

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
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1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 05-10-2007		2. REPORT TYPE FINAL		3. DATES COVERED (From - To)	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Eisenhower and Manstein: Operational Leadership Lessons of the Past for Today's Commanders				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Major William E. Herbert, U.S. Army Paper Advisor (if Any):				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Joint Military Operations Department Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the JMO Department. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
14. ABSTRACT The United States Military, the ultimate instrument of national resolve, is centered on servicemen and women. Without effective leadership these men and women are ill-equipped to succeed in combat and are unjustly put in harms way. The commander at the operational level is the link between national policy and action. His actions, character and decisions are of historical importance. While this paper will not cover the full spectrum of operational leadership; the most important traits of operational leadership will be explored. Additionally, this paper will highlight recent failures in operational leadership and compare and contrast them with lessons learned from two diametrically opposed operational leaders of World War II, General Dwight Eisenhower and Field Marshall Erich von Manstein. Analysis will concentrate on the specific operations of the Normandy invasion and Kharkov. The analysis will not deconstruct the operations but rather center on the operational leadership traits each commander displayed and their importance to the operation. Finally the paper will show how the lessons of sixty-five years ago are applicable today and for the future.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Operational Leadership, Normandy, General Dwight Eisenhower, Field Marshall Erich Von Manstein, Kharkov					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 23	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Chairman, JMO Dept
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-846-4647

**NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
Newport, R.I.**

**EISENHOWER AND MANSTEIN: OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP LESSONS
OF THE PAST FOR TODAY'S COMMANDERS**

By

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of
the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily
endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

Signature: _____

10 May 2007

ABSTRACT

The United States Military, the ultimate instrument of national resolve, is centered on servicemen and women. Without effective leadership these men and women are ill-equipped to succeed in combat and are unjustly put in harms way. The commander at the operational level is the link between national policy and action. His actions, character and decisions are of historical importance. While this paper will not cover the full spectrum of operational leadership; the most important traits of operational leadership will be explored. Additionally, this paper will highlight recent failures in operational leadership and compare and contrast them with lessons learned from two diametrically opposed operational leaders of World War II, General Dwight Eisenhower and Field Marshall Erich von Manstein. Analysis will concentrate on the specific operations of the Normandy invasion and Kharkov. The analysis will not deconstruct the operations but rather center on the operational leadership traits each commander displayed and their importance to the operation. Finally the paper will show how the lessons of sixty-five years ago are applicable today and for the future.

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INTRODUCTION

“Even so the Achaeans were still charging on in a body, using their swords and spears pointed at both ends, but when they saw Hector going about among his men they were afraid, and their hearts fell down into their feet.”

—Homer, *Iliad*, Book XV

In war, the difference between victory and defeat can often be traced to the vision, strength of character and moral courage of one individual, the operational commander. The operational commander is the link between policy and action. His vision can strive to achieve victory throughout the diplomatic, informational, military and economic (DIME) spectrum, or focus solely on the defeat of his adversary’s military. His character can strengthen coalitions into an effective fighting force, or alienate and dismantle them. His courage can motivate his forces to negate a deficiency in numbers, or, by refusing to stand up to civilian superiors, turn numerical and technological superiority into a liability.

Operational leadership has always been, is now and will always be of critical importance to the outcome of an operation. Alarming, in recent conflicts the United States has had operational commanders deficient in some of these critical areas of leadership.

The United States Military, the ultimate instrument of national resolve, is centered on servicemen and women. Without effective leadership these men and women are ill-equipped to succeed in combat and are unjustly put in harms way. Heroics at the tactical level cannot compensate for inadequate leadership at the operational level.

This paper is designed to illustrate the importance of the attributes of vision, strength of character and courage on operational leadership by comparing and contrasting lessons learned by two diametrically opposed operational leaders of World War II.

On the night of 24 March 1939, German Panzers streaked across the Rhine and struck targets in Poland and Belgium in a Blitzkrieg. This event marked the rise of one historic operational leader and the downfall of another. General Dwight Eisenhower and Field Marshal Erich Von Manstein were similar in that they both worked for many years in relative obscurity, but at the outset of World War II each saw a meteoric rise in rank until finding himself at the head of some of the largest forces in the world facing extreme challenges and a terrifying potential for failure.

Analysis will concentrate on the operational leadership characteristics and challenges faced by General Eisenhower and Field Marshall von Manstein in their planning and execution of the Normandy Invasion and the 3rd battle of Kharkov, and to draw conclusions about the impact that their leadership qualities had on the degree of success in the operations.

TRAITS OF OPERATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The term “Operational Leadership” pertains to those levels of command responsible for achieving political and military strategic objectives designated by the national or alliance/coalition leadership through the employment of operational art.¹ Leadership at all levels share fundamental characteristics which collectively define the individual. These traits, such as honor, intelligence, integrity, courage, loyalty, determination, creativity, and sound judgment are important to every commander. At the operational level however, the most important traits are vision, strength of character and moral courage.

¹ Milan Vego, *Operational Art*. Newport: Naval War College Press 1999, p. 561.

VISION

Where there is no vision, the people perish.
- Proverbs 29:18

Vision is crucial in enabling the operational commander the foresight to master the complexities of operational art. Without foresight, the operational commander is ineffective. He needs foresight to shape the battle space; otherwise he will be simply reacting to the enemy's actions.²

OPERATION DESERT STORM has been widely accepted as an operational victory for the United States and coalition forces. Recently however, critics have pointed to a lack of vision on the part of the operational commander, General Schwarzkopf as a contributing factor to some of today's problems in the region. "In Schwarzkopf's command, the war plan was joint more in name than in fact. Each service was allowed to attack the way it preferred, with little thought about how an attack in one area would affect the fighting in another."³ This deficiency in vision resulted in the escape of the Republican Guard.⁴ The Republican Guard being Saddam Hussein's primary weapon in the subjugation of Shiites and Kurds.

Vision ensures the operational commander is effectively judging and balancing the ends, ways, and means of his forces to ensure his objectives can be met. The operational commander must provide vision of what is to be done, give the purpose and an endstate that is focused on the objective. The vision provides the sense of purpose, direction, and

² Vego, p. 565.

³ Michael R. Gordon and General Bernard E. Trainor, *The Generals' War: The Inside Story of the Conflict in the Gulf*. Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1995. p. 432.

⁴ Ibid, 471-473.

motivation.⁵ A commander with a well thought vision coupled with instinct will be able to incorporate doctrinal, cultural, political, religious, and ethnicity aspects of friendly and enemy forces as well as civilians to reach his desired endstate.

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER:

Waste no time arguing what a good man should be. Be one.
- Marcus Aurelius

General Matthew Ridgeway stated: Character is the bedrock on which the whole edifice of leadership rests. It is the prime element for which every profession, every corporation, every industry searches in evaluating a member of its organization. With it, the full worth of the individual can be developed. Without it – particularly in the military profession – failure in peace, disaster in war, or, at best, mediocrity in both will result.⁶

Strength of character is a combination of qualities including integrity, loyalty, will, and decisiveness among others. The operational commander must possess an ability to command respect, not through his position but through his character. Other nations will not respect the position if they don't respect the man. Following OPERATION ALLIED FORCE In Kosovo, General Wesley Clark has been criticized for a deficiency of character. Specifically, his subordinate general officers, as well as coalition general officers lost faith in his leadership. Lieutenant General Michael Short, Clark's Joint Forces Air Component Commander found General Clark's lack of faith unacceptable and commented: "Wesley Clark drove me crazy as a micromanager, and reduced our ability

⁵ Army Leadership, Be, Know, Do, (FM 22-100) August, 1999, 7-8.

⁶ Vego, p. 561.

to effectively execute our mission.”⁷ One particularly telling incident occurred when Russian forces unexpectedly occupied the airfield in Pristina when the NATO bombardment ended. British Lieutenant General Sir Michael Jackson refused orders from Clark to send an air assault team into Pristina to block the Russian forces. "I'm not going to start the Third World War for you," Jackson reportedly told the US commander (Clark) during one heated exchange. When General Jackson refused, General Clark asked Admiral James Ellis, in charge of NATO's Southern Command, to position helicopters on the runways to prevent Russian Ilyushin transport aircraft from landing. Admiral Ellis also refused, reportedly saying “General Jackson would not like it” [*emphasis added.*]⁸

The operational commander must possess indisputable integrity that serves as a model to juniors, peers, and seniors alike. He should be loyal both up and down the chain of command. This will manifest in the commander’s ability to demonstrate faith in subordinate commanders by remaining at the operational level. This in turn creates a command climate that motivates subordinate commanders to make the hard decisions to meet challenges.

COURAGE

"Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages, bitter cold, long months of complete darkness, constant danger, safe return doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success."

- Explorer Ernest Shackleton in an 1890 job ad for the first Antarctic expedition.

7 "World: Europe Generals 'clashed over Kosovo raid'." BBC News Network Online, 2 August 1999. Available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/409576.stm/> - Internet accessed 25 April 2007.

8 Ibid.

Courage takes two forms, physical courage and moral courage. Collectively, they minimize fear and maximize sound judgment under pressure.⁹ Physical courage is the conscious choice to risk personal injury or death, a risk inherent in military service. Moral courage can be described as “competent risk taking and tenacity and includes the willingness to stand up for what one believes to be right, accepting full responsibility.”¹⁰

The operational commander may be faced with political pressures from civilian leadership and must demonstrate a willingness to put country before career. Recently, former CENTCOM commander General Tommy Franks has been criticized for failing to stand up to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld both during planning and execution of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). In an interview, author Thomas Ricks recalled a conversation regarding General Franks changing his mind about the necessity of a larger force structure for OIF after a meeting with the Secretary of Defense. “The Army looks upon this process, I think, with a little bit of horror during that period of war plan formation.” “I remember one day the general said to me, ‘Tommy’s drunk the Kool-Aid.’ And that meant, “Yeah, Franks had gone over to kind of the belief in a smaller, narrower force.”¹¹

If two distinctly different operational commanders more than a half century ago had not shown the leadership traits of vision, strength of character and courage, the history of World War II may have been written in a vastly different way.

9 Robert L. Taylor and William E. Rosenbach, *Military Leadership*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1992, 46.

10 Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine Capstone and Keystone Primer. Washington, DC: 10 September, 2001, 4.

11 Transcript of Frontline interview of Thomas Ricks. PBS Online, 17 October 2006. Available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/yeariniraq/> - Internet accessed 30 April 2007.

GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER

1943 was a dangerous and uncertain time for the allies in World War II. The United States and Great Britain felt that if an invasion of Europe did not occur, or worse, if it failed, the Soviet Union may negotiate peace and Germany would be able to focus all of its combat power west. European governments were searching for an appropriate response to the German onslaught. This was a moment for American leadership.¹² That leader, General Dwight Eisenhower, facing historic decisions, immense pressure and charged with the planning and execution of the largest amphibious invasion in history did not waver in his resolve.

General Eisenhower's experiences early in his military career molded him in to the operational leader he would become. Following graduation from West Point in 1915, he trained soldiers through World War I, frustratingly, never seeing action himself. He was promoted to Major in 1919, at age 28 but did not see another promotion for 16 years.

While spending two decades as a staff officer working for both General MacArthur and General Marshall, he gained the reputation as a competent, efficient dependable officer.¹³ Eisenhower learned a great deal about both leading and following from the arduous experience of serving under MacArthur. Biographer Carlo D'Este has observed that Eisenhower gradually managed to "challenge one of the U.S. Army's most autocratic soldiers with virtual impunity," adding that "no one ever stood up to [MacArthur] more forcefully than Eisenhower."¹⁴

¹² Carlo D'Este. *Eisenhower: A Soldier's Life*. New York: Holt Company, 2002. P.114.

¹³ Ibid, p. 38.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 40.

General Marshall, an officer who himself had waited 36 years for promotion to flag rank, ended his first year in office as Army chief of staff in 1940 by retiring 54 generals.¹⁵ After the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, Marshall continued to replace hundreds of generals and colonels, while elevating men of strong character like Colonel Eisenhower. By November 1942, following United States landings in Africa and Italy, Eisenhower had gained a fourth star and was selected to be the Supreme Commander Allied (Expeditionary) Force of the North African Theater of Operations.

In December 1943, it was announced that Eisenhower would be named Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force for Europe. In this position he was charged with coordinating the efforts and managing the combat operations of a tremendous war coalition, carrying out the allied assault on the coast of Normandy in June 1944, the liberation of Western Europe and the invasion of Germany.¹⁶

General Eisenhower realized that his 1 million ground troops would face a German defense of approximately 700,000.¹⁷ This ratio of 1.43:1 did not favor the attacking force. The allies did enjoy an advantage in tanks and aircraft, but the key challenge would be getting the troops ashore and fighting in the hedgerows of France. Eisenhower envisioned a broad front strategy to prevent a coordinated counterattack from Germany's feared Panzer reserves while British General Montgomery and others favored a single thrust strategy.¹⁸ Eisenhower demonstrated resolve and confidence in his vision

¹⁵ Col. Douglas A. MacGregor (Ret.) *The Failure of Military Leadership in Iraq Fire the Generals!*. "Counterpunch." <http://www.counterpunch.org/macgregor05262006.html>. Internet; accessed 20 April 2007.

¹⁶ David Eisenhower. *Eisenhower at War: 1943-1945*. New York, New York: Random House, 1986. p. 81

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 93

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 95

and the courage to stand up to scrutiny, eventually convincing his superiors and subordinates of the wisdom of his plan.

Eisenhower insisted upon control of tactical and strategic air forces of the United States and Great Britain to attack transportation infrastructure to prevent German counterattack and resupply. He was immediately challenged by military leaders and Winston Churchill who wanted to use strategic bombing to attack German command and control.¹⁹ But, yet again Eisenhower's resolve won out.

Prior to D-day, Eisenhower ensured his subordinate commanders of the nine army divisions (three airborne and six infantry) from the United States, Britain and Canada had sufficient time to train their forces, both separately and jointly, and fine tune their invasion plans to take full advantage of their combined capabilities. The infantrymen practiced their beach assaults, the Airborne rehearsed assembly, the Rangers climbed cliffs, engineers destroyed beach obstacles and the quartermasters stockpiled supplies. The Allies' air and naval components were similarly active during the buildup. The navies conducted amphibious rehearsals and reconnaissance of beach defenses while the air forces rehearsed and continued to attack German positions.

In the days leading up to the invasion Eisenhower never lost sight of the fact that many servicemen would give their lives and deserved the assurance that they fought for a noble cause for a grateful leader and would be victorious. He drafted an order for distribution to every individual in the Allied Expeditionary Force on D-Day. "You will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for ourselves in a free world. Your

¹⁹Ibid. p. 96.

task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped, and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely....The free men of the world are marching together to victory. I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty, and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full victory. Good luck, and let us all beseech the blessings of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking." ²⁰

OPERATION OVERLORD was a true joint operation. On June 5th and 6th, 1944 Allied air forces carried three airborne divisions into battle, protected the naval force as it crossed the English Channel, and attacked targets throughout the invasion area before and after the landing in support of the assault forces. More than 5,000 ships--from battleships to landing craft--carried, escorted and landed the assault force along the Normandy coast. Once the force was landed, naval gunfire provided critical support for the soldiers as they fought their way across the beaches. In the invasion's early hours, more than 1,000 transports dropped paratroopers to secure the flanks and beach exits of the assault area. Amphibious craft landed some 130,000 troops on five beaches along 50 miles of Normandy coast while the air forces controlled the skies overhead.²¹

During the operation, Eisenhower remained focused at the operational level, allowing his tactical subordinates to execute their plans. Though Eisenhower was Supreme Commander of the Allied forces invading Normandy in 1944, Montgomery had temporary command of allied ground troops for the duration of the assault on the beaches. After the beaches were secure and Eisenhower's headquarters had been

²⁰General Dwight D. Eisenhower giving the D-Day order on June 6, 1944. The Dwight Eisenhower Presidential Library. Available from <http://www.eisenhower.utexas.edu/refdesk.html> - Internet Accessed 25 April 2007

²¹ Eisenhower. p. 100.

established in Normandy, Montgomery would command all British and Canadian ground forces and General Omar Bradley would command the American armies.

Eisenhower's plan was a huge success, but not without great sacrifices. From the airborne drops, through the amphibious landings and the three months of fighting in Normandy the allies suffered over 209,000 casualties, with nearly 37,000 dead amongst the ground forces and a further 16,714 deaths amongst the allied air forces.²² By September 1944, the German army had been pushed back to the "Falaise Pocket" and the majority of the German 7th Army was wiped out, opening the way for the Allies to overrun Northern France.²³

The fact that Eisenhower knew the plan for OPERATION OVERLORD was audacious, but held great risk is illustrated in a short speech that he wrote prior to the invasion. In it, he took full responsibility for the operation. Long after OPERATION OVERLORD was a success, the never-used second speech was found in a shirt pocket by an aide. It read: "Our landings in the Cherbourg-Havre area have failed to gain a satisfactory foothold and I have withdrawn the troops. My decision to attack at this time and place was based on the best information available. The troops, the air and the Navy did all that bravery and devotion to duty could do. If any blame or fault attaches to the attempt, it is mine alone."²⁴ This one speech speaks volumes of the man in regards to vision, strength of character and courage. These traits are as applicable today as they were in 1944.

²² US Army Center of Military History. "Normandy" Available at <http://www.army.mil/cmhp/brochures/normandy/nor-pam.htm/> - Internet accessed 20 April 2007.

²³ Ibid

²⁴ General Dwight D. Eisenhower note. The Dwight Eisenhower Presidential Library. Available from <http://www.eisenhower.utexas.edu/refdesk.htm/> - Internet Accessed 25 April 2007.

FIELD MARSHALL ERICH VON MANSTEIN

After World War II, historian B.H. Liddell Hart stated “The general verdict among the German Generals I interrogated in 1945 was that Field-Marshal von Manstein had proved the ablest commander in their Army, and the man they had most desired to become its Commander-in-Chief. It is very clear that he had a superb sense of operational possibilities and an equal mastery in the conduct of operations with a greater grasp of the potentialities of mechanized forces than any of the other commanders who had not trained in the tank arm. In sum, he had military genius.”²⁵

The German collapse in the Soviet Union during World War II was a colossal defeat to Nazi Germany. In the winter of 1942 at the Battle for Stalingrad alone, one complete German army had been lost, along with about 300,000 men, seriously depleting German strength in the east.²⁶

Why would an operational commander during this disaster be used as an example of positive operational leadership for future leaders? In short, because despite low morale, an enemy numerical superiority of six to one and threatened with encirclement, General von Manstein’s vision, strength of character and courage played a crucial role in German counterattacks that resulted in the destruction of 52 Soviet divisions in the last major combat operation victory for the Germans in World War II.

Erich von Manstein entered the army in 1906 at age 21. He served in World War I where he was severely wounded and spent the next several years in different staff positions. Similar to Eisenhower, after many years of service, (21), he was

²⁵ B.H. Liddell Hart, *The German Generals Talk*, (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1948), p. 13.

²⁶ Michael Yoder, “The Battle of Stalingrad” Available from:
<http://www.militaryhistoryonline.com/wwii/stalingrad/default.aspx/> - Internet accessed 1 May, 2007

promoted to major in 1927. By 1934 he had been promoted to Colonel and within eight years he attained the rank of Field-Marshal.²⁷

In November, 1942, during the Battle of Stalingrad, Adolph Hitler appointed von Manstein commander of the newly created Army Group Don. His forces consisted of two shattered Rumanian armies, the surrounded German 6th Army and the weakened 4th Panzer Army.²⁸ Following the disaster at Stalingrad, successive Soviet offensives had destroyed the German 6th Army and annihilated the Germany's allied armies of Italy, and Hungary. Germany teetered on the brink of defeat and the Soviet High Command believed that the war could be won with one more offensive. The offensive, designated Operations "Star" and "Gallop", focused on destruction of remaining German forces and the recapture of the major industrial city of Kharkov in the Ukraine.²⁹

At the beginning of February, 1943, Manstein's forces were attacked by four Soviet armies and on February, 14th German forces successfully executed a planned withdrawal from Kharkov. Von Manstein's strength of character and courage were on display as he rallied his ragged forces. His vision for the operation called for a mobile defense to generate the operational reserves he needed to reduce his front, hold decisive points along his lines of communication and allow the Soviet attack to reach its culminating point. His forces would then counterattack the soviet flanks to destroy the penetrations. As with Eisenhower and the Normandy invasion, Manstein's vision included a complicated plan that carried great risk to achieve great payoff. On February 22, with soviet tanks within sight of his headquarters, he calmly ordered the

²⁷ Erich von Manstein, *Lost Victories*, edited and translated by A. G. Powell (Novato, California: Presidio Press, 1984), p. 368.

²⁸ Ibid p. 375.

²⁹ Ibid p. 379.

counterattack. This remarkable counterattack which integrated mobility, firepower and decentralized tactics recaptured Kharkov and destroyed or crippled the four Soviet armies that had driven them out of the city. Manstein's forces continued to drive the Soviets back and regained much of the territory lost since Stalingrad. According to B. H. Liddell Hart: "That counterstroke was the most brilliant of operational performance of von Manstein's career and one of the most masterly in the whole course of military history."³⁰ His vision was a product of his intellect, imagination, sound judgment, and flexibility.

The German success at Kharkov is a powerful example of operational leadership. Von Manstein's vision included the means and the ways to reach the desired end. He was able to communicate his vision to his subordinates and ensure that it was carried out. Von Manstein's courage is evident in the great risk he was willing to accept in order to achieve mass at the decisive point. Additionally, his frequent clashes with Hitler over military strategy led to his dismissal in March 1944, He was one of few German officers that dared to put his convictions before his career, or his life. "He was not only the most brilliant strategist of all our generals, but he had a good political sense. A man of that quality was too difficult for Hitler to swallow for long. At conferences Manstein often differed from Hitler, in front of others, and would go so far as to declare that some of the ideas which Hitler put forward were nonsense." –German General Günther Blumentritt³¹

Without strength of character, von Manstein would not have been able to succeed at Kharkov. His will and calmness provided stability when critical decisions were required. As a footnote to von Manstein's strength of character however, it must be considered that in 1949 he was brought on trial in Hamburg for war crimes, which

³⁰B.H. Liddell Hart, *The German Generals Talk*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1948. Liddell Hart, p. 65.

³¹ Ibid. p. 69.

convicted him of "Neglecting to protect civilian lives and for using scorched earth tactics denying vital food supplies to the local population."³² He was sentenced to 18 years in prison.

LESSONS LEARNED

From this author's perspective, several lessons learned can be gleaned from Eisenhower at Normandy and von Manstein at Kharkov for the development of future operational commanders.

In order to maximize employment of combat capabilities, the operational commander must have a clear vision and the strength of character to be bold and decisive. Both Eisenhower and von Manstein's clear operational vision, audacity and decisiveness allowed them to play to their forces' strengths as well as exploit the enemy's weaknesses.

An operational commander's vision should incorporate all phases of the operation, including post-combat operations. The commander must identify the desired end state, in order to determine operational objectives and form a coherent plan to accomplish those objectives. In addition, he must not forget the "Pottery Barn rule"— you invade, you break it, you own it.

The commander's character affects his entire command. Eisenhower's faith in his subordinates allowed him to remain at the operational level and continue to develop his

³² Geoffrey P. Megargee, "Inside Hitler's High Command," Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000. p. 84.

vision. His loyalty to his subordinates created a command climate that motivated his commanders to make the hard decisions and overcome challenges.

Character is developed through self-study, formal military education, operational experience and scenario based training.³³ The most tragic error an operational commander can make is to compromise his character.

The operational commander must possess both the physical courage to face the hazards of battle and the moral courage to stand by his convictions. Both Eisenhower and von Manstein are excellent examples of having the courage of ones convictions. Eisenhower stood up to MacArthur, Montgomery and Churchill while von Manstein stood up to Hitler. The operational commander is responsible for explaining to civilian policymakers the demands of future combat and the risks entailed in failing to meet those demands. He cannot remain silent if strategy developed by civilian superiors doesn't pass the common sense test.

The military must remain true to the development of warriors and leaders as opposed to managers. Leadership requires continuous training and challenge throughout ones career. In peacetime it is difficult to measure how an individual will react under actual combat situations therefore training should reflect the realities of combat as much as possible.

³³ Werner W. Banish, "Leadership at the Operational Level," Army, no. 8 (August 1987): 60.

CONCLUSION

The United States owes its armed forces operational commanders of the highest caliber. If today's and future leaders look to leaders like Eisenhower and von Manstein they will find the characteristics that lead to victory.

Dwight David Eisenhower never led a single soldier into battle. Before World War II, he had never even heard a shot fired in anger. His vision, strength of character, and courage throughout the Normandy invasion spoke to his superiors and subordinates alike "You can hold me 100 percent accountable for this, but you have to give me 100 percent of the responsibility, as well." Von Manstein walked into the proverbial "eye of the storm." Outnumbered, recently defeated in battle and suffering low morale, his forces were on the verge of collapse. His vision, strength of character and courage enabled him to calmly assess the situation, motivate his forces and focus their capabilities toward the destruction of the enemy.

Future operational commanders can learn valuable lessons from history's poor leaders as well, such as how not to lead. Why is it that of late one sees so many recently retired general officers speaking out against current operations? They have written books, testified before congress and appeared in the media. Did they stand up for their convictions while they were on active duty? One did. When asked about Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki, Former CENTCOM commander General Joseph Hoar stated that "I think he was the only service chief that spoke out about certain things."³⁴

³⁴Transcript of Frontline report. PBS Online, 17 October 2006.
Available from <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/yeariniraq/> - Internet;
accessed 30 April 2007.

Operational leadership has always been, is now and will always be of critical importance to the outcome of war. The operational leader who fails to apply the lessons from history is doomed to repeat the failures of the past. Today's as well as future operational commanders are faced with challenges like globalization, information operations, real time communications, asymmetric threats and coalition warfare. The operational commander must not allow his vision to be clouded by the dangerous illusion of technology. Technology will always play an important but distinctly secondary role, because even our most sophisticated satellites and computers cannot get into the mind of the enemy, interact with local leaders, understand other societies and cultures, or make the instantaneous life or death decisions required to meet our 21st century challenges.³⁵ Simply stated, war is and always will be fought in the human dimension.

³⁵ General Peter Schoomaker, Chief of Staff of the Army Farewell Address April 2007 Army.mil. Available from www.army.mil/news/2007/04/06/2565-farewell-message-from-gen-peter-j-schoomaker/ -Internet; accessed 25 April 2007.

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