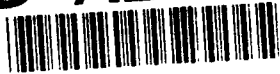


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GENERAL WALTER KRUEGER
A CASE STUDY IN OPERATIONAL COMMAND
A Monograph

by
Major John H. McDonald, Jr.
Field Artillery

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School of Advanced Military Studies
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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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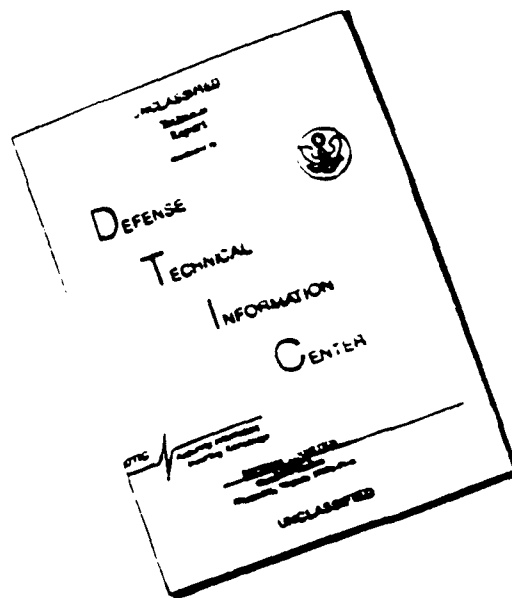
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1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE 5 May 1989	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Monograph
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4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE General Walter Krueger: A Case Study in Operational Command (U)	5. FUNDING NUMBERS
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6. AUTHOR(S) Major John H. McDonald, Jr.	
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7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES ATTN: ATZL-SWV FORT LEAVENWORTH, KS 66027-6900 Com (913) 684-3437 AV 552-3437	8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
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9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)	10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER
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11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

12a. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release: distribution is unlimited.	12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE
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13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 words) SEE ATTACHED
--

14. SUBJECT TERMS OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS MILITARY COMMANDERS MILITARY DOCTRINE MILITARY OPERATIONS LEADERSHIP LEADERSHIP TRAINING	15. NUMBER OF PAGES 43
	16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UNLIMITED
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ABSTRACT

GENERAL WALTER KRUEGER: A CASE STUDY IN OPERATIONAL COMMAND by MAJ John H. McDonald Jr., USA, 43 pages.

During World War II, American army officers who had spent their entire careers commanding at regimental level and below were suddenly called upon to lead armies and army groups against the foe in both Europe and the Pacific. Especially in the Pacific, this meant commanding large forces composed of air, land and sea elements. Although not without their share of problems these leaders were up to the challenge. How were they able to make the remarkable transition from commanding a brigade of 3000 soldiers to a field army of over 300,000 in a few brief years? What assignments, education, or training prepared them to fight in a joint and/or combined environment? What qualities and attributes made them effective operational commanders?

The army officer of today faces much the same situation as his predecessor of the interwar period. Although there has been a flurry of interest in the operational level of war since 1982, the focus of the officer corps remains firmly fixed upon the tactical level. The vast bulk of an officer's career is spent in assignments at division and below. If so called upon, will the officer of today's Army be able to make the transition from tactical to operational command as effectively as his counterpart of the Second World War? What qualities and attributes should the Army look for in choosing its operational commanders? How should we educate, train, and assign these officers to prepare them for this task?

This paper addresses these questions by examining the career of one successful American practitioner of the operational art--General Walter Krueger, commander of the Sixth Army and ALAMO Force during World War II. After examining the writings of classical military theorists such as Clausewitz, Jomini, Fuller, Liddell-Hart, and others, as well as the current U.S. Army doctrine on leadership and command at senior levels, the author chronicles General Krueger's education, training and early assignments. He compares the qualities and attributes demonstrated by Krueger to those outlined in current U.S. Army doctrine and concludes that, while the doctrine is correct in identifying those characteristics desired in an operational commander, the army needs to do more to encourage its officers to move out of their tactical "comfort" zone and give more serious and systematic study to the operational level of war.

GENERAL WALTER KRUEGER
A Case Study in Operational Command

by

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Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

5 May 1989



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GENERAL WALTER KRUEGER:
A CASE STUDY IN OPERATIONAL COMMAND

Since the publication of the 1982 edition of FM 100-5, Operations, the U.S. Army has divided warfare into three levels--strategic, operational and tactical. Tactics are defined as "the specific techniques small units use to win battles and engagements. . . ." ¹ Most U.S. Army officers spend the vast majority of their careers serving in tactical units and perfecting these "specific techniques." They feel "comfortable" commanding at the tactical level, especially battalion and below. The U.S. Army has taken great pride in its tactical acumen. Even in discussing the strategic failure in Vietnam, many officers are quick to point out that the Army was never defeated in a single battle or engagement during that war.

Likewise, the Army has devoted a significant amount of resources to educating and training officers in the development of military strategy. Each year approximately 200 colonels and lieutenant colonels are selected to attend the Army War College or an equivalent senior service institution. Much of their curriculum is focused upon the development of military strategy--the use of "the armed forces of a nation to secure the objectives of national policy by applying force or the threat of force." ² Additionally, the Army Education Requirements Board authorizes a selected number of staff officers to attend advanced civil schooling in disciplines such as political science and international relations prior to their assignment to as staff officers in such places as the Strategy, Plans, and Policy Directorate of the

¹ Field Manual 100-5, Operations (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 20 August 1982), p. 2-3.

² Ibid.

Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations (DCSOPS). Like the tactical level of war, the strategic level has long been an accepted aspect of American military doctrine.

The operational level of war was introduced into U.S. Army doctrine in 1982 to bridge the gap between strategy and tactics:

The operational level of war uses available military resources to attain strategic goals within a theater of war. Most simply, it is the theory of larger unit operations. It also involves planning and conducting campaigns. Campaigns are sustained operations to defeat an enemy force in a specified space and time with simultaneous and sequential battles. The disposition of forces, selection of objectives, and actions taken to weaken or outmaneuver the enemy all set the terms of the next battle and exploit tactical gains. They are all part of the operational level of war.³

Although the operational level of war is relatively new to U.S. Army doctrine, the concept itself dates back at least to the 19th century and Napoleon. Both Clausewitz and Jomini recognized a distinct difference between the Emperor's actions during battle as compared to those before and after the main action. The two believed that "the designing of campaigns, the concentration of large forces prior to battle and the techniques of exploiting tactical success differed enough from the conduct of battles to merit separate consideration."⁴ The concept of operational art--the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals in a theater of war or theater of operations--was studied and developed by the Germans and Russians during the period between the world wars. European theorists such as Svechin, Tukhachevsky, Seeckt, and Guderian provided the doctrinal

³ Ibid.

⁴ L.D. Holder, "Catching Up With Operational Art" (Unpublished paper, School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1986)

framework for the integration of operational art into their national military doctrines. In the United States, the study of large-unit operations at the staff colleges in Newport and Leavenworth during the 1920's and 30's allowed the future leaders of World War II to think in terms of theaters of war, strategic objectives, lines and bases of operations, and the movement and employment of corps and armies at a time when the largest unit in the peacetime force was a regiment.

The difference between commanding a battalion of 600 men and employing a field army of almost 300,000 is obvious, but it is easy to forget the professional and intellectual qualities that the commander must possess in order to make this adjustment. Today, as on the eve of World War II, the operational level of war presents a challenge to officers who have spent their entire careers focusing on the tactical level of war. What are the qualities and attributes necessary to command at the operational level of war? How can the American officer prepare himself to make the transition from thinking and fighting at the tactical level to waging war at the operational level? What assignments, education, or training will best prepare him to command large units in a joint and/or combined environment?

In attempting to find the answers to these questions, it is often helpful to look to the past. This case study will briefly survey a number of classical military theorists and practitioners for their views on the qualities and attributes necessary for operational command as well as the U.S. Army's current views as expressed in doctrinal manuals. The study will focus upon one successful practitioner of the operational art--General Walter Krueger, Commanding General of the Sixth Army and ALAMO Force during World War II. The emphasis will not be upon the details of Krueger's campaigns in the

Southwest Pacific, but upon his apprenticeship to high command--his assignments, education and training that allowed him to successfully make the transition from commanding a 3000-man brigade in 1939 to leading the 300,000-man Third Army two years later. The qualities and attributes that Krueger demonstrated will be compared to those we expect of our senior-level leaders today. The case study will examine how Krueger developed these attributes and see if there are any applicable lessons for the operational commanders of tomorrow.

Classical and Contemporary Perspectives on Operational Command

A number of classical military theorists and practitioners have written about the qualities and attributes necessary to command at the operational level of war. The great Prussian philosopher of war, Carl von Clausewitz, defined the "essence of military genius" as "all those gifts of mind and temperament that in combination bear on military activity."⁵ While no single quality is adequate in itself, he does provide us with a prioritized list of these requisite attributes. Since "war is the realm of danger, therefore, courage is the soldier's first requirement."⁶ Clausewitz writes of two types: first, courage in the face of personal danger and the courage to accept personal responsibility. Second, he focuses in on the "powers of intellect":

War is the realm of uncertainty; three quarters of the factors on which action in war is based are wrapped in a fog of greater or lesser uncertainty. A sensitive and discriminating judgement is called for; a skilled intelligence to scent out the truth. Average intelligence may recognize the truth occasionally, and exceptional courage may now and then retrieve a blunder; but usually intellec-

⁵ Carl von Clausewitz, On War, ed and trans by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1976) p 100

⁶ Ibid p 101

tual inadequacy will be shown up by indifferent achievement. . . If the mind is to emerge unscathed from this relentless struggle with the unforeseen, two qualities are indispensable: first an intellect that even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth; and second, the courage to follow this faint light wherever it may lead. The first of these qualities is described by the French term, coup d'oeil; the second is determination.⁷

Coup d'oeil refers to the "quick recognition of a truth that the mind would ordinarily miss or would perceive only after long study and reflection."⁸ Determination, on the other hand, "proceeds from an special type of mind, from a strong rather than a brilliant one."⁹ Third, Clausewitz places presence of mind, i.e. the "speed and immediacy of the help provided by the intellect" in dealing with the unexpected.¹⁰ Next, he mentions strength of will--energy, firmness, staunchness, emotional balance, and strength of character. He places particular emphasis upon emotional balance and strength of character. The final attribute mentioned by Clausewitz is imagination:

Things are perceived, of course, partly by the naked eye and partly by the mind, which fills the gaps with guesswork based on learning and experience, and thus constructs a whole out of the fragments that the eye can see; but if the whole is to be vividly present to the mind, imprinted like a picture, like a map, upon the brain, without fading or blurring in detail, it can only be achieved by the mental gift that we call imagination.¹¹

Clausewitz concludes his chapter, "On Military Genius," by stating:

If we then ask what sort of mind is likeliest to display the

⁷ Ibid., pp. 101-102.

⁸ Ibid., p. 102.

⁹ Ibid., p. 103.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 104.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 109.

qualities of military genius, experience and observation will both tell us that it is the inquiring rather than the creative mind, the comprehensive rather than the specialized approach, the calm rather than the excitable head to which in war we would choose to entrust the fate of our brothers and children, and the safety and honor of our country.¹²

Clausewitz' Swiss contemporary, Baron de Jomini, also provides us with a list of the qualities needed by an operational commander. His top choice is remarkably similar to the Prussian: "The most essential qualities for a general will always be as follow:--First, A high moral courage, capable of great resolutions; Secondly, A physical courage which takes no account of danger."¹³ Like Clausewitz, Jomini recognizes the need for the commander to have the ability to "see the truth" and the moral courage to choose the proper course of action and follow through to its completion. "Scientific or military acquirements are secondary" to these two forms of courage, though not unimportant: "It is not necessary that he should be a man of vast erudition. His knowledge may be limited, but it should be thorough, and he should be perfectly grounded in the principles at the base of the art of war."¹⁴ Jomini ranks qualities of personal character as next in importance. In particular, he points out the need for a senior commander to surround himself with the best possible staff and subordinate commanders, without regard for questions of petty jealousies and shared glory. He then raises an interesting question: "... whether it is preferable to assign to the command a general of long experience in service with troops, or an officer of the staff, having generally but little experience in the management of troops." His

¹² Ibid p 112.

¹³ Baron de Jomini, The Art of War, trans by G H Mendell and W P Craighill (Philadelphia: J B Lippincott & Co. 1862 Westport CT: Greenwood Press 1971) p 57

¹⁴ Ibid pp 55-56

conclusion was:

1. A general, selected from the general staff, engineers, or artillery, who has commanded a division or a corps d'armee, will, with equal chances, be superior to one who is familiar with the service of but one arm or special corps.

2. A general from the line, who has made a study of the science of war, will be equally fitted for the command.

3. That the character of the man is above all other requisites in a commander-in-chief.

Finally, He will be a good general in whom are found united the requisite personal characteristics and a thorough knowledge of the principles of the art of war.¹⁵

The subject of both Clausewitz' and Jomini's study, Napoleon, also focused upon the dual requisite attributes of courage and intellect. He wrote: "It is exception and difficult to find in one man all the qualities necessary for a great general. What is most desirable, and which instantly sets a man apart, is that his intelligence or talent are balance by his character or courage."¹⁶ He placed his premium upon presence of mind: "The first qualification in a general is a cool head--that is, a head which receives accurate impressions, and estimates things and objects at their real value. He must not allow himself to be elated by good news, or depressed by bad."¹⁷ Napoleon also place strong emphasis upon tactical and technical competence. As Martin van Creveld notes, "A complete master of his profession, Napoleon--in his own words--could personally do everything connected with war."¹⁸ Napoleon coupled this technical expertise with a supreme self-confidence

¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 56-57.

¹⁶ Quoted in Robert D. Heintz Jr., Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1966), p. 127.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 131.

¹⁸ Martin Van Creveld Command in War (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 63.

and an imperturbability under stress: "Few people can form an idea of the extraordinary moral force that is required in order to launch one of those battles that decide the fate of armies, countries and thrones."¹⁹ But Van

Crevelde cited another reason for Napoleon's success:

Intellectually, Napoleon's most distinctive quality may well have been his vivid imagination, which not only endows many of his letters with high literary quality but also enabled him to envisage things as they would be after this or that series of moves were carried out. To this he joined a formidable capacity for calculation that in at least one documented case, enabled him to accurately predict the location of a decisive battle several weeks before it took place. "Napoleon always thinks faster than anybody else" was one contemporary comment; il sait tout, il fait tout, il peut tout was another.²⁰

Van Crevelde also cites the importance of Napoleon's charismatic personality in dealing with subordinates as being essential to his success as an operational commander: "A good understanding of the French soldier; a knack for resounding phrases; an encyclopedic memory for faces, often assisted by careful but well-concealed homework; and a talent for stage management--all these are indispensable for understanding why so many followed him for so long."²¹

Three British soldier-writers of the 20th century also emphasized this need for the operational commander to have a thorough knowledge of human nature to be successful in war. J.F.C. Fuller considered it more important than technical expertise:

... in war it is not so much the knowledge contained in ... books and ... manuscripts which is so important, it is insight into the personality of their writers including oneself. "Know thyself" are two words of wisdom. . . For the true general is the creator

¹⁹Ibid. The quote is by Napoleon.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., p. 64.

quite as much as the applier of knowledge. What kind of knowledge? Psychological rather than operational.²²

B.H. Liddell-Hart felt that "A commander should have a profound understanding of human nature, the knack of smoothing out troubles, the power of winning affection while communicating energy."²³ Archibald Wavell used Napoleon as an example of why an understanding of human nature is "indispensable to the high commander":

[The general] should have a genuine interest in, and a real knowledge of, humanity, the raw material of his trade. . . . If you can discover how a young unknown man inspired a ragged, mutinous, half-starved army and made it fight, how he gave it the energy and momentum to march and fight as it did, how he dominated and controlled generals older and more experienced than himself, then you will have learnt something. Napoleon did not gain the position he did so much by a study of rules and strategy as by a profound knowledge of human nature in war.²⁴

Despite the writings of these military theorists and others, the United States Army was slow to recognize the special qualities and attributes needed to command at the operational level. As late as 1985, Major Mitchell M. Zais was able to write:

. . . there is no doctrinal base which can serve to guide the Army in the selection or development of these senior leaders. There is not even an agreed upon doctrine which distinguishes the requirements for leadership at senior levels of command from the requirements for leadership at lower organizational levels. In fact, it is only within the last few years that the Army has recognized, even informally, that requirements for leadership skills and abilities change with organizational level. And while virtual libraries of material have been written on the topic of leadership, nearly all this literature tends to assume that the qualities and at-

²² Quoted in Mitchell M. Zais, "Generalship and the Art of Senior Command: Historical and Scientific Perspectives" (Unpublished thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 1985), p. 79.

²³ Ibid. p. 80.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 79.

tributes which are required for success are the same irrespective of position or organizational level. Thus, one is left to presume that the most successful battalion or brigade commanders will necessarily perform most effectively at higher levels of command such as Corps or Army.²⁵

In 1987, the Army did publish a manual that provided doctrinal guidance on the attributes and characteristics required for operational command--Field Manual 22-103, Leadership and Command at Senior Levels.

In FM 22-103, the Army clearly recognizes that leadership at the operational level requires more complex, highly developed skills and attributes than are needed to command at the tactical level. The authors of the manual define this leadership as "the art of direct and indirect influence and the skill of creating the conditions for sustained organizational success to achieve the desired result."²⁶ Senior leaders have to continue to use the tactical leadership skills that are so critical to the leaders of small tactical units but they also have to develop "an understanding of organizational structure and climate needed to effect indirect leadership." They have to learn to devote more attention to forecasting, planning, and shaping future events. The ability to conceptualize events and formulate appropriate tactical action to deal with future requirements becomes critical: "In the area of leadership and command at senior levels is the art of balancing competing demands according to priorities activated by a clearly defined vision, implemented by a clearly communicated intent and enforced by the toughness to see matters through."²⁷

The operational commander must have several special characteristics to

²⁵ Ibid. p. 3

²⁶ Field Manual 22-103, Leadership and Command at Senior Levels (Washington,

1987), Department of the Army, 21 June 1987, p. 3

be successful. First, he must have the ability to rapidly assess the situation and form his vision of the operation. Second, he must have a high tolerance for ambiguity and uncertainty. This is due not only to the "free will" exercised by the opposing commander, but also due to the operational commander's need to make decisions now to effect events far in the future. Third, he must be a quick learner, flexible enough to adapt to situations and circumstances that are different than he expects.

According to the manual, the operational commander must possess certain attributes and perspectives and follow several leadership imperatives. "Attributes establish what leaders are. Perspectives govern what they need to know. Imperatives dictate what they do to execute their tactical and operational responsibilities."²⁸ There are three attributes that the successful operational commander must demonstrate. First, he must be the standard bearer who establishes the ethical environment within his command. In this aspect, what he does will set the tone far more than anything he says or writes. Second, he is the developer of his staff and subordinate commanders through his teaching, training, and coaching. He must infuse in them the ability and willingness to operate without his direct supervision yet within the context of his intent. Third, he is the integrator responsible for focusing the activities of all of his subordinates towards the accomplishment of the mission.

The operational commander must also possess well-developed historical, operational, and organizational perspectives. The study of military history provides the commander with a core of background knowledge which allows him to form and reform his vision of the battlefield beyond the realm of his own combat experience. "A meaningful operational perspective develops

²⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

from the current knowledge of doctrine, constant study of the art of war, and total familiarity with the capabilities of [the] men and machines" in his command.²⁹ An organizational perspective allows the commander to match his vision to the capabilities of his unit.

The ability to instill purpose, direction, and motivation in subordinates is as imperative for the operational commander as it is for the tactical commander. "Establishing purpose provides the organization with a reason to withstand the stress of continuous operations."³⁰ Effective communication of his vision allows the senior leader to focus the efforts of his command in the proper direction to insure accomplishment of the mission. "Motivating units and soldiers ensures that the organization is capable of generating the required moral force demanded by the values of our society. It is not enough that subordinates know why and what is to be done. They also need the will to do the utmost as teams to achieve the desired goals under the most difficult circumstances."³¹

The doctrine writers note that success at the operational level is also dependent upon the professional skills of the commander. They point out that:

Professional skills build on the basic leadership tenets of knowing yourself, knowing your job, and knowing your unit. At the same time, senior leader and commander skills are different. First, they provide the capability to generate the action required to succeed in the complex technological and organizational world where senior leaders operate. Second, they are the yardstick by which senior professionals are judged by their soldiers, other professionals, and even their enemies. Third, professional skills provide the means for clear expression of purpose and direction to subordinates so that operations can be executed effectively and

²⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 13.

³¹ Ibid., p. 14.

the intent understood.³²

Professional skills fall into three general categories: conceptual, competency and communications. Well-developed conceptual skills allow the commander to think and act in terms of the total system with an understanding of the constraints time places upon him. Commanders possessing these skills are decisive and have common sense, vision, judgement, and imagination. These skills are decision making, forecasting into the future, creativity, and intuition.³³ Competency skills instill confidence in the commander by his subordinates, but more importantly, they provide the commander with a high degree of self-confidence. Senior leaders with these skills are resourceful and have energy, self-discipline, balance, and expertise. In addition to basic tactical and technical proficiency, competency skills include perspective, endurance, risk taking, coordination, and assessment.³⁴ Good communications skills allow the operational commander to minimize the impact of fog and friction in war. They enhance public support, organizational performance, morale, teamwork, and unity. Commanders with these skills are usually compassionate, trusting, inspirational and thoughtful. These skills are interpersonal listening, language teaching, and persuasion.³⁵

Finally, our new doctrine requires that the operational commander be a master of the four processes of command, control, leadership, and management. Command is defined as the primary means whereby the commander's battlefield vision is imparted to the organization. In contrast,

³² Ibid., p. 27.

³³ Ibid., p. 28.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 31-32.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

control is used to limit and provide structure. Its effect is to serve as a compensating, correcting device for command. Leadership deals with the interpersonal relationships between the commander and his subordinates while management is the acquiring, directing, integrating and allocating of resources to accomplish the mission.³⁶

Many of the qualities and attributes of operational command deemed essential by the classical theorists are found in FM 22-103. A shortcoming of the manual is its failure to offer any rank-ordering of these attributes as well as their all-encompassing nature. It offers only vague general guidance on how the U.S. Army officer should prepare himself for operational command. Yet in spite of these faults, it is a major step in the right direction towards providing the Army with a framework to evaluate its senior leaders for selection to command at the operational level of war.

General Walter Krueger--The Case Study

This case study focuses upon one successful American practitioner of the operational art, General Walter Krueger, Commanding General of Sixth Army and ALAMO Force during World War II. Krueger served as General of the Army Douglas MacArthur's principal subordinate commander in the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) from 1943-45. He planned and executed the campaigns that achieved the strategic objectives of the theater commander, General MacArthur. The actual conduct of these campaigns is beyond the scope of this paper; instead, the focus will be upon Krueger's early career. By examining his early assignments, education and training, some insight

³⁶ Ibid. pp. 4-45

may be gained into how Krueger was able to improve upon his natural abilities and emerge as one of the outstanding operational commanders of the Second World War.

Walter Krueger was born in Prussia on 26 January 1881. His father, a captain in the Prussian Army during the Franco-Prussian War, died when Krueger was four and in 1889, the family moved to the United States. His mother married a German-born Lutheran minister, Emil Carl Schmidt, and the family moved to Indiana where Krueger attended the local schools. His formal education was supplemented by his mother and stepfather. From his "brilliant but inexorable and very severe" stepfather, Krueger received a classical liberal arts education. Reverend Schmidt spent long hours intensively tutoring young Krueger in mathematics, the classics, and languages. In addition to his native German, Krueger became fluent in English, French, and Spanish. This knack for languages played a key role in Krueger's rise to prominence in his early military career. While there are strong indications that his family life was not especially warm and close, Krueger did develop a penchant for discipline, hard work, and exactness that he retained throughout his career.³⁷

Krueger's life changed dramatically when he left Indiana to attend the Cincinnati Technical School in Ohio in preparation for attending engineering school. After watching the 6th Infantry march through the streets of the city on its way to Cuba in 1898, he and several of his classmates were caught up by the wave of patriotism that swept the country. Enlisting in the 2nd U.S. Volunteer Infantry, he fought in Cuba and rapidly rose to the rank of sergeant before being discharged in February of the following year. Instead

³⁷ Undated, unsigned manuscript entitled "General Walter Krueger" believed to be prepared by an aide shortly after Krueger's retirement in 1946. Papers of General Walter Krueger, United States Military Academy Library, West Point, New York. Hereafter, Krueger Papers

of returning home, he enlisted in the 12th U.S. Regular Infantry and went to the Philippines. His demonstrated bravery, penchant for hard work, and broad education helped Krueger rise to the rank of sergeant in less than two years, and Major General Arthur MacArthur awarded him a battlefield commission as a second lieutenant of infantry in 1901. Years later, when Krueger enjoyed a reputation as a "soldier's general" who looked after the welfare of his troops, he would often remark that he could empathize with his troops because he had been one himself. Second Lieutenant Krueger served as a company commander and in a variety of minor staff positions prior to returning to the United States in 1904. During his tour in the Philippines, he became intimately familiar with the problems of combat in the rugged terrain of Luzon. He would build upon that base of practical knowledge during a subsequent tour in the islands.

The young lieutenant who had dropped out of school in 1898 began his formal military education when he reported to Fort Leavenworth in 1905. A year later he was named Distinguished Graduate of the Infantry and Cavalry School and was selected to attend the Army Staff College. He graduated from the Staff College in 1907, the same year he published the first of his numerous translations of foreign military writings--Friederich Immanuel's The Regimental War Game. While there is no existing record of Krueger's performance at the Staff College, he must have impressed some of the faculty because he was selected to be an instructor upon his return from the Philippines in 1909.

Upon graduation, Krueger commanded his second infantry company at Fort Crook, Nebraska before returning to the Philippines in 1908. He was detailed to conduct the first topographical survey of the Central Valley of

Luzon. Almost forty years later, he would lead his Sixth Army against Field Marshal Yamashita's forces over this exact region. After a subsequent intelligence assignment in Manila, Krueger returned to the United States in late 1909.³⁸

For the next three years, Lieutenant Krueger served as an instructor at the Army Staff College at Fort Leavenworth. Assigned to the Department of Languages, he wrote several course texts and translated the works of several German authors. The most important of these was his 1911 translation of Wilhelm Balck's Tactics which garnered a fair amount of acclaim for both the author and Krueger.³⁹ The title is somewhat misleading since Balck's scope covered not only "minor tactics," but also "grand tactics," or operations. During the summer months when classes were not in session, Krueger and his fellow instructors were detailed as umpires for the maneuvers of Regular Army and National Guard units at training areas throughout the country. These maneuvers provided an opportunity to see the problems faced by reserve units in preparing for war. After commanding his third infantry company for a two-year period at Madison Barracks, New York, Krueger found himself working with these "citizen soldiers" on a daily basis.

With Europe already at war in the fall of 1914, First Lieutenant Krueger reported for duty as an advisor to the Pennsylvania National Guard. Like his contemporary George C. Marshall who later served in a similar position with

³⁸ These three paragraphs were compiled from notes, orders, and official correspondence found in Boxes 1 and 2, Krueger Papers.

³⁹ The book attracted the attention of the influential congressman, William Taft, and the Chief of Staff of the Army, Major General Leonard Wood, and was widely read throughout the officer corps. Copies of Krueger's correspondence with Taft and Wood are in Box 2, Krueger Papers. General George S. Patton's copy of Tactics was shown to the author by Colonel Roger Nye, chairman of the Friends of the West Point Library. It was marked with the letter "P" in the margin, thus was Patton's personal and private

the Illinois National Guard, Krueger was less than elated about this assignment. He accepted it without complaint, however, and soon developed a reputation with the Guardsmen as a tough but helpful advisor. Their respect for Krueger became evident when the 10th Pennsylvania Infantry was alerted to move to the Mexican Border in the summer of 1916. Deeming the regiment's service in commanding a unit of the 10th Pennsylvania of Pennsylvania commissioned Krueger as a lieutenant colonel in the National Guard. Krueger's assignment was to command the regiment's deployment to the border, and although the unit did not see combat, he learned valuable lessons about training and discipline. When the United States entered the war in 1917, Krueger resigned his National Guard commission, reverted to the Regular Army rank of captain, and was assigned as the assistant chief of staff of a division.

His assignment was to train the newly drafted soldiers of the division, the 10th Division, which was composed of men from all over the country. The strength of singly more than 100,000 in 1916 grew to 2.4 million by the end of 1918. The relative handful of Leavenworth-trained officers were in great demand and often were assigned to the most important units. Krueger's assignment in rapid succession. During this period, Krueger served as a division commander, a regimental commander, and a brigade commander. He was an instructor at the American Expeditionary Force General Staff College at Langres, France, and as the G-3 and, later, chief of staff of the occupation corps. During these two years, he went from being a newly-promoted

⁴⁰History of the 10th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry: Its Forebearers and Successors in the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II and the Korean War, 1915. No author or publication date is listed, but it appears to have been

captain with command experience at the company level only, to the rank of colonel with duties as the G-3 and chief of staff of an army corps. Something in his background and experience allowed him to make such a transition and still perform well enough to be awarded the Distinguished Service Medal. By June 1920, the peacetime reduction of the Army caught up with Colonel Krueger. He reverted to his permanent rank of captain, returned to the United States, and was selected to attend the Army War College in Washington, D.C.⁴¹

The 1920's saw Krueger develop a solid grounding in operational art. He spent the next five years in Washington as a student, an instructor, and a General Staff officer. His performance as a student at the War College resulted in his retention as a member of the faculty upon graduation. His strong interest in American and European military history and his familiarity with the works of such noted military writers as Clausewitz, Jomini, Delbruck, Moltke, Grant, and Mahan made him a perfect choice to teach about the German operational art of war and the German military system.⁴²

In August 1922, Krueger was promoted (again) to lieutenant colonel and ordered to duty with the War Department General Staff, serving in the War Plans Division and as an Army member of the Joint Army and Navy Planning Committee, a working committee which prepared staff studies for the senior Joint Army and Navy Board. This brought Krueger into contact with the Navy for the first time in his career. Although the two services had no joint

⁴¹ Biographical sketch, Generals of the Army, October 1953, p. 10. Krueger Papers.

⁴² Lectures presented by Krueger included "Evolution of the German War Plan of 1914" (presented 8 November 1921), "The Basic War Plan" (12 January 1922), "Observations and Reflections: The Situation in Germany" (25 September 1922), and "The Mountain Strategy of the German Empire" (October 1922). Krueger Papers, Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

doctrine and were conducting very few joint exercises, he was fortunate to observe several of these when Army Chief of Staff General John J. Pershing selected him as Assistant to the Chief Umpires for the Grand Joint Army and Navy exercises during the next three years. This duty provided many insights and valuable experience in planning and conducting joint operations.

Krueger's relationship with the Navy continued to develop when he was selected to attend the Naval War College in 1925. While a student at Newport, Krueger submitted a thesis entitled "Command," in which he elaborated at some length upon his philosophy of leadership. Drawing heavily upon his wide readings in military history, he emphasized that it is "the human element that constitutes the basic factor in the defense of a nation, . . . and that is why no leader has ever been successful unless he understood human nature."⁴³ He strongly believed that good commanders are born not made, but that all commanders need to strive continually to make themselves the best they could possibly be.

The most profitable thing to do, therefore, is to discover what the qualities are that have made commanders succeed and to endeavor to emulate them. While this study and emulation will not in itself produce successful commanders, the clear conception gained of the qualities required for command, especially high command, that is the command of armies and fleets, will at least make us better followers than we would otherwise be. Moreover, it will enable each of us to discover and mitigate bad qualities, and cultivate and develop those that will make us better commanders in peace and in future war. [emphasis added]⁴⁴

In Krueger's estimation, "character" was the most important quality of any commander. Under the heading of character he included such attributes as "iron will-power, moral courage, fortitude, resourcefulness, energy,

⁴³ Walter Krueger, "Command" (Unpublished thesis, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 1925), p. 2. (Emphasis added.)

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

patience, tenacity, simplicity, enthusiasm, and magnetism." But above all these he listed "boldness coupled with caution": "Boldness is the noblest virtue of a commander, but the higher his position, the more necessary it is that this boldness be paired with a superior mentality."⁴⁵

Krueger emphasized the importance of the commander making his will or intent explicitly clear to his staff and subordinate commanders. He noted that until comparatively recent times, the size, armament, and mobility of armies allowed commanders to exercise personal control over all functions of their command. The passage of time had changed that situation and now high command had to be exercised through a staff and subordinate commanders. The staff must become the "brain cells" of the commander. They are controlled by and subject to his will:

In war. . . so much depends upon chance and the intelligent understanding of the will of the COMMAND by subordinate commanders, especially by those at a distance and perhaps faced by a situation that the COMMAND had not foreseen, that organization and training, i.e., the acquisition of cohesion through practice, do not suffice. Some thing more must be provided to make assurance of success doubly sure. This something more is INDOCTRINATION, which is the keystone of all military action and therefore the basis of all training as well.⁴⁶

This "indoctrination" is firmly based in doctrine. The doctrine provides uniformity of understanding and a common language. The possession of such common language assures harmony of effort and gives COMMAND confidence that subordinate commanders will understand the purpose of the COMMAND and will follow such course of reasoning and will take such action as . . . necessary to accomplish the aims of the COMMAND."⁴⁷ Here, in 1925,

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 16.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 5.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Krueger clearly enunciated a concept--the commander's intent--that is critical to operational command and was "re-discovered" by U.S. Army doctrine writers in 1986.⁴⁸

Krueger also addressed the issue of unity of command and joint operations. He defined "unity of command" as "the right or power of the COMMAND to control all the forces that can and must be made available for the purpose of attaining... success." He cited a number of historical examples where the absence of unity of command was "the cause of more defeats and disasters than any other contributing factor" and warned that "it can not be cast aside without wantonly courting disaster." Krueger then asked:

If unity of command is of such vital importance, why then, it may well be asked, is it not applied to the army and navy of each country? The answer is simple. Armies and fleets do not, as a rule, operate together, their respective spheres of activity being usually far removed from each other. When armies and fleets do operate together, however, unity of command or, at the very least, unity of strategic direction should undoubtedly be provided. [emphasis added]⁴⁹

This fascinating student thesis provides some insight into the careful study and thoughtful reflection given by Krueger to the strategic and operational aspects of his profession.

After a brief tour as the second-in-command of the 22nd Infantry, Krueger embarked upon a curious adventure. The Air Corps Act of 1926 called for the expansion and modernization of the air arm. Anxious to have

⁴⁸ Department of the Army, Command and General Staff College Student Text 100-9 The Command Estimate (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, July 1986), p. 3-2. See also Major Russell W. Glenn, "The Commander's Intent, Keep It Short"; Major Edward J. Filiberti, "Command Control, and the Commander's Intent"; and Major David A. Fastabend, "The Application of Commander's Intent" McDowell Review, August 1987.

⁴⁹ Krueger, Command, pp. 10-11.

his key command and staff positions filled by innovative and proven leaders, the Chief of the Air Corps asked for Krueger. Since all higher-level commands were to be filled by rated aviators only, the 45-year old Krueger reported to flight school. A case of neuritis in his right arm washed him out of the program and he returned to the infantry. The following summer he returned to Newport for a four-year assignment to the faculty at the Naval War College. This assignment was one of his most enjoyable and he was able to further his study of warfare at the operational level. He continued to teach military history and lectured on a variety of subjects from "Joint Army and Navy Operations" to "The Art of Command." During this tour he had the opportunity to meet many of the senior naval officers whom he later served with in the Southwest Pacific, and described the assignment as "... both interesting and, I think, profitable..."⁵⁰

The 1930s saw Krueger advance through a myriad of staff and command assignments, from regiment to field army. He clearly relished his tour as commander of the 6th Infantry. Determined to make it the finest regiment in the Army, he quickly established a reputation as a spit-and-polish soldier who set high standards for himself and expected others to do likewise. "An excellent instructor and a hard taskmaster," his inspections were legendary. Kitchens were expected to be spotless, correspondence perfect, but most of all, training realistic. His troops soon learned that nothing escaped the Old Man's eye. In 1933, the regiment became involved in supervising the training for the Civilian Conservation Program. Although Colonel Krueger resented this interference in the training of his regiment, it afforded him the

⁵⁰ Lectures presented at the Naval War College are found in the Krueger Papers. Letter from Krueger to Earl W. English, 28 September 1928, Folder 10, Box 9, English Papers, RG 226, National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland.

opportunity to become familiar with the problems encountered in disciplining and training large numbers of young men in a short period of time. This would prove to be of great value to him in the coming years.⁵¹

In July 1934, Colonel Krueger returned to Washington to become the Executive Officer of the War Plans Division (WPD) of the General Staff. For two years he served as the Senior Army member of the Joint Army and Navy Planning Committee. In May 1936, he was promoted to brigadier general and appointed as the Chief, War Plans Division. These four years were busy and critical years for the division as the clouds of war began to gather over Europe and the Far East. They provided Krueger with a perspective on the strategic level of war.

One of the first accomplishments of WPD under Krueger was the development of the Protective Mobilization Plan (PMP) concept. He anticipated that in all major war situations the Army would have one requirement in common: to provide "covering forces under the protection of which we can develop our war effort." The PMP provided for the "mobilization of a moderate but balanced force for the protection of the Continental United States, including Hawaii and Panama." This force included the Regular Army and the National Guard. Upon completion of the PMP, additional forces would be created as needed under an Augmentation Plan. Krueger also instituted separate Strategical Plans. Under the previous system, the mobilization plan integrated the process of mobilization with that of strategic concentration. Because of the multitude of possible war situations, this made the plan inflexible and unnecessarily complex. The PMP now covered mobilization only. The process of strategic concentration

⁵¹ Lieutenant Colonel Edwin T. Wheatly to Colonel Walter Krueger Jr., 21 August 1934. Wheatly was the senior member of the Joint Army and Navy Planning Committee. This document is in the author's possession.

was covered in a separate series of Army Strategic Plans, which were based upon the Joint Army-Navy War Plan. This significantly reduced the amount of classified material that had to be distributed to the field on this matter, and made the planning process far more flexible.⁵²

Krueger was also involved in updating the Joint War Plans. The Joint Army and Navy Board, of which he was now a member, decided in November 1937 that because of the changing international situation, the current Plan ORANGE (War with Japan) was obsolete. Krueger played an active role in the creation of the new plan which called for rapidly reinforcing the garrisons at Hawaii, Panama, and the West Coast, but realistically noted that the army and navy forces in the Philippines could expect to be "augmented only by such personnel and facilities as are available locally."⁵³ In updating these plans together with his Navy counterpart, Krueger continued to build upon his broadening base of experience in joint operational planning.

During his tenure as the Chief, WPD, Krueger was tasked by the Assistant Secretary of War to conduct an "analysis of past and present relations between the Army and Navy and determination of methods and principles that should govern future relations between the two services." In reply, he presented a brief history of joint operations between the Army and the Navy, and a study of cases that had been presented to the Joint Board since its inception in 1903. He noted that in over 600 cases, only 3 had not been satisfactorily resolved by the Board. He considered a number of expedients

⁵² Lecture delivered by Krueger at the Army War College on 1 March 1938 entitled "The War Plans Division, War Department General Staff". U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

⁵³ Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan-ORANGE, 21 February 1938, AF 327, Serial 107, WPDG, War Plans Division, War Department General Staff, War Plans Division, War Department General Staff, War Plans Division, War Department General Staff, WPDG, National Archives

for improving relations between the two services, including the creation of a Department of National Defense that would oversee both the War and Navy Departments. He rejected such radical changes and recommended only the "creation of increased opportunities for contact between Army and Navy officers." This included exchanging officers and instructors at the staff schools, increasing the frequency of joint exercises, organizing joint staffs for all joint exercises, and detailing officers for limited periods of service with units of the sister service. While arguing that unity of command is necessary in the conduct of joint operations, Krueger felt that the creation of a unified armed service was neither feasible nor desirable.⁵⁴

In July 1938, Krueger turned over the WPD to Brigadier General George C. Marshall and assumed command of the 16th Infantry Brigade. With the pending retirement of Chief of Staff Major General Malin C. Craig, both Krueger and Marshall were among the five candidates to succeed Craig. A combination of Krueger's German ancestry and the aged Pershing's support for Marshall caused Roosevelt to choose the latter. A year later, Krueger received his second star and command of the 2nd Division. This unit was selected to test a new organizational concept--the "triangular" motorized division. Slightly more than half the size of its World War I counterpart, the new division was put through a series of tests to validate the concept. Speed and maneuverability were its assets and the division soon earned the nickname, the "Blitzkruegers."⁵⁵ Marshall was impressed by the performance of the division and ordered the conversion of several more divisions to the triangular organization.

⁵⁴ Memorandum for the Asst Sec of War, 27 August 1937, subj Relations between the Army and Navy, WPD Correspondence 1920-42, WPD 3740-1, RG 165, Records of the WDCS, 1937-1942, 3740-1-10.

⁵⁵ The New U.S. Army Division, File 114 August 1939, 4b-57.

In May 1940, Major General Krueger was named as commander of IX Corps (Provisional) during the army's first ever corps-vs.-corps maneuver. Both he and the the Army as a whole benefited greatly from this exercise. In August, he commanded the VIII Corps (Provisional) during another series of exercises, involving both Regular and National Guard divisions. These exercises pointed out a number of problems. Provisional corps headquarters created more problems than they solved. As Krueger bluntly noted in his final critique: "VIII Corps Headquarters was made up of personnel gathered from many sources, hastily thrown together, and expected to operate as an effective corps headquarters"--it did not. Permanent corps headquarters were needed. A second problem was the readiness of the National Guard divisions--they were not. Although he was confident that "the National Guard components could be made effective elements of the corps battle team," they needed new equipment and intensive training, beginning with individual training and progressing upwards". In October, VIII Corps was activated on a permanent basis with Krueger as commander.⁵⁶

As the war clouds loomed darker in April 1941, General Marshall pinned a third star on Krueger and appointed him to command Third Army. Intensive training continued and in September, Third Army clashed with Lieutenant General Ben Lear's Second Army during the Louisiana Maneuvers, the largest and most realistic peacetime military exercises ever conducted by the U.S. Army. Although Lear had Patton's experimental armored corps, Krueger skillfully coordinated the close air support available to his ground forces to halt the Second Army. Then, sending his motorized 1st Cavalry Division around the enemy flank to raise havoc in the rear area,

⁵⁶ "The Army's First Corps Maneuver," *The Army*, 1940, pp. 1-10. The study is in Washington. All references herein are to pp. 1-10.

he counterattacked and pinned Lear's forces against the Red River. When the problem ended, Third Army held a clear advantage. Maneuver director Lieutenant General Leslie J. McNair shifted some forces between the two field armies and began the exercise anew. Krueger and Third Army bested their adversaries in this round as well. The importance of these exercises for Krueger and the Army was immense. They gained valuable experience in conducting joint operations with the Army Air Corps, and in maneuvering and sustaining large forces in the field for a period of several months.⁵⁷ They served as a capstone to Krueger's forty-three years of education and training in preparation for wartime command at the operational level.

All this preparation was nearly in vain. With the outbreak of war, Marshall decided that operational commands would go to younger officers such as Eisenhower, Bradley, and Devers. Krueger had resigned himself to commanding a training base army for the duration of the war when in January 1943, General Douglas MacArthur cabled the Chief of Staff to ask that Krueger be sent to the Southwest Pacific as the senior American ground force commander.⁵⁸ MacArthur and his GHQ Southwest Pacific Area would formulate campaign plans, assign objectives, and allocate resources. Krueger's headquarters initially known as ALAMO Force and later as Sixth Army, was charged with formulating and coordinating the operational plans with the Navy, Marines, and the Army Air Forces. In effect, he became the joint task force commander. Significantly, he was given this responsibility without command authority over the other services. Captain Bern Anderson, naval liaison officer to Krueger's headquarters, noted:

General Krueger's staff was one of the smoothest working

⁵⁷ The definitive work on the Louisiana maneuvers is by Christopher R. Gabel, "The 1941 GHQ Maneuvers of 1941," Unpublished PhD dissertation, Ohio State University.

⁵⁸ MacArthur to Marshall, 11 January 1943, Krueger Papers.

army staffs I ever saw. Krueger was in a tight spot as "coordinator of planning." This gave him a dominant but not a command position. He handled the situation tactfully, leaning over backwards to consult with the naval and air commanders he had to deal with in the field. . . General Krueger was a thorough soldier, perhaps a little on the hard side. He demanded a high state of efficiency, shunned publicity, and was what the correspondents labeled as "no color."⁵⁹

The record speaks for itself. Working at a level where no previous doctrine existed, Krueger planned and executed twenty-one major amphibious operations. Within a period of eighteen months his troops had advanced over 4500 miles from Papua on eastern New Guinea to the tip of northern Luzon. His command had grown from three understrength divisions to over 650,000 men for the planned invasion of Japan. Krueger's men enjoyed the best enemy-to-friendly casualty ratio of any force in the Pacific theater. He was hailed by the New York Times as the "Master of Amphibious Warfare."⁶⁰ Noted military historian and biographer of Robert E. Lee, Douglas Southall Freeman, called Krueger "one of the great American soldiers of all time" and quoted an unnamed "experienced leader" who remarked: "If I had a campaign to direct in circumstances that called for the greatest prudence, the largest skill, and the utmost employment of all the resources of a single army, I would put it in Krueger's hands."⁶¹ MacArthur spoke glowingly of his former subordinate in 1953.

I don't think that history has given him due credit for his greatness. I do not believe that the annuals [sic] of American war show his superior as an army commander, swift and sure in attack, tenacious and determined in defense, modest and restrained in

⁵⁹ Samuel Eliot Morison, History of United States Naval Operations In World War II, Vol. VIII: New Guinea and the Marianas (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1953), p. 64.

⁶⁰ Frank L. Kluckhohn, "Master of Amphibious Warfare", New York Times Magazine, 31 December 1944, pp. 11-32.

⁶¹ Douglas Southall Freeman, Robert E. Lee: A Biography, The Daughters of the American Revolution, Leader, 13 November 1945, p. 2.

victory. I don't know what he would have been like in defeat, because he was never defeated, but I think he stands unexcelled in the history of our traditions. The great mantle of Stonewall Jackson would certainly fit his ample frame.⁶²

Doctrinal Analysis of General Krueger as Operational Commander

What qualities and characteristics did General Krueger demonstrate as an operational commander? How do these compare to the attributes required for senior-level leadership and command as enunciated in FM 22-103? What aspects of Krueger's assignments, education, and training made him a better operational commander than he otherwise might have been.

The most striking aspect of Krueger's career is its length and breadth. His forty-eight years of continuous active service allowed him to serve in a wide variety of assignments. He commanded at every level from platoon to field army, except for battalion. He was a company commander on three occasions and commanded two regiments. He served on staff from battalion through corps. He was an engineer and intelligence staff officer as well as operations officer for divisions and corps. He learned through first-hand experience the problems that faced the commanders of tactical units. One of his regimental commanders in the Philippines, later Lieutenant General Arthur S. Ace Collins Jr., recalled with amazement just how knowledgeable the army commander was of the finer points of small unit tactics.⁶³ His many years in tactical units allowed him to quickly size up the quality of the unit he was visiting. There is no substitute for that sort of experience.

Krueger's long career also allowed him to spend over twelve years as

⁶² Speech delivered by MacArthur to the Veterans of the Southwest Pacific Annual Meeting, 24 January 1973. Papers of Major General William H. Gill, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Fort Belvoir, Illinois, 1973, p. 109.

⁶³ Arthur S. Collins, Jr., "Walter Krueger," Infantry (January-February 1983), 16.

both student and instructor at the various staff and senior service colleges. At these institutions, he had time to read, reflect, and write about the major issues of his chosen profession, unhampered by the press of daily requirements that are inherent in assignments to tactical units. The intellectual interchange with his students and fellow faculty allowed Krueger to develop and refine his thoughts on leadership, campaign planning and the conduct of large-unit operations. More importantly, they provided Krueger an opportunity to continue his own self-education. As opposed to a narrow technical background, Krueger enjoyed a broad classical education. He had a solid background in military history and his language abilities allowed him to take advantage of foreign as well as American writers. Not limiting his studies to the usual military subjects, he read widely in the fields of history, politics and government, economics, philosophy, and religion. It is, perhaps, the ultimate irony that this man who dropped out of high school to become a soldier, earned the reputation as one of the army's leading intellectuals of his time.

In addition to his many years in tactical units and the service schools, Krueger's lengthy career allowed him to spend seven years in the War Plans Division. Although there were no permanent joint staffs at the time, Krueger seemed to actively seek opportunities to serve in "joint" assignments at a time when many of his contemporaries shied away from interservice tours. He recognized the importance of good relations between the Army and the Navy, learned as much as possible about this sister service, and actively sought their views on operational issues. While he and the Navy commanders did not always come to an agreement on these issues, he had their confidence and respect as a senior army officer with such a long-

standing interest in interservice affairs.

General Krueger's style of leadership was well suited for operational command. He insisted that mission statements and concepts of operation clearly reflect his own intent. He would tell his staff and subordinate commanders what he wanted done, but not how he wanted it done. He would then wait to see what concepts they produced.⁶⁴ As a field Commander, Krueger never had a plan, as such drawn up. Rather, when his staff submitted a field order to him for approval, he considered the plan, and when he signed it it became the order. This process saved much staff work.⁶⁵ While allowing the greatest possible latitude to his planners, he always stayed informed of their progress and insured that they remained focused on his intent. "In order to permit the fullest and freest discussion by the Joint Planning Group, I never injected myself into its deliberations, but kept an interested eye in the background, though in close touch through Colonel Eddleman (Sixth Army G-3), to whom I made such suggestions from time to time as I deemed necessary."⁶⁶

Unlike several of his less secure contemporaries, Krueger surrounded himself with high-caliber staff officers and subordinate commanders. As an Army commander, his chiefs of staff included General of the Army Dwight Eisenhower, a future-Chief of Staff and President; General Al Gruenther, a future-Supreme Allied Commander for Europe; and General George Decker, another future-Chief of Staff. His long-time G-3, General Clyde Eddleman,

⁶⁴ Interview with General George H. Decker, Sixth Army Chief of Staff and later Chief of Staff of the Army. Conducted by LTC Dan H. Ralls on 7 November 1972. Senior Officers Debriefing Program, U.S. Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

⁶⁵ Collins, "Walter Krueger," p. 15.

⁶⁶ "General Krueger's Leadership," in *General Krueger: The Story of a Soldier's Life*, pp. 10-11.

became Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. General Courtney Hodges, who commanded the First Army in Europe, had been a corps commander under Krueger at Third Army. Among his regimental commanders were General Bruce Palmer Jr., LTG "Ace" Collins, and MG Aubrey Newman. In their memoirs and interviews, each held Krueger in the highest esteem.

Eisenhower considered Krueger as his mentor while Collins spent the last year of his life getting an article on Krueger published. (The editor of Army magazine felt Krueger wasn't colorful enough to merit a story.)⁶⁷ Krueger expected his staff to be brutally frank with him. General Eddleman recalled Krueger scolding him for conducting a superficial inspection of a division, rating it satisfactory while glossing over its many shortcomings. The next inspection was rigorous and the unit was rated unsatisfactory. The army commander responded by relieving the division commander and informing Eddleman: "This is the kind of report I want."⁶⁸ Perhaps one reason for Krueger's eagerness to surround himself with top-notch subordinates was his "selfless sense of dedication to duty," as Collins so aptly put it. But another reason may well have been his quiet self-confidence in his own technical and tactical competence.

In addition to technical and tactical competence, Krueger also demonstrated his conceptual skills as Sixth Army Commander. Operating with little or no doctrine as a guide, Krueger had to maintain the mental flexibility to conduct multiple operations in widely dispersed geographical areas while simultaneously planning future operations. Since the SWPA was

⁶⁷ Interview with Colonel (Ret) Walter Krueger Jr., 13 June 1988, Arlington, VA. During the interview, Colonel Krueger showed the author an autographed portrait given by President Eisenhower to his father with the inscription, "To my mentor."

⁶⁸ Interview with General Clyde D. Eddleman, Sixth Army G-3 and later Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. Conducted by LTC L.G. Smith and LTC M.G. Swindler on 11 February 1988, at Fort Belvoir, Fort Belvoir Barracks, Pennsylvania.

habitually short of amphibious shipping and other critical assets, Krueger and his staff had to forecast well in advance of the actual execution of these operations. Creativity was essential in dealing with both resource shortfalls and MacArthur's mercurial temperament. The theater commander's decision to invade Los Negros Island was made only five days prior to D-Day. Krueger knew MacArthur was operating under the false assumption that the island was undefended and protested strongly, but when MacArthur refused to cancel the operation, the Sixth Army commander and staff planned and executed the division-size operation on time.⁸

Krueger has been criticized by some historians as being overcautious. Most of these writers, relying upon the memoirs of the embittered Eighth Army commander Lieutenant General Robert Eichelberger, cite MacArthur's dissatisfaction with Krueger's rate of advance from Lingayen Gulf to Manila during the conquest of Luzon. MacArthur, wanting the city to be liberated by his birthday, urged Krueger to launch a rapid thrust for the capital. With very strong Japanese forces astride his left flank, the Sixth Army commander refused to take such an unjustifiable risk just to satisfy the whim of his superior. MacArthur tried to cajole, badger, and intimidate Krueger into making this foolish move but the army commander would not take the risk unless given a direct order. Faced with the responsibility such an order would entail, MacArthur never issued the directive. "Boldness coupled with caution" marked the campaigns of Sixth Army in its drive toward Japan and strong personal character was the mark of its commander.

A final facet of Krueger's leadership style was his relationship with the soldier. Believing that understanding human nature is "the basic factor in

the defense of a nation," he took advantage of every opportunity to be near the front line soldiers who carried on the brunt of the fighting. Much of his time as Sixth Army commander was spent flying all over the SWPA to visit units in contact with the enemy. One day when visiting a division headquarters he had fresh eggs for breakfast. Later that morning, he asked the soldiers at the front whether they had had any fresh eggs lately. The soldiers laughed, but the division commander did not when Krueger told him from now on the fresh eggs were to go to the people doing the fighting, not those at the headquarters. His own headquarters was spartan in comparison to other army headquarters or to MacArthur's GHQ. Krueger never developed a "trademark" like MacArthur's pipe and sunglasses or Patton's pearl-handled pistols; he believed the soldier saw through any flashy exterior and looked for a deeper substance. The famous wartime cartoonist Bill Mauldin had served under Krueger during the Louisiana Maneuvers:

Twice in the same month I encountered him while my company was doing field exercises. It is an awesome experience when a man with three stars on each shoulder steps out of the bushes and demands to see your bare feet. As we sat on the ground and peeled off footgear, Krueger picked up our socks, inspected them for holes, and ran his hands inside our shoes to check for nails. Then he had us spread our toes as he peered between them, his august nose not six inches away. . . . We in the lower echelons sort of loved the crusty old boy, were delighted to learn that he had enlisted as a private and risen through the ranks, and were not surprised when later he turned out to be one of the most distinguished generals in the Pacific.⁷⁰

Krueger felt that taking care of the troops was the "holy duty of an officer." He expected his officers to learn to know "a soldier's heart and what makes him tick."⁷¹ By all reports, the Sixth Army commander surely did.

⁷⁰ William H. Mauldin, *The Jones Ring* (New York: Norton, 1971), pp. 98-99.
⁷¹ Krueger's emphasis on the welfare of his troops is discussed in *General Krueger's Papers*.

Based upon a comparison with Krueger's stated philosophy of command and his demonstrated leadership qualities while commanding in the SWPA, it appears that the qualities and attributes listed in FM 22-103 are indeed the proper ones to look for in an operational commander. Krueger certainly demonstrated the ability to rapidly conceptualize his "vision" for an operation, effectively communicate it to his staff and subordinate commanders, and possessed the necessary skill and determination to professionally execute his plan. The attributes of standard bearer, developer of subordinates, and integrator of all resources are clearly evident. Finally, he possessed the necessary historical, operational, and organizational perspectives to insure successful completion of the Sixth Army mission.

Implications for Today:

If our senior-level leadership doctrine is adequate, what are the implications of this case study in selecting, training, educating, and assigning future operational commanders? What can the Army do to help its officers make the transition from commanding battalions and brigades to positions as CINCs and JTF commanders? While recognizing that great commanders at any level are born, not made, what can we do to make them better at operational command?

The Army has already taken some steps in this direction. In the last ten years, a renewed emphasis upon the study of military history has occurred. It has been incorporated into the curriculum at all levels of military education. This will help broaden the base of experience, albeit vicarious, of our officer corps. The formal recognition of a level of war between tactics and strategy is also being made in the right direction. As are the

opportunities for additional study of the operational art through such programs as the Advanced Operational Studies Fellowships and the Advanced Military Studies Program. The lead taken by Congress to make joint service assignments career enhancing is another positive measure. But these measures are only small steps along the road to developing a coherent operational-level doctrine and an officer corps capable of executing it.

There is still a long way to go.

The focus of the officer corps today remains firmly locked upon the tactical level of war. Junior officers are encouraged by promotion and command board results to spend as much time as possible in "muddy boot" unit assignments. Time not spent in line units, especially brigade and battalion, is widely viewed as "lost time". Service school assignments as students are viewed as a necessary evil while tours as an instructor are to be avoided at all costs. Even joint assignments, now a "hot ticket" due to the impact of the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, are viewed as a "ticket that has to be punched"--two years away from troops but not a day longer! While few officers today can expect to enjoy a forty-eight year career like Krueger's, the Army senior leadership must encourage a better balance between "muddy boot" tactical assignments and opportunities to study the operational level of war.

In the arena of joint operations, the services have made significant progress in the ongoing overhaul of the joint staff officer program. While this is encouraging, the bulk of the course emphasis is focused more upon the administrative aspects of joint staff work rather than the conceptual aspects of the operational art. Even more discouraging is the decision to

the joint staff officer training and education curriculum. This sends a signal to the field that this curriculum is relatively unimportant. Clearly, this is a case of the Army's personnel "tail" wagging the operational "dog"!

Clausewitz highlights another problem facing the senior Army leadership in the identification of future operational commanders:

Every level of command has its own intellectual standards; its own prerequisites for fame and honor. . . There are commanders-in-chief who could not have led a cavalry regiment with distinction, and cavalry commanders who could not have led armies.⁷²

The U.S. Army needs to recognize the validity of the "Peter Principle" in promoting officers to operational command based solely on their demonstrated abilities to command at the tactical level. Many of these senior officers are reluctant to leave their "comfort zone"--the tactical level of war. The result is senior commanders who still think at the battalion level while commanding large units that lack a battalion's responsiveness. Talented tactical commanders need to be encouraged to continually develop those skills and attributes peculiar to the operational art--forecasting, movement of large forces over great distances, sustainment of those forces, "seeing" the operation in its totality, etc. Selection of operational commanders should be based upon evidence of the personal qualities of leadership contained in FM 21-103 and their performance at senior service schools which provide education and training in the perspectives and professional skills required for operational command, as well as their demonstrated tactical abilities. The impetus for this professional development has to come from the individual himself and it must begin early in his career. This interest and self-study is often reflected in the authorship of journal articles that focus upon the operational art. It is worth

⁷² - Clausewitz On War pp. 111-140

noting that several of the great strategical and operational commanders-- Moltke, MacArthur, Marshall, and Eisenhower--spent comparatively little time in tactical units.

Finally, operational commanders today face one problem that Krueger and MacArthur did not face in SWPA--an unclear, uncertain "end state." If the operational art is to use "available military resources to attain strategic goals within a theater of war," those strategic goals must be enunciated as clearly and unequivocally as possible. The operational level of war bridges the gap between tactics and strategy. Just as it is imperative that the operational commander be solidly based in tactics, it is just as essential for the strategist, both military and civilian, to be aware of the capabilities and limitations of the operational art. The impact of constraints and restraints, such as rules of engagement, upon operational commanders must be clearly understood by strategists and policy makers. The Army needs to insure that the doctrinal concepts of the operational level of war are understood by from the tactical commander all the way to the Commander-in-Chief.

In many ways, the Army of today resembles the Army of the interwar years. Declining budgets and shrinking force structures will tend to cause many officers to intensify their focus on tactics and small-unit operations. In times of relative peace such as we currently are experiencing, the Army must develop the ability to identify the operational commanders of the next war. Our senior-level leadership doctrine, while still maturing, has laid out the framework for this task; now the current leadership of the army must create the environment necessary to motivate our best and brightest officers to strive for operational, as well as tactical, excellence.

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