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Operational Battle Command: The Doorway to Versatility

The purpose of this monograph is to investigate the effects of battle command on a conventional corps fighting in an unconventional environment. Battle command is a new doctrinal term describing how a commander leads his unit into an operation. TRADOC Pam 525-200-1 defines battle command as "the art of battle decision making, leading, and motivating soldiers and their organizations into action to accomplish missions at least cost to soldiers. It begins in the training a commander provides for his command and it ends with the successful redeployment and recovery of the command in preparation for its next operation." This particular topic is significant for investigation because a U.S. Corp could easily have similar challenges when conducting operations in places such as Bosnia or Cambodia.

This monograph will use Viscount Slim's Burma campaign during World War II to investigate the research question. Slim took over a defeated army with low morale, formulated his vision of what actions had to take place for victory, and proceeded to execute his vision which led to his unit's eventual success. Using the model of battle command as a guide, the study investigates the actions of a successful commander overcoming a difficult situation to achieve success in an unfamiliar environment.

OPERATIONAL BATTLE COMMAND:
The Doorway to Versatility

A Monograph
By
Major Michael W. Alexander
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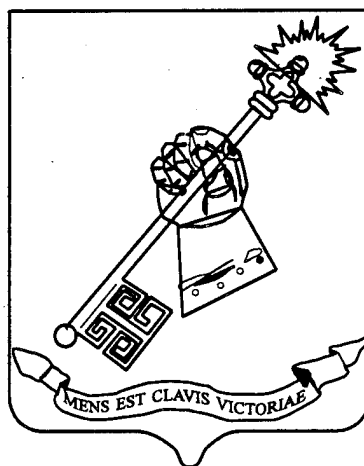
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Major Michael W. Alexander

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Approved by:

_____ Monograph Director
LTC Charles D. Franklin, MMAS, MBA

_____ Director, School of
COL Gregory Fontenot, MA, MMAS   Advanced Military
   Studies

_____ Director, Graduate
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D.   Degree Program

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Chapter I
Introduction

Battle command is a doctrinal term describing how a commander leads his unit into an operation. *TRADOC Pam 525-200-1* defines battle command as "the art of battle decision making, leading, and motivating soldiers and their organizations into action to accomplish missions at least cost to soldiers. It begins in the training a commander provides for his command and it ends with successful redeployment and recovery of the command in preparation for its next operation."[1] Although the term battle command is a new idea, a commander leading his soldiers in combat is not. Historically great armies in battle have had great commanders leading them. The true essence of a great commander is his ability to adapt to a changing environment and have the clear vision to point his army to success. General William T. Sherman brilliantly led the Army of the West, which during the American Civil War marched from Vicksburg to the Atlantic ocean and destroyed much of the Confederacy's ability to wage war. The audacious leadership of General George S. Patton motivated the U.S. Third Army to race across Europe and destroy German army units becoming one of the most famous US Army units in WW II. These two commanders are examples of outstanding leaders with a clear vision of the objectives they wanted their armies to achieve.

This monograph focuses on battle command using Field Marshall William J. Slim's Burma campaign during World War II as a model. The monograph investigates the role of battle command in helping a conventional force adapt to an unconventional environment. This study will investigate the nature of how Slim inspired his soldiers to their great victory in Burma through the use of battle command. The investigation will decide what battle command considerations are important for a conventional operational commander fighting

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in an unconventional environment. Then it will consider how modern commanders can use battle command to help their army adapt to a changing situation.

Battle command begins with a commander planning training for his unit's missions and ends with a successful redeployment and preparation for future missions.[2] It enables the commander to make rapid decisions using available information with the new technology to help him make good decisions in combat. Thus, an essential element of battle command is visualizing the current state and desired future states. The commander then designs a training strategy to prepare his organization for future operations that effectively train his most valuable asset, his soldiers.[3]

Two important aspects of battle command contribute to visualization and decisiveness, the science and the art. The science focuses on technology and the advantages it provides the commander on the battlefield. The commander of the future can use technology to expand his influence across an increasingly larger battle space and increase his knowledge of combat situations' both enemy and friendly. The art focuses on leadership, cohesion, and morale, those human factors on the battlefield that come through personal interaction. The art is the timeless factor of battle command. Great commanders still motivate their soldiers through inspired personal leadership.

Increased technological capabilities impose high requirements for effective leadership and timely decision making. *FM 22-103* defines 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."[4] Effective leaders are present and know how to express their intention to their subordinates. They are also technically and tactically proficient. They are always aware of the morale of their soldiers.

FM 100-5 defines decision making as, ". . . knowing if to decide, then when and

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what to decide. These are tactical, operational, and strategic judgments."[5] To make good decisions a commander must have current, essential information. Good information allows the commander to make critical decisions effectively. The Army Battle Command Systems described in *TRADOC Pam 525-5, Force XXI Operations* will allow the commander to have a clearer picture of the battlefield. But, the positioning of the commander near the critical place on the battlefield will still be important even with the new technology. The commander still needs to make personal decisions at the objective. A commander present at the critical place on the battlefield making crucial decisions is an effective commander.

Using the battle command tenets and dynamics as criterion, this study will explore battle command as described in current and emerging doctrine. A tenet is, "A principle, belief, or doctrine generally held to be true, especially: One held in common by members of an organization, group, movement, or profession."[6] A dynamic is, "The pattern of change or growth of an object or phenomenon."[7] The difference between the two is a tenet is a belief that rarely changes and a dynamic is action that constantly changes. Also, by employing Slim's successful campaign as a guide, the study assesses the validity of the current concept of battle command. Furthermore, it will assess how the concept applies to the modern requirement to employ conventional forces in unconventional warfare. A brief description of each of the criterion will include a short explanation of its significance in battle command.

BATTLE COMMAND TENETS

Battle command has nine fundamental tenets. Four of the tenets are unique to battle command. These four tenets are flexibility, judgment, intuition and empathy. The study will use these tenets to measure the effectiveness of Slim's battle command. To fully understand what makes a commander effective in battle a true understanding of these tenets as they relate to a combat commander is important.[8]

FLEXIBILITY

Flexibility is "a ready capability to adapt to new, different, or changing requirements."[9] Major James Madigan, author of the article "Battle Command: A Force XXI Imperative," notes,"It allows the commander to adapt his decision-making process and leadership to different situations."[10] A flexible commander gives his subordinate commanders and staff clear, simple intent. This allows the subordinate commanders and the staff to plan and execute the mission without the commander giving rigid details on how he wants the mission accomplished. [11] A flexible commander is a well-prepared commander. He can execute many different plans because he knows that battlefield situations change quickly. His plans must be flexible enough to adapt to the plethora of changes that could occur on the battlefield. During the Atlanta campaign, General William T. Sherman constantly changed his formations, broke corps in different directions and adjusted his plan of logistics so that he could defeat the General Johnston's army without engaging them in a major battle. Sherman was innovative and very flexible throughout this campaign. This campaign eventually led to the capture of Atlanta and a great defeat for the South in the American Civil war. [12] Flexibility is best described by Chinese General Sun Tzu, "If wise, a commander is able to recognize changing circumstances and to act expediently."[13]

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JUDGMENT

Battle Command (draft 2.1 April1994) defines judgment as,"the process of forming an accurate opinion or estimate based on available information. It is required for selecting the critical time and place to act, assigning missions, prioritizing, assessing risk, allocating resources, and leading."[14] Judgment by the commander is an integral part of selecting the decisive time and place to appear, assigning missions, prioritizing, considering risk, allocating resources, and most importantly leading.[15] The commander enhances his ability to exercise good judgment by being forward on the battlefield assessing the situation personally. Good commanders lead from the front. The closer the commander is to the critical place on the battlefield, the better his judgment will be on where to act. A commander will make decisions based on his feel for the situation, his trust in his subordinates and his experience in similar situations. During the American Revolutionary War, General Nathanael Greene's judgment to withdraw into North Carolina to wear down the under supplied British Army was brilliant. Even though Greene's army ultimately lost the Battle of Guiliford Court House, this withdrawal caused the British to lose eventually their campaign in the South. General Greene had achieved his overall mission, the destruction of Cornwallis's army ability to wage war.[16]

INTUITION

Battle Command (draft 2.1) notes, "Battle commanders must often bridge the gap between what they know at the time of the decision with a feel for the battle."[17] Great commanders can feel when it is time to execute difficult maneuvers against an enemy force. The commander knows when it is time to act and when not to act. A commander's intuition in battle command supplements his ability to create, his self-assurance, and his interpersonal skills that are necessary for the accomplishment of his mission.[18] Clausewitz refers to it as

coup d'oeil " an intellect that, even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to truth."[19]

EMPATHY

Battle Command (draft 2.1) defines empathy as, ". . . understanding, being aware of being sensitive to and experiencing the feelings, thoughts and experiences of soldiers and their families."[20] A commander has to be present with his soldiers during training or combat. This reassures the soldiers that the commander, the one whose decision it was to execute whatever mission they are working on, is willing to share the hardship with them. Soldiers will give their heart, soul, and entire being to a commander they feel shares the danger of combat with them. *Battle Command (2.1)* notes, "It is a key to leading and motivating soldiers and understanding what they are capable of doing at a given time." [21] A good commander feels empathy for each of his soldiers problems. A young private's family problem may seem trivial, but to that private it may be the greatest hardship he has ever faced. That soldier will have great respect for the commander who understands his problem. The commander's ability to empathize with his soldiers is extremely important for the morale of his unit. The commander who treats his soldiers with respect and dignity will gain more respect from his soldiers than the commander who is a tactical genius but does not. Frederick the Great commented "The commander should appear friendly to his soldiers, speak to them on the march, visit them while they are cooking, ask them if they are well cared for and alleviate their needs if they have any."[22]

BATTLE COMMAND DYNAMICS

Besides describing battle command tenets, current doctrine ascribes six primary dynamics to the concept: Leadership, decision making, information assimilation, visualization, conceptualization and communication. When projecting his desired endstate

for a particular mission to his subordinates, the commander uses all these battle command dynamics to paint a clear picture of the mission for his subordinates. For this study the four tenets of flexibility, judgment, intuition, and empathy will be the four major headings of Slim's command evaluated. The study will investigate the dynamics of battle command: Leadership, decision making, information assimilation, visualization, conceptualization, and communication.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership is "the art of direct and indirect influence and skill of creating the conditions for sustained organizational success to achieve the desired result."[23] Without good leadership on the battlefield, a unit cannot be successful. All the technological advantages mean nothing if a unit in combat is without good leadership. Major-General J.F.C. Fuller notes the importance of leadership, "The presence of the general-in-chief, in the face of danger, at once creates confidence, for his personal crowd, and the higher his self-control the higher does this confidence grow, it magnetizes his men and morally reunifies them."[24]

DECISION MAKING

Decision making is a commander's most important duty on the battlefield. *TRADOC Pam 525-200-1* notes that "For the commander, knowing if to decide, then when and what to decide is a sophisticated art. Decision brings with it the cost of committing resources, foreclosing options, incurring risk, and revealing intentions to the enemy. Uncertainty and chance will always bedevil decision making."[25] In *The Command Decision*, German General Lothar Rendulic discusses decision making in war using his World War II division command experiences on the Eastern Front. Rendulic acknowledged that decision making was a significant consideration of commanding. He believed that making decisions were

simplified if the commander made the more daring decision, took the initiative, and possessed the "longer breath" or will power.[26]

INFORMATION ASSIMILATION

Throughout history successful commanders receive information, digest it and act swiftly to gain victory. The battle staff gives the commander the flexibility to focus on current operations as required. The commander also has confidence his dedicated battle staff is concurrently examining alternative ideas for future operations.[27] In a recent *Military Review* article, MAJ James C. Madigan notes,"Information assimilation is the ability to take available information into the mind and thoroughly comprehend that which is important. Assimilation is the first step toward analyzing information fragments and synthesizing them to form a mental vision of the situation."[28] Information assimilation is also the ability of the commander to take information about an enemy and use whatever assets available to defeat the enemy force. During the British Palestine campaign of 1918, General Allenby used his conventional forces as well as his unconventional forces under T.E. Lawrence to achieve victory over the Turko-German forces. Allenby was able to receive information on the enemy, assess the enemy vulnerabilities, then assign whatever assets needed to defeat the enemy. It did not matter if those assets were conventional or unconventional, Allenby was looking for a tool that could provide him victory based on the information he received about the Turko-German forces.[29]

VISUALIZATION

A great commander visualizes the endstate of his mission. In his mind's eye, he can visualize the major operational components necessary to achieve mission accomplishment. *Battle Command (2.1)* defines visualization as "the act of forming a mental picture of the current and future states based on higher commanders' intent, available information and an intuitive feel of the battlefield. Seeing enemy and friendly forces and terrain in terms of time, space and purpose forms the basis of the commander's estimate."[30] Not only is it important for the commander to visualize an endstate, but he must be able to convey this vision effectively to his subordinates.

When the commander gives his intent to his subordinates, the commander transmits his vision of success. General Gordon R. Sullivan, Army Chief of Staff, describes vision best in a consideration of Grant's command of the Union Army, "An important feature of Grants' plan was that he envisioned a campaign-- not a battle-- as the way to achieve victory. He conceived of one unified campaign throughout the depth of his theater of war, a campaign that tied together the activities of all his armies. The scope of this vision was unprecedented. He realized that it will not be possible to unite [his subordinate armies] into two or three large ones. ...But, generally speaking, concentration can be practically effected by Armies moving to the interior of the enemy's country."[31]

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Once the commander has transmitted his vision to his subordinates, next is the portrayal of all the elements of the force operating together to accomplish their mission. The commander's intent portrayed as a plan of action is the concept of operations. *Battle Command (draft 2.1)* defines conceptualization as, ". . . an overall scheme of operations, the necessary interfaces and coordination, the sequence from one phase to the next, the

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commander's priorities, and the risks he is willing to take." This concept the commander gives to his subordinates must be flexible enough for them to execute their mission without specific guidance from the commander.[32]

COMMUNICATION

A commander can obtain and convey information over a variety of media from many different sources. This is the commander's ability to communicate effectively. The two types of communications discussed in *Battle Command(draft 2.1)* are implicit communications and explicit communications. Implicit communications are the ability to communicate through mutual understanding, using a minimum of key, well-understood phrases or even anticipating one's thoughts. Explicit communications are the ability to communicate through precise, crystalline writing or oral instructions. Madigan notes that communication is "The bridge that links information to decisions and decision to action."[33]

General Grant gave General Sherman only minimal instructions of how he wanted him to conduct his campaign against Joseph E. Johnston. "You I propose to move against Johnston's army, to break it up and get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can upon their war resources."[34] Grant's clear, simple instructions to Sherman allowed him to execute Grant's orders with great vigor and imagination. The simultaneous campaigns of Grant and Sherman won the war for the North. A key to either success or victory lay in Sherman's ability to clearly understand the vision his commander [Grant] expressed to him.

A classic example of unclear command communication is a letter from Custer to his Troop commander CPT Benteen during the Battle at Little Big Horn: "Benteen--Come on. Big Village. Be quick. Bring Packs. PS. Bring Paks."[35]Benteen could not understand the message, he arrived too late and unprepared. The slaughter of Custer and his soldiers

at Little Big Horn was due in some part to this unclear written message.

In chapter two, this study will review General Slim's Burma campaign and Fourteenth Army's performance in combat. During his Burma campaign, Slim's performance as Army commander was exceptional. He epitomized the battle commander in combat and more importantly he won a great victory despite overwhelming odds against him. Furthermore, this case study will provide insight for assessing the role of battle command in current operations.

Chapter II
The Burma Campaign

BACKGROUND

The allied objective of the Burma campaign was to establish a land route via the Ledo Road to support the Chinese ground forces in their fight against the Japanese. This would split Japanese forces in Asia and force Japan to fight a two front war in Burma and China.[36] A two front war would consequently extend Japanese logistics to the breaking point and would keep them from reinforcing the Pacific. An additional British interest was to retake Burma, which was a part of their colonial empire. General William J. Slim believed to reconquer Burma he needed to concentrate and destroy the Japanese Army in the field.[37] He believed that with the destruction of the Japanese Army the allies could achieve their objectives.

When speaking to the 1952 class of the Command and General Staff College, Slim explained what was his definition of command. He said, "If you ask me really to define it, I should say personality -- and like all true art, and command is art, it is exercised by each man in his own way."[38] The art of battle command is the commander's ability to lead and make critical decisions to accomplish his units' mission.[39] General Slim was able to lead his army to victory against the Japanese by masterfully "projecting his personality" to motivate his soldiers. The study now explores how General Slim developed into a successful battle commander.

SLIM -- DEVELOPMENT OF A BATTLE COMMANDER

During WW I, William J. Slim fought initially in the Eastern theater in Gallipoli and ended the war as a company commander in Mesopotamia. [40] Slim earned the Military Cross for bravery while fighting in combat operations in Mesopotamia. [41] He maneuvered his unit in combat in Mesopotamia, he did not fight from trench to trench as was the method on the Western Front. This gave him a vision of the advantages of maneuver warfare that was to prove advantageous for him in WW II. He found the methods of trench warfare to be quite unimaginative, a waste of good soldiers. This concern for the thoughtless use of resources stayed with Slim throughout his career.

INTERWAR PERIOD

Between WW I and WW II, Slim spent most of his time in operational assignments, institutional study and self development. Slim's first assignment after the war was with the 1/6th Gurkha Rifles Regiment. The jobs he held while in the 1/6th included company commander and adjutant. Slim learned Gurkhali so he could effectively communicate with his soldiers. Often he had to learn many languages because he worked not only with soldiers from Nepal, but also with Indian soldiers. This unit was quite different from the British Army in Europe. Slim commented "I spent many of the happiest, and from a military point of view the most valuable years of my life in the Regiment. The Almighty created in the Gurkha an ideal infantryman, indeed an ideal rifleman, brave, tough, patient, adaptable, skilled in field-craft, intensely proud of his military record and unswervingly loyal."[42]

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While in the 1/6th Slim fought frontier engagements in Afghanistan. These engagements gave Slim more combat command experience and gave him valuable experience commanding foreign troops in combat operations.[43] Slim's most important experience at the battalion level probably came during his time as the adjutant. In this position he was responsible for training, discipline, and administration.[44] He learned how to train foreign soldiers in terms of fighting spirit, and firm discipline. This experience would pay dividends later in the coalition operations of the Burma campaign.

Slim was picked to go to the British War College at Quetta in 1926.[45] He was the only officer picked from the Indian Army to attend the war college. A friend of Slim's at Quetta during this period was Sir Percy Hobart who was instrumental in the development of the teachings on mobile warfare in Great Britain. Sir Percy was an instructor at Quetta during this period and he helped to give Slim his early introduction to the concepts of mobile warfare. The knowledge of the basic concepts of mobile warfare would benefit Slim immensely.

Officers in the British Army during the 1920 and 30's did not make a great deal of money. Many of these officers supplemented their incomes from other resources. Slim chose to supplement his income through his writing. He wrote about his experiences in the Indian Army in a sort of Rudyard Kipling adventure story prose. He wrote under the pseudonym of Mr. Anthony Mills, which is Slim spelled backward.[46] His short stories were enormous successes in England and helped to supplement Slim's income. Slim's writing career helped him to clearly formulate ideas and put them on paper clearly and coherently. Ronald Lewin, Slim's biographer noted, "The ability to express his thoughts

clearly and cogently-- which later would make his speeches and broadcasts so effective --

was not the least of the attributes which struck his contemporaries." [47]

Between 1928 and the start of WW II Slim worked on the Army staff, two years as

an instructor at the staff college, Camberly and a year at the Imperial defense college.

While teaching at the staff college Slim experimented with new ideas of warfare.[48] He

studied how to use effective air power and mechanized forces. He also gave deep thought

on how to use these assets in the next war.

His staff college experience helped to broaden his knowledge of these new tactics

and he explored all the advantages and disadvantages of the new forms of warfare. During

briefings to superior officers he tried to present some of his ideas about air resupply and the

use of mechanized forces only to be ridiculed by shortsighted senior officers.[49] Teaching

also broadened Slim's exposure to other officers in the British army. During off duty time,

many instructors and students would meet at the officer's club and discuss that day's class

or whatever tactical questions the students had. The students were encouraged to speak

candidly about their thoughts on instructors or their lessons. If a student had a different

view of the lesson presented by the instructor it was not disrespect, only a different opinion.

Slim's students respected his knowledge of tactics and his openness about what he did or

did not know. This respect that Slim formed with junior officers would enhance his

reputation as a great officer when he commanded in Burma in WW II.[50]

In September 1939 after the declaration of war against Germany, Slim became a

brigade commander of the 10th Indian Brigade. In the fall of 1940 Slim's brigade moved

from Iraq to Ethiopia to engage Italian soldiers in North Africa. Although trained for

combat on the Iraqi frontier, Slim's unit deployed to the Western Desert of North Africa.[51]

As a Brigade and higher commander Slim experienced a series of military reverses, retreats and defeats that would last until 1943.[52] During this period Slim was learning constantly, when faced with similar situations he would make the best use of these many painful lessons. Ronald Lewin, notes, "Slim learned a lesson to trust his instincts in battle and to choose the audacious over the careful in many cases ensured success."[53] Slim was wounded in North Africa and transferred to Iraq where he became a division commander.

After North Africa, Slim took command of the 10th Indian division. His division's mission was to fight against Pro Iraqi forces, the Vichy French in Syria, and Pro German Persians.[54] The Persian Army was better equipped than Slim's Division but he found a way to defeat them. In Persia, 10th Division fought with the Russians against the Persians. During these battles Slim learned the importance and the sensitivity of working with allies. This was another valuable lesson Slim learned before fighting in Burma. He forged a fine division in Persia and had some great victories and then he was pulled out to become a Corp commander. This was the beginning of Slim's initial defeat and final victory in Burma.[55]

Slim's experience in the military prior to the Burma campaign would help him be successful in that theater. His most important experiences prior to fighting in combat in Burma was with allied soldiers and experimenting with new forms of maneuver warfare. Slim also predicted mechanized forces and air power would provide armies great advantages over their future adversaries. Also, his experience in combat during the interwar period gave him valuable knowledge of what works under fire.

THE BURMA CAMPAIGN

In March 1942 Slim was promoted to acting Lieutenant General and was sent to command the two divisions that made up the Burma Corps.[56] Slim's first mission as Burma Corps commander, was to protect Rangoon then fall back as necessary to preserve the corps. Lewin notes, "A corp implies a normally staffed and equipped HQ. But, throughout the story of the retreat it must be remembered that Slim's headquarters were deficient in almost every item of equipment that makes effective service possible -- virtually no wireless sets or even signallers, little transport, less office stores."[57] Slim's corps was doomed for failure in this first engagement because of poor reconnaissance, poor air cover, and a poor intelligence network.[58] Slim's corps was stretched out along a long defensive line from the Chindwin river to Imphal with a division strength of about a brigade for each division.[59] His corp suffered a terrible defeat against the Japanese at Rangoon. The corps conducted an orderly, disciplined retreat to ensure their survival as an effective force. Even though this was a terrible defeat, the corps maintained discipline due to Slim's presence all over the battlefield. Slim felt the commander's presence on the battlefield was important. He thought his presence is especially important when the unit is losing and the soldiers need moral support from the commander.[60]

Throughout the retreat, Slim remained calm in his communications to his subordinates. Captain Brian Montgomery, brother of Field Marshall Montgomery observed,"When speaking on the wireless Slim always began 'This is Bill speaking.' To me, at any rate, 'Bill speaking' at a time of crisis was psychologically superb, for it breathed

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friendship, not necessarily avuncular!"[61] The Japanese used jungle warfare infiltration

tactics against Slim's corp with great success. However, even when Slim's corps was being

soundly defeated by the Japanese, he was always setting the conditions for his unit to

counterattack or attack to regain the initiative.[62]

Slim's corps retreated from Burma into India in good order even though the soldiers

looked terrible. Slim's Burma Corps was able to maintain their unit cohesion, mostly due

to Slim's efforts being everywhere encouraging them at every opportunity.[63] Lewin

wrote,"At chokepoints and danger areas Slim would position himself at these critical areas

for morale and command and control, also he would seek out commanders to convey his

intent verbally."[64] Slim lost 13,000 soldiers in the retreat march. Many soldiers were lost to

illness, causalities, wounded or killed and nursing. After the retreat, Slim said, "They look

like scarecrows but they look like soldiers too." This incredible retreat covered 1,000

miles in hot weather with a lack of food and water. The soldiers maintained their discipline

throughout this treacherous ordeal.[65]

Later in 1943, after the retreat from Burma there followed a period of consolidation

for the British Army. A defensive line of 90,000 men protected India from the Japanese.

To reopen lines of communication from India into China a reconquest of Northern Burma

was essential. An amphibious assault by the allies at Rangoon would have been the

optimum solution; but, there were no available ships to execute an amphibious landing.

Therefore, a land campaign would retake Burma from the Japanese. General Wavell, the

South East Asia commander, ordered the Eastern Army to advance to the Arakan region

which is the coastal region of Burma to recapture the port of Akyab. This would establish a

port for the sea lines of communications into Burma. Slim was given command of XV corp with the objective to seize Arakan to secure the port of Akyab. He immediately began retraining his new corps to fight with the Japanese. More important, he restored their diminishing morale. [66]

To prepare for battle in the Arakan, Slim focused his training on jungle warfare. He identified eight key lessons that were important for his unit's success in jungle warfare: (1)The individual soldier must learn by living, moving, and exercising in it, that the jungle is neither impenetrable or unfriendly. (2) Patrolling is the master key to jungle fighting. (3) All units must get used to having Japanese parties in their rear, and, when this happens, regard not themselves, but the Japanese surrounded. (4) In defense, no attempt should be made to hold long continuous lines. (5) There should rarely be frontal attacks and never frontal attacks on narrow fronts. (6)Tanks can be used in almost any country except swamp. (7) There are no noncombatants in jungle warfare. (8) If the Japanese are allowed to hold the initiative, they are formidable.[67]

Slim based all his plans in Burma on simple planning principles. His principles were: (1) The ultimate intention must be an offensive one. (2) The main idea on which the plan was based must be simple. (3) That idea must be held in view throughout and everything else must give way to it. (4) The plan must have in it an element of surprise.[68] Slim had provided his commanders and staff simple, yet effective training techniques that could make his corp a viable fighting force in the jungle.

The first Arakan battle was unsuccessful. Slim and General Irwin, the Eastern Army Commander, had personality conflicts. Although Slim had a full corp HQ, he was not

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involved in the battle because of Irwin's order that he not be involved. Irwin decided to

piecemeal units into the fight resulting in their defeat in detail. Irwin, seeing the situation

getting out of hand, asked Slim to go down and observe the division commander fighting

the battle. Irwin wanted Slim to observe the battle and report to him its progress, not

participate. As the situation worsened, Irwin decided that the battle was lost and he

ordered Slim's headquarters to take over the battle. Slim tried to restore order, but it was

too late to salvage the situation. Slim fought a delay to allow the division to move to more

defensible ground to dig in during the monsoon season. General Irwin blamed Slim for the

costly defeat and tried to relieve him. Irwin was relieved instead and Slim remained as XV

corps commander. Slim received reinforcements and maintained control of the Arakan

battle.[69]

During the monsoon season Slim focused training on the critical mistakes made

during the previous Arakan battle. Lewin wrote, "Apart from his performance in battle,

there is probably no more effective means for a commander of imposing his will and his

personality than by addressing his assembled subordinates about the battle that lies ahead

and winning them over to his way of thinking by manifestly talking sense."[70] The first

Arakan battle was another loss for the British forces in Burma. However, Slim's soldiers

were learning new methods of fighting the Japanese, and they were gaining confidence in

their ability to defeat the Japanese in combat.

BURMA 1944-45 VICTORY

After Arakan, Slim was assigned as the Fourteenth army commander under Lord

Admiral Mountbatten. The two commanders worked well together, and Mountbatten left

the war fighting in Burma to Slim. Mountbatten made sure Slim received the supplies and

materiels he needed to win the Burma campaign. Slim and Mountbatten believed a key to

success in Burma was constant pressure on the enemy. To maintain this pressure, they

decided to continue fighting throughout the monsoon season.[71] Mountbattan wanted to

eventually conduct an amphibious assault to retake Burma.[72] This course of action was not

feasible at the time because of insufficient vessels to support an amphibious assault. The

Normandy Invasion had priority. So, Mountbatten, General Giffard (the Eleventh Army

Group commander) and Slim decided that the reconquest of Burma would be accomplished

as a land campaign.[73]

Slim's greatest concerns as the new commander of the Fourteenth Army were

supply, health, and morale.[74] To address the supply concern, Slim ordered his logisticians

to ensure they could supply his army over land, sea, and air. Slim encouraged innovative

approaches to seemingly hopeless problems. For example, Slim ordered his engineer to

build his own fleet of supply boats. These boats brought critical supplies up and down the

various waterways in Burma. In another instance, Slim designed and produced Fourteenth

army parachutes since there were a shortage of parachutes for air-resupply in theater. Slim

lived by his favorite motto "God helps those who help themselves."[75]

Slim's concern over health was a product of both the extreme environment and

austere support. Slim was wounded twice in WW I and he realized the importance of

timely evacuation for wounded. Many sick or wounded soldiers transported from the front

lines were absent from their units for long periods. Slim wanted to reduce the turn around

time for soldiers from the hospital to their units because there were not many replacements

coming into theater. He set forth to accomplish this by establishing forward hospitals for the sick and wounded. Soldiers were evacuated from the front lines and after treatment returned them to their original unit much faster than previous evacuation times. Slim ruthlessly supervised the enforcement of other health measures such as personal hygiene and taking malaria pills. He also began an air evacuation system that took injured soldiers from the front very quickly and reduced the soldiers' exposure to lack of medical help. [76]

Slim attacked his morale concern by establishing three foundations of morale: spiritual, intellectual and material. Slim said, "I use the word spiritual, not in its strictly religious meaning, but as belief in a cause."[77] Slim believed the spiritual foundation was the only foundation that could stand real strain such as combat. By building the spiritual foundation, Slim wanted his soldiers to believe in a noble object. He wanted his soldiers to believe that achievement of this object was vital. Slim focused his soldiers on the spiritual object of defeating the "evil" Japanese. Slim wanted each of his soldiers to feel that whatever action they did, it would result in the attainment of that object.

The intellectual foundation is built on the belief that attaining the spiritual object is possible. It was also important for the soldiers to understand that their organization is efficient and would help them attain their object. Slim felt soldiers must believe their leaders are competent and will wisely lead them to attain their object without needless loss of life. Achievement of these steps would result in the soldiers building their intellectual foundation.[78]

Finally, providing soldiers with the supplies they need to attain their goal builds the material foundation. Slim ranked this foundation last because he said,"the very highest

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morale are often met when material conditions are lowest." Slim emphasized that

commanders must treat their soldiers fairly and provide them good work conditions. Also,

the army should provide the soldiers with the best equipment possible for the assigned task

at hand.[79]

Before engaging the Japanese in a large scale battle again, Slim thought it wise to

engage the Japanese in small battles with overwhelming odds favoring the British. Winning

these small victories would build the soldier's confidence. Slim ordered his units to send out

patrols in the jungle to do search and destroy missions against the Japanese Army. Often

the British would send out a battalion to fight a Japanese platoon. This style of warfare

was successful building the confidence of the Fourteenth Army. With victories over the

Japanese in the jungle and morale getting higher everyday, Slim's army was prepared to

retake Burma.[80]

Fourteenth Army began its long journey to reconquer Burma with the second battle

of Arakan. Victory would establish a sea line of communications as a first step in taking

Burma. In December 1943, at the end of the monsoon season, three divisions of XV Corps

attacked Arakan. The allied forces met only light opposition until the Japanese launched a

counterattack in February 1944, with the intention of drawing Fourteenth Army from its

defense of the Indian border and securing their own seaward flank. The allies met the

onslaught, formed defensive perimeters, and secured by air supply, shattered the enemy.

The Japanese suffered 5,000 dead, and the legend of Japanese invincibility was broken. [81]

Burma was one of the worst places in which to wage war, Slim described it as "an

undeveloped labyrinth of mountains, rivers, and jungle -- without roads, railways or

airfields."[82]   Many thought attacking into this rugged jungle terrain was impossible for Slim's army. Slim, however, had trained his soldiers to a razor's edge and was going to prove his skeptics wrong by doing the impossible.

Slim's plan for the reconquest of central Burma was both simple and brilliantly concieved. He intended to defeat the enemy on the terrain of his choosing; a plain in the Assam region around the town of Imphal. The plan involved first an advance to the Chindwin river, to arouse the Japanese to counterattack. Next, the plan directed a withdrawal to the open plains around Imphal -- where the Japanese could be confronted by allied air superiority and the full weight of armor and firepower. Not only did the timing have to be accurate, but if the withdrawal degenerated into retreat or rout, the effect could be contagious and the whole front might collapse.[83]

The Japanese attack on Imphal, codename operation U Go, involved 100,000 Japanese troops and a division of the Indian National Army. These soldiers were under the command of Lieutenant General Renya Mutaguchi's Fifteenth Army. Mutaguchi had no intention of advancing beyond the Assam region, farther into India; however if the British were defeated, every opportunity would be made to exploit the Indian rebel forces. The Japanese forces that were facing the British carried supplies for just three weeks.

Slim's force included IV Corps with the 17th Division at the front and the 20th Indian in reserve. Farther back in Assam were the 2nd British Infantry and 11th East African divisions. Slim moved up valuable reinforcements to the fight as needed.[84] The 17th Indian Division moved down the Tiddim Road and had orders to fall back when the enemy engaged them. This was a mistake. Slim misread the first signs of the enemy

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attack monitored by his intelligence network along the Chindwin and waited nearly twenty-four hours before giving the 17th the order to pull back. The Japanese 33rd Division quickly outflanked the Indian troops and cut off their lines of communications. Slim realized; he had to rescue the unit and he convinced Mountbatten to divert a large number of US aircraft to air lift the 5th Indian Division for reinforcement. [85]

The Battle of Imphal and Kohima falls into two phases. The first was the Japanese offensive, from March 8 until April 5, when they surrounded IV corps at Imphal and smaller garrisons at Kohima. It took the defenders until June 22 to break the encirclement. Although Imphal is viewed as two or three battles, Slim conducted the operation as a single coherent battle. He never lost sight of his original objective, to inflict damaging defeat on the enemy in preparation for the invasion of Burma.[86]

The Japanese won the early engagements in the Battle of Imphal. Slim anticipated the Japanese attacking the important railhead at Dimapur, where he had deployed his XXXIII Corps. Instead the Japanese attacked Kohima. It took Slim's army three weeks to fight their way from Dimapur and raise the siege at Kohima. But the road to Imphal was still blocked. [87]

To support the surrounded forces at Imphal, Slim launched STAMINA, the greatest air resupply operation of the war. Some 19,000 tons of supplies were flown in and 13,000 wounded and 43,000 noncombatants were flown out. The surrounded IV Corps was heavily reinforced, including the 7th Indian Division and a brigade of commandos flown in from Arakan. [88]

The monsoons began on April 27, and the miseries on the battlefield at Imphal

increased tremendously. The fighting went on through May with the Japanese slowly weakening because of their dwindling supply lines. The allies on the other hand, receiving necessary supplies gained confidence and broke the Japanese hold on their perimeter. Finally, the Japanese commander made a desperate suicide attack in a last effort to attain their original goal. These tactics fell into Slim's hands, and the Japanese 33rd Division was almost totally destroyed. On July 8, the Japanese finally retreated across the Chindwin. By this time the Japanese had lost over 60,000 soldiers. Slim commented in his book *Defeat to Victory*, "The Imphal-Kohima battle which now ended was the last and greatest of the series that had been fought continuously during the past ten months on all the Burma fronts. They had achieved substantial results; the Japanese Army had suffered the greatest defeat in its history."[89] Slim had completely outsmarted and totally defeated Mutaguchi.

After the victory at Imphal, Slim directed his energies toward the goal of reconquering Burma. This was possible because the political and strategic objectives had changed. Prime Minister Churchill now saw the reconquest of Burma as an important instrument in securing a British voice in the conduct of war against Japan.[90] The final phases of the campaign involved nine months of unrelenting fighting, from August 1944 to May 1945, a thousand miles south to Rangoon. Slim's Fourteenth Army evolved the war's most sophisticated techniques in air supply, cleared the Arakan coast with a series of amphibious hooks, and conducted two opposed river crossings on the central front. The Chindwin was breached in 1944; and, in February 1945 Fourteenth Army engineers spanned the Irrawaddy. Upon reaching the plains, Slim unleashed his mechanized forces and retake Rangoon and Burma.[91]

Slim's generalship was at its pinnacle when his Army executed the crossing of the Irrawaddy. His intent was to cross the Irrawaddy with two corps and destroy the Japanese Army located at Mandalay and Meiktila. Slim directed IV Corps to conduct the northern river crossing near Mandalay. Once the corp crossed, 19th Indian Division attacked to seize Mandalay as the Fourteenth Army supporting attack. The 19th Indian Division captured the town of Mandalay after a tough battle. Also, IV Corp conducted a series of deception missions to portray units crossing at various locations along the Irrawaddy. This deception worked as the Japanese tried to adjust to contain the different crossings.[92] The XXXIII Corps, the main effort, attacked one hundred miles south (undetected) and cross the Irrawaddy. Then, XXXIII Corps continued the attack toward Meiktila, a Japanese supply center. This surprise attack from the rear would encircle the Japanese. At Meiktila, XXXIII Corps slugged it out with General Masaki Honda's Thirty-third Army. The Japanese garrison, aided by wide lakes that constrained Slim's Army, fought with great ferocity. But after four days, during which the Japanese lost most of their artillery and suffered appalling casualties, the town fell to the allies.[93]

After that victory, Slim changed the complexion of the Fourteenth Army from a jungle fighting force to a mobile, aggressive mechanized force. The new objective for the army was Rangoon. Slim's Army plowed through the plains and rice paddies of lower Burma in a two-pronged advance, with XXXIII Corps moving down the Irrawaddy valley and IV Corps streaking along the railway to Toungoo and Pegu. The fall of Rangoon came by way of an amphibious force via the Arakan, while Slim's infantry was at Pegu, forty-five miles away. The Japanese, however, had already retreated northward and toward Thailand.

Three Japanese armies were destroyed, and suffered 250,000 casualties.[94]

Slim's success demonstrates the role of battle command in transforming an organization from an conventional force to an unconventional force. His superior leadership transformed a defeated army into a victorious army. His ability to visualize the desired endstate in Burma and communicate that vision to his soldiers made Fourteenth Army successful. Several elements of battle command were critical in the transformation of Slim's Army. The following section assesses Slim's battle command using of the doctrinal tenets and dynamics to consider this great general's ability to transform his army to fight in an unconventional environment.

Chapter III

Analysis of the Historical Study

I. FLEXIBILITY

A flexible unit can adapt to new and different situations. General Slim changed Fourteenth Army from a beaten army to a victorious army. The key dynamics of battle command that enabled Fourteenth Army to become a flexible organization were: Leadership and decision making. Slim used these dynamics to allow his army to have the flexibility to fight in an unconventional environment. *Battle Command 2.1* notes, "flexibility is encouraged by a battle commander who makes his intentions clear but does not impose detailed tasks on his subordinates."[95]

Slim's plans to achieve victory in Burma were simple and focused on the objective of defeating the Japanese. Prior to the Battle of Imphal-Kohima, Slim provided his subordinate commanders and his staff simple guidance on what he thought would help his army adjust to jungle fighting. The eight lessons Slim gave to his subordinate commanders to adapt to jungle warfare were important in the transformation of the army.[96] They allowed the army the flexibility to fight in the jungle and achieve victory at Imphal-Kohima. The four planning steps which Slim gave to his staff to base Fourteenth Army operations ensured simple, yet aggressive plans. These plans focused on Slim's ultimate intent of destroying the Japanese Army. These planning steps were visible throughout the planning of the Burma campaign. The plan allowed Slim to exercise great flexibility when battling the Japanese in Burma.

Prior to the Battle of Imphal most of the engagements the Fourteenth Army had against the Japanese in the jungle were defeats. However, the fighting at Imphal-Kohima was jungle fighting. Fourteenth Army did very well against the Japanese in the jungle because of their training. The Japanese suffered their greatest lost in their history at Imphal.[97] The new training strategy for jungle fighting Slim gave his subordinate commanders enabled them to transform from mechanized desert fighting force to a jungle fighting force. The Fourteenth Army was now a very flexible force with the ability to fight in the jungle and when necessary fight a mechanized battle.

This defeat was due to Slim's decision to train his conventional force to fight in an unconventional environment. Slim wisely decided to change his force so it could fit the situation they had to fight in, not make the situation fit his force.

After the success at Imphal, Slim's concept for offensive operations was to use his air power and mechanized forces to destroy the Japanese Army. Slim wanted to take advantage of the weakened Japanese Army by attacking them. After Imphal, Fourteenth Army had a huge advantage over the Japanese forces with their mechanized forces. Slim wanted to use these forces to destroy the Japanese in the Shwebo plain foward of the Irrawaddy river. The Japanese instead crossed the river and set up a defense. Slim adjusted his concept based on the Japanese movement and the Fourteenth Army also conducted the Irrawaddy crossing. What followed after the crossing of the Irrawaddy were the battles of Mandalay and Meiktila. Both the river crossing and attack to Manadalay/Meiktila were very successful by the Fourteenth Army. The Japanese were soundly defeated because of their total surprise by the maneuver of Slim's army.[98] Slim's simple instructions for planning

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concepts helped his army achieve great victory in the field.

II. JUDGMENT

In his speech to the 1952 class of the Command General Staff College (CGSC),
General Slim offered advice for future commanders. He said " The motto for a commander
who is going to survive the strain of command for any length of time, is, 'Don't keep dogs
and bark yourself.' Deal, also, with the things that matter and have the judgement to
determine which they are." [99] Slim decided after the retreat from Burma an important
objective for his army was the defeat of the Japanese. In his judgment the way to attain that
goal was through the transformation of his army from a conventional force to a force that
can fight in an unconventional environment. As discussed earlier in this study, the first step
in this transformation was to build morale. The next step was to train the soldiers to fight in
the jungle environment.

Slim knew the importance of his army winning victories against the Japanese after
the retreat from Burma. One change Slim felt was necessary to prepare his army for their
next encounter against the Japanese was to improve the army replacement camps. These
camps held the new soldiers before they went out to their unit. Slim went to a few of these
camps and felt that morale and discipline was extremely low. The reason for the low morale
was the living conditions were bad and the training was not preparing the soldiers for war.
Slim decided this was an important transition spot for his new soldiers. He wanted them to
go to their units with a winning attitude. In his judgment these camps would have to change
their method of preparing soldiers or a defeatist attitude would spread. [100]

Slim talked to his subordinate commanders about the situation at the camps. He

explained his training vision of prepared soldiers coming to their units ready to fight. To make this vision a reality, commanders would have to provide the replacement camps energetic leaders to help train the new soldiers. The subordinate commanders did not want to give away their best leaders to the replacement camps, but Slim convinced them better trained soldiers would help the Fourteenth Army to defeat the Japanese later. The new leadership would also introduce the new techniques of jungle warfare to soldiers trained for desert warfare.[101]

Slim also used this training time in the replacement camps to send new officers and soldiers on patrols in the jungle against the Japanese. These patrols with overwhelming numbers in favor of the Fourteenth Army gave the new leaders and soldiers experience in jungle warfare. This also provided them with easy victories against the Japanese. These victories gave the new leaders and soldiers confidence they could win in the jungle against the Japanese.[102]

Slim used good judgment by reconstructing the replacement camps to retrain soldiers and give new leaders experience fighting in a jungle environment. This decision removed some of the best leadership from some of his units for a period of time. But, this training allowed his leaders to gain confidence and provided valuable training for the new soldiers. The improvement of the replacement camps helped instilled a confident spirit into the army that improved their chances to achieve victory in Burma.[103]

Slim's vision for the reconquest of Burma was the defeat of the Japanese. From Rangoon to Imphal Slim visualized key battles that would set the conditions to make his vision a reality.[104] Visualization of battles leads to the commander's intent.[105] Slim let his

staffs prepare for battles and he gave them as much freedom as they needed. But, the one

thing Slim insisted he write himself was his intention. He said,"One part of the order I did,

however, draft myself-- intention. It is usually the shortest of all paragraphs, but it is always

the most important, because it states -- or it should -- just what the commander intends to

achieve. It is the one overriding expression of will by which everything in the order and

every action by every commander and soldier in the army must be dominated." [106] Slim's

simple vision of defeating the Japanese and retaking Burma provided his leaders and

soldiers with a focused objective which would provide them direction to win in Burma.

In 1942 after Slim's retreat from Burma, he pondered what worked and what did

not work against the Japanese. Slim said "I had not realized how the Japanese, formidable

as long as they are allowed to follow undisturbed their daring projects, are thrown into

confusion by the unexpected."[107] Slim knew executing unexpected maneuvers against the

Japanese he required information on their dispositions. Consequently, he used all available

means of land, air, and naval forces to provide him information. For example, Slim used his

"navy" to patrol the many rivers in Burma gathering information. The boats used to build

this navy came from old discarded transport boats.[108] Also, Slim made great use of the

United States and Royal Air Force to fly aerial reconnaissance to check Japanese

movement.[109] Finally, Slim made valuable use of human intelligence provided by the

Burmese natives. These assets provided Slim with good information on Japanese

dispositions during the Imphal battle. This allowed Slim to make the critical decision to

counterattack based on his knowledge of the weakening supply line of the Japanese.[110]

Slim received timely information on the Japanese movement through his intelligence

assets. At Imphal ,the Japanese attacked earlier than anticipated and Slim had to adjust his

plan to that situation. One of the lessons Slim had given his army was to prepare to fight

surrounded against the Japanese in the jungle.[111] Based on the previous encounters against

the Japanese, Slim anticipated they could not maintain the momentum of their attack over

a long period. Slim based this assumption on the Japanese history of poor management of

logistics in past battles.[112] Slim decided to divert air craft and soldiers to reinforce Imphal,

realizing it was a critical battle for the reconquest of Burma. An earlier decision by Slim and

Mountbatten to fight through the monsoon season payed off at Imphal. When the

monsoons came, Fourteenth Army continued to fight the Japanese. This continuous

fighting finally stretched the weak Japanese logistics to the limit and the Japanese attack

lost momentum.[113] Slim made an accurate decisions at Imphal based on information

gathered on the Japanese prior to the battle. His imaginative use of internal assets to

provide him an intelligence base to make critical decisions to defeat the Japanese was very

innovative. This type of innovative thinking is what made Slim a great battle commander.

III. INTUITION

Slim's ability to know the Japanese intentions was important for victory in Burma.

He based his plans on what he expected the Japanese to do when presented with certain

situations. Slim's "feel" for the battlefield was built through experience and knowledge of

enemy tactics. As Slim remarked,"The commander who always guesses right doesn't guess,

it's a product of training, knowledge, observation, and character." [114]

Slim thought a knowledge of the opposing commander was extremely important

and necessary for victory. He said, "Practically nothing about one of the most important

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factors that a general has to consider the character of the opposing commander." [115] Slim thought to know the other general's mind was important to victory. He went on to say, " I remember, on one occasion, I really thought I knew my opposite number pretty well. I used to keep his photo on my desk. If I couldn't do anything else, I used to look at him and say, 'Well, I may not be much of general, but I am better looking than you.' I thought I knew that fellow very well. I planned the whole campaign on what I reckoned he would do as a reaction."[116] Slim formed a picture of how the Japanese fought after his corp's retreat from Burma. Slim's experience with the Japanese in combat was they were fanatical fighters that carried minimal logistics. Their Generals stuck rigidly to their plans and showed little initiative. If the Japanese plan was to attack, they would attack until they had success or had taken great losses. Slim devised his plans with a knowledge of Japanese tactics and their fanatical fighting spirit. His "feel" for the way the Japanese fought guided Slim's battle plans against them. [117]

During the Imphal battle, Slim's 17th Division was surrounded by the Japanese. However, Slim's army had trained to fight the Japanese while surrounded. Slim stayed in constant communications with the surrounded commander and constantly resupplied his division by air. Slim knew that instead of breaking off the attack and trying a different approach, the Japanese commander Mutaguchi would continue to attack and chew up his forces. When Fourteenth Army intelligence observed the Japanese unit strength reduced, Slim launched An immediate counterattack. His great victory at Imphal was due to Slim's knowledge of the enemy commander's action.[118]

IV. EMPATHY

Slim was a successful commander in Burma because his soldiers knew he cared for them. Slim was constantly found at the front near the action pulling his soldiers to victory. When morale dropped Slim would speak to his units in their native language to raise morale.

Empathy was a true strength of Slim's command. Slim spent his entire career in Indian Army units. He considered himself part of a family with the Indian and Gurkha soldiers. As Slim commented "I spent many of the happiest, and from a military point of view the most valuable years of my life in the [Gurkha] Regiment."[119] His experience with the soldiers and long term ties made it easier for him to retrain and motivate these soldiers after the retreat. The best example of empathy Slim displayed for his soldiers came during the retreat from Burma when his soldiers were tired, ragged and beaten. Slim was everywhere encouraging the army. He was proud of them because they had fought against a superior enemy and lost but maintained their dignity. He knew the soldiers wanted to win and after retraining them, when he saw a chance at victory he encouraged them to seize the moment. The soldiers of the Indian Army regiments had always been last to receive anything especially praise from the British Army. When the soldiers found they had an Army commander that spoke their language and believed in them, they would fight their hearts out for Slim. Slim noted, "The European who serves with the native troops should be, not only much above average in efficiency and character, as he must accept greater responsibility, but he should serve with them because he wants to, because he likes them."[120]

Slim made a point when making command speeches to start with a material aspect and end on a spiritual aspect. He said, "Two things only were necessary: First to know what you were talking about, and, second and most important, to believe it yourself. I found that if one kept the bulk of one's talk to the material things men were interested in, food, pay, leave, beer, mails, and the progress of operations, it was safe to end on a higher note-- the spiritual foundations--and I always did."[121] Slim's speeches worked well to build the morale of his soldiers in the Burma. Slim's communication skills were a key assets to building his army to defeat the Japanese.

After early losses to the Japanese in combat Slim recognized that his soldiers lacked confidence. Instead of belittling his soldiers, Slim retrained his soldiers. Slim's Fourteenth Army contained a variety of races and cultures. These soldiers fighting in the toughest theater in WW II were not receiving any moral support from home. Slim knew to motivate these soldiers who called themselves "The Forgotten Army," he would have to instill within them a common goal to gain victory. Slim had to improve his army's morale. Slim's foundations of morale was an important tool in the transformation of his army.[122]

Slim built the morale of his army by stressing three foundations that were spiritual, intellectual, and material. Slim reinforced these foundations by being present at both training and on the battlefield to communicate his goal of defeating the Japanese to his soldiers. As the soldiers won victories in Burma, they no longer believed that the Japanese were an unbeatable enemy. They believed they could recapture Burma. What made Slim a great commander was his ability to make his soldiers believe they could win. [123] As he said to the 1952 CGSC class about command,"Command is that mixture of example, persuasion, and

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compulsion by which you get men to do what you want them to do, even if they don't want to do it themselves."[124] Slim feeling his men's disappointment, then encouraging them to change to achieve victory was the act of a great commander.

Slim was able to transform his army through great leadership and focused decision making. He was able to take his army into an unconventional environment and achieve victory against a tough opponent. Chapter four investigates how battle command can help conventional US units transform into effective units in an unconventional environment.

Chapter IV

Conclusion

Future US Army operations will range from high intensity conflicts to Operations Other Than War (OOTW). In command of these units that deploy to execute this vast array of missions will be aggressive, well-trained leaders. The uncertainty leaders face in these various missions will magnify the need for the effective use of battle command. Battle command provides them a guide for versatile, adaptable leadership.

In operations such as OOTW combat organizations may be force packaged for prolonged periods to conduct a variety of missions. The challenge for the leadership would be to transform the organization into an effective force capable of completing any mission assigned to them. In this example the mechanized division will probably be very uncomfortable operating in an unconventional environment and working with an allied army. But, with effective battle command the unit leadership can develop a cohesive team that will be successful.

Effective battle command is critical to success in combat in an unconventional environment. As stated earlier General Slim said, "Command is that mixture of example, persuasion, and compulsion by which you get men to do what you want them to do, even if they don't want to do it themselves." [125] It is important for leaders in unconventional environments to use battle command as a guide to versatility in an uncertain environment. In an unconventional environment leadership and flexibility of mind are essential. The art of battle command, the human element of command, has remained unchanged over the centuries leaders have lead their soldiers to combat. The concept of battle command is

viable and a key element in operational planning and execution. The science of battle command is constantly changing. Mastery of both elements is essential in today's highly unpredictable operational environments.

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