

INTREPIDITY, IRON WILL, AND INTELLECT: GENERAL ROBERT L.
EICHELBERGER AND MILITARY GENIUS

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General Studies

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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (References to this study should include the foregoing statement.)

ABSTRACT

INTREPIDITY, IRON WILL, AND INTELLECT: GENERAL ROBERT L. EICHELBERGER AND MILITARY GENIUS by MAJ Matthew H. Fath, 114 pages.

There are currently two contradictory schools of thought in the historiography of General Robert L. Eichelberger's generalship. One group of authors, John Shortal and Jay Luvaas, consider Eichelberger a brilliant World War II commander. Another author, Paul Chwialkowski, believes Eichelberger to be good, but not distinguished. This study attempts to develop a concise judgment of Eichelberger's leadership. The research analyzed Eichelberger's generalship using Clausewitz's theory of military genius as a model. The first step was to define military genius and to determine its components and subcomponents. Next, Eichelberger's pre-World War II education, mentorship, and training experiences were evaluated. The third step was to analyze Eichelberger's generalship during the Papua New Guinea, Netherlands New Guinea, and Philippines Campaigns of World War II to determine if he consistently demonstrated the qualities of military genius. This study concluded that Eichelberger definitively displayed the components of courage and determination but a judgment on his coup d'oeil required a more detailed examination and warranted further research. Eichelberger's leadership is relevant to today's military officer because he successfully defeated an enemy who employed many asymmetrical tactics of potential enemies in the contemporary operating environment: anti-access denial, defense in complex terrain, and fanatical fighting abilities.

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ACRONYMS

CGSS	Command and General Staff School
IJA	Imperial Japanese Army
SWPA	Southwest Pacific Area

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In his essay “A Perspective on Military History,” author Thomas C. Greiss argues that military history is an essential adjunct to a military officer’s practical experience. He states:

Studying military history can also help compensate for deficiencies in individual experience. Soldiers may serve only two or three years in a combat zone during their professional careers. Somehow, they must prepare themselves for waging war without the benefit of much practice. It is almost as if a doctor faced a crucial operation after nothing but medical school observation and practice on animals. (Greiss 1998, 32)

This process of vicarious learning is critically important to officers, especially those who have yet to serve in a combat zone.

One way to examine military history is through the study of military biographies, also known as the great captain methodology. Especially intriguing is the study of those leaders who overcame seemingly insurmountable obstacles to snatch victory from the hands of defeat. But military history is seldom a consensus endeavor. The study of generalship and combat leadership may be particularly difficult when the subject of the military biography is relatively unknown or when there is conflicting analysis of his achievements.

General Robert L. Eichelberger has been called the “Fireman of the Southwest Pacific” because of his success during intense and pivotal campaigns in the Pacific Theater during World War II (Shortal 1987, xi). But there are currently two contradictory schools of thought in the historiography of General Robert L. Eichelberger’s generalship. One group of authors, such as John Shortal and Jay Luvaas, consider Eichelberger a great

unsung World War II commander. Another author, Paul Chwialkowski, judges Eichelberger to be a good, but not necessarily distinguished, general. However, there is no study available that attempts to analyze both groups' points of view and then synthesize these arguments into a concise judgment of Eichelberger's leadership.

The purpose of the research is to determine whether General Robert Eichelberger was a military genius or not. Military genius is an excellent analytical model because Carl von Clausewitz developed it after an exhaustive and critical study of human or moral factors and the demands of the battlefield. As author Bernard Brodie stated in his essay "The Continuing Relevance of *On War*":

We therefore find ourselves with at least two reasons why Clausewitz continues to be worth the most careful study: first, he was striving always, with a success that derived from his great gifts as well as his intense capacity for work, to get to the fundamentals of each issue he examined, beginning with the fundamental nature of war itself; and second, he is virtually alone in his accomplishment. He is not simply the greatest but the only true great book on war. (Brodie 1989, 53)

To make a determination on Eichelberger's generalship, first the concept of military genius must be defined. Only by understanding what Clausewitz meant by military genius can it be used as an analytical model for generalship. After defining military genius, then its key components must be determined. Then, these components and their subcomponents, if any, must be defined.

After obtaining a working model of military genius, Robert Eichelberger's career can then be examined. First, Eichelberger's pre-World War II career will be briefly assessed in order to understand what key schooling and practical experience contributed to his leadership during World War II. Personal habits, those often ubiquitous

characteristics, are also important. They often indicate what a general holds as important, in both thought and deed.

Next, Eichelberger's generalship during the Papua New Guinea, Netherlands New Guinea, and Philippines campaigns will be analyzed to determine if he consistently displayed the qualities of military genius in execution. Finally, the thesis will examine the relevance of Eichelberger's generalship and military genius to future Army leadership requirements and current leader development models.

In order to give an appropriate frame of reference, it is necessary to provide a brief explanation of military genius and the background of General Robert Eichelberger. In his book *On War*, military theorist Carl von Clausewitz explored the theory of the ideal military commander and termed this phenomenon "military genius." Clausewitz's concept of military genius is mainly discussed in Book One, Chapter Three of *On War*. Clausewitz derives the virtues needed in a great military leader from his examination of the climate of war and military history. Hence, it is a synthesis of both theory and history.

Since Clausewitz believed that war was filled with danger, exertion, chance, and uncertainty, then certain qualities were necessary to overcome these obstacles. Clausewitz used both Frederick the Great and Napoleon as his case studies, seeking to determine what inherent qualities influenced their successful generalship in battles and operations and how those traits set them apart from their peers.

The seeds of Robert L. Eichelberger's combat leadership spanned from his entrance into West Point in 1905 until his selection to command I Corps in June 1942. This time frame spans formative years that directly impacted the quality of his generalship. They include intellectual development, professional military education, and

practical leader experience in a variety of tactical and operational assignments. Key educational experiences included his formal schooling at West Point, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and the U.S. Army War College. Important operational assignments included training with units in field exercises and deployments in combat zones. Eichelberger served as a rifle platoon leader and infantry company commander in the 10th Infantry Regiment from 1909 to 1915. He served with the 22nd Infantry Regiment along the Arizona-Mexico border in 1915 in conjunction with the Punitive Expedition. He was also the G-2 of the Allied Expeditionary Forces during the Siberian Expedition from 1918-1920.

Three important World War II Pacific Theater campaigns highlighted Eichelberger's generalship while serving in positions of increasing responsibility. Eichelberger served as both a corps and Army commander under General Douglas MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area Force. As commander of I Corps, Eichelberger successfully revived a wrecked American force and defeated the Japanese at the Battle of Buna during the Papua New Guinea Campaign from December 1941 to January 1942. Next, Eichelberger commanded I Corps during amphibious assaults on Hollandia during the Netherlands New Guinea Campaign in April 1944. In June 1944, his superiors once again called upon him to revitalize a beaten force. He took command of "Biak Task Force" and defeated the Japanese during the Battle of Biak Island in June 1944. Finally, Eichelberger commanded the U.S. Eighth Army during the Philippines campaign from December 1944 to August 1945. Eichelberger's Eighth Army conducted fifty-two separate amphibious landings and seized the Southern Philippines island chains.

Some assumptions are necessary in order to begin this research. The first assumption of this research is that the model of military genius is a suitable one. Clausewitz's theoretical approach to war does not provide a prescriptive formula or list of principles for excellence in generalship. Instead, some level of analysis and then synthesis is required to understand the components of military genius. The second assumption is that the military genius model is still applicable today and therefore can be used to anticipate future leadership requirements. It is still relevant because at its core is the belief that theory and history aids the military officer by training his judgment. Finally, it is also assumed that an appropriate goal of professional military education, both institutional and personal, should be to institutionalize excellence by seeking to manufacture military genius.

A brief definition of military genius is necessary at this point. However, a detailed examination of the concept is available in a discussion of the research methodology (chapter 3). Military genius is a well-balanced fusion of outstanding talents of mind and personality that provide exceptional military achievements. Clausewitz defined genius as a "highly developed mental aptitude for a particular occupation" (Clausewitz 1989, 100). He then goes on to state that military genius is composed of "all those gifts of the mind and temperament that in combination bear on military activity" (Clausewitz 1989, 100). Moreover, these qualities must exist in a "harmonious combination" (Clausewitz 1989, 100). These components of military genius include courage, courage d'esprit or determination, and coup d'oeil or intellectual and intuitive talent in decision making.

One limitation of this proposed study was the lack of access to Eichelberger's personal papers. His personal papers are held at the William R. Perkins Library at Duke

University in North Carolina. Microform copies are available from the library at the United States Military Academy (USMA) in West Point, New York. The collection is rather large and loosely organized chronologically, not topically. Due to restrictive interlibrary loan policies concerning these collections, Eichelberger's papers were not available for research. Also, a lack of personal funds and the competing U.S. Army Command and General Staff Officer Course (CGSOC) curriculum prevented a research trip to the Perkins Library or the USMA library.

However, a lack of access to these papers was mitigated because other primary sources were available at the Fort Leavenworth Combined Arms Research Library. Editor Jay Luvaas's *Dear Miss Em: General Eichelberger's War in the Pacific, 1942-1945*, a collection of Eichelberger's letters to his wife during his Pacific campaigns, offer the researcher a look at his insight into events as they are unfolding. Eichelberger's autobiography, *Our Jungle Road to Tokyo*, was published in 1950 and presents some thoughtful analysis of his campaigns, brought on by five years of detachment from the stress of war. In addition, an audiotape of Eichelberger's speech to the CGSOC Class of 1950 entitled "Corps Operations in an Amphibious Campaign" is available. This speech offers Eichelberger's analysis of his major World War II campaigns.

Besides other primary sources, two important secondary sources, in the form of Eichelberger biographies, are available to the researcher. John F. Shortal's *Forged by Fire: Robert L. Eichelberger and the Pacific War* and Paul Chwialkowski's *In Caesar's Shadow: The Life of General Robert Eichelberger* rely heavily on The Perkins Library collection of Eichelberger's personal papers. In addition, both of the author's dissertations, Shortal's "Robert L. Eichelberger: The Evolution of a Combat

Commander” and Chwialkowski’s “A ‘Near Great’ General: The Life and Career of Robert L. Eichelberger,” are available and are excellently footnoted.

In order to complete the research, certain delimitations have been imposed. The focus of this study is on Eichelberger’s leadership of units during combat operations in World War II. It was not a compilation of campaign analyses--the focal point is on Eichelberger’s thoughts and actions. Eichelberger’s entire life will not be analyzed. Pre-World War II experiences will only be analyzed as these impacted Eichelberger’s preparation for leadership roles. Evaluation of Eichelberger’s generalship will not include his duties as commander of U.S. Eighth Army and Allied Ground Forces, Japan from 1945 to 1948. Eichelberger’s post-World War II life, to include his advisory duties to the Under Secretary of the Army during the Korean War, will also not be explored.

Finally, this research will provide some relevance and significance to the current military professional. Given the contemporary operating environment, it is likely that the US Army will fight an enemy that will employ asymmetric warfare. TRADOC White Paper *Future Operational and Threat Environment: A View of the World in 2015* states that future enemies will attempt offset U.S. superiorities in technology and firepower by conducting anti-access denial operations, defending in complex terrain, and fighting with fanatical savagery. These tactics have much in common with Japanese Army defenses of jungle infested islands of World War II. While four of the five elements of combat power (maneuver, firepower, protection, and information) have changed with time, only one-- leadership--remains time less. Leadership, the most dynamic of the elements of combat power, is the means in which a unit’s combat potential is transformed into combat power. FM 22-100, *Army Leadership*, professes that a high level of excellence in character and

competence are required to overcome challenges and win on future battlefields. As Ralph Peters stated, “Good isn’t enough. We need brilliant because the enemies we will face often will be the best their countries and cultures have to offer” (Noonan 2002).

Therefore, it is worthy to explore an example of an exemplary leader, through the prism of an analytical model, who consistently and decisively defeated an enemy that employed these tactics. That proposed model is Clausewitz’s military genius and the case study is that of General Robert Eichelberger during his Pacific campaigns in World War II.

Next, it is necessary for the researcher to examine the historiography of General Robert Eichelberger. In conjunction, the concept of military genius can be studied through the analyses of many historians. This literature review will provide a context for the research question while also identifying patterns or schools of thought on Eichelberger’s generalship.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

To begin the literature review, one might as well go straight to the heart of the historical argument. There are two schools of thought on the quality of Eichelberger's generalship. The first believes that he was a great unsung general of World War II. Author John Shortal (*Forged by Fire: Robert L. Eichelberger and the Pacific War*) and Professor Jay Luvaas (editor of *Dear Miss Em: General Eichelberger's War in the Pacific, 1942-1945*) are the chief proponents for Eichelberger's prominence in the history of World War II generalship. Shortal believes that Eichelberger was a great general because he always accomplished his missions, despite tough terrain and an even tougher Japanese enemy. He states that the distinct characteristics of Eichelberger's personal leadership style were brave leadership by example, concern for the welfare of his soldiers, and persistent determination.

Luvaas argues that Eichelberger's generalship during World War II should be a leadership lesson for military officers. He states that Eichelberger "possessed in abundance the essential ingredients of good leadership--integrity, loyalty, sound judgment, knowledge, courage, and human understanding" (Luvaas 1972, 22).

Author Paul Chwialkowski holds a contradictory view. In his book *In Caesar's Shadow: The Life of General Robert Eichelberger*, Chwialkowski attempts to discover why military officers and historians have ignored Eichelberger. He concludes that Eichelberger was not a "truly great" general but merely "near great" (Chwialkowski 1993, 205). First, he claims that Eichelberger's peers did not believe he possessed any

great skills or a “special competence” (Chwialkowski 1993, 205). Instead, Chwialkowski believes Eichelberger was a blatant careerist that advanced in rank due to his associations with high-ranking officers, not because of talent. Second, the author states that most of Eichelberger’s career was spent fighting in secondary theaters, such as Siberia during World War I and the Pacific during World War II. Inherent in this argument is that Eichelberger was not adequately tested against a sufficiently dangerous opponent. Third, the author contends that Eichelberger was not a serious student of the military profession and placed little value on self-study and education. Lastly, he argues that Eichelberger possessed an insecure and “destructive” personality that alienated both his superiors and peers (Chwialkowski 1993, 205-208).

After an awareness of both arguments, the researcher may then turn to primary sources. The *General Robert L. Eichelberger Papers* are held at the William R. Perkins Library at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. A microform copy of the entire collection is available from the United States Military Academy Library in West Point, New York. This collection contains materials from 1872 to 1961, with the bulk of the compilation focused on World War II and the occupation of Japan. The collection contains Eichelberger’s diaries, personal and official correspondence, military papers, writings, and speeches.

Eichelberger’s autobiography, *Our Jungle Road to Tokyo*, was written in collaboration with *Saturday Evening Post* writer Milton MacKaye. Eichelberger’s introduction contains only a brief description of his life prior to World War II. The bulk of the work covers his account of the Pacific campaigns. Published in 1950, this book provides Eichelberger’s analysis and reflections of his campaigns and important battles.

Luvaas's *Dear Miss Em* is a selected collection of Eichelberger's letters to his wife during World War II. It covers the time period from Eichelberger's assumption of I Corps command in August 1942 until Japan's surrender in September 1945. *Dear Miss Em* contains only about 15 percent of Eichelberger's letters to his wife. However, the editor claims that his work contains only about 20 percent of material that was covered in Eichelberger's *Our Jungle Road to Tokyo*, thus avoiding needless repetition and providing new material. *Dear Miss Em* offers a glimpse into Eichelberger's mind during operations in Papua New Guinea, Netherlands New Guinea, and the Philippines.

Another primary source is General Eichelberger's speech, entitled "Corps Operations in an Amphibious Campaign," to the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College Class of 1950. Given on 4 January 1950, he discusses the Buna and Hollandia battles, along with his Philippines campaign. The question and answer period at the end of the lecture offers an insight into Eichelberger's observations on leadership and the strengths and weaknesses of the Japanese Army during World War II.

Besides the published works of Shortal and Chwialkowski, other secondary source biographical information on Eichelberger is available. Both authors' dissertations, Shortal's "Robert L. Eichelberger: The Evolution of a Combat Commander" and Chwialkowski's "A 'Near Great' General: The Life and Career of Robert L. Eichelberger," mirror their published works and are excellently footnoted. Both Shortal and Luvaas collaborated to produce the condensed biography entitled "Robert L. Eichelberger: MacArthur's Fireman" in *We Shall Return!: MacArthur's Commanders and the Defeat of Japan, 1942-1945*. In addition, Shortal's article "MacArthur's Fireman: Robert L. Eichelberger," published in the U.S. Army's War College journal *Parameters*,

argues that Eichelberger often saved MacArthur's reputation with his highly personal leadership, innovative tactics, and prowess as a combat trainer.

But there does exist a lack of breadth and depth of secondary sources on Eichelberger's pre-World War II leadership, besides the biographies of Shortal and Chwialkowski. David Wittels, who interviewed Eichelberger for the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1943, includes a brief biography of Eichelberger in *These Are the Generals*, a compilation of articles on seventeen World War II generals. Wittels's article is a condensed biography of Eichelberger's pre-World War II service. He suggests that Eichelberger possessed a single-minded tenacity throughout his military career. He praised Eichelberger for his personal bravery and superior intelligence during the Siberian campaign. He also argues that Eichelberger was selected to be Superintendent of West Point due to his intelligence.

In addition to biographies, it is also important to discover what Eichelberger's superiors thought about his leadership. General William Graves was the commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force in Siberia and served as both Eichelberger's superior and mentor. Throughout his book *America's Siberian Adventure, 1918-1920*, General Graves relies heavily on the intelligence analysis of Eichelberger; a testament to Eichelberger's intellectual gifts and proven trust.

Perhaps Eichelberger's most controversial superior was General Douglas MacArthur, the commander of the South West Pacific Area in World War II. In his book *Reminiscences*, General Douglas MacArthur praises Eichelberger for his combat bravery and his administrative abilities, calling him a "commander of the first order" (MacArthur 1964, 157). In his book *The Untold Story of Douglas MacArthur*, war correspondent

Frazier Hunt, who interviewed MacArthur numerous times, stated that MacArthur believed that Eichelberger was the Stonewall Jackson to his Robert E. Lee, praising him for his speed and victories during the Philippines Campaign. Renowned MacArthur biographer D. Clayton James, in *The Years of MacArthur* (Volume II), states that Eichelberger was “widely esteemed” among his fellow general officers, including General Dwight Eisenhower (James 1975, 276). He also contends that MacArthur selected Eichelberger to command the planned main effort assault on the Japanese homeland due to his outstanding previous performance as an Army commander.

Additionally, Eichelberger’s peers, subordinates, and contemporaries also provide the researcher with judgments on his generalship. In *General Kenney Reports: A Personal History of the Pacific War*, the former Commanding General of the Allied Air Forces of the Southwest Pacific commends Eichelberger for Eighth Army’s rapidity during the Mindanao operation. Kenney believed that swiftness in operations was a hallmark of Eichelberger’s operational expertise.

General Walter Krueger was both Eichelberger’s superior and fellow Army commander during the Pacific campaigns in World War II. Krueger, who commanded the U.S. Sixth Army, often feuded with Eichelberger for MacArthur’s big assignments. While Krueger’s narrative *From Down Under to Nippon: The Story of Sixth Army in World War II* lacks any analysis of Eichelberger’s generalship during the Netherlands New Guinea Campaign, he does state that he recommended to MacArthur that Eichelberger be given command of the U.S. Eighth Army.

General Clovis Byers was Eichelberger’s chief of staff for I Corps and Eighth Army. In his articles “A Lesson in Leadership” in *Military Review* and “Combat

Leadership” in the *Marine Corps Gazette*, Byers chronicles Eichelberger’s assumption of command at Buna under desperate conditions. Byers emphatically states that Eichelberger’s transformation of a defeated American force at Buna into a victory “constitutes the most inspiring example of leadership I have ever witnessed” (Byers 1963, 15).

General Courtney Whitney was an intelligence officer on MacArthur’s staff and one of his trusted “Bataan Gang” members. In his book, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous With History*, he credits the Allied victory at Buna to Eichelberger. Specifically, Whitney states that Eichelberger combined tactical changes in the attack with personal courage and dynamic leadership to defeat the Japanese.

But Admiral Daniel Barbey in *MacArthur’s Amphibious Navy: Seventh Amphibious Force Operations, 1943-1945*, offers a somewhat less congratulatory viewpoint. Barbey, the commander of the U.S. Navy’s Seventh Amphibious Force, did describe Eichelberger as an “able officer with a warm personality” (Barbey 1969, 27). However, he goes on to criticize Eichelberger for overestimating the Japanese Army’s capabilities, believing that the memories of Buna haunted Eichelberger during the Netherlands New Guinea campaign and made him overly cautious.

Campaign histories also help put Eichelberger’s decisions and actions into their proper context. In addition, some authors provide excellent analysis of Eichelberger’s generalship. These applicable histories can be subdivided into the Siberian Expedition, Papua New Guinea Campaign, Netherlands New Guinea Campaign, and the Philippines Campaign. However, most of the literature seems to be weighted on the Papua Campaign and specifically, the Battle of Buna. This battle seems to garner attention because of the

perception that Eichelberger rebuilt a demoralized American force and defeated the Japanese.

Virginia Cooper's "AEF Siberia-The Forgotten Army" in *Military Review* and Judith Lockett's master's thesis "Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Eichelberger and the American Military Intelligence Division in Siberia, 1919-1920," both provide some commentary on Eichelberger's performance as an intelligence officer. Cooper's article contains Eichelberger's reflections on the challenges of the campaign. It offers a view of Eichelberger's analysis of the strategic and operational problems encountered. Lockett's paper discusses Eichelberger's formation of an intelligence collection system in Siberia. Eichelberger's personal mission to rescue American prisoners and his interrogations of intelligence sources are also discussed. Lockett praises Eichelberger's analytical and intellectual skills, believing he was able to discover Japanese attempts at destabilizing Siberia and convince his commander of the accuracy of his investigative results.

After Siberia, the thesis can then move to Eichelberger's first campaign as the I Corps commander. Samuel Milner's *Victory in Papua*, the official U.S. Army history, provides a thorough narrative of the Papua New Guinea campaign and is an excellent starting point. Next, Eichelberger's official *History of the Buna Campaign: December 1, 1942 to January 25, 1943* is based on official unit records and personal interviews. This report was written immediately following the Buna campaign while I Corps was conducting refit operations in Australia. Sent to the Commandant of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College by Eichelberger, its purpose was to teach tactical lessons on fighting the Japanese in jungle operations. While essentially a staff report, it is

Eichelberger's official "lessons learned" and it is his signature that appears on the foreword. Especially important are his observations on leadership and tactics.

Luvaas's "Buna, 19 November 1942 – 2 January 1943: A Leavenworth Nightmare" in *America's First Battles: 1776-1965*, is also an excellent battle analysis. Luvaas argues that Eichelberger defeated the Japanese not just by his personal leadership, but also because of the tactical changes he instituted. Eichelberger, Luvaas claims, stopped costly frontal assaults and employed new offensive tactics. The author argues that Eichelberger's offense consisted of patrolling to identify enemy strengths and weaknesses, infiltration attacks, and small unit combined arms tactics to overcome enemy strongpoints.

Thomas Huber's "Eichelberger at Buna: A Study in Battle Command" in *Studies in Battle Command* and David LaBarbera's paper entitled "Buna: MacArthur's Lieutenants in an Immature Theater" believe that Eichelberger reversed MacArthur's operational failure at Buna. Huber professes that Eichelberger beat the Japanese by concentrating his combat power, improving logistics, and demonstrating courageous leadership. LaBarbera states that Eichelberger won the victory by tactical changes, leadership by example, and a sense of urgency.

Other books and articles specifically focus on Eichelberger's personal courage and determination. Frazier Hunt in his 1944 book, *MacArthur and the War Against Japan*, praised Eichelberger's calm demeanor and physical courage while leading from the front during the Battle of Buna. Ted Shane's 1944 *Heroes of the Pacific* described Eichelberger's personal courage during the Battle of Buna from the observations of a U.S. Army sergeant. In George Johnston's "Fighting Back in New Guinea" in *Combat*

World War II: Pacific Theater of Operations, the author believes that Eichelberger's physical presence at the front lines inspired his soldiers to victory.

Cole Kingseed's "Restoring the Fighting Spirit" in *Army* and Joseph Olmstead's "Assumption of Command" in *Military Review* both explore Eichelberger's successful leadership during the Papua campaign. Kingseed attributes Eichelberger's triumph to his ability to improve the morale of his men and lead by example. Olmstead argues that Eichelberger was able to reverse American defeats in Buna by relieving substandard officers and placing his own team in key staff and command positions.

On the other hand, three other works offer a somewhat differing view of Eichelberger's performance during the Papua New Guinea Campaign. In *Bloody Buna*, author Lida Mayo contends that Eichelberger did not demonstrate any brilliance but merely slogged his way to victory. In his biography of General Forrest Harding (one of the division commanders that Eichelberger relieved at Buna) entitled *Gentle Knight: The Life and Times of Major General Edwin Forrest Harding*, author Leslie Anders contends that Eichelberger was able to win at Buna because he received personnel and armor reinforcements. Anders states that Eichelberger's performance was not any better than Harding's efforts. In *MacArthur Strikes Back: Decision at Buna: New Guinea, 1942-1943*, author Harry Gailey agrees with Anders's viewpoint that Eichelberger won because he was given the replacements that Harding was denied.

Eichelberger's next campaign as I Corps commander was during the Netherlands New Guinea campaign. Robert Ross Smith's *The Approach to the Philippines*, which contains the U.S. Army's official history of the Netherlands New Guinea Campaign, is a first-rate narrative. Two outstanding campaign analyses of the Netherlands New Guinea

Campaign are Stephen Taafee's *MacArthur's Jungle War: The 1944 New Guinea Campaign* and Nathan Prefer's *MacArthur's New Guinea Campaign*. Taafee argues that Eichelberger's optimistic leadership rescued American forces on Biak Island. Taafee maintains that Eichelberger devised an original tactical plan that quickly isolated Japanese strongpoints. Prefer also praises Eichelberger for his tactical concept at Biak Island, especially concentrating his combat forces and firepower to unhinge the Japanese defense.

Also noteworthy is Harold Riegelman's *Caves of Biak: An American Officer's Experience in the South West Pacific*. Riegelman was Eichelberger's chemical officer for I Corps. Riegelman praised Eichelberger for his courage and front line leadership. Also, Riegelman asserts that Eichelberger was able to solve complex tactical problems because he found it necessary to conduct a through personal reconnaissance. The author argues that this first hand knowledge of battlefield situations, combined with Eichelberger's exceptional mind, was able to produce successful and original solutions.

John Shortal's article "Hollandia: A Training Victory" in *Military Review* examines Eichelberger's often overlooked accomplishments during the Battle of Hollandia. He argues that I Corps was successful during the Hollandia phase due to a rigorous training program previously devised and executed by Eichelberger. This training program, which emphasized small unit actions, flexibility, and initiative, enabled leaders to seize tactical opportunities and secure Hollandia airfields before the Japanese could organize a response.

Eichelberger's Philippines campaigns as the commander of the Eighth Army were perhaps his most challenging and complex. Robert Ross Smith's *Triumph in the*

Philippines and Samuel Morison's *The Liberation of the Philippines* are superb official histories and campaign narratives. Stephen Lofgren's *Southern Philippines* from the U.S. Army Center of Military History provides a short but first class campaign analysis. Lofgren contends that Eichelberger's Philippines campaigns were successful because he designed aggressive and innovative operations that unhinged the Japanese defenses and demoralized them. Dan McNeill's "Eichelberger in Mindanao: Leadership in Joint Operations" maintains that Mindanao campaign was successful due to Eichelberger's audacious and flexible generalship which kept the Japanese forces from reconstituting a coherent defense.

Some good primary source material is also available on the Eichelberger's Philippines campaign. The *Report of the Commanding General, Eighth Army, on the Panay-Negros and Cebu Operations* and the *Report of the Commanding General, Eighth Army, on the Mindanao Operations* contain the official records of some of the major operations during the Philippines campaign. Especially important are the lessons learned sections of both reports. Both of the reports' condensed lessons center on the need for aggressive reconnaissance, seizure of key objectives and terrain, and rapid exploitation--all considered hallmarks of Eichelberger's operational style.

Finally, since Clausewitz's theory of military genius will serve as the analytical model, it is necessary to review some important sources and interpretations. These allow the researcher to test his "working model" of military genius against that of another person's analysis, often gaining a unique perspective. This review can be subdivided into three parts: a brief overview how Clausewitz arrived at the concept of military genius, the

differing interpretations of military genius, and suggestions on how to produce or instill military genius in leaders.

The bulk of Clausewitz's discussion on military genius is found in Book One, Chapter Three of *On War*. But Clausewitz also discusses military genius, determination, courage, and coup d'oeil throughout *On War*. Author Michael Handel in *Masters of War: Classic Strategic Thought* provides the researcher with a valuable tool by topically listing references to such terms as military genius and coup d'oeil.

Author Michael Howard argues in the preface to *A Short Guide to Clausewitz On War* that Clausewitz developed his concept of military genius as a result of his study of the moral and physical requirements of the battlefield. Roger Leonard in *A Short Guide to Clausewitz On War* claims that the concept of military genius originated from Clausewitz's attempt to make the greatness of Napoleon comprehensible to military officers. Peter Paret in an introductory essay to the Princeton University 1989 paperback printing of *On War* believes that Clausewitz's military genius concept was a theory derived from a study of warfare that discerned between those characteristics that were enduring versus the momentary ones. Paret states that this theory was meant to serve as a guide to the study of warfare.

Perhaps the most focused discussion of the origins of military genius concept can be obtained from a reading of Jon Sumida's "The Relationship of History and Theory in *On War*: The Clausewitzian Ideal and its Implications" in the *Journal of Military History*. Sumida argues that Clausewitz purposefully combined theory and history in order to study decision making in battle. Sumida states that theory was used to understand the

uniquely human and therefore complex nature of warfare. Then, the study of history was used to study a commander's judgment in a given context.

After an understanding of the origin of the military genius theory, interpretations on the definitions and components of military genius can be explored. Most of these expositions can be found in periodical literature or dissertations. In "Clausewitz, Genius, and the Rules" in the *Journal of Military History*, Clifford Rogers claims that military genius consisted of coup d'oeil and determination. He goes on to state that a military genius was a commander who could rapidly recognize and apply the appropriate rules of war to a given tactical problem. Dominic Caraccilo and John Pothin in "Coup d'oeil: The Commander's Intuition in Clausewitzian Terms" in the *Air & Space Power Chronicles* define a military genius as a patient and intuitive leader who not only possesses a high level of "cognitive complexity" but also great interpersonal skills (Caraccilo and Pothin, 5).

But most authors tend to define military genius in terms of what they believe are its components. Author Jon Sumida defines military genius as a combination of intuition and determination. Antulio Echevarria in his dissertation "Neo-Clausewitzian: Freytag-Loringhoven and the Militarization of Clausewitz in German Military Literature Before the First World War" believes that military genius was a balance of courage, boldness, strength of character, and intelligence. Katherine Herbig in her essay "Chance and Uncertainty in On War" in *Clausewitz and Modern Strategy* states that military genius was a combination of various qualities to include coup d'oeil, determination, presence of mind, intelligence, strength of mind, character, energy, and even political acumen. Thomas Killion in "Clausewitz and Military Genius" in *Military Review* states that

military genius is a combination of intellectual and personality temperaments. The intellectual gifts consist of an extensive and ingrained knowledge base, coupled with a grasp of the influences of terrain on military operations. He argues that the important personality attributes are courage, determination, stability, firmness, endurance, and strength of character.

Lastly, authors also comment on means to develop military genius. One author, Trevor DePuy in *A Genius for War: The German Army and General Staff, 1807-1945*, presents the educational model of the German General Staff as a case study for the production of military genius. DePuy claims that the German Army successfully produced military genius by a staff college whose key components were a demanding study of military history and challenging wargames and map exercises.

Most authors believe that military genius is developed through education, training, and experience. H. Gray Otis in “Developing Military Genius” in *Military Review* argues that coup d’oeil is more than just intuition. He states that coup d’oeil is insight gained by years of military experience resulting from training. Authors Caraccilo and Pothin also stress the importance of experience. They believe that genius is cultivated by developing an “experiential database” (Caraccilo and Pothin, 4). They believe that this database is built through participation in training exercises and observation and interaction with other leaders. They also contend that with an increase in experience comes an increase in intuitive powers. Thomas Killion argues that intellect is trained by both education and experience. But he emphatically contends that innate personality traits, so important to military genius, can only be molded by experience and cannot be trained. Jon Sumida and Michael Linn, author of “The Opening of the Military Mind” in

Marine Corps Gazette, stress the importance of not only study but also reflection in order to exercise the mind.

After the researcher has finished his assessment of the literature on Eichelberger and Clausewitz's concept of military genius, it is necessary for him outline the method in which the research will be conducted. The research methodology begins with an examination of military genius, transitions to the construction of a synthesized military genius model, and then summarizes how this model will be applied to an analysis of Eichelberger's genius.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The basic methodology began with an examination of military genius and its components. This assessment commenced by reading and analyzing Clausewitz's *On War*. The majority of Clausewitz's discussion of military genius is contained in Book One, Chapter Three. However, other chapters do contribute to his theory of military genius and were read. Chapters Four through Eight in Book One described the battlefield realities and therefore the environment in which military genius must operate. Other chapters in Book Three covered attributes such as military spirit, boldness, perseverance, and cunning.

The goal of the Clausewitz readings and initial analysis was a working definition of military genius and its components. Next, secondary source material concerning Clausewitz and military genius were read. The works of these historians and analysts served to produce a finalized definition of military genius and its components, along with completed definitions of these components. These authors provided unique perspectives on Clausewitz's use of history and theory and his concept of military genius.

The origins of Clausewitz's concept of military genius were a result of his study of history and theory. Author Jon Sumida believes that Clausewitz united history and theory in order to study "critical decision making" in battle. Clausewitz believed that history provided a narrative in which to analyze leadership in different circumstances and environments. Historical case studies provided examples of cause and effect; decisions that led to either successful or unsuccessful actions (Sumida 2001, 334). Historical case

studies were used in an attempt to decipher the greatness of military generals such as Napoleon and Frederick the Great. By studying battles and campaigns, Clausewitz's wanted to "isolate and examine those human qualities which contributed most to the virtuosity on the battlefield" (Echevarria 1994, 181).

The goal of theory was to illustrate the demands of the battlefield. Theory was a device to separate the enduring elements of war from the transitory ones. Clausewitz concluded that those timeless elements were the "free play of human intelligence, will, and emotion," all in a horrifically violent atmosphere (Paret 1989, 11). Clausewitz described the "climate of war" as composed of the elements of "danger, uncertainty, exertion, and chance" (Clausewitz 1989, 104). Therefore, as author Katherine Herbig states, Clausewitz deduced that since war contained much uncertainty, then a commander must possess "special qualities to deal with adversity," along with the "intellectual flexibility to take advantage of opportunities" (Herbig 2001, 100). A study of war's environment produced these "finest and least dispensable of military virtues, in all their degrees and variations" (Clausewitz 1989, 86). These qualities, verified with a study of case studies on generalship, constituted military genius.

Clausewitz defined military genius as those "gifts of mind and temperament that in combination bear on military activity" (Clausewitz 1989, 100). By stressing combination, Clausewitz realized that just possessing one quality was insufficient and that all of these qualities were interactive. Moreover, Clausewitz stated that a "harmonious combination" must exist; one attribute may be stronger in a leader than the other but the strongest trait could not "conflict with the rest" (Clausewitz 1989, 100).

These qualities or components of military genius were courage, determination, and coup d'oeil.

Clausewitz attached great importance to courage. Since war required “physical exertion and suffering,” these would “destroy” a commander unless he became “indifferent” to them (Clausewitz 1989, 101). Both the body and mind of a commander had to be able to withstand fear and strain, each honed to withstand the withering effects of sustained combat. Also, courage allowed a commander to operate in the face of danger and enabled him to position himself on the battlefield, regardless of personal risk, in order to make a crucial decision. Therefore, Clausewitz considered courage the “highest of all moral qualities” and the “soldier’s first requirement” (Clausewitz 1989, 85; 101).

Clausewitz believed there were two sub-components to courage, physical and moral courage. He referred to these as “courage in the face of danger” and “courage to accept responsibility”(Clausewitz 1989, 101). Physical courage was a result of “indifference to danger” and “positive motives” such as “ambition, patriotism, or enthusiasm of any kind” (Clausewitz 1989, 101). Indifference to danger was considered a permanent condition, a part of a person’s internal psychological make-up. Clausewitz stated that this was part of a person’s “constitution,” “temperament,” or “habit” (Clausewitz 1989, 101). Courage as a result of momentary emotions, such as patriotism or ambition, motivated the mind and sparked a leader’s actions, often achieving greater results. Nevertheless, Clausewitz determined that it was extremely important for both to exist in a military leader. He stated, “The highest kind of courage is a compound of both” (Clausewitz 1989, 101).

However, valor alone could not produce military genius. Clausewitz stated, “The reader should not think that a brave but brainless fighter can do anything of outstanding significance in war” (Clausewitz 1989, 111). Courageous behavior, while having the ability to rally soldiers to prevent defeat, could not solely and consistently ensure victory. From his study of generalship, Clausewitz determined that great leaders also needed to possess mental prowess in both determination and intellect.

Determination was a driving tenacity to overcome the physical and mental challenges of war and accomplish the mission. Determination allowed a commander to maintain his mental faculties despite the very brutal climate of war that included death and suffering before his very eyes. Clausewitz defined determination as a “mental habit” whose role was to “limit the agonies of doubt and perils of hesitation when the motives for action were inadequate” (Clausewitz 1989, 102-103). Determination was important because the battlefield was fundamentally unclear. Information was often misleading, incorrect, or incomplete. Clausewitz states that during combat, the commander “continually finds things that are not as he expected” (Clausewitz 1989, 102). This in turn challenged his plans and their underlying assumptions. Subsequent information and intelligence often tended to produce more uncertainty, not less. Determination was the will of the commander to make decisions, despite these doubts.

Determination is also the component of military genius that could overcome friction. Clausewitz defines friction as the “countless minor incidents--the kind you can never really foresee--[that] combine to lower the general level of performance, so that one always falls far short of the intended goal” (Clausewitz 1989, 119). As author Michael Howard stated, Clausewitz believed that the commander’s determination made

an army, like a machine, work. Determination must “radiate” from a commander because he “alone set and maintained the whole machine in motion” (Howard 1967, x).

Clausewitz also discussed subcomponents or qualities of determination. Energy was a contagious enthusiasm that could motivate troops to overcome the withering effects of war. Staunchness was the ability to recover from a major setback, while endurance was the ability to overcome multiple setbacks. Strength of mind allowed intellectual powers to work. It was the “ability to keep one’s head at times of exceptional stress and violent emotion” (Clausewitz 1989, 105). Self-control and human dignity allowed a commander to think rationally and calmly despite stress. Finally, strength of character maintained one’s emotional balance. As Clausewitz states, “Even with the violence of emotion, judgment and principle must still function like a ship’s compass, which records the slightest variations however rough the sea” (Clausewitz 1989, 107).

Nevertheless, courage and determination alone could not produce success. Clausewitz stated, “No great commander was ever a man of limited intellect” (Clausewitz 1989, 146). Coup d’oeil was an essential component of genius, defined as a “quick recognition of a truth that the mind would ordinarily miss or would perceive only after long study or reflection” (Clausewitz 1989, 102). Clausewitz further goes on to state that coup d’oeil was a “sense of unity and power of judgment raised to a marvelous pitch of vision, which easily grasps and dismisses a thousand remote possibilities, which an ordinary mind would labor to identify and wear itself out in doing so” (Clausewitz 1989, 112).

The very nature of war was based on ambiguity, thus a highly developed mind was needed to penetrate the fog of war. Since war was a human activity, intelligence was

often inaccurate and incomplete, requiring decisions to be made without a complete knowledge of the truth. The commander also could not fall back on rules to govern his actions because every circumstance was different and enemy actions could not be predicted like a science experiment. Clausewitz stated, “Circumstances vary so enormously in war and are so indefinable, that a vast array of factors has to be appreciated--mostly in the light of probabilities alone” (Clausewitz 1989, 112).

In addition, the dangers of war would also affect the mind’s ability to make decisions. Therefore, Clausewitz believed that a “strong mind” was necessary, not just a “brilliant” one. Determination and coup d’oeil were integrally linked. He stated that the “mind tells that boldness is required and thus gives direction to his will” (Clausewitz 1989, 103). Determination told the mind to follow the “faint light” of intellect (Clausewitz 1989, 102).

Authors Dominic Caraccilo and John Pothin believe that coup d’oeil allows a commander to seize and maintain the initiative in combat. They define coup d’oeil as an intuitive ability to deal with high levels of “cognitive complexity” (Caraccilo and Pothin 2000, 2). They also believe that coup d’oeil equips a commander with “high levels of situational awareness” (Caraccilo and Pothin 2000, 1).

Coup d’oeil is a combination of intellect, resulting from education, and intuition, the product of experience. According to Clausewitz, intellect was based on the “general intellectual development of a society.” Author Thomas Killion adds that intellect’s foundation rested on a “broad knowledge base” combined with technical and tactical competence. More important, Killion believes that this knowledge “must be so ingrained”

that it becomes “innate” (Killion 1995, 1). This knowledge could therefore be called upon by intellect, the “inward eye” or “guiding light” (Clausewitz 1989, 102).

Some of the characteristics of coup d’oeil are inquisitiveness, discrimination, calmness, comprehensiveness, and terrain appreciation (Caraccilo and Pothin 2000, 5). Inquisitiveness is a constant desire for information and understanding, what we refer to in modern times as intellectual curiosity. Discrimination is the ability of the mind to weed out the important and critical information from the less vital. Clausewitz stated that this entailed a “skilled intelligence to scent out the truth” (Clausewitz 1989, 101).

Calmness was both a patient and “unexcitable mind,” despite danger and “human emotional extremes” (Caraccilo and Pothin 2000, 5). Calm minds could focus the intellect. Clausewitz stated, “The commander must trust his judgment and stand like a rock on which the waves break in vain. It is not an easy thing to do” (Clausewitz 1989, 117).

Comprehensiveness refers to a commander’s aptitude in identifying and considering an enormous number of relevant details to a decision or situation (Clausewitz 1989, 117). Terrain appreciation is what Clausewitz described as “sense of locality” (Clausewitz 1989, 109). This is a combination of the two abilities: the capacity of a commander to quickly judge the tactical importance of terrain and then visualize the battlefield with his imaginative powers. As author Thomas Killion states, “Experts can see what others cannot” (Killion 1995, 6).

After completion of the military genius model (table 1), an examination of how it can be developed is worth the researcher’s effort. *On War* must also be read to discover Clausewitz’s ideas on instilling military genius through experience, intellectual

development, and training. This will prove valuable in developing a critical eye when reading primary and secondary source material on Eichelberger. Clausewitz believed that only combat experience could provide the true “lubricant” to reduce the overall effects of friction (Clausewitz 1989, 122). Short of actual experience in combat, Clausewitz deemed training to be significantly meaningful. He stated that the goal of training should be to “train officers judgment, common sense, and resolution” and that “no soldier, whatever his rank, should wait for war to expose him to those aspects of active service that amaze and confuse him when he first comes across them” (Clausewitz 1989, 122). Also, Clausewitz advocated the need for officers to serve as war observers, so that they may “learn what war is like” (Clausewitz 1989, 122).

Tough, demanding training, while never fully imitating the fear of death on the battlefield, builds self-confidence and “strengthens the heart in great peril” (Clausewitz 1989, 122). It also fostered the requirements of *coup d’oeil*. As authors Dominic Caraccilo and John Pothin stated, experience gained in training helped a leader’s decision-making skills. During unit training, a commander is not only executing his missions but also interacting and observing other leaders. This process, over time, “refines the experiential database required for the development of military genius” (Caraccilo and Pothin 2000, 4).

Also, in order to train the mind, Clausewitz urged the study of military history. He believed that the true utilitarian nature of history was that it provided the military leader with lessons on what “was possible” and what “was not” (Clausewitz 1989, 120). He stated, “Theory then become as guide to anyone who wants to learn about war from books; it will light his way, ease his progress, train his judgment, and help him avoid

pitfalls” (Clausewitz 1989, 141). The study of history did not tell a commander what to think but instead sharpened and developed his intellect.

After constructing a military genius model, Eichelberger’s generalship was then examined with respect to the components of military genius. Primary sources were consulted first before turning to the opinions and analyses of secondary source authors. Campaign accounts and analyses were read in order to gain other opinions of Eichelberger’s generalship or to place his decisions and actions in context. The biographies of Eichelberger’s subordinates, peers, and superiors were also consulted in order to discover their impressions of his leadership.

First, Eichelberger’s pre-World War II career was scrutinized. Particularly important were those educational opportunities and practical experiences that may have formed the foundation for military genius. Initial focus was on professional, institutional military education and operational combat assignments. Additionally, it was important to discover the extent to which Eichelberger immersed himself in reading military history. Also important was discovering how the mentorship of superior officers influenced Eichelberger’s professional learning.

Subsequently, analysis was conducted on Eichelberger’s generalship during three pivotal campaigns. Eichelberger’s direct leadership during the Battles of Buna, Hollandia, Biak Island, Tagaytay Ridge, and Davao City were analyzed using the components of military genius. Next, Eichelberger’s organizational leadership during the Papua New Guinea, Netherlands New Guinea, and Philippines Campaigns was also analyzed. Equally important was a discovery of how experiences in a former campaigns and battles impacted his generalship in subsequent operations. It was also necessary to

ascertain whether Eichelberger demonstrated degradation in military genius along with his rise in rank and responsibilities.

Finally, Eichelberger's leadership and the military genius model were explored to discover whether any implications might be drawn with respect to current U.S. Army leadership doctrine and development. Especially important was a look at implications Eichelberger's leadership could have on contemporary debates surrounding professional military education vs. practical operational experience, institutional education vs. personal study, and the value of officer mentorship. Moreover, Eichelberger's leadership was examined in an attempt to discover what leadership traits were essential to his ability to overcome a staunch Japanese enemy fighting in difficult terrain. This will provide some insight into leadership qualities needed to fight a future fanatical enemy who is likely to employ asymmetrical tactics in complex terrain.

With the completion of our military genius model, the analysis and interpretation phase can begin. This phase will incorporate the discoveries revealed through the literature review and then apply the military genius model as a means of analyzing Eichelberger's generalship. This analysis will not only incorporate genius in execution but also seek to discover the fostering of components and sub-components in preparatory years.

Table 1. Military Genius Model

MILITARY GENIUS MODEL	
COMPONENTS	SUBCOMPONENTS
COURAGE	Physical <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indifference to Danger • Positive Motives (Ambition, Patriotism, Enthusiasm) Moral
DETERMINATION	Energy Staunchness Endurance Strength of Mind Self Control Human Dignity Strength of Character
COUP D'OEIL	Intellect & Intuition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inquisitiveness • Discrimination • Calmness • Comprehensiveness • Terrain Appreciation

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Courage

Since Clausewitz stated that a “soldier’s first requirement” was courage, then the analysis will begin with an assessment of Eichelberger’s physical and moral courage. Eichelberger’s physical courage originated from a mix of indifference to danger, an enthusiastic hatred of his enemy, and ambition. In addition to these spiritual roots, his physical courage also stemmed from a pragmatic need to exercise battle command and inspire his soldiers. Eichelberger demonstrated his physical courage by direct leadership in small engagements during the Siberian Expedition, such as the Battle of Novitskaya, and in numerous battles during World War II, to include Buna, Biak Island, Tagaytay Ridge, and Davao City. He demonstrated his moral courage with a deep appreciation of the responsibilities of command and a willingness to accept responsibility for his decisions and actions.

There exists some evidence that Eichelberger possessed an indifference to danger, highlighted especially in his youthful years and the Siberian Expedition. For instance, his older brother related a story to a biographer of how a twelve-year-old Eichelberger responded to a bully. The bully put a chip on his shoulder and dared Eichelberger to knock it off. According to his brother, Robert Eichelberger just “picked a spot on his chin” and “let him have it” (Wittels 1943, 98).

In Siberia, Eichelberger wrote his wife that he “enjoyed our little engagements thoroughly” and “had a wonderful time” during firefights. His first exposure to enemy

fire gave him a jolt of self-confidence. He wrote, “I proved to myself that I could stand up and laugh while bullets were passing and other men old enough to know better had eyes as big as full moons” (Chwialkowski 1993, 21). Eichelberger also believed that he left Siberia “unafraid in combat” (Chwialkowski 1993, 22).

After reading a compilation of Eichelberger’s letters in *Dear Miss Em*, there can be little doubt that Eichelberger was an extremely ambitious man. Eichelberger once described himself as a “man possessed” to find achievement and recognition (Chwialkowski 1993, 104). This may be, as author Paul Chwialkowski contends, the result of his childhood. Growing up, Eichelberger, as a middle child, lived in the shadow of his smart and athletic older brother. After World War I, he felt slighted by the superiors and peers who served in the trenches in France, the so-called “fair-haired boys” (Chwialkowski 1993, 3-4; 30). As a result, he briefly changed his branch from Infantry to Adjutant General’s Corps during the Interwar years in an attempt to be promoted to Colonel.

During World War II, he often prodded his wife to keep him informed on events in Europe, especially the achievements of his peers, Generals George S. Patton (“Georgie”), Omar Bradley, and Dwight D. Eisenhower (“Ike”). His letters often contain a touch of resentment at his superior, General Douglas MacArthur, Commander of the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA). MacArthur’s press censorship infuriated Eichelberger, who believed that both he and his units, I Corps and then later Eighth Army, should have received more publicity for their accomplishments. Also, Eichelberger’s competition with fellow Army commander, Sixth Army commander General Walter Krueger, is mostly

based on a competition for notoriety, with the “Race for Manila” during the Luzon Campaign as a shining example of two ambitious commanders.

In addition to ambition, Eichelberger’s physical courage was also fueled by a hatred of the Japanese. During the Siberian Expedition and subsequent duties as an intelligence officer in the Philippines and China prior to World War II, Eichelberger’s relationships and confrontations with the Japanese seemed to have engendered an intense dislike. In Siberia, he believed that the Japanese were imperialistic, treacherous, and devoid of human compassion. This loathing of the Japanese carried on and was intensified during combat in World War II. In 1944 he wrote to his wife, “Now my feeling is that I would like to fight the Japanese as often as possible” (Luvaas 1981, 150). In 1947 he recalled, “I too know of the Japanese deceit and brutality since I served with the Japanese military in Siberia during World War I and fought against them in World War II. My hatred for them was very real and I probably enjoyed fighting them more than any other officer” (McNeil 1989, 9).

Eichelberger’s physical courage was also based on a pragmatic view of its importance to the military commander. He understood that physical courage allowed a commander to move to a place on the battlefield where he could visualize the battle, make a situational estimate, and then arrive at the correct decision. To put it simply, physical courage often enabled coup d’oeil. Besides a necessity of battle command, Eichelberger also triumphed the psychological effects of a commander’s courage. He believed that a commander’s courage stirred his subordinates and that these moral forces often were decisive in battle. Finally, Eichelberger thought that physical conditioning and strenuous training buttressed courage by warding off fatigue.

In his autobiography, *Our Jungle Road to Tokyo*, Eichelberger stated, “The best way for an officer to learn is to go where bullets fly. Then he doesn’t have to take other men’s opinions on what the problems are. He finds out for himself” (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 14). To Eichelberger, war was an extremely personal affair that could not be separated from human behavior. Reports and statistics were one thing, but personal visits often uncovered the precise problems and thus, the proper solutions. What he desired is what the Germans would term *fingerspitzengefühl*, a touch, feel, or understanding of the battlefield. Eichelberger stated, “Sometimes a commanding general far, far in the rear, who watches the numerous pins on a map, cannot get the feel of the battlefield and the problems of the commanders” (Luvaas 1981, 139). During his campaigns in the Pacific theater, he was often contemptuous of superior officers who have “never commanded anything in person” but stayed “many miles away, holding a bat over the fellow who has the responsibility of fighting” (Chwialkowski 1993, 111). According to Eichelberger, in order to make a truly accurate assessment, a leader must make a personal reconnaissance and thus risk contact with enemy fires.

Eichelberger believed that courage also served as a source of inspiration to his men. Given the cruel and brutal climate of war, men were expected to advance on enemy positions and risk their lives, an uncommonly unnatural thing for a human being to do. Eichelberger bluntly summed up a fundamental truth of combat and human nature when he stated, “Almost all troops are afraid in battle because almost all men are afraid. That is where the leadership comes in” (Blakeley, n.d., 85).

Accordingly, it was imperative that a leader served as an exemplar and a rallying point for his men. Eichelberger professed that a commander must “radiate courage” to his

subordinates (Luvaas 1981, 214). His courage could be infectious to those around him. But in order to encourage men, Eichelberger believed that the commander must be physically present on the battlefield. Eichelberger stated, “There is an ancient military maxim that a commander must be seen by his troops in combat” (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 28).

Eichelberger professed that soldiers also responded favorably to officers, especially high-ranking officers, who were willing to risk their lives in order to accomplish the mission. Desperate situations often called for officers who were willing to move to the decisive point on the battlefield and fight alongside their soldiers, regardless of their echelon in the command structure. Early in his career, Eichelberger dismissed the notion “that an officer’s life was too valuable to risk” (Shortal 1987, 8). During World War II he exclaimed, “A combat man who is risking his life takes a dim view of pontifical messages coming up from those living in safety and comparative comfort” (Chwialkowski 1991, 203).

Eichelberger also believed that training and physical conditioning sowed the fertile ground that could harvest courage. Eichelberger probably would have agreed with the Patton dictum that “Fatigue makes cowards of us all.” As commander of the 77th Infantry Division in 1942, he relentlessly trained his division during long days and nights. He told his soldiers that “we shall have thorough training and hard work, the methods used by all successful armies” because combat “will be no joy ride or picnic” (Shortal 1985, 37). During World War II, he recognized that jungle fighting required enormous demands on a soldier’s physical and mental condition. As I Corps commander, he developed a training plan to prepare his corps for the Netherlands New Guinea campaign.

In addition to standard infantry training in patrolling, attacks, and amphibious assaults, Eichelberger's training regimen stressed conditioning his soldiers for the rigors of the combat environment. He emphasized forced foot marches, hand-to-hand combat, bayonet training, obstacle courses, live fire exercises, and night operations. To ensure proper training, Eichelberger personally inspected many companies (Shortal 1986a, 42-43).

Perhaps Eichelberger's Eighth Army Training Directive best sums up his views on the linkage between arduous training and courage. It stated:

The proper aim of training is to overcome the inhibiting effect of fire and of danger upon the individual and by so doing bring about unity of action . . . every combat soldier must be trained mentally for the shock of battle. So far practicable, he must be subjected in training to every sight, sound, and sensation of battle. He must be trained to act calmly and with sound judgment regardless of noise, confusion, and surprise . . . hardened physically and mentally to withstand the rigid requirements of combat in this theater . . . fatigue, loss of sleep, limited rations, adverse mental conditions, and other hardships not weaken their determination to find and destroy the enemy. (Shortal 1985, 173-174)

Not only did Eichelberger appreciate the value of physical courage, he also consistently demonstrated magnificent physical courage during the Siberian Expedition and numerous battles and campaigns in World War II. The Siberian Expedition was then Colonel Eichelberger's first real experience with battle in the form of a participant. In Siberia, his combat experience consisted mainly of small skirmishes, raids, and ambushes. Eichelberger's World War II battles would test his direct leadership in desperate battles and continuous operations against a deadly and formidable foe in rough and difficult terrain.

During the Siberian Expedition, two engagements stand out as a testament to Eichelberger's physical courage. These two engagements, coupled with a brave and successful mission to secure the release of four American prisoners from Bolshevik

partisans, earned Eichelberger a Distinguished Service Cross (DSC). Eichelberger's actions are striking in the fact that he was the Allied Expeditionary Force Siberia (AEF Siberia) G-2, not a commander. Eichelberger became one of only nine officers to be awarded both the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM) and DSC in World War I.

Eichelberger's first combat engagement occurred on 2 July 1919 near the village of Novitskaya. In retaliation against attacks on American forces, an American platoon raided a Bolshevik headquarters as a punitive measure. Eichelberger, who accompanied the patrol to gain first hand intelligence, courageously fought with the platoon. The DSC citation stated that Eichelberger, "without regard to his own safety and armed with a rifle, voluntarily covered the withdrawal of the platoon" (Shortal 1987, 15). The next day, the patrol was ambushed by a Bolshevik patrol in a mountain pass near Novitskaya. When the platoon leader was wounded, Eichelberger immediately took charge, gained control of the platoon, and fought back. The DSC citation stated that he "voluntarily assisted in establishing the firing line, preventing confusion, and, by his total disregard for his own safety, raised the morale of the American forces to a high pitch" (Shortal 1987, 15). During another engagement against Bolshevik partisans on 12 July 1919, Eichelberger led a company flanking maneuver to unhinge the enemy's hasty defense. A Russian newspaper account reported, "The bullets begin to whistle in quick succession. The soldiers lie down on the ground. Only Colonel Eichelberger and Major Graves remain standing. After a while, the left flank of our line occupies a hill, from whence it keeps up a fire upon the Partisans" (Luvaas 1981, 10).

During World War II, numerous superiors, subordinates, and observers alike praised Eichelberger's courage. General MacArthur stated that Eichelberger "proved

himself a commander of the first order, fearless in battle” (MacArthur 1964, 157). Harold Riegelman, an I Corps chemical officer, described Eichelberger as a “Spartan in disregard for his personal comfort and safety” (Riegelman 1955, 171). Eichelberger’s I Corps Chief of Staff and later the commander of the 32d Infantry Division, General Clovis Byers, stated:

The personal appearance of General Eichelberger on the various battlefields had a profound effect. In many cases it caused operations to be speeded up and it insured success. Leaders and troops cannot but be impressed and inspired to have their commander in their midst. And he coupled reports with first hand information to make decisions where they were required. (Luvaas 1981, 22)

War correspondent Frazier Hunt described Eichelberger as “fearless” and the “inspirational spearhead” of his unit (Hunt 1954, 357; 382).

Eichelberger’s first campaign of World War II in Papua New Guinea serves as a shining example of Eichelberger’s courage. In November 1942, the 32d Infantry Division was close to collapse near Buna, ravaged by disease and halted by fearsome Japanese defenses. MacArthur called for Eichelberger to take command of operations on Buna and ensure victory. On 30 November 1942, MacArthur stated:

Bob, I’m putting you in command at Buna. Relieve Harding . . . remove all officers who won’t fight. Relieve regimental and battalion commanders; if necessary put sergeants in charge of battalions and corporals in charge of companies--anyone who will fight. Time is of the essence; the Japs may land reinforcements any night--I want you to take Buna, or not come back alive. (James 1975, 243-244)

Upon immediately assuming command of the Buna fight on 1 December 1942, Eichelberger assessed one of the major problems as a failure to lead by example from battalion to division level command. He noticed that, in his opinion, the division command post was too far to the rear. Subsequently, Eichelberger moved his command

post to within 125 yards of the front lines (Kingseed 1996, 50; Chwialkowski 1993, 59). Another problem Eichelberger quickly recognized was that jungle warfare, with its restrictive and compartmentalized terrain, required him to lead from the front in order to make decisions.

While the previous commander led by telephone from his command post, during his first attack on 5 December 1942, Eichelberger was near the front of the Urbana Force's attacks near Buna Village and Buna Mission, "pushing and leading troops forward" and acting more like a "troop leader" than a corps commander (Luvaas 1981, 44). Near his command group, both the new division commander and Eichelberger's aide were wounded. When his chief of staff, fearing Japanese snipers, asked him to take off his rank insignia, Eichelberger exploded, "I want the boys to know I'm here with them. Hell, what's the use of my going up front if I go incognito?" (Luvaas 1981, 23). While the Warren Force attacks failed, the Urbana Force's attacks, where Eichelberger's personal presence was felt, succeeded in rupturing the Japanese defensive lines between Buna Mission and Buna Village. This created what became known as "Bottcher's Salient," named after the platoon leader whose unit made and held the penetration.

Eichelberger spent the next month leading from the front, pushing commanders and soldiers, and gallantly leading selective attacks. Many times Eichelberger went to the front lines and made on the spot corrections to leaders and soldiers on weapons emplacement and conducted his own reconnaissance to locate better positions for them, all in danger of a "lurking enemy" (Byers 1963, 13).

Another problem, according to Eichelberger, was that too many soldiers and commanders "took counsel of their fears" (Luvaas 1981, 50). To remedy this,

Eichelberger proposed to “instill the spirit of the fighting races” by personal example (Luvaas 1981, 40). Eichelberger once told his staff, “I don’t know whether or not I am a good general, but sure as hell I am one fine platoon leader” (Shortal 1987, 55).

Captain Fred Brown recalled an incident in which Eichelberger used his personal presence and courage to cajole soldiers to fight. Eichelberger yelled, “Who wants to go with me today and kill some Japs. You can’t live forever, anyway. Let’s go, you--and you--and you” (Shortal 1985, 76). Another time he just confidently strolled up and stated, “Lads, come along with us” (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 28). On another occasion, Eichelberger visited Bottcher’s platoon. At night and crawling on his belly, Eichelberger linked up with the Bottcher, gained an appreciation of the importance for the salient’s defense, and even took turns with the squad shooting and killing Japanese snipers in the trees (Shane 1944, 331).

Eichelberger wanted to demonstrate to his soldiers that he was willing to share the dangers of war. He told his wife, “At least the boys cannot sing after the war that I ‘wasn’t there’ as they did about the general’s *Croix de Guerre* after World War I” (Luvaas 1981, 54). During a speech after the war, when asked about the steps he took to improve morale, he matter of factly stated, “Three general officers were shot there, the one furthest away was seventy yards. That’s one thing that raised morale” (Eichelberger 1950). Byers stated that Eichelberger’s “attitude, of course, did not escape notice of the troops . . . spirits rose” (Byers 1963, 13).

During Eichelberger’s month long infiltration attacks, Riegelman stated that Eichelberger was “constantly with the forward elements, wading the swamps, standing in waist deep water, borrowing a carbine to pick off snipers, and, by his utter disregard of

exposure, encouraged the men, raised their morale, and set a needed example to the company officers” (Riegelman 1955, 20). War correspondent Frazier Hunt added, “Eichelberger took it on the chin with the same quiet courage as his men. He took the mud and danger, the mortar shells and the sniper’s bullets. No platoon leader ever more willingly shared common hardships and dangers with his men” (Hunt 1944, 104).

Buna Mission was finally seized on 2 January 1942 and the Japanese defense near Buna was destroyed. Byers believed that Eichelberger’s “dynamic, tireless, and imaginative leadership” was the decisive factor that “turned the tide” at Buna and ultimately produced victory (Conolly et al. 1962, 27-28). Byers, who would go on to command two different corps during the Korean War, stated that Eichelberger’s actions at Buna “constitutes the most inspiring example of leadership I have ever witnessed” (Byers 1963, 15).

Byers also recommended Eichelberger for the Medal of Honor. Although Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall would support the recommendation, MacArthur jealously intervened to block it (Chwialkowski 1993, 74; Shortal 1985, 87). However, MacArthur did later praise Eichelberger for his “skill, courage, and indomitable will for victory” and awarded him his second Distinguished Service Cross (Shortal 1985, 90). MacArthur acknowledged to Eichelberger how “splendid and electrical your presence has proven” and added, “I am so glad that you were not injured in the fighting. . . . I always feared that your incessant exposure might result fatally” (Chwialkowski 1993, 61; 63; 69).

Others praised Eichelberger for his physical courage during the Papua New Guinea Campaign. General Courtney Whitney, who served on MacArthur’s SWPA

intelligence staff, extolled Eichelberger's courage and leadership as the decisive change that led to victory at Buna. Whitney stated, "He [Eichelberger] wore his stars instead of hiding his rank from the snipers as his predecessors had done. He went up to the front and personally led his men forward through enemy fire" (Whitney 1956, 83).

Australian allies also applauded Eichelberger and through their recommendations, he was made a Honorable Knight of the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. Australian General Sir Thomas Blamey, Commander in Chief of the Australian Military Forces and Commander, Allied Land Forces SWPA, stated, "It has been his personality, drive, and courage that kept the attack going. He went everywhere with his men, encouraging them and keeping them going at the Japs" (Shortal 1985, ix). General Edmund Herring, Commander of New Guinea Force and Eichelberger's nominal superior, often worried to MacArthur about Eichelberger's leadership style that exposed him to frequent dangers. But after the victory at Buna, Herring acknowledged to Eichelberger, "Your coming was like a very pure breadth of fresh air and you blew away a great deal of the impurities that were stopping us from getting on with the job" (Shortal 1985, 89-90).

As well as Buna, Eichelberger demonstrated his physical courage in other pivotal campaigns and battles. He was sent to salvage another forlorn fight on Biak Island during the Netherlands New Guinea campaign. His superior, Sixth Army Commander General Walter Krueger, was aware of Eichelberger's penchant for front line leadership and cautioned him, "Now don't go and get yourself killed" (Taafee 1988, 167). But the struggle against the tough Japanese cave defenses required inspirational leadership.

Eichelberger believed that one of the problems with the previous commander was that had not visited the front often enough.

Eichelberger again led by personal example. When military policemen blocked a road leading to the front because of the presence of a nearby enemy machine gunner, Eichelberger angrily retorted that the front lines were certainly “more dangerous” and bypassed the roadblock (Luvaas 1981, 131). On one occasion, while pressing a coordinated tank-infantry company attack on Japanese caves near “The Sump,” Eichelberger’s command group was under almost continuous fire from locations as close as seventy-five yards for about one hour (Riegelman 1955, ix-x; Shortal 1985, 150). For his leadership on Biak Island, Eichelberger was awarded a Silver Star for his “spectacular leadership” and “heroic conduct” (Chwialkowski 1993, 103).

During the Luzon campaign, Eichelberger, now Eighth Army Commander, located himself with the lead elements of the 11th Airborne Division while they fought to seize key terrain and destroy or bypass Japanese strongpoints. By placing himself at forward points of the battlefield, he not only encouraged his units but also was able to directly gain an appreciation of the situation and make thoughtful, yet immediate decisions. He reflected:

Outstanding personal leadership of senior officers was a conspicuous characteristic of these operations. The constant presence of ranking officers in the zone of action stimulated the confidence of the men in their leadership and inspired them to greater effort. Another advantage of this personal reconnaissance and first-hand contact was that authoritative action could be and was taken without recourse to communication channels. With the time lag thus eliminated, it was possible to take full advantage of the rapidly changing combat situation. (Shortal 1985, 195)

Eichelberger was shot at by Japanese snipers near the Imus River Bridge and earned another Silver Star at Tagaytay Ridge. The award citation read:

Realizing the need for rapid action, he moved forward, met the commander of the glider regiment, obtained first-hand information about the situation and directed the attack. Without regard for his own safety and in the face of heavy enemy rifle, machine gun and artillery fire, he personally directed the consolidation of the two forces. General Eichelberger's courageous example and disregard of personal danger so inspired his men that they advanced with renewed vigor and seized the objective ahead of schedule. (Shortal 1985, 195)

During the Southern Philippines campaign in both the Visayan and Mindanao operations, Eichelberger demonstrated relentless battlefield circulation and command presence. He stated, "It is one thing to sit hundreds of miles away and settle things on a map but it is different when one gets out in the rain and mud" (Luvaas 1981, 170).

Although an Army commander, Eichelberger did not want to "just stay in and solve a map problem" and stated that "every day I will try to go someplace" (Luvaas 1981, 170; 185). Moving from one operation to another in his B-17 Flying Fortress, christened *Miss Em* and serving as a "flying command post," Eichelberger stated that he was able to "gain first hand knowledge of the abilities of my combat leaders and of the actual conditions of the men in combat" (Shortal 1985, 170). Eichelberger earned yet another Silver Star during the assault on Davao City during the Mindanao Operation. The citation read:

Accompanying the most forward elements in the face of stiff opposition by the fanatical pockets of enemy resistance that remained, he inspired the fighting troops by his extraordinary display of courage, daring, and assurance. His assistance on being where the fighting was most bitter made for quick decisive action with regard to each contingency that arose. (Shortal 1985, 214)

In addition to great physical courage, Eichelberger possessed an abundance of moral courage. During the Siberian campaign, he greatly admired his superior, General William Graves's moral courage. Graves stood up against pressure from State

Department officials and Allied governments to directly aid the Whites and thus violate his orders. Eichelberger stated, “It has taken a man with the courage of his convictions to stand up for what he believed to be right. . . . Graves was a man whom I admired extravagantly and his character made a very definite impression on me--probably more so than any officer with whom I have served” (Chwialkowski 1991, 38-40).

From Graves, Eichelberger learned that higher-level commanders must often resist interference from their superiors who do not understand the situation on the ground. Eichelberger recognized that it took moral courage to tell his superiors that their views of the battlefield conditions were incorrect. During the Papua New Guinea campaign, Eichelberger resisted MacArthur’s calls for an immediate, large-scale offensive. Eichelberger had correctly surmised that his small-scale infiltration attacks would produce victory at a smaller cost. When assuming command on Biak Island, Eichelberger withstood both MacArthur’s and Krueger’s urgings for an immediate attack. In response, Eichelberger properly argued for a brief halt to reorganize and then a bold envelopment to unhinge the enemy’s defense. Perhaps the best illustration of Eichelberger’s moral courage was his relief of his West Point classmate and friend, General Edwin Harding, upon assuming command at Buna. Eichelberger unapologetically explained to his wife, “My orders were to take Buna and I was not there to excuse myself or others” (Luvaas 1981, 39).

Determination

Coupled with his physical and moral courage, Eichelberger possessed a single-minded determination to accomplish his missions that was apparent in his thoughts and actions. The research suggests that Eichelberger's determination stemmed from tough peacetime training as a young officer and mentorship experience. He persistently confirmed this tenacity during his campaigns in World War II, which he referred to as "The Hard Way Back" (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 3). During the Papua New Guinea Campaign, he exemplified staunchness by recovering from the failure of his initial offensive at Buna. At Buna, Biak Island, and numerous operations in the Philippines, he also confirmed his endurance by demanding an unrelenting pressure on the enemy, pausing only after they were destroyed. His strength of mind, strength of character, and self-control allowed him to think rationally and calmly despite the viciousness of the battles against the Japanese and the wearisome effects of terrain and weather in Pacific jungles. Lastly, Eichelberger showed an emotive sense of human dignity, never forgetting that while his determination resulted in victory, it also destroyed some of the lives of the young men he led.

Eichelberger's early career as an infantry platoon leader taught him valuable lessons on determination, especially strength of mind. Curiously, both indelible experiences happened during road marches. The first was during the 10th Infantry Regiment's annual 200-mile road march near Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. Eichelberger, despite pain and blisters, finished the march through mental will. Eichelberger remembered:

I had new shoes--the greatest mistake I made was not to break in some uniform shoes on my summer's leave. As a consequence, I limped in the last 100 miles and had to fight off suggestions that I ride in the ambulance. However, while the soldiers were possibly a bit amused at my suffering, I felt that I had their respect. Some officers rode in the ambulances but in a long lifetime in the Army, that is one treatment to which I never indulged myself. (Shortal 1987, 4)

Next, still a lieutenant but now a company commander in the 10th Infantry Regiment, Eichelberger gained a valuable lesson from the mentorship of a senior captain in Panama. During a 25-mile road march with full combat equipment, Eichelberger learned from the determination displayed by this officer. Eichelberger stated:

He had no sympathy for the soldier who quit. He wasn't bothered by the tears caused by fatigue. He told me that he felt that a man always had a lot left in him even when he felt he could go no further. The lessons I learned that day I never forgot. . . . I realized that the fact that we arrived with all our men in Las Cascadas in all that heat was due to the fact that these men were commanded by hard officers. (Shortal 1985, 6-7)

In addition to his early observations during troop assignments in infantry regiments, Eichelberger also believed he gained an appreciation of strength of mind, strength of character, and self-control from watching General Graves during the Siberian Expedition. Eichelberger was awe struck with Graves's poise and his ability to deal with the mental stresses caused by the burden of command. Eichelberger stated, "General Graves is certainly a dandy--he goes serenely on his way, no matter what pressure is brought to bear" (Chwialkowski 1993, 19). From his familiarity with Graves, Eichelberger learned the need for a commander to think rationally, despite the stress of higher-level command.

Equipped with both reasoned convictions and a desire to emulate his mentors, Eichelberger entered World War II with an understanding of the necessity for determined leadership. While naval gunfire, aerial bombardment, and artillery would certainly attrit

some of the enemy, “in the end, the only way to take a Jap position was to send in a man with a gun” and to “dig these little rats out of their holes” (Lofgren 1996, 35; Shortal 1985, 49-50). Eichelberger demonstrated his indomitable will as both a corps commander and an Army commander during demanding times in the Papua New Guinea Campaign, Netherlands New Guinea Campaign, and the Philippines Campaign.

Upon assuming command at Buna, Eichelberger inherited an unconfident and ill disciplined American force that was ravaged with disease. Nearly half of the men had malaria and for every two men that had been wounded in combat, five were in field hospitals for dengue fever (Milner 1957, 12). In one infantry company, every soldier was running a fever (Kingseed 1996, 50). Byers referred to the state of the troops as simply “deplorable” (Byers 1963, 12). In Eichelberger view, the scenes of undisciplined and leaderless gangs of bearded soldiers roaming the rear areas verified serious deficiencies in leadership and confirmed an overall lack of resolve in the force.

Eichelberger was determined to accomplish his mission despite the condition of his command. He stated, “Sick troops can fight. . . . No commander wants to make sick troops fight, but, hard as was my decision, there was no alternative” (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 23). Eichelberger talked to soldiers and told them that the capture of Buna and subsequent destruction of the Japanese was their task and that they, and nobody else, was going to accomplish it for them. What was needed, according to Eichelberger, was for the soldiers to “stop feeling sorry for themselves” and “abandon all hope of being relieved” (Chwialkowski 1991, 121-122). On one attack, Eichelberger told a regiment to “go in and kill those devils or get killed” (Luvaas 1981, 57). He told MacArthur’s SWPA operations officer, General Richard Sutherland, “If I have to arm the headquarters clerks

and sergeants to get a little leadership, I am going to do it. . . . I intend to put all the fight I can into this crowd that they will take and then add some more” (Shortal 1987, 56).

This is not to say that Eichelberger was not compassionate to the plights of his soldiers. But he did believe that a commander’s strength of mind and self-control often required him to steadfastly focus on the task at hand. Eichelberger explained to a doctor at a field hospital, one who originally thought he was a “cold, hard man,” that “war is such as unutterably cruel enterprise that generals, being human, must ration their own emotions in order to have reason about them when reason is imperative. They cannot afford to crack” (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 68-69).

Besides self-control and strength of mind, Eichelberger also demonstrated staunchness. His first offensive on 5 December 1942 did not achieve a defeat of the Japanese defenses on all fronts. On the Urbana Front, his attacks only ruptured the Japanese defenses at one location (“Bottcher’s Salient”) and were beaten back on the Warren Front. Although some of his small-scale attacks were thwarted, he maintained steady pressure on the Japanese defenses by infiltration attacks and fire support. He wrote to his wife that some results were “bitterly disappointing . . . but I had to pound on” (Luvaas 1981, 50). Later he added, “The Japs smacked me down a few times but I always sailed in for the next round” (Luvaas 1981, 54)

While Eichelberger did devise new tactics for the attacks at Buna, an integral part of his success was the dogged tempo of these infiltration attacks. Endurance was the key. Eichelberger, after making an assessment through personal reconnaissance, stated, “I do not intend to let the Japanese sit down and sleep. . . . We shall reorganize and push on” (Luvaas 1986, 212). Eichelberger’s new strategy was designed to “tighten the noose” by

“continued pressure and advance by infiltration” (Shortal 1985, 78; Luvaas and Shortal 1988, 164). He alternated these small-scale attacks between both fronts to keep the Japanese from shifting their forces and denying them a tactical respite. For example, after seizing Buna Village and Coconut Grove on the Urbana Front on 16 December 1942, Eichelberger then launched an attack and seized Cape Endaiadere on the Warren Front on 18 December 1942. Initial victories convinced Eichelberger that some of his units had finally “found their soul,” but he was still was not content. After seizing some of the Japanese strongpoints, he stated that there would be no celebrations, only time enough to “reorganize and push on” (Luvaas and Shortal 1988, 164).

More than anything, Eichelberger saw the Buna campaign as a test of wills. He told his wife that he never forgot General Ulysses S. Grant’s axiom that “victory goes to the one who can put the last foot forward” (Luvaas, 59). He summed up his own views on determination at Buna, stating:

In battle the margin between victory and defeat is often narrow. Under terrific pressures of combat, officers and men alike tend to forget that the enemy is hard pressed too. Sometimes just plain stubbornness wins the battle that awareness and wisdom might have lost. That’s what happened at Buna. The Japanese morale cracked before ours did. (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 48-49)

Perhaps the greatest tribute to Eichelberger’s iron determination at Buna came from a letter written by his former aide de camp, Captain Daniel Edwards, while he was recovering from wounds in a hospital. Edwards wrote:

Those of us who were with you in the front lines during the first days have no doubt . . . that your personal leadership was a decisive factor. Whatever the present newspaper accounts may be, some day the permanent record will contain the story of how you were sent at the eleventh hour to salvage an impossible situation without any assistance except you own intelligence and your own force of character. . . . While I was with you I was convinced that if the troops under

your command did not go into Buna, you would have unhesitatingly gone in there alone. (Shortal 1985, 89)

At Hollandia in April 1944, during the Netherlands New Guinea campaign, Eichelberger again demonstrated his determination but this time while completing distinctively different tasks and under dissimilar circumstances than Buna. Eichelberger's I Corps' mission was to conduct an amphibious assault to defeat the Japanese forces and then build important logistics nodes such as airfields, bases, and ports. The real constraint was time. I Corps, whose D-Day was 22 April 1944, had to complete these activities in just three weeks. The airfields and bases at Hollandia had to provide fighter and bomber aircraft and logistics support for the other operations in the Wakde area (no later than 15 May 1944) and the Toem-Sarmi and Schouten Island areas (no later than 27 May 1944) (Shortal 1985, 71).

When "Reckless Task Force" achieved tactical surprise on the beachhead and encountered little enemy resistance, Eichelberger pressed his commanders to rapidly push inland and quickly seize the airfields. Eichelberger did not want to give the Japanese an opportunity to reconstitute their defenses. Although the Japanese defenders were service troops from field base units and an air division, they never were able to seize the initiative against Eichelberger's driving determination. I Corps killed 3,000 Japanese defenders at a cost of 124 American killed in action. Eichelberger's rapid movement to contact proved correct, as the Japanese commander's retreat to the Wakdi-Sarma area decimated his remaining force of 6,000 to 1,000 and rendered it incapable of interfering with Eichelberger's logistical buildup (Shortal 1987, 83).

After defeating the Japanese, Eichelberger quickly realized that his personal leadership would be needed in order to meet the logistical deadlines. During the “big engineering fight,” Eichelberger believed that his job was to “direct traffic and construction, and to demand speed, speed, and speed” (Chwialkowski 1993, 96). Eichelberger christened the slogan for the buildup as “Immediately, if not sooner!” (Luvaas 1981, 113).

Eichelberger maintained a relentless and energetic schedule, acting as a “factory foreman” (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 113). Up early every morning, he would begin his inspections of construction, supply, and transportation activities at the harbor and airfields. His personal contacts allowed him to deconflict problems with units’ perceived missions and areas of responsibility. Every night, sometimes after midnight, he conducted meetings with his engineers to establish priorities and then allocate resources accordingly (Shortal 1987, 84).

I Corps’s task was not easy, especially with the added time constraint. The Japanese airfields that I Corps inherited would not immediately support Allied planes. Built for Japanese fighters, the airfields had to be paved and lengthened in order to support American bombers and cargo aircraft. Eichelberger wrote that building roads was still another challenge. He stated, “Sides of mountains were carved away, bridges and culverts were thrown across rivers and creeks, gravel and stone ‘fill’ were poured into sago swamps to make highways as tall as Mississippi levees” (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 113-114).

All in all, I Corps accomplishments were substantial and more importantly, on schedule. The first airfield accepted C-47 landings one week after D-Day. General Ennis

Whitehead, Commander of the Fifth Air Force, credited Eichelberger with taking a “bomb-cratered, grassy ridge in the middle of the swamp” and turning it quickly into an operational airfield (Shortal 1985, 134).

Docks were also constructed at Humboldt Bay. Eichelberger’s engineers built roads from the port at Humboldt Bay to the airfields in just two weeks, a task that had eluded the Japanese service troops. These roads also had to be hardened in order to move anti-aircraft guns to support the defense of the airfields. After they were paved, then the engineers expanded the roads for two-way traffic. Engineers constructed a 135-mile system of pipelines that brought aviation fuel from the docks to the airfields. I Corps also built Hollandia into a great logistical base, complete with barracks for 140,000 troops (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 113-114; Luvaas 1981, 114-115; Chwialkowski 1991, 191).

Eichelberger’s next display of determination came during the Netherlands New Guinea Campaign when he assumed command of “Biak Task Force” on Biak Island. After completing a personal reconnaissance, Eichelberger made his assessment to his superior, General Krueger. Eichelberger believed that what the troops needed was a determined leader. In his correspondence to Krueger he stated, “Today I have been with General Doe and 186 and 162 Infantry. With the possible exception of the first Bn 162 Inf, the troops are not nearly exhausted as I had expected and I believe they can be made to fight with energy” (Shortal 1987, 88-89). He wrote to his wife that “the boys needed a kick in the pants and I had to give it to them” (Chwialkowski 1993, 101). Soldiers of “Biak Task Force” quickly realized they had a new leader. A warrant officer told

Eichelberger that he looked “different” than other officers and that his eyes were “alive with determination” (Luvaas 1981, 129).

After an imaginative envelopment that unhinged the Japanese defenses and captured the airfields, Eichelberger still had to defeat the remaining Japanese who were holed up in their cave defenses. “The Sump” or West Caves consisted of an interlocking maze of cave defenses (some caves were seventy five feet deep) that the Japanese had generously stockpiled with food and ammunition. Eichelberger persistently experimented with various methods to destroy the Japanese caves; to include combined arms attacks with dynamite, tanks, flamethrowers, and bazookas and even Air Corps skip-bombing. An engineer unit even lowered an 850-pound TNT charge in a cave and then detonated it electronically. Finally, crevices were found leading down to the individual caves and hundreds of barrels of gasoline were poured into the caves and then ignited, immolating the inhabitants (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 151; Chwialkowski 1993, 101).

During the Philippines Campaign, Eichelberger’s forward presence and determination drove his subordinate commanders to apply continuous pressure on the enemy and unrelentingly pursue him. Eichelberger’s willpower was visible in the steadfast way in which he tackled his assignment. It was also evident in his belief that more often than not, operational and tactical speed saved lives. The Commander of Allied Air Forces of SWPA, General George Kenney, proclaimed, “Bob [Eichelberger] liked to move fast once he was told to move” (Kenney 1949, 100).

Eichelberger was like a restless whirlwind, moving from island to island in his B-17 “flying command post.” He confessed to his wife that he had an “eternal yearn to keep

traveling while that fight is going on” (Luvaas 1981, 266). In fact, he was present during the liberation of every major city in the Visayan island chains.

During the Luzon operation, he ordered the 11th Airborne Division commander General Joseph Swing to advance against the enemy both day and night. He told Swing to maintain contact until the enemy was “either dispersed or annihilated” (Shortal 1987, 109). The 11th Airborne Division advanced fifteen miles on the first day. Four days after the landing, the beachhead was sixty-nine miles long and 500 yards wide (Luvaas and Shortal 1988, 173). The speedy attack proved fortunate because it prevented the enemy from mining roads and establishing roadblocks. It also enabled Eichelberger’s forces to seize key chokepoints before the enemy could organize their defense. For instance, the 11th Airborne Division seized the Palico River Bridge intact, despite Japanese demolition preparations. During the pursuit toward Manila, Eichelberger sensed that “things seemed to be going a bit slow,” and he returned to Tagaytay Ridge where he personally supervised a truck shuttling system to increase the momentum of his attack (Luvaas and Shortal 1988, 173). When he discovered that the 11th Airborne Division had only one day’s supply of gasoline, he personally intervened to have the airfield at Nasugbu enlarged and gasoline flown in by C-47 (Luvaas 1981, 208-209).

The Mindanao Operation also showcased Eichelberger’s determination. In order for his operational turning movement to succeed, he understood that the enemy could not be allowed to reconstitute a coherent defense west of Davao City. He drove and pushed his corps and division commanders, telling the 24th Infantry Division commander, “Let nothing stop you except bullets” (McNeill 1989, 31).

In addition to the subcomponents of determination that are often synonymous with mental toughness and strength of will, Eichelberger also possessed an enthusiastic, contagious energy. He believed that “cheerful leaders soothe the anxieties of men, that calm leaders allay the hysterias which are both endemic and epidemic in battle, that optimistic leaders imbue their subordinates with confidence” (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 68). He also added, “It is hard to get a fellow down who has a grin on his face” (Luvaas 1981, 19).

Despite the harsh combat at Buna, in which he lost over thirty pounds, Eichelberger wrote to his wife, “One must develop a hide like a rhinoceros or rather one must develop the habit of happiness” (Luvaas and Shortal 1988, 166; Kingseed 1996, 51). Some reporters nicknamed him “Uncle Bob,” while another was impressed with his “optimistic smile always present on his friendly, understanding visage” (Chwialkowski 1991, 148-149).

No matter how much of war’s inhumanity he witnessed, Eichelberger also maintained a deep appreciation of human dignity. On the day he defeated the Japanese at Buna, he wrote to his wife, reflecting on the campaign, “To see those boys with their bellies out of the mud and their eyes in the sun, closing in unafraid on prepared positions, made me choke, and then I spent a moment looking over the American cemetery which my orders of necessity have filled from nothing” (Luvaas 1981, 50). Also, he detested the term “mopping up” because it devalued the sacrifices men made to complete the enemy’s destruction. Upon reflection after the war, he advocated banning the word from military use because “it is not good enough a phrase to die for” (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 182).

Several incidents also illustrate Eichelberger's poignant sense of dignity. When he visited wounded soldiers in a field hospital in the Philippines, he brought his "lads" gallons of ice cream. After defeating the Japanese on Biak Island, he proudly ordered the captured Japanese beer to be distributed to his "boys," with the infantry getting the first share (Shortal 1987, 103; Luvaas 1981, 137). Eichelberger was deeply touched with the sacrifices his men made. He championed them in his autobiography, stating that his men, the "ordinary, muddy, malarial, embattled, and weigh-down-by-too-heavy packs GIs" were the "true artisans of the island-hopping campaign in the Pacific" (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 3).

Coup d'oeil

Eichelberger coup d'oeil was a combination of his intellect and intuition that was a result of his childhood education, self-study, professional military education, mentorship, and his practical training and experience. According to one biographer, Eichelberger had a reputation as a “brain” officer, a “scholarly type of soldier” who “dug right into the root of a problem” (Wittels 1943, 100-107). Despite an inconsistent relationship, MacArthur once referred to Eichelberger as “one of the Army’s most brilliant commanders” (Chwialkowski 1993, 189).

Eichelberger’s penchant for personal reconnaissance demonstrated the inquisitiveness of his mind and his desire for information and situational understanding. The discriminatory aspects of his mind, always attempting to scent out the truth, were apparent in his duties as a G-2 in Siberia and commander in Buna and Biak Island. At Buna, Biak Island, Tagaytay Ridge, and Mindanao, this discrimination combined with an uncanny terrain appreciation to produce innovative tactical solutions. His comprehensive approach, identifying and considering large amounts of information, were evident in the logistics preparation of Hollandia and his command and control of Eighth Army in the Philippines campaign. In addition, his mental calmness was noticeable in his ability to think with rational coolness during the crisis times of Buna and Biak Island.

Eichelberger’s early intellectual development was a direct result of the emphasis his parents put on education. His father encouraged his sons to take a “very active interest” in international affairs (Chwialkowski 1993, 2). His father also challenged his sons to think critically about large issues and problems. Eichelberger remembered that

“world problems and peoples” were actively discussed and debated every night at the dinner table (Chwialkowski 1993, 2).

Eichelberger was blessed that his father had an extensive library. As a youth, Eichelberger read the works of Shakespeare, Dickens, Thackeray, and Bulwer-Lyton. One of his favorite books was Henry Stanley’s *Through the Dark Continent*, the explorer’s personal account of his travels in sub-Saharan Africa. In addition to Stanley, Eichelberger was fond of the historical fiction works of G. A. Henty (Chwialkowski 1993, 2). Henty, a war correspondent turned author, wrote about historical heroes and described their courage, intelligence, and dedication to their cause. Eichelberger probably was very inspired by Henty’s novels, which gave accounts of famous military men, from Hannibal, Robert the Bruce, and William Wallace to Robert E. Lee, Frederick the Great, and Wellington.

Besides the historical fiction of Henty, Eichelberger devoured Civil War history. His father was an enlisted man during the American Civil War and maintained close contacts with other Civil War veterans in Urbana, Ohio. One of his father’s friends had a large Civil War history library. Eichelberger stated that he read “every book in it” (Luvaas and Shortal 1988, 155). He was also fortunate to be exposed to an oral history of the Civil War combat. Frequently, a group of veterans would meet in his father’s law office and tell stories and accounts of Civil War combat. Eichelberger was allowed to sit in and listen. When he was twelve, his father took him on a tour of the Civil War battlefields of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge (Chwialkowski 1993, 3).

Eichelberger did trumpet the value of military history for the professional officer. He believed that military history could supplement and fill in the gaps of an officer’s

experiential learning. He stated, “Caesar, Napoleon, Wellington, Sherman--a clear understanding of their military tactics has never handicapped a green officer in the field” (Chwialkowski 1993, 33).

Eichelberger’s exposure to a broad education almost indefinitely sparked his intellectual curiosity, a trait that was recognized by his subordinates later in his career. Friends often likened him to a “curious cat” upon entering a room for the first time (Luvaas 1981, 7; Wittels 1943, 103). Riegelman was specifically impressed with the depth and breadth of Eichelberger’s intellect. He stated, “In conversation, there were few subjects he did not illuminate of the storehouse of rich and colorful incident in the four corners of the globe” (Riegelman 1955, 171). Later, as Commandant of Cadets at West Point, stories were told of Eichelberger making his rounds and observing cadets solve academic problems in class (Wittels 1943, 108).

With the foundations of his intellect set, Eichelberger continued to learn as part of his professional military education. He entered the United States Military Academy in 1905. While he was not an academic standout, mostly due to the rigors of mathematics, he did graduate 68 out of 103 cadets. As an infantry lieutenant stationed at inter-war regimental posts, he continued his learning by focusing on his desire to gain practical, military knowledge and increase his technical and tactical competence. Eichelberger worked hard in garrison schools, often ranking first but if not, at least in the top three in all of his courses. Serious about his professional education, he scoffed at officers who “spent their off-duty hours, which were long, gambling or in other forms of recreation” (Shortal 1987, 4).

Eichelberger believed that one of the defining moments of his professional military education was his attendance at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff School (CGSS). Comparing it with his West Point education, he stated, “I learned more at 39 than I ever learned at 21” (Chwialkowski 1993, 32). He was not alone in his assessment of CGSS’s contribution to the inter-war officer corps. General J. Lawton Collins stated that “for the Army as a whole, the courses at the Command and General Staff School were probably the most important in the entire system of military education, and were to prove invaluable in World War II” (Berlin 1989, 10). General Ernest Harmon believed that the “intensive and imaginative training at the Command and General Staff College” prepared the students to lead large armies against the Axis powers (Berlin 1989, 10).

The curriculum at CGSS was challenging and competitive. Extensive reading and preparation was required of the students. From CGSS, Eichelberger developed the requisite knowledge and appreciation of the complexities of maneuvering and supplying larger tactical units. During the first part of the year, Eichelberger spent his mornings attending lectures and conferences, while during the afternoon he was engaged in map problems and practical exercises. Work was also done in committees. Committees were assigned a case-study problem and each student was required to draft an operations plan against an enemy. Students also conducted staff rides. During these rides, students were issued a map and tactical situation. They then conducted personal reconnaissance and drafted orders. During winter months, the students conducted indoor map exercises on Gettysburg and Leavenworth maps. Later in the year, officers conducted map maneuvers. Units were replicated by cardboard figures and students assumed the roles of different

staff officers (Bender 1990, 44-47). Eichelberger excelled in this atmosphere. He graduated on the Distinguished Graduate List and ranked 27 of the 245 students (Shortal 1987, 19; Berlin 1989, 11). After graduation, Eichelberger was selected to remain at the CGSS as an instructor.

Eichelberger's next step in his professional military education came with his selection to the Army War College. Eichelberger believed that the War College was his "postgraduate inquiry into military strategy" (Chwialkowski 1993, 32). Eichelberger completed four staff studies on war preparation and two historical case studies on past military campaigns. The War College curriculum also consisted of three war games that lasted for approximately one month each. Students also completed a strategic reconnaissance and conducted a command post exercise. These case studies, historical analyses, and exercises prepared him for command of large-scale units (Chwialkowski 1993, 33; Shortal 1987, 20).

Eichelberger's intuitive leadership was based on his peacetime training experiences and mentorship. These important experiences comprised a database that his intuitive intellect could recall. Eichelberger's troop leadership in Panama and intelligence duties in the Far East gained him an appreciation of his future battlefield terrain and foe. Inter-war training produced an experiential database for commanding large units in battle. He was also fortunate to have excellent high-level mentors who shared with him the problems and possible solutions of high-level command.

Eichelberger first encountered jungle terrain during his service with the 10th Infantry Regiment in Panama. As a lieutenant, he led mapping expeditions that marked trails that led to the Panama Canal. He also observed the building of the canal and saw

firsthand the challenges of jungle terrain. Eichelberger stated that this experience gave him a “taste of what jungle warfare would be like” and that this “helped a bit” during his subsequent Pacific campaigns (Chwialkowski 1993, 11; Luvaas and Shortal 1988, 156).

Eichelberger observed his first real battle during his service along the Arizona-Mexico border at Fort Douglas in September 1915. From a building on the Arizona side of the border, Eichelberger intently watched the three-day Battle of Agua Priete between the rebel forces of “Pancho” Villa and the Mexican government’s army. From just 1,000 yards away, Eichelberger scrutinized the actions and was fascinated with what he saw. He remembered, “Officers were permitted and even encouraged to go to the international boundary and watch combat in progress. . . . An infantryman must prepare himself to lead troops in battle and where can one find out more than from actual conditions when bullets were flying?” (Shortal 1987, 8). He was concerned with learning not only what tactics looked like in actual war but also how humans reacted in battle. He stated that he wanted to “hear the crack of a bullet fired in anger . . . and see the effect of fire coming out of Agua Priete and gauge the enthusiasm of Villa’s men” (Luvaas 1981, 6).

Eichelberger’s pre-World War II experiences also put him into contact with his future enemy. Eichelberger believed he had a special insight into the Japanese military mind and their tactics. In fact, Eichelberger once stated that he had “known them” since his duties in Siberia (Eichelberger 1950, Speech). In Siberia, Eichelberger had negotiated with their leaders and even accompanied their patrols. He was impressed with individual Japanese soldier, especially their “meticulous” manner and discipline (Shortal 1987, 15).

Subsequent to his G-2 duties in Siberia, he served in a variety of intelligence positions whose duties centered on observing and reporting on Japanese activities in the

Far East. From May to October 1920, he served as the G-2 for the Philippine Department. During his six months in Manila, Eichelberger presciently recommended that contingency plans be prepared for an eventual war with Japan. His superior, General Francis Kernan, praised Eichelberger for his “marked intelligence” and stated that his duties were performed in a “thorough and conscientious manner” (Shortal 1987, 16). From October 1920 to August 1921, he served as an intelligence officer in Chinese cities of Peking and Tientsin. During this assignment, he traveled extensively throughout China. He enlisted the unofficial services of foreign experts and newspaper reporters and then prepared intelligence reports. Returning to the United States in the summer of 1921, he served for three years as an intelligence officer with the Far Eastern Section of the Army General Staff’s Military Intelligence Division. Here he was praised for his “executive ability, tact, and painstaking follow-up” by the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, General John Hines (Shortal 1987, 17). His tasks included writing a short history of China and serving as a military aide to the Chinese delegation during the Limitation of Armaments Conference in Washington, D.C. during the winter of 1921 and 1922. At the end of the conference, Eichelberger shrewdly warned “any agreement that made the Japanese so happy might possibly not be one...in the interests of the United States” (Chwialkowski 1993, 31). By the start of World War II, many officers considered Eichelberger to be a Japanese expert (Shortal 1991, 19). During the war, Eichelberger continued his quest for insights on Japanese tactics and equipment, inspecting their defensive fortifications and operating captured weapons. He believed that it was a commander’s responsibility to learn the “Japanese methods of warfare” (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 14).

Mentorship also played a critical role in developing Eichelberger's intellect and intuition. By a highly personalized interaction with his superiors, Eichelberger was able to vicariously learn by being exposed to the difficulties of high-level command and encountered varied decision-making styles. During his the Siberian Campaign, he had very close personal contact with his commanding officer, General Graves. Not only did the men eat and room together, Eichelberger also enjoyed a special working relationship with Graves. Eichelberger also stated:

My work in Siberia would have been much more difficult had it not been for the support and cooperation of the Commanding General. There were no interviews which the Commanding General had with any prominent men in Siberia that I was not free to go to him, hear the results of the interview and hear the comments of the Commanding General over the matters brought on. (Luckett 1974, 13-14)

By observing Graves, Eichelberger later claimed that he learned how to analyze a situation "from every angle" (Luvaas 1981, 11).

Graves also took an active role in Eichelberger's professional development. During long hikes in the hills above Vladivostok, Graves taught Eichelberger about high-level command through a process of challenging questioning. He often asked Eichelberger for his opinions and views on strategic and operational matters. In reverse, Graves often candidly used Eichelberger as his sounding board from time to time. At the time Eichelberger reflected, "I am very fortunate . . . to be able to profit by his talks . . . he doesn't advise as a rule but lets me exercise my own initiative and criticizes me later when necessary" (Chwialkowski 1993, 19).

Eichelberger had other important mentors during his service as the Secretary of the General Staff for the Chief of Staff of the Army from 1935 to 1938. Eichelberger first served under General Douglas MacArthur. During his service for MacArthur,

Eichelberger's main responsibility was to summarize and brief the reports and special studies of the General Staff. Eichelberger was also tasked with writing a history of the five-year tenure of MacArthur as Chief of Staff. MacArthur was appreciative of Eichelberger's abilities. He was "impressed" with Eichelberger's "comprehensive grasp of the Army's major problems and of War Department functioning." He also praised Eichelberger for his "tact, loyalty, intelligence, and initiative" (Chwialkowski 1991, 73).

Eichelberger had a closer relationship with MacArthur's successor General Malin Craig. Craig and Eichelberger ate lunch together daily, with Craig teaching Eichelberger about the challenges of large unit command. Throughout the rest of Eichelberger's career, he remained in contact with General Craig, whom he referred to as his "wise and understanding mentor" (Luvaas and Shortal 1988, 157).

While serving as the Secretary of the General Staff, Eichelberger also impressed other senior officers who routinely came into contact with him. Renowned historian D. Clayton James contended that Eichelberger was "widely esteemed in high Army circles" (James 1975, 276). The Adjutant General of the Army, General Robert Davis, called him a "rising star" in the Army (Chwialkowski 1991, 64). General Edwin "Pa" Watson, President Roosevelt's military aide, and General George Simonds, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Army, were also praiseworthy of Eichelberger's abilities. Watson lobbied to have Eichelberger become the next Adjutant General of the Army. Simonds once wrote Eichelberger and stated, "I am for you and will do anything I can to boost you along" (Chwialkowski 1991, 77). General William Connor, Superintendent of West Point, lobbied General Craig to release Eichelberger to serve as the Commandant of Cadets. Eichelberger topped Connor's list of potential future Commandants, ahead of Jacob

Devers, Dwight Eisenhower, and George Patton. Connor stated that Eichelberger had all the necessary “characteristics,” to include, “youth, energy, intelligence, balanced judgment and a sympathetic understanding of young men” (Shortal 1985, 27-28).

In addition to his mentorship, Eichelberger’s interwar training as a regimental, division, and corps commander also prepared him well for his Pacific campaigns. As commander of the 30th Infantry Regiment, he conducted maneuvers and training exercises in Fort Ord, Camp Roberts, and Pasa Robles, California and also in Fort Lewis, Washington. Not only did Eichelberger serve as commander of his regiment during the maneuvers, he also got to serve as a division commander, assistant division commander, division operations officer, and division chief of staff. Later during a command post exercise at The Presidio in San Francisco, California, General Courtney Hodges commended Eichelberger’s performance. His evaluation stated that Eichelberger’s instructions were “thorough” and his leadership was of the “highest degree” (Chwialkowski 1993, 45).

During a joint exercise in the winter of 1940 near Fort Ord, Eichelberger commanded the opposing force ground troops and gained important experiences in a defender’s perspective of an amphibious assault. Colonel Eisenhower, a battalion commander in the 3rd Infantry Division, and Colonel Mark Clark, the G-3 of the 3rd Infantry Division, lauded his performance. The 3rd Infantry Division Commander, General William Sweeney, gave Eichelberger high marks on his efficiency report. General George C. Marshall, the Chief of Staff of the Army, also praised Eichelberger’s capabilities and performance (Chwialkowski 1993, 44-45). In the summer of 1942, Eichelberger also conducted a complex demonstration that included coordinated attacks

by armor, infantry, and airborne forces. This demonstration gained the acclaim of both Marshall and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (Chwialkowski 1993, 52).

While Eichelberger's inter-war training gained him valuable experience in commanding regiments, division, and corps, his intellectual and intuitive powers were first shown during his service in Siberia. When Eichelberger arrived with the AEF in Siberia in 1918, there was no established intelligence system. He immediately began to develop one. His official duties included the training of interpreters, collection of Siberian maps, counter-espionage and counter-propaganda, and censorship. Most importantly, he was responsible for intelligence collection and analysis. He dealt with a variety of issues to include Russian economic conditions, military capabilities of Russian Bolshevik and White forces, Japanese order of battle and military activities, and road and rail conditions.

He began by interviewing "everything from a baron to a prostitute" and developing agents (Chwialkowski 1993, 16). He hired a Russian tutor and spent his nights learning Russian vocabulary and grammar. He was not content to just receive information behind a desk and he often accompanied both U.S. and Japanese patrols in the Suchan area to gain first hand information or to corroborate his intelligence. His discriminating mind sifted through reports to discern facts, attitudes, capabilities, and intentions. Eichelberger wrote to his wife, "I am getting to be a regular newspaper reporter when sorting out what is a real news item and what is bunk" (Chwialkowski 1993, 17). By 1920, he had single handedly created an intelligence network that stretched 5000 miles from Vladivostok to the Ural Mountains. So discerning was his intelligence

network that a White Russian general asked Eichelberger to determine who the people of Omsk recognized as the real town leader.

Eichelberger's views and conclusions were just as accurate on the major issues of the campaign and are widely accepted by most historians. Eichelberger's intuition is remarkable given conflicting information and the Byzantine motives and actions of the major participants. Most of his conclusions were not only against popular conceptions of the time, but also against what the State Department believed to be the situation on the ground. He came to many startling and true conclusions. First, the Japanese were paying Ussuri Cossacks to attack Allied forces and rail traffic, all in order to force the U.S. out and then destabilize the region. The Japanese main interest was in controlling eastern Siberia, especially commercial interests and the Trans-Siberian Railroad. He stated that the "Japanese military had as its firm purpose the conquest of all Asia" (Shortal 1987, 15). Second, the majority of the populace near the Suchan mines were not communist but simply despised the White forces because of their brutality. Furthermore, Eichelberger rightly contended that the true British and French reasons for sending forces to the region was to defeat the Bolshevik government and he discovered that both the British and French were providing financial and military assistance to Admiral Alexander Kolchak's White Russian forces (Luckett 1974, 49-51; Chwialkowski 1991, 33-34).

In April 1919, Eichelberger saved General Graves from embarrassment and prevented an international incident by exercising his discriminating mind. U.S. forces were required to remain neutral and could only fire to protect themselves, their Allies, or the railroads. White Russian troops under General Kolchak requested Allied military assistance near the town of Shkotova. The Whites claimed that Bolshevik forces had

surrounded them. Japanese commanders, who claimed that Bolshevik forces attacked them also, appealed to General Graves to conduct a combined U.S.-Japanese attack in order to rescue the White forces and punish the Bolsheviks. Eichelberger, who did not always believe the prevailing story, requested Graves to postpone his decision until he could personally investigate. Eichelberger's intuition proved correct. The White Russians were not surrounded by Bolsheviks but had merely been attacked by villagers who were enraged when drunken Whites had recklessly shot at their homes. Also, the Japanese had not been attacked at all.

Eichelberger's superiors all recognized his accomplishments. The director of the Army's Military Intelligence Division, General Marlborough Churchill, wrote, "I think I have a pretty fair picture of the difficulties under which you worked, and I am deeply indebted to you for keeping the intelligence game alive, even though you had to work almost single handed" (Luckett 1974, 125). For his service, General Graves recommended him for the Distinguished Service Medal (DSM). Eichelberger's citation read:

By his keen foresight, discriminating judgment and brilliant professional attainments, exercised through his efficiently established organization, he was able to keep his commanding general well and fully informed at all times. His tireless energy and keen foresight into local conditions gave him a masterful grasp of the situation, which contributed materially to the success of the forces in Siberia. He rendered most conspicuous services of inestimable value to the Government in a position of great responsibility. (Wittels 1943, 103)

Eichelberger's first demonstration of coup d'oeil occurred during the Battle of Buna during the Papua New Guinea Campaign. Not only was his unit physically weakened, undisciplined, and uninspired, it also faced a serious tactical dilemma. The Japanese defensive system, built by veteran engineer units, was terrifyingly formidable.

The entire defense near Buna was about 3 1/2 miles long and 3/4 of a mile deep. But due to the restrictive nature of the terrain, it could only be attacked by crossing swamps and then only along two narrow corridors. These two corridors, which became the Urbana and Warren Fronts, were only two to three miles apart. However, they could not be mutually supported because of deep swamps and thick jungles. Eichelberger described the jungle as “voluptuous, dripping, and sinister green” (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 37). Travel from one front to another was mostly on foot by native trails and it took over six hours by foot and almost two days by jeep on a circuitous route. Thus, the Japanese held the advantage of interior lines (Luvaas and Shortal 1988, 163; LaBarbera 1997, 5).

Their individual bunkers were also frightening. One observer described:

The Japanese bunkers were almost entirely above ground. The base of the bunker was a shallow trench, up to 40 feet in length for the large bunkers, and 6 to 10 feet for the smaller. A framework of columns and beams were set up, the walls were revetted with coconut logs ranging up to 1 1/2 feet in thickness, and a ceiling of two or three courses of such logs was laid on top. Not content with this construction, the enemy reinforced the wall, using steel oil drums and ammunition boxes filled with sand, as well as log piles and rocks. Over all this were piled earth and sand mixed with short logs, coconuts, and the like. When the bunker, 7 to 8 feet high, was camouflaged with fast-growing jungle vegetation, it became almost impossible to spot in the tangled underbrush. (Milner 1957, 16)

After arriving on 1 December 1942, he made his own tactical assessment after two days of personal reconnaissance. Eichelberger demonstrated that he understood both the difficulties of terrain and the strength of the Japanese defenses. He stated:

The Jap utilization of terrain was admirable. At their back was the sea (no danger from that quarter in those days). Their left flank also rested on the ocean while on their right were two unfordable streams--the Girua River and tidal Entrance Creek. Almost the entire Japanese position was in a coconut plantation in which they had built up a series of concealed bunkers and connecting trenches. . . . Since American advances from the morasses could only be made on a few known trails

or tracks, it was simple enough for Japanese machine guns to cover them with fields of fire. (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 24)

He also quickly understood that he could only win the battle on the offensive. He stated, “It was evident that a very pallid siege was being waged. In any stalemate it was obvious that the Japanese would win” (Luvaas 1981, 37).

Eichelberger next sought an appropriate solution. There is evidence that he believed that the large-scale attack on both fronts on 5 December could have been successful if he inspired his soldiers by his physical courage. But the overall failure of these attacks disabused him of this notion. Eichelberger immediately forbade any “all-out frontal assaults” and turned to his idea of infiltration tactics he had originally brainstormed during his second day at Buna (Luvaas 1981, 44). During his initial personal reconnaissance, Eichelberger had questioned General Harding on whether or not he had attempted to use “infiltration tactics.” Harding responded that these tactics were “not practical” (Anders 1985, 264). This indicates that the germination of Eichelberger’s changed tactics actually began on the day after he arrived in Papua New Guinea and before the attacks on 5 December 1942. Also, Eichelberger, unlike his predecessor, learned from his mistakes.

Eichelberger’s new tactics called for “constant pressure and advance by infiltration” (Shortal 1987, 55). Instead of large-scale offensives, he would defeat the enemy by a “series of little fights” that aimed at “tightening the noose” around Buna Village (Eichelberger 1950, Speech; Shortal 1985, 78). Eichelberger believed that these small, decentralized engagements would be necessary based not only on the strength of the enemy’s defenses but also due to the constrictiveness of the terrain. Jungle fighting

was “usually and necessarily carried on independently by small clusters of men” (Luvaas 1986, 213).

These infiltration tactics, a “sly, sneaky kind of combat,” focused on the systematic destruction of enemy bunkers (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 33). He immediately ordered all companies to conduct night patrols, commanded by an officer, to identify Japanese positions. Once the Japanese strongpoints were identified, they were methodically suppressed with mortar and artillery fires and machine gun and antitank rounds, and then destroyed by infantry close combat. Soldiers of the 32d Infantry Division soon termed their new tactics “Indian fighting” (Bergerud 1996, 219).

The enemy also noticed a change. The excerpts of a Japanese soldier’s diary on Buna provides a description of the enemy’s demoralization. Before Eichelberger arrived, the Japanese soldier wrote:

The enemy has received almost no training . . . their movements are very slow. At this rate they cannot make a night attack. . . .

The enemy has been repulsed by our keen-eyed snipers. In the jungle it seems they fire at any sound, due to illusion. From sundown until about 10 p.m. they fire their light machine guns and throw hand grenades recklessly. (Byers 1963, 13)

After Eichelberger’s arrival and tactical changes, there is a profound alteration in the Japanese soldier’s view of the U.S. soldier and his own morale:

The nature of the enemy is superior and they excel in firing techniques. . . . HQs is a pitiful sight due to their artillery fire. . . . Enemy scouts appear everywhere and attack, shooting automatic rifles. . . .

With the dawn the enemy started shooting all over. All I can do is shed tears of resentment. Now we are waiting only for death (Byers 1963, 15).

Eichelberger’s tactics were inexorably effective. From 6-12 December 1942, his units focused on patrolling and identifying enemy strongpoints and conducted small-scale

raids on enemy bunker complexes. These six days did soften up the enemy on the Urbana Front and on 14 December 1942, he seized Buna Village. With this momentum, the infiltration tactics began to release a torrent of victories and the Japanese strongpoints began to fall one by one. On 17 December 1942, Coconut Grove on the Urbana Front was seized, followed by the Warren Front's Duropa Plantation and its 150 bunkers on 18 December. On 29 December 1942, Eichelberger's men broke the Japanese defensive system into small pockets of resistance on the Urbana Front and isolated Buna Mission. It fell on 2 January 1943. General Eichelberger captured Buna and defeated the Japanese in just thirty-two days.

Besides a change to tactics, Eichelberger's personal intervention in two key engagements further demonstrated his coup d'oeil. He immediately took advantage of fleeting tactical opportunities. When Sergeant Bottcher's platoon successfully penetrated the Japanese defense on the Urbana Front, Eichelberger without delay ordered this salient reinforced. Eichelberger recognized the criticality of the position that had effectively spilt the Japanese defenses between Buna Village and Buna Mission. This salient allowed him to concentrate his attacks against Buna Village. This salient could be used as an assault position to pin the Japanese forces at Buna Village against the Girua River. This is exactly what Eichelberger did and Buna Village was the first Japanese strongpoint to fall.

After his initial attacks on "The Triangle" on 19 December 1942 were repulsed, Eichelberger decided to bypass this area, seize Giropa Point, and thereby isolate Buna Mission also from the East. Eichelberger told his commanders to bypass the footbridge over Entrance Creek, personally identified the new crossing site downstream, and then audaciously ordered a night crossing. This decision allowed him to push two companies

across the creek and establish a bridgehead, outflanking the enemy. From this bridgehead, attacks eventually penetrated the Government Gardens, seized Giropa Point, and completed the isolation of Buna Mission (Mayo 1974, 152; Luvaas 1986, 218; Milner 1957, 288-289).

It is true that unlike Harding, Eichelberger did receive reinforcements (an Australian infantry battalion and tank platoon and a U.S. infantry regiment). But these reinforcements did not arrive until after Eichelberger had made his initial penetration of the Japanese defenses on the Urbana Front. Harding had not dented the Japanese defenses despite a month's worth of fighting. Also, more men, employed in costly frontal assaults, would have gained nothing. General Courtney Whitney credited Eichelberger's courageous leadership and his "new tactics of attack" as decisive (Whitney 1956, 83).

During the Netherlands New Guinea campaign, Eichelberger demonstrated his coup d'oeil first at Hollandia. The original plan for the amphibious assault at Hollandia called for a two-division double envelopment to seize three key airfields. The 41st Infantry Division was to land in the east at Humboldt Bay and the 24th Infantry Division, the planned main effort, was to land in the west at Tanahmerah Bay. Immediately moving ashore on the same day as the landings, Eichelberger realized that he needed to shift the main effort due to logistical problems on the beaches. (An intelligence error had not identified a swamp thirty yards from one of the 24th Infantry Division's beaches) Realizing that he had achieved tactical surprise and could not allow the enemy time to consolidate and reorganize, he designated the 41st Infantry Division as the main effort, landed his reserve regimental combat team behind them, and changed all D+2 logistical convoys to Humboldt Bay. This decision maintained the momentum of I Corps attack and

never surrendered the initiative to the enemy. General George Marshall would later assert that the Hollandia operation was a “model of strategic and tactical maneuver” (Shortal 1987, 84).

Eichelberger also never forgot the purpose behind his capture of Hollandia--to build airfields and logistics bases for impending future operations. He applied both his comprehensive and discriminating mind to ensure that, despite limited resources, complex, simultaneous tasks were accomplished on time. His Chief of Staff, Clovis Byers, stated:

In the past everyone has known Bob to be an outstanding administrator, and more recently even Walter [General Walter Krueger, Sixth Army Commander] has acknowledged his prowess as a courageous and skillful leader of troops, but this recent task is a supply one of extreme difficulty. Bob’s intelligent curiosity has enabled him to reach the bottom of the complexities of the problem and the results are nothing sort of remarkable. Jimmie Frink [General James Frink, Commanding General of the United States Army Services of Supply, SWPA] says his results here in the supply line are astounding. (Luvaas 1981, 122-123)

At Biak Island, Eichelberger was faced with some of the same challenges he faced in Buna. He assumed command of a demoralized American force that was fighting in harsh terrain, an island he would later describe as “unreal and frightening s Conan Doyle’s ‘Lost World’,” and against a fanatic, entrenched enemy (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 135). Biak Task Force had landed on Biak Island on 27 May 1944 and faced no initial Japanese resistance. However, once the soldiers of the 41st Division began to move inland, through the mountains and towards the airfields, they met with fierce Japanese resistance. The Japanese coral and cave defensive positions that honeycombed Mokmer Ridge were infested with artillery, mortars, and machine gun positions. More importantly, this position dominated all three airfields, the Biak Task

Force's objectives. The American task force attacked from 29 May to 14 June 1944 and all failed to dislodge the Japanese from their defenses and secure all three airfields.

Assuming command of Biak Task Force on 15 June 1944, Eichelberger immediately conducted a personal reconnaissance of the battlefield and visited regimental command posts. Eichelberger wrote his wife, "But this fight is a witch. . . . The many coral cliffs leading away from the narrow coastal shelf has immeasurable caves in which our little friends are willing to die" (Luvaas 1981, 129).

What the previous commander could not see, Eichelberger's intellect and intuition showed him the way to victory. Eichelberger decided to destroy the Japanese in two phases. First, he would secure the airfields as his immediate objective. Next, he would systematically destroy the Japanese forces in the caves. On 17 June 1944, Eichelberger sent a message to his superior Krueger outlining his plan. He stated:

Having arrived here forty-eight hours ago in almost complete ignorance of the situation, I have spent two days at the front. Tomorrow [18 June], I have called off all fighting and troops will be reorganized. On Monday, [19 June], I propose to put three battalions in the rear of the Japanese, and on Tuesday [20 June], I propose to take the other two airfields (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 146)

By 16 June 1944, Eichelberger had decided that given the nature of the terrain and the disposition of the enemy forces, the previous commander's tactics were all wrong. He stated that the problem was he was "using little nibbling attacks that would not have gotten any place" (Chwialkowski 1993, 101). While many officers would have fallen back on one of their previously successful methods, Eichelberger believed that every tactical problem was unique. Eichelberger did not resort to infiltration tactics but instead developed and executed a bold envelopment.

The initial attack of two regiments was hinged on terrain dominance. Eichelberger ordered a reinforced infantry company to seize Hill 320, which dominated the area north of the airfields. Recognizing Hill 320 as key terrain, it was an excellent observation point that would provide him accurate artillery fires on Japanese defenses. Eichelberger had realized that the previous commander had wasted his artillery with unobserved fires, simply “throwing boat loads of artillery ammunition at area that might or might not be occupied by the Japanese” (Luvaas 1981, 139). In contrast, Eichelberger combined the fires of four artillery battalions and a heavy mortar platoon at observed enemy positions and then unhinged the Japanese defenses with decisive maneuver. Eichelberger described his envelopment as an effort to “jar them [the Japanese] loose from Mokmer Ridge” (Taafee 1988, 172). One regiment fixed the enemy in the West Caves, while another regiment encircled the caves from the front and rear.

Eichelberger’s tactics were also a masterful mix of physical dislocation and psychological disruption. He stated, “My plan called for giving the Japanese a dose of their own medicine. . . . Japanese troops, just like occidental troops, take a very dim and unhappy view of enemy forces in their rear” (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 146). He later stated, “By throwing three battalions across the enemy’s rear I broke their hearts” (Luvaas 1981, 140). It took Eichelberger just five days to seize all three airfields.

Eichelberger’s initial attacks “broke the back” of the Japanese defenses (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 148). After seizing the airfields, Eichelberger then turned to destroying the remainder of the Japanese forces in the cave complex in order to secure the airfields from Japanese counterattacks. Equipped with a great ability to tactically judge terrain, Eichelberger solved the “riddle of the caves” by selecting to

attack the main cave, the West Cave or “The Sump,” and then focusing his combat power on it (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 149). The attacks on the West Caves threatened the Japanese positions with systematic destruction. In desperation, the Japanese commander burned his colors and launched three suicidal counterattacks. Eichelberger responded by decimating the Japanese forces.

At Biak, Eichelberger’s coup d’oeil had shown him that the critical factor in defeating the Japanese strong defensive positions was to seize key terrain. By enveloping the Japanese defenses and pounding them with accurate indirect fires, he forced them to retreat back to cave complexes. Instead of attacking the entire cave complex simultaneously, he astutely destroyed the West Caves first, the Japanese decisive point. Knowing that their fate was sealed, the Japanese launched a rash counterattack that was destroyed. A *Time* article summed up Eichelberger’s great achievement by stating:

At Biak, Eichelberger was sent to rescue another bogged-down force. . . . It was a clever job of tactics--no frontal assaults, much fast stepping, cleverly conceived flanking movements, a swift securing of three vital Biak islands. For such imaginative tactics, MacArthur made Eichelberger commander of the new Eighth Army. (Shortal 1985, 167)

Commander of the U.S. Eighth Army was the pinnacle of Eichelberger’s combat leadership in World War II and he displayed no degradation of intellectual or intuitive skills despite his rise in rank. Some military commanders in history could not cope with the responsibilities of greater command. Clausewitz stated that “the standard rises with every step . . . Every level of command has its own intellectual standards, its own prerequisites for fame and honor” (Clausewitz 1989, 111).

Eichelberger would confirm his outstanding gift of coup d’oeil during the Philippines Campaign, a campaign that author Jay Luvaas termed an “Amphibious

Blitzkrieg” (Luvaas 1981, 221). MacArthur would later characterize Eichelberger’s operations in the Philippines as “speed, dash, and brilliance” and likened him to Stonewall Jackson (James 1975, 750; Hunt 1954, 382). MacArthur would also state that “no army of this war has achieved greater glory and distinction than the Eighth” (Shortal 1987, 95). From December 1944 to August 1945, Eighth Army conducted fifty-two separate amphibious landings and killed 91,509 Japanese. In fact, Eighth Army averaged a landing every day and a half. As Eighth Army commander, Eichelberger captured more enemy territory in less time than any other U.S. general in World War II (Shortal 1987, 95).

During the Luzon operation, Eichelberger’s intellect formulated his successful tactics. His basic plan for operations stressed the need for aggressive patrolling, a “rapid advance,” seizure of key terrain, and continued pursuit of Japanese forces (Shortal 1986b, 64-65). Eichelberger clearly understood that speed saved lives because it denied the Japanese, who were tenacious defenders, the ability to reconstitute their defenses. Going ashore with the lead elements, Eichelberger had to make two crucial decisions: whether to change the reconnaissance in force to a full-scale attack and where an airborne assault was possible (Luvaas and Shortal 1988, 173).

The landing of General Swing’s 11th Airborne Division at Nasugbu, fifty-five miles south of Manila, was initially a reconnaissance in force. The SWPA G-3 had originally planned for a regimental sized landing at Batangas. Eichelberger personally intervened to increase the size of the force to a division and change the landing site to Nasugbu, which offered a more direct route to Manila. Eichelberger’s drive turned the operation into a full attack and thus, prevented American casualties. Eichelberger was

able to outthink and outflank the Japanese by always being one-step in front of their decision-making cycle. Eichelberger would later state that he exploited the Japanese commanders' biggest weakness, their inability to adapt to changing circumstances. He stated, "They didn't change their plan, they lacked initiative . . . they had an unwillingness to change their orders quickly" (Eichelberger 1950, Speech).

Eichelberger did not want the Japanese Shimbu Group to be able to organize a defense on critical terrain or natural chokepoints. Eichelberger stated, "Beyond Tumulid the road began to climb more steeply and to cut through the hills. These narrow defiles, with precipitous wooded banks on either side, were natural troop traps which the Japanese could have--and would have--defended if we had not achieved surprise" (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 190-191). With his gifted terrain visualization, Eichelberger ordered Swing to seize critical bridges, including the Palico River Bridge. The capture of the Palico River Bridge intact allowed Eichelberger to continue to push his forces along the Nasugbu-Tagaytay two-lane concrete road. After the bridge was seized, Eichelberger demanded that Swing continue to attack all night. Eichelberger believed that "enemy troops were confused and retreating, and a halt at dark would have permitted them to reorganize" (Shortal 1987, 109). That night Swing conducted a regimental passage of lines and continued the attack. Eichelberger's demand for speed allowed him to achieve a momentum that overwhelmed the Japanese forces.

Eichelberger's largest challenge enroute to Manila was the Japanese defensive positions on the Tagaytay Ridge, just thirty miles south of the outskirts of Manila. Explaining its great importance, Eichelberger stated, "Tagaytay Ridge was by all odds the most important military position in southern Luzon. It was twenty-four hundred feet high

and a concrete road [Highway 17, two lane road] lead downhill” (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 190-191). In order to open the road to Manila, Eichelberger had to seize Tagaytay Ridge.

Instead of conducting a conventional assault on the most powerful Japanese position south of Manila, Eichelberger devised and executed an innovative plan. His plan was to conduct a vertical envelopment of Tagaytay Ridge by an airborne assault. This would position forces for an assault in the rear of the Japanese defenses. Then he could launch a coordinated attack on the Japanese defenses from two directions. At 0730 on 3 February 1945, the 188th Regimental Combat Team assaulted and seized the highest and most important hill on the Japanese defenses on Tagaytay Ridge. At 0815, the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment conducted an airborne assault to the rear of the Japanese and then attacked. By 1300, the Japanese defense on Tagaytay Ridge had been destroyed. Immediately continuing the attack, they bypassed the Imus Bridge and Eichelberger and the lead elements found a crossing site and forded the Paranque River. Then, they seized the Las Pinas bridge intact, while “once again,” Eichelberger wrote, “the Japanese were found asleep” (Shortal 1986b, 65).

By 4 February 1945, Eichelberger’s men had fought over forty-five miles and reached the outskirts of Manila in just 104 hours. Unfortunately for Eichelberger, he would not get the glory of liberating Manila, as MacArthur ordered him to turn control of the Swing’s division to Sixth Army and conduct the liberation of the Philippines’s Visayan Islands. Eichelberger summed up the operation, “The entire operation from the Nasugbu Beachhead to Nichols Field was characterized by rapid exploitation and dynamic forward movement . . . our forces, by their swift, daring movement and effective

use of terrain, took advantage of the enemy's confusion and prevented him from making any organized stand" (Shortal 1985, 194-195). General William Dunckel, the Chief of the SWPA Planning Division, wrote Eichelberger and told him that he sincerely believed that "we could have saved more of Manila" if Eighth Army was made SWPA's main effort instead of Krueger's Sixth Army (Shortal 1986b, 66).

After the Luzon operation, Eichelberger next turned to the capture of the Southern Philippines or the Visayan island chain. Between 28 February and 3 April 1945, Eichelberger's Eighth Army conducted thirty-five separate amphibious landings, across 1000 miles of territory. Equally impressive was the fact that Eichelberger's span of control was huge.

During the spring of 1945, Eichelberger spend seventy of ninety days in the air in his B-17 "Flying Command Post," which was equipped with both a working area with maps and desks but also small living quarters that contained a stove, icebox, and bed. During the Visayan operations, Eichelberger had to command and control simultaneously operations of a myriad of different units, all in various stages of planning, preparation, movement, and fighting. For instance, during the month of March 1945, the liberation of Panay, Negros, and Cebu were all happening concurrently. During April 1945, Eighth Army liberated the Mindanao, Calamian, Balabac, Jolo, Sanga Sanga, Masbate, and Bohol. Eichelberger's flexible mind and his ability to comprehend multiple issues simultaneously was one of the reasons that war correspondent Frazier Hunt claimed that Eichelberger was better than Krueger because he was "decidedly more versatile" (Hunt 1954, 357).

Eichelberger's operational concept contained three key components that were issued as directives to his subordinate commanders. First, the amphibious assaults were as made close as possible, usually within fifty miles, to a major port and the port was to be captured within forty-eight hours. The purpose of this directive was to take advantage of operational or tactical surprise during the fleeting hours of the initial amphibious assault. If American forces could rapidly seize a lodgment, then forces and supplies could be pushed to maintain the momentum of the attacks and prevent the enemy from regaining the initiative. Second, key terrain, especially chokepoints along major lines of communication, was to be rapidly seized to prevent the enemy from anchoring a reconstituted defense at these points. Finally, relentless pressure on the enemy was to be brought to bear to prevent him from establishing a coherent defense. To his subordinate commanders, Eichelberger stressed "the need for speedy and aggressive action and the constant maintenance of contact" (Shortal 1985, 200). He cautioned his commanders against the succumbing to the "sit-still-and-patrol method" (Luvaas 1981, 176). If necessary, enemy strongpoints were to be bypassed and his overall defenses could be broken up by maneuver. This would force the enemy to retreat into the hinterlands, where he could be destroyed with supporting fires, malnutrition, and disease. In order to prevent tactical pauses, Eighth Army units were ordered to move with a five day supply of rations and fuel. Also, in order to maximize theater shipping resources, infantry divisions landed with fifteen days of supply instead of the usual sixty days. As a contingency, a floating supply reserve was maintained that could quickly steam to the requested unit (United States Eighth Army 1946b, 45; 150; Chwialkowski 1993, 132; Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 233).

Eichelberger's operational concept proved to be correct. During the planning of the seizure of Negros, Eichelberger ordered that a raid seize the 650 foot steel Bago River Bridge prior to the landing to prevent the Japanese from dropping it into the gorge that it spanned. On 29 March 1945, the 40th Infantry Division landed and quickly seized the island's principal seaport of Bacolod. Prior to the landing, a platoon-sized raid had already seized the bridge. Then this platoon conducted a passage of lines for the remainder of the division as it attacked along Highway 1 and broke through a series of enemy defenses. General MacArthur would later write that Eichelberger's plan to seize the Bago River Bridge was "brilliant" (Shortal 1987, 119).

The Cebu Island operation is another example of Eichelberger's coup d'oeil. On 26 March 1945, the Americal Division conducted an amphibious assault and landed five miles south of Cebu City. From 29 March to 8 April 1945, the division's attacks against the enemy defenses were all repulsed. Eichelberger arrived on 9 April 1945, assessed the situation, and then ordered a regiment to land to the rear of the enemy's defenses. On 12 April 1945, a coordinated attack was executed and the Japanese were totally surprised. The enemy panicked and fled to the mountains where Americal Division destroyed him with a series of patrols and airpower and artillery.

Perhaps the greatest display of Eichelberger's coup d'oeil happened during the Mindanao Operation. The Mindanao Operation from April to May 1945 was fret with potential difficulties. The sheer size of the island, which made it difficult for the attacker to secure, also contained a large Japanese force of 50,000--the most Eichelberger had ever contended with in one area. Since the majority of the Japanese troops were defending the heavily fortified Davao City, Eichelberger cleverly close to conduct an

operational turning movement and land X Corps at Illana Bay and then attack 110 miles, using a single overland route, to defeat the Japanese defenses at Davao City from the rear. However, this route, Highway 1, could have been easily blocked by Japanese forces.

By using the Mindanao River, which ran parallel to Highway 1, Eichelberger saw the possibility of a rapid advance. Conducting riverine assaults, X Corps was able to outflank and destroy Japanese blocking forces in a two-pronged attack, moving and fighting fifty-two miles in five days. This prevented the enemy from organizing and establishing a coherent defense and cut his lines of communication at the junction of Highway 1 and Sayre Highway. In addition to the tactical uses of the Mindanao River, X Corps used the river as a major supply route (United States Eighth Army 1946a, 26).

While MacArthur had predicted that the seizure of Davao City would take three to four months, Eichelberger took Davao City in just twelve days; capturing the city from the rear while its heavy guns still pointed east, waiting for an amphibious assault that never came. Eichelberger's men had fought across 110 miles of enemy territory, the largest sustained land advance during the Pacific war (Eichelberger and MacKaye 1950, 223). Eichelberger stated that "rapid exploitation of opportunity and fearless offensive action had paid off to cut down a three or four month's job to a two week's task" (Shortal 1985, 214). MacArthur was equally impressed. He stated that the Eichelberger's Philippine Campaign was a "model of what a light but aggressive command can accomplish in rapid exploitation" (Shortal 1985, 168). He also told Eichelberger, "You run an army in combat just like I would like to have done it" (Shortal 1985, 209). As a result of his performance, MacArthur designated Eichelberger to command the planned main effort assault on Honshu on the Japanese mainland. But perhaps the greatest

compliment Eichelberger received was from General George Patton who wrote, “In my limited experience with amphibious attacks, I found them the most dangerous form of sport yet devised. If I should be so fortunate, I am going to sit at your feet and learn how to do it” (Luvaas 1981, 24).

With the completion of the analysis, the research questions can be answered and interpretations of Eichelberger’s generalship can be drawn. Equally important is the discussion on the significance of Eichelberger’s military genius to the current military professional. In addition, a discussion on further research recommendations is warranted.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Was General Robert Eichelberger a military genius? Probably yes. If this seemingly indecisive answer frustrates the reader, keep in mind that historical analysis seldom produces answers and often generates only mere insights. Human beings and their talents rarely can be sufficiently judged within the framework of a master's thesis. Moreover, the researcher is reminded that the journey, not the destination, is the essential part of scrutinizing Eichelberger's generalship. As British General Archibald Wavell once reminded British Staff College students:

Study the human side of history . . . to learn that Napoleon in 1796 with 20,000 beat combined forces of 30,000 by something called economy of force or operating on interior lines is a mere waste of time. If you can understand how a young unknown man inspired a half starved ragged, rather Bolshie crowd; how he filled their bellies; how he outmarched, outwitted, outbluffed, and defeated men who had studied war all their lives and waged it according to the text-books of their time, you will have learnt something worth knowing. (Greiss 1988, 35)

Eichelberger definitely possessed courage and determination in abundance. His courage was both moral and physical. Moral courage manifested itself in his willingness to shoulder the burdens of command and take responsibility for his actions and decisions. His physical courage consisted of both psychological and pragmatic components. The psychological components of his courage consisted of a blend of indifference to danger, detestation of his enemy, and ambition. These subcomponents combined with his pragmatic need to visualize the battlefield, make adjustment decisions, and inspire soldiers. He demonstrated his gallantry at the Battles of Novitskaya, Buna, Biak Island,

Tagaytay Ridge, and Davao City. In total, he was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross and three Silver Stars for his direct leadership in combat and exceptional heroism.

His determination is likewise practically indisputable. He displayed the key sub-components of staunchness, endurance, strength of mind, strength of character, self-control, and a sense of human dignity. Eichelberger recovered from initial setbacks at Buna to take the fight to the enemy and then destroyed him with his single-minded tenacity. His iron will during World War II demanded an implacable pressure on the enemy and once engaged, he did not relent until they were defeated. His mental faculties, his ability to think rationally and calmly under stress, did not diminish despite the grisly conditions of fighting the Imperial Japanese Army (IJA) in the arduous jungle terrain of the SWPA. Finally, soldiers were not pawns in a chess game to Eichelberger, they were his “lads” and his “boys,” and he never forgot their humanity or the inhumanity inherent in the task to which he was engaged.

Despite the transparent certainty of Eichelberger’s courage and determination, it is his coup d’oeil, this combination of intuition and intellect, which requires further research and analysis. Eichelberger’s battlefield intuition was both evident and exceptional during his changes to infiltration tactics at Buna, the envelopment of Japanese strongpoints at Biak Island, and the “Amphibious Blitzkrieg” operational strategy for the Southern Philippines. But the hesitancy in declaring Eichelberger a military genius centers on his intellect. After all, intellect is a critical factor if the researcher is to determine whether Eichelberger befits the term genius or not. What is really needed is a comprehensive and exhaustive study of Eichelberger’s intellectual development and decision making in combat.

Good models for a future researcher in the study of Eichelberger's intellectual development could be Roger H. Nye's *The Patton Mind: The Professional Development of an Extraordinary Leader* or Forrest C. Pogue's *George C. Marshall: Education of a General, 1880-1939*. A study like this could focus on Eichelberger's personal library and writings, especially Eichelberger's case studies and battle analyses from CGSS and the War College, in an attempt to gain an appreciation for his intellectual development. Also needed is a more cogent analysis of Eichelberger's decision making in combat. Critical to this study would be extensive and full examination of Eichelberger's diaries, personal letters, and original orders.

Despite the lack of clarity on Eichelberger's intellect, the research did produce some disputations with author Paul Chwialkowski's claims. The research into Eichelberger's military genius offered another perspective on the effectiveness of Eichelberger's generalship and contributed another opinion to the historical argument. First, Chwialkowski's claims against Eichelberger's possession of a special competence do not take into account Eichelberger's recognized expertise in amphibious operations. Eichelberger's superior, General Douglas MacArthur, characterized Eichelberger's operations as brilliant (Shortal 1985, 209). Eichelberger's peer, General George Patton, a man who historians Roger Nye and Carlo D'Este both consider a military genius, believed that Eichelberger possessed an extraordinary aptitude for amphibious operations. In fact, Patton wanted Eichelberger to instruct him on amphibious operations (Luvaas 1981, 24).

Second, Chwialkowski's contention that Eichelberger was a careerist with a destructive personality seems to falter on flawed modeling and faulty definitions.

Chwialkowski model of virtue seems to be General Omar Bradley. To believe that Bradley was not ambitious is not only naïve but laughable, and Chwialkowski's apparent surrender to Bradley's Karl Malden image that does not live up to historical scrutiny. Eichelberger was definitely ambitious, as were many of his peers, Eisenhower, Bradley, Patton, to name a few. But a careerist connotes a military officer who places his desire for promotion above the good of his soldiers, his unit, and his own professional institution. Eichelberger was certainly no Courtney Massengale of *Once an Eagle* fame, and there exists no evidence that he was promoted by climbing over the corpses of his peers or soldiers.

Thirdly, Chwialkowski seemed to underestimate the ferocity of fighting in the Pacific Theater when he insinuated that Eichelberger was not tested against a sufficiently dangerous opponent. Authors Meirion and Susie Harries in their book, *Soldiers of the Sun: The Rise and Fall of the Imperial Japanese Army*, convincingly contended that during World War II, the IJA "redefined the meanings of both heroism and barbarity" (Harries 1994, viii). The IJA proved to be tough, enterprising, ruthless, and more often than not, they fought to the death. Author Eric Bergerud best summed up the nature of combat in the Pacific Theater when he stated:

The nature of ground combat in the South Pacific was unique in this century. Although the strategic dynamic of the campaign concentrated on seizing and holding air and naval bases, most of the fighting, as is usually the case in war, was done by infantry. The Japanese and Allied armies confronted each other on terrain that was incredibly hostile, primitive, and largely unknown. Because the dense jungle battlefield greatly lessened the tactical effectiveness of modern weapons, the war became a ferocious slugging match between light-infantry armies at extremely close quarters. Furthermore, the radical battle ethos of the Japanese initiated a vicious circle of violence where no mercy was asked or given, creating, in essence, a war of annihilation. It was war at its most basic and its most brutal. (Bergerud 1996, xii)

This evaluation of the skill and effectiveness of an opponent leads directly to the first relevance of the study. Eichelberger's efforts at defeating tough units of the IJA can be analogous to current operations against another opponent who displays an equal ferociousness and willingness to die for a cause, Al Qaeda (AQ). The reader needs to remember no further in contemporary history than recent operations in Tora Bora against Usama Bin Laden's Brigade 055, composed of a mix of nationalities and ethnicities of Arab, Central Asian, Chinese, and Chechen descent, that fought to the death on mountain ridges and caves of Afghanistan. Furthermore, enemies similar to the IJA are probably what the U.S. Army can expect in the near future in the contemporary operating environment. As author Ralph Peters stated:

When we face warriors, we will often face men who have acquired a taste for killing, who do not behave rationally according to our definition of rationality, who are capable of atrocities that challenge the descriptive powers of language, and who will sacrifice their own kind in order to survive. We will face opponents for whom treachery is routine, and they will not be impressed by tepid shows of force with restrictive rules of engagement. (Peters 1994, 21)

So how does the U.S. Army overcome a future enemy, like the IJA, that will employ asymmetric warfare and attempt to offset U.S. technological superiority through the employment of anti-access operations and campaigns in complex terrain and fights with fanatical savagery? An examination of Eichelberger's generalship promotes an assertion that the decisive factor was leadership, a leadership that possessed courage, determination, and coup d'oeil. This coup d'oeil resulted from intuition, the product of experience, and intellect, the result of education.

While an in-depth study of the corollaries between Eichelberger's generalship in the Pacific and the current leader development model of the U.S. Army is far beyond the

scope of this paper, certain insights are worth briefly addressing. First, Eichelberger's formal military education appears to have had a major impact on his success. Accepting the parameters of the adult learning model and recognizing that the Army cannot force leaders to conduct an independent study of their profession through military history, the question then becomes how the Army's institutional educational program can correct deficiencies. For example, if we consider a military genius, a JDAM (Joint Directed Attack Munition), how do we develop a JDAM collar, or synthetic genius, for a "dumb" bomb? One way is to ensure that the Command and General Staff College is qualitatively rigorous, challenging, and most of all, demanding. Eichelberger's experience at CGSS with its curriculum of map exercises, staff rides, battle analyses, and case studies provide an excellent starting point.

Finally, Eichelberger's career also seems to support the necessity for a mentorship program. Eichelberger's mentors, Graves and Craig especially, introduced Eichelberger to the complex problems of organizational and strategic leadership and allowed him to vicariously learn from their actions. Author Kenneth Jolemore in his historical examination of the mentorship of Marshall, MacArthur, and Patton during their formative years, contended that mentorship meant more than just coaching and teaching. It also involved advising, validating, counseling, motivating, protecting, and role modeling behavior (Jolemore 1996, 9). Through a mentorship program, maybe using the Army Alumni Program, young officers can gain indirect practical experience. Mentors may also spark his protégé's intellectual curiosity towards either military history or cultural studies. Both a historical context and cultural awareness are sure to be critical in the

future war on terrorism, which will likely entail “small wars” in locations other than the West.

General Robert L. Eichelberger, whether a military genius or not, deserves a prominent place in the annals of great American military leaders. Eichelberger’s personal and formal military education, coupled with senior officer mentorship, built his amazing mental faculties. Practical experience supplied him with an experiential database for his intuition and also fostered his resoluteness and self-confidence. Equipped with these attributes, Eichelberger’s campaigns in Papua New Guinea, Netherlands New Guinea, and the Philippines highlighted his personification of the qualities of coup d’oeil, personal courage, and determination. His life should serve as a model in the quest of institutionalizing military excellence in modern military leaders and fostering the preeminent traits of military genius.

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