

The Divisional Commander in the U.S. Army in World War II:

A Case Study of the Normandy Campaign,

6 June 1944 to 24 July 1944

by

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to investigate the role of the divisional commander in the United States Army in World War II. It uses the group of general officers who were engaged during the Normandy campaign in June and July 1944 as a case study. The thesis examines the '*Normandy Group's*' entry into the Army and early service, including the impact of World War I and the post Armistice demobilization. It then focuses on the officers' careers between the wars, and how they spent their time with troops, on staff work and in the Army school system.

The thesis investigates how the Army reacted to the war in Europe after September 1939, in particular the legal steps taken so command changes could be expedited if the country went to war. It also looks at how the army assessed incumbent commanders and selected their replacements, exploring different problems in the Regular Army and National Guard. The role of the army manoeuvres in assessing commanders is also examined.

The thesis examines the reasons behind changes in commanders of the divisions destined for Normandy, after the United States entered the war in December 1941, exploring the differences between the Regular Army, the Armored Force, the National Guard and the New Army. It argues that using Efficiency Ratings and networking achieved a 75-percent success rate and examines how general officers were monitored. While battle testing was the true test of command effectiveness under fire, the thesis examines the amount of combat experience available to SHAEF before D-Day.

The thesis scrutinizes the role of the divisional commander on the battlefield, comparing different command styles, and the functions of his staff. It uses five case studies to study the reasons behind success and failure in command, examining the justification for removing officers from command and the reasons for choosing their replacements. A snapshot of the Normandy Group in May 1945 explores how successful the initial assessments are. Finally, the thesis examines what essential command skills a successful divisional commander needed and what leadership qualities were desirable.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my late parents Phil and Fay Rawson who instilled the importance of a good education in me from an early age. Hopefully, I have done the same for my son Alex.

Acknowledgements

A thesis such as this would not have been possible without the help and support of a number of people. Firstly, thanks must go to the staff at the various research centres I visited in the United States and the United Kingdom. In the United States these were the Library of Congress (LOC), Washington D.C., National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) at the University of Maryland, the United States Army Military History Institute department of the United States Army War College (AWC), Carlisle, Pennsylvania and the George C. Marshall Research Library (GCMRL), Lexington, Virginia. Also the Imperial War Museum Library, London, in the United Kingdom.

There are three people who gave me particularly extensive support due to their knowledge in the field of knowledge I was working on. This thesis would not have been so complete without them. They are Richard L. Boylan, Senior Military Archivist at the NARA, David A. Keough, Archivist-Historian at the AWC, and Peggy Dullard, Archivist at the GCMRL. You can never underestimate the assistance dedicated archivists can offer.

At the University of Birmingham, I would initially like to thank all the staff I have come into contact with during my course of studies. However, I would like to thank three individuals for their help. Dr. John Bourne eased my way onto the course and also provided me with the inspiration for the subject of this thesis. Dr. Bourne's work on Divisional Generals in the British Army in World War I is well known; I applied his idea to a different conflict, World War II and a different army, the U.S. Army, and then added my own questions. I must also thank my supervisor, Professor Gary Sheffield initially for pointing me towards the Normandy campaign, and allowing me to focus my work, and also suggesting many of the questions posed. He then patiently, and painstakingly, pushed me in the right direction over the next two years. I have learnt a tremendous amount about research and presentation thanks to his guidance and support. I thank Dr. Michael Snape for allowing me to present a paper on my thesis during the April 2010 War Studies Post-Graduate Symposium. Finally, I thank Ross Mahoney for allowing me to refer to his thesis for guidance on presentation.

Andrew Rawson, June 2011

Contents

Abstract		ii
Dedication		iii
Acknowledgements		iv
List of Figures		vii
Introduction		ix
1.1	Introducing the Normandy Group	ix
1.2	Notes on Sources and General Officers' Curricula Vitae	xi
Chapter 1	Careers Prior to World War II	1
1.1	Entry into the Army and Service before World War I	2
1.2	The Impact of World War I on Officers' Careers	6
1.3	The Army's Situation between the Wars	12
1.4	Army Officer Careers between the Wars	14
1.5	Troop Time	17
1.6	Staff Time	20
1.7	Student Time	22
1.8	The General Service Schools	26
1.9	The Army War College	30
1.10	Teaching Time	32
1.11	Conclusions: Careers Prior to World War II	34
Chapter 2	Reaction to a European War: Sept 1939 to November 1941	37
2.1	Ability Ahead of Seniority	38
2.2	The National Emergency	41
2.3	The Selection of General Officers	44
2.4	Temporary Promotions	46
2.5	Assessing Merit	48
2.6	The National Guard Problem	53
2.7	Military Manoeuvres as an Assessment Tool	58
2.8	Making Changes in the National Guard	62
2.9	The Normandy Group in December 1941	65
2.10	Conclusions: Reaction to a European War	67
Chapter 3	Reaction to a World War: December 1941 to May 1944	69
3.1	Networking for Promotion	70
3.2	Changes in Command, Armoured Divisions	75

3.3	Changes in Command, Regular Army Divisions	77
3.4	Changes in Command, National Guard Divisions	80
3.5	New Army Divisions	83
3.6	Issues Arising from the Mediterranean Campaigns	85
3.7	Theatre Promotions versus United States Promotions	90
3.8	Eisenhower's Final Decisions: December 1943 to May 1944	92
3.9	Conclusions: Reaction to a World War	97
Chapter 4	Normandy, Case Studies in Command: June and July 1944	101
4.1	The Chain of Command: From Army Down to Platoon	102
4.2	The Division Commander	104
4.3	The Assistant Commander	107
4.4	The Divisional Staff	109
4.5	Case Studies in Command	111
4.5.1	General Jay W. MacKelvie and 90th Infantry Division	112
4.5.2	General Eugene M. Landrum and 90th Division	115
4.5.3	General Raymond McLain and 90th Division	121
4.5.4	General William C. McMahan and 8th Infantry Division	124
4.5.5	General Leroy H. Watson and 3rd Armored Division	126
4.5.6	General Lloyd D. Brown and 28th Infantry Division	128
4.6	Promotion Policy during the European Campaign	131
4.7	Successful Commanders	133
4.8	The Stress of Command	136
4.9	Conclusions on Command in the Normandy Campaign	138
Chapter 5	Conclusion: Desired Command Skills and Leadership Qualities	142
5.1	Holistic Views of Command and Leadership	142
5.2	Personal Management Skills	145
5.3	Man Management	146
5.4	Personal Abilities	148
5.5	Leadership Attributes	151
5.6	Final Conclusions	153
Bibliography		
B1.	Contemporary Sources	159
B2.	Non-Contemporary Sources	163

List of Figures

Introduction

Figure I.1	The Normandy Group	x
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Chapter 1 Careers Prior to World War II

Figure 1.1	Normandy Group Graduates of the USMA	3
Figure 1.2	Graduates from Alternative Educational Establishments	4
Figure 1.3	Officers Commissioned from the National Guard Cadet Corps	4
Figure 1.4	Enlisted Soldiers Commissioned from the Ranks	5
Figure 1.5	Changes in Rank due to World War I	7
Figure 1.6	World War I Experience in France	8
Figure 1.7	The Normandy Group's Careers between the Wars: 1918-1940	15
Figure 1.8	Commanding Troops: 1918-1940	17
Figure 1.9	Overseas Postings between the Wars: 1918-1940	19
Figure 1.10	Staff Time between the Wars: 1918-1940	21
Figure 1.11	The Army School System	23
Figure 1.12	Studying Time between the Wars: 1918 – 1940	24
Figure 1.13	Teaching Time between the Wars: 1918 – 1940	32

Chapter 2 Reaction to a European War: Sept 1939 to November 1941

Figure 2.1	The Normandy Group in September 1940	43
Figure 2.2	Armored Division Commanders; October 1941	59
Figure 2.3	Regular Army Division Commanders; October 1941	60
Figure 2.4	National Guard Division Commanders; October 1941	60
Figure 2.5	Career Advancements due to the Army Manoeuvres	62
Figure 2.6	The Normandy Group in December 1941	65

Chapter 3	Reaction to a World War: December 1941 to May 1944	
Figure 3.1	Wartime Changes in Armored Division Commanders	75
Figure 3.2	Wartime Changes in Regular Army Division Commanders	77
Figure 3.3	Wartime Changes in National Guard Division Commanders	80
Figure 3.4	Wartime Changes in New Army Division Commanders	83
Figure 3.5	Prior Combat Experience	94
Figure 3.6	Length of Service with Division	95
Chapter 4	Normandy, Case Studies in Command: June and July 1944	
Figure 4.1	Commanders Removed and their Replacements	111
Figure 4.2	Successful Commanders	133
Figure 4.3	Promoted to Corps Commanders	136
Chapter 5	Conclusion: Desired Command Skills and Leadership Qualities	
Figure 5.1	Essential Command Skills and Leadership Qualities	144

Introduction

I.1 Introducing the Normandy Group

Between December 1941 and August 1945, 140 men commanded a United States Army division in combat, either in the Mediterranean, the Pacific or in Europe Theatres.¹ General Omar N. Bradley, commander of First U.S. Army in Normandy, believed that a division was only as good as its commander:

... it demonstrated how swiftly a strong commander can transfuse his own strength into a command. But even more than that it proved what we had long contended; that man for man one division was as good as another - they vary only in the skill and leadership of their commanders.²

Despite the importance of the divisional commander in the United States Army in World War II, a survey of the literature covering this period, including campaign histories, divisional histories and biographies, suggests that their role has been under-researched. This thesis aims to examine the careers of the divisional commanders engaged in First U.S. Army's Normandy campaign of June and July 1944 as a case study of this level of command.

On 6 June 1944, D-Day, Allied troops landed, by air and by sea, on the north coast of France at the start of Operation OVERLORD. The airborne and seaborne landings, and the seven-week long battle for Normandy which followed, is one of the most important campaigns of World War II. It is also one of the most widely studied. This thesis focuses on the general officers who commanded a U.S. division in the Normandy campaign, forming a case study for investigating the training and selection of the divisional commander. Twenty divisional commanders took their divisions into combat during this seven week period: twelve infantry, six armoured and two airborne. This thesis explains how they and their subordinates carried out their duties in battle. Four of the twenty were removed from command

1 Heefner, Wilson A., *Twentieth Century Warrior: The Life and Service of Major General Edwin D. Patrick* (Shippensburg, Nebraska, White Mane Inc., 1995) Appendix F, p. 174.

2 Bradley, Omar N., *A Soldier's Story* (New York, NY, Holt, Rinehart Winston, 1951) p. 296.

for failing to command effectively, and one replacement was also removed. This thesis also studies why they were replaced and why their replacements were chosen. It also assesses the command skills and leadership qualities a divisional commander needed to have.

These twenty-five general officers were responsible for the day-to-day execution of First U.S. Army's plans, and it was they who were ultimately responsible for its eventual success in the battle for Normandy. The twenty-five generals are referred to as the 'Normandy Group' in this thesis and they are listed in Figure I.1:

Figure I.1: The Normandy Group*

Name	Nickname	Date of Birth	Place of Birth
Baade, Paul W.		April 16, 1889	Fort Wayne, Indiana
Barton, Raymond O.	Tubby	August 22, 1889	Granada, Colorado
Brooks, Edward H.	Standing Eddie	April 25, 1893	Concord, New Hampshire
Brown, Lloyd D.		July 28, 1892	Sharon, Georgia
Cota, Norman Daniel	Dutch	May 30, 1893	Chelsea, Massachusetts
Eddy, Manton S.	Matt	May 16, 1892	Chicago, Illinois
Gerhardt	Jumping Charlie	June 6, 1895	Lebanon, Tennessee
Grow, Robert W.		February 14, 1895	Sibley, Iowa
Hobbs, Leland S.		February 24, 1892	Gloucester, Massachusetts
Huebner, Clarence R.	Coach	November 24, 1888	Bushton, Kansas
Irwin, Stafford L.	Red	March 23, 1893	Fort Monroe, Virginia
Landrum, Eugene M.		February 6, 1891	Pensacola, Florida
MacKelvie, Jay W.		September 23, 1890	Esmond, South Dakota
Macon, Robert C.		July 12, 1890	Washington, DC
McMahon, William C.		January 10, 1895	Brooklyn, New York
McLain, Raymond S.		April 4, 1890	Rose, Kentucky
Oliver, Lunsford E.		March 17, 1889	Nemaha, Nebraska
Ridgway, Matthew B.	Eagle	March 3, 1895	Fort Monroe, Virginia
Robertson, Walter M.		June 15, 1888	Nelson County, Virginia

Rose Maurice		November 26, 1899	Middletown, Connecticut
Stroh, Donald A.		November 3, 1892	Harrisburg, Pennsylvania
Taylor, Maxwell D.		August 26, 1901	Keytesville, Missouri
Watson, Leroy H		November 3, 1893	St. Louis, Missouri
Wood, John S.	Tiger Jack or 'P'	January 11, 1888	Arkansas
Wyche, Ira T.	Billy	October 16, 1887	Ocracoke, North Carolina

Key:

Nickname: General's Nickname

Date of Birth: Date of Birth

Place of Birth: Place of Birth

Note:

- * Limitations of time and space have precluded a study of the occupations of the fathers of the group.

The time period covered by this thesis ends on 24 July 1944. Operation COBRA, First U.S. Army's attack west of St Lô, began the following day. This was the start of the Allied breakout across France. 25 July is also the date that the command structure of the U.S. Army in Normandy changed. Twelfth U.S. Army Group headquarters was formed with General Omar N. Bradley in command. Under Bradley were First U.S. Army, (General Courtney H. Hodges), and Third U.S. Army (General George S. Patton).

This thesis aims to discover who these general officers were; how their careers had been shaped; how they were trained; why they were chosen and how they performed in the Normandy Campaign. It also aims to explain what command skills and leadership qualities they had to have.

I.2 Notes on Sources and General Officers' Curricula Vitae

The National Personnel Records Center, St Louis (NPRC), is the repository for the United States military personnel records. On 12 July 1973 a fire destroyed around 17 million, or 80-percent, of the files, including many belonging to general officers of World War II:

No duplicate copies of the records that were destroyed in the fire were maintained, nor was a microfilm copy ever produced. There were no indexes created prior to the fire. In addition, millions of documents had been lent to the Department of Veterans Affairs before the fire occurred. Therefore, a complete listing of the records that were lost is not available.³

I decided not to visit the NPRC because of the gaps in its archives. Instead, I choose to concentrate my efforts on the records held in the National Archives and Records Administration, University of Maryland, College Park, MD (NARA), the George C. Marshall Foundation Archives Library, Lexington, VA (GCMRL), and the Army War College Library, Carlisle, PA (AWCL). Published works, including campaign histories, biographies and divisional histories, were consulted at the Library of Congress, Washington DC (LoC). After visiting the four archives, I believed that I had located enough correspondence, papers, files and books to answer many of the questions set by this thesis.

An early stage in the preparation of this thesis was the construction of detailed *curricula vitae* for the Normandy Group. Complete records could be created for nineteen general officers while partial information was found for the remaining six. Skeleton *curricula vitae* were also created for other general officers who were affected by the appointments of the Normandy Group, to confirm if they were promoted, transferred, demoted or retired. This also made it possible to investigate cases of networking and mentoring. All the references to appointments, promotions, transferrals and removals are based on the information listed in the relevant *curricula vitae*.

Three main sources were used to construct the *curricula vitae*:

- 1). Office of Public Information Press, Department of Defense, *General Officers Biographical Summaries*, Washington DC, circa 1947 (*curricula vitae* of general officers who served in the

³ National Personnel Records Center, St Louis, website, <http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/military-personnel/fire-1973.html>, accessed February 2010.

Department of Defense in the post-war years; a copy is held in Librarians' area of the National Archives, Records Administration, University of Maryland, College Park, MD)

- 2). Ancell, R. Manning & Miller, Christine M., *The Biographical Dictionaries of World War II Generals and Flag Officers* (Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 1996)
- 3). Stanton, Shelby L., *Order of Battle, U.S. Army, World War II* (Novato, CA, Presidio, 1984)

Supplementary information has been added from divisional histories, campaign histories and obituaries. Correspondence between senior general officers and their G-1 Personnel staff officers⁴, primarily General George C. Marshall (Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army after September 1939), General Lesley McNair (Chief of Staff at General Headquarters, U.S. Army after July 1940 and Commanding General of Army Ground Forces after March 1942) and General Dwight D. Eisenhower (Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force after December 1943) have also provided information

⁴ Staff officers and staff work in the U.S. Army was split into four sections. G-1 for personnel and administration, G-2 for intelligence on the enemy, G-3 for planning operations, G-4 for logistics; G-5 was added during the battle for Germany, to deal with matters relating to the occupation.

Chapter 1

Careers prior to World War II

The pre-World War II careers of the Normandy Group will be assessed in this chapter. A range of questions will be considered, including: how did these general officers begin their careers and what impact did World War I have on their career? By 1919 the Normandy Group were captains or majors, aged around thirty years old, serving in an army that had just been reduced to a fraction of its wartime size by demobilization. Moreover, the interwar years started with the United States pursuing an isolationist military strategy, which saw it refusing to be drawn into worldwide alliances. While the country relied on its Navy and Coastguard to protect its territories, the politicians and the people expected the part-time National Guard to deal with internal emergencies. Regular Army soldiers had nothing to do except train while the generals struggled to cope with crippling financial cutbacks. How did the national strategy and the financial restraints affect the Normandy Group's careers during this period?

The United States entered an economic depression following the October 1929 Wall Street Crash; it would become known as the 'Great Depression'. Military budgets had to be further reduced and by 1932 General Peyton C. March, former Chief of Staff, summed up the United States defensive situation as 'impotent'.¹ It was not a good time to be an officer in the Regular Army; 'Low pay, often boring duty, and slow promotions characterized the career of a regular.'² This thesis examines the how the Depression affected the Normandy Group's careers and training.

While the United States pursued its isolationist strategy, to what extent did the U.S. Army continue to train its officers for war? What opportunities were there to command troops, compared to

1 Gole, Henry G., *The Road to Rainbow: Army Planning for Global War 1934 to 1940* (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2003) p. 3.

2 Gole, *The Road to Rainbow* p. 7.

studying or teaching? How did the U.S. Army school system identify talented officers, and did it train them to command a division when there were none to command? If so, where were they taught and what were they taught? Finally, what rank had the Normandy Group reached when war erupted in Europe in September 1939, and how were their careers affected when the United States mobilized the National Guard and planned to create a large citizen army, known as the New Army?

1.1 Entry into the Army and Service before World War I

The Normandy Group were born during the 1870s and 1880s and they witnessed rapid technological and cultural changes during their formative years. The majority of them joined the U.S. Army between 1907 and 1913 when there were four ways to become a Regular Army officer. First, enrol at the United States Military Academy, West Point, (USMA); second, graduate from a military school at an alternative educational establishment; third, gain a National Guard Cadet Corps commission then transfer to the Regular Army; fourth, enlist in the Regular Army and rise through the ranks.

The USMA was a very insular institution before World War I and classes on the four-year course focused on learning by rote rather than through debate.³ Although the Academy was improving its curriculum and facilities, they had changed little since the Civil War. Teaching was biased towards mathematics and science classes rather than competitive sports and physical fitness.⁴ World War I curtailed courses in 1917 and 1918 and 'America's entry into the war had caused the Academy to be transformed, briefly, into a glorified officer's candidate school.'⁵ Although the new Superintendent, Brigadier-General Douglas MacArthur,⁶ endeavoured to rectify the post-war chaos, his changes came too late for Normandy Group; all but one had graduated by 1917. Seventy-four (50-percent) of the 140 general officers who commanded a U.S. Army division in combat in World War II

3. Sidney Forman, *West Point, A History of the United States Military Academy* (Columbia University Press, 1950), p.198.

4 *Ibid*, p. 198.

5 Taylor, John M., *General Maxwell Taylor, The Sword and the Pen* (Bantam Dell Publishing, New York, NY, 1989), p. 16.

6 General Douglas MacArthur, Superintendent of USMA from 1919 to 1932, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army from 1930 to 1937, commander of U.S. Army Forces Far East in 1941, Supreme Commander, Southwest Pacific Area, 1942 to 1945.

were commissioned from the USMA. Fourteen of the Normandy Group (56-percent), were commissioned from the USMA between 1911 and 1922; they are listed in Figure 1.1.⁷

Figure 1.1: Graduates of the USMA

Name	Branch	Commissioned	Division
Baade	Infantry	1911	Infantry
Barton	Infantry	1912	Infantry
Cota	Infantry	1917*	Infantry
Gerhardt	Cavalry	1917*	Infantry
Hobbs	Infantry	1913	Infantry
Irwin	Cavalry	1913	Infantry
McMahon	Infantry	1917*	Infantry
Oliver	Engineers	1913	Armored
Ridgway	Infantry	1917*	Airborne
Robertson	Infantry	1912	Infantry
Taylor	Field Artillery	1922	Airborne
Watson	Infantry	1915	Infantry
Wood	Coastal Artillery	1912	Armored
Wyche	Field Artillery	1911	Infantry

Key:

Branch: Branch of the United States armed services the graduate joined

Commissioned: Year commissioned from West Point

Division in Normandy: Type of division commanded in Normandy

Note:

* Candidates graduated in April 1917, when the course was cut two months short following the declaration of war.

⁷ Heefner, *Twentieth Century Warrior*, Appendix F, p. 174.

Four officers were commissioned from alternative military establishments; they are listed in figure 1.2. All four attended the three month course for First Provisional Officers at the Army Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, before they were commissioned in the Regular Army.⁸

Figure 1.2: Graduates from Military Schools at Other Educational Establishments

Name	Branch	Establishment	Date	Division
Brown	Infantry	Georgia University	1917	Infantry
Eddy	Infantry	Shattuck Military School	1916	Infantry
Macon	Infantry	Virginia University	1916	Infantry
Stroh	Cavalry	Michigan Agricultural College	1917	Infantry

Key:

Branch: Branch of the United States armed services joined

Educational Establishment: Educational establishment graduated from

Date: Year commissioned from the Army Service Schools course

Division: Type of division commanded in the European campaign

Two of the Normandy Group started their military careers with the National Guard Cadet Corps. They then transferred to the Regular Army and attended the First Provisional Officers Course. They are listed in figure 1.3:

Figure 1.3: Officers Commissioned from the National Guard Cadet Corps

Name	Branch	Commissioned	Division
Brooks*	Field Artillery	1917	Armored
Grow**	Field Artillery	1916	Armored

⁸ Course title detailed in General Eddy's Curriculum Vitae. The course brought officers up to a standard acceptable by the Regular Army.

Key:

Branch: Branch of the United States armed services joined

Commissioned: Year commissioned

Division: Type of division commanded in the European campaign

Notes:

* Brooks graduated from Norwich University as a captain in the Vermont's National Guard in 1916. He was called up and granted a Regular Army commission in 1917.

** Grow was commissioned in the Minnesota National Guard in 1915 and granted a Regular Army commission in 1916.

Five of the Normandy Group enlisted in the ranks, three in the Regular Army. They served for an average of five years before they were commissioned. They are listed in figure 1.4:

Figure 1.4: Enlisted Soldiers Commissioned from the Ranks

Name	Branch	Enlisted	Commissioned	Division
Huebner	Infantry	1910	1916	Infantry
MacKelvie	Cavalry	1913	1917	Infantry
Landrum	Infantry	1910	1916	Infantry
McLain	Infantry	1912*	1914*	Infantry
Rose	Infantry	1916*	1917*	Armored

Key:

Branch: Branch of the United States armed services enlisted in

Enlisted: Year enlisted in the ranks

Commissioned: Year commissioned from the Army Service School

Division: Type of division commanded in the European campaign

Note:

* National Guardsman and a National Guard commission

Fourteen of the Normandy Group served as junior officers in the Regular Army before the United States declared war in April 1917. Brooks, Brown, Cota, Gerhardt, MacKelvie, McMahon, Stroh and Ridgway were commissioned after the United States entered World War I. Only Taylor was commissioned after the Armistice. McLain and Rose were officers in the National Guard.

The only U.S. Army military activity prior to World War I followed raids on border towns by Mexican bandits led by Francisco 'Pancho' Villa in November 1915. While Regular Army units and National Guard units deployed along the Mexican border, General John J. Pershing raised a 5,000 strong 'Punitive' force; it crossed the Mexican border in March 1916.⁹ Six of the Normandy Group (Baade, Eddy, Grow, McLain, Oliver, Rose and Wyche) served along the Mexican border. Only Hobbs and Irwin served with Pershing's expedition.

1.2 The Impact of World War I on Officers' Careers

The U.S. Army numbered only 108,399 when the country entered World War I in April 1917 but it expanded rapidly to 2.5 million over the next two years.¹⁰ It had no recent overseas military experience and Regular Army officers were promoted, either on a permanent or a temporary basis, above their experience to command in the expanding citizen army. The rank details of seventeen of the Normandy Group are known and partial information is known about three more. Virtually all were permanently promoted one grade, typically from 1st lieutenant to captain, and most were temporarily promoted a second grade, typically to major.¹¹ Temporary grades were typically removed in the post-Armistice demobilization. Changes in grade are listed in Figure 1.5:

9 D'Este, Carlo, *Eisenhower, Allied Supreme Commander* (London, Cassell, 2004), pp. 115-116.

10 D'Este, *Eisenhower*, p. 116.

11 Rank hierarchy from the lowest upwards was 2nd lieutenant, 1st lieutenant, captain, major, lieutenant colonel, colonel.

Figure 1.5: Changes in Rank due to World War I¹²

Name	Pre-War	Declaration of War	Temporary Wartime	Permanent Wartime	Permanent Post-War
Baade	1st Lieut.	Major	Lieut.-Col.	Unknown	Unknown
Barton	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Brooks	2nd Lieut.	1st Lieut.	Captain	1st Lieut.	Captain
Brown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Cota	2nd Lieut.	1st Lieut.	Major	1st Lieut.	Captain
Eddy	1st Lieut.	1st Lieut.	1st Lieut.	1st Lieut.	Captain
Gerhardt	2nd Lieut.	1st Lieut.	Captain	1st Lieut.	Captain
Grow	1st Lieut.	Captain	Captain	Captain	Captain
Hobbs	1st Lieut.	Captain	Major	Captain	Major
Huebner	1st Lieut.	Captain	Lieut.-Col.	Captain	Captain
Irwin	1st Lieut.	Captain	Major	Captain	Major
Landrum	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
MacKelvie	1st Lieut.	Captain	Captain	Captain	Captain*
Macon	1st Lieut.	Captain	Captain	Captain	Captain
McMahon	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
McLain**	Captain	Captain	Captain	Captain	Captain
Oliver	1st Lieut.	Captain	Lieut.-Col.	Captain	Captain
Ridgway	2nd Lieut.	Captain	Captain	1st Lieut.	Captain
Robertson	1st Lieut.	Captain	Major	Captain	Captain
Rose	2nd Lieut.	2nd Lieut.	1st Lieut.	1st Lieut.	****
Stroh	2nd Lieut.	Captain	Captain	2nd Lieut.	Captain
Taylor***	---	---	West Point	West Point	West Point
Watson	1st Lieut.	Captain	Major	Captain	Captain
Wood	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
Wyche	1st Lieut.	Captain	Lieut.-Col.	Captain	Major

¹² Declaration of war in April 1917 and the Armistice declaration in November 1918.

Key:

Pre-War Rank: Permanent rank before April 1917

Declaration of War Rank: Rank awarded during the Army expansion in the summer of 1917

Temporary Wartime Rank: Highest temporary rank during the war

Permanent Wartime Rank: Permanent rank at the Armistice

Permanent Post-War Rank: Rank attained when the post war demobilization ended in 1920

Notes:

* MacKelvie was a temporary Major during the post war demobilization

** McLain was National Guard

*** Taylor did not graduate from West Point until after the Armistice.

**** Rose left the National Guard after the armistice; he joined the Regular Army in 1921 after a twelve month break

The first U.S. Army division entered the trenches in France in October 1917, and two more followed in March 1918. The American Expeditionary Forces (A.E.F.) principally fought in the final Allied offensive in the autumn of 1918, and it had suffered around 320,000 casualties by the time of the Armistice on 11 November 1918. All but one (Taylor was still at USMA) of the Normandy Group were eligible to serve in France and Flanders, however, only twelve (50-percent) did; their type and length of experience is listed in Figure 1.6:¹³

Figure 1.6: World War I Experience in France

Name	Rank	Trenches	Staff work
Baade	Unknown	4	---
Brooks	Captain	6	---
Brown	Unknown	6	---
Eddy	1st Lieut.	6	---
Gerhardt	Captain	4	8

¹³ No information is known about Barton, McMahon and Wood.

Hobbs	Major	---	1
Huebner	Lieut-Col.	16	---
Mackelvie	Captain	4	---
McLain	Captain	4	---
Rose	1st Lieut.	4	---
Watson	Major	4	---
Wyche	Lieut-Col.	1	---

Key:

Rank: Highest temporary rank in France

Trenches: Months served with troop units in the trenches between April 1917 and November 1918

Staff work: Months served as a staff officer in the rear areas between April 1917 and November 1918

It is clear from Figure 1.6 that only one officer, Huebner, gained extensive combat experience, rising to battalion commander by November 1918. The remainder arrived in France in the spring of 1918 and served as junior officers, typically company commanders in the A.E.F.'s final battles of the war; the week long attack on the St Mihiel Salient in September and the six-week long campaign in the Meuse-Argonne starting in October. By this stage of the war tactics had evolved to include tanks, light machine guns, airplanes and sophisticated artillery bombardments; it was a rudimentary type of warfare of the sort the Normandy Group would experience in World War II.

Demobilization after World War I bled the U.S. Army dry of experienced men. Enlistment had ended in August 1918, the draft stopped in November 1918 and volunteers were released quickly into civilian life after the Armistice. A law for enlistments of either one or three years had to be passed on February 28, 1919, to counter the problem. By 1920 the Regular Army had been reduced from its

wartime level of 2.5 million, to its required peacetime volunteer force level of only 227,500 officers and men.¹⁴ It was a tenth of its size and the process had taken less than eighteen months.

The War Department was concerned by the rapid contraction and it urged Congress to increase the Regular Army strength back up to 600,000 and for it to be supported by a citizen reserve. General Pershing, commander of the AEF in France, recommended the following:

... first, a permanent Military Establishment large enough to provide against sudden attack; second, a small force sufficient for expeditionary purposes to meet our international obligations, particularly on the American continent; third, such force as may be necessary to meet our internal requirements; fourth, a trained citizen reserve organized to meet the emergency of war.¹⁵

His proposal was rejected and the cuts continued, shrinking the U.S. Army to 117,500 by 1925.¹⁶

The number of Regular Army officers also fell during this period, reducing from 78,000 in 1918 to 13,300 in 1925.¹⁷ The impact of demobilization on the careers of the Normandy Group varied considerably but they all benefited in terms of rank. Ten officers had their temporary rank made permanent. Six officers kept the permanent rank awarded at the outbreak of war but they had their temporary wartime rank cancelled. The two National Guard officers, McLain and Rose, were honourably discharged; they would both quickly return to uniform.

The Normandy Group had to wait a long time before their next promotion and many would not reach their wartime rank again for many years. Three extreme examples illustrate the delay. Huebner, Oliver and Wyche were temporary lieutenant colonels in 1918 and Oliver and Wyche had to wait until 1935 before they were promoted to permanent lieutenant colonel. Huebner had risen from 1st lieutenant to temporary lieutenant colonel in twenty months; he had to wait another twenty years until he became permanent lieutenant colonel in 1938.

¹⁴ Gole, *Road to Rainbow* p. 3.

¹⁵ Recommended to a joint session of the House and Senate Military Committees; quoted in Griffith, Robert K., *Men Wanted for the U.S. Army: America's Experience with an All-Volunteer Army between the World Wars* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), p. 9.

¹⁶ Gole, *Road to Rainbow* p. 3.

¹⁷ Watson, Mark S., *The U.S. Army in World War II: Green Series: Chief of Staff: Pre-War Plans and Preparations* (Washington DC: Historical Division, The War Department, 1966) p. 24.

Across the U.S. Army, it took about thirteen years to rise from 1st lieutenant to captain, while some captains remained in grade for seventeen years.¹⁸ Wade's study of 45 divisional commanders¹⁹ has the average time as captain at six years and ranging up to 12 years. The average at the rank of major was 9.3 years, ranging up to 19 years. Eight of the Normandy Group were captains in November 1918; they had to wait an average of 13.2 years before they were promoted to major. Five of the Normandy Group were majors in November 1918; they had to wait an average of 18 years before they were promoted to lieutenant-colonel.²⁰

The careers of the Normandy Group had been stagnated due to a phenomenon known in U.S. Army circles as 'The Hump':

A crippling complication [of the pre-war promotion system] was provided during the thirties by the 'hump' of officers who had originally entered the Army in great numbers in World War I and remained in it, with the result that within an age group of very few years were some 4,200 officers, almost one-third of the entire Regular Corps. Inevitably, the 'hump' slowed promotion of individuals within and below the group to a discouragingly laggard pace.²¹

The statement above is incorrect in one aspect for the Normandy Group. They had joined the U.S. Army *before the war* and they had been promoted ahead of their time *due to the war*. Most of the men who had volunteered after April 1917 and been appointed officers left the Army in the post war demobilization. The Normandy group's future promotion was delayed by senior officers in the same situation. They suffered because the Army had granted too many permanent promotions too soon.

18 Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, p. 7.

19 Wade, Major Gary, *World War II Divisional Commanders* (Combat Studies Institute Study No. 7, 1983, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College) available at www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/wade2/wade2.asp (hereafter Wade, CSI Study 7, C&CGS) accessed January 2010.

20 Figures taken from a study of the officers' curriculum vitae.

21 Watson, *Chief of Staff: Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 247.

1.3 The Army's Situation between the Wars: 1918 to 1940

Although President Woodrow Wilson promoted the formation League of Nations in the post war years, his attempt to get support for it in his own country failed.²² The United States elected to pursue an isolationist foreign policy and it refused to be drawn into world politics and alliances. It also rearranged its armed forces to sustain the policy. The United States would rely on its Navy and Coastguard to protect its shores and overseas territories from attack, while the Regular Army protected the borders and garrisoned the territories. The Organized Reserves and the part-time civilian National Guard could be mobilized to support the Regular Army in a National Emergency. It was an attempt to redress the problems caused by the rapid expansion of the Army in World War I and 'for the first time in peace the army was organized into tactical formations capable of a logically planned response to an emergency.'²³

In 1920 the National Defense Act set the peacetime appropriation strength for the Regular Army at 175,000 officers and men but the actual number would determined by annual budgets set by Congress. The War Department recommended a minimum of 165,000 to fulfill its obligations but there was no resolve to pay for them:

The public seemed little interested in helping the Army. Rather, it supported economy in government and non-involvement in foreign affairs. Congress responded accordingly by pressing for economy... Neither the public nor Congress was ready to live up to the demands of the National Defense Act [of 1920].²⁴

Instead the Army faced continual cutbacks until it had been reduced 118,750 by 1925.²⁵ All units suffered, and while some were reduced to non-functioning cadres, others ceased to exist:

Instead of a lean, hard organization capable of scientific expansion on short notice, there was from 1920 onward an emaciated organization incapable of expanding directly and automatically into a rounded field force, the skeleton units which had been eliminated would have now to be recreated from the beginning.²⁶

22 President Wilson was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1919 for his part in establishing the League of Nations.

23 Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, p. 19.

24 Griffith, *Men Wanted for the U.S. Army*, p. 78.

25 *Ibid*, p. 69.

26 Watson, *Chief of Staff: Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 24.

Continuous cutbacks became a political concern until President Hoover ordered a War Department investigation into a 'one whole army program' in the spring of 1929. The report's assessment of the Army's situation criticized the Budget Director's practice of implementing financial cutbacks without assessing their impact. Recommendations were made to increase the Army's budget but while it was being planned, the Wall Street stock market crash in October 1929 threw the United States into a state of depression.²⁷

The U.S. Army suffered further cuts during the economic crisis and, as already outlined above, by 1932 it was in such a poor state of readiness that the former Chief of Staff, General Peyton C. March, described the United States defensive situation as 'impotent'.²⁸ In the same year, the incumbent Chief of Staff, General Douglas MacArthur, believed that 'the Army was accordingly at the lowest effectiveness that it had touched since World War I, standing seventeenth among the world's armies...'.²⁹ The number of Regular Army officers and men serving on mainland United States had fallen to less than 90,000; the size of a crowd in a large, modern sporting venue.³⁰ But in spite of the savage budget cuts, the War Department had the foresight to plan for future expansion and the Army staff drafted a proposed reorganization.

While the United States chose to cut back its military budgets, the global political situation deteriorated rapidly as other countries rearmed. Across the Pacific, Japan seized Manchuria, left the area naval limitation treaty and then invaded China. In Europe, Nazi Germany was rearming at an alarming rate under its Four Year Plan and it occupied Austria and part of Czechoslovakia in 1938.

Congress made the first small increase to the Army budget in 1935, allowing numbers to increase to 160,000 men; money was also granted for the first divisional manoeuvres since the Armistice. Budget increases did continue over the next three years but weapon development and the

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 24.

²⁸ Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, p. 3.

²⁹ Watson, *Chief of Staff: Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 24.

³⁰ 119,000 total less 29,000 on overseas postings.

expansion of the Army Air Corps, a response to advances in air to ground tactics, absorbed the money.³¹

On January 28 1938, President Franklin D. Roosevelt finally put his concerns about the global situation to Congress, stating that 'as Commander-in-Chief... it is my constitutional duty to report... that our national defense is, in the light of the increasing armaments of other nations, inadequate for purposes of national security'. The armed forces budget was increased significantly but the bulk of the money was directed at naval rearmament and aircraft production while the 14-percent increase in the Army's annual budget was spent on improving anti-aircraft defences. The War Department was acutely aware that advances in aviation and naval technology, particularly in aircraft carrier development, meant that the United States could no longer rely on its Navy to defend the homeland.³²

On 1 September 1939, German troops invaded Poland and two days later Great Britain and France declared war on Germany. By the summer of 1940, Nazi Germany occupied most of Europe and President Roosevelt responded by declaring a limited National Emergency starting in October 1940. It sanctioned preparations for defense of the Western Hemisphere under the plan codenamed RAINBOW I.

1.4 Army Officer Careers between the Wars

Life was monotonous in the U.S. Army between the wars. Taylor summed it up as 'drab and un-exhilarating'.³³ The infantry focused on drill and marksmanship while cavalry troopers exercised and groomed their horses. Only the engineers were kept busy supervising civilian construction projects. The annual training programme was dictated by the weather. Troops spent the winter months indoors, studying map reading and small unit tactics while practising with small calibre weapons. They spent

31 Griffith, *Men Wanted for the U.S. Army*, p. 175.

32 *Ibid*, p. 175.

33 Taylor, *The Sword and the Pen*, p. 20.

the summer months putting their knowledge into practice outdoors and annual manoeuvres were followed by autumn evaluations and maintenance activities.³⁴

Army salaries were attractive after the Armistice but inflation in the 1920s outstripped wage increases.³⁵ Recommendations to bring army wages in line with the national average were cancelled following the October 1929 stock market crash. The abolition of vocational and educational training due to financial cutbacks also limited post army career prospects. Living conditions were usually sub-standard and 75-percent of officers and men lived in cramped temporary barracks dating from World War I.³⁶

Between the Armistice in November 1918 and the declaration of a National Emergency in October 1940 the Normandy Group broadly spent their time on four activities. First, 'troop time'; either commanding troops or working as a staff officer with troop formations. Second, 'staff time': either working on the War Department staff, with a corps headquarters or a territory headquarters. Third, 'student time': studying in the Army school system. Fourth, 'teaching time': teaching in the Army school system. Each activity will be examined below in turn.

Figure 1.7, details time spent in the four activities for the twenty-four Regular Army officers (although Rose rejoined the Regular Army, McLain remained with the National Guard and he is dealt with separately). Full career information is known about seventeen officers and partial career information is known about seven.

³⁴ Griffith, *Men Wanted for the U.S. Army*, p. 94.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 98.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 69.

Figure 1.7: The Normandy Group's Careers between the Wars: 1918-1940

Name	Branch	Troops	Staff	Student	Teacher	Unknown
Baade	Infantry	2	4	5	4	0
Barton	Infantry	1	*	3	8	10
Brooks	Artillery	4	6	4	8	0
Brown	Infantry	*	3	2	6	11
Cota	Infantry	5	5	6	6	0
Eddy	Infantry	3½	3	3	12½	0
Gerhardt	Cavalry	4	5	5	8	0
Grow	Cavalry	5	4	4	5	0
Hobbs	Infantry	4	8	5	5	0
Huebner	Infantry	3	5	3	11	0
Irwin	Cavalry	2	4	4	12	0
Landrum	Infantry	*	*	3	5	12
MacKelvie	Artillery	10	3	3	5	0
Macon	Infantry	5	3	5	9	0
McMahon	Infantry	1	*	4	9	14
Oliver	Engineers	12	3	5	2	0
Ridgway	Infantry	3	9	4	6	0
Robertson	Infantry	3	9	3	7	0
Rose	Infantry	3	3	3	5	8
Stroh	Cavalry	9	1	5½	6½	0
Taylor	Artillery	3.5	3.5	10	5	0
Watson	Infantry	7	3	4	8	0
Wood	Coast Artillery	3	1	3	8	7
Wyche	Artillery	4	5	3	10	0

Key:

<i>Branch:</i>	Branch of the U.S. Army
<i>Troops:</i>	Years spent serving as an officer commanding troops or as a staff officer with a troop unit
<i>Staff:</i>	Years spent serving as a staff officer with the War Department, a territories, army or corps headquarters
<i>Student:</i>	Years spent studying in one of the army schools
<i>Teaching:</i>	Years spent teaching in one of the army schools
<i>Unknown:</i>	How many years for which the officer's careers details are not known

Notes:

* Details unknown

McLain was the only National Guard officer to command a division in Normandy. He left the National Guard following the Armistice but rejoined after two years on the Reserve. He spent the next 19½ years commanding National Guard troops. He attended the three month Command and General Staff short course for National Guard officers at Fort Leavenworth.

1.5 Troop Time

'Troop Time' between the wars was the time spent commanding troops, either in the United States or one of its territories. Full details of the command experience of eighteen of the Normandy Group between the wars are known and partial details are known about one other. On average officers spent only 20-percent of the time, or 4.4 years, commanding troops and assignments were often separated by long gaps. Officers typically commanded as captains at company level. Many postings were to scattered camps which had been established during the 19th Century Indian wars, limiting opportunities for larger scale activities. Only nine officers had more than twelve months experience as a major and only one (Wyche) had more than twelve months experience as a lieutenant-colonel. Months commanding in a grade are shown in figure 1.8 for each officer.

Figure 1.8: Commanding Troops: 1918-1940*

Name	Branch	Lt.	Capt.	Major	Lt-Col	Months	Years	%
Brooks	Artillery**	---	69	---	---	69	5.75	26.1
Cota	Infantry	---	28	24	---	52	4.25	19.3
Eddy	Infantry	22	---	9	11	42	3.50	15.9
Gerhardt	Cavalry	---	19	32	3	54	4.50	20.5
Grow	Cavalry	---	11	37	---	48	4.00	18.2
Hobbs	Infantry	---	13	36	5	54	4.50	20.5
Huebner	Infantry	---	14	---	42***	54	4.50	20.5
Irwin	Cavalry	---	---	29	---	29	2.42	11.0
Macon	Infantry	---	63	---	6	69	5.75	26.1
MacKelvie	Artillery	---	86	19****	---	105	8.75	40.0
Oliver	Engineers	---	---	13	12*****	25	2.08	9.5
Ridgway	Infantry	---	47	---	---	47	3.92	17.8
Robertson	Infantry	---	26	---	---	26	2.17	9.9
Stroh	Infantry	8	38	38	---	84	7.00	31.8
Taylor	Artillery	38	---	---	---	---	3.17	14.4
Watson	Infantry	---	23	24	3	50	4.17	19.0
Wyche	Artillery	---	---	27	27	54	4.50	20.5

Key:

Branch: Branch of the armed services the troops belonged to

Lt.: Months commanding troops as a lieutenant

Capt.: Months commanding troops as a captain

Major: Months commanding troops as a major

Lt-Col: Months commanding troops as a lieutenant colonel

Months: Months commanding troops in all officer grades

Years: Years commanding troops in all officer grades

%: Percentage of time between November 1918 and October 1940 spent commanding troops in all officer grades

Notes:

- * Details are unknown for Baade, Barton, Brown, Landrum, McMahon, Rose and Wood.
 - ** Transferred from cavalry to artillery in July 1920.
 - *** Includes 20 months as temporary lieutenant-colonel in 1919-1920 and 22 months as permanent lieutenant-colonel eighteen years later.
 - **** All the time as temporary major after the Armistice, he did not command as a permanent major.
 - ***** All the time as temporary lieutenant-colonel following the Armistice.
-

The Civilian Conservation Corps was established in 1933 as part of the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal, an employment scheme introduced to reverse the effects of the Depression. 3,000 Regular Army officers were seconded to the Corps to supervise 300,000 civilians working on environmental schemes.³⁷ Only Cota and MacKelvie are known to have participated.

The U.S. Army also had three overseas postings between the wars and 'the best opportunities to command fully manned and larger formations were to be found in Hawaii, the Philippines and Panama'.³⁸ There was also a small garrison in Tientsin, China. The number of troops based in non-CONUS³⁹ posts was doubled to 64,000 in 1940 while new posts were established in Alaska and Puerto Rico.⁴⁰ Figure 1.9 details the twelve officers who served on an overseas posting; none served in Alaska or Puerto Rico.

³⁷ Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, p. 6.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 6.

³⁹ The United States Department of Defense referred to (and still does) the 48 states and the District of Columbia as Continental United States (CONUS); Hawaii and Alaska are referred to as Outside of Continental United States (OCONUS); I have referred to postings other than CONUS as non-CONUS postings.

⁴⁰ Griffith, *Men Wanted for the U.S. Army*, Appendix A.

Figure 1.9: Overseas Postings between the Wars: 1918-1940*

Name	Hawaii	Philippines	Panama	China
Garrison**	14,000	4,000	9,700	1,000
Brooks	---	2	---	---
Eddy	2	---	---	---
Gerhardt	---	2	---	---
Hobbs	3	---	---	---
Huebner	2	---	---	---
Macon	---	---	3	2
Ridgway	---	---	2	1
Robertson	---	2	---	---
Rose	---	---	1	---
Taylor	2	---	---	---
Watson	---	---	2	---
Wood	2	---	---	---

Note:

* Time given in years

** The number of troops stationed in each overseas theatre

Key:

Hawaii: Number of years spent serving with the Hawaii garrison

Philippines: Number of years spent serving with the Philippines garrison

Panama: Number of years spent serving with the Panama garrison

China: Number of years spent serving with the China garrison

1.6 Staff Time

'Staff Time' between the wars can be divided into three categories. The first is that spent with an army, corps or overseas territory headquarters; the second with the offices of Branch Chiefs (Infantry, Cavalry, Armor, Artillery); and the third with the War Department General Staff either in Washington D.C. or on a diplomatic mission. The Normandy Group spent an average of 17.5-percent of their time, or 3.9 years, between the wars in a staff post but they only spent a limited amount of time on staff work in the 1920s because of their junior rank. Many were posted to important staff positions after attending the Command and General Staff School. Most of the group attended in the mid-1930s.

There was a great deal of high level staff activity after war broke out in Europe in September 1939. Over the next two years the War Department staff expanded while new army and corps headquarters needed staff. During this period the number of Normandy Group officers working for army and corps headquarters fell from thirteen to three but the number working in high level staff posts increased dramatically. Ten moved to the War Department; four worked for the Chief of Staff's War Department General Staff; three were in offices of Branch Chiefs and two in other senior positions; one (Taylor) was engaged on a diplomatic mission for the Chief of Staff. This indicates that the Chief of Staff was using superior officers who had trained in war planning work. This in turn brought them into contact with influential officers and the networking connections made in the offices around Washington D.C. would be referred to later in the conflict. Figure 1.11 breaks down time spent on the staff between the wars. Full details are known about seventeen, partial details are known about seven:

Figure 1.10: Staff Time between the Wars: 1918-1940*

Name	Staff	Branch	War Dept.	Total	%
Baade	Unknown	4	Unknown	Unknown	
Barton	0.5	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
Brooks	Unknown	Unknown	1	Unknown	
Brown	---	1	---	1	5
Cota	---	2.5	1	3.5	16
Eddy	0.5	---	---	0.5	2

Gerhardt	4	---	---	4	18
Grow	2	4	---	6	27
Hobbs	4	4	---	8	36
Huebner	---	4	0.5	4.5	20
Irwin	---	3	---	3	14
MacKelvie	---	2	2	4	18
Macon	3	---	---	3	14
McMahon	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
Landrum	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
Oliver	---	---	---	0	0
Ridgway	4	---	4	8	36
Robertson	2	---	4	6	27
Rose	3	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
Stroh	0.5	---	---	0.5	2
Taylor	1	---	4.5**	5.5	25
Watson	4	---	---	4	18
Wood	1	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	
Wyche	3	0.5	1	4.5	20

Notes:

* Time given in years

** Studying Japanese while working at the American Embassy in Tokyo

Key:

Staff: Working on a general's staff, on a corps staff, on as a staff officer on a military post or on a training camp

Branch: Years working for a branch office, infantry, cavalry or artillery

War Department: Years working for an office in the War Department

Total: Total years spent on staff work

%: Percentage of time spent on staff work between November 1918 and October 1940

1.7 Student Time

Despite stringent budget cuts, the U.S. Army strived to improve its school system for its officer corps. The school system had to train officers in peacetime for senior posts which would only exist in wartime: 'the Army, in particular, regarded its educational system as preparing officers in peacetime for the complex situations they might face in wartime'.⁴¹ Officers typically spent four years attending educational establishments in the order given in figure 1.11:

Figure 1.11: The Army School System

School	Length	Training Level
Branch School, Basic Course	1 year	Company commander
Branch School, Advanced Course	1 year	Battalion commander
Command and General Staff School (C&GS)	1 or 2 years ⁴²	Divisional commander
Army War College (AWC)	1 year	Corps commander
Army Industrial College (AIC)	1 year	Corps commander

Key:

School: Name of the school

Length: Length of the course

Training Level: Level of command for which the officer was training

New tactics, combining air, artillery and armour, had only just started to be developed in France during the final months of World War I. While it was clear that technological advances, particularly in armour, machine guns, artillery, communications and aviation, would affect small and large unit tactics, the Army could not give its officers practical experience due to a financial ban on

41 A'Hearn, Francis W., 'The Industrial College of the Armed Forces: Contextual Analysis of an Evolving Mission, 1924-1994' (Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 1997) p. 48.

42 Note: The Command and General Staff School courses extended from one combined year to one two year courses in 1929.

large scale manoeuvres. Even so, the Army school system played an essential part in preparing them for command. J. Lawton Collins, VII Corps commander in Normandy, praised it highly:

I am a great believer in the Army school system. The thing that saved the American Army, no question about it in my judgment, was this school system, the entire school system: Branch Schools, the Command and General Staff College, the War College and the Army Industrial College. If it wasn't for the Army school system I don't know what in the world we would have done.⁴³

The Normandy Group spent 18-percent, or 3.9 years, of their time in the classroom between the wars. Full educational information is known about twenty of the group and partial information is known about the remaining four (see Figure 1.12).

Figure 1.12 Studying Time between the Wars: 1918 – 1940

Name	Basic	Advanced	C&GS	AWC	Years	%age
Baade	1	1	1	1	4	18.2
Barton	1	1	1	1	4	18.2
Brooks	1	1	2	1	5	22.3
Brown	Unknown	Unknown	2	1	Unknown	Unknown
Cota	---	1	2	1	4	18.2
Eddy	1	1	2	---	4	18.2
Gerhardt	1	1	1	---	3	13.6
Grow	---	1	1	1	3	13.6
Hobbs	---	1	2	1	4	18.2
Huebner	---	1	1	1	3	13.6
Irwin	1	1	1	1	4	18.2
Landrum	Unknown	Unknown	2	1	Unknown	Unknown
MacKelvie	---	1	2	1	4	18.2
Macon	1	1	2	1	5	22.3
McLain**	---	---	0.5	---	0.5	0.03

⁴³ *Conversations with General J Lawton Collins transcribed by Major Gary Wade* (Combat Studies Institute Study No. 5, 1983, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College) www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/wade3/wade3.asp (hereafter Collins transcribed by Wade, CSI Study 5, C&CGS) accessed April 2008.

McMahon	Unknown	Unknown	2	1	Unknown	Unknown
Oliver	---	---	2	1	3***	13.6
Ridgway	1	1	2	1	5	22.3
Robertson	---	1	1	1	3	13.6
Rose	Unknown	1	2	1****	Unknown	Unknown
Stroh	1	1	2	1	5	22.3
Taylor	1	1	2	1	5	22.3
Watson	---	1	2	1	4	18.2
Wood	Unknown	Unknown	1	---	Unknown	Unknown
Wyche	---	1	1	1	3	13.6

Key:

Basic: Years attending a Basic Branch School course

Advanced: Years attending a Advanced Branch School course

C&GS: Years attending the Command and General Staff School

AWC: Years attending the Army war College

Notes:

* Eddy was invited to attend the AWC in 1941 but course was cancelled due to the National Emergency

** McLain only attended the short C&CGS course for National Guard officers

*** Oliver had fourteen years experience of controlling engineering projects

**** Rose did not attend the Army War College but he did attend the Army Industrial College

Branch schools were established, or improved, after World War I. The Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, opened in October 1918 with two classes. The basic course taught captains how to command a company while the advanced course taught majors and lieutenant colonels how to command a battalion. Studies were a mixture of classroom tactical problems and practical outdoor exercises, including hands-on experience with infantry support weapons. The School's Infantry Board studied new weapons and improved tactics, using students to test and analyze them before they were incorporated into the curriculum. However, the school did suffer from outdated teaching methods and

Lieutenant-Colonel George C. Marshall, Assistant Commandant from 1927 to 1932,⁴⁴ organized the courses into four new departments; Tactics, Weapons, Logistics, Military History and Publications. He streamlined the courses, reduced paperwork, rationalized regulations and removed drills. He was looking to the future when the school might have to turn civilians into officers in the shortest time possible.⁴⁵ Courses concentrated on creating officers who were tactically proficient, effective at communicating and familiar with the dynamics of leadership.⁴⁶ Only five of the Normandy Group (Cota, Eddy, Hobbs, Macon and Stroh) benefited from Marshall's improvements, the rest had already attended. Cavalrymen attended the Cavalry School at Fort Riley, Kansas, while artillerymen went to the Artillery School, at Fort Sill, Oklahoma⁴⁷; there was a separate school specializing in Coastal Artillery.

1.8 The Importance of the General Service Schools

Officers were assessed every six months by their superiors and the results were recorded as a numeric 'Officer Efficiency Rating' in their 201 Personal Files.⁴⁸ Officers with consistent high scores were invited to attend the General Service Schools at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Successful attendance at the Schools was an essential step on the route to high command. 135 of the 140 commanders (96-percent) who commanded a U.S. Army division in combat in World War II attended the General Service Schools; 105 of the 140 (75-percent) also taught at the Schools.⁴⁹

There were two courses, run by the Command and General Staff School and the General Staff School and while they were initially run back to back in a single year, they were extended into two distinct annual courses after 1929. The Schools also catered for forty promising National Guard

44 Chief of Staff of the Army from 1939 to 1945.

45 Information taken from Marshall's Curriculum Vitae.

46 Robert A. Miller, *Division Commander: A Biography of Major General Norman D Cota* (Spartanburg, SC: Reprint Co, 1989), p. 31.

47 Originally called the School of Fire.

48 Explanation of the Officer's Efficiency Rating and the assessment process is covered below.

49 Heefner, *Twentieth Century Warrior*, Appendix F, p. 174.

and Reserve officers every year on a consolidated three month course. The Schools taught students how to command a division and its core principles were to teach them about the functions of commanders, the functions and organization of staffs, tactics, logistics and the combined use of all arms.⁵⁰ Students studied how the arms and services from the other branches, infantry, armour, artillery and logistics, worked together in a division. Classes emphasized both command skills and staff work.

The command phase of instruction here has been strongly emphasized and careful distinction is made of the difference in functions of the commander and his staff. Much time has been given to the study of the functions of command, realizing that for all commanders to be fully efficient must have detailed knowledge of staff work and all staff officers to be fully efficient must have intimate knowledge of the commanding officer's viewpoint.⁵¹

There were 35 instructors and around 100 students on each of the courses, giving an instructor to student ratio of 1-to-7.

The Leavenworth curriculum concentrated on military organization; the tactics and techniques of the various services - both separately and in combination; plans and orders; decision making; and logistics. Instructors continued to use the applicatory method, by which students learned principles in the classroom and then applied them to tactical decision making during map exercises, maneuvers, war games, and staff rides.⁵²

In the 1920s, students were usually majors, but most were captains by the mid 1930s.⁵³ Students worked on exercises in small groups or pairs⁵⁴ and a number of significant friendships were formed at Leavenworth. For example, Dwight Eisenhower and Leonard Gerow worked together as a pair.⁵⁵

50 Ely, Major-General H. E., *U.S. Service School, Fort Leavenworth, Annual report of the commandant, 1922-1923*, p. 36-37, available at website <http://www.cgsc.edu/carl/download/reports/rep1922.pdf>, accessed April 2008.

51 *Ibid*, pp. 36-37.

52 Bender, Major Mark C., *Watershed at Leavenworth, Dwight D. Eisenhower and the Command and General Staff School*, (Combat Studies Institute Special Study for the Combined Arms Research Library, March 1990), Chapter 3, available at <http://www.cgsc.edu/carl/resources/csi/bender/bender.asp>, accessed February 2010.

53 Survey of the graduate lists in the Fort Leavenworth commandant's annual reports 1922-1939, available at website <http://www.cgsc.edu/carl/download/reports/rep1922.pdf> through [rep1939.pdf](http://www.cgsc.edu/carl/download/reports/rep1939.pdf), accessed April 2008.

54 D'Este, *Eisenhower*, p. 180.

55 Eisenhower would later choose Gerow to lead V Corps for the assault on Omaha Beach in June 1944, *Ibid*, p. 180.

The General Staff School⁵⁶ taught students about the functions of the components of the division and the teaching experience was intensive:

Morning classes were followed by an independent study, study that could not be postponed because each student was expected to produce a paper or map problem each day.⁵⁷

The Command Section covered the organization and function of the Headquarters and General Staff, covering higher level commands, command techniques, the mental characteristics of leaders and the psychology of troops. Each arm and branch section used offensive and defensive tactical exercises⁵⁸ to explain their role and students spent 25-percent of the course solving them.⁵⁹

The G-1⁶⁰ section covered personnel issues. The G-4 logistics section concentrated on the role of the quartermaster, transport methods, the medical units and the signal corps.⁶¹ The G-2 intelligence section covered assessment of the enemy and the environment as well as martial, military and international law. It also taught military history, using case studies from Napoleon's 1800 Marengo campaign, three American Civil War campaigns⁶² and the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.⁶³ The final year of World War I was also covered. The G-3 operations section studied all aspects of training and operational planning.⁶⁴

56 The School was organized into eight sections: Infantry; Cavalry; Engineer; Signal Corps; Air Service; Chemical Warfare Service; Medical Corps; and the Judge Advocate.

57 Taylor, *The Sword and the Pen*, p. 23.

58 Offensive tactical exercises covered movement, reconnaissance, concentration and the pursuit while defensive tactical exercises covered static defenses, delaying positions, withdrawal and counteroffensives, Ely, *Fort Leavenworth Annual Report 1923*, Control Chart for Instructional Subjects in the General Service Schools, inserted between pp. 12 & 13.

59 Ely, *Fort Leavenworth Annual Report 1923*, p. 33.

60 Staff sections were designated; G-1 Personnel, G-2 Intelligence, G-3 Operations, G-4 Logistics.

61 Ely, *Fort Leavenworth Annual Report 1923*, Control Chart for Instructional Subjects in the General Service Schools, inserted between pp. 12 & 13.

62 The Henry and Donelson Campaign, the Peninsular Campaign and General Grant's 1864-65 Campaign.

63 Ely, *Fort Leavenworth Annual Report 1923*, p. 33.

64 Ely, *Fort Leavenworth Annual Report 1923*, Control Chart for Instructional Subjects in the General Service Schools, inserted between pp. 12 & 13.

Having learnt about the components of a division, the Command and General Staff School taught students how to command them and make them support each other in combined operations:⁶⁵

... the second year being devoted to corps and army units and to the logistical problem, of which I knew very little prior to that time... I'm a great believer in having officers learn not only their own branch of the service but at least one other, and preferably two. If an officer is an infantryman he ought to know something firsthand about artillery and air support, those two things. The infantry is no good without good artillery and without good air. [They] just can't get anywhere.⁶⁶

The Command Section covered the strategic and tactical functions of larger units while the G-1 and G-4 section covered command, staff and logistics.⁶⁷ The G-2 section taught students how to collect and analyse information about the enemy and the environment. It taught military intelligence, psychology, leadership, logic, research and military history, focusing on the AEF in World War I.⁶⁸

The G-3 Operations taught students how to train and plan for offensive and defensive operations using lectures, map exercises, and staff rides⁶⁹; *Tactical Principles and Decisions* classes occupied 25% of the course time. Students solved a variety of problems related to the tactics, techniques, weaponry and deployments of the arms and branches.⁷⁰ They also learnt how to transmit clear field orders and administrative orders, either verbally or written.

The Schools turned out a high standard of student and Taylor 'believed that his classmates in the second year of the Leavenworth course were the most able group of officers of that size with whom he was ever associated'.⁷¹ Lecturers carefully monitored the students:

Officers while here are under the closest supervision of a large number of very experienced instructors. The Efficiency Reports made out here are not merely the opinion of the

65 Organized into six sections; Command, Personnel and Logistics, Intelligence, Operations, Publications and Correspondence Ely, *Fort Leavenworth Annual Report 1923*, Control Chart for Instructional Subjects in the General Service Schools, inserted between pp. 12 & 13.

66 Collins transcribed by Wade, CSI Study 5, C&GS.

67 *Ibid.*

68 Ely, *Fort Leavenworth Annual Report 1923*, p. 49.

69 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

70 Full break down of lectures, conferences and exercises given in Ely, *Fort Leavenworth Annual Report 1923*, pp. 49-77.

71 Maxwell D. Taylor, *Swords and Ploughshares* (New York, NY, Norton, 1972), pp. 29-30.

Commandant or one of the Directors, but they are the mature judgment after due discussion and consideration of not only the Faculty Board but some ten or a dozen other advisors with regard to each efficiency report. It is believed, therefore, that these reports, being practically reports of a Board of Officers of considerable experience, some twelve or fifteen in number, are deserving of considerable consideration in the selection of officers for various duties.⁷²

Originally students were graded; 10-percent graduated with 'honor' while 15-percent were 'distinguished' graduates. Nine of the group of Normandy Group graduated under the graded system and three were honour graduates.⁷³ The grading system was abolished in 1928 to promote a cooperative learning experience and reduce unhealthy competition between the students.

Mark Clark⁷⁴ believed that the Schools standardized training for troop commanders and staff officers, allowing them to work anywhere:

The Leavenworth system, imposing conformity and standardization, shaped several generations of graduates into a homogeneous pattern. The result enabled the Army to use officers as interchangeable parts. Anyone educated at Leavenworth was at home in any headquarters.⁷⁵

Taylor agreed; Leavenworth students graduated '...all speaking the same professional language, following the same staff procedures, schooled in the same doctrine and thus ready to work together smoothly in any theatre of war.'⁷⁶

1.9 The Army War College

The one-year course at the Army War College was the next step in the schools system. It focused on war planning: 'planning for war at the War College... was constant, even when no enemy was visible on the horizon.'⁷⁷ It concentrated on the operational work and staff work of field armies with an emphasis on military, political, economic and social situations around the world. 259 out of 305 army

⁷² Ely, *Fort Leavenworth Annual Report 1923*, pp. 8-9.

⁷³ Baade in 1924, Huebner in 1925 and Robertson in 1926.

⁷⁴ Commander of Fifth Army from 1943 to 1944 and Fifteenth Army Group from 1944 to 1945 in Italy.

⁷⁵ Martin Blumenson, *Mark Clark* (Corydon and Ward, New York, NY 1984), pp. 33-34.

⁷⁶ Taylor, *Swords and Ploughshares*, pp. 29-30.

⁷⁷ Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, p. xviii.

generals (85-percent) who served in World War II graduated from the Army War College;⁷⁸ twenty of the Normandy Group graduated (80-percent).⁷⁹

On average 18 teachers taught 85 students, giving a teacher to student ratio of 1-to-5. Students had to be a Fort Leavenworth graduate and Leavenworth's top students were earmarked for the Army War College:

... I am strongly of the opinion that the Command and General Staff School should be the only source from which the War College should draw its student officers. The chiefs of branches should designate officers from their various branches to attend the War College from among those who graduate with credit from the Command and General Staff School.⁸⁰

The College brought together '... a body of officers linked by a community of interest for the consideration of common problems, and charged with the special duty of assisting the Chief of Staff and the other divisions of the General Staff in preparing plans for the nation's defense.'⁸¹

The lecture programme featured speakers from the military, academe, industry and journalism. Students conducted military, economic and political studies about the allies and enemies of the United States and their findings were used to plan mobilization schemes and strategies. The school had a post-graduate style of study and students participated in 'full and free discussion of the subject supported by reasonable premises',⁸² including the role-playing of scenarios. Real situations were often provided by the War Plans Division of the General Staff and the College became its think-tank.

A great deal of time was devoted to war planning, in particular the Rainbow Plans, a series of colour coded plans which were annually reassessed to match the changing global situation. Hypothetical war planning took on a serious nature as Japan, Germany and Italy rearmed and the

78 Heefner, *Twentieth Century Warrior*, Appendix F, p. 174.

79 Manton Eddy should have attended the course cancelled in the summer of 1941.

80 Ely, *Fort Leavenworth Annual Report 1923*, p. 10.

81 Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, p. 17.

82 *Ibid*, p.19.

College's plans were used when the army mobilized in October 1940 and the United States went to war in December 1941.⁸³

There was a second postgraduate establishment: the Army Industrial College, where students studied how to mobilize American industry for wartime. Only 6 of the 140 divisional commanders attended (4-percent); of the Normandy Group, only Rose studied there.⁸⁴

1.10 Teaching Time

The army operated a 'cascade' system of learning and the Normandy Group spent an average of 33-percent of their time teaching between the wars. The hierarchy of educational establishments was, from the bottom up, the Military Academies; the Branch Schools; the Command and General Staff School; the Army War College and the Army Industrial College. Graduates often returned to an educational establishment after serving with troops, to pass on their command experiences. National Guard units and the university and college based Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) also needed instructors.⁸⁵

The teaching experiences of nineteen of the Normandy Group are known, and partial details are known about the remaining six. They usually taught at the branch schools or lower, reflecting the level of their experience. Figure 1.13 details their experiences:

83 The Army War College suspended its course in 1941 but it was cancelled due to the army manoeuvres.

84 Heefner, *Twentieth Century Warrior*, Appendix F, p. 174.

85 ROTC instructors taught courses on military tactics, a requirement for all male students in many U.S. universities at the time.

Figure 1.13 Teaching Time between the Wars: 1918 – 1940*

Name	Academy	College	Branch	C&GCS	AWC	Other	Total	%
Baade	4	---	---	---	---	---	Unknown	Unknown
Barton	---	4	---	4	---	---	Unknown	Unknown
Brooks	---	1	4	2	---	---	7	33
Brown	2	---	4	---	---	---	Unknown	Unknown
Cota	2	---	3	2.5	---	---	7.5	34
Eddy	4	---	3	5	---	---	12	55
Gerhardt	5	---	3	---	---	---	8	36
Grow	---	4	4	1	---	---	9	41
Hobbs	4.5	---	---	---	---	---	4.5	21
Huebner	---	---	6	4	---	---	10	46
Irwin	---	1.5	3.5	---	---	4**	9	41
MacKelvie	---	2	3	---	---	---	7	32
Macon	---	4	5	---	---	---	9	41
McMahon	---	9	1	4	---	---	Unknown	Unknown
Landrum	---	---	4.5	---	---	---	Unknown	Unknown
Oliver	---	---	3	2.5	---	---	5.5	25
Ridgway	---	---	---	---	---	---	0*	0
Robertson	---	---	---	3	3	---	6	27
Rose	---	3	---	---	---	2***	Unknown	Unknown
Stroh	---	3	---	---	---	5****	8	36
Taylor	5*****	---	---	---	---	---	5	23
Watson	---	---	4	3	---	---	7	32
Wood	5	4	---	---	---	---	9	41
Wyche	---	---	7.5	---	---	---	7.5	34

Notes:

- * Time given in years
- ** Irwin spent 4 years instructing National Guard units
- *** Rose spent 2 years instructing National Guard units
- **** Stroh spent five years instructing Organized Reserves units
- ***** Taylor taught Spanish at USMA, West Point

Key:

Academy: Years teaching at USMA, West Point

College: Years teaching at a university or college

Branch: Years teaching at a branch school; infantry, cavalry, artillery, coastal artillery

C&CGS: Years teaching at the Command and General Staff School

AWC: Years teaching at the Army War College

Other: Years teaching in another teaching institution

Total: Total years spent teaching

%: Percentage of time between November 1918 and October 1940 spent teaching

1.11 Conclusions: The Normandy Group's Careers before World War II

The majority of the Normandy Group joined the army between 1910 and 1916, before World War I. Only half attended USMA, West Point, and attendance at a military educational establishment was not obligatory.⁸⁶ Two started with the National Guard cadet corps and four started in the ranks; all six attended the Army Service School course to bring them up to an acceptable standard. The only military activity prior to World War I was in Mexico in 1915-16 but only seven mobilized to the border while only two, Hobbs and Irwin, joined the Punitive expedition into Mexico. It occurred too early in the careers of the Group to have a significant impact.

The majority of the Normandy Group were promoted from lieutenant to captain when the United States entered World War I in April 1917. Only eleven, or half, served in the trenches. Only

⁸⁶ Slightly higher than all 140 divisional commanders in World War II, Heefner, *Twentieth Century Warrior*, Appendix F, p. 174.

one officer, Huebner, had extensive combat experience; the remainder only took part in the final seven-week campaign. However, trench experience was not considered to be an important factor when senior commanders were chosen for the Normandy campaign. Only three, Courtney H. Hodges (First U.S. Army assistant) Troy H. Middleton (VIII Corps) and Walton H. Walker (temporary with XIX Corps) had served in the trenches. Leonard T. Gerow, (V Corps) and Charles H. Corlett (XIX Corps) had served on the staff behind the lines. Dwight D. Eisenhower (SHAEF), Omar Bradley (First Army), and J. Lawton Collins (VII Corps) did not serve in France, even though they were eligible to do so.

Temporary promotions and responsibilities were removed when the army demobilized after the Armistice in November 1918. World War I had a lasting negative effect on the Normandy Group as careers stagnated because the 'Hump' of older officers with trench experience.⁸⁷ The army had been cut back to 118,750 officers and men by 1925⁸⁸ and the situation was exacerbated by the Depression after 1929. Officers endured a hum-drum existence, training with obsolete weapons on small scattered posts while there was no money for military manoeuvres. Wages fell and promotion prospects disappeared due to financial cutbacks. The Normandy Group typically commanded troops for five years (less than 25-percent of their time) between the wars, and they rarely commanded above the rank of company commander;⁸⁹ 'many senior commanders of World War II experienced troop command at levels no higher than battalion or company.'⁹⁰ A similar amount of time was spent in staff positions.⁹¹

Although the United States isolated itself from the global political situation between the wars, the army continued to teach its officers for higher command. The Normandy Group typically spent over half their time (an average of twelve years) in schools, either as a student or as a teacher.⁹² Officers were continually assessed and those with potential were recommended for advancement. By the time war erupted in Europe, the Normandy Group were in their mid to late forties. They had all

87 Watson, *Chief of Staff: Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 247.

88 Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, p. 69.

89 Refer to figure 1.8.

90 Gole, *The Road to Rainbow*, p. 6.

91 Refer to figure 1.10.

92 Refer to figures 1.12 and 1.13, respectively.

been trained to command a division in war, even though few had commanded above company level in peace. The majority had also been involved in war planning even though they had very little practical experience with troops.

Attendance at the Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, was essential because students were taught the functions of command techniques, staff work, and division level combined arms tactics and logistics.⁹³ Attendance at the Army War College was desirable. Despite severe financial cutbacks and the country's isolationist strategy, the U.S. Army worked hard to improve its school system to train the divisional commanders of the future. To repeat Collins' judgement, cited above, this system of schools 'saved the American Army' during World War II.⁹⁴

93 Ely, *Fort Leavenworth Annual Report 1923*, pp. 36-37.

94 Collins transcribed by Wade, CSI Study 5, C&CGS.

Chapter 2

Reaction to a European War

September 1939 to November 1941

On 1 September 1939, German troops invaded Poland. Two days later Great Britain and France declared war on Germany. Coincidentally Brigadier-General George C. Marshall was appointed Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army and promoted to full General on the same day in Washington D.C. This chapter will consider some key questions on how the U.S. Army reacted to the war in Europe. What part did politicians play in decision-making as Marshall became accustomed to his new appointment? How were incumbent divisional commanders assessed, how were potential commanders earmarked and how were changes implemented? To what extent was there resistance to change among career officers?

Another key appointment was made in July 1940 when Brigadier-General Lesley J. McNair became Chief of Staff at General Headquarters, U.S. Army.¹ Marshall and McNair together chose the divisional commanders in the U.S. Army. This thesis will examine McNair's role in assessing incumbent divisional commanders and in selecting potential commanders. It will also investigate how the Marshall-McNair team planned to implement changes during the worst case scenario; the United States involvement in a global war.

¹ Temporary Lieutenant-General; McNair's post was renamed Commanding General of Army Ground Forces in March 1942.

The National Emergency declared in October 1940 called for a huge expansion of the army and hence the appointment of many new corps and divisional commanders. This chapter considers three questions posed by the expansion of the army. First, which Regular Army division commanders could be promoted to command a corps and who would replace them? Second, what was the standard of command in the existing National Guard divisions? Third, who would command the New Army divisions which would soon assemble?

Moreover, increased budgets were made available to the army for 1941 and money was allocated for large scale military manoeuvres. Were the manoeuvres a useful tool for assessing the competence of current divisional commanders and earmarking potential future commanders? These questions will be addressed in this chapter.

2.1 Ability Ahead of Seniority

The provisions of the 1920 National Defense Act² stated that 'the Army's pre-war promotion system (save for in selection of general officers) operated by seniority only.'³ Marshall was appointed acting Chief of Staff in July 1939 and the same month four new army commanders were selected on merit.

The Normandy Group were only colonels or lieutenant-colonels and still they had to be promoted on seniority in grade rather than ability.⁴ A new law had to be approved before they could be promoted ahead of their peers. In his first month in office Marshall proposed removing the privilege

2 The National Defense Act of 4 June 1920, reorganized the military and civilian arms of the U.S Army into the Regular Army, a National Guard, and the Organized Reserve, so they could contribute their appropriate share of troops in a war emergency. It also de-centralised the process for approving defense contracts.

3 Watson, Mark S., *The U.S. Army in World War II: Green Series: Chief of Staff: Pre-War Plans and Preparations* (Washington DC: Historical Division, The War Department, 1966), p. 247.

4 *Ibid*, p. 248.

of seniority with the following words; 'we will have to do that if we are going to get efficiency... this thing is a cold business.'⁵ He had a clear vision for a promotion system based on ability:⁶

Promotion based on length of service is satisfactory only under the normal conditions of peacetime. In an emergency, in a period of rapid expansion of the army, or during actual war, that system of promotion is much too slow... Under present conditions, and in actual war, promotion must be based primarily on demonstrated ability, and must be as rapid as the current situation demands. While expansion is taking place promotion is accelerated. After expansion is completed the rate diminishes...⁷

Marshall recognized that the increased speed and intensity of modern warfare would place new physical and mental stresses on commanders. Communications had developed to a point where generals could command on the move while rest time was no longer defined by daylight:

You have a man's experience, you have his judgment. And that increases in the average individual with the years. But, unfortunately, from the military point of view his muscles and his tendons do not go along with that development of judgment and of experience. And they are absolutely necessary to field leadership...⁸

Marshall had witnessed the adverse effects of campaigning on elderly general officers in World War I.⁹ He did not want to see the experience repeated if the U.S. Army went to war again:

Leadership in the field depends to an important extent on one's legs and stomach and nervous system and on one's ability to withstand hardships and lack of sleep and still be disposed energetically and aggressively to command men, to dominate men on the battlefield... I saw 27 different divisions of ours engaged in battle - we employed 29 - and there were more reliefs of field officers... due to physical reasons than to any other cause... their spirit, their tenacity of purpose, their power of leadership over their men, was broken through physical fatigue...¹⁰

5 Marshall's testimony before House Committee on Military Affairs, 11 July 1939, hearing HR7903; quoted in Watson: *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 247.

6 General George C. Marshall was himself was promoted from Brigadier-General to full General between July and September 1939.

7 Marshall, "Letter to Republican Thomas E. Martin, 17 November 1939, G-1/16172-698"; quoted in Watson: *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, pp. 252-253.

8 Marshall before the Senate Committee for Military Affairs 8 April 1940; quoted in Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 249.

9 Marshall served with General Pershing's Expeditionary Force headquarters and First U.S. Army headquarters.

10 Marshall before the Senate Committee for Military Affairs 9 April 1940; quoted in Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 249.

Marshall planned to promote talented junior officers ahead of unimpressive senior officers to command divisions in the expanding army:

No system of promotion based on service-in-grade could adequately meet the needs of an emergency army. The fact that promotion by selection, based upon demonstrated ability and adjusted in tempo to the varying needs of the Army, leaves some officers of long service in their present grades is recognized as a regrettable but unavoidable result. We cannot let our sympathy for these officers divert us from the prime necessity of preparing a larger number of younger officers for the responsibilities they must assume when the shooting begins.¹¹

Marshall presented the bill in April 1940, stressing the need to improve the standard of commanders in the Army's:¹²

Some legislation of this nature should be accomplished at the earliest practicable moment. Otherwise we are getting into a rather impossible situation so far as the general efficiency of the officer corps is concerned. And I mean particularly the leadership...¹³

The first part of the bill proposed halting the promotion of and limiting the deployment of elderly major generals. Any major general approaching the compulsory retirement age of 64 would be retired 'as soon as possible'; any with less than two years service remaining 'would not be given an important command'. Any with less than two years service remaining 'would only be allowed to serve overseas on the condition that he would remain on the assignment.'¹⁴

The second part of the bill placed a scale of age limits on the grades of brigadier-general and below, to deal with the 'Hump' of officers with World War I commissions:¹⁵

They will be so old when the time comes that they might eventually reach promotion to lieutenant colonel and colonel and so limited in experience in handling men, except in small groups, that it would be a very unfortunate thing for the Army to have them suddenly jump to positions of high command and control.¹⁶

11 Marshall, 'Letter to Martin, 17 November 1939'; quoted in Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, pp. 252-253.

12 The Senate Military Affairs Committee on 8 April 1940 and the House of Representatives Military Affairs Committee on 9 April 1940.

13 Marshall to Senate Committee on 9 April 1940; quoted in Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 249.

14 *Ibid*, p. 249.

15 For example over 1,900 captains should have been lieutenant-colonels according to their age and their experience; figures for lieutenant-colonels and colonels in a similar position is not known; Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 247.

16 Marshall, "Testimony to Senate Military Affairs Committee, April 8, 1940" (Marshall Papers, Pentagon Office, Testimonies, George C. Marshall Research Library, Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia, hereafter GCMRL).

The age-in-grade bill was passed at the beginning of June 1940. While it left the way open for younger senior commanders, it created a shortage of experienced major generals who were young enough to serve overseas.

2.2 The National Emergency

A month after Marshall was appointed, the Regular Army was authorized to increase in size to 227,000 and the National Guard to 235,000. The army budget for May to October 1940 was set at \$8 billion; the figure was greater than the sum of the past twenty annual budgets.¹⁷ However, this huge allocation of money had come very late in the day:

In the thirties, when war clouds were mounting both in Europe and Asia, the U.S. Army had ample time to rebuild itself, but no money. When war broke out in Europe late in that decade, the Army was given more and more money, but time, far precious than money, was now lacking.¹⁸

In April 1940, 70,000 American troops took part in the first U.S. Army corps and army manoeuvres held since World War I. Another 90,000 participated in manoeuvres held in August. The National Guard divisions were at less than half strength and a third of the men who turned out had no previous field training.¹⁹ There was also an acute shortage of weapons and equipment.²⁰ Major-General Hugh A. Drum (First U.S. Army) made an official complaint:

Deficiencies in tank and plane formations as well as equipment, deficiencies in defense against these instruments of modern warfare, deficiencies in experience, discipline, leadership, supply, communications, reconnaissance, liaison, sanitation...²¹

One assistant chief of staff simply described the manoeuvres as 'lousy'.²² Marshall used the poor results to push Congress for more men, weapons and equipment.²³

17 Griffith, Robert K., *Men Wanted for the U.S. Army: America's Experience with an All-Volunteer Army between the World Wars* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), p. 206.

18 Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 247.

19 *Ibid*, p. 209.

20 Water pipes were used to represent artillery pieces, while trucks posed as tanks and observation planes pretended to be bombers.

21 Reported in the *New York Times*, 23 August 1940, p. 9; quoted in Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 209.

While the U.S. Army was staging its first large scale manoeuvres, the Phoney War in Europe came to an end. Between April and June German troops advanced rapidly through Denmark and Norway before invading the Low Countries and France. By the summer of 1940 they were apparently poised to invade Great Britain. President Roosevelt responded by declaring a limited National Emergency in September 1940, sanctioning preparations for defence of the Western Hemisphere under the plan RAINBOW I, starting in October.

The Selective Service and Training Act, the first ever peacetime draft of untrained civilians, was also approved and every man between the age of 21 and 35 had to register with local draft boards in October. 900,000 men were then drafted for twelve months service by lottery. The National Guard had been made a component of the Regular Army under the National Guard Act of 1933 and it too was mobilized for twelve months. The combined effects of expanding the Regular Army, mobilizing the National Guard and the draft allowed the army to expand to 1.2 million with another 300,000 in training.²⁴ It was the start of a massive expansion.²⁵

Figure 2.1 is a snapshot of the Normandy Group when the National Emergency was declared. The majority of the Group were lieutenant colonels, seven recently promoted. Although seven Regular Army officers were serving with troops, only three of them were commanding troops (Macon, Robertson, Watson), a sign of the limited availability of command posts at this rank.

22 Brigadier-General Sherman Miles, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, during a conference on 27 August 1940; quoted in Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 209.

23 Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 209.

24 *Ibid*, p. 209.

25 The army would increase to fifteen times its 1940 size in three years, including Regular Army, National Guard and New Army Divisions.

Figure 2.1: The Normandy Group in September 1940

Name	Rank	Promotion	Post
Baade	Lt-Col	Unknown	Regimental staff officer
Barton	Unknown	Unknown	Infantry division chief of staff
Brooks	Lt-Col	August 1940	War Department General Staff
Brown	Unknown	Unknown	Staff officer in National Guard Bureau
Cota	Lt-Col.	July 1940	General Service Schools Instructor
Eddy	Lt-Col.	August 1938	Corps staff officer
Gerhardt	Lt-Col.	July 1940	Army War College staff
Grow	Lt-Col.	July 1938	Armored division staff officer
Hobbs	Lt-Col.	June 1936	Camp staff officer
Huebner	Lt-Col.	February 1938	War Department General Staff
Irwin	Lt-Col.	June 1936	Member of the Field Artillery Board
Landrum	Unknown	Unknown	Executive officer at the Infantry School
MacKelvie	Lt-Col.	July 1940	Staff officer for Chief of Field Artillery
Macon	Lt-Col.	October 1938	With armored infantry regiment
McMahon	Unknown	Unknown	Motorized division staff officer
McLain*	Brig-Gen.	April 1937	Commanding an Infantry Brigade
Oliver	Lt-Col.	August 1935	Command and General Staff School Instructor
Ridgway	Lt-Col.	July 1940	War Department General Staff
Robertson	Lt-Col.	August 1935	Serving with infantry division
Stroh	Lt-Col.	July 1940	Army staff officer
Taylor	Major	July 1940	Diplomatic mission in South America
Watson	Lt-Col.	January 1937	Serving with an armored division
Wood	Unknown	Unknown	Army chief of staff
Wyche	Colonel.	August 1935	Staff officer in Chief of Field Artillery's office

Key: *Rank:* Rank in October 1940

Promotion: Date of last promotion

Post: Officer's duty and type of unit in October 1940

Note: * National Guardsmen mobilized in October 1940

The National Guardsman, Raymond McLain, was also commanding troops. His career path between the wars was very different to the Regular Army officers. While pursuing a career in business, he had served in the National Guard and was promoted to the rank of colonel in 1925 and brigadier-general in 1937. He had also attended the three-month Special Command and General Staff Class for Guard and Reserve officers at Fort Leavenworth. He was ordered to active duty when his brigade mobilized in September 1940.

2.3 The Selection of General Officers

Promotions were controlled by the War Department, authorized by the President, and carried out under the authority of the Adjutant General. In practice, 'In both the promotion of generals and their assignment to ground commands General McNair exercised a very considerable influence.'²⁶ General Lesley J. McNair had been Chief of Staff at General Headquarters, U.S. Army since July 1940. His G-1 Personnel staff was responsible for keeping Marshall's G-1 Personnel staff informed on key personnel issues, in particular with the large numbers of promotion and transfers during the National Emergency. McNair also wanted younger general officers, after learning about the German combined arms tactics used during the *Blitzkrieg* in Poland and France:

The situation today, as I see it, is not the same as in the World War, when divisions had merely to 'go down the alley'. Today the tempo of all operations is speeded tremendously, but the difficulty is that the upper storey of our commanders has not speeded accordingly.²⁷

McNair's personnel staff used criteria laid down by Marshall when they made the first selection of potential brigadier-generals in December 1940.²⁸ Colonels and lieutenant-colonels had to have a minimum 28 years service and they had to be young enough to have sufficient years left to

26 Palmer, Robert R., Wiley, Bell I., & Keast, William R., *The U.S. Army in World War II: Green Series: Army Ground Forces: The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops* (Historical Division, Department of the Army, Washington DC, 1948), p. 100

27 McNair, "Memorandum for Marshall, Cases in Connection with High Command, 24 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

28 Assistant Chief of Staff, Personnel, "Memorandum G-1/16089-62 to Marshall, 16 December 1940" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

serve as a major-general. They also had to have 'outstanding qualities of leadership' and McNair's staff had to 'exclude anyone who there is doubt about.'²⁹ The Selection Board accepted 800 of 2,251 lieutenant colonels; a second selection accepted another 56 officers.³⁰

In March 1941, Marshall asked McNair to compile a list of general officers he could refer to when making decisions. The list included their 201 Personal File summary³¹ and their General Efficiency Ratings:³²

I am continually being called upon to submit efficiency reports on general officers with whose performance I am completely unfamiliar, except through incidental reports or a few papers that come over my desk. I wish you would start to keep a file so that you can advise me on this important matter from time to time. It might be advisable to prepare a list in order of efficiency so that they can be rated on a competitive basis.³³

Only a few days before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, Marshall explained how he intended to use the list:

I've looked over colonels, lieutenant-colonels and some of the majors in the Army... I'm going to put these men to the severest tests which I can devise... I'm going to start shifting them into jobs of greater responsibility than those they hold now... Those who stand up under the punishment will be pushed ahead. Those who fail are out at the first sign of faltering.³⁴

Marshall's desire to list potential general officers was well known across the Army Ground Forces. However, it did have one weakness:

The chief was noted for carrying a 'little black book' in which he noted the names of promising subordinates. Later, [Maxwell D.] Taylor himself would adopt this practice. With Marshall, however, there was always some question as to whose name was being recorded, for the Chief of Staff was notoriously bad at remembering names.³⁵

29 *Ibid.*

30 Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 258.

31 Every serving soldier had a 201 Personnel file; it contained details of their service, courses, awards, their Efficiency Ratings, official correspondence and personal recommendations. Marshall however wanted a summary of relevant information.

32 An average of the past ten Officer Efficiency Rating; see relevant section below in this chapter for a full explanation.

33 Marshall, "Memorandum to McNair, 27 March 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

34 Record of a conversation between Marshall and the military author George Fielding Elliot; quoted in Taylor, *The Sword and the Pen*, pp. 37-38.

35 Taylor, *The Sword and the Pen*, p. 35.

Marshall's G-1 Assistant Chief of Staff, Personnel, kept a formal list of names backed up with personnel details, recommendations and correspondence for the Chief of Staff to refer to.³⁶

2.4 Temporary Promotions

The National Guard and the Reserve Officer Corps were allowed to implement temporary 'selective advancement' based on merit rather than seniority during a national emergency. It allowed units to address command issues caused by a short-term mobilization and subsequent demobilization. The 1920 National Defense Act only allowed the Regular Army to use make selective advancements in wartime for the same reasons; '[a] position of according command purely on the basis of seniority of colonels, which means that field command where leadership is most important would go usually to the least vigorously physically.'³⁷ The General Staff wanted to grant the Regular Army the same authority as the National Guard so that it could prepare for war.³⁸ 'Such authority now exists in wartime' Marshall argued. 'It should exist in an emergency... Leadership in the field, and especially during the hurried organization of the urgently needed new units, must not depend on seniority, meaning age.'³⁹

In August 1940, Marshall explained to the Senate Military Affairs Committee how the Regular Army had expanded from 227,000 to 375,000 other ranks over the past twelve months without a corresponding increase in numbers of officers at each grade. Officers had to take on extra responsibilities without the benefit of rank and it was undermining their authority and reducing morale:

Officers with knowledge, initiative, drive and leadership must be placed in important command and staff positions. We have the officers and they can so be placed, provided the authority is

36 Various correspondence (NARA, RG 165, Entry 41, Box 210, G-1 Personnel, Numerical File 1921-1942, 16252-1 to 16252-250) and (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

37 Marshall before the Senate Military Affairs Committee in August 1940; quoted in Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 251.

38 Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 249.

39 Marshall, "Letter G-1/16252 to Chairman, Senate Committee on Military Affairs 16 August 1940"; quoted in Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 250.

granted to select and redistribute them without the normal peacetime restrictions as to seniority.⁴⁰

In September 1940, Marshall approved the final amendment to the bill on temporary promotions. It coincided with the introduction of the Selective Service and Training Act, the draft of young men in the armed services by lottery. He expected the bill to have several positive effects:

The purpose of temporary promotion is to increase the general efficiency of the Army. The factors of individual justice and personal morale are secondary except as they influence the other larger consideration of general effectiveness. It should be considered, however, that promotion pertains entirely to individuals. It is a personal matter. It deals with the human side of the preparation of an army for war.⁴¹

Marshall's personnel officer pointed out that the temporary promotions had to be made wisely and confirmed for the duration of the emergency; later retractions could be bad for morale:

The measure of prestige which an officer loses through reduction in grade far exceeds the measure of prestige he previously gained through the acquisition of that advance grade. It is immaterial that he loses grade through no fault of his own. The fact that he has been reduced in grade becomes the most conspicuous attribute of that individual, not only to himself but to others... Unless temporary promotion is conferred for the duration of the emergency, it is feared that the ultimate result of such promotion, in opposition to its primary purpose, will be to reduce the efficiency of our officer corps, and hence the whole service.⁴²

The bill was introduced to the House of Representatives Committee on Military Affairs on 24 June 1941 and before the Committee of the Whole House on 15 July 1941. The War Department's Report included the following statement:

Your committee believes that the situation confronting the Nation today is such as to demand the organization and the expansion of our armed forces to the same extent as would be necessary if the Nation were at war, and that every reasonable aid to assist those responsible for this organization and the expansion should be provided by Congress.⁴³

The report recognized the above concerns but agreed that temporary promotions would alleviate anomalies in command caused by the expansion. Officers would continue in their temporary rank until

40 Marshall, "Letter G-1/16252 to Chairman, Senate Committee on Military Affairs 16 August 1940"; quoted in Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 250.

41 Shedd, "Memorandum to Marshall on Temporary Promotions, 15 October 1940" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 41, Box 210, G-1 Personnel, Numerical File 1921-1942, 16252-1 to 16252-250)

42 *Ibid*

43 "House of Representative's Report No. 954; Made by the War Department on Temporary Promotions, July 15, 1941" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 41, Box 210)

the National Emergency ended, or six months after a war was concluded, to allow for demobilization. While appointments up to Brigadier-General would be made by the President alone, higher ranking appointments needed the Senate's approval.⁴⁴

2.5 Assessing Merit

The approval of the temporary promotions bill, posed three issues for Marshall and McNair. First, which divisional commanders would they promote to corps command; second, which divisional commanders would have to remove (and how to remove them with the minimum of ill-feeling); and third who were the divisional commanders of the future? McNair was aware that German Army had implemented many command changes before going to war:

... G-2 reported not long ago that there had been no changes in the German high command since the war began. The inference was that the changes had been made before the war. Certainly a great many changes must be made in our Army before or after the war begins - preferably before.⁴⁵

However, the German *Wehrmacht* had changed their generals before the war for political or racial reasons. The army was Aryanised in 1935, and Jewish officers, and those who did not support Hitler's regime, were cashiered and replaced by Nazi supporters.⁴⁶ The Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, General Werner von Blomberg, and the Chief of Army, General Werner von Frisch were also removed in February 1938, using fabricated scandals, following their opposition to Hitler's war plans. Eight other senior generals who opposed plans to occupy Austria and Czechoslovakia were removed at the same time.⁴⁷ McNair wanted to replace the incumbent generals in the U.S. Army as soon as possible on the grounds of military efficiency.

Marshall and McNair promoted or removed general officers on merit, and they had to justify their choices to the President for approval. As they had no recent practical experience to refer, they

⁴⁴ *Ibid*

⁴⁵ McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, June 18 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

⁴⁶ Evans, Richard J., *The Third Reich in Power (1933-1939)*, (Allen Lane, Penguin Group, London, 2005) pp. 547-548

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 642-643

relied on the army's bi-annual personnel reviews to make their decisions. Review results were recorded on an Officer's Evaluation Report (OER), and filed in their 201 Personnel File.⁴⁸

I have been unable to locate a 1940s era OER during the course of my research but a study of a 1991 style OER used during Operation Desert Storm has been consulted. The modern version indicates what type of attributes are expected of an officer in the modern day U.S. Army and several conclusions can be drawn from them. The Army has always expected standards of professionalism and work ethics but methods of measuring them have become increasingly complex over the years as new ideas have been introduced. The emphasis on certain skills has changed over the years, while the impact of the Vietnam Conflict, during which U.S. Army ground troops were deployed from 1965 through to 1972, on man management was huge.

Despite these difficulties, the assumption is made that the core principles which defined the differences between a superior, an average and an inferior general officer have remained the same over the fifty years between 1941 and 1991. A reviewing officer had to consider an officer's professionalism and probably included the following attributes in his report:

- Personal judgment, standards, physical fitness and attempts to self-improve
- Capacity to acquire knowledge and grasp concepts, and then apply them
- Support for superior officers and the motivation and development of subordinates
- Physical and mental performance under stress and an ability to adapt to changes
- Standard of written and oral communication

A study of the officer's professional ethics would probably include the following attributes:

- Dedication, responsibility, loyalty and discipline
- Integrity, moral courage, selflessness and moral standards

Attributes were given a numerical score and the average was recorded as the Officer's Efficiency Rating (OER). Results recorded improvements or problems. McNair was looking for consistent high standards in various appointments recorded by a number of superior officers. A candidate's overall performance was rated as: superior, excellent, above satisfactory, satisfactory or below satisfactory.

⁴⁸ Palmer, Wiley & Keast, *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops* pp. 99-103

Their potential maximum ranks during peacetime and in wartime were also given. Marshall rated Major Omar Bradley in June 1930, when they served together at the Infantry School:⁴⁹

General Estimate: Quiet unassuming, capable, sound common sense. Absolute dependability; give him a job and forget about it.

Recommended Command: Regiment in peace, Division in war.⁵⁰

An average of the past ten OERs, gave the General Efficiency Rating (GER) assessed over five years.⁵¹ A high GER (over 6.5) indicated promotion ahead of others while a low score (under 4.5) indicated a need for disciplinary action or reclassification.⁵² McNair compared GERs before forwarding candidates selected for promotion to Marshall.⁵³ A high GER was important when it came to getting Presidential approval for a promotion: 'The Senate Committee knows pretty well how the War Department selects generals and is likely to scrutinize closely those nominees which fall below 5.5 GER'.⁵⁴

McNair's personnel officer obtained names from all the branches and the services and listed them in GER order; current OERs were also given to illustrate that had not been a recent decline in standards. A character summary and career history, listing experience and past accomplishments were given; intelligence, loyalty, judgment, vigour and ability for aggressive action were also assessed.⁵⁵ Lists were forwarded to Marshall's G-1 Personnel, Assistant Chief of Staff for consideration and he checked age and seniority as well as the length of time spent commanding troops at a suitable level; he could also consult individual 201 Personal Files. Once qualification was complete, officers would be cross-referenced with vacancies.

49 Bradley would command the largest command in U.S. Army history, Twelfth U.S. Army Group, from July 1944 to May 1945.

50 Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* Note Cards, Box 41, (U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA, Chester B. Hanson Collection)

51 Palmer, Wiley & Keast, *Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, p. 99.

52 *Ibid*, p. 99.

53 One example was compiled by Lt-Col C. Parkin, "List of AA Officers for McNair, 12 August 1942" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

54 M.D.T., "Memorandum 210.2 (4-23-42) to Marshall, 23 April 1942" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

55 Parkin, "List of AA Officers for McNair, 12 August 1942" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

In May 1941 McNair asked his army and corps commanders to discreetly select the divisional commanders they wanted removing; he also asked them to suggest replacements:

The relief of a very few high ranking officers would most probably accomplish much towards weeding out inefficients in lower grades in the units that from which these officers had been relieved and in other units. The fact of relief would be either an inducement or a silent warning for others to begin reclassification... Somebody must do an unpleasant duty; it should be first required of the Corps and Army commanders.⁵⁶

The Inspector-General of the U.S. Army, Major-General Virgil Peterson, carried out independent inspections of divisions in July 1941.⁵⁷ He also assessed the commanders and found that while most of the Regular Army general officers were 'active and able', a small number of field grade officers were judged as 'undesirable' due to their age; they could be removed under existing procedures. He recorded that Reserve Army officers were 'distinctly encouraging' and 'while lacking in experience, they average high in potential ability and are improving'. Again existing procedures could remove unsuitable officers. The situation in the National Guard officers was, however, 'much more serious':

Many field officers lack energy and assurance. A very considerable number of general officers are complacent and lack fundamental qualifications for higher command. These undesirables tend to coast along pending termination of their year of service.⁵⁸

Contrary to orders, McNair soon believed that army and corps commanders were not making objective assessments. He believed that a reluctance to remove unsuitable general officers was 'prima facto evidence of a lack in command ability'.⁵⁹ He intended to wield his own 'axe' and would start at the top to set the example:

I am not yet convinced that the present regulations for reassignment and reclassification are ineffective. The principal obstacle now is that commanders lack either the guts or the discernment to act. This difficulty can and should be remedied by relieving such commanders themselves. They then will get the idea quickly.⁶⁰

56 Brown, "Memorandum to McNair, 20 May 1941" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

57 Peterson, "Memorandum for Marshall, 28 July 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

58 *Ibid.*

59 Brown, "Memorandum to McNair, 20 May 1941" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

60 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 18 June 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

Marshall was also aware that the problem lay with corps commanders and many were not applying reclassification as vigorously as they wanted.⁶¹

He [the corps commander] is close enough to the troops to be able to press reclassification where that is clearly the solution and to overcome the reluctance of subordinates to initiate and expedite reclassification proceedings. On the other hand, the army corps commander is far enough removed from the individual to be free of the impulses which make his subordinates cautious about classification.⁶²

Lloyd R. Fredenhall (II Corps' new commander), was an exception and he wanted to replace all three of his National Guard division commanders, also suggesting replacements:⁶³

The 28th Division, General Martin, and the 29th Division, General Reckord, will not come under the 62-year rule... Fredenhall thus should be in the market for three division commanders, a clean sweep, and suggests as division commanders, in order of preference: Simpson, W H - 28th, Wallace, F C, 29th, Muir, J I - 44th. So far as I know the officers, I think his judgment is excellent.⁶⁴

McNair admired his honesty because it allowed him to address the command problems in II Corps' area:

I feel strongly that you have something in Fredenhall. I wish that there were more like him. He is going to work on that situation - a tough one at best - with the setting above none too favorable.⁶⁵

Meanwhile, McNair completed his assessment of replacements for Marshall in July 1941, short-listing ten brigadier-generals and fourteen colonels as 'suitable candidates for divisions'. He readily admitted that he had 'received help in preparing this list, no access to records, however, others may well be equally as good or better.' He also believed that some of the younger colonels might be better than the brigadier-generals.⁶⁶

The four senior American commanders on D-Day in June 1944 were on McNair's list; Eisenhower (SHAEF), Bradley (First U.S. Army), J. Lawton Collins (VII Corps on Utah Beach) and Leonard T. Gerow (V Corps on Omaha Beach). Two of the Normandy Group, Huebner and Gerhardt,

61 Haislip, "Memorandum for Marshall, 1 August 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

62 Marshall, "Memorandum to Army commanders, 4 September 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

63 Two of the divisions, the 28th Infantry (NG) and the 29th Infantry (NG), would be engaged in Normandy.

64 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 10 September 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 76).

65 *Ibid.*

66 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 8 July 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 76).

were also listed. Marshall confirmed all but one of the twenty-four names with the word 'promising'.⁶⁷ Two days later McNair put forward another five names for armoured commanders; one would be a corps commander during the Normandy campaign (Walton H. Walker, XX Corps, temporarily with XIX Corps).⁶⁸

2.6 The National Guard Problem

In September 1940, eighteen National Guard divisions were mobilized following the President's declaration of the twelve-month National Emergency. It was generally recognized across the Regular Army and confirmed in July 1941 by the Inspector-General that command was a serious problem across the National Guard.⁶⁹ Many unsuitable officers had been promoted during World War I and they had not been removed. A ban on inter-state transfers had introduced state rivalries and restricted promotion prospects.⁷⁰

By September 1940 many National Guard division commanders were elderly or inexperienced or both.⁷¹ The National Guard Bureau had limited state allocations for senior officers between the wars and it had created a shortage in some; political interference had exacerbated the problem in some states.⁷² When the ban on inter-state transfers was lifted over the winter of 1940-1941 Marshall's office was inundated with letters from senior officers and politicians suggesting promotions.⁷³ They were all politely refused because the Chief of Staff did not want to be seen to be

67 Colonel J. A. Considine was not noted as promising and he did not command a division or higher. Two future army commanders were listed, Mark Clark and Alexander Patch, and a future corps commander, Franklin Sibert.

68 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 8 July 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 76) .

69 Peterson, "Memorandum for Marshall, 28 July 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

70 Shedd, "Memorandum to Chief of Staff, 19 November 1940" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 41, Box 210).

71 Martin, 28th, was 61; Reckord, 29th, 60; Russell, 30th, 51; Truman, 35th unknown age.

72 Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 259.

73 Many examples of requests and replies filed in "War Department General Staff G-1 Personnel Numerical Files 1921-1942" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 41, Box 210).

influenced. However, many ideas were filed for future reference so they could be discreetly referred to later.

The National Defense Act of 1920 included a regulation for 'retiring or discharging unsatisfactory' National Guard officers and the Secretary of War set up a board of officers to start making recommendations.⁷⁴ However, plans for bringing National Guard units up to *war strength* had shrewdly omitted to include a specific procedure for appointing replacement divisional commanders.⁷⁵ If an army commander could not recommend a suitable replacement *from within* a division, the War Department would provide a Regular Army replacement. This stopped National Guard general officers applying for transfers to other divisions, as the following excerpt illustrates:

The Chief of Staff is committed to the policy that any vacancy occurring in a National Guard organization will be filled by a National Guard officer if a qualified officer can be found in the unit. This policy applies to all positions, including that of division commander...⁷⁶

The army commander advised Marshall to reject the suggested replacement in this case. Opinions of two other army commanders were sought before a Regular Army general officer was selected.

Although the decision to ring fence National Guard division commander posts for Regular Army general officers was politically sensitive, McNair wanted the best the army could find: 'In these times the Army of the United States can afford to make no appointment on the basis other than the following: "This officer is considered qualified to be a division commander in combat."⁷⁷ Ring fencing would also achieve two important objectives. Promising officers would be given the opportunity to prove themselves while introducing Regular Army discipline and training values to the National Guard.

McNair was also wary of the National Guard's General Efficiency Ratings, believing that the bi-annual Officer Efficiency Ratings had been repeatedly over estimated to protect or enhance

74 Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 241.

75 Letter AGO, 24 October 1940; quoted in Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 241.

76 Sent following the relief of Haskell of the 27th (NG) Division; OCS (signed by Colonel Smith, SGS) for USW: Assignment to Command Division, G-1/16803 (11-18-41), 18 November 1941; quoted in Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 260.

77 Brown, Lieutenant Colonel Lloyd, G1-Personnel, Assistant Chief of Staff, "Memorandum to McNair, 28 March 1941" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1)

careers. He was also sure that no one would down grade a fellow officer during the current temporary mobilization:

The National Guard on the whole has in peacetime made out these reports in a perfunctory manner... With the prospect of going home, the National Guard commander cannot be entirely blamed for being easy on his life-long friend or business associate. Many Regular Army officers have probably failed to bust an old sergeant even though he was inefficient... since it is desirable for the War Department to save face of a deserving junior officer, a division commander cannot be logically be blamed for desiring to save face of a deserving junior officer... There is no happy solution to this problem.⁷⁸

McNair requested an immediate review of every officer's Efficiency Ratings to be completed by the end of June 1941 while 'special efficiency reports' on general officers would be prepared following the September and October army manoeuvres.⁷⁹ General officers would be allowed to resign in the interests of the army and McNair intended to encourage some to volunteer their own resignation or reclassification.

Marshall decided to implement the age-in-grade ruling in June, setting the limit for general officers commanding troops at sixty years, after learning that it would remove eight out of nineteen major-generals:⁸⁰

The ages of National Guard officers are surprising to me in the considerable proportions of older officers... Assuming that such action is legally permissible, a scale of maximum ages in grade should be established and made effective progressively, beginning at the top.⁸¹

He explained to his army commanders why the age-in-grade limit would be used, just before the autumn army manoeuvres:

For some time we have been consulting or corresponding with commanders of major units in the field in an effort to find the fairest and most effective method of building up the efficiency of the field forces. In considering their suggestions we have been forced to the conclusion that the War Department must establish a policy of maximum age-in-grade for all officers serving with field force units.⁸²

78 Brown, "Memorandum to McNair, 20 May 1941" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1)

79 *Ibid.*

80 Peterson, "Memorandum to Marshall, 17 July 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

81 The age limit was reduced for lower ranking officers; McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 18 June 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

82 Marshall, "Memorandum to Army commanders, 4 Sept 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

Peterson agreed; believing that the incumbent commanders were either too old or inexperienced to have an active command:

I know all these officers and am of the opinion that due to age/or the lack of other fundamental qualifications, not one of them will ever function satisfactorily as a division commander in the war that threatens us.⁸³

Although the generals had been capable of commanding in peacetime, they were unsuitable for training divisions for combat:

... the majority of these officers would welcome reassignment and relief from the heat, mud, rain and other hardships that are in store for them, provided such assignment would be recognized by public opinion as a promotion and a recognition of their knowledge of and experience with the National Guard.⁸⁴

The age-in-grade limits were announced in July 1941 and the Inspector-General was confident that it would receive support across the Army:

The reassignment of general officers announced yesterday will, in my opinion, receive the support of the general public and be interpreted by it as a move on the part of the War Department to give the Army of the United States more vigorous and aggressive leadership. Should similar steps be taken, upon congressional action authorizing the retention of the National Guard in the service, in the reassignment of the older National Guard division commanders it is believed that the action would be similarly interpreted and receive similar approval. Further it would permit the new commanders to be benefited by experience gained in the forthcoming maneuvers.⁸⁵

The limits were implemented after the autumn army manoeuvres when most of the incumbent National Guard divisional commanders were found to be unsuitable, as were their subordinates. Replacement Regular Army commanders were selected based on their General Efficiency Ratings and their performance during the 'war-games':

... I am particularly interested in vitalizing⁸⁶ our leadership through a liberal application of the reclassification procedure where necessary... I am doubtful, however, that the new

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Haislip, Brigadier General Wade, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1 Personnel, "Memorandum to Marshall, 17 July 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

⁸⁵ Peterson, "Memorandum to Marshall, 17 July 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

⁸⁶ i.e. giving new energy to the leadership by replacing older, time served, commanders with younger, highly rated, general officers.

regulations will be productive of the desired results unless there is present among the field force commanders a sincere desire to rid their units of unsatisfactory officers.⁸⁷

Marshall also had to decide what to do with unsuitable National Guard division commanders after they had been removed. They were highly regarded, well connected, and in some cases, had political support in the Senate or in the House of Representatives in Washington DC. The question was how tactfully to bring their careers to an end:

While it is of great importance that no sudden general action be undertaken which will give the impression of a campaign to eliminate officers, particularly of the civilian components, it is equally important that a start be made in the matter of reclassification commissioned personnel. We must be able to have the basis for the elimination of those who obviously are not qualified... the matter will have to be handled with considerable forethought and diplomacy.⁸⁸

Two had already volunteered to retire but Marshall did not want to undermine the remainder's status or lose their experience, and he had several ideas on how to employ them:

I think it very important to protect the pride and reputation, in other words, to save face, of good men who by reason of age or lack of opportunity have not the ability for command leadership which we know is necessary. Confidentially, I have had in mind the quiet transfer of the best of these, from time to time, to command of the larger cantonments. By this the home reputation of the individual would be protected.⁸⁹

Peterson recognized that divisional commanders were spending too much time reclassifying unsuitable officers, a complicated procedure which had yet to be streamlined, during his July 1941 inspections. He had recommended setting up dedicated reclassification boards at each of the four army headquarters.⁹⁰ Four of the National Guard division commanders could head the new boards, removing the burden of reclassification from divisional commanders.

By the summer of 1941, Marshall and McNair had another imminent National Guard problem to consider. The National Guard's twelve-month mobilization period would finish at the end at the

87 Marshall, "Memorandum to Army commanders, 4 Sept 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

88 Marshall, "Memorandum to McNair, 7 May 1941" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1)

89 Cantonments were training camps where divisions would billet as they moved around the United States; *Ibid.*

90 On 6 September the Adjutant-General was asked to prepare to remove four National Guard generals officers noted in Haislip, "Memorandum to Marshall, Officer Personnel Reclassification, 6 September 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

autumn army manoeuvres.⁹¹ The problem was resolved in August 1941 when the House of Representatives voted for a six month extension by a single vote; the Senate concurred with a convincing majority. It meant that Marshall and McNair would be able to implement their plans for National Guard general officers after the army manoeuvres.

2.7 Military Manoeuvres as an Assessment Tool

Against a background of continuing German military success, including the invasion of the USSR in the summer of 1941, the U.S. Army prepared for the largest military manoeuvres it had ever held. The manoeuvres would give senior generals an opportunity to assess tactics, doctrine, and unit organisations. They would also discover how incumbent Regular Army and National Guard division commanders coped with the pressures of imaginary combat. Promising commanders could also be earmarked.

Several corps held preliminary military exercises during the summer and the four armies held manoeuvres between August and November 1941.⁹² New OERs were carried out at the end of the exercises and they were given double weighting in the GERS to reflect their importance.⁹³ The results were disappointing. Only a few general officers performed well and ‘most of the forty-two division, corps and army commanders who took part in the GHQ manoeuvres were either relieved or reassigned to new commands in 1942 (including twenty of the twenty-seven participating division commanders)’.⁹⁴

91 The officers and men were getting restless and the nickname OHIO, an acronym for ‘Over the Hill in October’ was a standing joke in the National Guard.

92 Fourth Army held their manoeuvres in Washington State in August, Second and Third Armies held combined exercises across Louisiana and the Carolinas in September and October, First Army held their manoeuvres in the Carolinas in November.

93 Brown, “Memorandum to McNair, 20 May 1941” (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1)

94 Gabel, Christopher R., *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941* (U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC, 1991) p. 187.

McNair demanded drastic action when he circulated his assessments of commanders on 7 October 1941. Three of the four army commanders and all nine of the corps commanders were to be removed under the recent age in grade ruling.⁹⁵ There were also serious concerns about many of the division commanders, particularly the National Guard commanders. Figures 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 below give McNair's comments on the general officers commanding the Armoured, Regular Army and National Guard divisions destined for Normandy:

Figure 2.2: Armored Division Commanders; October 1941

Division	Commander	McNair's Comments⁹⁶
2nd	George S. Patton	'Good; division probably his ceiling'*
3rd	Alvan C. Gillem	'New but definitely promising.'
4th	Henry W. Baird	'New but definitely promising'
5th	Jack W. Heard	'Untried'
6th	None	Division activated in February 1942

Key:

Commander: Name of the commanding officer, RA for Regular Army general officer and NG for National Guard general officer

McNair's Comments: General McNair's summary of the general officer's prospects

Note: All Regular Army general officers

* Patton would be promoted to corps commander in January 1942 and army commander in July 1943; he commanded Seventh U.S. Army during the Sicilian campaign and Third U.S. Army throughout the European campaign.

95 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 7 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 76).

96 *Ibid*

Figure 2.3: Regular Army Division Commanders; October 1941

Division	Commander	McNair's Comments⁹⁷
1st	Donald C. Cubbison	'I hope good - but not proved thus far'
2nd	John N. Greenly	'Very dubious prospect'*
4th	Fred C. Wallace	'Temporary - believe he should have it'
5th	Charles H. Bonesteel	'Untried'
8th	James P. Marley	'Not yet proved'
9th	Rene E. Hoyle	'Not yet proved - Devers left him a going concern'

Key:

Commander: Name of the commanding officer, RA for Regular Army general officer and NG for National Guard general officer

McNair's Comments: General McNair's summary of the general officer's prospects

Note: All Regular Army general officers

* Greenly was replaced a month later

Figure 2.4: National Guard Division Commanders; October 1941

Division	Commander	McNair's Comments⁹⁸
28th	Edward Martin (NG)	'No question that he should go'
29th	Milton A. Reckord (NG)	'Good administrator but should go'
30th	Henry D. Russell (NG)	'Pleasing, leader of a sort but not a military commander. Should go sooner or later'
35th	William H. Simpson (RA)	'Untried, but should do well'*

Key:

Commander: Name of the commanding officer, RA for Regular Army general officer and NG for National Guard general officer

McNair's Comments: General McNair's summary of the general officer's prospects

⁹⁷ *Ibid*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Note: All National Guard officers except Simpson who was Regular Army

* The National Guard commander had retired in July 1941

McNair assessed commanders of sixteen Regular Army⁹⁹ and eighteen National Guard divisions. Six of the National Guard commanders had already been replaced by Regular Army general offers. Only three of the remaining twelve National Guard commanders were 'satisfactory thus far'.¹⁰⁰ Four divisions needed a new commander immediately and the remaining five would probably have to be replaced in the near future. McNair also made it clear that he made 'no positive prophecies'.¹⁰¹

Many colonels and lieutenant colonels had showed promise and McNair noted eighteen names for future. Eisenhower and Gerow were again suggested; Wyche was a third name mentioned. Ten of the Normandy Group had their careers advanced due to their superior performance during the army manoeuvres; they are listed in Figure 2.5:¹⁰²

The military manoeuvres had proved to be an excellent way of testing commanders' skills. Starting in September 1942, the first of a two-and-a-half year long programme of army and corps exercises were held.¹⁰³ Again many commanders were removed due to unsuitable performances while promising candidates were identified.

99 The Regular Army had nine infantry, two cavalry and five armored divisions in October 1941; National Guard divisions were infantry.

100 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 7 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 76).

101 *Ibid.*

102 Either promoted on merit or transferred to fill a vacated post, the reasons are difficult to assess

103 Manoeuvre details listed in Stanton, *Order of Battle, U.S. Army, World War II* (Novato, CA, Presidio, 1984).

Figure 2.5: Career Advancements due to the Army Manoeuvres

Name	Rank	Promoted	New Posting
Baade	Brigadier General	No	Assistant division commander
Barton	Colonel	No	Corps chief of staff
Cota	Colonel	Yes	Division chief of staff
Eddy	Lieutenant-Colonel	No	Command of an infantry regiment
Grow	Lieutenant-Colonel	Yes	Armored regiment commander
Irwin	Colonel	Yes	Division artillery officer
Macon	Lieutenant-Colonel	Yes	Armored regiment commander
Robertson	Colonel	Yes	Assistant division commander
Wood	Colonel	Yes	Armored regiment commander
Wyche	Brigadier General	Yes	Division commander

Key:

Rank: Rank following the army manoeuvres

Promoted: Was the officer promoted following the army manoeuvres?

New Posting: The officer's new posting

2.8 Making Changes in the National Guard

Immediately after the army manoeuvres, the Inspector-General sent a National Guard colonel to attend the 21st Annual Convention of the 'Military Order of the World War' (World War I veterans) in Washington DC. The colonel spoke with senior officers from the Regular Army, the National Guard and the Organized Reserve, 'a fair cross section of the intelligent military-civilian opinion of the country'.¹⁰⁴ Most believed that the age-in-grade policy was 'a step in the right direction' and many named general officers who would be 'incapable of sustaining a continuous mental and physical effort

¹⁰⁴ Peterson, "Memorandum OCS-21199/2177 to Marshall", 9 October 1941 (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

in rapidly moving situations'.¹⁰⁵ The colonel's findings reassured Marshall and McNair that criticism over changes in the National Guard would be limited.

As soon as the manoeuvres were over, National Guard officers were replaced in earnest but McNair was concerned that changes had to be carried out in a structured manner:

The removal of National Guard officers at last is proceeding on some considerable scale. Regular officers are being called for to fill vacancies in National Guard units. If these calls are filled one by one as they are received, and with no broad plan in view, the results may be satisfactory in some degree. The early vacancies may be filled splendidly and later ones not so well, due to unwise distribution of the available resources. To be specific, it may be assumed fairly that practically all vacancies in general officers sooner or later should be filled by regular officers, and no doubt the supply is adequate for this purpose...¹⁰⁶

Marshall was wary that the original purpose of the National Guard to reinforce the Regular Army in an emergency had to be recognized. A part time citizen army could not maintain the same standards as the Regular Army in peacetime but it could be brought up to standard, if improvements were introduced by Regular Army officers early enough:

In considering the capabilities of a National Guard officer to command a National Guard unit it is not believed that we should compare him with the best available Regular Army officer. Rather, we should consider, in my opinion, whether or not the National Guard officer is capable of discharging the duties of the position in a creditable manner. If he can qualify under that standard I feel that the National Guard officer should be selected.¹⁰⁷

McNair, however, did not want to internally promote any National Guard generals to division commander and he was determined to impose his closed shop approach on professional grounds. Regular Army officers had the advantage of years of full time training and the benefit of years in the the Army school system, in particular attendance at the Command and General Staff School courses. He was adamant that Regular Army commanders must be used to accelerate training:

I fail to see the wisdom of promotions such as these when one ponders the welfare of the country and the troops commanded. I believe that a citizen officer in general should be content to reach the highly responsible grade of colonel, and that the high command should be selected by professional soldiers...¹⁰⁸

105 *Ibid.*

106 McNair, "Memorandum 33/5-F (10-9-41) to Marshall, 20 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

107 Marshall, "Memorandum G-1/16083-91 to General Ben Lear, 23 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

108 McNair, "Letter to Marshall, 24 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

McNair also believed that a new commander would rapidly improve standards, whereas promoting internally might fail to do so. A new Regular Army general officer would be able to make a fresh assessment of the division, eliminating the prejudices and grievances an internal promotion might produce.

There is more to consider than the morale of displaced commanders. More important is the morale of the men commanded, who know full well the weakness of their leaders, and I believe welcome experienced and capable commanders...¹⁰⁹

In short, McNair recognised that Regular Army general officers had the benefit of better and more intensive training than National Guard general officers.

The political influences in the National Guard were diminishing as the global situation deteriorated, but McNair recognized that Marshall and Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson still had difficult decisions to make:

I am unalterably opposed to promoting any National Guard brigadier general on the horizon to major general and assigning him to command a National Guard division. It is appreciated that the course upon which you are now proceeding in improving leadership inevitably must bring repercussions on the Secretary and you. Nevertheless, it is believed that the course is sound, that it will be supported by the people, and that 'token' promotions by way of appeasement will harm rather than improve the situation, broadly speaking.¹¹⁰

2.9 The Normandy Group in December 1941

By December 1941 ten of the Normandy Group had benefited from a temporary promotion following the army manoeuvres. However, only eight of the twenty-four were serving as commanding troops (Baade, Eddy, Gerhardt, Grow, Macon, McLain, Robertson and Watson) while ten were serving in staff posts. Figure 2.6 details ranks and postings in December 1941.

109 *Ibid.*

110 *Ibid.*

Figure 2.6: The Normandy Group in December 1941

Name	Rank	Posting
Baade	Colonel	Commander of an infantry regiment
Barton	Colonel	Chief of Staff with a corps
Brooks	Lieutenant-Colonel	Chief of Staff, Artillery, Armored Force
Brown	Colonel	War Department General Staff
Cota*	Temporary Colonel	Staff officer at division headquarters
Eddy	Lieutenant-Colonel	Commander of an infantry regiment
Gerhardt	Brigadier-General	Assistant commander with a cavalry division
Grow	Colonel	Commanding an armored regiment
Hobbs	Temporary Colonel	Camp Commandant
Huebner	Temporary Colonel	War Department General Staff
Irwin	Temporary Colonel	Artillery commander with an infantry division
Landrum	Colonel	Staff officer at division headquarters
MacKelvie*	Lieutenant-Colonel	War Department General Staff
Macon	Colonel	Commanding an armored regiment
McMahon	Colonel	Staff officer with a motorized division
McLain**	Brigadier-General	Artillery commander with an infantry division
Oliver	Temporary Colonel	Armored Force Engineer, Armored Force
Ridgway*	Temporary Colonel	War Department General Staff
Robertson*	Temporary Colonel	Commander of an infantry regiment
Rose	Lieutenant-Colonel	Armored Division's Executive Officer
Stroh	Temporary Colonel	Staff officer at army headquarters
Taylor*	Temporary Lt.-Colonel	War Department General Staff
Watson	Temporary Colonel	Commanding an armored regiment
Wood	Brigadier general	Artillery commander with an armored division
Wyche	Brigadier general	Artillery brigade commander

Key:

Rank: Rank on the declaration in war in December 1941

Post: Posting on the declaration in war in December 1941

Notes:

* Temporary ranks awarded in December

** National Guardsman

2.10 Conclusions: Reaction to a European War

As noted above, McNair 'exercised a very considerable influence' in the promotion and assignment of general officers. He suggested all but two of the 140 general officers who commanded divisions in action between December 1941 and August 1945. Only one suggestion was turned down, and the general officer was later accepted and commanded a division in Europe.¹¹¹ Marshall's office approved the recommendations.

Marshall and McNair both recognized that the army faced many command problems at division level but they were also aware that it was difficult to take action while the country was not at war. The two bills in June 1940 reduced the age limit for troop commanders, allowing the promotion of ability ahead of seniority. The National Emergency declared in October 1940 called for a huge expansion of the army and Marshall responded with a third bill in July 1941 which allowed for temporary promotions. The three bills made it possible to start making changes in peacetime.

McNair recommended general officers serving in the Army Ground Forces for promotion and he started as early as December 1940.¹¹² In May he asked the army commanders to assess incumbent division commanders.¹¹³ They failed to be objective and he carried out his own

¹¹¹ Palmer, Wiley & Keast, *Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, p. 100; the officer who was turned down is not mentioned.

¹¹² Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, Personnel, "Memorandum G-1/16089-62 to Marshall, 16 December 1940" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

¹¹³ Brown, "Memorandum to McNair, 20 May 1941" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

assessment¹¹⁴ while the Inspector-General made independent inspections in July 1941. The results proved that while Regular Army commanders were generally up to standard, the National Guard had serious problems.¹¹⁵

Half of the National Guard generals were removed by applying the age-in-grade limit and the rest were diplomatically persuaded to resign.¹¹⁶ Marshall put their experience to good use in alternative, non-combat postings; avoiding ill-feelings and political repercussions.¹¹⁷ Both Marshall and McNair correctly ring-fenced the vacant posts for Regular Army commanders.¹¹⁸ In doing so they advanced superior Regular Army officers and improved standards in the National Guard.

General Efficiency Ratings was a simple, yet effective, method to judge officers against their contemporaries; even the Senate Committee referred to them when approving promotions.¹¹⁹ Marshall asked McNair to compile quick reference lists in March 1941 and used GERs to earmark superior officers.¹²⁰ 201 Personal File Summaries provided background information and references for networking checks. The lists were a useful reference tool for Marshall and his staff.

The army manoeuvres were a useful instrument for checking the competence of incumbent division commanders; twenty out of the twenty-seven division commanders were considered unsuitable during the combined Second and Third Army exercises alone.¹²¹ Post-manoeuve Efficiency Ratings were based on practical experience and they allowed McNair to finalize his assessments of commanders.¹²² Of the Regular Army divisions in the Normandy group, eight division commanders were new, two had to be removed and only one, George S. Patton, was believed to be

114 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 8 July 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 76).

115 Peterson, "Memorandum for Marshall, 28 July 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

116 Peterson, "Memorandum to Marshall, 17 July 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

117 Marshall, "Memorandum to McNair, 7 May 1941" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

118 McNair, "Letter to Marshall, 24 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

119 M.D.T., "Memorandum 210.2 (4-23-42) to Marshall, 23 April 1942" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

120 Marshall, "Memorandum to McNair, 27 March 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

121 Gabel, *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941*, p. 187.

122 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 7 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 76).

suitable so far. The manoeuvres had also identified eighteen future division commanders while ten of the Normandy Group had their careers advanced due to a superior performance.¹²³

On 11 October 1941, all correspondence relating to army, corps and division commanders was transferred from the Army Ground Forces to the Adjutant-General's office for use by the Chief of Staff's personnel officer.¹²⁴ Marshall discussed the files with the four army commanders a few days later.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 the United States was at war and looked to its armed services for action. When it came to who would command the army divisions, Marshall and McNair had prepared well for the event. McNair had noted who to remove and earmarked replacements, using GERs, three independent assessments and manoeuvres to back up his recommendations. Marshall had put forward strong arguments for making changes and put in place the legal means to make them possible. Marshall and McNair had done everything possible to improve the standard of divisional commanders and had used diplomacy and discretion to limit the political backlash to a minimum.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ The files were stored in "Army Ground Forces Binder #1 (322.98)" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1, 1 to 9643). All that remains is a pink receipt slip noting that the material was moved to the Adjutant-General's safe in October 1941. The indexes remain but all of the relevant correspondence has been removed and replaced with removal slips. Enquiries with the NARA archivists indicate that the files either remain classified or they would have been destroyed.

Chapter 3

Reaction to a World War

December 1941 to May 1944

On 7 December 1941, Japanese planes attacked the naval bases at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii and in the Philippines. The United States responded by declaring war on Japan. Four days later Germany declared war on the United States as it entered a world war for the second time in its history. As the divisions started in earnest to train for combat, command changes could now be made in the interests of the war effort. This chapter will consider some important questions about the changes made before June 1944.

Over the next two years Marshall and McNair selected eight commanders for new Armored and New Army divisions destined for Normandy. They also had to make thirty changes in command in the divisions training for Normandy (on average, nearly three changes per division). Some commanders were promoted, some were sacked and some were transferred to staff posts; the reasons for these changes will be explored in this chapter. This chapter will also examine the issue of 'networking', both official and unofficial: how important a factor was it in these decisions, both at Marshall and McNair's level, and at the level of the division commanders?

Under wartime conditions, Marshall and McNair could apply the results of the assessments they had made over the past twelve months. They had three issues to address. First they had to replace promoted corps commanders; second to replace unsuitable commanders, particularly in the National Guard; third to find commanders for the New Army. This chapter will consider how quickly they attended to these issues, and whether the appointments were successful. It also looks at how they addressed the different challenges in the Armored Force, the Regular Army, the National Guard and the New Army.

Another challenge was presented by the commencement of U.S. military operations against the Axis powers. The U.S. Army landed on the coast of North Africa in November 1942, by which time eight of the Normandy Group were commanding their divisions.¹ Lieutenant-General (temporary) Dwight D. Eisenhower (later SHAEF commander in Normandy) was the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces, North Africa, and Major-General (temporary) Omar N. Bradley became his deputy in February 1943 (First U.S. Army commander in Normandy). Over the winter of 1942/43 the troops under their command fought their way to Tunisia; the invasion of Sicily followed in July 1943.

This chapter addresses a number of issues concerning command that emerged from these campaigns. What lessons were learnt during combat about commanders and the experience they gained? Was there an attempt to exchange combat-experienced general officers with promising commanders in the Army Ground Forces, to spread the lessons learned in North Africa and Sicily? Finally, did combat expose any procedural issues or disciplinary problems relevant to the divisional commander's role, and if so, what steps were taken to address them? When Eisenhower assumed command at SHAEF in December 1943, how much control was he given by Marshall over division commanders, and did Marshall take any final steps to look for replacements? Finally, how much combat experience did First U.S. Army accumulate at division command level and how long had the division commanders spent with their divisions?

3.1 Networking for Promotion

The number of officers in the United States army had remained consistent at 12,500 between 1921 and 1938 but it jumped to over 93,000 by 1941.² Networking was an important feature between the wars and Regular Army officers knew many others of a similar age and grade, having served, studied or taught together. They could often get references about other officers via a third party. How were these contacts exploited when the army's expansion offered promotion opportunities?

1 Barton 4th Infantry; Eddy 9th Infantry; Hobbs 30th Infantry; Robertson 2nd Infantry; Wyche 79th Infantry; Watson, 3rd Armored; Wood, 4th Armored; Ridgway, 82nd Airborne.

2 Watson, Mark S., *The U.S. Army in World War II: Green Series: Chief of Staff: Pre-War Plans and Preparations* (Washington DC: Historical Division, The War Department, 1966), p. 24.

In the days before advanced telecommunications, handwritten, or typed, correspondence were the only form of 'hard copy' communication, both official and personal.³ An individual's information was stored in his 201 Personal File and the correspondence section of each he file was split into two.⁴ 'Official Correspondence' contained notifications, instructions and orders regarding promotions, merits, travel, expenses and postings. 'Personal Correspondence' contained recommendation letters acknowledging good work and they were a valuable source of contacts for checking references.

The only surviving 201 Personal File discovered in the relevant files in the National Archives gives an insight into the army's close knit officer community. Harry Collins received over twenty-five congratulatory letters when he was appointed commander of the 42nd Infantry Division in July 1943.⁵ These were personal letters, referring to Collins and his family on first name terms.⁶

Four examples illustrate how personal recommendation, or mentoring, could accelerate an officer's career. Edward Brooks was a major on the War Department General Staff in September 1941 when General Jacob Devers was looking for a Chief of Staff, Artillery, in the Armored Force. He remembered teaching alongside Brooks at the Field Artillery School back in 1925-26 and asked for him.⁷ By August 1942, Brooks was commanding an armoured division and he was transferred to

3 Telephones and telegraphs were available.

4 Collins' 201 File" (NARA, RG 491, General Correspondence Relating to Individuals Box 1, A-D, File Records of Headquarters ETO, U.S. Army, WWII, Collins' 201 File; hereafter known as NARA, RG 491, Collins' 201 File).

5 There were ninety division and ninety assistant division commanders in the U.S Army at this time, Ibid.

6 Out of an army of ninety division commanders and ninety assistants.

7 Arlington National Cemetery, entry for Edward Hale Brooks, at <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/ehbrooks.htm>, accessed January 2010, and a comparison of Devers' and Brooks' entries in the General Officers Biographical Summaries, (Office of Public Information Press, Department of Defense, Washington DC, circa 1947, held in the NARA, Floor 2, Librarians' area).

England in April 1944 to take over the 2nd Armored Division as it made its final preparations for Normandy.⁸

Colonel Barton was serving as the 4th Motorized Division's chief of staff when Major-General Griswold joined in July 1941. Griswold asked for Barton when he was promoted to IV Corps three months later. He was recommended to return to the 4th as commander as it prepared for the July 1942 Carolina Manoeuvres. The division was the first ashore on D-Day on Utah Beach, Normandy.⁹

Mackelvie and Ridgway worked in the War Plans Division of the War Department General Staff when Gerow was the Chief and Eisenhower was the deputy. Ridgway became commander of the 82nd Division in June 1942 after serving as Bradley's assistant. Mackelvie took over as commander of 90th Division when the commander was promoted to corps in January 1944.

Marshall's office received many suggestions for promotions; 'the source of recommendations rarely controlled the Chief of Staff's action, but it often determined the degree of friendliness in his reply'.¹⁰ He gave non-committal replies to those recommending brother officers but he was less benevolent to those putting their own names forward. Some suggestions were noted on officer's 201 Files and discreetly acted on later without reference to the source.

Marshall also made personal recommendations for senior posts. Omar N. Bradley was transferred from Commandant of the Infantry School to take command of the 28th Infantry Division (NG) when it was having training difficulties; he turned it around in nine weeks.¹¹ Leonard T. Gerow was transferred from the office of Assistant Chief of Staff, Chief of the War Plans Division, to command 29th Infantry Division (NG).¹² Matthew B. Ridgway was Gerow's assistant when he was

8 2nd Armored Division entry in Stanton, *Order of Battle, U.S. Army, World War II* (Novato, CA, Presidio, 1984), also Brooks' entry in R. Manning Ancell & Christine M. Miller, *The Biographical Dictionaries of World War II Generals and Flag Officers* (Greenwood Press, Westport, CT, 1996).

9 4th Division entry in Stanton, *Order of Battle*, also comparison of Griswold's and Barton's War Department General Staff Curriculum Vitae, also Griswold and Barton entries in Ancell & Miller, *Generals and Flag Officers*.

10 Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 256.

11 He would command First U.S. Army in Normandy.

12 He would command V Corps and the Omaha Beachhead in Normandy.

transferred to assist Bradley with 82nd Division; he became commander when it was converted to airborne status.

Once a general officer had been selected to command a division, his commanding officer was contacted to arrange his release. The proposed change and the reason behind the transfer were forwarded to the Chief of Staff's personnel officer for approval.¹³ McNair's G-1 personnel officer¹⁴ then listed possible subordinates for the division. The newly appointed commander was also allowed to recommend subordinates and many referred to their own 'little black book', containing the names of men who had impressed them over the years, as J. Lawton Collins recalled:

I had run across General John Hodge while he was in Benning as a student along with me. He was a tough little guy that did well in the course. He had all the markings of a good soldier. I marked him down as a man who someday I might want to have as an assistant.¹⁵

Harry Collins received several letters suggesting officers that he might like to ask for when he took command of 42nd Division. Some officers asked if they could be transferred to his division or if he could put in a 'good word' for them at Washington D.C.¹⁶ The following example also illustrates that personal contact and third party contacts were used:

Colonel Evans and Lt. Col. Clark are personally known to me and I have purposely placed their names at the top of the list as I believe both these officers to be of suitable personality and attainment to fit them for this assignment. Lt. Cols. Boyer and Jordan, and Major Cotulla have all served on the War Department General Staff in recent years and, while not personally known to me have been recommended by officers who knew them while here. Lt. Col. Hurd and Major Vokel have been selected purely from their records. They stood at the head of the list of Reserve Officers attending the Command and General Staff School in 1940.¹⁷

13 Examples in "G1-Personnel, Assistant Chief of Staff, to the Chief of Staff Files" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

14 G-1, Personnel, Assistant Chief of Staff.

15 *Conversations with General J Lawton Collins transcribed by Major Gary Wade* (Combat Studies Institute Study No. 5, 1983, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College) www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/wade3/wade3.asp (hereafter Collins transcribed by Wade, CSI Study 5, C&CGS) accessed April 2008. Hodge eventually commanded XXIV Corps in April 1944 and it took part in the assault on Okinawa in April 1945.

16 Collins' 201 File (NARA, RG 491).

17 Hoyt, Lieutenant-Colonel H. L., General Staff, "Memorandum for Brigadier General William Shedd, G-1 Personnel, Assistant Chief of Staff, 31 August 1940" (one of many examples in NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

A good relationship between the divisional commander and the chief of staff was crucial in training and in combat. Taylor later noted that ‘many division commanders liked to pick their own senior staff’ while others kept their predecessor’s selection to maintain continuity in staff work.¹⁸ As a post-1945 British general once wrote of the commander and chief of staff;

The two must respect and understand each other fully. They must have full confidence in each other and know instinctively and accurately how to act in the absence of the other. The chief of staff must know how far to go in the absence of the commander and feel confident in doing so. The commander must feel that, once he has given his orders, they will be carried out within acceptable parameters and that the chief of staff will conduct the battle in accordance with them.¹⁹

Two examples illustrate how chiefs of staff were appointed. In March 1942 McNair recommended Ira Wyche as commander 79th Division to the War Department.²⁰ The following day McNair notified Wyche: ‘You are selected as CG 79th Division. Submit [the] name of officer you desire as Chief of Staff. Name four in order of preference.’²¹ McNair’s telegram to Franke, on his appointment to lead 81st Division outlines the procedure:

You have been tentatively selected as commanding general, 81st Division... It is desired that you submit the name of the officer you desire as Chief of Staff. You will submit at least four names in order of priority desired bearing in mind that officers on key positions may not be available. Please expedite.²²

It took only six days to make the decision, approve the transfer and notify Franke.²³

The divisional commander could also suggest subordinates, providing he forwarded a summary of the individual’s 201 Personal File to McNair’s G-1 personnel office for approval. A summary included the officer’s age, his current assignment, his education, promotion dates, war

18 Taylor, John M., *General Maxwell Taylor, The Sword and the Pen* (Bantam Dell Publishing, New York, NY, 1989), p. 71.

19 Farndale, General Sir Martin, “Command and Control of the Joint Army Group/Tactical Air Force Battle at the Operational Level” in Reid, Brian Holden, and Dewar, Michael, (eds.) *Military Strategy in a Changing Europe: Towards the Twenty-First Century* (Brassey, London, 1991) p. 188; quoted in Professor Sheffield, Gary D., (ed.) *Leadership and Command: The Anglo-American Experience since 1861* (Brassey, London, 2002), p. 4.

20 McNair, “Telegram to G-1, War Department, 2 March 1942” (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

21 McNair, “Telegram to Wyche, 3 March 1942” (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

22 McNair, “Telegram to Franke, 12 March 1942” (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

23 Franke, “Telegram to McNair, 18 March 1942” (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

service, gallantry awards, attendance at the Command and General Staff School and the Army War College. The length of time spent leading troops was included for troop commanders.²⁴

3.2 Changes in Command, Armoured Divisions

Five armoured divisions were destined for Normandy and the majority of command changes were due to promotion. Changes are detailed in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Wartime Changes in Armored Division Commanders

Div.	Name*	Take Over	Comments
2nd	George S. Patton	January 1941	Promoted to I Armored Corps
	Willis Crittenger	January 1942	Promoted to II Armored Corps
	Ernest N. Harmon	July 1942	Took the division to North Africa In theatre promotion to II Corps
	Hugh J. Gaffey	April 1943	In theatre promotion
3rd	Alvan C. Gillem	April 1941	Promoted to II Armored Corps
	Walton H. Walker	January 1942	Promoted to IV Armored Corps
	Leroy H. Watson	August 1942	Took the division to Normandy
4th	Henry W. Baird	April 1941	Relieved and retired
	John S. Wood	May 1942	Took the division to Normandy
5th	Jack W. Heard	October 1941	Unsatisfactory and relieved
	Lunsford E. Oliver	February 1943	Combat experienced from North Africa Took the division to Normandy
6th	William H. Morris	February 1942	Promoted to II Armored Corps
	Robert W. Grow	June 1943	Took the division to Normandy

²⁴ Hoy, "Memorandum to Shedd, 31 August 1940" (one of many examples in NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

Key:

Name: Name of the division's general commanding officer

Take Over: Date the general took command of the division

Comments: comment on the general officer's future career

Note:

* All general officers were Regular Army (RA)

The decision to create four armoured corps meant that four new technophile armoured division commanders had to be found. Commanding a fast moving armoured division required knowledge of mobile warfare involving tanks, mechanized infantry and mobile artillery, effectively ring fencing posts to armoured commanders. Four of the replacement commanders would command their divisions in combat. Three armoured division commanders, Gillem, Harmon and Walker, would eventually command corps in the European campaign.

Only two out the thirteen armoured commanders selected by McNair were unsatisfactory, an 85-percent success rate. Baird failed to live up to McNair's assessment of being 'definitely promising.'²⁵ Devers, Commanding General of the Armored Force, relieved him after twelve months because '... although he is a fine general officer and has done splendid work organizing and training the 4th Armored Division, he has neither the physical capacity nor the ability to command a division in battle.'²⁶ Baird was only six months off his sixtieth birthday. Heard joined 5th Armored Division on activation in October 1941 but it performed badly in II Armored Corps California Training Manoeuvres in August 1942. Oliver, a veteran of North Africa, replaced him in February 1943 and brought the division up to standard ready for Second Army's No 1 Tennessee Manoeuvres.²⁷

25 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 7 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 76).

26 Devers, "Letter to Commanding General, Field Forces, 23 March 1942" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

27 Command changes and manoeuvre details listed 5th Armored Division's entry in Stanton, *U.S. Army Order of Battle*.

3.3 Changes in Command, Regular Army Divisions

Six Regular Army infantry divisions were destined for Normandy and there were nine command changes. They are detailed in figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Wartime Changes in Regular Army Division Commanders

Div.	Name*	Take Over	Comments
1 st	Donald Cubbison	February 1941	Transferred under age ruling
	Terry Allen	May 1942	Took division to North Africa Relieved in theatre by Eisenhower
	Clarence Huebner	July 1943	Took the division to Normandy
2nd	Greenly	Unknown	Relieved after manoeuvres
	John C. H. Lee	November 1941	Promoted to senior theatre staff post
	Walter Robertson	May 1942	Took the division to Normandy
4th	Harold R. Bull	July 1941	Promoted in the War Department
	Fred C. Wallace	December 1941	Promoted to a home Corps
	Raymond O. Barton	June 1942	Took the division to Normandy
5th	Cortlandt Parker	August 1941	Unsatisfactory performance
	Stafford L. Irwin	June 1943	North Africa combat experienced Took the division to Normandy
8th	James P. Marley	April 1941	Transferred under age ruling
	Paul E. Peabody	August 1942	Removed due to inexperience
	William McMahon	January 1943	Took the division to Normandy
9th	Rene E. Hoyle	August 1941	Transferred under age ruling
	Manton S. Eddy	July 1942	Took division to North Africa and then to Normandy

Key:

Div.: Division number

Name: Name of the division's general commanding officer

Take Over: Date the general took command of the division

Comments: comment on the general officer's future career

Note:

* All general officers were Regular Army (RA)

Three of the incumbent commanders, Cubbison, Martin and Hoyle, were transferred to non-combat posts under the age-in-grade ruling. Cubbison and Hoyle were appointed Commandants of Field Artillery Replacement Training Centres;²⁸ Martin became Commanding Officer of the U.S. Army Disciplinary Barracks. While Wallace, Bull and Lee, were satisfactory general officers, they were not suited to commanding divisions and were transferred to senior staff posts. Wallace was promoted to command a home corps command. Bull was served on the War Department's General Staff before taking command of a Replacement and School Command. After September 1943 he was Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations on the COSSAC staff²⁹ and the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces.

Greenly had proved to be a 'very dubious prospect' in the October 1941 army manoeuvres and was immediately replaced by Lee, commanding officer of the Californian Port of Embarkation. Lee was a devout, and somewhat pompous, churchman, and his tough discipline was what the division needed.³⁰ Six months later Lee was appointed Chief of the Services of Supply in the

28 Artillery Replacement Training Centres trained artillery recruits before they were posted to their units.

29 COSSAC was the office tasked with planning Operation Overlord and the naval side of the landings, Operation Neptune before General Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) took over in December 1943.

30 His initials gave him the nicknames 'Courthouse' and 'Jesus Christ Himself'; information taken from his eulogy at <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/jchlee.htm> accessed January 2010.

European Theater of Operations,³¹ an organization which would grow to become one of the largest military logistical operations in military history. Lee's assistant commander, Walter Robertson, an 'outstanding trainer',³² took command of 2nd Infantry Division.

Three command changes were made after December 1941 due to unsatisfactory performance. Peabody, 8th Motorized (later Infantry) Division, performed badly during I Corps' Tennessee Manoeuvres in October 1942. He was relieved because '...it has been determined that he is not yet sufficiently experienced for such command. He has a brilliant record as a staff officer in France, at home, and as an instructor. This denied him a proper proportion of troop duty.'³³ He would serve as a military attaché in London until the end of the war. Little is known about the background of his replacement, McMahon.

Parker, 5th Infantry Division, was relieved following Devers' damning report in May 1943; 'I am of the opinion that General Parker should not go to England with the 5th Division, and should be taken out of Iceland.'³⁴ Parker was transferred to command the Southern California Sector, Western Defence Command. He was replaced by Irwin, an artilleryman and veteran of the North African campaign. Eisenhower carried out the third dismissal in July 1943.³⁵ Terry Allen, 1st Infantry Division, was replaced for failing to address discipline problems during the Sicilian campaign. His case is dealt with on pages 93-95 below.

31 SHAEF's supply line during the European campaign; Lee was also appointed deputy commander of U.S. forces in the Theater of Operations in January 1944.

32 Chandler, David G. & Collins, James Lawton (editors), *The D-Day Encyclopedia* (Simon & Schuster, New York, NY, 1978), p. 462.

33 Secretary of War Stimson, "Temporary Promotions, 8 February 1943" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

34 Marshall "Memorandum for McNarney, 25 May 1943" taken from the electronic version of Bland and Stevens, *The Papers of Marshall*, vol. 3, pp. 703-705, available as entry #3-493 of the Marshall Papers on the MFDL, accessed in April 2008.

35 Gerald Astor, *Terrible Terry Allen: Combat General of World War II - The Life of an American Soldier* (Presidio Press; 2003).

3.4 Changes in Command, National Guard Divisions

Four National Guard Divisions were destined for Normandy and all four commanders had been replaced by Regular Army general officers by April 1942. Changes are detailed in figure 3.2.

Figure 3.3: Wartime Changes in National Guard Division Commanders

Div.	Name*	Take Over	Comments
28th	Edward Martin (NG)	February 1941	Relieved under age ruling and retired
	J. Garesche Ord (RA)	December 1941	Unsatisfactory and removed
	Omar N. Bradley (RA)	June 1942	Promoted to North Africa
	Lloyd Brown (RA)	January 1943	Took the division to Normandy
29th	Milton A. Reckord (NG)	February 1941	Transferred under age ruling
	Leonard T. Gerow (RA)	January 1942	Promoted to command V Corps
	Charles H. Gerhardt (RA)	July 1943	Took the division to Normandy
30th	Henry D. Russell (NG)	September 1940	'Weak' assigned to a corps staff ³⁶
	William H. Simpson (RA)	April 1942	Promoted to corps command
	Leland S Hobbs (RA)	September 1942	Took the division to Normandy
35th	William H. Simpson (RA)	October 1941	Transferred to 35th Division
	Maxwell Murray (RA)	April 1942	Given a home command
	Paul W. Baade (RA)	January 1943	Took the division to Normandy

Key:

Div.: Division number

Name: Name of the division's general commanding officer

Take Over: Date the general took command of the division

Comments: comment on the general officer's future career

³⁶ McNair, "Memorandum to CG, Field Forces, 20 December 1941" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

Note:

* (RA) Regular Army general officers and (NG) National Guard general officers

Two replacements, Ord and Murray, were considered unsatisfactory and Marshall selected three names from his black book, Bradley, Gerow and Simpson,³⁷ to act as trouble-shooters. All three would be eventually command armies in the European campaign (and Bradley an army group commander). Their selection illustrates that Marshall had identified their potential before Pearl Harbor and that they lived up to his expectations.

In October 1941, McNair's assessed 28th Division's commander, Martin, with the words 'no question that he should go'.³⁸ He chose to retire from the army and entered politics.³⁹ 28th Division's new commander, Ord, was unable to maintain its training programme, partly because men were being continuously drafted to other divisions. However, the Inspector-General was 'doubtful of Ord's ability to develop the division properly' when he visited the 28th four months later and found him to be 'non-responsive' about command problems.⁴⁰ Ord was replaced and appointed Chairman of the Joint Brazil-U.S. Defense Commission.

28th Division was saved by Bradley, who had already proved himself by training the 82nd New Army Division to a high standard. When Bradley learnt that officers and men in the 28th had been recruited from the same towns, he realised that civilian friendships were interfering with discipline. Standards rose dramatically when officers were switched between units; he also stepped up the physical training programme. By the time Bradley left for North Africa in February 1943 to

37 Bradley was promoted to corps command in April 1943, army command in October 1943 and army group command in July 1944; Gerow was promoted to corps command in and army command in January 1945; Simpson would be promoted to corps command in September 1942 and army command in September 1943.

38 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 7 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, POC, Box 67).

39 Martin was Governor of Pennsylvania from 1943 to 1947 and a U.S. Senator from 1947 to 1958.

40 Peterson, "Third Army Inspection Report, 24 April 1942" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

serve as Eisenhower's deputy, the 28th was an effective division.⁴¹ He was replaced by Brown, a protégé of Marshall's who had worked extensively on the Chief of Staff's staff.

Although McNair assessed Reckord as a 'good administrator' he was unsuitable to command 29th Division's in combat.⁴² He was promoted to Commanding General of III Corps Area⁴³ and replaced by Gerow, another Marshall protégé, working in the War Plans Division. Eisenhower and Gerow had met at West Point and the pair studied together on the Command and General Staff Course.⁴⁴ Gerow was promoted to command V Corps on Eisenhower's recommendation in July 1943.⁴⁵ Gerhardt had already spent a year commanding 91st Division and he continued Gerow's good work with the 29th in England.

McNair assessed 30th Division's commander, Russell as 'pleasing, [a] leader of a sort but not a military commander' and he did 'go sooner or later', in April 1942.⁴⁶ He commanded a Replacement and School Command before serving on several committees.⁴⁷ Simpson had already proved to be an 'outstanding officer', training 35th Division⁴⁸ and did the same at 30th Division. He was promoted to corps command and Hobbs, 8th Division's assistant commander, took command.

Truman had retired from 35th Division as early as summer of 1941 and Simpson accelerated the division's training before transferring to the 30th. Murray failed to build on his good work and was appointed Commanding General of Southern California Sector, Western Defence Command. The assistant commander, Baade took over.

41 Miller, Robert A., *Division Commander: A Biography of Major General Norman D Cota* (Spartanburg, SC, Reprint Co, 1989) pp. 92-95.

42 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 7 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, POC, Box 67).

43 He served as Duty as Theater Provost Marshal in the European Theater after December 1943.

44 D'Este, Carlo, *Eisenhower, Allied Supreme Commander* (London, Cassell, 2004), p. 180.

45 V Corps would be the first ashore on Omaha Beach on 6 June 1944; consequently Gerow spent nearly twelve months involved with the planning for the invasion of Normandy.

46 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 7 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, POC, Box 67).

47 War Department Manpower Board and Pearl Harbor Board.

48 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 23 April 1943" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

3.5 New Army Divisions

Twenty-three New Army infantry divisions were reactivated between the spring of 1942 and the autumn of 1943. Choices for commanders were becoming limited and they had the unique task of organizing and training a large number of draftees from scratch. They only had limited time and had to rely on a small Regular Army cadre, many of them recently promoted officers. The New Army commanders are listed in figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4: Wartime Changes in New Army Division Commanders

Div.	Name	Take Over	Comments
79 th	Ira T. Wyche	May 1942	Took the division to Normandy
82 nd *	Omar N. Bradley	March 1942	Transferred to 28th Division
	Matthew Ridgway	June 1942	Took the division to Normandy
83 rd	Frank W. Milburn	August 1942	Promoted to command XXI Corps
	Robert C. Macon	December 1943	Took the division to Normandy
90 th	Henry Terrell Jr.	March 1942	Promoted to command XXII Corps
	Jay W. MacKelvie	January 1944	Took the division to Normandy
101 st **	William C Lee	August 1942	Pioneer of U.S. Army airborne training

Key:

Div.: Division number

Name: Name of the division's general commanding officer

Take Over: Date the general took command of the division

Comments: comment on the general officer's future career

Notes:

- * (RA) Regular Army general officers and (NG) National Guard general officers
 - ** 82nd Infantry Division was designated Airborne in August 1942
 - *** 101st Airborne Division was created when 82nd Airborne Division was divided in two in August 1942
-

Wyche was promoted to command 79th Division after a superior performance with the 1st Anti-tank Group in the autumn 1941 army manoeuvres. He took it to Normandy. Milburn and Terrell both had extended service as assistant commanders with Regular divisions. After commanding well in the manoeuvres, they were both promoted and their assistants, Macon and MacKelvie, took command as their divisions prepared to sail for England.

Bradley was Commandant of the Infantry School and a protégé of Marshall when he was appointed commander of 82nd Division. He raised a well-trained division in four months and his efforts did not go unnoticed. He transferred to 28th Division when it needed the same treatment. Bradley's assistant Ridgway, another protégé of Marshall's who had worked in the War Plans Division of the War Department General Staff, took over. Two months later the 82nd was converted into an airborne division, a sign of its elite status.

Lee had been involved in airborne training since it started in the U.S. Army, carrying out the first test jumps in 1940. As commander of the Provisional Parachute and then Commanding General of the Airborne Command, he was the obvious choice to command 101st Airborne Division when it was formed by dividing 82nd Division into two.

Only Macon had combat experience as a regimental commander in North Africa. In all the other cases Marshall and McNair had chosen men who had performed well as a commander or as an assistant in the recent army manoeuvres. In all cases they made successful choices.

3.6 Issues Arising from the Mediterranean Campaigns

In October 1942 McNair proposed using a statistical distribution as a quick solution to the next round of promotions. The next group of 602 officers would be promoted according to their GER, with the majority taken from those with the highest result.⁴⁹ The only other criterion was that officers over fifty years of age had to demonstrate they had the stamina to command in combat. Marshall objected to McNair's suggestion. Although it would take longer to make decisions, he believed each promotion to be assessed on the officer's individual merits. The invasion of North Africa was looming and he believed that combat experienced commanders would soon have to be given preference:

I do not consider the proposed system desirable, as leadership ability and physical stamina are not uniformly distributed qualities. The individuals possessing them must be singled out and promoted, regardless of other factors. The demands placed upon the stamina of a general officer by the conditions of modern warfare make it necessary to select for combat duty only officers who are physically and mentally young.⁵⁰

Only World War I veterans had any combat experience, and those that had not already been promoted to senior commands were too old. No one could anticipate if an officer could cope with the mental and physical stresses of combat but those who rose to the challenge would learn far more about command in a few months of combat than years of training. Marshall recognized that he would soon have to consider officers who had proved themselves in combat:

Heretofore, our selections have had to be based largely upon past records and the performance of duty under training conditions. Under such limitation the World War group of officers admittedly was the most experienced and, in general, the best available source... Now that we have a considerable force engaged in active operations, an increasing proportion must be made up of those who successfully demonstrate their ability to lead troops in actual combat...⁵¹

The time for using GERs to assess capabilities was coming to an end; it was time to consider combat experience with an emphasis on selecting younger officers:

I desire, however, that maximum consideration be given to younger men, and that an increasing number of those under forty-five be given greater opportunity for command experience in regiments and units of comparable size. In addition, I propose to utilize to the

49 422 from 1,000 to 5,000, 120 from 5,000 to 6,200 and 120 from 6,200 onwards: McNair, "WDGAP 210.1 Gen.0. (10-28-42), Memorandum for Marshall, 28 October 1942" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

50 Marshall, "Memorandum for McNair, 28 October 1942" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

51 *Ibid.*

maximum the officers who have had actual combat experience in filling the general officer positions in new units.⁵²

Four weeks later, Marshall expanded his thoughts on selecting combat experienced officers; he still believed that general officers had to be chosen on individual merit not by using statistics:

... an attempt is being made to over-simplify a complex problem by reducing it to numbers and percentages. I view the selection of officers for high command as one of our most complicated and important duties and one which will have to be approached directly without attempting to obtain definite percentages from certain groups.⁵³

He also believed that they had to start considering theatre commanders' assessments of officers based on combat experience:

Years of service are not necessarily a true indication of experience since the opportunities for education and to exercise command may vary to a considerable extent. The officers now participating in the African operation are gaining in a few months time more valuable experience than they could have acquired in years of peacetime training. To be very personal, consider our own experience in 1919, compared with that of hundreds of officers senior to us... Vital qualifications for a general officer are leadership, force and vigor. Ordinary training, experience and education cannot compensate for these and the officers who possess them must be singled out and advanced regardless of other considerations. I am convinced that they will be found among our officers under forty-five to a much larger degree than your percentages indicate.⁵⁴

By the spring of 1943, as the North African campaign came to an end, Eisenhower was also in no doubt that combat was the ultimate test of an officer's ability to command:

The only valid reason for advancing an individual is to improve the quality of our military leadership and so produce a greater battle and general efficiency in the American Forces. Since service in Theater provides the surest index to an officer's present and potential value in this regard, the War Department has conferred upon Theater Commanders a most liberal delegation of authority in making promotions. It is my responsibility to the War Department and that of all subordinates to me, to see that this authority is used intelligently.⁵⁵

Marshall intended to send several senior officers to the theatres as combat observers. They would be able to learn about combat first hand and at the same time identify suitable officers to be posted back to the United States to become divisional commanders. McNair disagreed. He wanted the theatre commander to nominate officers, believing that he could overrule an observer's

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Marshall, "Memorandum for McNair, 21 November 1942" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ Eisenhower, "Letter to Subordinates, 15 March 1943; forwarded to Marshall on 24 April 1943" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

suggestions.⁵⁶ McNair also did not want division commanders leaving their posts for extended periods to act as combat observers. Eisenhower did not like observers either because their visits interfered with combat operations and took up valuable time.⁵⁷ Eventually a compromise was reached and four corps commanders visited in the spring of 1943.⁵⁸

Before long, McNair was concerned that Eisenhower was returning 'less desirable' officers to Army Ground Forces to facilitate promotions in his own theatre.⁵⁹ Marshall contacted several high ranking officers on 14 April 1943, including Eisenhower, making it clear that the practice had to cease.⁶⁰ Eisenhower's reply asked for Marshall's agreement on decisions concerning all general officers:

In the cases of very senior officers, decisions are never arrived at suddenly and on the spur of the moment. They are a result of many observations and reports. When doubts arise concerning any one of these people, I think that, even at the risk of bothering you with the details, I should give you warning of what may transpire. This will enable you to consider possible assignment or allow you to direct me to keep the man here on some job for a specified length of time.⁶¹

His main concern was how to get the maximum use out of general officers who were unsuitable troop commanders:

One of the greatest difficulties encountered in this matter is that of making the greatest subsequent usefulness of individuals who may have disclosed some particular weakness on the battlefield, but who have definite value in other capacities.⁶²

Eisenhower also explained thoughts on combat effectiveness:

Combat effectiveness includes battle and general discipline, morale, high training standards, and administrative and staff efficiency. Good conduct, appearance, and deportment of troops,

56 McNair, "Memorandum for Marshall, 210.2 (3-30-43), 30 March 1943" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

57 Palmer, Wiley & Keast, *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, pp. 103-104.

58 McNair was slightly wounded during a visit to North Africa.

59 McNair, "Memorandum for Marshall, 30 March 1943" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

60 Marshall's letter referred to in Eisenhower's response, "Letter to Marshall, 24 April 1943" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

61 Eisenhower, "Letter to Marshall, 24 April 1943" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

62 *Ibid.*

no matter where located, may be taken as outward signs that this type of efficiency is being at least partially attained.⁶³

He believed that officers could be divided into three groups after their first taste of combat. The first group were combat commanders who coped well and some would be eventually suitable for promotion. The second group were staff men who coped badly while commanding troops in combat but they were suitable for staff work. Eisenhower intended to employ them rather than returning them to the United States to train troops for combat; he recognized it could be bad for morale. Eisenhower was in no doubt how he would deal with the third group; those who failed to perform in either capacity:

You may be sure that in no case where a General Officer convinces me that he has little value, either here or at home, he will come back except with flat recommendation for his reduction to regular rank and assignment to administrative duty.⁶⁴

Marshall still asked his personnel officer to monitor who Eisenhower was sending back and why:

... if it is done in such a way that most of the men brought here will be promoted and their removal from over there will cause promotions within the divisions; always provided that they do not 'kick' men 'upstairs' to us.⁶⁵

Eisenhower was also concerned that the discipline of some divisions had slipped to an unacceptable standard in his theatre. Poor discipline was being ignored when promotions were being considered and the problem started at the top:

The conclusion is inescapable that in some instance senior commanders are not pressing on these important matters and demanding results from subordinates before recommending them for promotion. Likewise, it appears obvious that some officers must be occupying responsible positions from which they should be removed and reduced in grade in which they can be more closely supervised. We must insist upon obtaining and bringing up efficient leaders, men who will qualify themselves for the stern tasks ahead and who have the nervous and physical energy and moral courage to obtain desired results from their subordinates.⁶⁶

63 Eisenhower, "Letter to Subordinates, 15 March 1943; forwarded to Marshall on 24 April 1943" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

64 *Ibid.*

65 Marshall "Memorandum for the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, 11 May 1943" taken from the electronic version of Bland and Stevens, *The Papers of George C. Marshall*, vol. 3, pp. 688-689, available as entry #3-651 of the Marshall Papers on the MFDL, accessed in April 2008).

66 Eisenhower, "Letter to Subordinates, 15 March 1943; forwarded to Marshall on 24 April 1943" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

Marshall had also noted the problem to McNair earlier on 1 February 1943, and he was concerned that a failure to address minor disciplinary issues behind the lines led to bigger, and potentially disastrous, problems in combat,

While I was in Algiers, Eisenhower referred a number of times to the urgency of having a higher standard of discipline developed in our troops. He stated that laxness in saluting and in the observance of small regulations was magnified many-fold in its unfortunate results once the troops became involved in the confusion and discomforts of campaign. He spoke of their eating up their reserve rations, of ignoring instructions regarding minor matters which became major considerations once they were in contact with the enemy.⁶⁷

1st Infantry Division was a particular culprit. Terry Allen and his assistant division commander, Theodore Roosevelt, failed to address many discipline problems, believing that combat experience exempted them from the finer points of discipline. Their attitude was considered unacceptable because 1st Infantry Division's lack of discipline could easily spread to untried divisions. As one historian has noted,

... Allen instilled the uniquely independent spirit that the 1st Division still possessed on the eve of Overlord. He promoted an 'us against them' mind-set that ultimately cost him his command. Allen was not a stickler for discipline. He cared little for such things. He cared, instead, about combat performance. His division acquired a reputation for toughness on the front lines and unruliness in the rear.⁶⁸

'Under Allen', another writer has argued,

... the 1st Division had become increasingly temperamental, disdainful of both regulations and senior commanders. It thought itself exempted from the need of discipline by virtue of its months on the line. And it believed itself to be the only division carrying its share of the war... The Division had already been selected for the Normandy campaign. If it was to fight well there at the side of inexperienced divisions, under the command of an inexperienced corps, the division desperately needed a change in its perspective.⁶⁹

Allen and Roosevelt also ignored army procedures to gain short term benefits, disregarding the long term problems they created for others.

67 Marshall, "Memorandum to McNair, 1 February 1943", taken from the electronic version of Bland and Stevens, *The Papers of George C. Marshall*, vol. 3, pp. 525-526, available as #3-493 of the Marshall Papers on the MFDL, accessed in April 2008.

68 McManus, John C., *The Americans at D-Day* (Forge Publishers, New York, NY 2004) p. 45.

69 Rogers, Robert J., *A Study of Leadership in the First Infantry Division in WWII*, p. 50; quoted in Steven Flaig, 'Clarence R. Huebner: An American Military Story of Achievement,' p.100 (Master of Science, thesis, University of North Texas, May 2006), accessed at <http://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc5281/m1/1/>, in January 2010 (hereafter known as Flaig, Huebner Thesis).

Please Help! I have no complaints against the repeated attempts of the 1st Division to look after its self and to get what it can, but there are ways and ways. One way is to send an aide to the Secretary of the General Staff of Allied Force Headquarters, with a request for supplies and personnel, unscreened by the II Corps. I am positive that you do not like that way any better than we do, so please get Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen under control and keep him off our backs. All of us here are trying to be helpful and are doing what we can. However, we are all doing it the hard way. You can make it considerably easier for us.⁷⁰

Terry Allen and Theodore Roosevelt were replaced by two officers serving with the Allied Force Headquarters as it prepared for the invasion of Sicily. Clarence Huebner had been assigned to Eisenhower's headquarters since March 1943 and he was Allen's polar opposite.

As Allen's successor in the 1st Division we picked Major General Clarence R Huebner, known to the army as a flinty disciplinarian... He was no stranger to the 1st Division, for he had already worn its patch in every rank from a private to colonel. In returning to command the division, however, he had come from a desk in the Pentagon.⁷¹

Whereas Allen was '... a maverick, stubborn, independent, skillful, adept and aggressive' divisional commander...' Huebner was '... an austere and no-nonsense disciplinarian, a teacher as well as a leader...' ⁷² While Allen had maintained close, personal relationships with his staff, Huebner adopted a formal military relationship with his subordinates. Each one believed that their leadership style was the correct one to achieve the objective with fewer casualties.⁷³ Only time would tell in Normandy if Huebner's approach worked.

3.7 Theatre Promotions versus United States Promotions

Marshall had to maintain a balance between promotions in the Pacific and Mediterranean Theatres and at home in Army Ground Forces. He was mindful that it would be difficult to return a combat

70 Hughes, General Everett S., Deputy Theater Commander, "Letter to Omar Bradley, 12 June 1943" (AWCL, Bradley Papers, Correspondence with Major Historical Figures, 1936 - 1960).

71 Bradley, Omar N., *A Soldier's Story* (Holt, Rinehart Winston, New York, NY, 1951), p. 275.

72 Denno, Colonel Bryce F., '*Allen and Huebner: Contrast in Command*,' *Army Magazine*, June 1984; quoted in Flaig's Huebner Thesis, p. 101.

73 Rogers, Robert J., *A Study of Leadership in the First Infantry Division in WWI*, p. 5.; quoted in Flaig's Huebner Thesis, p. 101.

experienced commander to an appropriate post in the United States if he had been promoted too high in theatre.

With regard to promotions, I feel that we are getting into an increasingly embarrassing situation with reference to the advancement of somewhat proven leaders in the field and those at home based on training leadership. Would it not help the situation if you had somebody, preferably a general officer, to travel in the various theatres in order to make sure that a proper balance is maintained, and particularly that we have not too many 'forgotten men'?⁷⁴

At the same time, Marshall was considering how to spread the limited amount of combat experience across the Army Ground Forces. He asked Eisenhower to select two or three brigadier generals or colonels, three or more colonels, ten to fifteen field officers of other grades, and as many combat experienced junior officers as he could spare, to return to the United States.⁷⁵

General McNair is anxious to get more of our outstanding senior officers experienced in an active theatre and therefore would like to furnish you replacements in grade for a reasonable portion of those you return while still leaving you vacancies for the promotion in your theater of those whose battle performance was particularly outstanding.⁷⁶

On 9 May 1943 the remnants of German Fifth Panzer Army surrendered to Bradley's II Corps in Tunisia. Two days later Marshall instructed his personnel officer to give Eisenhower a list of officers to recall from North Africa for promotion; he also made it clear which divisions to target. Eisenhower could then promote outstanding officers into the vacated positions:

Under the rotation policy, I should like to have your ideas as quickly as possible as to the grades and numbers of officers you may expect from our battle trained divisions. Without damaging ourselves, we can provide a few of these officers, some of whom will be recommended for promotion... have secretly in mind that subtractions from the 1st, 3rd, 45th, Airborne, and 2nd Armored Divisions cannot be made at this time. Offhand I am inclined to think that from divisions like the 9th, 34th, and 1st Armored we can make a heavy draft on their officer strength... It also seems to me that we should get our brigadiers from these divisions and possibly some regimental commanders, for both the newly organized divisions

74 Marshall, "Memorandum to McNair, 29 March 1943" *The Papers of George Marshall*, vol. 3, pp. 618-619, available as entry #3-578 of the Marshall Papers on the MFDL.

75 Marshall, "CM-OUT-4987: Radio No. 7861 to Eisenhower, 12 May 1943", taken from the electronic version of Bland and Stevens, *The Papers of George C. Marshall*, vol. 3, pp. 688-689 available on entry #3-651 of the Marshall Papers on the MFDL, accessed in April 2008.

76 *Ibid.*

and to replace promotions or vacancies otherwise created in the divisions next to be used in battle. Their battle experience will be invaluable.⁷⁷

Twelve major generals were eventually returned from all theatres to the United States to take over units in training in 1943; six commanded divisions, one took over a corps and two joined replacement training centres; the future careers of the remaining three are unknown. The practice ended in August. In return, six major generals went overseas between June and October 1943 as replacements. Ten brigadier generals returned to the United States while eight were transferred to theatres during the same period.⁷⁸

Three combat experienced men joined a Normandy-bound division. Oliver, a combat commander with 1st Armored Division, was promoted to command 5th Armored Division. Stroh, 9th Division's assistant commander, transferred to 8th Motorized Division as assistant and helped McMahon through its conversion to an infantry division. Irwin, 9th Division's artillery commander, took over 5th Infantry Division in Iceland after Devers recommended Parker's removal.⁷⁹

3.8 Eisenhower's Final Decisions: December 1943 to May 1944

In December 1943, General Dwight D. Eisenhower transferred to the United Kingdom to take command of the newly operational SHAEF headquarters. The invasion of France was only six months away and ten divisions were already training in United Kingdom and Iceland. The remaining ten divisions destined to be engaged in Normandy would cross the Atlantic Ocean over the next four months.⁸⁰ While SHAEF's staff was engaged in planning Operation OVERLORD and the naval

77 Marshall, "Memorandum for the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, 11 May 1943", taken from the electronic version of Bland and Stevens, *The Papers of George C. Marshall*, vol. 3, pp. 688-689, available as entry #3-651 of the Marshall Papers on the MFDL, accessed in April 2008).

78 Palmer, Wiley & Keast, *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops* pp. 103-104.

79 Marshall, "Memorandum for McNarney, 25 May 1943"; taken from the electronic version of Bland and Stevens, *The Papers of George C. Marshall*, vol. 3, pp. 703-705, available as entry #3-493 of the Marshall Papers on the MFDL, accessed in April 2008.

80 Shipping schedule listed in Stanton, *Order of Battle, U.S. Army, World War II*.

element of the landings, Operation NEPTUNE, Eisenhower also had to consider the division commanders under his command.

On 26 January 1944, Marshall told Eisenhower that he could replace any division commanders he wanted and he forwarded McNair's list of promising general officers serving in the United States with Army Ground Forces.

I want you to have great freedom in making such readjustments as you may appear desirable to you in the matter of division and corps commanders. We have over here some admirable men, particularly in the division command category. You have at least one or two whom you have doubts. I am ready to effect transfers if you so desire.⁸¹

Marshall asked Eisenhower to check McNair's suggestions with Bradley, Hodges and Patton, and reply with any names they liked.⁸² He also wanted them to identify anyone they wanted to remove. Eisenhower was delighted to hear that SHAEF had full flexibility over the choice of commanders.

From my viewpoint you were truly inspired when you wrote your radio No. 30, because at the moment it arrived I was very much concerned in the problem of assuring that our major organizations have the very best possible commanders when this attack shall start. Your message puts the case so clearly and provides so much flexibility that I feel we can give the Army Commanders the men they want.⁸³

Eisenhower earmarked three generals he might want in the near future and he noted that 'General Bradley has already indicated to me one division commander of who he is quite doubtful and I regard it as certain that I will be proposing to you changes within a short time.'⁸⁴ Bradley's concerns were not acted on.

In February 1944, Eisenhower noted his worries about the lack of experienced commanders in the invasion force.

I am just a bit uneasy about our failure to get a greater leaven of combat experience among our formations. We brought back from the Mediterranean only four divisions and two of these were special, that is one was airborne and one was armored [1st and 9th Infantry, 2nd

81 Marshall, "Memorandum CM-OUT-10258 to Eisenhower, 26 January 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Library, Microfilm 105).

82 The term 'tagging' was used and a general's interest in an officer would be noted on their 201 File.

83 Eisenhower, "Letter to Marshall, 29 January 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 67).

84 The officer was General Charles Gerhardt, of 29th Division, he served with his division throughout the European campaign; Eisenhower, "W-10158 to Marshall, 28 January 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

Armored and 82nd Airborne]. That left only two battle-trying infantry divisions, and of these, the 1st Division is commanded by an officer who has not led it during this war [Huebner].⁸⁵

Figure 3.5 illustrates Eisenhower's problem. Only seven of the Normandy Group had any combat experience, two of them only brief experience. Only two, Eddy and Ridgway, had commanded their divisions in combat. By June 1944 only eight of the Normandy Group had spent more than twelve months with their division as figure 3.6 illustrates.

Figure 3.5: Prior Combat Experience

Name	Division	Experience Level	Combat Experience
Eddy	9th Infantry	Division	4 months North Africa, 1 month Sicily
Irwin	5th Infantry	Division Artillery	4 months North Africa
Macon	83rd Infantry	Regiment	4 months North Africa
Oliver	5th Armored	Combat Command	4 months North Africa
Brooks	2nd Armored	Combat Observer	1 month North Africa
Ridgway	82nd Airborne	Division	1 month Sicily, 1 month Italy
Taylor	101st Airborne	Assistant Division	1 month Sicily, 1 month Italy

Key: *Division:* The division the general commanded in Normandy

Experience Level: Command level held in combat

Combat Experience: Length of time in combat and location

⁸⁵ Eisenhower, "Telegram to Marshall, 9 February 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 67).

Figure 3.6: Length of Service

Length of Service	Number
Over 18 months	5
18 to 12 months	3
6 to 12 months	4
Less than 6 months	4
Still to take command	4

Key: *Length of Service:* Number of months in command of their division, split into six month groupings

Number: Number of commanders commanding their divisions for the specified period

For the next two months, Marshall and Eisenhower concerned themselves with other matters, including choosing corps commanders. By the end of March, Marshall assured Eisenhower that any communications on other personnel matters would be welcome:

... it is my desire to provide for you all the skill that we can muster for the first four weeks of your battle and you will not be involved in quibbles with G-1 for personnel, but radio to me direct if you have any ideas on the subject.⁸⁶

Marshall again asked McNair to provide list of superior rated commanders with combat experience, and explained what qualities he was looking for:

I have felt that we should make a special effort to give you a few more men who have had battle experience and who have demonstrated on this side that they are in an aggressive mood and have developed well in the training program. McNair is going over all of his units, particularly those not due to sail before May to see who among Regimental, Brigade, and Division commanders might be detached from their units and sent over to you to be immediately available as replacements for men regarding whom you have any doubts... McNair is digging up the names of others in the three grades I mentioned which I shall radio to you, on the basis that you may wish to have them there available for quick assignment where you have any doubts about the aggressive, sturdy fighting capacity of men now on your hands.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Marshall, "Letter to Eisenhower, 20 March 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 67).

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

The following day McNair's suggestions were forwarded to Eisenhower 'as being particularly favourable prospects for battle leadership due to services already rendered'.⁸⁸ The results were disappointing. There were only three major generals, six brigadier generals, and six colonels. Five were potential division commanders and while four had Pacific combat experience, only one had served in North Africa. Eisenhower chose only one, Eugene Landrum. He had amphibious experience in the Pacific and he joined VII Corps as General J. Lawton Collins' deputy in April 1944.⁸⁹

Eisenhower was forced to make an emergency change in March 1944 when William Lee, commander of the 101st Airborne Division, suffered a heart attack. He suggested three men who could be sent from the United States, they were not used. Maxwell Taylor, a man who was 'socially adept, attentive to superiors and highly intelligent',⁹⁰ was promoted in-theatre because he had airborne combat experience from the Mediterranean campaign.⁹¹

The final command change was made in March at Eisenhower's request. Although Hugh Gaffey had commanded 2nd Armored Division in the Mediterranean, it was his experience as II Corps chief of staff that was important. He had served under Patton and he was needed as Third Army's chief of staff to compensate for Patton's shortcomings. As Devers wrote, 'Patton admittedly is not a great planner... His ability as a combat commander is unsurpassed.'⁹² Eisenhower suggested four names to command the 2nd Armored Division, including Edward Brooks, who he had noted on McNair's January list. Brooks was immediately flown to the United Kingdom, closely followed by his own choice of chief of staff.⁹³

88 Marshall, "Telephone 3542 to Eisenhower, 21 March 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 67).

89 *Ibid.*

90 Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway*, p. 20.

91 Eisenhower, "Cable B-126 to Marshall, 9 February 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

92 Devers, "Attached to Cable 13676, 20 February 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

93 Eisenhower, "Radio 266 to Marshall, 10 March 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

3.9 Conclusions: Reaction to a World War

The limited evidence available suggests that networking in the U.S. Army was very important and the personal correspondence section of the 201 Personal File was a valuable reference source. Suggestions made to Marshall were refused in the first instance, but they were referenced for possible later use.⁹⁴ While GERs continued to be used, generals could also suggest protégés and both Marshall and Eisenhower earmarked men for senior positions. A new divisional commander was expected to choose his chief of staff and could use his networking knowledge to suggest his own subordinate officers, using recommendations from brother officers.

Five armoured divisions were destined for Normandy and McNair made eight changes in command; six due to promotions to corps command. Only two were relieved for unsatisfactory performance; a 75-percent success rate.

Six Regular Army infantry divisions went to Normandy and McNair made eight changes in command. Three commanders were transferred to staff posts under the age-in-grade ruling while another three were transferred to staff posts to make the most of their talents. Only two of his choices were unsatisfactory; a 75-percent success rate.

Four National Guard Divisions went to Normandy and McNair replaced all the National Guard commanders with Regular Army officers soon after Pearl Harbor. Two failed and they had to be transferred to staff posts; a 50-percent success rate. Marshall resorted to three personal choices, Bradley, Gerow and Simpson, as trouble shooters.

Five New Army divisions were destined for Normandy. All five choices proved to be suitable; a 100-percent success rate. Milburn and Terrell were promoted to corps command and replaced by their assistants, Macon and MacKelvie. Bradley had to be transferred to help two National Guard divisions through training. He was replaced by his assistant, Ridgway.

⁹⁴ Watson, *Pre-War Plans and Preparations*, p. 256.

By October 1942, McNair wanted to use a statistical method to decide promotions.⁹⁵ Marshall disagreed, believing that it was important to assess each general officer on their individual merits.⁹⁶ Eisenhower supported the idea that officers accumulated more relevant command experience in a few months of combat than they had done in many years of peacetime training.⁹⁷ It was clear that combat quickly divided commanders into three groups; those suitable to command troops, those suitable for staff work and those suitable for neither. 'Battle testing' proved an officer's ability to command under fire, something that assessments could not test for.⁹⁸ Theatre commanders were tasked with selecting officers for promotion based on combat experience.⁹⁹

Marshall recalled experienced men to the United States at the end of the North African campaign to join divisions in training.¹⁰⁰ He did, however, put a stop to the practice of sending poor officers back to facilitate theatre promotions.¹⁰¹ Eisenhower tried to substantiate his decisions¹⁰², but Marshall was still wary of the choices made.¹⁰³

95 McNair: "WDGAP 210.1 Gen.0. (10-28-42): Memorandum for Marshall, 20 November 1942" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

96 Marshall, "WDGAP 210.1 Gen.0. (10-28-42), Memorandum for McNair, 21 November 1942" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

97 Eisenhower, "Letter to Subordinates, 15 March 1943; forwarded to Marshall on 24 April 1943" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

98 Marshall, "WDGAP 210.1 Gen.0. (10-28-42), Memorandum for McNair, 21 November 1942" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

99 Marshall, "Memorandum for McNair, 21 November 1942" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

100 Marshall "CM-OUT-4987, Radio No. 7861 to Eisenhower, 12 May 1943"; taken from the electronic version of Bland and Stevens, *The Papers of George C. Marshall*, vol. 3, pp. 688-689, available in entry #3-651 of the Marshall Papers on the MFDL, accessed in April 2008.

101 McNair, "Memorandum for Marshall, 30 March 1943" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

102 *Ibid.*

103 Marshall, "Memorandum for the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, 11 May 1943" taken from the electronic version of Bland and Stevens, *The Papers of George C. Marshall*, vol. 3, pp. 688-689, available as entry #3-651 of the Marshall Papers on the MFDL, accessed in April 2008.

Marshall also recognized correctly by March 1943 that he had to closely monitor theatre promotions with Army Ground Force promotions.¹⁰⁴ When the Tunisian campaign came to a close two months later, he was asking for experienced men to be sent back, targeting specific divisions.¹⁰⁵ Twenty general officers returned to the United States from all theatres in the summer of 1943.¹⁰⁶ They were promoted and used to replace unsuitable general officers, making the maximum use of their combat experience to accelerate training. While some were replaced by theatre promotions, fourteen promising general officers were sent to theatres.¹⁰⁷

The exchange of officers had four advantages. Firstly, men who had proved themselves in combat were rewarded with promotion; secondly, battle tested officers were able to spread their combat experience across Army Ground Forces; thirdly, promising officers could be transferred from Army Ground Forces to theatres; finally, promising general officers with combat experience could be promoted in theatre.

Eisenhower also made it clear that he wanted team players during combat by sacking Terry Allen and Theodore Roosevelt for failing to follow procedures or demand discipline amongst their men.¹⁰⁸ 1st Infantry Division was slated to move to England, ready to train to spearhead the landing on Omaha Beach on D-Day. Poor discipline and over-confidence could rapidly spread to the inexperienced divisions already there, if they were not dealt with.

After December 1943 Eisenhower was given responsibility for assessing the divisional commanders while they trained in the United Kingdom. Marshall gave Eisenhower permission to change any division commander he wanted on 26 January 1944 and he provided a list of

104 Marshall, "Memorandum to McNair, 29 March 1943" *The Papers of George C. Marshall*, vol. 3, pp. 618-619, entry #3-578 of the Marshall Papers on the MFDL, accessed in April 2008) .

105 Marshall, "Memorandum for the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, 11 May 1943"; taken from the electronic version of Bland and Stevens, *The Papers of George C. Marshall*, vol. 3, pp. 688-689, available as entry #3-651 of the Marshall Papers on the MFDL, accessed in April 2008.

106 Palmer, Wiley & Keast, *The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops* pp. 103-104.

107 *Ibid*, pp. 103-104.

108 Rogers, *A Study of Leadership in the First Infantry Division in WWII*, p. 50.; quoted on p.100 of Flaig's Huebner Thesis.

replacements supplied by McNair.¹⁰⁹ It gave Eisenhower the confidence to assess commanders and make changes.

As early as February, Eisenhower was concerned by the lack of experience. Only four out of twenty divisions had fought in the Mediterranean. While seven commanders had some combat experience, only two had commanded a division in combat. At Marshall's request, McNair looked for suitable replacements and on 20 March 1944, two short lists were sent to Eisenhower as potential replacements.¹¹⁰ One listed officers with high GERs while the second listed those with combat experience. Only one combat experienced man was selected as an assistant corps commander.

Eisenhower, Bradley, Hodges and Patton, were satisfied with nineteen out of twenty division commanders, and early concerns over Gerhardt of 29th Division were dropped.¹¹¹ Only one change was made to increase the staff experience at Third Army headquarters.¹¹² One final change was forced due to illness and a combat experienced man was promoted internally.¹¹³ With combat experienced general officers in short supply, consistent achievement and long service with a division had to be important factors.

109 Marshall, "Memorandum Reference CM-OUT-10258 to Eisenhower, 26 Jan. 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 105).

110 Marshall, "Telephone 3542 to Eisenhower, 21 March 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 67).

111 Bradley concerns were raised in Eisenhower "Cable 175 to Marshall, 25 February 1944 (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

112 Edward Brooks replaced Hugh Gaffey of 2nd Armored Division.

113 Maxwell Taylor replaced William Lee of 101st Airborne Division.

Chapter 4

Normandy, Case Studies in Command

June and July 1944

Before examining individual case studies in command, it is necessary to identify how the division fitted into First U.S. Army's command chain during the battle in Normandy in the summer of 1944. What did a division commander have to contend on a day to day basis during the battle and who helped him to plan and execute attacks? Other important matters considered include what resources could he call upon to carry out combined arms attacks?

The Normandy Group had been selected by McNair, approved by Marshall and endorsed by Eisenhower. The General Efficiency Rating was used to select them and the army manoeuvres were used to test them. How did Bradley as commander of First Army monitor the division commanders, particularly during the first few days of combat? Four of the Normandy Group were replaced for failing to command effectively in battle; one of the replacements was also replaced. What were the causes of relief and how were they dealt with? How did Eisenhower and Bradley select replacement commanders and how much did combat experience count?

Each of the five cases will be studied in turn to see why they were removed and what qualities their replacements had. The relief of Landrum's assistant commander in 90th Division will also be explained to illustrate the importance of the relationship between a commander and his assistant. Finally, the question of GERs versus combat experience as a measure for effectiveness will be investigated. Did the promotion policy change during the European campaign; and if so, how?

4.1 The Chain of Command: From Army Down to Platoon

The army was the 'fundamental unit of strategic manoeuvre.'¹ The army area was split into two zones. While the infantry and armour fought in the forward combat zone, the logistics chain occupied the rear communications zone. Artillery batteries were usually deployed in the communications zone.²

First U.S. Army operated the standard corps and division chain of command found in all armies in World War II and General Omar N. Bradley divided its front into lateral corps sectors. During offensive operations in Normandy a corps typically held a five-mile wide sector with two or three divisions and another in reserve. During defensive operations a corps typically controlled a ten-mile wide sector with three divisions, each providing its own reserve.³ The corps headquarters did not have any combat troops of its own but it had control of large calibre artillery batteries and air support.

Bradley set the corps objectives, typically a terrain feature, a road network, or a town; he also allocated each corps a road network to use:

The army commander gave to each corps a clear mission, assigning zones, specifying direction and objectives for an attack, and allotting divisions and other resources among the corps. He followed the battle closely, issuing clear and timely orders, coordinating corps movements, and committing reserves of artillery, aviation, tanks and other units where necessary.⁴

A few examples of corps objectives follow. VII Corps was ordered to capture Cherbourg and its port facilities towards the end of June. At the beginning of July, VIII Corps was ordered to establish a bridgehead over the River Seves while VII Corps and XIX Corps had to cut the road between Périers and St Lô road, limiting lateral motorized movements of the German *Seventh Army*. V Corps was ordered to take St Lô, further limiting German motorized movements.

In sum, the corps commanders were the link between First U.S. Army and the divisions. They controlled planning in a sector, making sure that the divisions cooperated to accomplish the corps

1 Manual on large unit operations published in June 1942; quoted in David W. Hogan, Jr., *A Command Post at War, First Army Headquarters in Europe, 1943-1945* (Center of Military History, Washington, D.C. 2000), p. 13.

2 *Ibid*, Chart 1, p. 15.

3 Survey of maps from *St. Lô* (American Forces in Action Series, U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC, 1948).

4 Hogan Jr., *A Command Post at War*, p. 10

objective. Commanders dealt with the division commanders on a day-to-day basis, suggesting promotions and demotions to First U.S. Army.

During an offensive, a corps commander divided his objective into lateral division sectors, each two or three mile wide. He had to be decisive during the planning stage and flexible once the battle started. Collins recalled that,

I put out a field order, a limited number of field orders, one for each new major campaign, one that was worked up by careful analysis and careful discussion with the division commanders. When everybody had pretty well agreed on what we were driving at, I would make a final decision. A commander is the only one who can make a decision. We might start with a plan, but right off the bat the enemy would step in and do something that we didn't quite anticipate and force a change. You've got to be ready to shift accordingly.⁵

A corps commander made regular visits to his subordinate division headquarters and he could also keep in touch by telephone. Collins believed it was essential to have a reliable assistant.⁶

Every day I was out in the field visiting as far as I could the critical point of action. Where the crux of the fighting was likely to be was the place I headed for. I tried, and most of the time was able, to visit practically every division during each day. Because I was out in the field constantly, I had to have a good man back at the command post to act in my stead.⁷

A corps commander needed a good assistant and direct communication with his subordinates; the same applied to the division commander:

When I was away he had authority to act, if necessary. My aide always kept in contact with the headquarters by telephone. We'd plug a phone into the lines leading up to the front. If a division commander wanted to get me he could immediately get me through the line that came from his Command Post. We would then discuss whatever the problem was, and again I would have to make a decision. But I'd also want to know what the division commander said about it.⁸

5 *Conversations with General J Lawton Collins transcribed by Major Gary Wade* (Combat Studies Institute Study No. 5, 1983, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College) www-cgsc.army.mil/carl/resources/csi/wade3/wade3.asp (hereafter Collins transcribed by Wade, CSI Study 5, C&CGS) accessed April 2008.

6 Collins's assistant, Eugene Landrum, had to replace Jay MacKelvie, 90th Division's commander, after only a few days.

7 Collins transcribed by Wade, CSI Study 5, C&CGS.

8 *Ibid.*

Eisenhower had limited combat experience to rely on at corps level. Three of the five corps commanders had been in battle but none had commanded before at corps level.⁹ Bradley recognized that it was a difficult role to fulfil:

Toughness is not enough. The corps commander must know his division commanders and must thoroughly understand their problems, respect their judgment and tolerate their limitations. For there are few distinguishing characteristics of a successful corps commander. Success comes instead from a well-balanced combination of judgment, self-confidence, leadership and boldness.¹⁰

Bradley's aide, Chester Hanson, agreed that 'few men [are] qualified to lead a corps because of the problem in remote control. Few can handle it.'¹¹

4.2 The Division Commander

A division needed a centrally positioned command post. The Command and General Staff School taught officers to issue clear written orders and then to follow them up to 'inspire confidence and ensure that his orders were understood and being executed'.¹² A division commander attended planning meetings before an attack was launched and attended crisis meetings during the battle:

His position would be at the centre of division operations. While he would be able to delegate responsibility, issue orders, assign people to special missions, promote and demote, reward and discipline, he would never be able to escape the burden of command. The ultimate accountability for division's success or failure was his and his alone. This is what he had worked for, trained for, hoped for.¹³

By World War II, telephone and radio communications were advanced enough to allow generals to command while they were on the move. A divisional commander was expected to make daily visits his regimental headquarters, monitoring, advising and correcting his colonels; the frequency of visits increased during critical situations. Taylor 'would later recall his role as scuttling by jeep from one

9 Collins (VII Corps), Troy Middleton (VIII Corps) and Charles Corlett (XIX Corps).

10 Noted in Henry G. Phillips, *The Making of a Professional, Manton S. Eddy* (Greenwood Publishing Group, Westport, CT, 2000) p.111.

11 "Hanson, War Diary, 20 June 1944" (AWCL, Chester B., "Collection, Series II Official Papers, War Diaries, Box 4, 20 February 1943-31 October 1944, hereafter known as AWCL, Hanson War Diary).

12 Hogan Jr., *A Command Post at War*, p. 12.

13 Miller, Robert A., *Division Commander: A Biography of Major General Norman D Cota* (Reprint Co, 1989) p. 93.

flank of his division to the other counselling and observing',¹⁴ Walker (XIX Corps temporarily) 'insisted that the commander or chief of staff of each of his divisions visited the front each day to 'observe but not to meddle', and to encourage soldiers by their presence.'¹⁵

Regular visits allowed the division commander to keep in touch with the tactical situation and gave him the opportunity to assess his subordinates' grasp of the battle face-to-face:

... [you] very quickly sense the situation when you walk into an area. You can see it, and smell it, and just feel it. It doesn't take very long to size up the capabilities of a unit. I would have the commander brief me right on the spot. Standing on the ground with a commander, you very quickly sense his grasp of the situation, and his confidence of it.¹⁶

A division commander had to anticipate when and where a problem could occur so that he could be present to influence the outcome:

... [the] commander belongs right on that spot, not at some rear command post. He should be there before the crisis erupts, if possible. If it is not possible, then he should get there as soon as he can after it develops... he gets the best possible view of what is happening and can best exercise his troop leadership and the full authority of his command. He is in a position to make instant decisions...¹⁷

Ridgway believed that his 'his first urgent requirement should be to get to everyone of his subordinate commanders in battle..., up front where the going was the hottest' but recognized that there was a 'very fine balance in judgement... between what you can accomplish up there and what you lose by being up there.'¹⁸ Taylor also wanted to be 'out front all day, exhorting, cajoling, and teaching.'¹⁹ The assistant division commander ran the division headquarters during the commander's absence, dealing with routine enquiries and forwarding important information to the division commander; he also gained 'hands-on' experience in how to command a division.

14 Taylor, John M., *General Maxwell Taylor, The Sword and the Pen* (Bantam Dell Publishing, New York, NY, 1989), p. 88.

15 Heefner, Wilson A., *Patton's Bulldog, The Life and Service of General Walton H. Walker* (Shippensburg, PA, White Mane, 2001), p. 320.

16 Mitchell, George Charles, *Matthew B. Ridgway: Soldier, Statesman, Scholar, Citizen* (Mechanicsburg, PA, Stackpole Books, 2002), p. 20.

17 *Ibid*, p. 20.

18 *Ibid*, p. 25.

19 Taylor, *General Maxwell Taylor*, p. 40.

A divisional commander's first few days in combat were crucial. If he could not cope with the stress of commanding in real time or his leadership skills failed him, the division was in trouble. His staff could not function correctly, combat units would not get the support they needed and the division would fail to take its objectives. Courtney H. Hodges (First U.S. Army's assistant in Normandy), a 'slender man of medium height, with a small moustache, he looked more like a successful business man than a military commander',²⁰ acted as Bradley's eyes and ears during the campaign.²¹ One of his tasks included observing division commanders during their first days in combat.²²

Hodges is still quiet and leisurely, as though he were secretly amused by it all - splendid man highly regarded and liked by everyone though he lacks General Bradley's gregarious manner that makes friends for him so easily...²³

Eisenhower and Bradley relied on Hodges to give feedback on the divisional commanders.

A division's success depended on the ability of rifle companies and platoons to advance in cooperation with tanks, artillery and engineers, capturing fields and villages and then holding them if the enemy counterattacked. The three infantry regiments formed the backbone of the division:

Despite the awesome, aggregate firepower of the weapons within a triangular division, the lifeblood of the infantry division was the 5,211 officers and combat infantrymen who manned its 27 rifle companies.²⁴

Two regiments typically held the division's front, while the third was held in reserve. Each regimental commander split his area into 600-metre wide battalion sectors while battalion commanders split their area into 200-metre wide company sectors.²⁵ A division's front was typically divided into around twenty company sectors. A division's objective was also divided up longitudinally. The advance started from a well defined 'Line of Departure' and the objective was divided into sections, or phases.

20 Chandler, David G. & Collins, James Lawton (editors), *The D-Day Encyclopedia* (Simon & Schuster, New York, NY, 1978), p. 297.

21 Hodges was appointed First Army commander following Bradley's promotion to Twelfth U.S. Army Group on 31 July 1944.

22 Comparison of Stanton, *U.S. Army OB* and entries in Sylvan, "War Diary" (Sylvan, Major William C. Papers, AWCL), Hodges was invariably at a division headquarters when it went into action.

23 Hanson, "War Diary, 27 July 1944" (AWCL, Hanson War Diary).

24 Weigley, Russell F., *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany, 1944-1945* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1981), p. 24.

25 Survey of maps from *American Forces in Action Series*, St. Lô.

Phase lines usually followed well defined terrain features and the advancing troops were supposed to reach each one to a set timetable. Pauses were often included in the timetable to allow for regrouping.

An infantry division had four regiments of three twelve-gun 105-mm howitzer battalions and one twelve-gun 155-mm howitzer battalion. Artillery fire had to be used wisely in the dense Normandy terrain and the artillery commander had a direct line of communications to the division commander. He needed a definite plan before the battle and would have to make many contingency plans during the battle.

4.3 The Assistant Commander

The post of assistant commander was created in the autumn of 1941 and a brigadier-general was added to each infantry and airborne division headquarters.²⁶ Seven of the thirteen infantry division commanders in the Normandy Group served as assistant division commanders, four of them with their own division.²⁷ Ridgway was 82nd Infantry Division's assistant before it converted to airborne status.

An assistant commander often ran the division headquarters in the commander's absence, holding and attending meetings on his behalf. Assistant commanders also acted as the training officer in the United Kingdom and in Normandy.²⁸ Updating training was an important feature in Normandy, and new tactics devised from lessons learned in combat had to be introduced to counter German defensive tactics used in the bocage. An assistant commander could also command task forces. Cota (29th Division), commanded the 'Bastard Brigade'²⁹ on Omaha beach on D-Day and Task Force 'C'

²⁶ Armored divisions did not have assistants, the combat command commanders led task forces on behalf of the division commander.

²⁷ Baade, Eddy, Macon and Robertson with their own division, Brown, Gerhardt and Hobbs with others.

²⁸ White, Major-General Charles H., "Letter to McNair, 4 August 1941" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1)

²⁹ The 'Bastard Brigade' was the nickname given to the over-sized regimental combat team composed of 116th Regiment and support elements.

when it captured St Lô on 18 July.³⁰ Assistant commanders could stand in for the division commander or a regimental commander if they were killed, injured or relieved.

The importance of an assistant commander and his desirable qualities were explained by the commander of 7th Infantry Division.

Without meddling he should try to find ways to be as useful as possible. To do this he must use a nice sense of discrimination. He must use tact in performing duties assigned him by the Division Commander, being careful not to impinge on the staff function of the Chief of Staff and the Division Staff. It should also be his aim to keep informed on everything of importance affecting the Division, not only the infantry components, but also as to the other components... in the absence of the Division Commander he would have to act in that capacity, in other words a 'second in command'...³¹

There had to be a good working relationship between the division commander and his assistant. An assistant commander needed to have good judgement and tact:

... the infantry Brigadier-General should strongly restrain himself from 'pernicious activity' and 'officiousness'. He must be tactful and helpful wherever he sees the chance without causing irritation... It is believed that by this process of observing and becoming informed that he is apt to prove of the greatest usefulness to the Division Commander. His judgment can be better when he is well informed and hence his advice, when requested, can be better advice.³²

The assistant commander had to be discreetly involved in all aspects of commanding the division:

... the Assistant Division Commander is authorized to go anywhere and into any place in the Division and see anything he wishes. While ordinarily his duty is best done through observation, advice and counsel, and other helpful means that suggest themselves, yet if on occasion he deems it desirable to issue oral orders he will do so in the name of the Division Commander... He should go around in a friendly way to see and observe everything going on in all elements, both outdoors and indoors. This does not mean that he has to 'snoop' but rather that he should make it his business to inform himself and at times offer suggestion and advice. His presence in lower units should not be resented. He has no power to give orders or instructions unless specifically empowered to do so in certain definite cases by the Division Commander. In short he is neither a Commander nor a Chief of Staff - he is a sort of 'Fifth Wheel'...³³

30 Task Force C (C for Cota) was a mobile column of reconnaissance, tank, tank destroyer, and engineer elements.

31 White, "Letter to McNair, 4 August 1941" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

32 *Ibid.*

33 White, "Letter to McNair, 8 December 1940" (NARA, RG 165, Entry 12, Box 1).

4.4 The Divisional Staff

The Command and General Staff School trained officers how to hold staff conferences. The chief of staff coordinated the administrative staff and a good one could anticipate his commander's needs. The divisional staff was split into four sections, each headed by an assistant; G-1 Personnel, G-2 Intelligence, G-3 Operations and G-4 Logistics.³⁴ As Colby has commented; 'Routinely in U.S. Army staffs, the chief of staff is the fulcrum and principal motivator for his subordinates G-1-2-3-4, and a competent chief both dominates and represents his staff.'³⁵ Cota summed up the role of a staff officer just before D-Day:

You must try to alleviate confusion, but in doing so, be careful not to create more. Ours is not the job of actually commanding, but of assisting. If possible always work through the commander of a group. This is necessary to avoid conflicts - duplications of both orders and efforts. You are my staff. My staff are my tools. Keep informed at all times of the situation that confronts you - particularly in your respective 'departments'. Keep those in a position to need this information informed. Don't merely keep it to yourselves. This vital information loses all importance unless it is a ready tool in the hands of the man who must use it.³⁶

Division commanders organized their staff to suit their command style and Eddy, a veteran of the North African campaign, adopted a German style used in the Mediterranean:

The assistant division commander habitually would remain at the main division command post, while Eddy roamed among the troops. At Main [command post] General Stroh would make emergency decisions and supervise the operational group comprised of the G-2 (intelligence) and G-3 (operations) sections, while the rear command post, Colonel Barth, the division chief of staff, would supervise the administrative group, the G-1 (personnel) and G-4 (logistics) sections.³⁷

The G-1 (personnel) and G-4 (logistics) sections facilitated combat activities. G-1 monitored personnel levels and casualty reports; it also maintained records for pay, promotions, awards and

34 This organization of staff into four is the same at all levels; for example G-1 regiment would put requests for personnel to G-1 division; G-2 division would forward intelligence to G-2 corps, G-3 division would send operation plans to G-3 regiment, G-4 division would request supplies from G-4 corps.

35 Colby, John, *War From the Ground Up: The 90th Division in WWII* (Austin, TX, Nortex Press 1991), p. 156.

36 Miller, Robert A., *Division Commander: A Biography of Major General Norman D Cota* (Spartanburg, SC, Reprint Co, 1989), pp. 78-79.

37 Phillips, Henry G., *The Making of a Professional, Manton S. Eddy* (Westport, CT, Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000), p. 132.

disciplinary matters.³⁸ G-4 organized deliveries of food, water, ammunition and fuel and maintained the casualty evacuation chain.³⁹ Collins commented that "... you can't move without a good logistic system. Unless you know how to handle logistics, you're going to be sunk."⁴⁰

The G-2 (intelligence) and G-3 (operations) sections monitored combat activities. G-2 recorded enemy activity to assess the German battle plan and collated material evidence to develop the German order of battle.⁴¹ G-3 analyzed the division's own activities, including battalion combat capabilities, and forwarded an hourly summary to corps headquarters.⁴² G-2 and G-3 information were recorded on a large situation map at each headquarters, creating a real-time analysis of the battle; hourly reports were forwarded to the corps headquarters.

G-2 and G-3 sections used a mixture of written reports, maps and map references to begin with during the Normandy campaign, but First U.S. Army soon standardized its paperwork. Unit locations were marked on tracing paper (known as overlays) placed over maps to provide a visual presentation of the current situation.⁴³ G-2 and G-3 paperwork were organized into separate *Journal and Files*. The *Journal* was the itemized chronological index listing message number, message time, type and summary of message, and the action taken. The *File* contained the actual messages. After-

38 Summary of information forwarded by division G-1s to corps G-1s are in the G-1 files of relevant division files (NARA, RG 407, (Entry 417, Box 1520) Note: NARA WWII division records are stored in numerical order; staff section order and subordinate unit files are stored in historical files within their division record. All division history requests are referenced with RG 407, Entry 417, Box 1520 followed by the division number and type of file.

39 Summary of information forwarded by division G-4s to corps G-4s are in the G-4 files of relevant division files (NARA, RG 407, Entry 417, Box 1520).

40 Collins transcribed by Wade, CSI Study 5, C&CGS.

41 Summary of information forwarded by division G-2s to corps G-2s are in the G-2 journal and files of relevant division files (NARA, RG 407, Entry 417, Box 1520).

42 Summary of information forwarded by division G-3s to corps G-3s are in the G-3 journal and files of relevant division files (NARA, RG 407, Entry 417, Box 1520).

43 Both the appropriate map and the overlay were needed to understand the situation markings on the tracing paper.

Action Reports were assessments of recent events, explaining successes, failures and lessons learned.⁴⁴

4.5 Case Studies in Command

In all organizations, the troublemakers attract the most attention and generate the most paperwork. It was the same in the Normandy Group, making a study of reasons of failure rather than of success more profitable. What command skills did sacked commanders fail to perform or which leadership qualities did they lack. Applying a reverse logic will illustrate what skills and qualities Eisenhower and Bradley wanted in a divisional commander.

Four of the Normandy Group were replaced for failing to command successfully in battle; one of the replacements was also replaced. Each case will be studied in turn and the causes for removing them and the reasons for choosing their replacement will be discussed. The two 90th Division commanders are discussed together because there are issues linking the two. The remaining three are discussed in the order they were removed. Watson and Brown were replaced just after the time period covered by this thesis, however, they were engaged during the time period and issues about their command had already been noted. The five case studies are listed in Figure 4.01.

Figure 4.1: Commanders Removed and their Replacements

Removed	Division	Replacement	Date
Jay W. MacKelvie	90th Infantry	Eugene M. Landrum	13 June
Eugene M. Landrum	90th Infantry	Raymond S. McLain	30 July
William C. McMahon	8th Infantry	Donald A. Stroh	12 July
Leroy H. Watson	3rd Armored	Maurice Rose	7 August
Lloyd D. Brown	28th Infantry	Norman D. Cota	13 August

44 Examples in relevant division files in (NARA, RG 407, Entry 417, Box 1520). G-1 Personnel and G-4 Logistics kept their own files.

Note: Listed in order studied; the two 90th Division cases are studied together for continuity; the remaining three are studied in chronological order

Key: *Removed*: Name of commander removed

Replacement: Name of the replacement commander

Date: Date of change in command

4.5.1 General Jay W. MacKelvie and 90th Infantry Division

MacKelvie joined the 90th in January 1944 after Henry Terrell Jr. was promoted to command XXII Corps, a corps destined to stay in the United States.⁴⁵ This suggests Terrell was as Marshall called it 'kicked upstairs': the promotion of general officers unsuitable for combat to higher staff positions.⁴⁶ MacKelvie had no combat experience but he had spent over year in the War Plans Division of the War Department General Staff, working for both Eisenhower and Gerow. Marshall would have also known him.

MacKelvie proved to be an unpopular choice with the rank and file and he 'quickly gained a reputation as a stickler for protocol, concentrating on petty discipline rather than combat readiness. He remained aloof from his staff and subordinate officers and often ignored advice from his assistant and his artillery commander; the replacement of one colonel was only one of his unpopular decisions.'⁴⁷ His pre-invasion speech to the men 'was read in an uncertain voice, ineptly phrased and filled with clichés such as "don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes."⁴⁸ It appears that everyone detected an air of indecisiveness about MacKelvie. Even Bradley noted his concerns after a visit to

45 In November 1944 he was appointed Commandant of an Infantry Advanced Replacement Training Centre.

46 Marshall "Memorandum for the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, 11 May 1943"; taken from the electronic version of Bland and Stevens, *The Papers of George C. Marshall*, vol. 3, pp. 688-689, entry #3-651 of the Marshall Papers on the MFDL, accessed in April 2008..

47 The popular Colonel Sheehy was replaced by the overbearing Colonel Ginder in command of 357th Regiment, *Ibid*, p. 348.

48 Chandler & Collins, *The D-Day Encyclopedia*, p.348.

the 90th but, 'plans were progressed too far to make any change in divisions especially as the number of divisions who were fully equipped at that time was limited.'⁴⁹

90th Division landed on Utah Beach on 6-7 June and joined Collins' VII Corps. MacKelvie was unsettled by the decision to revise the attack across the River Merderet on 10 June, but he persisted in making detailed orders, orders which were impossible to coordinate in the difficult terrain. When the attack was halted, 'MacKelvie, according to one observer, sat in a rook of the farmhouse that was the division command post. Meditate, and perhaps, sulk he did.'⁵⁰ Meanwhile, the assistant commander, Brigadier General Samuel Williams, stayed at the front line, visiting regimental and battalion headquarters. He had:

... a rugged strength of character and a forceful, domineering spirit. He unhesitatingly spoke his mind on all occasions when asked, and on many occasions when he should have remained quiet. He made decisions swiftly and was seldom in error...⁵¹

Regimental command was also a problem. Ginder of 357th Regiment was removed although 'Brad thinks action a little hasty'⁵². Thompson also ordered 358th Regiment to dig in when it came under nothing more than small fire.⁵³

While Williams was angered by 'MacKelvie's failure', he was also infuriated by 'the collective insufficiency of the regimental colonels and particularly some of the lieutenant-colonels responsible for leading the nine infantry battalions.'⁵⁴ His patience snapped when he found MacKelvie taking cover in a ditch on 12 June:

49 Bradley, "Letter to Eisenhower, 14 June 1944" (NARA, RG 491, MacKelvie 201 File, Records of the Secretary, General Staff, Records of Headquarters, European Theater of Operations, Correspondence Relating to Individuals; Hereafter NARA, RG 491, MacKelvie 201 File).

50 Harold J Meyer, *Hanging Sam: A Military Biography of Samuel T Williams* (University of Texas Press, 1990), Chapter 5, Note this book does not have page numbers.

51 Meyer, *Hanging Sam*, Chapter 5.

52 Hanson, "War Diary, 20 June 1944" (AWCL, Hanson War Diary).

53 Thompson was severely wounded in the encounter; Meyer, *Hanging Sam*, Chapter 5.

54 Meyer, *Hanging Sam*, Chapter 5.

Goddamit General, you can't lead this division hiding in the goddam hole. Go back to the CP [command post]. Get the hell out of that hole and go to your vehicle. Walk to it, or you'll have this goddam division wading into the English Channel.⁵⁵

Collins was also exasperated to find 358th Regiment dug in, despite little enemy activity, and was shocked by MacKelvie's negative attitude during a visit to the 90th's headquarters:

MacKelvie made no excuses and seemed to be bewildered as to what to do about his division's lack of drive... MacKelvie's dispirited, defeatist attitude, coupled with two days of his bungling and timid command was alien to the driving forcefulness Collins sought in his commander.⁵⁶

On 13 June Collins recommended replacing MacKelvie '... because the 90th Division was not making any progress in an area where we believe the resistance is not actually very strong...'⁵⁷ He made this assessment of MacKelvie's abilities:

While personally brave, he has been unable to instill a determined aggressiveness in his men. I feel that it was mandatory to replace him with an experienced division commander who has already proven his ability in action.⁵⁸

Bradley had also made several visits to the 90th and agreed with Collins' recommendation:

It [the division] made fair progress initially, but during the past three days it has advanced only approximately 2,000 yards. I have visited the division each of these days, going to each of the regiments and in many cases to front line battalions. From what I and my staff officers have observed, it is my belief that this opposition could have been overcome by vigorous attack.⁵⁹

MacKelvie was relieved and Bradley reported it to Eisenhower. He could not afford to give division commanders the benefit of the doubt if did not cope with combat:

General MacKelvie has always had a reputation of being a fine artilleryman and a fine staff officer. I hope that I am not doing him too much of an injustice in relieving him at this time. The fact remains, however, that his division was not getting results and I feel that we can just not take a chance and leave someone in command in whom we did not have full confidence under the circumstances.⁶⁰

Bradley was saddened by MacKelvie's relief but objectives had to be put before careers:

55 Colby, *War from the Ground Up*, p. 29.

56 Meyer, *Hanging Sam*, Chapter 5.

57 Bradley, "Letter to Eisenhower, 14 June 1944" (NARA, RG491, MacKelvie 201 File).

58 Collins, "Letter to Bradley, 14 June 1944" (NARA, RG491, MacKelvie 201 File).

59 Meyer, *Hanging Sam*, Chapter 5.

60 Bradley, "Letter to Eisenhower, 14 June 1944" (MacKelvie 201 Personnel File, RG 491, NARA).

Broken up over it [MacKelvie's relief] but Collins says they don't have the ginger and we are forced to agree. Troops lacked alertness in England. Sorry. MacKelvie is hell 'uva nice fellow - damned gentlemanly, kind, always ready with a cheery word, all the aides like him.⁶¹

Bradley's aide made it clear that MacKelvie's background was possibly the problem: '... an artilleryman, lacked a grasp of combined arms.'⁶²

It is clear from the above correspondence that the corps commander recommended the relief of a divisional commander, and he cited his observations. The army commander then passed on his own assessment to Eisenhower who in turn reported the decision to Marshall. This process had to be followed due to the general officer's senior rank as well as the implications of demotion and the placing of the officer.

4.5.2 General Eugene M. Landrum and 90th Division

McNair had put Landrum's name to Eisenhower in March 1944 because of his limited combat experience on the Alaskan Attu Islands.⁶³ He was accepted and appointed Collins' assistant at VII Corps headquarters.⁶⁴ Landrum took over from MacKelvie on 13 June, while 90th Division was engaged northeast of Ste-Mere-Eglis ; he was not a popular choice. He 'did not look or act like a combat leader; short, fat slow-moving, no demonstrated spark or drive.'⁶⁵ He was also 'both physically and personally... unimpressive.'⁶⁶

Landrum also had bad luck. Three regimental commanders were killed or wounded during his first three days in command. Colonel Barth, 9th Division's chief of staff, was shocked when arrived at 357th Regiment ready to take over;

61 Bradley, "Letter to Eisenhower, 14 June 1944", *Ibid*.

62 Hogan Jr., *A Command Post at War*, p. 100.

63 He replaced General Albert Brown who was relieved for a 'lack of aggressiveness'; McNair "Memorandum to Marshall", 24 May 1943 (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 76).

64 Marshall, "Telephone 3542 to Eisenhower, 21 March 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 67).

65 Colby, *War from the Ground Up*, p. 477.

66 Chandler & Collins, *The D-Day Encyclopaedia*, p. 340.

I had never before experienced 'zero morale'. The officers in my new headquarters seemed for the most part very competent but were absolutely sunk. I realized that I had a situation where I would have to start from the bottom and build the organization, particularly with regard to morale and their confidence as soldiers.⁶⁷

The regiment had hit 'zero morale' after only three days of light fighting, illustrating the fragility of an inexperienced unit in combat.

Raising 357th Regiment's morale to an acceptable level was a daunting prospect and Barth started by assessing his subordinates. He visited his battalions, asking for staff officers' opinions on the combat commanders and used their recommendations to make replacements.⁶⁸ He then studied captured German positions, made and circulated tactical notes and then instigated a training programme. He finally held a staff conference to explain his actions to everyone: 'After I gave this picture, I could see signs of encouragement and understanding in the faces of many of the officers.'⁶⁹ He had met everyone, let his subordinates suggest their commanders, revised the small unit tactics and explained his expectations to everyone in a matter of days.

After 14 June 90th Division was on the defensive and a week later it moved south to join VIII Corps' defensive front along the River Douve. Landrum had three weeks to replace poor commanders with good officers now everyone had some combat experience; a process called 'cleaning house' or 'cleaning house' by First U.S. Army.⁷⁰ Barth had done it with his regiment but Landrum did not make sure that it was carried out across the rest of the division.

90th Division attacked Mont-Castre on 2 July but the attack faltered in front of the German outpost line.⁷¹ Hodges was observing VIII Corps attack and he was concerned by Landrum's attitude: 'Pessimistic in outlook, he had no command presence, no personal magnetism, and no combat drive;

67 Also known as 'clearing house' Meyer, *Hanging Sam*, Chapter 5.

68 Colby, *War from the Ground Up*, p. 85.

69 *Ibid*, p. 85.

70 Barth's regiment was in reserve during the 2 July attack.

71 Colby, *War from the Ground Up*, p. 85.

his talks were usually bland, although they did convey some hope that things might get better.⁷²

There was total lack of drive across the division;

... not wishing to move until the direction of the German thrust was determined, the regimental commanders delayed their attacks. It took vociferous insistence by General Landrum to get even a part of the division moving. No German counterattack materialized.⁷³

A small number of armoured vehicles stopped 358th Regiment moving and '...Colonel Partridge postponed his attack several times... [while] most of his troops seemed primarily concerned about taking cover in their slit trenches...'⁷⁴ 359th Regiment did not move until dusk, and only then after a private led his company forward. German infantry infiltrated 90th Division's lines during the night and while men ran short of ammunition, wounded men were abandoned where they fell. Landrum relieved the exhausted Colonel Fales, replacing him with the unpopular Colonel Bacon.⁷⁵ Colonel Partridge was also wounded and evacuated.⁷⁶

Morale had plummeted because Landrum had 'not cleaned house enough'⁷⁷ and Eisenhower warned Marshall about his failures on the third day of the attack:

Strangely enough, all of us, (Bradley, Hodges and myself) are much concerned with Landrum. I sincerely hope he makes well because we have been counting on him very much. Nevertheless, he seems quite negative. One point to remember, however, is that he is commanding the 90th Division. Collins and our other commanders agree that this unit is less well prepared for battle than almost any other division they have seen. I do not know who the original commander was, but our seniors are quite sure that the division was not well brought up.⁷⁸

72 Chandler & Collins, *The D-Day Encyclopedia*, p. 340.

73 Blumenson, Martin, *Breakout and Pursuit*, U.S. Army in World War II (Washington, DC, Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1961), p. 63.

74 *Ibid*, p. 67.

75 Chandler & Collins, *The D-Day Encyclopedia*, p. 340.

76 Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 69.

77 Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, p. 333.

78 The original commander was Henry Terrell; Eisenhower, "Letter to Marshall, 5 July 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 67).

Although Eisenhower was placing the blame on the fighting qualities of the division, neither Bradley nor Middleton were impressed by Landrum's command style:⁷⁹

Bradley noted 'every time I see him, he was in his command post, which was usually in the basement of some building. He never got outside it. And he had no way to inspire his division. You got to get out and show them you are interested in willing to take a chance with them.'⁸⁰

Middleton was also concerned about Landrum's assistant commander: 'he is not an inspiring personality.'⁸¹ Williams again stayed at the front and became absorbed in the battle:

... my duties consisted entirely of outside work, as contrasted to work at division headquarters... it was necessary that daily I be at the most important place or places on the division front, assisting... regimental battalion commanders in leading their troops in the assault... There was no day during this period that I did not visit, advise and assist one or more regimental and battalion commanders.⁸²

With Landrum confined to the headquarters and Williams at the front, the two generals became disillusioned with each others efforts. They had clearly not addressed problems in the division:

... clear indications that 90th Division still had to learn how to make a skilful application of tactical principles to hedgerow terrain. The division had demonstrated continuing deficiencies, hangovers from its June performance. Some subordinate commanders still lacked the power of vigorous direction. Too many officers were overly wary of counterattack.⁸³

Landrum refused to reinforce 357th Regiment on the night of 6 July and it withdrew, leaving 250 men behind to be captured. After hearing lurid stories of surrender and annihilation, Williams' patience snapped again and he confronted Landrum:

... after dismissing everyone he heatedly condemned Landrum, slashing him for his basement style leadership and scolding him for his responsibility for the many unnecessary deaths that his 'goddam stupidity' had caused since his assumption of command.⁸⁴

90th Division persevered and cleared Mont Castre Hill on 11 July. It eventually reached the River Sèves on 14 July at a cost of 4,000 casualties.

79 Hogan Jr., *A Command Post at War*, p. 100.

80 Meyer, *Hanging Sam*, Chapter 6.

81 *Ibid*, Chapter 6.

82 Letter to General Ben Lear on 10 August 1944; quoted in Meyer, *Hanging Sam*, Chapter 6.

83 Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 69.

84 Meyer, *Hanging Sam*, Chapter 6.

Theodore Roosevelt, who had served as Terry Allen's assistant in 1st Infantry Division's in the Mediterranean, was chosen to replace Landrum.⁸⁵ Eisenhower and Bradley knew Roosevelt's weakness over discipline, but the 90th needed a charismatic commander to restore its morale:

... *'he's too short-hearted to take a division - too much like one of the boys.'* But it was not a disciplinarian the 90th needed now. It called for a man with vitality and courage, a man who could pick up the division single-handedly and give it confidence in itself... With a thick skinned disciplinarian as his second in command, Ted would have the 90th brawling with Germans in a couple of weeks.⁸⁶

Unfortunately, Roosevelt died suddenly of natural causes on 13 July, leaving Eisenhower looking for a new replacement.

Meanwhile, Williams had an angry confrontation with Donald Stroh, 8th Infantry Division's new commander.

Stroh told Sam that he hesitated to push the 8th hard while the 90th was in such a weakened condition. Stroh had asked Sam 'Are you people doing any better now?' Sam did not deny to Landrum later, and in a most forceful manner, that he took exception to Stroh's insinuation. He lost his temper and became ill-mannered.⁸⁷

Landrum advised his assistant to avoid further confrontations and Williams responded by requesting a transfer. Landrum asked Middleton if he could have an assistant with 'a more optimistic and calming attitude'. Middleton wanted a combat experienced officer 'who has proven himself in this war, and who has no relations with the division in the past.'⁸⁸

Landrum changed his accommodating attitude to Williams when he realized that he too was about to be relieved. He blamed his own poor performance on Williams' lack of support, his pessimism and his tantrums.

He is not calm of temper, is excitable and these traits needlessly affect those with whom he deals... His manner of speech is pessimistic and has caused me to lose confidence in the accuracy of his reports. General Williams is not always discreet or temperate of speech... His first impulse is to adopt a defensive attitude when deficiencies in training have been brought

85 They were relieved at the same time; Allen had already been given command of 104th Division, a New Army division.

86 Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, p. 333.

87 Meyer, *Hanging Sam*, Chapter 6.

88 *Ibid*, Chapter 6.

to his attention by the undersigned, although he later readily admitted the existence of the deficiencies...⁸⁹

Williams was relieved and Landrum's damning report made it impossible to place him anywhere in First U.S. Army:

... it appears that General Williams has been very disappointed on two occasions by not being give command of the 90th Division when the former commanders were relieved. He has let this affect his loyalty and spirit of cooperation with the new division commander [Landrum]. It is considered unfortunate that his disappointment in not succeeding to command on these occasions has thus influenced his usefulness because he is a hard worker and personally a very brave man.⁹⁰

After two weeks of deliberating, Eisenhower asked Marshall to give him a position in the United States:

Relieved ... for unsatisfactory performance in combat. Division, Corps and Army commanders' reports indicate that while General Williams is energetic and personally very brave, his performance has been such that he cannot be considered suitable for assignment as an Assistant Division Commander.⁹¹

Williams wanted to work under Henry Terrell Jr., the man who had commanded 90th Division during its training; the man Eisenhower and Bradley blamed for its poor performance: 'It may be that under General Terrell's or another command Williams may find himself.'⁹² Williams' request was granted and he returned to the United States a bitter man as the following words to one of his captains illustrates;

My contention was that my loyalty came first to you and other junior officers and soldiers in the outfit, the men who were slugging it out and to the Army of the U.S. and not to some dug-out 'Nell' that never went forward to see what was what.⁹³

Landrum still had one final attack to oversee and 90th Division attempted to form a bridgehead across the River Sèves on 22 July. Although part of St Germain-sur-Sèves was taken, many soldiers withdrew after dusk and a German counterattack panicked others; several hundred men were left behind in the confusion. The division had absorbed too many 'replacements [who] were

89 *Ibid*, Chapter 6.

90 *Ibid*, Chapter 6.

91 Eisenhower, "Cable E-41104 to Marshall, 2 August 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

92 Eisenhower, "Cable E-4256 to Marshall, 4 August 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

93 Letter to one of his captain's, October 1944; quoted in Meyer, Hanging Sam, Chapter 6.

poorly trained and undependable.⁹⁴ Middleton was 'rather disappointed' and believed that 'had he [used] his old 45th, there would have been no question of taking the town after crossing the river.'⁹⁵ Landrum was relieved on 30 July.

Eisenhower needed a confident commander with the experience and charisma to turn the 90th's fortunes around:

Middleton feels that this division, in view of the past performances requires new and enthusiastic leadership. Bradley concurs in the recommendation, and is convinced that Landrum is not the proper type to bring the 90th Division out of its present low state of battle efficiency. He feels that it requires a commander of more color and one who has not been associated with any of the unpleasant experiences of this division.⁹⁶

Initially Eisenhower was 'willing to take Landrum back with a division that he has had a hand in preparing for combat'⁹⁷ and he was given the 71st Division. He changed his mind after seeing Middleton's efficiency report on Landrum:

...Middleton, who is noted for his soundness of judgment and spirit of fairness... concurred, in by Bradley, is so low that I am forced to request you to remove Landrum from the list of division commanders to come over here. Specifically he is rated satisfactory in all qualifications except in physical endurance, in which he is very satisfactory. Under remarks Middleton says "inclined to be too cautious in employing troops in combat. Has too much of the cautious defensive attitude".⁹⁸

Landrum was immediately transferred to command an Infantry Advance Replacement Training Centre.

4.5.3 General Raymond McLain and 90th Division

McLain had served in the National Guard most of his life but his career looked in doubt following the Louisiana Manoeuvres in autumn 1941. McLain's corps commander only rated his performance as 'satisfactory' and felt he had 'neither the physical stamina nor the reserve necessary for extended field

⁹⁴ Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 201.

⁹⁵ 45th Division, Middleton's division in Italy; Sylvan, "War Diary, 22 July 1944" (AWCL, Sylvan Papers).

⁹⁶ Eisenhower, "Cable E-41104 to Marshall, 2 August 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Eisenhower, "Cable FWD-15607 to Marshall, 24 Sept 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

service.⁹⁹ General Key,¹⁰⁰ McLain's divisional commander, rated him as 'excellent' but he did 'not recommend [him] for any duty in the event of war.'¹⁰¹ Middleton took command of 45th Division in October 1942 and took McLain with him when the division headed for North Africa. McLain did well during the Sicilian and Italian campaigns¹⁰² and Marshall put his name forward as a combat experienced commander to Eisenhower in March 1944: 'McLain... has demonstrated his ability to command a division... Would you like to have McLain with the idea of eventually giving him a division? Middleton can give you an estimate of McLain.'¹⁰³

Eisenhower agreed to take McLain and two months later he was transferred to 30th Division when it needed an artillery commander; he then served during the difficult advance south of the River Vire. McLain thrived during combat and commanded with a low-key, reserved style and he was admired for his soft-spoken communication skills. He was known for making clear and timely decisions and relied on his staff to communicate them on his behalf while he spent the daylight hours visiting his subordinates.¹⁰⁴

On 25 July, Brigadier-General McLain arrived at VIII Corps headquarters, meeting his old division commander, Middleton. After five days assessing command in the 90th he concluded that commanders allowed their men to dig in rather than making them use fire and manoeuvre tactics.¹⁰⁵ McLain believed that assertive and aggressive commanders would resolve the problem and proposed

99 Haislip, "Memorandum for Marshall, 7 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

100 McNair rated General William Key as 'Forceful, impressive, and that's about all. Dubious for the long pull.:'; Key was removed soon afterwards, McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 7 October 1941" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 76).

101 McLain Belvin, Betty, *Ray McLain and the National Guard* (Manhattan, KS, Sunflower University Press: 1994), p. 64.

102 McLain served with the 45th Division in Sicily and at Salerno and Anzio in Italy and was awarded two Silver Stars, Belvin, *Ray McLain*, pp. 73-74.

103 Eisenhower, "Cable W-13765 to Marshall, 26 March 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

104 Colby, *War From the Ground Up*, p. 477.

105 Colby, *War From the Ground Up*, p. 145.

removing sixteen field officers; he also suggested replacements.¹⁰⁶ It was the 'house clearing' that Bradley had wanted Landrum to do.¹⁰⁷ The changes were immediately implemented.

On his first day in command, 30 July, McLain introduced himself in front of the division's 2,000 officers and non-commissioned officers. Standing relaxed in front of the large group, he calmly recapped the division's achievements, focusing on the lessons they had learnt in combat. Many of the group were veterans of tough fighting and they had to pass on what they knew to the replacements. He also gave the division a new nickname; the 'Tough 'Ombres'.¹⁰⁸ It was the pep talk the group needed; '... he talked those guys into thinking that they were great soldiers and sent them back to their outfits to convince the other 14,000.'¹⁰⁹

90th Division's fortunes quickly improved and Barth (357th Regiment) believed that McLain 'gave the division back its soul.'¹¹⁰ Bradley praised him after four weeks: 'According to Patton and Hodges this division has shown a marked improvement and looks like a different division.'¹¹¹ Eisenhower was pleased to pass on the news to Marshall:

You will be glad to know that the 90th Division had been transformed into a very effective unit and is now reported by General Patton as one of his best organizations. This is unquestionably due to the outstanding leadership qualities of Brigadier-General McLain...¹¹²

Eisenhower wanted his promotion to be a special case because he 'has done so well and also because he is a National Guardsman... his special accomplishment is the rehabilitation of the 90th Division into a first class fighting outfit.'¹¹³ After the ring-fencing of Regular Army generals to

106 Bradley, *Soldier's Story*, p. 296.

107 The replacement of under achieving officers was also called 'house cleaning'.

108 The shoulder patch had the letters T and O for the Texas and Oklahoma National Guard but the replacements came from across the United States.

109 Belvin, *Ray McLain*, p. 91.

110 *Ibid*, p. 486.

111 Bradley, "Letter to Eisenhower, 25 August 1944" (Bradley Papers, Correspondence with Major Historical Figures, 1936-1960, AWCL, hereafter known as AWCL, Bradley Papers).

112 Eisenhower, "Cable CPA-90233 to Marshall 19 August 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

113 Eisenhower, "Cable CPA-90255 to Marshall, 25 August 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

command National Guard divisions back in 1941-42, the news was significant and would be welcomed by National Guard supporters in the United States. Bradley later stated that McLain 'succeeded in making the 90th into one of the finest divisions on the Allied front'.¹¹⁴

Patton later listed McLain's strengths in his Distinguished Service Medal recommendation: '... complete comprehension of situations... brilliant perception of enemy weaknesses... sound planning... indefatigable leadership... inspired the division to outstanding feats of pursuit and attack...'¹¹⁵ McLain was promoted to corps command only three months later. He was the only National Guardsman to command a corps.¹¹⁶

4.5.4 General William C. McMahon and 8th Infantry Division

8th Infantry Division relieved 82nd Airborne Division in the centre of VIII Corps sector on 7 July. It continued the attack on Mont Castre and while it made the usual mistakes of a division new to combat after two days it '... had made no known progress, for reasons not very clear.'¹¹⁷ Hodges and Middleton were concerned about McMahon and his subordinates: 'hesitation, inertia and disorganization marked its first attempts to advance... but the division also displayed a particular ineptness in the realms of organization and control.'¹¹⁸

At 8th Division's headquarters 'everyone was more or less confused... they didn't seem to be operating to any particular plan.'¹¹⁹ On two occasions McMahon recorded that he had no idea what was stopping the advance.¹²⁰ He reacted by relieving the two colonels of the attacking regiments but

114 Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, p. 333.

115 Belvin, *Ray McLain*, p. 93.

116 McLain was promoted to temporary Lieutenant-General in June 1945 and was confirmed as a Regular Army Brigadier-General in June 1946, the first National Guardsman to be awarded such a high rank.

117 Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 125.

118 *Ibid*, p. 125.

119 Landrum of the 90th reporting on 8th Division, *Ibid*, p. 125.

120 8th Division G-3 Journal on 8 and 9 July; quoted in Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 125.

his assistant commander was killed helping their replacements.¹²¹ It was clear to Hodges and Middleton that McMahon had failed as a combat commander and he was relieved on 12 July,

... largely because of his attitude after the poor showing of his division. When asked by the general [Bradley] what was wrong he replied, 'Well I'm doing my best. If you think you can get someone to do the job better, I wish you could. I owe that much to the government.' Seemed to lack confidence and the general was disturbed by his attitude.¹²²

Eisenhower recognized that while McMahon was unsuited to a combat command he had his uses as a staff officer and used networking knowledge to place him with Lieutenant-General Mark Clark, commanding general of Fifth U.S. Army in Italy. Clark had been McMahon's roommate at West Point, and the two had been good friends ever since.¹²³ Eisenhower initially contacted Devers, Clark's superior officer, playing down the reasons behind McMahon's relief.

In my opinion this division was well trained by McMahon before going into action but due to certain rather unusual conditions and to inexperience throughout the division, a considerable confusion resulted which was at least partially traceable to him and which necessitated his relief. I think McMahon still has real usefulness either in command or in a staff position but I think it would be difficult for him to function successfully in this theatre at this time.¹²⁴

McMahon was accepted as Fifth Army's deputy chief of staff, G-1, Personnel.¹²⁵ Eisenhower then explained McMahon's case to Marshall,

... McMahon has been relieved from the battle line by his corps commander, fully concurred in by Bradley, for failure to lead his division effectively. His division had been in action only four days but both corps and army commander felt that his test had been sufficiently conclusive to demonstrate that he is not, repeat not, a good division commander in spite of acknowledged qualifications along other lines... I know he has many fine qualifications, and in my opinion it was tension and over anxiety that caused his poor performance as a division commander.¹²⁶

Two combat experienced generals took command of 8th Infantry Division. Donald A. Stroh had served with the 9th Division under Eddy since the Tunisian campaign in North Africa and Colonel Canham, who had led 116th Regiment (29th Division) ashore on Omaha Beach, became his assistant.

121 Brigadier-General Nelson M Walker, 8th Infantry Division's assistant commander.

122 Hanson, "War Diary, 12 July 1944" (AWCL, Hanson War Diary).

123 McMahon could have been asked who he wanted to work for, but it is impossible to prove

124 Eisenhower, "Cable S-55548 to Devers, 14 July 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

125 Devers, "Cable B-14217 to Eisenhower, 19 July 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

126 Eisenhower, "Cable FWD-12416 to Marshall, 19 July 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

Stroh and Canham replaced a regimental commander and their insistence on pushing forward despite high casualties had an immediate positive impact on the division.

Advocating side-slipping and flanking movements... without special hedgerow training, the division learned through its own errors how to solve the problems of attack and soon began to manifest that - if unspectacular - advance that was feasible in the hedgerows. The troops moved with increasing confidence, maintaining momentum by bypassing small isolated enemy groups.¹²⁷

The small daily advances revived the division's positive attitude and their men's self-belief; and it increased each day. As a modern leadership theorist has posited, 'It takes a leader to create momentum. Followers can catch it. Good managers are able to use it to their advantage once it has begun.'¹²⁸ 8th Infantry Division reached the high ground overlooking the River Ay on 14 July.

4.5.5 General Leroy H. Watson and 3rd Armored Division

Watson was an introverted man who had greeted Bradley 'shyly as he always does' shortly after D-Day.¹²⁹ Watson's abilities were questioned at the beginning of July when 3rd Armored Division's combat commands were attached to 30th Division during its advance south of the River Vire.¹³⁰ Confusion over objectives had led to the armour and infantry becoming entangled, bringing the advance to a halt. Watson had failed to assert himself on his combat commands and their commanders were relieved at the recommendation of General Hobbs, 30th Division's commander. It had, however, been difficult to pinpoint Watson's part in the problem.¹³¹

3rd Armored Division spearheaded VII Corps' part of Operation COBRA, at the end of July and Collins was soon concerned that Watson was making mistakes. His patience snapped when 3rd Armored Division started moving through Coutances, a town allocated to 4th Armored Division.

He [Watson] was back at the command post, the last place that he should have been under these conditions, because he should have anticipated the fact that this was going to be a

127 Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 125.

128 Maxwell, *The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership* (Thomas Nelson, Nashville, Tennessee, 2007) p. 201.

129 Hanson, "War Diary, 20 June 1944" (AWCL, Hanson War Diary).

130 "30th Division telephone conversation transcripts, 7-13 July 1944" (NARA, RG 407, Entry 427, Box 7614).

131 Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, pp. 108-116.

critical spot and he ought to have been there. I had to get him up. I said 'Look, I am commanding your division for you out here and I've got enough to do running the corps, so get on your horse now and get up there.'¹³²

A commander had to predict where difficulties would occur, prepare for them and, if necessary, be on the spot to manage them.¹³³ Collins relieved Watson on 7 August after only two weeks in combat.¹³⁴

Eisenhower believed that Watson's lack of drive and faulty intuition were his downfall:

... the Corps and Army commanders recommended that because of his value as a trainer of troops he should be sent back to the United States in grade but Bradley and I agree that if a man cannot successfully lead his division in combat he should not hold the grade of Major General.¹³⁵

As usual, Eisenhower tried to place Watson in SHAEF but his lack of determination concerned him:

... his services are not desired by any of the Corps or Army commanders where a vacancy exists. He produced a good division and his relief seems to be more of an accumulation of minor errors and mistakes and a deficiency in drive rather than a complete lack of leadership qualities. Bradley and I both believe that he is a good type but not quite of the caliber to command a division...¹³⁶

Eisenhower and Bradley hoped he would 'make good'¹³⁷ as an assistant commander; he did and served with 29th Division until the end of the war.

Maurice Rose replaced Watson. Rose had extensive combat experience, first as an armoured division chief of staff in North Africa and then as a combat commander under Hugh Gaffey in Sicily. In February 1944, Gaffey was transferred to Patton's Army headquarters and Rose was unimpressed with Edward Brooks when he arrived from the United States.¹³⁸

2nd Armored Division's combat commands were seconded to infantry divisions during the early stages of the campaign and the first time Edward Brooks and Maurice Rose had control of the whole division was at the beginning of August. There was an immediate conflict of personalities and

132 Collins, "Elements of Command Lecture, 30 August 1971" (J. Lawton Collins Papers, AWCL), p.16.

133 Maxwell, *The 21 Laws Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*, pp. 87-100.

134 Excluding the time when his combat commands were seconded to 30th Infantry Division.

135 Eisenhower, "Cable CPA-90227 to Marshall, 17 Aug. 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184) .

136 *Ibid.*

137 Eisenhower, "Cable CPA-90233 to Marshall, 19 Aug. 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

138 Devers, "Attached to Cable 13676, 20 February 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

Collins believed that 'Rose had twice as much drive as his division commander had, and the two men just clashed.'¹³⁹ Eisenhower used Watson's demotion to separate the two men and make the most of Rose's abilities. Rose turned 3rd Armored 'into a marvellous division' in a few weeks.¹⁴⁰

... Hodges says he [Rose] has done some fine work since assuming command of the division and considers him a fine division commander... He is aggressive and in my opinion well qualified to command a division. Hodges concurs.¹⁴¹

Collins described Rose as a 'great commander' and 'the top armoured commander in the army'.¹⁴²

4.5.6 General Lloyd D. Brown and 28th Infantry Division

Brown had no combat experience but he had served as an assistant for Marshall's personnel and operations assistant chiefs of staff before serving as an assistant commander and division commander. 28th Division entered the Normandy battle at the end of July but its first offensive operation was towards Mortain at the beginning of August 1944. The advance was considered to be 'slow, costly, and ineffective, largely as a result of poor direction by the division commander.'¹⁴³ Brown was relieved on 13 August, after two weeks in action.

Everyone had their opinion about Brown's demeanour. Corlett (XIX Corps) thought he was 'sick and in a rundown condition' while a battalion commander thought he was 'frantic and in a terrible state'; Bradley simply blamed the division's failure on Brown.¹⁴⁴ Eisenhower told Marshall that, 'both Bradley and I are completely convinced that he should be reduced. He has no inspirational qualities

139 Collins, "Elements of Command Lecture, 30 August 1971" (J. L. Collins Papers, AWCL), p.16.

140 *Ibid*, p.16.

141 Bradley, "Letter to Eisenhower, 25 August 1944" (AWCL, Bradley Papers).

142 Collins, "Elements of Command Lecture, 30 August 1971" (J. L. Collins Papers, AWCL), p.16.

143 Miller, *Division Commander*, pp. 92-93.

144 *Ibid*, pp. 92-3.

and while unquestionably a man of outstanding personal bravery, he definitely failed as a division commander.¹⁴⁵

Eisenhower did not want appoint Brown to another division as an assistant commander because did not cope well in combat:

... he is a Staff type who lacks the magnetic personality to keep an organization doing its best when the going gets tough... He is gallant and courageous and is well grounded in Staff work and in organizational and training requirements. My unfavorable opinion of him for command positions is based exclusively upon my belief that he does not exhibit in times of stress that magnetism and driving energy which are often the most important attributes of a commander.¹⁴⁶

Brown was reduced to colonel and he did not command another combat unit.

Bradley recommended an old friend, James Wharton, to take over 28th Division.¹⁴⁷ 1st Engineer Special Brigade lost 400 men and 300 injured when German E-Boats attacked their landing craft during a training exercise (Exercise Tiger) in the English Channel. Wharton took over and retrained the brigade ready for D-Day. After organizing the logistics on Utah Beach, he served as 9th Infantry Division's assistant commander. Wharton was fatally wounded by a sniper on his first day in command 28th Division.

Eisenhower's second choice was Norman Cota, who had just recovered from a wound received in the battle for St Lô. Cota had a chequered peacetime career and an exemplary combat career. He was held responsible for the theft of \$40,000 while serving as a Post Financial Officer early in his career. He did not command troops until Congress relieved him of the obligation twenty years later.¹⁴⁸ Cota served as 1st Infantry Division's chief of staff during the North African campaign and Eisenhower reported 'that in combat he has demonstrated qualifications of leadership, sound practical

145 Eisenhower, "Cable CPA 90227 to Marshall, 17 Aug. 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

146 Eisenhower, "Cable FWD-15465 to Marshall, 22 Sept. 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

147 Sylvan, "War Diary, 13 August 1944" (AWCL, Sylvan Papers).

148 Miller, *Division Commander*, p. 25.

judgment, and a high sense of duty, and has been primarily responsible for the successful of troop and supply movements.¹⁴⁹

Cota's amphibious experience was put to good use when he served as the U.S. Army representative with joint US-British Combined Operation while landing craft techniques were developed for D-Day. He became 29th Division's assistant commander in October 1943 and he taught 116th Regiment while it practised for the Omaha Beach landing.

He was recognized as a 'no nonsense' soldier with a strong sense of duty and a solid commitment to military discipline. He was in many respects the perfect counterpart to Gerhardt who ... tended to be more personal and charismatic in his style of leadership. Cota was to supply stability, reliability, and the common sense to balance the aggressive and impulsive nature of the division commander.¹⁵⁰

Once again the commander and the assistant were polar opposites who brought out the best in each other and in their men. Cota experienced the chaotic landings on Omaha Beach on 6 June 1944, fought through the bocage and ultimately commanded the task force which captured St Lô on 18 July.

One anecdote illustrates how Cota restored 28th Division confidence. When a staff officer described the tactical situation to corps headquarters as 'a bit jittery on the situation on our left, worried about our right and uncertain about the situation in front', Cota intervened:

"We are not jittery about the situation on our left, we are not worried about our right and we are not uncertain about the situation in front. When we are, I will tell you and at the same time turn in my suit."¹⁵¹

Ten days later Bradley made it clear that he was doing well with the 28th: 'Cota has already convinced Hodges that he is qualified to command a division, Hodges, says there has been a marked improvement in the division and recommends Cota's promotion to major general.'¹⁵²

149 Eisenhower, "Memorandum for the President on Temporary Promotions, 18 March 1943" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 306).

150 Miller, *Division Commander*, p. 73.

151 "Turn in my suit" was slang for "I will resign"; in other words hang up my uniform. *Ibid*, p. 98.

152 Bradley, "Letter to Eisenhower, 25 August 1944" (AWCL, Bradley Papers).

4.6 Promotion Policy during the European Campaign

At the end of July 1944 there was a combined effort on both sides of the Atlantic to assess potential division commanders. McNair detailed the best men left in Army Ground Forces before he left for Normandy in July 1944.¹⁵³ He accepted that the quality of commanders had declined because the best had already been deployed:

I am of course limited by the material available in this country, plus such commanders as may be returned from overseas. The latter source, however, has not proved prolific, since theatre commanders quite naturally are inclined to retain their battle-proved commanders. Undoubtedly the officers concerned themselves are far from anxious to return home, even for promotion. Admittedly, not a few commanders, whose records at home indicate superiority, have disappointed in combat.¹⁵⁴

He suggested ten names, judged to be 'outstanding in combat fitness' as replacements and ten names, 'judged weakest in combat fitness'. In short, Eisenhower had been given the authority to take best and remove the worst.¹⁵⁵

McNair also listed the suggestion's GERs but he recognized that they did not always reflect commander effectiveness in combat and that promotions... be deferred pending battle test'. He acknowledged that 'As operations progress and increasing proportions of our forces go overseas, it is to be expected that more and more battle-proved commanders will take over units as they arrive overseas.' McNair also made it clear that he would not ask Eisenhower to return any more combat experienced commanders and 'commanders of units in training in this country be made from the best material available at home.'¹⁵⁶

By August the number of divisions in Europe was greater than the number left in the United States. Eisenhower asked Bradley to compile a list of available 'battle-tested' commanders in Twelfth U.S. Army Group: 'In each case we are now requiring that each man recommended for promotion

153 McNair was killed by 'friendly fire' on 25 July 1944, while observing the United States Air Force bombing of the German lines at the start of Operation COBRA.

154 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 29 June 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

155 *Ibid*, Nine of the outstanding officers accompanied their own divisions to Europe, one was killed in an air accident; two of the weakest were replaced.

156 McNair, "Memorandum to Marshall, 29 June 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

demonstrate by actual leadership in battle that he is capable of filling the position.’¹⁵⁷ Combat experience had finally replaced the GER as an assessment tool at SHAEF headquarters.

The GER had been an excellent peacetime system for assessing an officer’s abilities, particularly during the hectic expansion of the army following Pearl Harbor. While the simple numerical system compared officers with their peers it had one failing in wartime; it could not assess an officer’s ability to cope with the stress of commanding in combat; what Eisenhower called ‘battle testing’.¹⁵⁸ Early experiences in the Mediterranean and the Pacific had shown Marshall that a GER did not always reflect an officer’s performance in combat. Some officers could not cope with the stress of command in combat but conversely some officers with low GERs rose to the challenge.

At the same time, Marshall and Eisenhower agreed on changes in policy relating to promotion and demotion. Marshall did not want any more unsatisfactory division commanders sent back in their temporary grade; ‘... to relieve officers because of unsatisfactory performance in combat and return them to the United States with retention of temporary grade in effect places something of a premium on combat inefficiency.’¹⁵⁹ They had to be demoted and given a staff job in the theatre, or if that was impossible, relieved from duty and retired.

Marshall eventually stopped the practice of sending senior officers home in December, believing that ‘combat inefficient’ general officers were unsuitable for training recruits.

We have now reached the point where the training of replacements is our principal task. I find that most of our large replacement establishments are commanded and staffed by men who have failed in their jobs in battle and who have been relieved for cause. We must have successful leaders for the training of the increasing numbers of replacements. That they by physically limited is not important.¹⁶⁰

He would, however, accept men who had been relieved due to combat related stress or ill health and who were in need of a short rest.

157 Eisenhower, “Cable CPA-90255 to Marshall, 25 Aug. 1944” (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

158 McNair, “Memorandum to Marshall, 29 June 1944” (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 28).

159 Marshall, “Cable CM-OUT 79544 to Eisenhower, 12 Aug. 1944” (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 67).

160 Marshall, “Secret Message W-83261 to Eisenhower, 28 December 1944” (NARA, RG491, Barton 201 File).

At the beginning of 1945 Eisenhower was already thinking about the army's post war command needs.

As times goes on there is an accumulation of evidence that we should constantly seek younger men in relatively high positions. Thinking of the problems that the War Department will have to solve after the war, I believe, moreover, that this tendency towards giving younger men battle command experience is a good thing for the future. Even where older men are at least temporarily doing very good jobs. I am thinking particularly of corps and division commands.¹⁶¹

Many experienced division commanders were approaching retirement age and Eisenhower wanted to invest in younger men who could teach the next generation of soldiers:

From the standpoint of both present and future effectiveness my own conviction is that a corps commander should be in his late forties, while division commanders should be in their early forties, with the occasional man even in his thirties. In all cases, at this stage of the war, assignments should be by demonstrated merit in battle.¹⁶²

He could have been considering how to avoid another post war 'Hump' of over-age officers, similar to the one he had experienced in the 1920s and 1930s.

4.6 Successful Commanders

Sixteen of the twenty commanders (75-percent) chosen by McNair, Marshall and Eisenhower went on to successfully command their divisions in the European campaign. They are listed in Figure 4.02:

Figure 4.2: Successful Commanders

Name	Division	Comments
Baade	35th Infantry	Division had no time to practice, ¹⁶³ it settled down after a bad start. ¹⁶⁴
Barton	4th Infantry	'... cheerful' ¹⁶⁵ with 'a great deal of aggressiveness and drive.' ¹⁶⁶

¹⁶¹ Eisenhower, "Cable S-75742 to Marshall, 19 January 1945" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 159.

¹⁶⁴ U.S. Army Historical Division, *St. Lô*, p. 107.

¹⁶⁵ Hanson, "War Diary, 8 June 1944" (AWCL, Hanson War Diary).

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 8 June 1944.

Brooks	2nd Armored	'... an exceptional and courageous leader who inspired confidence' considered 'a lucky general by his men.' ¹⁶⁷
Eddy	9th Infantry	'... tenacious spirit,' '... not timid, neither was he bold.' ¹⁶⁸
Gerhardt	29th Infantry	'... aggressive, almost hawkish,' ¹⁶⁹ 'peppery and profane' ¹⁷⁰
Grow	6th Armored	"I don't care if we do get so far out in front we are completely surrounded. We've enough fire-power and mobility to punch out of anything the Krauts have to offer." ¹⁷¹
Hobbs	30th Infantry	'... intensely intolerant of persons he suspected of inefficiency' ¹⁷²
Huebner	1st Infantry	A confident, ¹⁷³ logical, ¹⁷⁴ disciplinarian with a sense of humour ¹⁷⁵
Irwin	5th Infantry	... his coolness, ability and conspicuous inspirational leadership gave the units confidence in themselves... ¹⁷⁶
Macon	83rd Infantry	Nervous, ¹⁷⁷ became aggressive, ¹⁷⁸ showed signs of improvement ¹⁷⁹

¹⁶⁷ Brooks' eulogy by General Charles D. Palmer, <http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/ehbrooks.htm> accessed April 2010.

¹⁶⁸ Phillips, *The Making of a Professional*, no page numbers.

¹⁶⁹ McManus, John C., *The Americans at Normandy: The Summer of 1944, The American War from the Normandy Beaches to Falaise* (Ferndale, PA, Forge Books, 2004), p. 42.

¹⁷⁰ Miller, *Division Commander*, p. 71.

¹⁷¹ Quoted in *From Brest to Bastogne*, a small pamphlet published by Stars and Stripes in 1944, reproduced on <http://www.super6th.org/brest/Brest1.htm>, website accessed May 2010.

¹⁷² Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 92.

¹⁷³ McManus, *The Americans at D-Day*, p. 45.

¹⁷⁴ Stanhope Mason, 1st Division's Chief of Staff; quoted in Chandler & Collins, *The D-Day Encyclopedia*, p. 302.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 302.

¹⁷⁶ Silver Star citation awarded during the February 1943 Tunisian campaign; quoted in Irwin's entry in the General Officers Biographical Summaries, (Office of Public Information Press, Department of Defense, Washington DC, circa 1947, held in the NARA, Floor 2, Librarians' area).

¹⁷⁷ Hanson, "War Diary, 20 June 1944" (AWCL, Hanson War Diary).

¹⁷⁸ Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit* (Ref: telephone conversations in 83rd Division's G-2 and G-3 journal), p. 83.

¹⁷⁹ CI 30, 4th Division; quoted in Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 88.

Oliver	5th Armored	'... displayed keen foresight, remarkable tactical ability and inspiring leadership...' ¹⁸⁰
Ridgway	82nd Airborne	'... inspiring presence...' and "an uncanny ability for appearing at the right place at the right time." ¹⁸¹
Robertson	2nd Infantry	'... looked more a scholar than a warrior but looks were deceiving...' ¹⁸²
Taylor	101st Airborne	'... socially adept, attentive to superiors and highly intelligent...' ¹⁸³
Wood*	4th Armored	'Unquestionably in a rapid moving advance, he is the greatest division commander I have ever seen' ¹⁸⁴
Wyche	79th Infantry	He 'performed well and commanders [were] satisfied with progress of the division...' ¹⁸⁵

Note:

* Relieved due to stress in October 1944, see below

Key:

Division: Division commanded in Normandy

Comments: Comments on the commander's main personality traits or characteristics

180 Oak Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Service Medal Citation, awarded in July 1945; quoted in Oliver's in the General Officers Biographical Summaries, (Office of Public Information Press, Department of Defense, Washington DC, circa 1947, held in the NARA, Floor 2, Librarians' area).

181 Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, p. 60.

182 Chandler & Collins, *The D-Day Encyclopedia*, p. 462.

183 Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway*, p. 20.

184 General George S. Patton; quoted in Spiller, Roger J., General Editor, *Combined Arms in Battle Since 1939* (U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1992) online version available at <http://www.cgsc.edu/carl/resources/csi/Spiller/Spiller.asp>, accessed May 2010.

185 Hanson, "War Diary, 19 June 1944" (AWCL, Hanson War Diary).

Five of the above generals had been promoted to command one of the fifteen corps deployed in Europe by May 1945. One of the replacements, McLain, had also been promoted (Figure 4.03):

Figure 4.3 Promoted to Corps Commanders

Name	Division	Corps	Promotion
Brooks	2nd Armored	VI Corps	October 1944
Eddy	9th Infantry	XII Corps	August 1944
Huebner	1st Infantry	V Corps	January 1945
Irwin	5th Infantry	XII Corps	April 1945
McLain*	90th Infantry	XX Corps	October 1944
Ridgway	82nd Airborne	XVIII Airborne	August 1944

Notes:

* National Guardsmen who took command of 90th Division at the end of the Normandy campaign

Key:

Division: Division commanded in Normandy

Corps: Corps commanded in May 1945

Promotion: Month promoted from division to corps

4.7 The Stress of Command

The stress of commanding a division day after day was immense and ‘psychologists had determined that 200 combat days would be the maximum a person could withstand.’¹⁸⁶ The majority had coped

186 Belvin, *Ray McLain*, p. 105.

for over 300 days when the European campaign ended on 8 May 1945. Two of the Normandy Group, Barton and Eddy, were relieved due to physical fatigue. Barton was relieved following the Battle of the Bulge and Marshall's thought 'he did not impress me as being in the best condition.'¹⁸⁷ Eddy suffered 'a bad physical breakdown'¹⁸⁸ due to high blood pressure in April 1945.¹⁸⁹ Neither of them returned to Europe although both went onto serve in high level training posts.¹⁹⁰

Two of the Normandy Group, Stroh and Wood, were relieved due to mental fatigue. Stroh's son was killed piloting a plane supporting his father's division on Brest.¹⁹¹ Bereavement affected Stroh's ability to command and he was relieved in November following the battle for Hürtgen Forest.¹⁹² He returned to command 106th Division in a non-combat role, performing occupation and prisoner of war guarding duties.¹⁹³

The 'volatile and imaginative' Wood (4th Armored) quarrelled with the 'stolid, humourless Eddy' (XII Corps) during the drive to the Saar in November and his 'penchant for bluntness did not sit well with his new corps commander.'¹⁹⁴ Wood 'had a tendency to bend his orders to suit his own idea of how an engagement should be fought.'¹⁹⁵ After two incidents Eddy recommended Wood's relief and Patton confided: "I got 'P' [Wood] sent home on a 60-day detached service. He is nearly nuts due

187 He was appointed commander of an Infantry Replacement Centre; Marshall "W-83261 to Eisenhower, 28 December 1944", (NARA, RG491, Barton 201 File).

188 Eisenhower, "FWD-19528 to Marshall, 20 April 1945" (NARA, RG491, Eddy's 201 File).

189 Eisenhower, "FWD-19753 to Marshall, 23 April 1945" (NARA, RG491, Eddy's 201 File).

190 Barton was head of infantry training at Fort McClellan until 1946 while Eddy was Commandant at Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, from 1948 to 1950.

191 Eisenhower, "FWD 15459 to Marshall, 22 Sept 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

192 Eisenhower, "S-69280 to Marshall, 2 Dec. 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

193 106th Division guarded 100,000s of German prisoners of war held in temporary camps along the River Rhine.

194 D'Este, Carlo, *Patton: A Genius for War* (New York, NY, Harper Collins Publishers, 1995), p. 663.

195 Don M. Fox, *Patton's Vanguard: The United States Army 4th Armored Division* (McFarland & Company, Jefferson, NC, 2003), p. 226.

to nerves and inability to sleep. I hope I can get him a job in the States. He is too hard to handle.”¹⁹⁶

Stress and inability to relax had undermined Wood’s ability to command.

4.8 Conclusions on Command in the Normandy Campaign

First U.S. Army did take adequate steps to assess division commanders’ reactions to combat. Hodges was detailed to watch them when they went into combat for the first time and he gave encouragement, advice and corrected mistakes; he then reported his observations to Bradley. In two cases Hodge’s findings led to the immediate removal of a commander; MacKelvie and McMahon.

MacKelvie had been expected to step up 90th Division’s training but he failed to integrate with his team and made clumsy attempts to instil discipline.¹⁹⁷ Collins recorded that MacKelvie was not to blame for its initial poor performance, but he was responsible for failing to improve it:

... the 90th Division was not fully prepared for combat and lacked competent leadership in certain of its regiments and battalions and perhaps lower echelons... he has not demonstrated his ability to correct existing conditions, perhaps because he lacks familiarity with the problems of infantry combat.¹⁹⁸

It was clear that he had neither prepared 90th Division for combat nor was he able to command during combat. A division commander needed to be positive, assertive and charismatic; MacKelvie was none of these. Bradley and Eisenhower made the correct decision to remove him quickly. Williams’ contribution to MacKelvie’s problems would only become clear later.

Landrum had the opportunity to address command problems in the 90th, but he did not. His pessimism was also a cause for concern. Command in the division was again dysfunctional with Landrum at the headquarters and Williams at the front and their different command styles affected its combat effectiveness. Their relationship eventually deteriorated into arguments and recriminations.

196 Quote from Patton’s letter to his wife in D’Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, p. 663. Wood was appointed Commandant of Fort Knox’s Replacement Training Centre, overseeing tank crew training.

197 Chandler & Collins, *The D-Day Encyclopedia*, p.348

198 Collins, “Letter to Bradley, 14 June 1944” (NARA, RG 491, MacKelvie’s 201 File).

Although part of the delay can be attributed to Roosevelt's death, Landrum stayed in command far too long. As far as this division was concerned, Eisenhower and Bradley appear to have run out of ideas.

Bradley made an important point on commander styles when he considered Roosevelt for 90th Division. It needed, he wrote, a charismatic commander to 'give it confidence in itself' and 'a thick skinned disciplinarian as his second in command'.¹⁹⁹ The division needed a superior leader to inspire the men and a superior commander to attend to discipline and routine tasks.

Eisenhower diplomatically placed Williams with his old commander after failing to place him in First U.S. Army. Eisenhower was embarrassed over the delay in removing Landrum and by the inaccuracy of the initial assessment of his performance. His reaction contrasts to the benevolent behaviour shown to Williams, Brown and McMahon.

Middleton's efficiency report on Landrum followed similar lines to the Officer's Efficiency Report used between the wars and it can be assumed that commanders had to complete Efficiency Reports when subordinates changed postings.

McLain had thrived in combat. His transferral to England in March 1944 solved several issues. Firstly, it resolved a personality clash; secondly, it filled a vacant post in 30th Division; thirdly, Eisenhower had a combat experienced man with the potential to command a division. Eisenhower needed a man with exceptional leadership skills to revive 90th Division's morale because the tired veterans were not going to listen to anyone without experience. McLain was an ideal choice. He was also well known to Middleton, his corps commander.

McLain immediately 'cleaned house', using his subordinates own recommendations to guide him; he changed sixteen field officers. It was a wise, yet brave move by Bradley and Middleton. If McLain had made the wrong decisions, it could have been the end of the 90th. McLain's informal pep-talk meant that all his officers heard the same message at the same time; it created a sense of comradeship and eliminated the chance of rumours. He encouraged them to celebrate good experiences and learn from the bad ones. The new nickname 'Tough Ombres' was their new badge of honour. In short, they had fought a tough battle and come through the other side and their new

¹⁹⁹ Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, p. 333.

commander reminded them of that. McLain was an inspired choice and within a few weeks everyone was praising his work with the 90th. His appointment also illustrates that combat overruled any fencing of senior command for Regular Army general officers.

Eisenhower makes it clear that division commanders were on probation during the first few days of combat and McMahon's 'test had been sufficiently conclusive to demonstrate that he is not, repeat not, a good division commander.'²⁰⁰ His replacement by an experienced commander and assistant was the right decision because they had an immediate positive impact on the division. Under new commanders, 8th Division advanced at the same slow rate as everyone else; there had been no problems with its training, just with its command team.

It was clear that McMahon was not cut out to command troops but Eisenhower made use of his skills in a staff role with an old friend. Clark helped him to recover his composure and he performed useful service.

Watson had probably been on probation since his part on the advance south of the River Vire at the beginning of July. His 'deficiency of drive' in the breakout following Operation COBRA, the first time his command skills were fully put to the test, was not what Eisenhower and Bradley wanted to see in an armoured commander.²⁰¹ Eisenhower made the right decision to remove him. At the same time he capitalised on a personality clash in 2nd Armored Division to resolve a command issue. Rose proved to be a good choice.²⁰²

Brown did 'not exhibit in times of stress that magnetism and driving energy which are often the most important attributes of a commander.'²⁰³ In other words, combat brought out his worst characteristics not his best. Eisenhower made the right decision to demote him to assistant commander and Cota was an inspired last minute choice, following the death of Wharton. 28th Division's combat effectiveness improved under Cota, yet again demonstrating that a change in command was all it took.

200 Eisenhower, "Cable FWD-12416 to Marshall, 19 July 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

201 Eisenhower, "Cable CPA-90227 to Marshall, 17 Aug. 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

202 General Maurice Rose was killed in action in March 1945 commanding his division near Paderborn, Germany.

203 Eisenhower, "Cable FWD-15465 to Marshall, 22 Sept. 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

In July 1944 McNair gave Eisenhower permission to poach good division commanders or replace bad ones in Army Ground Forces. At the same time Bradley was asked to draw up of list of potential replacements in SHAEF. They all recognised that GERs had their limitations when it came to predicting combat effectiveness; general officers had to be 'battle tested'. As the number of divisions rose in Europe, the pool of 'battle tested' assistant commanders increased rapidly, making it easier to select replacements.

In conclusion, Eisenhower and Bradley recognized that while GERs were a good indicator of a commander's abilities, they could falter or fail during their first experience of combat. Hodges was tasked with mentoring and monitoring them and in four out of five cases (MacKelvie, McMahon, Watson and Brown as opposed to Landrum), they were relieved quickly. Eisenhower then used his networking knowledge to place them in suitable roles. By the end of the Normandy campaign, 'battle tested' assistants were considered ahead of commanders with high GERs.

Three out of the four replacements turned the fortunes of their division around quickly illustrating that the commander was the problem not the division. Only one, Landrum, overstayed his time in command and Eisenhower downgraded his assessment of him as soon as the scale of his failings was made known. Cota and McLain both had chequered peacetime careers²⁰⁴ but they were earmarked for promotion once they had proved themselves in combat.

A division's combat effectiveness reflected the commander's ability to command and lead. A good commander could get his division to advance; only the tenacity of the enemy dictated the speed of it. A poor commander could not get his division to advance. It can be stated that a good initial choice of commanders, the quick removal of commanders and wisely chosen replacements dictated the outcome in Normandy and First U.S. Army's ultimate success in its first campaign.

204 Cota and the robbery while he was finance officer; McLain's poor ratings in the Louisiana Manoeuvres.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Desired Command Skills and Leadership Qualities

Officers were taught command skills in the army school system, practised during manoeuvres and tested during combat. What superior command skills did a divisional commander need to have to make his division function efficiently? A commander also needed exceptional leadership qualities to bring out the best in his subordinates. These qualities were regularly assessed and recorded in his GER, analyzed during training and tested during combat. What leadership qualities did a successful divisional commander need to have?

5.1 Holistic Views of Command and Leadership

Matthew Ridgway believed that commanding a division in battle was ‘... a many faceted art, [and] superior leaders varied greatly in their outlook on life and their personal characteristics.’¹ Personality and temperament dictated a general’s command style and while some revelled in publicity, others avoided the spotlight.² McNair recognized that; ‘methods of leadership, as we all know, vary widely. I hold to no one particular procedure; the only criterion is the results obtained.’³

1 Quoted in Mitchell, George C., *Matthew B. Ridgway: Soldier, Statesman, Scholar, Citizen* (Mechanicsburg, PA, Stackpole Books, 2002), p. 20.

2 *Ibid*, p. 20.

3 Quoted in Palmer, Robert R., Wiley Bell I. & Keast, William R., *The U.S. Army in World War II: Green Series: Army Ground Forces: The Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops* (Historical Division, Department of the Army, Washington, DC, 1948), p. 101.

J. Lawton Collins identified five core qualities of a good combat commander: integrity, intelligence, drive, good health and a human touch.⁴ Ridgway produced a similar list of qualities required to foster physical and moral courage:

... and that a true leader had to have both, as they were both products of the character forming process of the development of self-discipline, physical endurance, of knowledge of one's job and, therefore, confidence... these qualities minimized fear and maximized sound judgment under pressure and, with some of that indispensable stuff called luck, often brought success from seemingly hopeless situations.⁵

Commanders possessed all these qualities at some level but it required education, a desire to improve and the means to develop them to a superior standard. While the GER provided a comparative numerical assessment of each officer, networking was used to provide intimate knowledge of an individual.

The 1941 edition of the United States Army *Operations Field Manual* stated that good leadership was a key component of a successful combat unit. It still is. General George C. Marshall, the Chief of Staff of the Army from September 1939 to November 1945, stressed that a general officer had to be a competent leader who was able to combine doctrinal concepts with battlefield experience:

Critical importance of dynamic, competent leadership: Commanding troops in combat was a complex task that required leaders to possess 'will power, self confidence, initiative, and disregard of self' as well as superior knowledge about technical and tactical matters.⁶

Collins believed that leadership qualities made the difference between an average commander and a superior commander: '... leadership is the essence of command. Without good leadership you simply cannot have a command or exercise command.'⁷

Ridgway believed there were two approaches to leadership; nature and nurture. The nature approach meant that, 'no amount of learning will make a man a leader unless he has the natural qualities to be one.' The nurture approach meant that leadership was 'an exact science capable of

4 Collins, "Elements of Command Lecture, 30 August 1971" (AWCL, Collins Papers), p. 2.

5 Quoted in Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgeway*, pp. 20-21.

6 U.S. War Department, *Field Manual 100-5, Field Service Regulations: Operations* (Washington DC, U.S. Government Printing Office 1941) introduction.

7 Collins, "Elements of Command Lecture, 30 August 1971" (Collins Papers, AWCL), p. 2.

being understood and practiced by anyone.’ Ridgway believed the nature approach was correct.⁸ His British contemporary Field Marshal Sir Archibald Wavell is quoted as saying “... the variables of human nature combined with those of combat, and to no lesser degree with those in peacetime training, make the exercise of leadership far more of an art than a science.”⁹

This thesis has identified six Command Skills and six Leadership Qualities that Marshall, McNair, Eisenhower and their subordinates required from U.S. Army division commanders in World War II. They are listed in Figure 5.01.

Figure 5.1: Command Skills and Leadership Qualities

Section	Sub-Section	Skills and Qualities
Command Skills	Personal Management Skills	Integrity Good Time Management Be a Team Leader
	Man Management	Train the Men Maintain Discipline Look After the Men
Leadership Qualities	Personal Abilities	A High Personal Standard Keep Physically and Mentally Fit Read History and Biographies
	Leadership Attributes	Determination A Positive Presence Relax under Pressure

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 20.

⁹ Quoted in Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway*, p. 20.

5.2 Personal Management Skills

This thesis argues that a successful division commander had to have three superior Personal Management Skills: firstly, *Integrity*; secondly, *Good Time Management*; and thirdly, *Be a Team Leader*.

A commander needed integrity to earn the respect of his men, particularly during combat: 'Ridgeway's leadership was founded firmly on the respect he had earned in the army over years by arriving at good decisions based on a careful scrutiny and weighing of the facts that he had marshalled.'¹⁰ Collins was adamant '... the American soldier can smell a phony a mile off. You just cannot fool the American soldier; he'll recognize a phony every time... He wants a leader who is honest, straightforward and means what he says'.¹¹

A commander had to make tough decisions, knowing that his decisions cost lives and his mistakes cost more lives. He also had to accept responsibility if he made a wrong decision: '... physical courage is rarely lacking but moral courage often is – calling for sound judgment, great restraint, and the readiness to accept responsibility and to admit mistakes which you are sure to make'.¹² The humiliation of officers and intimidation of enlisted men undermined respect and they were not tolerated. McNair stepped in when he heard that a divisional commander was treating his men badly:

My whole experience fixes my belief that the first essential of an efficient command is a happy one – the happiness, or contentment, if you will, being based on confidence in the leadership and a realization that the leader's demands are just, reasonable, and necessary for victory in war.¹³

The general re-evaluated his methods and he commanded his division in combat.

Battles are fought in real time against an unpredictable enemy and a commander needed good time management. 'The time factor is the one irretrievable, inextensible, priceless element in

¹⁰ Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway*, p. 19.

¹¹ Collins, "Elements of Command Lecture, 30 August 1971" (AWCL, Collins Papers), p. 3.

¹² Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway*, p. 23.

¹³ Quoted in Palmer, Wiley & Keast, *Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, p. 101.

war. You cannot get it back once lost or stretch it to accommodate your needs.’¹⁴ An experienced commander could anticipate events, predict his own needs and forecast the enemy’s reaction:

... the ability to meet the unexpected; be able to foresee how a problem is going to develop and then to be able to meet something that is unexpected. That takes the quality of looking ahead, of analyzing the situation. It takes brains to do this...’¹⁵

A commander’s presence at a regimental headquarters at a critical moment could change the course of a battle. He could make his own assessment of the battle and provide the necessary advice and encouragement to reassure the regiment’s headquarters team. Ridgway was known for his ‘uncanny ability for appearing at the right place at the right time.’¹⁶

Don’t take somebody else’s word for it... This calls for a constant analysis of the situation to anticipate where the critical action is likely to develop. The good commander is always where the trouble is likely to develop... That’s where he ought to be. To do this you’ve got to use your brains and you’ve got to keep looking ahead constantly.’¹⁷

A divisional commander had to develop teamwork. While the regiment and battalion commanders carried out his orders, the staff officers facilitated his plans. Ridgway recognized that he was reliant on many people and they all had a part to play: ‘Remember there are many others on your team, and be inwardly humble. Every man’s life is equally precious, although all are at the disposal of our country, and the contribution each makes in battle is of equal potential value...’¹⁸ A divisional commander relied heavily on his assistant commander to act as his eyes and ears around the division. The failure of Williams to support MacKelvie and Landrum, and how it adversely affected 90th Division’s performance, is a good example of how important teamwork was between them.

5.3 Man Management

This thesis argues that a divisional commander needed do three things to get the most out of his officers and men; firstly, *Train the Men*; secondly, *Maintain Discipline*; and thirdly, *Look After the Men*.

14 Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway*, p. 22.

15 Collins, “Elements of Command Lecture, 30 August 1971” (AWCL, Collins Papers), pp. 4-5.

16 Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway*, p. 22

17 Collins, “Elements of Command Lecture, 30 August 1971” (AWCL, Collins Papers), p. 13.

18 *Ibid*, p. 20.

In the United Kingdom, commanders had to organize a training regime to prepare their men for combat and once in Normandy incorporate lessons learned in battle:

If there was any 'secret' to Taylor's wartime success with the 101st, he would insist that no magic was required in leading such fighting men, it was attention to detail. As a divisional commander who sought to anticipate every contingency and to provide training so realistic as to condition his men for anything they might encounter.¹⁹

McNair removed commanders who under achieved during Army Ground Forces manoeuvres and he gave the following reason for removing an unsuitable commander:

... he has at best a restricted military horizon. He commands from his office. He seems incapable of training his division adequately... I am convinced that the present condition of the division reflects essentially General *****'s military ceiling, and it is too low, beyond all question. It would be utterly inexcusable to send 15,000 Americans into modern combat under such leadership.²⁰

Walker believed that the division commander's primary duty was to plan and supervise training: "the training of troops is all important and must not be subordinated to administrative duties."²¹

Commanders also had to insist on a constant high standard of discipline to instil pride and professionalism in the men. If discipline was relaxed, particularly following combat, mistakes and unnecessary casualties would follow the next time it went into action:

Soldiers never mind being disciplined, and being in a good outfit that has high standards, including discipline. They don't want to be in an outfit that's half-baked. They want to be in a first-class outfit. And discipline is one of the keys to a good outfit, no matter what the conditions are.²²

A divisional commander also had to look after the needs of the men, particularly in battle. Making decisions in combat carried a huge moral responsibility, one that a commander could not afford to forget:

19 Taylor, John M., *General Maxwell Taylor: The Sword and the Pen* (New York, NY, Bantam Dell Publishing Group, 1989), p. 72.

20 Quoted in Palmer, Wiley & Keast, *Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, p. 101.

21 Heefner, Wilson A., *Patton's Bulldog, The Life and Service of General Walton H. Walker* (Shippensburg, PA, White Mane, 2001) p. 319.

22 Collins, "Elements of Command Lecture, 30 August 1971" (AWCL, Collins Papers), p. 18.

... any commander who in the confusion or excitement of battle forgets that he is dealing with men's lives, and who callously or stupidly sacrifices them needlessly, is 'more butcher than battle leader. He is a fool and not a guiltless one.'²³

Collins believed that the human touch was one of the most important attributes of a good commander:²⁴ 'First, last and all the time... the men knew I was looking after their interests, and that's just worth its weight in gold when it comes to commanding men.'²⁵

Ridgway paid close attention to the concerns and physical needs of his troops; 'be close to the men, to keep them informed of one's thinking and plans, to see that they get the best rations, shelter, first aid, and evacuation facilities...'²⁶ He attempted to appreciate his men's concerns: 'His concern and consideration for the welfare of his troops, his courage to be up front sharing the dangers of the battlefield with his soldiers...'²⁷ Gavin (82nd Airborne assistant commander) closely monitored the men under his command, looking for subtle changes in morale: 'The key to Gavin's leadership, for as long as he wore a uniform, was his troops. He evaluated his military units by watching individual soldiers intently.'²⁸

5.4 Personal Abilities

This thesis argues that a successful divisional commander needed to have three personal abilities; firstly, *A High Personal Standard*; secondly, *Keep Physically and Mentally Fit*, and thirdly, *Read History and Biographies*.

Commanders had to set a personal example for their subordinates to follow: 'Insist on a top flight performance. You've got to be good yourself, but you make your men under you hold up to this

²³ Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway*, p. 20.

²⁴ Collins, "Elements of Command Lecture, 30 August 1971" (AWCL, Collins Papers), p. 10.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 17.

²⁶ Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway*, p. 22.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 19.

²⁸ Booth, T. Michael and Spencer, Duncan, *Paratrooper: The Life of General James M. Gavin* (New York, NY, Simon & Schuster, 1994), p. 158.

same type of performance, top notch performance. They'll respect you for it, and they'll emulate you as well.²⁹ A commander's personal example inspired subordinate officers to emulate them and they in turn would inspire their men:

Courageous leadership on the battlefield must apply not only to the local platoon or company leaders but all the way up at least to the corps commander. When a battalion is bogged down someone must start it. If the regimental commander fails to do so, then the division commander or some other officer must step in and set the example and get the battalion moving.³⁰

McNair believed that a commander's high standards would be reflected in the combat effectiveness of the division:

... I have commented that if the Division does not perform outstandingly in battle, I shall be forced to believe that there is no merit in training, or that the training of the Army Ground Forces has been all wrong... It is all one more example of how a body of troops reflects the character and spirit of its commander. The Division has a great commander, and I doubt not for a moment that no one realizes it better than the soldiers themselves.³¹

A high standard of physical fitness was important, especially on the battlefield, 'Since no one can predict when one may be thrown into battle and under what conditions, physical fitness is imperative.'³² A good commander had to keep active because 'that little extra stamina may someday pull you out of some deep holes...'³³ Exhaustion undermined a commander's confidence, increasing his chance of making mistakes: Walker 'insisted that there are more tired corps and division commanders than there were tired corps and divisions. He thought fatigue made everyone a coward and men in good physical condition do not tire.'³⁴

The junior officers and the rank and file were in their early twenties and subjected to a rigorous physical exercise regime and the rigours of combat. Divisional commanders were in their

29 Collins, "Elements of Command Lecture, 30 August 1971" (AWCL, Collins Papers), p. 12.

30 McLain Belvin, Betty, *Ray McLain and the National Guard* (Manhattan, KS, Sunflower University Press: 1994), p. 158.

31 Quoted in Palmer, Wiley & Keast, *Procurement and Training of Ground Combat Troops*, p. 102.

32 Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgeway*, pp. 21-22.

33 Quoted in Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgeway*, p. 20.

34 Heefner, *Patton's Bulldog*, p. 322.

forties but they had to be fit and alert: 'Fitness allowed a commander to keep up with younger troops, whatever the terrain or weather conditions...'³⁵

Eisenhower also recognized that age played its part in combat; 'Past experience has shown most clearly to me that the older officers cannot stand the gaff or otherwise meet the demands placed on division commanders.'³⁶ In September 1944 he was asked to check the list of twenty-eight divisional commanders still waiting to cross the Atlantic; he changed three due to their advanced age.³⁷

Commanders were introduced to military history at the Command and General Staff Schools. They were encouraged to continue their studies of military campaigns and commanders:

Read widely and wisely all history and biography possible. Soak up all the personal experiences you can of battle tested brother officers. This broadens your understanding of an art of which you can never hope to know all... Study thoughtfully the records of past successful leaders and adapt their methods to yours.³⁸

Military biographies particularly gave an insight into how commanders performed in battle:

Read-read-read [the] records of all the great ones that have been written... learn from the successes of the great ones and their failures... and how they avoided pitfalls. Then take these experiences and apply them to yourself. Each one has to apply these lessons in his own way, because each one of us is different.³⁹

Gavin 'avidly read military history and kept a notebook throughout his career.'⁴⁰ Collins also advised students to read widely on military history.⁴¹

35 Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgeway*, p. 22.

36 Eisenhower, "FWD-14722 to Marshall, 13 Sept. 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

37 Marshall, "W-32286 to Eisenhower, 18 Sept. 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

38 Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgeway*, p. 20.

39 *Ibid*, p. 26.

40 Booth and Spencer, *Paratrooper*, pp. 60-61.

41 Collins, "Elements of Command Lecture, 30 August 1971" (AWCL, Collins Papers), p. 10.

5.5 Leadership Attributes

This thesis argues that a successful divisional commander needed three personal attributes to get the best out of his subordinates. Firstly, *Determination*; secondly, *A Positive Presence*; and thirdly, *Relax under Pressure*.

A commander needed the willpower to see his plans through during combat. Collins called this determination to succeed, *drive*: ‘... you can estimate the situation all you want, you can lay excellent plans, you can issue orders... It will only come true if you make it come true, and this takes drive.’⁴² Ridgway called it character and believed it was the ‘bedrock on which the whole edifice of leadership rests.’ He believed that ‘... character stands for self discipline, loyalty, readiness to accept responsibility and willingness to admit mistakes. It stands for selflessness, modesty, humility, willingness to sacrifice when necessary and, in my opinion, for faith in God.’⁴³

Marshall asked McNair to search Army Ground Forces for commanders with drive so they could be transferred to SHAEF in March 1944: ‘I told McNair that I wasn’t so much interested in the Ground Forces appreciation of their tactical skill as I was in having sturdy, aggressive fighters who would stand up during moments of adversity.’⁴⁴ McNair was adamant that a lack of aggression had to be ‘corrected sternly whenever and wherever it crops up’.⁴⁵

Eisenhower wanted his commanders to be confident and positive in battle. He removed Brown of 28th Division because he did ‘not exhibit in times of stress that magnetism and driving energy, which are often the most important attributes of a commander.’⁴⁶ Bradley remained optimistic and emphasized good news during his tours along the front: ‘Go in with a smile on your face, helps kill the long faces they carry about.’⁴⁷ He was ‘much impressed by the spirit of his commanders’ during

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 5.

⁴³ Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgeway*, p. 20.

⁴⁴ Marshall, “Letter to Eisenhower, 20 March 1944” (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 67) .

⁴⁵ McNair, “Memorandum to Marshall, 24 May 1943” (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, POC, Box 76) .

⁴⁶ Eisenhower, “FWD-15465 to Marshall, 22 Sept. 1944” (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184) .

⁴⁷ Hanson, “War Diary, 8 June 1944” (AWCL, Hanson War Diary).

his first visit to the Normandy beachhead.⁴⁸ Pessimism and defeatism became rumours which spread around the division until they were accepted as fact. Eisenhower was well aware of this:

You've got to be confident and cheerful all the time. Otherwise someone will report that you look discouraged. Soon some one whispers it to the Prime Minister and he tells Roosevelt. The President calls in the Combined Chiefs of Staff, they listen and pretty soon ask "What's wrong?" A unit pretty much reflects the mind and attitude of its commander. 'I simply will not have any long faces about me. If I see one, out he goes.'⁴⁹

A commander also had to be assertive, especially during difficult situations:

Physical courage is a prerequisite for becoming a successful commander. A commander must never exhibit doubts or fears about a particular course of action, and he must always show a spirit of optimism to his soldiers and subordinate officers. When under fire, a commander must not show fear.⁵⁰

... [the] confidence and charisma that his personality and character projected inspired others to follow his directions.⁵¹

Above all, commanders had to have a calm, confident presence, particularly during difficult moments.

Two observers noted how Ridgway radiated presence:

General Bradley, his commanding officer in the early days of the war, believed that Ridgway was one of the most charismatic and able officers while his assistant in Normandy, General Gavin, was more precise in identifying his positive attributes; they were 'His great courage, integrity and aggressiveness in combat all made a lasting impression on everyone in that division.'

He would walk in a room and would create a presence by being in that room. He didn't have to say anything; just the way he walked, the way he looked. When his eyes would go over a room, everyone would be drawn to him, just like that. He didn't have to say a word. But when he spoke, he had a commanding voice. He was just a remarkable person - determined to get what he wanted and absolutely fearless.⁵²

Commanding a division in combat was stressful and commanders had to make accurate decisions quickly; an ability to relax '... minimized fear and maximized sound judgment under pressure.'⁵³ It was

48 *Ibid*, 8 June 1944.

49 *Ibid*, 27 July 1944.

50 Heefner, *Patton's Bulldog*, p. 321.

51 Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway*, p. 19.

52 Observation by an unknown officer serving under Ridgway; quoted in Blair, Clay, *Ridgway's Paratroopers: The American Airborne in World War II* (Doubleday and Company Inc., Garden City, New York), p. 196 and Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway*, p. 35.

53 Mitchell, *Matthew B. Ridgway*, p. 21.

important to stay calm and accept the unpredictability of combat because stress confused decision making: 'One of the things you have to learn in combat ... is that you've got to learn how to relax and to face the situation as it is, and not make a crisis out of every single thing that happens or else your health will break down.'⁵⁴ Wood's relief in November 1944 resulted from an inability to relax.⁵⁵

Marshall summarized many of these skills and qualities when he addressed the Senate Military Affairs Committee as early as April 1940:

You have to lead men in war by requiring more from the individual than he thinks he can do. You have to lead men in war by bringing them along to endure and to display qualities of fortitude that are beyond the average man's thought of what he should be expected to do. You have to inspire them when they are hungry and exhausted and desperately uncomfortable and in great danger; and only a man of positive characteristics of leadership, with the physical stamina that goes with it, can function under those conditions.⁵⁶

He wanted tough, inspirational men who could push soldiers harder than they believed possible.

Finally, Eisenhower recalled discussing leadership with Marshall and Patton: '... I asked them what special quality they would look for in a man to be given a big job... In the end the three of us agreed that what we would look for was selflessness.'⁵⁷

5.6 Final Conclusions

The Normandy Group joined a peacetime army that was more akin to the American Civil War era than World War II. Only half the Group attended USMA, West Point, while five rose from ranks. World War I presented exciting possibilities for a young officer and the majority were promoted, however, only one, Huebner, had extensive combat experience. While half the Group took part in the final six-week campaign, the rest did not see combat. The majority suffered the disappointment of having their

⁵⁴ Collins, "Elements of Command Lecture, 30 August 1971" (AWCL, Collins Papers), p. 7.

⁵⁵ Quote from Patton's letter to his wife in D'Este, *Patton: A Genius for War*, p. 663. Wood was appointed Commandant of Fort Knox's Replacement Training Centre, overseeing tank crew training.

⁵⁶ Marshall, "Testimony to Senate Military Affairs Committee, April 8, 1940" (GCMRL, Marshall Papers, Pentagon Office, Testimonies).

⁵⁷ Discussion for an article in the Infantry Journal (date not given); quoted in Belvin, *Ray McLain*, pp. 82-83.

temporary rank removed in the post-Armistice mobilization. The Group then found themselves in an army neither the public nor the politicians wanted to finance. Between the wars their profession suffered from budgetary cutbacks in the 1920s and the Depression in the 1930s. Their careers were also impeded by the 'Hump' of over-age officers left over from World War I.

Despite the United States isolationist strategy and severe financial constraints, the Army did its best to train its officers for combat between the wars. Officers were continually assessed under the bi-annual General Efficiency Rating scheme and the army school system taught promising officers how to command at higher ranks. Majors and captains were taught how to command the divisions of the future at the Command and General Staff School and the cascade method of teaching meant that the students were taught by lecturers who had recent practical experience to draw from. The U.S. Army was preparing its officers for the sort of wartime expansion experienced in World War I, even though the country would, and could, not finance a large standing army.

Following the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939, Marshall took steps to ensure that the U.S. Army would have young, superior general officers if the United States went to war. He introduced the age-in-grade bill to remove older officers, addressing the problem of the 'Hump'. Rather than retire them they were offered new senior staff posts in the expanding army to make use of their skills and smooth over the end of their career. Marshall also allowed the Regular Army to appoint temporary ranks during a National Emergency, bringing it in line with the National Guard. It meant that younger, superior general officers could be promoted on ability rather than the peacetime method of seniority.

While Marshall was changing military law to help promote superior general officers to command corps and divisions, McNair, the Inspector-General and the army commanders were carrying out independent assessments of the incumbent commanders. The overwhelming majority were unsatisfactory, usually due to age. Marshall and McNair checked General Efficiency Ratings to identify their replacements and used networking to get personal recommendations. The autumn 1941

army manoeuvres confirmed the inability of twenty of the twenty-seven participating division commanders' to command.⁵⁸ They also identified promising candidates for the future,

The U.S. Army faced a fifteen-fold expansion when it went to war in December 1941 but three factors enabled Marshall to appoint superior divisional commanders quickly. Firstly, between the wars, the Army school system had taught promising officers to command the divisions of the future. Secondly, McNair had assessed which incumbent general officers to remove and their replacements. Thirdly, Marshall had made the legal changes to make it possible to promote them quickly and without opposition.

Many changes at division command level were implemented following the United States' entry into the war in December 1941. There would be thirty changes in command in the twenty divisions destined to fight in Normandy over the next two and half years. The need for new corps commanders in the expanding army caused nine alone. Another ten commanders were removed under the age-in-grade bill and while five retired, five were promoted to new senior staff posts to make use of their experience.⁵⁹ Five New Army commanders also had to be found.

While two of the original armoured commanders were relieved, three were promoted to corps command. All five replacements were successful and three were later promoted to corps command. All six of the original infantry commanders were removed, two were promoted to staff posts and three under the age ruling and; only one was relieved due to poor performance. Of the six replacements, four took their divisions into combat and one was promoted; only one was relieved due to lack of experience. The four National Guard general officers were quickly removed. Marshall and McNair then faced political opposition when they correctly ring-fenced promotions for Regular Army general officers because they set higher standards for the National Guardsmen to aspire to. Three selections were promoted and four took their divisions to France; only two were unsatisfactory. All five of the generals appointed to command New Army divisions were successful. In sum, 27 of McNair's choices

58 Gabel, Christopher R., *The U.S. Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941* (U.S. Army Center of Military History, Washington, DC, 1991) p. 187.

59 Two armoured division, four Regular Army and four National Guard division commanders.

were promoted to corps level or took their divisions into battle; only four were unsatisfactory; an 87-percent success rate.

During the Mediterranean campaign, Marshall correctly recognized that combat experienced commanders had a lot to offer Army Ground Forces. Although he implemented a limited exchange scheme between the Mediterranean Theatre and Army Ground Forces, SHAEF was still lacking in combat experience at all levels by June 1944. Only two, Eddy and Ridgway, had commanded their division in combat while another five had combat experience at lower command levels. Even so, despite having full authority to do so, Eisenhower made the absolute minimum of changes.

Eisenhower and Bradley had both understood that a divisional commander's performance during the first few days in battle would have a huge influence over the performance of a division. If he coped with the challenge of real time combat, then so would the division. If he failed to cope with the difficulties of real time combat, then the division's performance would suffer. Both generals also recognised that a commander could fail quickly and would have to be replaced immediately.

Hodges was used wisely to support and observe new commanders during their first few days in battle. Two were removed after three days (MacKelvie and McMahon) while two were removed after two weeks (Watson and Brown). This policy extended down and divisional commanders could remove subordinate officers who failed to cope after only a couple of days combat. Hobbs of 30th Division referred to them as 'bad spots' and ordered his subordinates to replace them with officers who had coped.⁶⁰ It illustrates that it was recognized that men reacted very differently in combat and that it was important to make changes quickly. A report similar to the General Efficiency Report was compiled when a commander was transferred.

Divisional commanders were expected to spend their time visiting their regiments, to observe and give support. Optimism and an unwavering command style were important attributes. It was recognized that command styles were a personal choice. While some commanders, like Middleton, Barton and Eddy, achieved results through keeping calm, others, like Collins, Hobbs and Gerhardt were vociferous commanders. Both command styles worked, as long as they were applied

60 "30th Division telephone conversation transcripts, 7 -13 July 1944" (NARA, RG 407, Entry 427, Box 7614).

consistently during training and in combat; in good situations and bad ones. An optimistic outlook was also important to curb rumours.

A commander was expected to review his subordinates when he took over a new command; a process known in First U.S. Army as 'clearing house' or 'cleaning house'. To do so he had to do three things; he firstly he had to get feedback from field officers on their brother officers; secondly he had to assess the field officers to be replaced, know in some divisions as 'bad spots'; and thirdly he had to decide who to promote to replace them. The new commander was also expected to implement the changes quickly so that the replacement officers could start implementing their own changes at lower levels of command.

Landrum failed to 'clean house' when he took over 90th Division but the fact did not become apparent until it failed in its next battle. When McLain replaced Landrum, he immediately carried out the three steps listed above and then set about instilling self-belief into the officers and men. How he turned one of the worst performing divisions in Normandy into one of the best in Third U.S. Army in a matter of weeks is a model example of 'cleaning house'.⁶¹ His case illustrates more than anything the importance of selecting good divisional commanders in the U.S. Army in World War II.

As stated at the beginning of thesis, Bradley believed that a division's performance was a reflection of the commander's performance:

... it demonstrated how swiftly a strong commander can transfuse his own strength into a command. But even more than that it proved what we had long contended; that man for man one division was as good as another - they vary only in the skill and leadership of their commanders.⁶²

61 Eisenhower, "Cable CPA-90233 to Marshall 19 August 1944" (GCMRL, Marshall Collection, Microfilm 184).

62 Bradley, Omar N., *A Soldier's Story* (New York, NY, Holt, Rinehart Winston, 1951) p. 296

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