Investigation into the Reliefs of Generals Orlando Ward and Terry Allen

A Monograph
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In both cases, a standard history of the events emerged. It was based on the official U.S. Army account and a narrow reading of primary sources. This version of events ascribed each relief to flaws in Ward and Allen's leadership ability. The standard description of the reliefs continues to appear in recent scholarship. However, some accounts departed from the accepted portrayal, and point to alternate reasons behind the reliefs. When these alternative accounts are considered along with a comprehensive examination of primary source material, a new argument emerges. Ward and Allen were removed from command for political and military reasons of

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Abstract

INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELIEFS OF GENERALS ORLANDO WARD AND TERRY ALLEN by MAJ Richard H, Johnson, Jr., U.S. Army, 40 pages.

Between April and August 1943, the U.S. Army's II Corps saw two of its division commanders relieved of their commands. Each relief appeared tied to battlefield setbacks. MG Orlando Ward of the 1st Armored Division was relieved after his division failed to seize a narrow mountain pass near the town of Maknassy, in Tunisia. Ward's superiors labeled him too cautious, unwilling or unable to motivate his soldiers to take their objective. Months later on the island of Sicily, MG Terry Allen was relieved of command of the 1st Infantry Division. His relief followed the failure to seize the Sicilian town of Troina. Allen's superiors accused him of being too hesitant in committing his entire force to the attack. He was branded an insubordinate rebel who cared only for his own troops.

In both cases, a standard history of the events emerged. It was based on the official U.S. Army account and a narrow reading of primary sources. This version of events ascribed each relief to flaws in Ward and Allen's leadership ability. The standard description of the reliefs continues to appear in recent scholarship. However, some accounts departed from the accepted portrayal, and point to alternate reasons behind the reliefs. When these alternative accounts are considered along with a comprehensive examination of primary source material, a new argument emerges. Ward and Allen were removed from command for political and military reasons of expediency.

The research investigated the reliefs of Generals Ward and Allen in the larger context of Allied operations in the Mediterranean. For MG Orlando Ward, it is evident that the 1st Armored Division's difficulties at Maknassy stemmed primarily from confused orders passed down from the Allied Army Group commander, British General Harold Alexander. This proposition finds reinforcement in the correspondence of the Supreme Commander of Allied Forces, General Dwight Eisenhower. Eisenhower agreed to the relief based on an expressed need to appease the British allies in general, and Alexander specifically. For MG Terry Allen, one primary source proves conclusively that the difficulties at Troina could not have led to his removal. Again, a message from Eisenhower precludes any possibility that the battle led to his relief. Allen was relieved because his commanders simply perceived a need to change leadership of the Army's oldest division in preparation for the invasion of France. The opinions of Allen's superiors (principally his corps commander, Omar Bradley) influenced the poor historical view of Allen, but were not accurate in explaining his removal.

From a broader perspective, this investigation revealed how wartime leaders dealt with unprecedented circumstances to accomplish their goals. Understanding the reliefs of Generals Ward and Allen provides insight into organizational decision making and its effect on the U.S. Army in the early portion of World War II.

Table of Contents

Introduction 1
MG Orlando Ward 6
The Official History of Ward's Relief 6
Ward's Pre-Relief Leadership Characteristics 9
Events Bearing on Ward's Behavior Incident to his Relief 12
Political and Military Considerations Affecting Ward's Relief 16
MG Terry de la Mesa Allen 21
The Official History of Allen's Relief 21
Allen's Pre-Relief Leadership Characteristics 25
Events Bearing on Allen's Behavior Incident to his Relief 29
Political and Military Considerations Affecting Allen's Relief 33
Conclusion 36
Bibliography 39

Figures

Figure 1: II Corps Attack in Tunisia, March 17-31, 1943. 2
Figure 2: Sicily, July 10-August 17, 1943. 3

Introduction

On 19 February 1943, General Dwight Eisenhower wrote a letter to his son John, a cadet at West Point. Eisenhower was aware of the uncertain future for the Allied effort and for him as its Supreme Commander. He counseled his son on the ever-shifting nature of organizational leadership in the military and its inextricable ties to the success or failure of the campaign. His passages on this topic give clear insight into Eisenhower's beliefs. He wrote, "Personal fortunes mean nothing…at any moment, it is possible that a necessity might arise for my relief…modern war is a very complicated business and governments are forced to treat individuals as pawns."[1] As Eisenhower wrote his letter, the American defeat at Kasserine Pass was in progress. It is quite possible that this weighed on his mind as he penned his letter home. Eisenhower extended his belief in organizational expediency – at any cost – to his subordinate elements. Two weeks later, he ordered the relief of the American ground force commander in North Africa, MG Lloyd Fredendall. Fredendall had taken most of the blame in the wake of the Kasserine defeat. In his place Eisenhower temporarily put MG George S. Patton. Patton went forward to command the U.S. II Corps with clear instructions to solidify the American force on the ground and take up the offense again. Eisenhower instructed him to "not retain for one instant any man in a responsible position where you have become doubtful of his ability to do his job."[2]

Over the next five months, the U.S. II Corps saw Eisenhower's directive to Patton in practice on two occasions. In early April, Patton ordered the removal of MG Orlando Ward, the commander of the 1st Armored Division. Ward's division had failed to seize a narrow pass through Tunisia's Eastern Dorsal mountain range, despite outnumbering enemy forces there. Ward's superiors – Eisenhower, Patton, and British General Alexander – labeled him too hesitant and unable to motivate his soldiers to success. Their claim was that he had unnecessarily halted in the town of Maknassy prior to making his first attempt at the pass. The break in movement allowed a small but growing enemy force to prepare their defenses in

[1] Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., ed. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: II* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 965-66.

[2] Ibid, 1011.

the mountains to the east. Axis forces blocked the 1st Armored Division for almost three weeks. In the end the division never seized the pass in time to affect the larger campaign. MG Omar Bradley broke news of the relief to Ward on 4 April 1943. Ward turned command of the division over to MG Ernest Harmon the following day, in Maknassy, as German and Italian soldiers continued to trouble his division from the heights to the east.

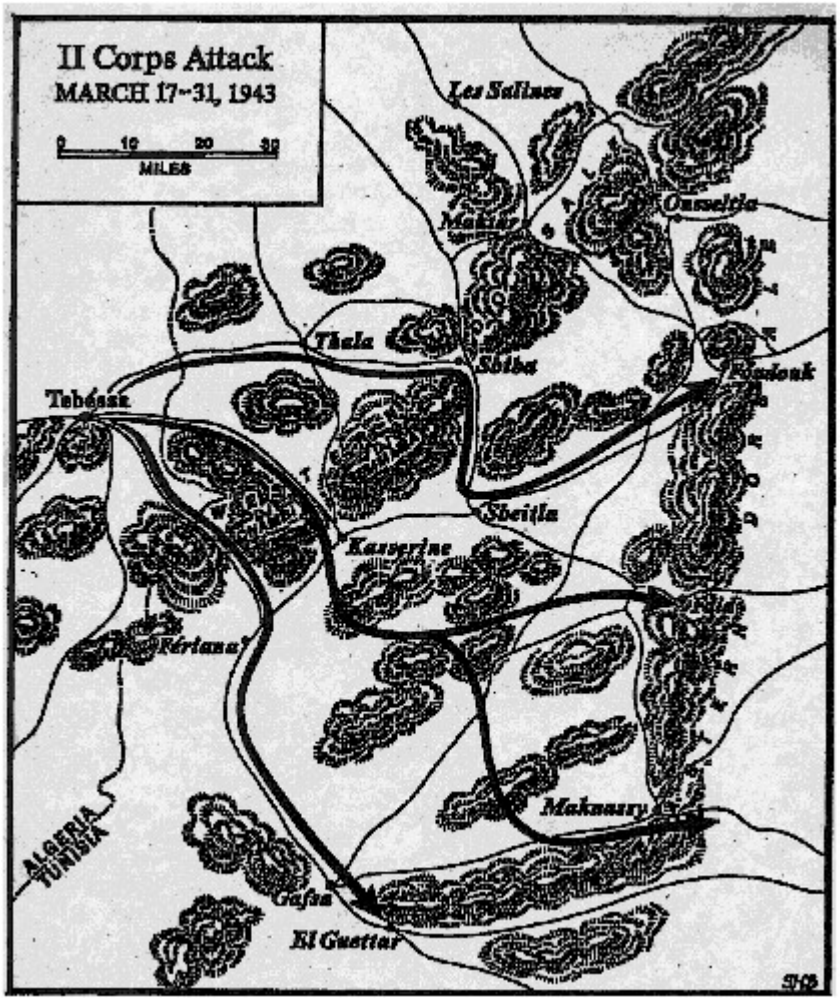

Figure 1: II Corps Attack in Tunisia, March 17-31, 1943. Map by Samuel H. Bryant from *The Patton Papers, 1940-1945*, Martin Blumenson, ed. Houghton-Mifflin Co, 1974.

Just four months later on the island of Sicily, General Patton again removed a subordinate from division command. The event looked remarkably similar to Ward's relief. In early August 1943, MG Terry Allen's 1st Infantry Division found itself unable to seize the vital Sicilian town of Troina. Allen's troops only took their objective once its defenders had abandoned it. Allen received notification of his

relief during the battle but remained in command until Troina had fallen. He gave the division to MG Clarence Huebner at midnight on the day his soldiers cleared the town. Both of Allen's immediate superiors took credit for the relief decision. The Seventh Army commander (now *Lieutenant* General Patton) had repeatedly belittled Allen in Sicily for moving too slow. The II Corps commander (now Bradley) branded Allen an insubordinate rebel who cared only for his own troops. The official history of the war connected his relief to being too hesitant in committing his entire force at Troina. It said Allen was unwilling to put his soldiers in harms way and expected aid from follow on units.[3]

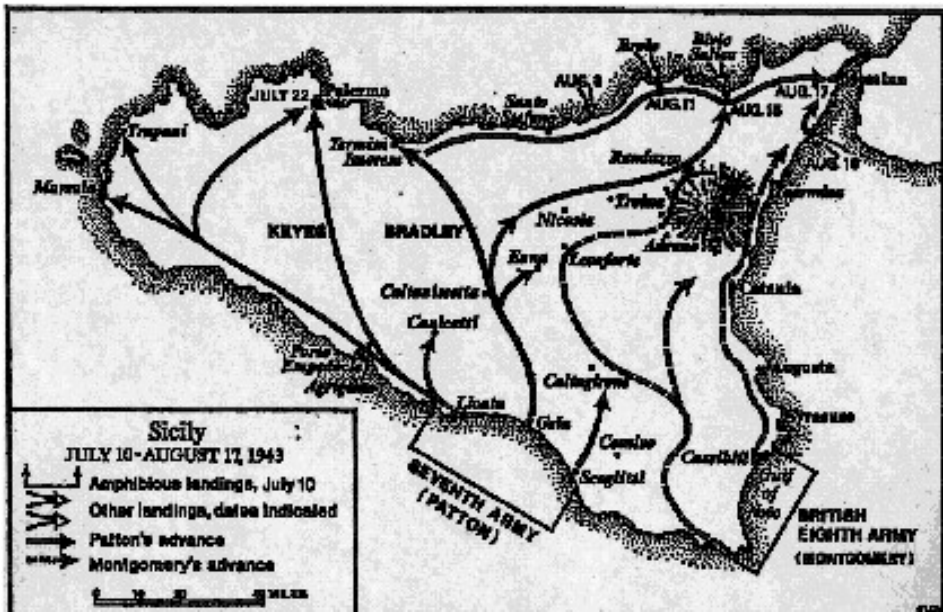

Figure 2: Sicily, July 10-August 17, 1943. Map by Samuel H. Bryant from The Patton Papers, 1940-1945, Martin Blumenson, ed. Houghton-Mifflin Co, 1974.

For both division commanders, the official U.S. Army history of the events ascribed each relief to flaws in leadership ability. Ward's indecision forfeited the initiative to the enemy before the battle even began at Maknassy. Allen was overly cautious and risk averse at Troina.[4] Some primary source accounts

[3] Albert N. Garland and Howard M. Smyth. *United States Army in World War II, The Mediterranean Theater of Operations, Sicily and the Surrender of Italy* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1965), 347.

[4] See Ibid, 347 and George F. Howe. *United States Army in World War II, The Mediterranean Theater of Operations, Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1957), 575 for the "green book" accounts of Allen and Ward, respectively.

of the Mediterranean Campaign reflected these versions of events. Because of this acceptance, they continue to show up in recently written histories as well. Ward and Allen's reliefs seem wholly justified on the grounds of personal failure alone. In Ward's case, at least one writer went so far as to say that the overall performance of all U.S. forces in theater improved after he was gone.[5] However, it is a matter of fact that both generals returned to successful division command later in World War II. This is acknowledged in both of the official Army histories, though neither gives substantive explanation to explain the apparent dichotomy. If Ward and Allen were relieved for poor performance, why were they subsequently given division commands in combat? The muted admission that both generals were eventually reinstated calls the standard historical view of their reliefs into question. Indeed, further research shows that some accounts depart from the accepted portrayal of the Allied Mediterranean Campaign. Taken together with a more comprehensive examination of primary source material, an argument emerges that Ward and Allen were removed from command for altogether different reasons. It is apparent that both division commanders were relieved for political and military reasons of expediency more reflective of Eisenhower's beliefs in his letter to his son John. Ward's relief had more to do with an "at all costs" need to solidify the American contribution to the Allied campaign, and Allen's with a perceived need to change leadership in preparation for the invasion of Western Europe.

A detailed examination of the reliefs validates the alternate reasons the two officers were removed from command. It is evident that Ward built a solid reputation as a competent and professional Army leader both prior to his command of the 1st Armored Division and while in command of the Division, prior to relief. Therefore, the leadership deficiencies identified in the official histories were not a normal characteristic of him as an individual. Further, the events surrounding the 1st Armored's fight at Maknassy were not sufficient to lead to a marked change in Ward's behavior. Rather, the Division's

[5] Carlo D'Este. *Bitter Victory: The Battle for Sicily, 1943* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1988), 61-2. D'Este's otherwise competent account is actually a book about the invasion of Sicily; in its opening passages, however, he discusses Patton's temporary command of II Corps in Tunisia, disparaging Ward by making the claim that "One of Patton's first acts was to relieve the commander of the 1st Armored Division and bring back Harmon as the new commander. From that time on, American forces in North Africa showed marked improvement."

difficulties in that battle stemmed primarily from confused orders and a poorly expressed intent passed down from the Allied Army Group commander, British General Harold Alexander. It then stands to reason that other factors apart from Ward's individual performance influenced his removal. It was Eisenhower's expressed need to appease the British allies, coupled with Patton's eagerness to prove American mettle that led to Ward's removal.

Terry Allen's story is less straightforward. To some degree, Bradley's accusations of indiscipline bear truth. Allen did indeed have a reputation for a marked lack of deference to authority and personal trouble. However, he was also widely known as an aggressive and tactically sound battle commander. At Troina Allen was true to form, refusing to abandon the effort *despite* the presence of relief forces. The slow commitment of the 1st Infantry to the battle and its excessive length were due primarily to poor intelligence and guidance Allen received from higher headquarters. Regardless, the timing of the relief decision precludes any possibility that Troina may have led to his relief. Although Bradley's opinions may have had some influence, it was Patton and Eisenhower who ultimately removed Allen from command prior to the battle. Allen was relieved not due to any individual deficiency, but because his commanders simply perceived a need to change leadership of the Army's oldest division in preparation for the invasion of France.

Determining which version of the reliefs most accurately reflects actual events involves several linked evaluation criteria. In each case, the use of primary source material is crucial. For both generals, the key decision-makers (Eisenhower, Patton, Bradley, and others) left behind volumes of correspondence and recollection that give insight into motive and intent. Thus, both the standard and alternate versions can be judged in terms of how each selects and references primary sources; a more comprehensive inclusion of material is better. Likewise, the ways each version juxtaposes the motives of the decision-makers with their own written words offers another means of evaluation. The better portrayal is more consistent with the written record vice an interpretation of the environment in Tunisia and Sicily. Finally, each relief occurred within the context of a defined timeline of battlefield events that is not open to interpretation. By this standard, both versions of the reliefs can be evaluated conclusively by how they

relate primary source material to a defined timeline. Put simply, the primary sources used to make each claim must conform to the timeline of events in order to pass muster.

A study of the reasons behind Ward and Allen's reliefs is important for the obvious reasons of clarifying an important period in the history of the United States Army. With several decades' hindsight, the Allied victory in the European Theater seems orderly and clear. At Allied Forces headquarters in 1943, no such certainty existed. Leadership at high levels focused on preserving the Allied war effort over all other concerns. Within this context, an examination of Ward and Allen's reliefs will inform a more complete look at organizational leadership decision making and its effect on the U.S. Army in the early days of World War II. In a larger sense, such an examination also serves as a cautionary example on the unquestioning use of standard histories, especially when these accounts deviate from a straightforward re-telling of events. In explaining the motives and intent of important historical figures like Eisenhower, Patton, and Bradley, even the "official" accounts are open to interpretation.

MG Orlando Ward

The Official History of Ward's Relief

Shortly before publication of the U.S. Army's official history of the Tunisian campaign, its author, Dr. George F. Howe, wrote a short book on the 1st Armored Division in World War II.[6] In the acknowledgements section of *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division,* Howe thanked several veterans of the Division for their assistance in his research. MG Orlando Ward was included on this list. Howe presented Ward's relief in non-descript terms in *Battle History.* He recognized that the division suffered significantly at Maknassy, and portrayed the relief as a "turn over" of command.[7] It is possible that this treatment was due to Howe's association with Ward while he was compiling his history of the Division. In *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative,* Howe painted a more negative picture of Ward's

[6] Howe's *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division* was published in 1954; the U.S. Army's *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West* came out three years later.

[7] George F. Howe. *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division: "Old Ironsides"* (Washington, D.C.: Combat Forces Press, 1954), 216.

leadership. For example, in one passage Howe described battle conditions in Tunisia at the time of Ward's relief. Howe made it clear that the 1st and 9th Infantry Divisions (south of 1st Armored at El Guettar) faced the majority of enemy forces. In so doing, he inferred that Ward's dilemma paled in comparison. The passages that follow this statement are striking. Howe wrote "The reinforced armored division…after forfeiting its best chance at successful action…seemed to have spent itself against an enemy who was inferior in strength but had exploited skillfully his advantage of position."[8] Howe concluded that Ward's decision to halt in Maknassy was the wrong one, as it permanently gave the initiative to a small group of German and Italian defenders. Howe's criticism of Ward was somewhat veiled, but apparent. He described the relief with faint condemnation, saying that Patton, "in the hope of bringing new energy and enthusiasm to the 1st Armored Division…replaced its commander."[9] Therefore, according to Howe's official history, Ward is responsible for the weariness of the division, its lack of motivation, and his removal will rectify these problems.

An examination of this last quotation generates questions regarding the ways Howe researched and compiled the official history. How did he come to this conclusion on Patton's motivations? The answer is in the footnotes. Howe often pointed to the correspondence of higher commanders as evidence. In this case, Howe backed up his assertion with Patton's opinion on the decision to halt in Maknassy.[10] Patton stated explicitly in his diary that Ward "simply dawdled" after entering the town.[11] Later, Howe referred the reader to numerous messages exchanged between Patton, Eisenhower, and Marshall as proof of Ward's leadership failure.[12] In one of these, Eisenhower stated that Ward was not able to "exhibit the necessary sturdiness of purpose to rehabilitate the morale and fighting spirit of his organization," and was

[8] George F. Howe, *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West*, 575.

[9] Ibid, 576.

[10] Ibid, 552.

[11] Martin Blumenson. *The Patton Papers: 1940-1945* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1974), 196.

[12] Howe, *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West*, 576, footnote #40. Interestingly, Howe also lists Bradley's more sympathetic account of Ward (in *A Soldier's Story*), although it does not appear to have significantly influenced his narrative in the "green book" history.

thus relieved of command.[13] Another of Ike's letters referred to Ward overall as competent, but "too sensitive" and possessed of a weakness that made him unsuitable for command.[14] Patton's diaries are replete with examples of similar sentiment. Howe cited it all as evidence. It appears that the official U.S. Army history of Ward's relief was colored largely by the opinions of commanders at the corps level and higher.

The persistence of this version of history is felt today. David Rolf's *The Bloody Road to Tunis*, written in 2001, cited both of Howe's books and many of the same references Howe used.[15] Rick Atkinson's *An Army at Dawn* (2002) relied partially on Howe's histories, Patton's diaries, and Eisenhower's letters in portraying Ward the division commander. Atkinson's conclusions mimic Howe's. Atkinson stated that Ward committed "tactical sins" and "forfeited surprise and audacity" in the days prior to his relief, and was in any case too hesitant and delicate for battlefield command.[16] It seems clear that a selective reading of the letters of key figures in Ward's chain of command has shaded the official U.S. Army historical account of Ward's performance, and a "standard" history of Ward has persisted in the fifty-two years since the publication of *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative*. By this history, Ward lacked the drive and aggressiveness expected of an American division commander. He was timid and hesitant to take the initiative in completing his mission. The description of his leadership ability and subsequent relief from command is intertwined with his fateful decision in Maknassy.

However, in contrast to Howe's account, Ward had proven himself to be a competent and professional officer and leader through almost three decades of service prior to Maknassy. In order to determine a more accurate picture of why Ward's relief occurred, his prior career must be examined to

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[13] The text of Eisenhower's message is in Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., ed. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: II*, 1066.

[14] Ibid, 1101.

[15] David Rolf. *The Bloody Road to Tunis: Destruction of the Axis Forces in North Africa: November 1942 – May 1943* (London: Greenhill Books, 2001), 181 & 199. Rolf's book does give a balanced presentation of the relief, however, telling the story also from Ward's point of view.

[16] Rick Atkinson. *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa 1942-1943* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 2002), 447 & 451.

determine whether the leadership deficiencies stated in Howe's account were known to be characteristics of the individual.

Ward's Pre-Relief Leadership Characteristics

Orlando Ward's early career followed a track similar to that of many of his peers. As a junior officer, he participated in operations on the Mexican border with the U.S. cavalry and served on the Western Front in World War I. Ward's experience in the Great War laid an early foundation of professional competence and tactical thinking that he would continue to build on throughout his career. In France, Ward gained "a reputation for dependability and competence in handling men and making plans."[17] In the interwar years, Ward's performance continued to receive notice from increasingly higher-ranking officers. In 1932, Ward developed innovative methods of improving the accuracy of massed artillery while at the Field Artillery school at Fort Sill. His work came to the attention of then-BG Lesley McNair, the school's assistant commandant. In a performance evaluation McNair described Ward as, "one of the soundest and most expert artillerymen" he had met.[18] In 1938, Ward was assigned work in the Secretariat to the Chief of Staff of the Army in Washington, D.C. He eventually became the Secretary of the General Staff (SGS) to George C. Marshall. Marshall respected his assistant and the difficult nature of the work. He commended Ward for "splendid judgment and untiring energy on a nerve-wracking assignment."[19] As SGS, Ward experienced up close the political nature of organizational leadership at the highest levels. In the midst of a resourcing disagreement between Marshall, General Henry "Hap" Arnold, and the Under Secretary of War, Ward noted that, "the matter was more political than military and that the rules of ethics had to be compromised to achieve political goals."[20] This realization, similar to

[17] Russell A. Gugeler. *Major General Orlando Ward: Life of A Leader* (Oakland: Red Anvil Press, 2009), 59. Ward spent most of his service on the Western Front in staff positions. See pages 59-66 for a description of his brief front line service with the 10th Field Artillery Regiment.

[18] Ibid, 115.

[19] Ibid, 147.

[20] Ibid, 130. Both Arnold and the Under Secretary had approved a plan to increase production of airplanes against Marshall's wishes and without his knowledge.

Eisenhower's, would perhaps serve him well when relieved of his division command three years later. In 1941, Marshall promoted Ward to Brigadier General and gave him a choice of assignments. Ward went to Fort Knox for brigade command in the 1st Armored. He was eventually selected by Marshall to command the entire Division. Ward was thus placed in command of one of the first American units designated for use in combat against the Axis Powers.

A brigade of the 1st Armored Division participated in the November 1942 Operation TORCH landings in Algeria. Ward and the remainder of the division arrived in North Africa in January of 1943. Ward's forces initially occupied defensive positions in Tunisia. In these early weeks, the Division was scattered across the Allied western front, reinforcing British and French units. In mid-February on the road between Sidi bou Zid and Sbeitla, Ward's combat commands were defeated by elements of the German Fifth Panzer Army.[21] Their defeat presaged the better-known battles in vicinity of Kasserine Pass by several days. A counterattack later brought the 1st Armored back to previously held positions, and eventually they continued the offensive through to Maknassy, where Ward was relieved of command in March.

Ward continued to exhibit a high degree of professional competence in the two months he spent as a combat division commander. In the aftermath of the defeat at Sidi bou Zid it was widely recognized that U.S. combat power had not been sufficiently concentrated to blunt the German attack. American units to the battalion level had been piecemealed to the front to fill gaps. Supply problems meant that many were unprepared for battle. Moreover, the British First Army commander had held the 1st Armored's most experienced brigade in general reserve until well after Ward's forward units had been forced to retreat.[22] Even so, on 17 February Ward rallied enough combat power to keep the pass at Sbeitla open long enough to allow the withdrawal of his forward most combat command. Following the retreat from Central Tunisia, an officer detailed to assess the damage to the 1st Armored Division noted that despite its

[21] "Combat command" refers to American brigade-level combined arms elements, task organized to accomplish varied missions. 1st Armored at this time consisted of four Combat Commands (CC), lettered A-D.

[22] At that time II Corps fell under operational control of General Noel Anderson's British First Army.

losses, "a very fine spirit still exists…and I am convinced that they can always carry more than their own weight…under any circumstances."[23] Ward remained proactive and mission focused when back on the offensive again in March. When ordered to seize the tiny village of Station de Sened on the road to Maknassy, he anticipated the Division's difficulty in traversing desert roads covered in mud as the result of heavy winter rains. Ward ordered movement a day early to make up the difference. In the attack, he maneuvered his combat commands in an indirect envelopment of the town, capturing enemy defenders and forcing others to retreat with few shots fired. At Maknassy, Ward followed Patton's orders and, carbine in hand, personally led an attack on the most difficult portion of the enemy defense.

The picture that emerges from Ward's admittedly brief command of the 1st Armored Division in combat coincides with the overall sense of his professional career. Ward's leadership skills were characterized by great tactical skill, management ability, and commitment to duty. He had a noted capacity for fostering cohesion in his subordinate units. Those who knew him personally confirmed these assertions. Eisenhower's deputy, then-MG Lucian Truscott, described Ward as "quiet in speech and manner, well trained, and methodical and thorough in all that he did. His division was well organized, had great espirit, and held General Ward in high esteem".[24] BG Paul Robinett, a brigade commander in the 1st Armored Division, defended Ward in the wake of the relief. Robinett said of his division commander, "He demonstrated character in battle – the most severe test of character. He dealt fairly and justly with subordinates and maintained good cheer and friendliness without sacrificing soldierly virtues."[25] Surprisingly, even Eisenhower held a favorable opinion of Ward. Of Ward's performance in the withdrawal at Sbeitla Eisenhower said "on two occasions at least [Ward] rendered a very fine account of himself in actual battle."[26] Ward's record and these descriptions stand at odds with his portrayal in the

[23] Lucian K. Truscott, Jr. *Command Missions: A Personal Story* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1954), 166.

[24] Ibid, 145.

[25] Paul M. Robinett. *Armor Command* (Washington, D.C.: McGregor & Werner, Inc., 1958), 209.

[26] Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., ed., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: II*, 982.

official historical accounts. It is safe to assert that the stated reasons for his relief were not representative of his character or leadership ability.

Aside from Ward's previous leadership patterns, it is possible that intervening events prior to his relief were of sufficient nature to justify relief from command. Two interconnected possibilities arise. First, that Ward was exhausted and stressed to such a point that his established leadership behavior changed. Second, and in accordance with the standard history of him, that this change made him reticent to command. These factors may have combined to the point that he paused unnecessarily once seizing Maknassy, instead of immediately attacking the vital mountain pass a few miles to the east. However, if neither is valid, it follows that Ward's leadership of the Division at Maknassy remained unaffected. The official version of his relief is further discredited, and some other reason must be examined.

Events Bearing on Ward's Behavior Incident to his Relief

During the February 1943 withdrawal from Tunisia, Ward's relationship with MG Fredendall was severely stressed. Afterwards, it was commonly understood that much of the difficulties the 1st Armored Division faced were linked to Fredendall's mismanagement. Multiple sources put the two officers in violent disagreement with each other while the battle raged on. General Truscott described their relationship during the withdrawal as severely strained: "Neither had any confidence whatsoever in the other, and every conversation with either of them, every report from the front, emphasized this unfortunate fact."[27] As early as 20 February, Fredendall requested Ward's relief through Eisenhower. However, an assessment conducted by MG Harmon cleared Ward and found Fredendall largely culpable for the defeat. Harmon found that Ward had performed well under fire, but was "badly handled" by his corps commander.[28]Fredendall was removed shortly thereafter.

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[27] Lucian K. Truscott, Jr., *Command Missions*, 169.

[28] Orr Kelly. *Meeting the Fox: The Allied Invasion of Africa from Operation Torch to Kasserine Pass to Victory in Tunisia* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2002), 253.

Nevertheless, some of Fredendall's enmity for Ward transferred to Patton. Sources are replete with examples of Ward's rough treatment during Patton's five weeks in Tunisia. It appears that Patton concluded early on that Ward was not possessed of the qualities needed for command in combat. Just one week after assuming command, Patton criticized the 1st Armored Division as "too timid." In an 18 March letter to his wife, Patton first broached the subject of Ward's relief.[29] This hostility towards Ward arose prior to any difficulties the 1st Armored Division had in the Tunisian offensive. Its source remains unclear, although Eisenhower's guidance certainly influenced Patton's thinking. Patton was known for his constant emphasis on the offense. In Tunisia, he was determined to show America's allies the battlefield proficiency of the American soldier. It thus makes sense that his treatment of Ward was the result of disappointment over the defeat at Sbeitla and Sidi bou Zid. Author Orr Kelly makes this assertion, and further postulates that Patton's antagonism of Ward may have had roots in "some long-simmering feud left over from the small, closed community of the peacetime army."[30] Additionally, in his 18 March letter home, Patton refers to the 1st Armored Division as "John's outfit." This is a reference to his son-in-law, John Waters, who was captured at Sidi bou Zid.[31] Waters was very much on the general's mind throughout the war. It is unusual that in the next sentence Patton says of Ward, "I may have to relieve a general."[32] It is reasonable to believe that anger over the capture of his son-in-law likewise affected Patton's opinions.

When II Corps again went on the offensive, Patton continually hounded Ward for moving too slow. Despite acknowledging the difficult terrain and weather factors in the attack, at one point Patton directed Ward to have his infantry outpace their armor support simply to maintain forward movement. As the battle for the Maknassy heights opened, Patton noted in his diary that, "Ward has not done well – no

[29] Martin Blumenson, ed. *The Patton Papers*, 188 & 193.

[30] Orr Kelly, *Meeting the Fox*, 256.

[31] Martin Blumenson, ed., *The Patton Papers*, 193. Waters remained a prisoner through the end of the war.

[32] Ibid, 193.

drive."[33] In the opinions of some who fought at Maknassy, Patton's treatment of Ward was unfair. Bradley defended the 1st Armored commander in both of his autobiographies. BG Robinett, on Patton's relationship with Ward, said that command of the Division at this time was, "like commanding a division in a goldfish bowl with a bunch of sharp eyed cats outside ready to scoop you up."[34] However, there is no evidence that any resulting stress or exhaustion led to a change in Ward's behavior as a leader. Throughout the February retreat to the west and the subsequent offensive in March, Ward appeared to act consistently with the same calm professionalism noted previously by Marshall and others. Primary sources – Eisenhower, Harmon, and Truscott – all indicate that Ward led the 1st Armored Division through the Sbeitla and Sidi bou Zid withdrawal as best as could reasonably be expected. Bradley recalls meeting with Ward following these battles, noting that he was, "happy to have pulled his division together" and, "anxious to show what a U.S. armored division could do if given a suitable mission."[35] Likewise, in the aftermath of his relief, Bradley describes Ward as understanding and professional, saying that Ward "took the decision with grace."[36] While the extremity of Patton's treatment is beyond doubt, it does not appear to have affected Ward's abilities as a commander.

Why, then, did Ward choose to stop initially in Maknassy? It was certainly the wrong time for an operational pause. In *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative*, Howe asserts that the best opportunity to seize the heights around the mountain pass was the first day of the battle, 22 March 1943.[37] Following this, the German and Italian defenders grew in number and continued to improve their positions. Descriptions of Ward's actions on 22 March are numerous but differ over key points, and in this fact lay the perspective needed to judge his decision. Put simply, there is no common agreement that Ward understood a need to commence an immediate attack to take the heights once Maknassy itself had fallen.

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[33] Ibid, 196.

[34] Paul M. Robinett, *Armor Command*, 208.

[35] Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, LLC, 1951), 40.

[36] Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 149.

[37] George F. Howe, *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West*, 575.

His higher commander's intent for the heights was constantly changing. Ward's headquarters received no less than three updates to their plan of attack in the week prior to 22 March. With each, the importance of the Maknassy pass to the overall Allied offensive grew. Unfortunately for Ward, the last change came on the 22nd itself, after Ward had entered and paused in Maknassy. The genesis for each change was General Alexander in 18 Army Group, senior to II Corps in the Tunisian offensive. Alexander tied the American attack to the fortunes of the British Eighth Army fighting from the southeast.[38] He reasoned that an attack on the Axis line at the Maknassy pass might threaten the enemy flank and draw German reserves away from British forces. However, Alexander distrusted American fighting ability in the wake of the Kasserine defeat. His initial plans clearly meant to limit the II Corps operation to the Eastern Dorsal Mountains. Bradley described the decision, saying, "At no time…was there any intention of converting this threat into a breakthrough from the Dorsal to the coast."[39] Initially Alexander designated the American main limit of advance on the mountains themselves.[40] Although the Maknassy pass had been a 1st Armored objective from the outset, Alexander's intent was for them to attack it but not break through. Initially, the immediacy of this mission was not stressed. This changed when the British Eighth Army commander, Bernard Montgomery, requested an American penetration to support his forces. Alexander immediately updated the plan and sent it forward – on 22 March, too late for Ward to react.[41] In this light, Ward's decision to pause at Maknassy is completely justified. He stopped in Maknassy to consolidate his forces before continuing the attack to the east. The decision was tactically sound and completely in keeping with Alexander's intent as Ward understood it at the time. It bears noting that once in receipt of

[38]See Orr Kelly, *Meeting the Fox*, 256.

[39] Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 50.

[40] See David Rolf, *The Bloody Road to Tunis*, 171. Rolf describes the control measure used to limit U.S. movement to the east, saying Alexander, "confined American and French troops west of a clear-cut boundary extending along the hills from Maknassy to Faïd and thence along the Eastern Dorsale to Fondouk."

[41] Corroborating accounts of this chain of events can be found in Orr Kelly, *Meeting the Fox*, 264-5; Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 446; and James Holland. *Together We Stand: America, Britain, and the Forging of an Alliance* (New York: Hyperion, 2005), 521.

Alexander's latest update, Ward issued the order to attack the Maknassy pass at 1415 hours, just seven hours after his initial occupation of the town.[42]

Ward directed his forces competently and in accordance with his higher command's orders until the day of his relief. Despite the stresses of combat, an ever-changing mission, and Patton's personality, he continued to lead with the same calm manner that had so impressed Marshall. It is unlikely that any intervening event prior to relief affected a change in his proven behavior as a leader. Quite separate from the standard historical accounts, the reasons behind Ward's relief lay in the politics and attitudes of his higher commanders: Patton, Alexander, and Eisenhower. Patton blamed Ward for a larger II Corps failure; Alexander believed Ward too weak to accomplish an easy mission. Neither charge was warranted. Based on a comprehensive look at primary sources, it is evident that Eisenhower relieved Ward not due to leadership deficiency, but in an effort to mollify both generals.

Political and Military Considerations Affecting Ward's Relief

In Tunisia, Patton was eager to prove American fighting prowess on the battlefield. He privately raged at the plans Alexander handed down to II Corps. Patton felt that the British-dominated campaign proposal gave prominence to an Eighth Army drive from the south, which would eventually "pinch us out so as to insure a British triumph."[43] Patton envisioned a breakthrough in the Eastern Dorsals and a thrust to the coast to cut large portions of the German and Italian Armies off from their only route of escape in Africa. The pass at Maknassy represented the best location to test his plan and demonstrate to Alexander that the Americans could fight after all.[44] Patton repeatedly demonstrated his ambitions when the offensive began in March. He acknowledged the severity of the environmental conditions faced by the American tank division, but refused to let them alter his concept of the attack. As the 1st Armored

[42] George F. Howe, *The Battle History of the 1st Armored Division*, 211.

[43] Quote from Patton's diary entry of March 19th, 1943 in Martin Blumenson, ed., *The Patton Papers*, 195.

[44] Author Orr Kelly describes Patton's aspirations for the pass at Maknassy as "a way of convincing Alexander and Eisenhower that he was capable of slashing through to the coast." Orr Kelly, *Meeting the Fox*, 265.

approached Maknassy, his diary entries reflected the effects of the unusually harsh seasonal rains. Privately, Patton admitted that the Division was "largely stuck in the mud," and, "If I can, I will start to push in on Maknassy tomorrow. All depends on the amount the ground dries." He said the next day that Ward was "in a sea of mud, really awful."[45] Dealing publicly with his division commander, however, Patton showed no such understanding. When the 1st Armored failed to take the pass, Patton blamed Ward personally. Especially in the first week of the stalemate at Maknassy, he bombarded Ward with daily visits and threatening phone calls. Despite the constant pressure, Ward's diligent efforts to take his objective failed. A German defense "drilled into the bare rock," was too strong.[46] It is important to note that II Corps faced similar problems with the 1st and 9th Infantry Divisions at El Guettar to the south. Neither division affected a breakthrough in their combined sector until the German defenders withdrew. Yet Ward alone faced the brunt of Patton's wrath. Patton initiated the relief because in his eyes Ward had spoiled the chance for a breakthrough in the Axis line, and confirmed the British view of American incompetence.

Like Patton, General Alexander also held a negative opinion of Ward, a judgment that was also hard to justify by any reasonable examination of events. Alexander had taken command of 18 Army Group in the midst of the Allied retreat from Central Tunisia.[47] Perhaps as a result of this earlier defeat, Alexander held a negative opinion of the American forces serving under him. He did little to stem the antagonism that existed between U.S. and British staffs. Bradley recounted the problem in his autobiography:

> Alexander and his staff continued to hold us in low esteem. The British were especially critical of Ward and Ryder [the commander of the U.S. 34th Infantry] and their divisions. They freely criticized us to the war correspondents, who in turn relayed these criticisms back to II Corps…we

[45] Quote from Patton's diary entries of March 18th and 19th, 1943 in Martin Blumenson, ed., *The Patton Papers*, 194.

[46] David Rolf, *The Bloody Road to Tunis*, 183.

[47] The Allies created 18 Army Group to merge command of ground forces in North Africa under one headquarters. Its nomenclature reflects the unification of the two major forces meeting in Tunisia, the British First and Eighth Armies.

> were justifiably enraged at these backbiting leaks which served no purpose other than to sow bitter dissension between allies.[48]

From Alexander's point of view these doubts were only confirmed when II Corps was stopped on the Eastern Dorsals. Alexander was especially vocal in his criticism of the 1st Armored Division and its commander. Ward's inability to seize the heights east of Maknassy jeopardized the latest Army Group plan. Further, it proved Alexander's beliefs in the unreliability of U.S. ground forces. In a letter to the British Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Alexander wrote that Ward was "quite useless in my opinion."[49] However, the record of Alexander's actions during the Tunisian offensive indicates a detachment from command and susceptibility to pressure from Field Marshall Montgomery. These factors, not leadership failure on Ward's part, influenced Alexander's reaction to the failure at the Maknassy pass. The fact that Alexander continued to revise his intentions for the Division's attack even as the battle commenced is not by itself open to serious criticism. Such changes were common and certainly within his purview as the overall ground commander. The reasons *behind* the changes deserve some scrutiny, however. Alexander's personal style of command made him more receptive to sudden changes in plan. Describing him as "one of the most intellectually lazy men ever to hold high command," one source quotes Montgomery as saying, "he relies on ideas being produced which will give him a plan; he does not come to the conference with *his own* plan."[50] The fact that the final change to Ward's mission at Maknassy was the result of pressure from Montgomery proves this point.[51] This, combined with a poor opinion of the Americans, led to unreasonable expectations for the 1st Armored Division attack at Maknassy. Alexander apparently felt that his updated orders were to be executed immediately. When they were not, he found a scapegoat in Ward.

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[48] Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life*, 146.

[49] David Rolf, *The Bloody Road to Tunis*, 181 & 199.

[50] Carlo D'Este, *Bitter Victory*, 338.

[51] Montgomery had initially pressured Alexander to keep the American units out of his way as he pushed the enemy northward to the Tunisian coast. Running into some difficulty in his offensive, he again petitioned Alexander for a change, resulting in the 22 March order for an American break through at Maknassy.

An examination of the situation in early April 1943 therefore shows that Patton held Ward responsible for poor impressions of U.S. fighting skill and a Corps-wide inability to penetrate the enemy defensive line. At the same time, Alexander held Ward to an unreasonable timeline, was distrustful of Americans in general, and was quite vocal in expressing his displeasure.[52] Both evaluations of Ward were grounded in these political and military considerations at echelons above the Division. Neither had anything to do with an assessment of Ward's individual command ability or tactical performance. Unfortunately for Ward, both Patton and Alexander served under the umbrella of Eisenhower's beliefs in organizational leadership.

Eisenhower's approval of the relief decision likewise rested on political foundations. He knew the importance of keeping the alliance of nations together. No state could defeat the Axis Powers singlehandedly. North Africa was only a stepping-stone to the main effort invasion of Europe, but it represented Ike's first test as Supreme Commander. The Allies had to remain together, and oriented on a common purpose. Anything less would prolong the effort in the Mediterranean and the war itself. Army Chief of Staff Marshall said of this situation that, "Ike's rise or fall depended on the outcome of the Tunisian battle."[53] Eisenhower stressed the alliance repeatedly in the opening days of World War II. A sure way to raise his ire was for a young American officer to disparage a British counterpart. Bradley recounted Eisenhower once saying, "Troublemakers who waved the flag were to be sent straight back home – home on a slow boat, unescorted."[54] At Allied Forces Headquarters, Eisenhower refused to hear arguments based on nationality. He imbued his subordinates with an unremitting attitude towards keeping the Anglo-American alliance in place and functioning. His efforts to this end were sometimes poorly received among his American subordinates. Patton believed Eisenhower had, "sold his soul to the devil

[52] Alexander himself summarized this argument nicely in the April 3rd note to the British Chief of the Imperial General Staff, saying of the Americans, "In fact, I handed them a ready-made victory on a plate, but their hands were too weak to take it." Quoted in David Rolf, *The Bloody Road to Tunis*, 198.

[53] Harry C. Butcher. *My Three Years with Eisenhower: The Personal Diary of Captain Harry C. Butcher, USNR, Naval Aide to General Eisenhower, 1942 to 1945* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 278.

[54] Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 33.

on 'Cooperation'" with the British.[55] Even Bradley believed that Eisenhower's "pro-British" attitude sometimes came at the expense of American troops.[56]

Consequently, when Alexander approached Eisenhower sometime around 1 April 1943 to express his disappointment in Ward, Eisenhower felt it his responsibility to pass the thinly veiled recommendation for relief on to Patton. In a secret cable to Patton dated 2 April 1943, Eisenhower clearly spelled out his motivation for doing so. "I feel we must recognize rights and duties of commanders [i.e. Alexander] to communicate freely with subordinates regardless of nationality."[57] In this matter, Patton actually agreed with Alexander, although with different motivations. With Eisenhower and Alexander's consent, he relieved Ward of command on 6 April and brought MG Harmon forward once again to take over. Thus, although Patton executed the relief, Eisenhower bore final responsibility for its approval. Eisenhower approved the action only to mollify his British subordinate, Alexander. This fact is best represented in Ike's own correspondence. On 29 March, seven days into the battle at Maknassy, Eisenhower wrote to General Marshall in Washington, D.C. He discussed the accounting of the 1st Armored Division in battle, relating that

> The First Armored has also done lots of good work, but there seems to be a feeling that it has not been employed quite as aggressively as it might have been on several occasions. *I am not at all certain, however, that this can always be attributed to lack of aggressiveness in the Divisional Command*, because on two occasions I have been present with Alexander in II Corps Headquarters when he constantly emphasized his purpose of avoiding pitched, indecisive battles in the Maknassy-Gafsa area where, as he expressed it, 'we might get into trouble' and clearly directed the employment of threat coupled with caution rather than actual seeking of heavy fighting [emphasis added][58]

Eisenhower's statement vindicates Ward. It confirms the idea that the passive nature of Alexander's command was behind the pause at Maknassy. The fact that Eisenhower reversed his position and

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[55] Quote attributed to Patton o/a March 6th, 1943 in Martin Blumenson, ed., *The Patton Papers*, 181.

[56] See Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life*, 170, for an account of a post-combat victory parade in Tunis, wherein Patton, Bradley, "and by extension, the American troops who had fought and died in Tunisia" received little acknowledgement for their actions, while Ike celebrated their British and French counterparts. Patton corroborates in Martin Blumenson, ed., *The Patton Papers*, 253-4.

[57] Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., ed., *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: II*, 1066.

[58] Ibid, 1059.

approved Ward's relief just three days later is proof positive of Ike's pro-alliance, "at all costs" mentality. The circumstances of his removal were soon apparent to Ward. Meeting with Eisenhower the day after his relief, Ward concluded, "The British think the 1st AD is not a good combat unit. Failure to take the hills. HINDSIGHT ALEXANDER AND HIS C OF STAFF BEHIND IT ALL [emphasis in the original]."[59] Others felt the same way. Robinett concluded that his division commander was a "victim of circumstances incident to a faulty command structure with far too many fingers in the pie…I felt at the time that General Patton had done the chopping desired by others."[60]

In the end, a narrow reading of primary sources shaded the official account of Ward's relief found in Howe's *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative*. Howe explained the relief by falling back on familiar reasoning – battlefield incompetence leads to removal – and referred only to sources that supported his claim. As a result, subsequent histories did not fully investigate Ward's character, his leadership in combat, or the notion that political considerations overrode any thought of retaining him. He was instead sacrificed to the ambitions of Allied generals on both sides of the same issue. Four months later, a remarkably similar set of circumstances led to the relief of Ward's fellow division commander, Terry Allen. A similar history also surrounds his removal.

MG Terry de la Mesa Allen

The Official History of Allen's Relief

Like Ward, the standard history of MG Terry Allen's relief from command is closely tied to a tactical setback. It is colored by the expressed negative opinions of several of Allen's superiors. The official Army history of Allen's relief, Garland and Smyth's *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, is direct in its assessment and condemnation of Allen. His leadership at Troina is overly hesitant and cautious. The best example of this is in the description of the battle's final day. The authors surmised that Allen unnecessarily made an elaborate, coordinated plan for the final assault despite awareness that the enemy

[59] Quote from Ward's diary entry of April 7th, 1943 in David Rolf, *The Bloody Road to Tunis*, 199.

[60] Paul M. Robinett, *Armor Command*, 209.

was withdrawing. The authors then claim that Allen delayed the attack to allow the defenders to leave, "presumably on the basis that if the Germans were going, it was better to let them go."[61] No reference is given for making this assumption. According to Garland and Smyth, at other times Allen's division headquarters was merely inept. They were "asleep at the switch" in failing to correctly interpret signs of a German attack four days into the battle.[62] Again, it is unclear as to how the authors determined this to be the case. Garland and Smyth do not refer to Allen's removal as a relief, saying he "relinquished command" instead. Nevertheless, their final summary of the Troina battle (and of Allen in Sicily) is most damning of all.

> The end of the battle for Troina may well have seemed to the 1st Division commander…like a most unsatisfactory time to turn over the command of "The Big Red One"…Perhaps more could have been avoided had General Allen, after the failure of the 39th Infantry to take Troina on 1 August [the first day of the battle], committed more of the division's strength, instead of waiting for two more days to do so. Evaluation of the division's performance in the fighting at Troina might also involve an answer to the question: did the expected relief by Eddy's incoming 9th Division contribute to the initial optimism and a possible desire to spare the troops?[63]

In an earlier passage, the authors acknowledged a lack of reliable intelligence as a mitigating factor in Allen's early decisions in Troina. However, in the summary they concluded that his hesitancy caused needless loss and lengthened the battle unnecessarily. In the process, Garland and Smyth asked "what if?" and deviated from a straightforward re-telling of events. The final sentence of their summary was a reference to the follow-on force designated to assume the fight from Allen's division. Allen knew of their presence and mission on 1 August as he committed his forces to battle in Troina. It is this sentence that is most damaging. Per the official history Allen is risk averse, avoiding enemy contact in the hopes another division commander will take up the fight for him.

Just as the official Army history found fault with Allen's leadership in this battle, several of his higher commanders found fault with his overall character as a leader and a division commander.

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[61] Albert N. Garland and Howard M. Smyth, *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, 346.

[62] Ibid, 341.

[63] Ibid, 347. The 39th Infantry Regiment, a subordinate unit of the 9th Infantry Division, was attached to Allen's 1st Division for the attack on Troina.

Eisenhower's chief of staff, MG Walter Bedell Smith, routinely criticized Allen, even after the war. Eisenhower's deputy commander, MG John Lucas, reported on Allen's disciplinary failures.[64] Allen's most outspoken detractor by far was his corps commander at the time of the battle, then-MG Omar Bradley. Both of Bradley's autobiographies, *A Soldier's Story* (1951) and *A General's Life* (1983) contain numerous negative impressions and anecdotes. Bradley accused Allen of fomenting riots between front line and rear echelon troops in North Africa, of misappropriating resources, illicit supply requisitioning, and outright insubordination. Bradley gave many reasons for his dislike of Allen. All point to a general impression of Allen as an undisciplined rogue who cared only for the welfare of himself and those in his command.[65] Especially in the latter book, Bradley pulled no punches. His loathing of Allen was pervasive to the point that Allen's biographer, Gerald Astor, claimed it affected the way history views Allen and his departure from command.[66] There is merit to Astor's argument. Eisenhower explained the reasons behind the relief in a letter to Allen after the war. Candidly, he related that Allen had not been removed due to leadership failure or battlefield indecision. Yet in a collection of Eisenhower's post-war letters, editor Louis Galambos supposed the opposite. In a footnote Galambos stated "In late 1943 Eisenhower had removed from the 1st Division both the commanding general, Terry Allen, and the assistant CG on the grounds that they were not enforcing good discipline among their troops while away from battle."[67] Thus, on the very same page Eisenhower explained the reasons for the relief decision, Galambos contradicted him and repeated the standard historical view. As a reference for the reader, Galambos pointed to none other than Omar Bradley's autobiography, *A Soldier's Story*. While seemingly minor – literally a "footnote to history" – Galambos' assertion is evidence of the influence Bradley's memoirs over Allen's

[64] Gerald Astor. *Terrible Terry Allen: Combat General of World War II – The Life of an American Soldier* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2003), 188-9.

[65] Bradley summarized his impression of Allen best: "Although Terry had become a hero to his troops, he was known as a maverick among the senior commanders…Terry was fiercely antagonistic to any echelon above that of division. As a result he was inclined to be stubborn and independent…he frequently ignored orders and fought his own way." Omar N. Bradley. *A Soldier's Story*, 81.

[66] Gerald Astor, *Terrible Terry Allen*, 223.

[67] Louis Galambos, ed. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The Chief of Staff: IX* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 1894. The "assistant CG" referred to here is BG Teddy Roosevelt, Jr.

historical image. Astor noted that even at the repository for Terry Allen's personal papers, an online career summary attributed his relief to "tactical dispositions that delayed the capture of Troina for a week."[68]

The standard history account of Allen views his relief from command as the result of leadership deficiency precipitating failure at Troina. In the U.S. Army's account, Allen hesitated and was noncommittal in the battle's opening stages. His actions caused needless casualties as he reluctantly applied combat power to the attack, then wasted time developing elaborate plans to no effect. Aware his division was to be pulled off the line, after seven days of brutal fighting Allen allowed the enemy to retreat. In *Sicily and the Surrender of* Italy, Garland and Smyth clearly pointed to Allen's removal from command as the eventual outcome of these events. The impressions left by the official history coincide with the recorded opinions of several other prominent individuals. Chief among these was Allen's corps commander at Troina, Omar Bradley. In Bradley's widely read memoirs, Allen was an insubordinate freelancer whose leadership qualities clashed repeatedly with accepted norms of behavior. Combined, a standard account of Allen and his removal from command has evolved over time and continues to color modern perceptions of the man. Surprisingly, even Astor concluded that Allen was relieved, "unofficially due to his unwillingness to subordinate his ways and his organization."[69]

To a certain degree, the assessment of Terry Allen's indiscipline and friction with higher command bears truth. This fact clouds the real reasons behind his relief. A closer look at Allen's qualities as a leader and division commander must lead to a re-evaluation of the factors considered in the final decision to remove him from command. A survey of evidence from his career directly refutes the picture of him given in Garland and Smyth's history.

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[68] See Gerald Astor, *Terrible Terry Allen*, 223 and University of Texas at El Paso, *Guide to MS 307 Terry de la Mesa Allen Papers* at http://libraryweb.utep.edu/special/findingaids/allenterry.cfm.

[69] Gerald Astor, *Terrible Terry Allen*, 226.

Allen's Pre-Relief Leadership Characteristics

As Bradley observed, Terry Allen's career was indeed marked by a lack of deference to authority and personal indiscipline. Allen was dismissed from West Point after accumulating an inordinate number of demerits and failing in his studies. He gained his commission later, through written examination. When the U.S. entered World War I, Allen forced his way to France by joining an ammunition transport unit. While waiting to deploy from the embarkation point in New York City, Allen became acquainted with upper class social circles in the city. He clearly enjoyed the life that came with it – perhaps too much. Allen's correspondence from this time alludes to an inability to budget money, failed investments, and a dependence on personal loans from family.[70] It is also clear that by this time he had developed a fondness for alcohol. Personal debt problems, a penchant for drink, and irreverence for structure and hierarchy stayed attached to Allen's reputation throughout his career.[71] At the Army's Command and General Staff School in 1924, a cavalier attitude towards his studies led the school's commandant to refer to Allen as "the most indifferent student ever enrolled."[72] Allen graduated in the bottom ten percent of his class and received an overwhelmingly negative evaluation. This appears to be the first time his unruly personal nature ever seriously threatened his career. Fortunately, like Ward, Allen's prospects picked up through an association with George Marshall when both were assigned to the Infantry School at Fort Benning. According to Astor and others, the same brash quality that led Allen to trouble at Fort Leavenworth impressed Marshall at Fort Benning. Marshall rated him top marks in all categories save military bearing. He said of Allen, "By training, experience, and temperament, [he is] highly qualified as a leader"[73] In another more qualified passage, Marshall said that Allen "had a dubious future in peacetime but should be

[70] Ibid, 27-8 & 78-9.

[71] Allen's reputation eventually received notice at the highest levels of the Army. Much later, as the 1st Infantry Division awaited its embarkation to Europe, Army Chief of Staff George Marshall personally warned Allen against drinking too much. See Rick Atkinson. *An Army at Dawn*, 82.

[72] Gerald Astor, *Terrible Terry Allen*, 72-3. It is worthy to note that the number one student in Allen's class was Eisenhower. Biographer Astor speculates that the two may have had an unhappy association at the time of their attendance (Ibid, 96).

[73] Ibid, 77.

entrusted with a division in time of war."[74] Evaluations of a similar vein are commonly repeated in other descriptions of Allen. They give insight into Allen's leadership attributes, summarized by personal courage and a love for soldiering, but a tendency towards questionable personal behavior.

However, Allen's early battlefield record is representative of the type of leadership he exhibited at Troina. As a battalion commander during the Saint-Mihiel offensive in 1918, Allen returned to an attack after being wounded and rendered unconscious. Shortly thereafter he was wounded again when a machine gun bullet knocked several of his teeth out. It is obvious from Astor's survey of Allen's WWI correspondence that the length of his subsequent recuperation bothered him greatly. His only motivation during convalescence was to return to the fighting at the front.[75] Astor asserts that it was partially Allen's record from the Great War that won him favor with Marshall.[76] Eight years after their association at Fort Benning, Marshall recommended Allen for promotion to Brigadier General. In light of Allen's reputation, this was a controversial move. Marshall apparently made it based on his assessment that Allen was one of the few officers able to, in his words, "enthuse all of their subordinates to carry through almost impossible tasks."[77] Just nine months later Allen received his second star. He assumed command of the 1st Infantry Division in June 1942.

As a combat division commander, Allen lived up to the reputation he had established in France twenty-four years earlier. Reality contrasts with Garland and Smyth's portrayal. Allen was tactically sound, aggressive, and in his element while commanding troops. In the words of a subordinate officer, "no man could have more authority with the Division than this one, who had taken it raw, trained it, molded it, and made it what it was to be."[78] Allen led the Division during the TORCH landings in Algeria, the offensive in Tunisia, and the invasion of Sicily. The 1st Infantry's initial fight at El Guettar

[74] Bryce F. Denno. "Allen and Huebner: Contrast in Command." *Army*, June 1984, 65.

[75] Gerald Astor, *Terrible Terry Allen*, 42-6.

[76] Ibid, 78.

[77] Ibid, 87.

[78] H.R. Knickerbocker, et al. *Danger Forward: The Story of the First Division in World War II* (Atlanta: Albert Love Enterprises, 1947), 37.

(occurring at roughly the same time as the Maknassy attack) stands out as an example of his battlefield competence. Allen's light infantry forces used massive artillery support to defeat a German tank division. His success brought much-needed validation to the soldiers of II Corps following the defeats at Kasserine and Sidi bou Zid one month earlier. In the July landings at Gela, Sicily, Allen ordered an unexpected nighttime exploitation attack after beating back the mobile enemy defenses. The action was successful and cemented the American beachhead. Afterwards it was only a matter of time before Axis forces were defeated on the island. Additionally, Allen and his assistant division commander, Teddy Roosevelt, Jr., proved especially adroit at building espirit in the men they commanded. This was accomplished mostly through personal example and an ability to coalesce disparate experiences into unit identity. Allen was legendary amongst his troops for his his colorful personality and focus on improving the skills of his soldiers.[79] Under Allen, unit cohesion was infectious. By the time the 1st Infantry Division arrived in North Africa it was "proud, self-absorbed, and ornery…as much a warring tribe as a military unit."[80] The unity of the Division worked well for Allen as the Big Red One quickly developed a name for itself in combat. Retired Colonel Bryce Denno summarized the nature of strong organizational leadership and the 1st Division's condition under Allen. Denno wrote, "By some subtle yet predictable chemistry, the division gradually [assumed] the personality and characteristics of its commander."[81] In the eyes of Allen's superiors, this was not a beneficial thing. As Allen showed a proclivity for rough behavior on and off the battlefield, so did his soldiers. When the Division pulled back from the front lines in Tunisia, they returned to the scene of their initial landings in Algeria. The city of Oran had been overrun by rear echelon supply services troops in the intervening months. Widespread fighting between combat soldiers

[79] See Flint Whitlock. *The Fighting First: The Untold Story of the Big Red One on D-Day* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2004), 16-7 for a description of Allen's skill at building morale.

[80] Rick Atkinson. *An Army at Dawn*, 82.

[81] Bryce F. Denno. "Allen and Huebner: Contrast in Command," 62. Denno fought under Allen with the 1st Infantry's 16th Infantry Regiment.

fresh from the front and their rear area counterparts followed.[82] The situation was so severe it eventually became known as the "Second Battle of Oran." Some senior officers, including Bradley, blamed Allen for failing to prohibit the fighting. However, some accounts argue that Allen was willing to discipline his soldiers. Most notably, author Carlo D'Este claimed that the 1st Division commander aggressively ordered the apprehension of any soldier involved in leading the Oran violence.[83] Nevertheless, "Second Oran" remained another reason for negative impressions of Allen and his leadership abilities.

Not everyone subscribed to such poor opinions of Allen. Patton refused to go to battle in Sicily without Allen and his Division. Alexander called Allen "among the finest division commanders he had observed in two world wars."[84] Even Bradley admitted that Allen "may have saved II Corps from a major disaster" on Sicily in fighting off the enemy counterattack. At Gela, "Only the perverse Big Red One with its no less perverse commander was both hard enough and experienced enough to take that assault in stride."[85] It is clear that Allen possessed many valued qualities of a division commander at war. Quite different from his portrayal in *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*, Allen was an aggressive and competent leader who sought contact with his enemies. He maintained an unwavering commitment to the welfare of his troops and was unafraid to share the rigors of combat with them. Unfortunately, his reputation seemed to precede him and was always present in the minds of some among his peers and superiors. Regardless, the reasons Garland and Smyth associated with the relief at Troina clearly do not correlate to Allen's previous record of leadership. If anything, his characteristic leadership traits were the exact opposite of the portrait given in the Army history. Only the charges of his indiscipline and lack of organizational control have any possible merit – but those mostly come from one published source, General Omar

[82] Rumors that the 1st Division was to return home to the U.S. exacerbated the situation when soldiers found out they were marked for participation in the invasion of Sicily instead. It must be noted that the violence amongst U.S. troops in Oran was not perpetrated solely by members of the 1st Division, although the association with Allen's reputation most often precedes any description of it.

[83] Carlo D'Este. *Bitter Victory*, 273.

[84] Gerald Astor, *Terrible Terry Allen*, x.

[85] Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 130. Presumably, Bradley uses "perverse" to mean "stubborn" or "unreasonable."

Bradley. Enough doubt exists to question Bradley's criticisms. This must lead to further exploration of alternate reasons behind Allen's relief from command.

It is possible that an intervening event changed Allen's behavior, or influenced the situation, and caused his relief. As with Ward, two possibilities arise. Bradley's negative opinions, coupled with his place in a position of authority over Allen stand out as one possible reason. It is possible that under his authority as corps commander, Bradley ordered the relief based on his own assessment. As well – although unlikely in light of his nature as a leader – the brutal severity and length of the battle for Troina may also have adversely changed Allen's response to the situation. As with Ward, if neither is an accurate description of events, the official history comes into doubt.

Events Bearing on Allen's Behavior Incident to his Relief

General Omar Bradley laid the blame for Allen's relief on a number of varying events. The arc of Bradley's argument begins with his first book, *A Soldier's Story*, published in 1951, and continues in his second, *A General's Life*, published in 1983. In the earlier volume, Bradley did not mention any reservations with keeping Allen in command until the passages on the invasion of Sicily. The reasoning in *A Soldier's Story* is incongruous. Bradley claims credit for the relief decision, saying,

> Early in the Sicilian campaign I had made up my mind to relieve Terry Allen at its conclusion. This relief was not to be a reprimand for ineptness or for ineffective command. For in Sicily as in Tunisia the 1st Division had set the pace for the ground campaign. Yet I was convinced, as indeed I still am, that Terry's relief had become essential to the long-term welfare of the division.[86]

In subsequent paragraphs, Bradley laid out his case. He explained that the 1st Infantry Division was best among the American ground forces, and vital to the upcoming Normandy invasion. Even so, Allen had to be relieved for the sake of organizational efficacy, much akin to Eisenhower's argument. Bradley then contradicted his initial statement when describing his ultimate reasoning:

[86] Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 154.

> Under Allen the 1st Division had become increasingly temperamental, disdainful of both regulations and senior commands. It thought itself exempted from the need for discipline by virtue of its months on the line…By now Allen had become too much of an individualist to submerge himself without friction in the group undertakings of war.[87]

It is difficult to reconcile the two tracts. Allen's removal was not the result of "ineffective command", yet his unit's lack of discipline and Allen's personal insubordination were given as reasons.

The story changed in *A General's Life*, written thirty years later. Post-Tunisia, Bradley admitted to trouble with Allen, but agreed with Eisenhower that he return to the U.S. to become a corps commander.[88] Patton's insistence on retaining Allen for Operation HUSKY prevented this from occurring. Contrary to the account given in *A Soldier's Story*, in *A General's Life* Bradley claimed he decided to relieve Allen in the wake of the Division's behavior at Oran (he calls it the "GI Revolt").[89] Later, at Troina, Bradley changed his story slightly.

> It was during this fight that I finally made up my mind to relieve Allen and Roosevelt. In the initial assault on Troina, Allen flubbed badly. He miscalculated the enemy's strength and verve and was thrown back with heavy losses. Throughout the seven days of heavy fighting that ensued, he attempted to operate much as he had in the past, as an undisciplined, independent army, unresponsive to my wishes – or in some cases, orders. Without meaning any disrespect to the individual soldiers – who fought with great valor – the whole division had assumed Allen's cavalier attitude. I personally took over tactical planning, and at the end of the Troina battle…I relieved both Allen and Roosevelt, one of my most unpleasant duties of the war.[90]

Bradley came full circle to the official Army history. According to the version of events in *A General's Life*, Bradley recommended Allen for promotion and a new command - despite Allen's rebelliousness. Later, the "GI Revolt" convinced Bradley that Allen must go. Ultimately, as in Garland and Smyth's history, ineptness of command at Troina is the final straw. That Bradley held a poor opinion of Allen is without doubt. However, Bradley's autobiographies are inconsistent and confusing in portraying his

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[87] Ibid, 155.

[88] In the early passages on his command of II Corps Bradley roundly criticizes Allen for, among other things, a failed attack on the Tine River's east bank in the final days of the Tunisia campaign. See Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life*, 158 for Bradley's criticism and Gerald Astor, *Terrible Terry Allen*, 176-8 for a description of the Tine River battle. According to Astor, Allen's maneuver plan in the action at the Tine River may have actually been the result of a II Corps field order emanating from Bradley's headquarters.

[89] Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General's Life*, 171-3.

[90] Ibid, 195.

decision making process concerning the relief. His earlier work was much more limited in its criticisms than the second, written well after Allen's death in 1969. This last may be the reason for the increased vitriol in *A General's Life*. Overall, the varying reasons Bradley gave for coming to the relief decision indicate a general friction with Allen as the precipitating factor, vice a single clear moment or event in time. Regardless of when Bradley first thought of relief – after "Second Oran", early on Sicily, or at Troina – the one consistency through both books is the insistence that he alone made the decision to relieve Allen.

Countering this point potentially renders Bradley's argument moot. Author Carlo D'Este's research suggested that in the event it was Patton and Eisenhower who ordered Allen's relief. Their order was independent from the decisions Bradley described in his autobiographies.[91] D'Este pointed to the proposal to move Allen from the 1st Division to a corps command as evidence. As a reference, D'Este used a letter from Patton to Eisenhower that dates the proposal to 16 May 1943. The date is significant. In mid-May 1943, the 1st Division was still on the forward battle line near Tunis. [92] The "Second Battle of Oran," had not yet happened, and the invasion of Sicily and the battle for Troina were still months away. D'Este showed that Eisenhower was contemplating Allen's administrative removal *before* the "decisive" events Bradley claimed as culprits had occurred. Neither Eisenhower's correspondence nor Patton's diaries document Bradley's consultation or dissent. Eisenhower and Patton agreed to retain Allen, "at least until the initial phase of the operation [in Sicily] is consummated."[93] Apart from his autobiographies, there is no other record of Bradley's opinions. The record of events shows only Eisenhower and Patton's involvement at this point in the Mediterranean Campaign. More significantly, primary source correspondence prior to the battle of Troina proves that Patton, not Bradley, ultimately finalized Allen's removal. A minor reference in a short message from Eisenhower to Bradley directly refuted the claims in

[91] Carlo D'Este. *Bitter Victory*, 468-9 & 472-3.

[92] See H.R. Knickerbocker, et al. *Danger Forward*, 97, which describes the end of fighting in Tunisia with, "The final [Axis] surrender on May 13th…found the First Division still in positions west of the Tine [River]."

[93] Martin Blumenson, ed., *The Patton Papers*, 251.

A Soldier's Story and *A General's Life*. In a secret cable dated 30 July, Eisenhower relayed, "Reference to the divisional command made in your letter [sic] has already been settled on request of General Patton."[94] Although cryptic, when read in context, this message informed Bradley that Patton had already requested Allen's relief from command. It is presumably a response to a similar request from Bradley. Eisenhower's message debunks Bradley's claims in several ways. First, it proves that the Troina battle was not Bradley's "final straw" as portrayed in *A General's Life*. Eisenhower responded to Bradley's request on 30 July. This was at least two days before the lead combat team of the 1st Division made its initial attack on the town. Bradley requested Allen's relief before Troina; therefore, the battle could not have been the reason. Second, although not conclusive, the message seems to indicate that Eisenhower and Patton made the decision to relieve Allen independent of and without Bradley's knowledge. The truncated response informs after the fact, as if Bradley was unaware of Patton's request or the redundancy of his own. Therefore, Bradley's influence over the relief is at best uncertain and for the most part undocumented. Based on the timeline of provable events enough doubt exists to question his accounts. Allen's eventual removal had been decided before the "GI Revolt" in Oran, and the fight at Troina had not yet occurred when this decision was finalized. Bradley may have disliked Allen, and may have spoken of this with Eisenhower and Patton, but the record of evidence shows only ancillary involvement in Allen's relief. Eisenhower and Patton made the decision and affected its execution. Then they informed Bradley.

For obvious reasons, this argument also dispels the notion that the stress of Troina changed Allen's behavior to such a degree as to warrant his relief. Other factors contribute to dismissing this idea, but the fact remains – clearly indicated in Eisenhower's message – that the decision to relieve Allen

[94] Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., ed. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: II*, 1304. The full text of the message reads: "Letter of yours just received. Will make request on Chief of Staff immediately for any one of three officers named by you [reference to Bradley's request for a new G3] In meantime will search our records to see whether we can offer you a highly qualified man immediately. Reference to the divisional command made in your letter has already been settled on request of General Patton." The absence of grammar indicates that this message was heavily abbreviated to lessen its size for transmission. The last sentence might more appropriately read, "Reference to the *change in* divisional command made in your letter – *this matter* has already been settled on request of General Patton.

occurred before the battle began.[95] Any effect the battle had on Allen's behavior could not have led to his relief. If further proof were needed, months later Eisenhower came to Allen's defense when media rumors circulated that Troina had been his undoing. As D'Este points out, Eisenhower was adamant in clarifying the record. He stated emphatically that, "It is a terrible injustice to General Allen to hint that he was relieved for inefficiency. The answer to this one is that I will be glad to have General Allen again as a division commander."[96] Like Ward, Allen continued to command his division with skill and perseverance until his relief on 6 August 1943. Neither Bradley's influence with Eisenhower nor his authority as Allen's corps commander was the proximate cause of the relief. As well, the timing of the relief decision precludes even the possibility that it was the result of the stresses of Troina. Rather, Allen's removal was merely the finalization of a decision made in Tunisia months prior. It had its roots in several interrelated issues outside his span of control and apart from his individual proficiency as a division commander. Eisenhower's correspondence clearly spelled out the reasons for the relief. They contradict the official Army history found in *Sicily and the Surrender of Italy*.

Political and Military Considerations Affecting Allen's Relief

D'Este argued that the impetus behind Eisenhower's desire to remove Allen from command was a chance meeting between the two just days prior to the Axis surrender in Northern Tunisia.[97] On 7 May 1943, Eisenhower and his party met with Allen in an apparently unscheduled visit to the 1st Infantry's command post. Allen had just returned from an unsuccessful attack on German defenses at the Tine

[95] Among the other factors that weaken the Troina argument is the widely agreed upon notion that Allen actually refused to quit fighting until the town was taken – even after the 9th Infantry Division was ready to assume his mission. See H.R. Knickerbocker, et al. *Danger Forward*, 135 and Gerald Astor, *Terrible Terry Allen*, 216 for corroboration. As well, Bradley himself played a significant part in the ways Allen committed his force to the battle; Allen actually withdrew two regiments from the initial attack on Bradley's recommendation (See H.R. Knickerbocker, et al. *Danger Forward*, 132 and Carlo D'Este. *Bitter Victory*, 463). Thus, to some degree, the hesitancy noted in the official Army history was actually the result of higher command influence, not stress or timidity.

[96] Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., ed. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: III* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 1596.

[97] Carlo D'Este. *Bitter Victory*, 471.

River. Eisenhower's aide wrote of the meeting in his diary. He described Allen as "Obviously…very tired. His discussion of the situation was given in a monosyllabic monotone…His men were tired. They had attacked daily for weeks."[98] The attack had commenced at three o'clock the previous morning. Allen's fatigue was obviously the result of being awake and at the front for the better part of two days. After the meeting Eisenhower apparently came to acknowledge that Allen and the 1st Division had been in the fight longer than any other American unit. D'Este claimed that this realization was the primary factor in Eisenhower's decision to move Allen.

This argument is an accurate starting point in examining the reasons for Allen's relief. However, more explanation is needed beyond that given in D'Este's *Bitter Victory*. A much broader factor influenced Eisenhower's thinking after the 7 May meeting. It was again rooted in his belief in organizational efficiency and "sacrifice for victory." Eisenhower understood that the 1st Infantry Division was unique within the United States Army. In continuous service since World War I, the Division was composed of more interwar regular army officers and NCOs than any other. The American public knew its fighting prowess; the victory at El Guettar had rescued II Corps' reputation when it was most in danger. In spite of Bradley's animus, the Division's spirit and élan were well known amongst the Allies. Allied Forces Headquarters recognized early on that the Division would play a key role in the inevitable cross-channel invasion of France. Indeed, immediately following the Axis surrender in Sicily the 1st Infantry was pulled off the line and sent to England to begin training for the Normandy landings.[99] More than "just another combat unit," the Big Red One thus represented a vital facet of the larger American strategy for the war. As for Allen, Eisenhower surely recognized that command of a division in World War II routinely involved direct exposure to enemy contact and extreme field living conditions. After Oran, Kasserine, El Guettar, and the Tine River, Eisenhower knew that this type of command would eventually wear down Allen. Eisenhower's approval of Patton's request to retain Allen for Sicily was tacit

[98] Harry C. Butcher. *My Three Years with Eisenhower*, 298.

[99] H.R. Knickerbocker, et al. *Danger Forward*, 175.

acknowledgement that Allen had not yet reached that point. However, in mid-May 1943, Eisenhower established a formal program by which he could ultimately retain Allen's aggressive leadership ability for future use and still give him a rest from continuous combat. In the waning days of the North African campaign, Eisenhower and Marshall instituted a plan for rotating officers from the combat theater to training units in the U.S. [100] Front line experience was immeasurably valuable to the divisions and corps then forming at home. Although Eisenhower's published correspondence never mentions the rotation of any officer above the rank of brigadier general, other sources corroborate the idea that he considered moving Terry Allen under the rotation policy. The orders Allen received directing his relief cited it as the official reason.[101]

Patton apparently agreed with Eisenhower's assessment. Allen served the Seventh Army's needs in the breakout from the beachhead at Gela. In the aftermath it was only a matter of finding the opportune moment for Allen's removal. This came at the end of July 1943, when MG Clarence Huebner was dismissed from his Deputy Chief of Staff position in Alexander's Army Group headquarters. Both Patton and Eisenhower had a favorable impression of Huebner. Patton received permission from Eisenhower to replace Allen with Huebner as the Division approached Troina.[102] The relief was therefore the result of Eisenhower's conclusion that Allen had served his purpose to the organization and should be given a chance to rest and preserve his leadership talents for future use. Eisenhower saw in Allen a proven combat leader of value to the country, much as Marshall had years earlier. Bradley's influence on history radically changed the ways in which Allen's relief is described. It permeates many contemporary

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[100] This discussion began on or around May 11, 1943. See Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., ed. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years: II*, 1123-4.

[101] Astor quotes a letter Allen sent to his wife in which he states, "It seems that in accordance with the War Dept. policy of rotating general officers with division combat experience, Ted [Roosevelt] and I are relieved from the 1st Division for reassignment." Gerald Astor, *Terrible Terry Allen*, 220. Astor's subsequent claim that "This policy was only applied to Allen…No one else from the North African and Sicilian campaigns was removed" is accurate in wording but not intent. In February 1943 MG Jonathan Anderson, commander of the 3rd Infantry Division, was reassigned from North Africa to the United States – before Ike's policy came into effect. See Donald G. Taggart, ed., *History of the Third Infantry Division in World War II* (Nashville: The Battery Press, 1987), 41.

[102] Martin Blumenson, ed., *The Patton Papers*, 303.

accounts. Oddly, most sources ignore the seminal statements on the matter, made by the primary decision-maker. Eisenhower defended Allen's reputation in the months following Sicily, and continued to do so years after the war ended. In 1947, Eisenhower responded to criticisms leveled at Allen by Walter Bedell-Smith. In a letter to Allen, Eisenhower fully described and validated the real reasons behind the relief:

> When you were sent back from the First Division, there were a number of reasons. Among these reasons was an agreement with the War Department that selected commanders would be sent back to improve the training of the vast number of divisions that would still have to enter the battle. Another was that you yourself told me you were somewhat tired, and I felt that a short period in training activity in the United States would bring you back freshened and with all your combat leadership qualities unimpaired…The final reason was after the conclusion of the Sicilian campaign. I felt that the First Division, which had performed magnificently under you, should then undergo a considerable period of training, and I felt that in Huebner we had available a man ideally suited for this role… [During the war,] There were several individuals who failed, and they were relieved from command and thereafter either reduced in rank, or were never again allowed to come into combat. Your whole record shows that you were definitely not classed in this category, but on the other hand were considered an extremely able combat commander.[103]

In light of such clear insight, it is unknown why so many sources still reiterate Bradley's flawed descriptions. D'Este summarized the real reasons behind Allen's relief best, saying, "The relief of Terry Allen is still viewed with mixed emotions even though the evidence clearly suggests that it came about as a result of the genuine belief it was time for a change."[104]

Conclusion

The reliefs of Generals Orlando Ward and Terry de la Mesa Allen represented in practice Eisenhower's belief in an "at all costs" focus on victory, and its application to organizational leadership. That he understood this concept early in the North African campaign and continued to imbue his decisions with it throughout his time as Supreme Allied Commander is testament to his foresight, patience, and willingness to forgo his personal reputation for the organization. Contrary to the opinions and recollections of his most outspoken subordinates, it was ultimately Eisenhower's decision that affected both reliefs.

[103] Louis Galambos, ed. *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: IX*, 1894.

[104] Carlo D'Este. *Bitter Victory*, 475.

In Ward, Eisenhower contradicted his own stated opinions to effectively "kill two birds with one stone" and satisfy the urgings of British and American generals at command echelons between Allied Forces HQ and the 1st Armored Division. Ward's dismissal covered up Alexander's incoherent plans for the American commitment to North Africa; in its wake, Patton's failure to punch through the German line and prove American superiority was assuaged as well. Ike kept the upper-level alliance intact (if not healthy) by sacrificing the position of a lower-level subordinate. Ward's career, while tarnished in the history books, was nevertheless intact. He returned to command the 20th Armored Division and saw combat on the European mainland. It is hard to believe that Ike was not aware of Ward's return, for, "In the American Army few relieved commanders got a second chance to lead men in combat; Ward was an exception because he was exceptional."[105]

In Allen, Eisenhower saw through the disapproval of one of his most trusted subordinates to understand the benefits to be had in retaining Allen's talents as a combat commander. At the same time, Ike realized that those talents could not last through sustained combat campaigns. He understood the special nature of the Big Red One, and found in Huebner the right man to take up command where Allen left off.[106] Allen's move from command should have been viewed for what it was: an administrative rotation of leadership. Unfortunately, in the sixty-six years since, the real reasons for his relief have been clouded by the dogged adherence to a single-track version of events. As with Ward, Allen's career was spared but his reputation smashed. He returned to fight under Eisenhower in Europe as commander of the 104th Infantry Division. More than that, Allen's lifetime of service to his country and his sacrifices even after leaving the military are representative of the finest the American officer corps has to offer.[107] His memory deserves better than it receives.

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[105] Rick Atkinson. *An Army at Dawn*, 452.

[106] It is worthy to note that Huebner was also replaced as 1st Division commander before the end of the war.

[107] Allen's son and namesake, LTC Terry de la Mesa Allen, Jr., was killed in Vietnam in 1967 while in command of a battalion of the 1st Infantry Division.

The commander of the 1st Armored Division's Combat Command B, General Paul Robinett, remarked, "The African Campaign has furnished the military students of the future a very interesting historical example of allied command."[108] His comments might extend to the entire Allied effort in the Mediterranean in 1943. Eisenhower's lesson, muddied by time and the regurgitation of history, yet stands for use by today's military leaders.

[108] Paul M. Robinett. *Armor Command*, 191.

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