must be able to achieve its purpose. Therefore, an army is combat effective if it is able to impose its will on the enemy forces through combat actions.

Crucial in enabling an army to maintain its will is morale. An army without morale is unable to achieve the commander's aim. The enemy's will is greater and the result is defeat. Maintaining, regaining, and instilling morale - a fighting spirit in an army is essential to achieving combat effectiveness. This is not to imply morale and fighting spirit are the only aspects of combat effectiveness. On the contrary, equipment, commander's competency, and technology all impact on the army's ability to carry out the commander's will. Nevertheless, if the army lacks morale, no amount of high tech equipment or visionary plans will matter.

Maintaining the morale or fighting spirit of an organization means maintaining the morale and fighting spirit of the fighting soldier. This responsibility falls squarely on the shoulders of every leader in the organization; but, ultimate responsibility rests with the commander.

### **Leadership Doctrine**

Doctrine is the bedrock of the United States Army's warfighting philosophy. It provides the Army with a common vision, philosophy, language, and purpose. It allows all members of the force to address situations with a common awareness of how to solve a problem; yet, demands the common sense and intuition of the individual. Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*, is the United States Army's keystone warfighting doctrinal manual.

Field Manual 100-5 provides the key concepts, principles, and fundamentals of warfighting. This manual also defines the role of leadership in the Army's warfighting doctrine. FM 100-5, *Operations*, first addresses leadership as a dynamic of combat power. Leadership is the basis of combat power. It integrates the elements of maneuver,

firepower, and protection to generate combat power. "Leaders inspire soldiers with the will to win. They provide purpose, direction, and motivation in combat."<sup>12</sup> FM 100-5 continues to address the impact of commanders of large forces. "The personal influence of the commanders of large joint and combined forces, field armies, corps, and divisions have a positive bearing on the outcome of battles and campaigns."<sup>13</sup>

The 1993 version of FM 100-5 also introduced the concept of battle command. Battle command is a combat function which helps the commander generate and sustain combat power. Battle command emphasizes the importance of visualizing the battlefield. It describes the need of the commander to move about the battlefield to meet face to face with subordinate commanders as well as soldiers. "The commander goes where he can best influence the battle, where his moral and physical presence can be felt, and where his will to achieve victory can best be expressed, understood, and acted upon."<sup>14</sup> Battle command has two elements - decision making and leadership. Leadership addresses the human element of command. Moral and physical courage as well as providing vision for future actions is addressed as part of leadership.<sup>15</sup>

Will is also discussed in FM 100-5. In this section, the doctrine discusses the relationship between military force, combat power, and their will to fight. It states that leaders are the main source of will. It states that combat actions are directed at breaking the will of the enemy commander and his army.<sup>16</sup>

FM 100-5 recognizes that leadership is the greatest element of combat power and the will of the army is essential to conducting combat operations. Operational level commanders directly impact on the outcome of campaigns, battles, and engagements.

Battle command is an essential combat function required to generate and sustain combat power.

Field Manual 22-103, *Leadership and Command at Senior Levels*, is designed to provide a “doctrinal framework for leadership and command within the context of the operational and tactical levels of war...”<sup>17</sup> While FM 22-103 provides an excellent overview of senior level command and leadership to include critical leader traits and processes, as well as professional skill, this monograph will only discuss those areas which impact directly on the combat effectiveness of the organization. Consequently, vision and the operational organization will be the primary focus.

FM 22-103 determines vision to be the core of senior level leadership and command. Sustained unit actions flow from senior level leadership. Vision is the senior leaders “source of effectiveness.” As stated earlier, in the context of warfighting, it is the means in which the commander imparts his will on the organization. The goal is to forge the organization into an element of combat power.<sup>18</sup>

Within the manual, vision is achieved when commanders adequately define their endstate and then create a concept to reach that endstate. The key components of vision are addressed as well. Vision is articulated by providing the organization purpose, direction, and motivation. Purpose explains the reason or the “why” of an operation. Purpose provides the means for independent thought, decision, and action by subordinate elements of the organization. Direction articulates the leaders chosen course to achieve the vision. Providing direction ensures that the organization achieves its objectives through unity of effort. Motivation generates the will of subordinates to achieve desired goals. Motivation is achieved through an adequate command climate based on mutual

trust. Within FM 22-103, vision is primarily discussed for organizations not engaged in combat operations. In discussing vision during a campaign, FM 22-103 states, “In a warfighting sense, it is the senior leader’s personal concept of what the organization must be capable of doing at some future point.”<sup>19</sup>

Organizations are also discussed in the doctrine. The desired characteristics of an organization are adaptability, cohesiveness, and resiliency. Adaptive organizations are rapidly able to shift and redirect actions in fluid and changing situations. Cohesive organizations are units which share “strong bonds and feelings of unity.” The units have mechanisms which maintain stability and sustain continued performance. Resilient organizations are characterized by the ability of the organization to learn rapidly, sustain the conditions for trust, confidence, and the ability to succeed, as well as fostering unity of purpose.<sup>20</sup>

The crux of FM 22-103 is the ability of the commander to give the organization a vision. The commander must create a military organization with the characteristics of adaptability, resiliency, and cohesiveness. He must be capable of attaining this in either peace or war.

When an organization has a vision, and motivation to achieve the vision, then the organization displays the characteristics of cohesiveness and resiliency. The commander and the organization are able to force their will on the enemy. However, the will to fight is fragile and if the balance is upset, the organization will lose its fighting spirit and morale.

While FM 22-103 tries to balance its discussion between war and peace, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1, *Battle Command*, is focused on combat leadership and

command. The concept of battle command was generated from the 1993 FM 100-5. Consequently, much of the discussion is the same as FM 100-5. Battle command is defined as “the art of battle decision making, leading, and motivating soldiers and their organizations into action to accomplish missions at least cost to soldiers.”<sup>21</sup> *Battle Command* focuses heavily on leader traits and characteristics which allow them to be successful in combat.

*Battle Command* describes the need for the commander to visualize current and future states and how to move from one to the next. It also addresses the need for the commander to lead up front, to lead and motivate the unit to the desired end. “Battle command demands that leaders position themselves where they can best command without depriving themselves the ability to respond to changing situations.”<sup>22</sup>

The doctrine squarely places the burden on the commander to adequately develop organizational leadership to generate combat power.<sup>23</sup> Additionally, *Battle Command* requires the commander to personally formulate the single unifying concept for a mission and having the will to direct and motivate the force to achieve the mission. The manual also describes the commander’s requirement to communicate his orders and intent face to face with subordinates if possible. Finally, the will of the commander is recognized as a source of combat power. The commander must inspire in his soldiers the will to win and persevere in difficult times.

FM 100-5 provides an excellent overview of the Army’s philosophy of warfighting leadership and command. FM 22-103 discusses thoroughly the need for the commander to establish his vision and the method to do so. Although FM 22-103 offers numerous examples and case studies of commanders in combat, there is a distinct lack of discussion

of the operational commander during a campaign. In fact, the manual seems to concentrate on peacetime leadership vice war. TRADOC Pam 525-200-1, on the contrary, focuses solely on command in war. It focuses heavily on the commander's actions in combat as well as his command post location in battle. Battle command treats command at all levels the same and makes few allowances for command at the operational level.

While each manual recognizes the importance of morale and fighting spirit of the soldier, none address means for the commander to regain it once it has been lost. However, all the doctrine addresses the importance of vision, the commander's will, and sustaining the organization's effectiveness. It recognizes the commander must communicate his will and vision to the force indirectly through organizational leadership as well as directly through his presence to influence the morale of his organization.

To better understand the essential elements and methods for restoring morale, it is necessary to study the actions of past commanders who faced this situation. Two such commanders are Lieutenant General William Slim and Lieutenant General Matthew B. Ridgway.

### III. Historical Case Studies

*Victory and pursuit - "This is the time for the victor to consolidate his gains by physical destruction - the only advantage that will be permanently his. The enemy's morale will gradually recover, order will be restored, his courage will return; and in most cases only a very small portion, if any, of the hard earned superiority will remain."*<sup>24</sup>

Clausewitz

#### **Slim and the Fourteenth Army**

Upon reaching Imphal, the Burma Corps ceased to exist. The 1<sup>st</sup> Burma Division retained few qualities of a combat effective unit. Consequently, the Burmese troops were given their rifle, fifty rounds, three month's pay and released back to their villages. The 17<sup>th</sup> Indian Division still functioned and was retained at Imphal as part of the IV Corps.<sup>25</sup> Lacking any combat forces, Slim was sent to stand up the newly forming 15<sup>th</sup> Corps on 20 May 1942.

While transitioning between the two commands, Slim used his available time to reflect on the cause of the defeat and retreat of the Burma Corps. Slim recognized that the Allies had been "out-maneuvered, outfought, and outgeneraled."<sup>26</sup> Slim's assessment revealed that there were basic causes to the defeat. Slim believed the Allies lacked proper preparation to include poor planning as well as poor preparation of the fighting troops. Lack of a sustainable logistics base in the austere environs of Burma coupled with too few fighting forces dictated an Allied retreat. Additionally the Allied forces lacked the ability and confidence to conduct operations off the roads and into the jungle. This gave Japanese forces a decided maneuver and psychological advantage over the British forces. Lastly, British forces lacked an aim or object of the campaign.<sup>27</sup> Allied forces never knew

if they were to retain Burma, defend India, or withdraw slowly preserving the army.

Slim writes, "Whoever was responsible, there was no doubt that we had been basically weakened by this lack of a clear object."<sup>28</sup>

The Burma Corps defeat impacted on all the troops within India regardless if they fought in Burma or not. The chaos of routed rear echelon troops, panicked refugees, and the beaten Burma Corps created a state of low morale throughout Allied troops in India. Additionally, Japanese forces achieved a psychological invincibility in the minds of Allied forces. In order to prevent the disintegration of 15<sup>th</sup> Corps troops in future combat operations, Slim issued training guidance to his corps based on the lessons he had learned from the Japanese during his withdrawal.

It was in the 15<sup>th</sup> Corps that Slim designed and executed the training plan he would institute in the Fourteenth Army. Slim believed the key to enhancing the confidence of the fighting force to beat the Japanese was to first make the soldiers confident in jungle fighting. Slim began a rigorous training program which emphasized patrolling, flanking attacks through the jungle, and increased capability of the rear administrative / logistics troops to protect themselves. Slim also told all units to expect enemy forces in their rear. In the event of enemy bypass, 15<sup>th</sup> Corps units were expected to dig in and hold.<sup>29</sup>

Slim's training regime is best demonstrated by the 15<sup>th</sup> Corps headquarters element. Each member of the headquarters was cross-trained on all personal weapons. Physical fitness was improved through foot marches with full pack. Patrolling was conducted by members of the corps headquarters and defensive training was instituted to provide all around protection.

Slim's training plan demonstrated a shrewd assessment of Allied and Japanese capabilities. Slim realized the fighting capability of the troops must be improved in order to improve morale. His training priorities focused on taking away the psychological advantage Japanese forces held. The jungle became the Allies friend. Slim changed the mental picture of all units in his corps by expecting units to fight while cut off - by demanding support troops and command posts defend themselves. This training philosophy allowed units and commanders to expect their lines of communications to be cut and thus, allayed the fear and panic which arises when soldiers are cut off or surrounded.

Slim's training program was halted early by the First Arakan campaign. This campaign began in late December, 1942 before troops were adequately trained for jungle fighting. Slim's corps was initially not a part of this campaign; however, as the situation rapidly deteriorated, Slim was asked by General Irwin, Eastern Army commander, to take operational control.<sup>30</sup> Slim arrived to a rapidly deteriorating organization. Eventually, Slim stabilized the situation and halted the Japanese offensive, but not before another loss to the Japanese exacted its impact on morale. An India command psychologist wrote, "...the whole of the Fourteenth Indian Division was for practical purposes a psychiatric casualty" The Fourteenth Indian Division subsequently became a rear training division and never saw front line duty again.<sup>31</sup>

Morale was now lower than ever. The poor handling and subsequent defeat of the First Arakan offensive resulted in the Eastern Army commander's relief. During the impending command changes in the China, Burma, India, theater, Slim ultimately became commander Fourteenth Army on 16 October 1943.<sup>32</sup> It was during this time in

which Slim laid the foundation for victory. Slim determined the fundamental problem was morale. In improving morale, Slim realized he must improve the will to victory in the individual soldier and create a sense of identity in the Fourteenth Army. To do this, Slim instituted the aggressive training program he initiated in 15<sup>th</sup> Corps, demanded aggressive patrolling against the Japanese from platoon to battalion size, instituted a series of limited attacks designed to regain confidence.<sup>33</sup> Most importantly, he provided a purpose for the Fourteenth Army.

Slim intrinsically knew the Fourteenth Army must first understand why it was fighting before he could significantly improve the morale. Henceforth, the Fourteenth Army would no longer defend India. Its purpose was to destroy the Japanese Army.<sup>34</sup> While this purpose certainly served a noble cause, it is certainly much more effective if it is believable. Nothing so far had indicated that Allied troops were on par with the Japanese. Slim meant to change that.

Slim knew he must communicate his vision to his command. He knew that each soldier must believe it was possible. Slim and his commanders began immediately to visit among his troops at the lowest possible level. Each commander spread the same message, the same organizational vision. Slim used every opportunity to promote his vision whether talking in small groups of officers and NCOs or at a sand table rehearsal. As Ronald Lewin writes in *Slim: The Standardbearer*, "The essence of Slim's achievement with the Fourteenth Army was precisely this - to communicate the faith that moves mountains."<sup>35</sup> Words, however, mean nothing if the power of action does not back them up.

To enable the Fourteenth Army to believe it was capable of defeating the Japanese, Slim carefully crafted a series of combat operations to enhance the Army's confidence. First, Slim ensured the Fourteenth's training program allowed the Allied soldier to compete with the Japanese soldier in the jungle. Secondly, Slim instituted combat patrolling throughout the Army. Patrolling and ambushing are "bread and butter" tactics in a jungle environment. Patrolling bred confidence and small unit capability. All members of the unit participated in the patrolling - not just the infantry. As the patrols had greater and greater success against the Japanese, confidence spread throughout the Army.<sup>36</sup>

While patrolling raised the confidence of the individual soldier, it could not dramatically enhance the organization's confidence. To do this, Slim crafted a series of limited offensive operations designed to allow formations to overwhelm smaller enemy elements. For instance, if the Japanese had a company outpost, Slim would send a brigade with a battalion of supporting artillery. Slim would chance no possible setbacks in the morale, confidence, and fighting spirit of the Army by risking a defeat.

With this fragile confidence in mind, Slim continued to seek means in which to enhance the organizations morale. He had this in mind when he designed the first offensive campaign of the Fourteenth Army. Slim's concept was to ensure the initial engagements would occur with overwhelming combat power against the Japanese at the decisive point. Slim was not looking to fight division against division. He wanted three Allied divisions against one Japanese division to ensure victory in the first battle. After initial victory was achieved, Slim believed the Fourteenth Army could withstand the setbacks associated with long campaigning. If only the Japanese would cooperate.

The Japanese, on the other hand, had other plans for the Fourteenth Army. The Japanese 28<sup>th</sup> Army in Operation Ha Go was to destroy the 15<sup>th</sup> Corps on the Arakan peninsula and to draw off Fourteenth Army reserves to the Arakan front. This would weaken the Fourteenth Army's defense of the Imphal plain which was the objective of the Japanese primary offensive - Operation U-Go.<sup>37</sup>

On 11 January 1944, Operation Ha-Go commenced. The Japanese goal was to isolate and destroy the 7<sup>th</sup> Indian Division by cutting the Ngakyedauk pass, then destroy the 5<sup>th</sup> Indian Division.<sup>38</sup> By 4 February, significant Japanese forces were in the 7<sup>th</sup> Division rear. By 6 February, Japanese forces had cut the lines of communication for the 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Divisions and blocked reinforcement routes along the Maungdaw - Bawli Bazaar road at the Briasco Bridge. Additionally, the Japanese forces were positioned to attack the Administrative Box in order to resupply their forces. The Administrative Box became crucial for the 15<sup>th</sup> Corps. If the administrative area panicked and fled, it would be devastating for the Army. The West Yorkshire Regiment and two squadrons of the 25<sup>th</sup> Dragoons (armor) were rushed to assist in the defense. However, the majority of the defenders in the Administrative Box would be clerks, cooks, and drivers. From 6-24 February, the Japanese attempted to seize the Administrative Box. Nevertheless, the men of the 15<sup>th</sup> Corps held fast. Aerial resupply supported the cut off divisions and the Administrative Box. No panic ensued when Japanese forces bypassed and cut their lines of communication. When reinforcements finally broke through to relieve the Administrative Box, the Japanese left over 5000 dead on the field. The Fourteenth Army rapidly transitioned to the offense to destroy remaining Japanese forces. Slim and the Fourteenth Army considered this fight to be the turning point in their war against Japan.<sup>39</sup>

The battle of the Administrative Box signified a turning point in the morale and fighting spirit of the Fourteenth Army. The organization knew they could fight the Japanese and win. Division and rear areas alike no longer panicked and fled when the Japanese cut their lines of communications. Individuals and organizations were confident in their ability to fight the Japanese in the jungle and win. The Japanese aura of invincibility was destroyed. The Fourteenth Army's morale was no longer fragile to the first misstep. The Army knew they could defeat the Japanese forces. The Fourteenth Army was combat effective.

### **Matthew B. Ridgway and the Eighth Army**

Lieutenant General Ridgway was no stranger to adversity. During World War II, he commanded the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division through Italy to Normandy. He commanded the XVIII Airborne Corps for the remainder of the war. Upon landing on the ground in Korea, Ridgway immediately began to assess the tactical situation and the status of the Eighth Army.

Ridgway firmly believed he must personally inspect his subordinate headquarters. The Eighth Army was comprised of three corps - the I, IX, and the X Corps.<sup>40</sup> Seven American divisions plus the 187<sup>th</sup> Airborne Regimental Combat Team made up the combat elements of the corps. The ROK Army fielded three corps comprised of nine combat divisions. Additionally, the Eighth Army fielded numerous coalition forces to include the Commonwealth Brigade, the British Brigade, the Turkish Brigade, and numerous individual infantry battalions from contributing nations. Ridgway commanded nearly 350,000 men.<sup>41</sup>

Ridgway traveled the Eighth Army front by light plane, jeep, and helicopter. By the evening of 28 December 1950, only four days after being notified to assume command of the Eighth Army, Ridgway had visited all the Corps and Division headquarters to include the Republic of Korea (ROK) commanders in the eastern and central sectors. After conferring with the commanders, Ridgway knew the “consensus from private to general was ‘Let’s get the hell out of here!’”<sup>42</sup> Ridgway in *The Korean War* wrote, “Every command post I visited gave me the same sense of lost confidence and lack of spirit. The leaders from sergeant on up, seemed unresponsive, reluctant to answer my questions.”<sup>43</sup> Ridgway realized the Eighth Army would not be able to hold against another Chinese offensive in its current state of mind.

Initially, Ridgway wanted to begin offensive operations. However, his assessment made him realize the Eighth Army would be unable to do so. Ridgway anticipated another Chinese offensive at the beginning of the new year. The Chinese obliged and the Chinese Third Phase offensive featuring six Chinese armies began on 31 December 1950. By 2 January, with the collapse of two ROK divisions, Ridgway ordered the Eighth Army to withdraw south of the Han river. By 7 January, the Eighth Army established defensive positions on Defensive Line D, the Pyongtaek line.

In *Ridgway Duels for Korea*, Roy Appleman describes the state of the Eighth Army, “The last three weeks of January were the low point of the Eighth Army.” The Eighth Army faced a period of indecision and lack of support from higher. Both Douglas MacArthur’s headquarters in Japan as well as the Joint Chiefs of Staff questioned the ability of the Eighth Army to remain in Korea. Debate ensued as to whether or not the

Eighth Army should be ordered to withdraw from Korea. General Ridgway remained steadfast in his conviction that the Eighth Army would remain in Korea.<sup>44</sup>

Although Ridgway was convinced the Eighth Army would recover, many members of the Eighth Army thought otherwise. Logistics elements refused to push ammunition stockpiles forward because they anticipated the Army would withdraw soon through Pusan. Soldiers sarcastically noted that each unit needed their own "bugout" route to Pusan.<sup>45</sup>

Ridgway remained extremely confident the Eighth Army would hold. More importantly, the Chinese failed to pursue the Eighth Army south of the Han river. This allowed the Army in the western corridor to establish a strong defensive line and regain their composure after another defeat. The Chinese pause gave Ridgway crucial weeks in which to gain control over the Army and begin to rebuild its fighting spirit.<sup>46</sup>

Ridgway's plan for rebuilding the Eighth Army's combat effectiveness can be found in his initial guidance to his corps commanders issued during the retreat. Ridgway felt that senior level command was largely responsible for many of the Eighth Army's problems. Thus, he provided very specific guidance to them. Commanders were required to move up front to the combat elements and have an intimate knowledge of the situation. Division commanders were to be with the lead battalions and corps commanders with the lead regiments in contact. He required all elements to begin aggressive patrolling to develop intelligence and to never lose contact with Chinese forces. He required commanders to institute a training program in night fighting and marches. Later, this was expanded to include operations with armor and close air support. Finally, he required

commanders to maximize their use of firepower. Nothing should go unused if it could inflict damage on the enemy.<sup>47</sup>

While this guidance was critical to providing a foundation for the Eighth Army, Ridgway continued to refine his methods to develop combat effectiveness. To instill a fighting spirit into the Eighth Army, Ridgway provided a purpose, calculated offensive actions, and communicated his intent through constant forward presence.

As Ridgway surveyed the fighting soldiers of the Eighth Army, he found the soldiers exhibited a malaise, a lack of understanding why they were in Korea. To combat this, Ridgway comprised a message to be read by each member of the Eighth Army. On 21 January, Ridgway issued the statement “Why We Are Here? What Are We Fighting For?” Ridgway stated the reason the Eighth Army fights was to determine “whether Communism or individual freedom will prevail.” While Ridgway intended for this statement to provide purpose and understanding to his command, the results were mixed. This is probably due to poor dissemination of the message. It is not known how many men of the Eighth Army ever received the message.<sup>48</sup>

However, this does not invalidate Ridgway’s effort. Ridgway’s message shows he recognized the absence of his organization’s purpose. His reflection on this problem influenced his actions and his approach to restoring the Eighth Army’s morale.

Although this purpose was not well communicated, Ridgway did succeed in providing one to the Eighth Army. The actual purpose communicated can be found in his intent and guidance to his senior commanders for conducting combat operations.

The Eighth Army’s purpose began with Ridgway’s instructions to his corps commanders while conducting the retreat. Ridgway demanded the corps conduct an

orderly withdrawal using maximum firepower to inflict maximum casualties on the advancing Chinese.<sup>49</sup> No matter where Ridgway went, he emphasized offensive actions and the need to use maximum firepower to inflict maximum casualties on the Chinese. While visiting the 89<sup>th</sup> Tank Battalion, Ridgway told the operations officer during the briefing, "Throw away your defensive plans. I'm not interested. We're not going back anymore; we're going to advance."<sup>50</sup> A similar message was passed to the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division. Ridgway stated he expected local counterattacks throughout the withdrawal. His plan was to go on the offensive as soon as possible. Regardless, the goal was to "inflict maximum loss to the enemy."<sup>51</sup>

Wherever Ridgway went he continued to preach the same sermon. He required all soldiers in the attack to have fixed bayonets. Theatrical yes, but in the very close combat of Korea, the bayonet provided the infantry soldier with a strong, aggressive psychological boost. The Eighth Army understood its mission: "The job is to kill Chinese."<sup>52</sup>

While Ridgway focused on improving the fighting spirit of the American and United Nations soldiers, Ridgway instinctively understood the Korean divisions must also be improved. The combat elements of the Eighth Army were intertwined. If the Korean divisions continued to rout, as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> ROK divisions had done during the retreat, American divisions would always be at risk. Upon consolidation on Defensive Line D, Ridgway wrote to General Chung Il Kwon, Chief of Staff of the ROK Army. Here, Ridgway articulated a slightly different purpose. He wrote, "First there is here but one ultimate objective - freedom for your people. To attain that objective, there is only one force - our combined Allied Army. Second, there is but one common destiny for this

combined Allied Army. It will fight together and stay together whatever the future holds.”<sup>53</sup>

To improve the Korean morale Ridgway did several things. First, Ridgway deactivated the ROK II corps which was destroyed during the CCF Third Phase Offensive. Secondly, Ridgway recommended the number of Korean Augmentations to the United States Army (KATUSA) be increased in the rifle companies in order to get more Koreans into the front line. Lastly, Ridgway confronted ROK President Syngman Rhee on his request to outfit more Korean divisions with weapons and equipment. Ridgway felt that the Koreans would fare much better if they were used as replacement for the already depleted Korean divisions.

ROK troops were generally considered unreliable against the Chinese by American commanders.<sup>54</sup> They had been routed too many times. Disintegration of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Divisions during the retreat and the collapse of the ROK 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> divisions during the Chinese Fourth Offensive are example enough. Constantly, the Eighth Army was placed in jeopardy. Ridgway dealt with President Rhee directly on this issue. Ridgway demanded Rhee discipline senior ROK commanders whose troops disintegrated under attack and especially those whose troops abandoned all equipment in pell-mell flight.<sup>55</sup>

Ridgway attempted to shore up Korean troops. On occasion, American combat support packages were placed under Korean control during offensive operations. However, despite Ridgway's attention focused on improving ROK capabilities, the ROK army remained a source of concern throughout the war.

Instilling a purpose provides a foundation for why the combat soldier fights; nevertheless, this alone will not improve the combat effectiveness of an outfit. Ridgway

expanded upon his purpose by conducting a series of limited offensive operations calculated to minimize risk to the army while enhancing an offensive spirit.

Ridgway did not wait until the Eighth Army was neatly established on Line D south of Seoul. Extensive patrolling was ordered as soon as the army halted. Contact was lost with the enemy and Ridgway was determined to regain it. One such reconnaissance in force was Task Force Michaelis composed of the 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment and one battalion of tanks. The 27<sup>th</sup> regiment was arguably one of the best in Korea. Task Force Michaelis was to attack towards the Suwon - Osan area on 15 January to “punish any enemy force with infantry, tank, and air assaults, then to withdraw maintaining contact with a minimum force.”<sup>56</sup>

Ridgway knew the Eighth Army could not afford anymore losses and provided General Milburn, I Corps commander, with very specific guidance. Milburn was not to allow Task Force Michaelis to move out too far to be cut off, nor was Milburn to allow combat operations to develop which would entail commitment of the corps. Milburn was also restricted from any large scale exploitation.<sup>57</sup>

To further safeguard against a setback, Ridgway ensured the Task Force had overwhelming firepower for Operation Wolfhound. Along with the tank battalion, the 27<sup>th</sup> Regiment also received close air preparation of 24 B-26 bombers and 126 fighter planes. Task Force Michaelis used over 200 air sorties by the operation’s end. Enemy resistance was light and so were American casualties.<sup>58</sup> Most importantly, the Eighth Army was attacking the Chinese.

Chief of Staff of the Army Joe Collins, was visiting the Eighth Army at the same time Operation Wolfhound was being conducted. Collins visited the troops involved in

Operation Wolfhound upon conclusion of the operation. Collins found morale to be much improved. General Milburn's staff was preparing further offensive reconnaissance in force to follow up Operation Wolfhound. As General Collins wrote in his assessment, "Eighth Army is in good shape and improving daily under Ridgway's leadership."<sup>59</sup>

In total, four regiments in four divisions in the I and IX Corps conducted large scale reconnaissance in force. None had suffered a defeat, and all were successful. They all followed Ridgway's guidance of inflicting maximum damage on the enemy. Clay Blair in *Forgotten War* best sums up the impact:

The operation had given the men new confidence in themselves and their units and the supporting tanks and artillery. They had met no CCF hordes; no American unit was overrun; none had bugged out. In as much as the CCF appeared to be reluctant to fight, morale in these regiments soared.<sup>60</sup>

Satisfied with the Eighth Army's performance and that the confidence and skill of the American divisions was sufficient to carry out large scale operations, Ridgway issued orders for a general offensive to begin on 25 January. Operation Thunderbolt was to be a slow methodical advance to contact with the Chinese. Ridgway demanded the divisions remain within mutual support of each other and that the corps maintain lateral communications at all times. During daylight, units were to advance. At night, units established strong defensive positions. During the advance, forces were to "ferret out enemy dispositions, disrupt hostile concentrations, and inflict maximum destruction on enemy personnel and material."<sup>61</sup> The advance would be limited to the Han river to prevent the Eighth Army from overextending.

I Corps advance to the Han experienced significant success. By February 9, I Corps reported NKPA units withdrawing in full flight. By 10 February, enemy forces had withdrawn across the Han river. I and IX Corps continued to have their confidence reinforced through tactical success. By reaching the Han, the Eighth Army experienced a significant psychological boost. The army was fully capable of integrating all combat assets to inflict maximum punishment on the enemy. Shrimp Milburn, I Corps commander, exuded this confidence. Milburn wrote, "The power of confident fighting men and their commanders when given the opportunity to come to grips with a tangible enemy" allowed the I Corps to move to the Han<sup>62</sup>

Thus, Ridgway nurtured the confidence and fighting spirit with each calculated action. Instilled with the purpose of inflicting maximum damage on the enemy, the Eighth Army responded. Ridgway planned his initial operations carefully after the withdrawal to defensive Line D. Ridgway demanded patrolling and heavy reconnaissance in force to make contact with the enemy. Throughout the operations, Ridgway's intent was to begin limited offensive action yet minimizing risk to the army. With each success in the Eighth Army, the confidence and aggressiveness of the fighting soldier grew. By injecting his direct presence throughout the command, Ridgway left nothing to chance.

Ridgway was a strong believer in the power of the senior commander's presence. He constantly provided a forward presence to assess troop morale, logistics status, commander's compliance with his intent, and most importantly, the combat situation. Ridgway constantly traveled the front to assess the situation. Ridgway felt the commander should constantly visit the forces forward and remain outside of his command post. Ridgway reserved the night to receive updates from his staff.

One of the first things Ridgway did when he arrived to Korea was to co-locate his forward command post with the I Corps command post. Ridgway felt the Eighth Army command post was too far to the rear in Seoul to accurately command and control the Army. He felt he needed to be forward to assess the situation. Ridgway wrote in his memoirs, "It is the basic responsibility of a field commander to anticipate where the crisis of battle will occur, and to be there when it develops. Only in this way can he see with his own eyes what is happening and get a proper sensing of the reactions of his subordinates and their troops."<sup>63</sup> Ridgway's constant presence at I Corps proved to be a trying time for the staff who effectively replaced the Eighth Army staff.

Ridgway received a briefing from the I Corps staff daily. Lieutenant Colonel Read, Corps G-2 noted, "Ridgway wanted exact information on men, weapons, vehicles, kinds of mines, and terrain covered by fire; he was sharp and hard to satisfy..." Ridgway forced the staff to focus on warfighting. He forced them to think about operations. Read said, "He got us out of the bug-out fever and put offensive spirit into us."<sup>64</sup>

Ridgway's constantly observed leaders' combat performance. Ridgway determined much of the Eighth Army's leadership was lacking. He was especially disappointed in the commanders' handling of the retreat south of the Han. Ridgway wrote to Army Chief of Staff Joe Collins:

There continues to be a lack of aggressiveness among some corps commanders and division commanders. Again and again I personally instructed both Corps commanders to so conduct their withdrawal as to leave strong forces so positioned as to permit powerful counterattacks. These orders, too, failed of execution.<sup>65</sup>

Ridgway never relented the pressure on his subordinate commanders. As a whole, Ridgway dramatically improved his organization by forcing his senior leaders to believe.

Strangely enough, the last place the Eighth Army fighting spirit improved was Ridgway's own Eighth Army Headquarters. Ridgway spent so much time at his forward command post that he rarely visited the main command post. With the culmination of Operations Touchdown and Roundup, Ridgway asked his staff to assess Eighth Army future combat actions. The Eighth Army I and IX Corps had moved forward to the Han river and the X Corps had stopped the Chinese Fourth Phase Offensive. Ridgway's G-3, John Dabney recommended the Eighth Army defend in place and abandon all offensive operations. When the inevitable Chinese spring offensive came, the Eighth Army should retire voluntarily to the Pusan Perimeter.<sup>66</sup>

To Ridgway, this confirmed the defeatist mentality still present in his Army staff. Ridgway disapproved the study and eventually replaced Dabney. To further shake up the Eighth Army headquarters, Ridgway ordered it to move from Taegu eighty miles north to Chongju. With his forward command post only twenty-five miles south of the forward troops, a psychological impression was made on the Eighth Army. The Eighth Army's move north was permanent.<sup>67</sup>

The Eighth Army's move forward coincided with the Eighth Army's new offensive - Operation Ripper. Operation Ripper also demonstrated the complete rejuvenation of the Eighth Army. The purpose of Operation Ripper was once again to inflict maximum punishment on the enemy and disrupt any plans for a new offensive. Ridgway's method of

control also remained the same with controlled advance being emphasized and no unsupported pursuits.<sup>68</sup>

Operation Ripper set the conditions for the Eighth Army's advance to and beyond the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel. Ridgway had turned the Eighth Army around and regained its combat effectiveness. Ridgway looked at the Eighth Army through a commander's eyes and recognized the change:

The American flag never flew over a prouder, tougher, more spirited and more competent fighting force that was the Eighth Army as it drove north beyond the Parallel. It was a magnificent fighting organization, supremely confident that it could take any objective assigned to it.<sup>69</sup>

#### IV. Analysis

*In the engagement, the loss of morale has proved  
the major decisive factor.<sup>70</sup>  
Clausewitz*

The purpose of this section is to analyze Slim and Ridgway's actions with Field Manual 22-103, *Command and Senior Level Leadership* and TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1, *Battle Command*. First, Ridgway's and Slim's actions will be analyzed in the FM 22-103 framework of vision, purpose, direction, and motivation. Secondly, the two leaders will be addressed in the context of TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1. The intent of this section is to determine if the Army adequately addresses the requirements for the operational commander to restore the combat effectiveness of the fighting organization.

FM 22-103 requires the senior leader to establish a vision to focus his organization on a single overarching aim or objective. This vision allows the organization to become an element of combat power. Slim and Ridgway developed an organizational vision for their armies. Both commanders focused on restoring the offensive spirit into their armies to destroy the enemy. This vision was primarily an organizational vision which focused on improving combat effectiveness. Organizational vision should not be confused with the operational vision a commander must provide in the context of a campaign. While these two visions often overlap and support each other they are not the same.

The commander's operational vision for a campaign focuses on determining the desired endstate of the campaign and the ways in which the commander will achieve the endstate. Those ways are the methods in which the commander sequences tactical battles in time and space. In determining the operational vision, the commander must also

consider the means in which he has available to achieve the endstate. The commander's primary means is his combat organization. In the case of both Ridgway and Slim, each had to rebuild his organization to support an operational vision. Consequently, each commander primarily focused on achieving their organizational vision of regaining their armies' combat effectiveness first.

FM 22-103 provides purpose, direction, and motivation as the key components of vision. The purpose of the organization provides the unifying reason for the organization's action. Slim clearly articulated the purpose of the Fourteenth Army - to destroy the Japanese Army. Slim ensured the Army's purpose was understood and believed by each member of the organization. Slim's experience with the Burma Corps during the retreat allowed him to understand the impact of not having a purpose and the need to provide a clear purpose for the organization.

Ridgway initially tried to provide a purpose to the Eighth Army through his "Why We Fight" statement. Although this provided an idealistic approach for why the American forces were fighting, as stated earlier, it was fairly ineffective due to poor dissemination. Ridgway actually defined the purpose of the Eighth Army through his intent for conducting combat operations. This purpose was to "inflict maximum punishment on the enemy at all times. In effect, Ridgway expected the Eighth Army to destroy the Chinese forces. In each case, the operational commanders chose a positive purpose in which to focus their armies.

Direction charts the course for the organization. In establishing direction, commanders create conditions which allow their organizations to succeed.<sup>71</sup> The direction Slim and Ridgway provided for their armies proved decisive. Both Slim and Ridgway

assessed their armies major ailment as the lack of fighting spirit - low morale. Slim and Ridgway restored the combat effectiveness in a very similar fashion.

Slim first focused on restoring the individual soldier's confidence in his ability to fight in the jungle and defeat the Japanese in the jungle. Secondly, he focused on restoring confidence in the small unit actions and then graduated to large unit exercises in the jungle. Slim required all elements, combat as well as support, to learn to defend themselves in order to deal with the fluidity of jungle warfare. Slim used patrolling as the primary means to enhance his soldiers' confidence in jungle operations and to "learn" how to beat the Japanese. Finally, Slim crafted limited offensive operations with successively larger units designed to win against smaller Japanese units.

Ridgway approached the problem in a similar manner. He constantly emphasized aggressive actions by all units - even when retreating. Unlike Slim, Ridgway did not have the luxury of restoring his unit while it rested. Slim was fairly secure during monsoon season while Ridgway experienced little time between Chinese offensives. Ridgway required all units to begin patrolling to gather intelligence as soon as the Eighth Army halted. Ridgway also conducted a series of limited offensive actions calculated to regain the army's confidence and ability to defeat Chinese force. Even Operations Touchdown and Ripper were all out offensive actions with very strict control. Ridgway demanded all units attack by phase line and severely limited the corps commanders' ability to exploit a favorable situation. Ridgway carefully mitigated the risk to the army in each offensive action. It was clear in Ridgway's mind that it was more important to carefully nurture the army's growing confidence; and, he was unwilling to risk defeat.

The final aspect of Ridgway's plan was to improve the Eighth Army's senior level leadership. Ridgway did not feel his senior level commanders were effective. To combat this, Ridgway constantly visited the commanders and issued very specific intent for conducting operations. Ridgway also instituted a replacement program which eventually led to the replacement of the majority of his commanders.

Motivation of members of the fighting organization provides the impetus for the organization to carry out the commander's will. Slim and Ridgway recognized the need to rebuild the fighting spirit of their organizations. This became the primary focus of all their actions. Each commander used direct and indirect leadership to influence their organization. Slim relied heavily on a shared organizational vision with his senior commanders. Slim and his commanders, both together and individually, visited their troops constantly to provide the organization's vision. They constantly told their soldiers they could beat the Japanese. At all occasions, they emphasized the mission was to destroy the Japanese army. Slim could also be found visiting all elements of the army ensuring that each understood he played an important role in the organization's success.<sup>72</sup>

Ridgway seemed to rely much more heavily on the power of his personality and direct presence to influence actions. As stated earlier, Ridgway felt his senior commanders were weak and literally had to force his will and intent on them. Ridgway called for offensive actions even when his senior commanders recommended against it. Ridgway could constantly be found at the front. Ridgway's presence exuded confidence throughout the Eighth Army.

One unique characteristic of these campaigns is the combined nature of the operation. Both commanders assessed the combined unit's capabilities and attempted to

include them in their operational vision. Ridgway worked hard to improve the capabilities of the ROKs. Ridgway provided a vision for ROK elements within the Eighth Army. Additionally, he tried to improve the ROKs combat effectiveness and recognized that ROK failure would severely impact on American morale.

Slim commanded a truly multinational army. Slim's message applied to every one - just in a different language. Slim also received OPCON of General Stillwell's Army during the second Arakan campaign. Although Stillwell had little impact on the Fourteenth Army operations, Slim did coordinate to ensure unity of effort.<sup>73</sup>

Both commanders recognized motivation as the key to improving combat effectiveness. Each deduced a positive purpose which would focus the organization and lead to the mission's success. Both Slim and Ridgway developed a direction and series of goals which focused entirely on enhancing the organization's motivation while enabling the organization to achieve its purpose.

FM 22 -103 clearly focuses on providing leadership for the large organization. It provides a very cursory look at the commander in the context of a campaign. Although it discusses combat command, it only provides a cursory overview. It does provide, however, an adequate means for the operational level commander to develop an organizational vision. It provides an overview of how a commander may develop a vision by historical examples. On the other hand, the manual offers little insight on how an operational commander could develop a vision and integrate a combined force with various degrees of capabilities. Lastly, and most importantly, the manual inadequately addresses morale. While the manual focuses on the indirect leadership aspect of a large

organization, it fails to recognize that direct leadership becomes an extremely important means for a senior commander to instill confidence and fighting spirit into an organization.

TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1 tries to distill the essential functions a commander performs in combat at all levels of command. Two of the key components of battle command are leading and motivating. Consequently, it would appear to address the key elements of rebuilding the combat effectiveness of the organization. Unfortunately, the reference to leadership and motivating soldiers is as far as it goes.

By focusing on the commander's competencies, Battle Command does provide the leader with some insights. First, the commander must be able to visualize his current state and desired end state and how to get from one to another. Taken in this context, the operational commander could apply this to his campaign and develop an operational vision. Slim did this when he developed his campaign plan to defeat the Japanese Army. Slim decided he first must deceive the Japanese to attack him first while he defended on the Imphal plain.<sup>74</sup> This resulted in the battles of Kohima, Imphal, and the Japanese Army's culmination. Slim followed this success with a crossing of the Irawaddy River and subsequent seizure of Meiktila. This action completely unhinged the Japanese Army's defense against Slim.

Ridgway provided operational vision as well when he transitioned from the defense to the offense with Operations Touchdown, Roundup, Killer, and Ripper. Ridgway's plan allowed the Eighth Army to advance, shake off the Chinese Fourth Phase Offensive, and continue operations beyond the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.

While operational vision is essential to a campaign plan, it must be recognized that Slim and Ridgway focused the majority of their energy on fulfilling the organizational

vision. The key was their ability to closely link the objectives of both visions and then to focus on the means, improving the combat effectiveness, in order to accomplish the operational vision.

Another positive aspect of *Battle Command* is the pamphlet's emphasis on the direct role of the commander. It reflects the need for the leader to be up front to assess soldiers and the combat situation. Slim and Ridgway constantly moved forward to assess the situation. Both believed the commander's place was to be forward where the action was. Neither advocated moving forward to better control the situation, but to merely assess the situation. Both believed it was essential for the soldier to see the commander forward sharing the same hardships and danger.

As a whole however, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1, *Battle Command* provides only a cursory look at the commander in combat. It provides little insight on the relationship between the commander and the fighting organization. Its discussion of leadership and motivating soldiers is limited in providing the commander any method to actually doing it. The pamphlet also focuses solely on individual leadership.

FM 22-103 and TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1 provide some very useful concepts. Each addresses a specific niche in the Army's ever widening leadership and command doctrine. FM 22-103 provides adequate guidance on leading large organizations. It provides a method for developing an organizational vision. However, it provides very little useful insight on how the operational commander leads in the context of a campaign. *Battle Command* provides the key attributes and traits a commander needs to command. It provides some guidance for a commander to develop an operational vision; however, it does not discuss organizational leadership in a campaign. Several

changes are recommended to provide guidance to a commander in order to restore the combat effectiveness of his organization.

## V. Conclusions and Recommendations

*The operational leader must be mindful that although he has available increasingly sophisticated weapons, technologies, and communications giving him a better view of the battle, he still depends on the motivation, determination, and cohesion of subordinates.*

*Mark H. Gerner<sup>75</sup>*

Combat effectiveness is the ability of the organization to impose its will on the enemy. A fighting organization is unable to do this if their morale has been lowered to a point in which the combat soldier no longer has the will to fight. General William Slim and General Matthew Ridgway faced this situation when they took over their commands. For the remainder of their commands, each constantly assessed the morale and fighting spirit of the organization. Both commanders took over armies during a retreat in which the enemy out-numbered and out-fought their soldiers.

To begin the arduous road to recovery, each commander provided the elements of an organizational vision, purpose, direction, and motivation. Both commanders conducted training to enhance confidence, initiated patrolling, and limited calculated offensive operations to build up confidence and aggressiveness. Both commanders influenced morale significantly through their constant presence forward, and each commander assessed the morale of combined forces within the organizational and operational vision. Finally, it must be noted that both commanders appeared to provide their commands with first, an organizational vision focused on improving morale, and secondly, an operational vision which supported future combat operations. In both cases, the commanders tied their organizational and operational purpose to the same positive aim - the destruction of enemy forces.

Currently, Army leadership doctrine vaguely covers the operational level commander in the context of a campaign. Likewise, the *Battle Command* doctrine only addresses the commander in the context of individual actions and not as a part of an organization. To adequately address the operational commander and his role in rebuilding the combat effectiveness of an organization, it would be helpful to understand the commander's role and the organization's role in a campaign.

A possible solution is to combine key elements of TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1 with FM 22-103. For example, FM 22-103 provides an excellent method for developing an organizational vision while it addresses very little on actual campaign planning and operational vision. TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1 provides the basis for developing an operational vision. For example, Slim provided an organizational vision to the Fourteenth Army which focused on building the combat effectiveness of the army. With the daily improvement of his army, Slim developed the operational vision which resulted in the Imphal, Kohima, Rangoon campaign plan.

Using the campaign as a means to address combat leadership also allows the operational commander to influence morale and combat operations at the same time. Both commanders used limited risk offensive operations to improve morale through victory. By recognizing the precarious nature of their respective armies morale, each commander initially designed less audacious campaigns.

Neither manual adequately addresses the need for direct leadership and its importance in reinforcing morale. This is not to imply a return to the Vietnam practice of helicopter orbits over the company commander. However, both Ridgway and Slim believed it was vital for the commander to be seen by his men. Neither advocated for

Army commanders to move with companies; yet, both often positioned themselves at the lead division or regiment in contact. There is a place and a purpose for the senior level leader to be forward and his impact is significant.

Lastly, FM 22-103 should address the importance of combined operations. With America's ever increasing participation in multinational operations, then it is imperative for the operational commander to understand his role in influencing the morale of combined forces. Language and cultural barriers will limit the commander's direct impact on coalition soldiers; however, the commander can influence coalition performance. Assistance in training, equipping, and advising are examples. Ridgway worked directly with Syngman Rhee and indirectly through the U.S. Ambassador to Korea to influence the ROK forces. More importantly, the commander must recognize the capabilities of combined forces and assign appropriate missions. Recognition of the commander's leadership role in combined operations would enhance the effectiveness of FM 22-103

The skills and methods that General Slim and General Ridgway used to restore the combat effectiveness of their armies worked. FM 22-103 provides an excellent doctrinal foundation for operational commanders. TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1 does not offer as much. By including the concepts proposed in this monograph, a more complete doctrine will ensue. Given today's come as you are war and the complexity of warfare, the operational commander would be well served by the changes.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Clay Blair, *The Forgotten War*, (New York: Doubleday, 1987) 571.
- <sup>2</sup> United States Army Field Manual 100-5, *Operations*, (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1993), 6-2.
- <sup>3</sup> Geoffrey Evans, *SLIM as Military Commander*, (London: B.T. Batsford LTD, 1969), 82.
- <sup>4</sup> *Biruma Koryaku Sakusen* (The Taking of Burma), 354. Quoted in , Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War 1941-1945*, (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1984), 69.
- <sup>5</sup> Field Marshall Sir William Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, (New York: The Great Commanders, 1996), 89.
- <sup>6</sup> Blair, 382.
- <sup>7</sup> Blair, 502.
- <sup>8</sup> United States Marine Corps FMFM 1, *Warfighting*, (Washington , D.C.: Department of the Navy, 1989), 15.
- <sup>9</sup> *The American Heritage Dictionary*, ed William Morris, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1980), 416.
- <sup>10</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 90.
- <sup>11</sup> James J. Schneider, "The Theory of Operational Art," (Fort Leavenworth, KS: SAMS Reprint, 1988), 7.
- <sup>12</sup> FM 100-5, 2-11.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-11.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-14.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-15.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.
- <sup>17</sup> FM 22-103, i.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* 8-9.
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 16
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 50-51.
- <sup>21</sup> TRADOC Pamphlet 525-200-1, *Battle Command*, (Fort Monroe, VA: TRADOC, 1994), 3.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 5

<sup>24</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 232.

<sup>25</sup> Michael Hickey, *The Unforgettable Army*, (Great Britain: SPELLMOUNT LTD, 1992), 69.

<sup>26</sup> Slim, 92.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 92-98.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 116-117.

<sup>30</sup> Evans, 95.

<sup>31</sup> Hickey, 79-80.

<sup>32</sup> Lewin, 127.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>34</sup> Slim, 157.

<sup>35</sup> Lewin, 137.

<sup>36</sup> Slim, 162.

<sup>37</sup> Louis Allen, *Burma: The Longest War 1941-1945*, (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1984), 170.

<sup>38</sup> Evans, 137.

<sup>39</sup> Allen, 187-188.

<sup>40</sup> It should be noted X Corps was not under the control of Eighth Army initially. This proved to be a large contributor to problems General Walker faced. Additionally, General Almond's close relationship with General MacArthur and his continuing role as MacArthur's Chief of Staff proved advantageous for X Corps. One of the first things Ridgway did in Korea was to "lay down the law" to Almond. Almond would no longer be able to operate outside command channels of the Eighth Army. For a more detailed discussion see Blair.

<sup>41</sup> Blair, 331, 554, 572-573, 569.

<sup>42</sup> Appleman, 35.

<sup>43</sup> Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1967), 87.

<sup>44</sup> Appleman, 141.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 147.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 83.

<sup>47</sup> Blair, 586-587.

<sup>48</sup> Appleman, 157 -158. Appleman states in his book that he interviewed a high-ranking officer about the memo and the officer stated he had never seen it or heard it discussed. This leads Appleman to conclude that most of the Eighth Army never heard it. I tend to agree based on the tempo of operations and the difficulty of passing such a message throughout a command while in combat.

<sup>49</sup> Blair, 594.

<sup>50</sup> Blair, 605.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 620.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 657.

<sup>53</sup> Appleman, 142.

<sup>54</sup> Blair, 646. This addresses General Joe Collins' written assessment to the JCS while on site survey in Korea. Collins wrote, "ROK forces lack confidence and instinctively fear Chinese but are still capable of resistance against NKPA troops. No sign of disaffection or collapse though this could change quickly in event of serious reverses."

<sup>55</sup> Blair, 750-751.

<sup>56</sup> Bill C. Mossman, *Ebb and Flow November 1950 - July 1951*, (Washington D.C.: Center of Military History US Army, 1990), 228.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>58</sup> Appleman, 150,152.

<sup>59</sup> Blair, 646.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 651.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 654.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 682.

<sup>63</sup> Matthew B. Ridgway, *Soldier*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), 209.

<sup>64</sup> Appleman, 141.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 91-92.

<sup>66</sup> Blair, 718.

<sup>67</sup> Blair, 745.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 733.

<sup>69</sup> Ridgway, *Soldier*, 219.

<sup>70</sup> Clausewitz, 231.

<sup>71</sup> FM 22-103, 14.

<sup>72</sup> One of Slim's greatest attributes was making every member of the 14<sup>th</sup> Army feel they each contributed an important part. Numerous authors write specifically of this quality. Slim in his memoirs *Defeat Into Victory* discusses the analogy of a clock that he often used. Slim, while talking to support soldiers, remarked how a clock has the main spring represented by the army commander but also required all the other numerous gears and small springs to function. This was the role of each member of the army. Slim, 160.

<sup>73</sup> Slim, 178-179. Stillwell refused to be placed under General Giffard's command, CIC 11<sup>th</sup> Army Group. Stillwell had a significant personality clash with Giffard and refused to place Chinese troops or himself under Giffard's control. However, Stillwell did agree to place his command under Slim out of mutual respect.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 186-187, 248-249.

<sup>75</sup> Mark H. Gerner, "Leadership at the Operational Level," *Military Review*, June 1987, 28.

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