

Pattern for Victory: Forging and Leading Air Power at War

**A Monograph
by
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General Laurence S. Kuter served as both an operational planner and commander during the Second World War. As a planner, he co-authored Air War Plans Division Plan 1 (AWPD-1); the basic strategy upon which the United States Army Air Forces waged the war. Beyond designing the plan, Kuter helped to execute it as a commander in both the European and Mediterranean Theaters of Operation before returning to the Pentagon as a strategic planner. His service is unique in that he successfully transitioned between planning and commanding. The narrative examines Kuter's career through the end of the Second World War. Early discussion focuses on his role formulating United States Army Air Corps bombardment theory and writing AWPD-1. The study of Kuter's service as a commander reveals that he was instrumental in improving the command and control mechanisms required to guide the application of air power. Additionally, after viewing the operational environment from both the planner's, and commander's point of view, he realized that the different perspectives generated friction. As the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, Kuter continued to maintain control of strategic plans despite the continuous modification and adjustment required for their implementation in different theaters.

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Abstract

A "Pattern for Victory:" General Laurence S. Kuter by Major Leland K. Cowie II, USAF, 52 pages.

General Laurence S. Kuter served as both an operational planner and commander during the Second World War. As a planner, he co-authored Air War Plans Division Plan 1 (AWPD-1); the basic strategy upon which the United States Army Air Forces waged the war. Beyond designing the plan, Kuter helped to execute it as a commander in both the European and Mediterranean Theaters of Operation before returning to the Pentagon as a strategic planner. His service is unique in that he successfully transitioned between planning and commanding.

To date, no one has studied Kuter's career in depth or his ability to fulfill both roles effectively. There are only two published accounts of wartime service and both of these are very narrow in scope. Fortunately, Kuter donated his extensive personal archive to the Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection at the United States Air Force Academy. This manuscript collection contains thousands of documents, publications, and photos spanning his entire life. Additionally, the Air Force Historical Research Agency maintains a copy of Kuter's oral history recorded in 1974. These primary sources serve as the basis for this study.

This monograph's overarching research question is to what extent does the historical example of Kuter's experience as an operational planner combine with his service as a commander to provide insight into the origins of USAF operational art? Three specific questions guide this investigation. First, were there items for which the AWPD-1 planners failed to account? Second, how did the commanders executing the plan provide feedback to their planners? Third, did the plan allow for the incorporation of feedback from the field?

The narrative examines Kuter's career from his graduation from West Point through the end of the Second World War. Early discussion focuses on his role formulating United States Army Air Corps bombardment theory and writing AWPD-1. The study of Kuter's service as a commander reveals that he was instrumental in improving the command and control mechanisms required to guide the application of air power. Additionally, after viewing the operational environment from both the planner's, and commander's point of view, he realized that the different perspectives generated friction. As the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, Kuter continued to maintain control of strategic plans despite the continuous modification and adjustment required for their implementation in the different theaters of operation.

Discourse concludes by arguing that Kuter achieved his greatest contributions in the evolution of air power during the Second World War. First among these is designing the war-winning US Army Air Forces and future US Air Force through his co-authorship of AWPD-1. Second, Kuter codified air power theory into doctrine with his contributions to Army Regulation 95-5 and Field Manual 100-20. Third, he learned to balance strategic objectives with the realities of the operational environment. These lessons range from simple ideas such as the importance of basing and the need to provide details regarding the projected flow of forces into theater, to more advanced concepts, like the functional combatant command or the proper way to ensure the flow of feedback between commanders and their strategic planners. Ultimately, he designed the command and control structure used to empower the centralized control and decentralized execution of Boeing B-29 "Superfortress" operations in the Pacific Theater of Operations.

Dedication

On August 20, 1944, twenty-five year old George “Mac” McCarthy, a native of New York, fought with the controls of his battle-damaged Boeing B-29 “Superfortress” attempting to keep the aircraft level while his crew bailed out over Japanese-occupied China. After the last airman had safely egressed, he left the pilot’s seat of his dying bomber and jumped into the rushing air, opening his parachute with only seconds to spare. Mac hit the ground so hard that his back was wrenched, leaving him unable to move. For days, he lay in the open, bundled in the silk of his parachute, still gripping the ripcord that had saved his life. The Chinese resistance found Mac, rounded up the rest of his crew, and conveyed them to safety. After healing from his wounds, Mac returned to combat flying with 20th Air Force in May 1945. After the war, he continued to serve in the Air Force Reserve, eventually retiring as a colonel.

While flying his first combat mission on November 11, 1944, twenty-two year old Carl “Bob” Reiger, a B-29 aerial gunner, bailed out of his crippled aircraft shortly after attacking a target in Japanese-occupied China. The Japanese captured Bob immediately after he drifted back to earth, beginning months of captivity. Bob served as a prisoner of war under the harshest of conditions, facing Japanese brutality with the impeccable honor and integrity that best characterizes him. After repatriation, the Army Air Forces discharged Bob from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and he returned to his hometown of Jonesburg, Missouri. Bob continued to advance American air power through his employment with the McDonnell Douglas Corporation, assisting in the construction of the F-15 “Eagle” mock-up prior to his retirement.

Like many veterans from their generation, Mac and Bob were proud of their service, but rarely mentioned the details of the circumstances they personally experienced. With steadfast determination, they faced dates with destiny fashioned by Major General Laurence “Larry” Kuter’s planning team. After the war, both of these heroes humbly lived their lives with the same humility. This monograph is dedicated to Mac, Bob, and all the other brave American airmen who launched from bases in Chengtu, China, to wage war in the skies above the Empire of Japan.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In January 1941, officers from the United States and United Kingdom met in Washington, District of Columbia (DC) to begin combined planning and coordination should America enter the war raging in Europe. This effort resulted in the March 29 release of the American-British Conversations (ABC-1) report, which subscribed to defeating “Germany first” in the event the United States (US) and United Kingdom (UK) both find themselves engaged in war simultaneously against Nazi Germany and the Empire of Japan.¹ Throughout the spring, US military planners incorporated the ABC-1 report into their previously developed Rainbow-5 plan and the Joint Army and Navy Board approved these updates on May 14.²

The US Army Air Forces found the design of a campaign appropriate for the “Germany first” strategy, as prescribed by the ABC-1 report and incorporated into the Rainbow-5 plan, a complicated matter. Except for the last five months prior to America’s entry into the Second World War, the US Army Air Forces lacked an officially sanctioned operational planning organization. The Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) developed most US air power theory in the interwar period; however, internal War Department bureaucracy prevented American airmen from codifying their ideas as official doctrine. On July 9, 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked the Secretaries of War and Navy to estimate “the overall production requirements required to defeat our potential enemies.”³

The Secretary of War looked to the War Department General Staff (WDGS) War Plans Division to answer the president’s request. Colonel Clayton L. Bissell was a member of the US

¹ Warren F. Kimball, *Forged in War: Roosevelt, Churchill, and the Second World War* (New York: Morrow, 1997), 75.

² Haywood S. Hansell Jr., Maj Gen, USAF, *The Strategic Air War Against Germany and Japan: A Memoir* (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1986), 29.

³ *Ibid.*, 30.

Army Air Forces working in the War Plans Division when it received this task.⁴ He approached the newly appointed Chief of the Army Air Forces, Major General Henry H. “Hap” Arnold, with the suggestion that the US Army Air Forces develop an air annex to the war plan under development in the War Plans Division.⁵ Based on Bissell’s recommendation, Arnold approached General George C. Marshall, the Chief of Staff of the Army, requesting that the US Army Air Forces (USAAF) independently conduct the operational planning required to answer the president’s directive.⁶ Marshall in turn authorized the creation of the Army Air Forces’ Air War Plans Division as a distinct organization autonomous from the existing WDGS War Plans Division.⁷

On July 14, 1941, Lieutenant Colonel Harold L. George arrived in Washington, DC and assumed responsibility for the Air War Plans Division as the newly appointed Assistant Chief of Staff for War Plans.⁸ George, previously an ACTS bombardment instructor, selected three other former ACTS instructors to help write the USAAF response to the president’s question.⁹ The officers were Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth N. Walker and Majors Haywood S. “Possum” Hansell Jr. and Laurence S. “Larry” Kuter.¹⁰ By the end of July, they completed Air War Plans Division-Plan 1 (AWPD-1), which went far beyond simply projecting production requirements.¹¹ Kuter realized these requirements stemmed directly from the strategic plan guiding the employment of the US Army Air Forces. Kuter learned this lesson in early 1940, when he presented Marshall a

⁴ Phillip S. Meilinger, “The Prescient Planners of AWPD-1,” *Air Force Magazine*, July 2011, 72.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Theodore A. Wilson, *The First Summit: Roosevelt and Churchill at Placentia Bay, 1941*, rev. ed. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), 62.

⁷ Hansell, 29.

⁸ Ibid., 30

⁹ Meilinger, 73.

¹⁰ Hansell, 31

¹¹ Meilinger, 72.

plan to expand the US Army Air Corps to fifty-four groups.¹² Marshall asked him what purpose fifty-four groups served, what objective the US Army Air Corps could achieve with that number, on what grounds was the objective selected, and how that fit into their greater strategic plan.¹³ This experience demonstrated to the airmen of the Air War Plans Division that they needed a solid operational plan upon which to base their production calculations. As a result, AWPDP-1 was more than an aircraft and aircrew production forecast; it provided a blueprint for the destruction of Nazi Germany from the air. According to Kuter:

The basic concept of AWPDP-1 consisted of four Air Force tasks: first, to conduct air operations in defense of the Western hemisphere; second, to assist initially in the strategic defense of the Pacific; third, to wage an unlimited strategic air offensive against Germany, including air support to a final invasion of the Continent if actual invasion was found to be necessary; and, fourth and finally, to concentrate great strategic air power against the mainland of Japan, which would reduce Japanese strength to the point where surface assault and invasion of the Japanese home islands would be practicable, if invasion should prove necessary.¹⁴

These four studious airmen completed AWPDP-1 in only nine days, with President Roosevelt accepting it in September 1941.¹⁵

The authors of AWPDP-1 went on to achieve great success in the US Army Air Forces; each of them achieved flag rank. Of the four AWPDP-1 planners, Kuter enjoyed the longest career retiring from the US Air Force (USAF) in 1962 as a general.¹⁶ During the war, Kuter commanded the 1st Bombardment Division of 8th Air Force. He later served as the American deputy commander for the Northwest African Tactical Air Force, before his return to Headquarters Army

¹² Hansell, 29.

¹³ Ibid., 30.

¹⁴ Laurence S. Kuter, Gen, USAF, *Airman at Yalta* (New York: Duell, Sloan, and Pearce, 1955), 22.

¹⁵ Meilinger, 72.

¹⁶ Vicki J. Rast, Lt Col, USAF, *The Air University Pantheon of Air, Space, and Cyberspace Power Thinkers* (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 2009), 82.

Air Forces as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans.¹⁷ The only memoir Kuter published is narrow in scope. Additionally, very little material covers his experience as a planner or commander.

Of the AWPD-1 planners, Kuter's career is the best model for evaluating the plan against its actual execution as seen through the eyes of a commander. This study's overarching research question is: to what extent does the historical example of Kuter's experience as an operational planner combine with his service as a commander to provide insight into the origins of USAF operational art? The author uses this historic example to answer three questions. First, were there items for which the AWPD-1 planners failed to account? More broadly stated what pieces of the plan were missing or unapparent to the airmen tasked with implementing AWPD-1? Second, how did the commanders executing the plan provide feedback to their planners? Was there any mechanism established to facilitate this communication? Third, was the plan malleable? Did it allow for the incorporation of feedback from the field and how would that influence USAAF operational art? This monograph argues that Kuter's pre-Second World War service in the US Army Air Corps armed him with a deep understanding of air power theory critical to the design of AWPD-1; despite this, his wartime experience shows the plan's effectiveness hinged on balancing the competing demands emanating from the clash of strategic aims with the realities of the operational environment.

While several Second World War histories occasionally refer to Kuter, only two works focus solely on him. These are his own memoir, *Airman at Yalta*, and Daniel R. Mortensen's "The Legend of Laurence Kuter: Agent for Airpower Doctrine" in *Airpower and Ground Armies: Essays on the Evolution of Anglo-American Air Doctrine*. Kuter published *Airman at Yalta* in 1955 to recount his experiences representing Arnold at the US, UK, and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics Yalta Conference in 1945. Mortensen investigates Kuter's role in the publication of

¹⁷ "General Laurence S. Kuter," The Official Web Site of the US Air Force, <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=6114> (accessed October 10, 2011).

Field Manual (FM) 100-20 *Command and Employment of Air Power*, dated 21 July 1943, which codified a new USAAF command and control arrangement.¹⁸ Neither of these books provides any breadth in their evaluation of Kuter's wartime service.

Additionally, other authors have written about AWPD-1's shortcomings. For example, the aerospace strategist, Phillip S. Meilinger's discussion on the role of the escort fighter in an article for *Air Force Magazine*, "The Prescient Planners of AWPD-1," highlights that there were disconnects between the plan and the reality of combat.¹⁹ Further investigation of Gen Kuter's Second World War service stands to clarify the impact his experience as a commander shaped his outlook as an operational planner.

Considering the limited nature of published materials featuring Kuter as their primary subject, several archives provide the primary source material. The Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brigadier General Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, Colorado, houses Gen Kuter's papers, speeches, and scrapbooks. The Air Force Historical Research Agency maintains copies of additional documents written by Kuter. His 1974 oral interview is stored in the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama. Finally, Generals Ira C. Eaker's papers from the Manuscripts Division of the Library of Congress shed light on the initial execution of AWPD-1 in the European Theater of Operations. The cross-referencing of primary sources yields answers to the research question.

The monograph consists of five chapters. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction. Kuter's early career through the writing of AWPD-1 provides the focus of Chapter 2. Chapter 3 revolves around the lessons Kuter learned about the command and control of air power while serving as commander. Chapter 4 assesses the actions Kuter took as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans to

¹⁸ Daniel R. Mortensen, "The Legend of Laurence Kuter: Agent for Airpower Doctrine," in *Airpower and Ground Armies: Essays on the Evolution of Anglo-American Air Doctrine, 1940-43*, ed. Daniel R. Mortensen (Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University Press, 1998), 86.

¹⁹ Meilinger, 74.

empower the US Army Air Forces to pursue strategic aims despite the competing demands placed upon it by theater commanders. The final evaluation is the primary subject of Chapter 5.

Chapter 2: The Inter-War Years

On February 4, 1942, the *Philadelphia Record* published an article titled “The Army’s Boy General.”²⁰ After identifying the “boy general” as Kuter, the Associated Press went on impressed that “All the way from captain to brigadier general was the jump made by this 1927 West Pointer, whose unprecedented Presidential nomination was announced in Washington Yesterday [sic].”²¹ Similarly, the *Alabama Journal* ran the headline “Aviator, 36 Becomes Youngest U.S. General.”²² With only fourteen years of service, Kuter’s promotion caught the eye of the American public. Such a dramatic rise through the ranks warrants further investigation.

This chapter examines Kuter’s career prior to his promotion to brigadier general. The discussion first centers on his formative experiences as a military officer and young USAAC pilot. This shows his practical background in bomber aviation and origins of his relationships with other future high-ranking USAAF officers. Focus then shifts to cover his time on the faculty of the Air Corps Tactical School. As an ACTS instructor, he forged bombardment theory while serving with future USAAF planners and commanders. Additionally, in this role he caught the eye of senior Army officers who brought Kuter to Marshall’s attention. Finally, this dialogue is not complete without discussing Kuter’s role as a staff officer in the War Department General Staff where he applied strategic bombing theory in the writing of AWPD-1. Kuter was a highly competent military professional who enjoyed equal admiration from officers of both the land and air components of the US Army.

²⁰ Laurence and Ethel Kuter, “Kuter Papers Vol. 3, Pt. 1, May 1939 – February 1942,” Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

A native of Rockford, Illinois, 2nd Lieutenant Kuter was commissioned into the Field Artillery upon graduation from West Point in June 1927.²³ Larry Kuter married his childhood sweetheart Ethel Lydon while enroute to his first assignment in Battery D, 2nd Battalion, 76th Field Artillery, Presidio of Monterey, California. According to Mortensen, “At an artillery exercise where he took his battery out to shoot up the landscape, he received such poor information from supporting aircraft that he asked to go to flight school to improve spotting, thus making him a better artilleryman.”²⁴ After moving to Texas in July 1929, Kuter attended both the Air Corps Primary Flying School at Brooks Field and the Air Corps Advanced Flying School, Bombardment, Kelly Field.²⁵ At one point, Kuter almost washed out; however, his evaluator, Captain Claire L. Chennault, decided to retain him.²⁶ Upon completion of his flight training in July 1930, Kuter became the operations officer, 49th Bombardment Squadron, 2nd Bombardment Group, Langley Field, Virginia, and officially transferred from the Field Artillery to the US Army Air Corps.²⁷

During his four years at Langley Field, Kuter participated in activities that forged the character of the early US Army Air Corps. In 1932, Kuter flew a Keystone bomber from Langley Field to France Field in the Panama Canal Zone.²⁸ He also secured a second place finish in the annual USAAC bombing competition.²⁹ The Langley Field leadership deemed him “Very

²³ E. S. Adams, January 30, 1942, “OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF SERVICE OF LAURENCE SHERMAN KUTER,” MS 18, Series II, Box 1, Folder 13, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

²⁴ Mortensen, 71.

²⁵ Adams.

²⁶ Laurence S. Kuter, interview by Tom Sturm and Hugh Ahmann, 30 September – 3 October, 1974, Naples, FL, transcript, p. 30, USAF Oral History Program, Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL.

²⁷ “General Laurence S. Kuter,” The Official Web Site of the US Air Force, <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=6114> (accessed October 10, 2011).

²⁸ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 82.

²⁹ “General Laurence S. Kuter,” The Official Web Site of the US Air Force,

satisfactory” on his annual ratings during his first two years on station.³⁰ By 1932, Kuter’s superiors considered him “Excellent.”³¹

1933 started with Kuter’s promotion to first lieutenant followed by him becoming both the operations officer, 2nd Bombardment Wing, and the assistant operations officer for Langley Field.³² In these capacities, Kuter pioneered high-altitude bombing techniques during the operational development of the Boeing B-9 bomber.³³ The B-9 was the first all-metal monoplane USAAC bomber and was faster than any American fighter plane.³⁴ Additionally, when President Roosevelt cancelled airmail contracts and ordered the US Army Air Corps to fly the mail, Kuter served as operations officer for the Eastern Zone Army Air Corps Mail Operation from February to June, 1934.³⁵ The Army Air Corps Mail Operation was an early US Army Air Corps attempt to execute the centralized control of air operations while providing an example to bolster its lobby for the creation of the General Headquarters (GHQ) Air Force. Kuter wrote the eastern zone’s final report describing its use of centralized control to deliver airmail.³⁶ Between his promotion to first lieutenant and his nomination for brigadier general, Kuter’s performance consistently warranted “Superior” annual ratings.³⁷ Kuter proved himself as a tactically proficient officer well

<http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=6114> (accessed October 10, 2011).

³⁰ Adams.

³¹ Ibid.

³² “General Laurence S. Kuter,” The Official Web Site of the US Air Force, <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=6114> (accessed October 10, 2011).

³³ Rast, 80.

³⁴ “Boeing: History—Products – Boeing B-9 Bomber,” Boeing Corporation, <http://www.boeing.com/history/boeing/b9.html> (accessed December 29, 2011).

³⁵ “General Laurence S. Kuter,” The Official Web Site of the US Air Force, <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=6114> (accessed October 10, 2011).

³⁶ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, p. 153.

³⁷ Adams.

versed in emerging theories related to bomber aviation, as well as the command and control of air power.

September 1934 witnessed Kuter moving to Maxwell Field, Alabama, to attend the Air Corps Tactical School.³⁸ One of Kuter's instructors was Major Chennault and his classmates included Major Byron E. "Hungry" Gates, and Captains Muir S. "Santy" Fairchild, Barney M. Giles, and Haywood Hansell.³⁹ Following his March 1935 graduation, Kuter became a member of the ACTS faculty and primarily focused on the instruction of bombardment aviation; however, he also taught a special course on naval operations. During his tenure at the Air Corps Tactical School, Kuter's students included: Majors Ira C. Eaker, Orvil A. Anderson, and Harold M. McClelland; and Captains John K. Cannon, and Emmett "Rosie" O'Donnell Jr.⁴⁰ Each of these airmen would play a significant role in Kuter's future as both a planner and commander.

In his introductory lesson to naval operations, Kuter admitted as "extravagant air enthusiasts... we have made an honest effort to temper our zeal."⁴¹ A review of Kuter's lesson plans shows that he moderated his enthusiasm by employing two techniques that would serve him well in the future as a planner. First, he invited "criticism" by asking a naval officer to review his lesson plans.⁴² Second, he stabbed directly at the heart of the material by identifying differences in the doctrinal assumptions upon which each service based their estimates.⁴³ Additionally, in preparing his naval operations class on joint action, Kuter gained a thorough comprehension of

³⁸ Adams.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Laurence S. Kuter, Capt, USA, 1938, "THE INFLUENCE OF AIR POWER ON NAVAL WARFARE," MS 18, Series II, Box 1, Folder 3, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

“the doctrine promulgated by the Joint Board.”⁴⁴ Kuter’s service at the Air Corps Tactical School instilled in him a working knowledge of the joint policies and general functions of the War and Navy Departments, while preparing him for his role in the development of AWPDP-1.

Kuter’s service as a bombardment instructor had the greatest impact on shaping the perspective he brought to the Air War Plans Division. First, he built his coursework around existing doctrine. When orienting students to the bombardment course material, Kuter emphasized, “this text is actually in use in all bombardment groups.”⁴⁵ He assigned students map problems; however, he had them use aircraft and force structures that he had projected into the future. In 1936, Kuter challenged his students to design operational plans with the future in mind stating, “Our ‘war-time’ Bomb Gp. is the 2d Bomb Gp., the 7th Bomb. Gp [*sic*] or the 19th Bomb. Gp. – not necessarily the 19th Bomb. Gp. of 15 or 20 B-10 B’s today and again not necessarily the 19th Bomb. Gp. of 52 Project D’s of 1950, but generally the 19th Bomb. Gp. that you may command and staff, perhaps on June 30, 1939, with 44 B-18’s.”⁴⁶ Additionally, Kuter provided students a framework for envisioning bombardment operations by coaching them through campaign analysis of American air power in the First World War.⁴⁷

With his lesson “AMERICAN AIR POWER – SCHOOL THEORIES vs WORLD WAR FACTS,” Kuter emphasized several points that he would continue to expand throughout his career. Prior to disseminating his ideas, Kuter solicited “comments” from Generals Hugh A.

⁴⁴ Laurence S. Kuter, Capt, USA, 1938, “JOINT ACTION OF THE ARMY AND THE NAVY,” MS 18, Series II, Box 1, Folder 4, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

⁴⁵ Laurence S. Kuter, 1Lt, USA, 1936, “ORIENTATION AND INTRODUCTION TO BOMBARDMENT COURSE WITH RECAPITULATION OF LECUTRE B-1 AND B-2,” MS 18, Series II, Box 1, Folder 1, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Laurence S. Kuter, Capt, USA, 1937, “AMERICAN AIR POWER – SCHOOL THEORIES vs WORLD WAR FACTS,” MS 18, Series II, Box 1, Folder 2, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

Drum, Fox Connor, George C. Marshall, and Charles E. Kilbourne about his analysis of their Great War campaign planning.⁴⁸ Based on his study of First World War history, Kuter believed that Colonel William “Billy” Mitchell and Lieutenant Colonel Thomas D. Milling identified the true power of the bomber prior to the St Mihiel Offensive. According to Kuter, “Milling and Mitchell did convince Drum and Pershing that the appalling loss of life to our own ground troops might be avoided if the Germans were forced to withdraw from the salient because of a lack of food, ammunition and supplies that were coming in by the trainload over that rail line.”⁴⁹ In Kuter’s mind, the bomber had the potential to destroy an opposing army from its rear. However, during the forty-seven days of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, Army commanders chose to employ their bombers to “confuse reserves” located within six or eight kilometers of the front, instead of cutting the supply lines the enemy relied upon.⁵⁰ To Kuter, this was a waste of resources and justified his arguments for the centralized control of air power under an airman. Despite this, he also used his Great War example to show that each component’s operational plans must nest within the greater “decisive strategical [*sic*] direction” provided by the supreme commander; General Ferdinand Foch in this case.⁵¹

While developing these ideas Kuter continued to excel. The Assistant Commandant of the Air Corps Tactical School, Colonel Millard F. “Miff” Harmon, called Kuter “An exceptional officer who should be given a rating of ‘Superior plus.’”⁵² Foreshadowing the future, Harmon

⁴⁸ Laurence Kuter, “AMERICAN AIR POWER – SCHOOL THEORIES vs WORLD WAR FACTS.”

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Adams. During the Second World War both Lt Gen Millard F. Harmon and Lt Gen Hubert Reilly Harmon served with distinction in similar positions and, at times, equivalent ranks. Throughout this paper, the name “Miff” Harmon refers to Millard Harmon. “Miff” is the name Millard F. Harmon’s contemporaries used when referring to him. While this paper does not mention Hubert Harmon, the goal of this accommodation is to prevent confusion of the two general officers.

also said that Kuter “Possesses superior qualification for staff assignment and for future high command.”⁵³ In June 1937, Kuter achieved the rank of captain. Two events caused him to catch the eyes of senior Army leaders. First, in December 1938 he travelled to Washington, DC to design a plan that employed a few thousand Douglas B-18 “Bolo” bombers in unison with 300 US Navy destroyers to defend the Western Atlantic.⁵⁴ “The Air Defense Plan for North America” called for the US Army Air Corps to swell to 5,000 planes and, as previously mentioned, Kuter briefed the expansion to Marshall. Second, Brigadier General Leslie J. McNair, Commandant of the Command and General Staff College, and Colonel Edmund L. Gruber, of the WDGS G-3 Training Division, walked away from a spot inspection of the Air Corps Tactical School highly impressed by Kuter.⁵⁵ In June 1939, Kuter received orders to the War Department General Staff, started working in the G-3 Plans and Operations Division, and began applying the concepts he helped forge at the Air Corps Tactical School.⁵⁶

One of Kuter’s first accomplishments in the WDGS G-3 was getting the strategic mission of the US Army Air Corps recognized through publication in official Army doctrine. Kuter assisted in the rewrite of Army Regulation (AR) 95-5, which abolished the GHQ Air Force and established the US Army Air Forces by consolidating all of the former USAAC assets under the command of one airman. The revised manual still perpetuated the distribution of tactical aircraft between divisions and brigades; however, it identified long-range bombardment as a mission

⁵³ Adams.

⁵⁴ Laurence and Ethel Kuter, “Kuter Papers Vol. 3, Pt. 1, May 1939 – February 1942,” “Notes for Captain Kuter,” Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

⁵⁵ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 127.

⁵⁶ Ethel Kuter to Duane Reed, September 8, 1991, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 2, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

centralized under the US Army Air Forces.⁵⁷ AR 95-5 served as the first step towards codifying ACTS theory as Army policy. Kuter received a promotion to the temporary rank of major on December 30, 1940, with it becoming permanent the following month.⁵⁸

When Arnold began assembling his team to write the air annex that eventually became AWPD-1, George requested the War Department General Staff loan Kuter to the Air War Plans Division.⁵⁹ The task was daunting and primarily carried out by George, Walker, Hansell, and Kuter. Despite this, the team consulted outside sources. Hansell secured the blueprints for several German power plants from the American banks that financed their construction.⁶⁰ Additionally, Kuter turned to Orvil Anderson to envision large-scale paratroop and airborne assaults employing 12,000 transport aircraft to conduct vertical envelopment.⁶¹ Similarly, Brigadier General Fairchild helped Kuter develop a framework for the distribution of training bases.⁶² The Royal Air Force also sent a liaison officer to consult with the four authors.⁶³ After the completion of AWPD-1, Kuter remained in the Air War Plans Division for two weeks while the team briefed the plan to various agencies within the War Department General Staff and the US Army Air Forces.⁶⁴

Following his work in the Air War Plans Division, Kuter returned to his duties in the WDGS G-3. In November 1941, and he began working directly for General Marshall in the WDGS Secretariat.⁶⁵ During this time, Larry and Ethel Kuter became members of the Theater

⁵⁷ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 196.

⁵⁸ Laurence and Ethel Kuter, "Kuter Papers Vol. 3, Pt. 1, May 1939 – February 1942."

⁵⁹ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 217.

⁶⁰ Hansell, 23.

⁶¹ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 203.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 205.

⁶³ C. H. "Bobby" Sharp, Group Captain, RAF, to Laurence S. Kuter, Brig Gen, USA, March 28, 1942, MS 18, Series II, Box 1, Folder 7, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

⁶⁴ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 217.

⁶⁵ Adams.

Guild and began socializing with another WDGS couple, Lieutenant Colonel Omar and Mary Bradley, seated next to them in the second row balcony of the National Theater.⁶⁶ On January 5, 1942, Kuter became a temporary lieutenant colonel.⁶⁷

Shortly after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Marshall appointed Lt Col Kuter as the air specialist to the three-man War Department Reorganization Committee (WDRC).⁶⁸ With the goal of putting the War Department on a wartime footing, Marshall appointed a member of the June 1939 Joint Army-Navy Planning Committee, Brigadier General Joseph T. McNarney, to head the War Department Reorganization Committee.⁶⁹ The committee eliminated the Army branch chiefs and established Army Ground Forces, Army Air Forces, and Army Service of Supply as the three primary divisions within the War Department.⁷⁰ Additionally, under the provisions of the WDRC plan, each of the functional “G” offices were only authorized 10 officers.⁷¹ According to Kuter, this enabled strategic centralized control, while ensuring there were “so few people that they couldn’t get into operating” and “so few people that they could not get involved in detail.”⁷² This concept of establishing overarching guidance in Washington, DC, while empowering commanders to shape the actual execution within their theaters, set the stage for a disconnect between strategic goals and operational reality that Kuter later observed during the war. These changes extended beyond the War Department General Staff and had similar impacts on the internal structure of the US Army Air Forces. Following Kuter’s February 2

⁶⁶ Ethel Kuter to Reed.

⁶⁷ Adams.

⁶⁸ “General Laurence S. Kuter,” The Official Web Site of the US Air Force, <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=6114> (accessed October 10, 2011).

⁶⁹ “General Joseph T. McNarney,” The Official Web Site of the US Air Force, <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=6428> (accessed February 4, 2012).

⁷⁰ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 222.

⁷¹ Ibid., 223.

⁷² Ibid., 224.

promotion to the temporary rank of brigadier general, Marshall transferred him to Headquarters Army Air Forces as the Deputy Chief of Air Staff to help implement the WDRC plan.⁷³

Kuter's rapid rise through the ranks was due to many factors including his work ethic, ability to enact ideas, and the dynamic circumstances of America's entry into the Second World War. Equally important, Marshall's respect for Kuter also played a large role. Of the documents stored at the Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, one provides the best explanation why Kuter skipped colonel in his rapid rise through the ranks. In *Hap: The Story of the U.S. Air Force and the Man Who Built It*, Thomas M. Coffey asserts, "Marshall kept urging Arnold to reach below his 'antique staff officers and passé fliers' for promising, aggressive young men who knew how to get things done."⁷⁴ Ethel Kuter underlined Coffey's assertion that Marshall added Kuter's name to the subsequent promotion lists from November 1941 through February 1942.⁷⁵ Whatever the circumstances, Coffey is correct in identifying the heavy influence of Marshall's hand in process. In the end, Marshall called Kuter into his office and told him that he had forwarded his name to the president for promotion to brigadier general.⁷⁶ Kuter's shock at the news was evident by his recollection that after leaving Marshall's office, he "sat around a bit, called Ethel and asked her to be seated, and repeated the story."⁷⁷

Upon hearing of Kuter's promotion, congratulatory notes poured in from colleagues across the Army, Navy, and Royal Air Force (RAF).⁷⁸ Despite his youth, Kuter was an astute

⁷³ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 226.

⁷⁴ Thomas M. Coffey, *Hap: The Story of the US Air Force and the Man Who Built It: General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold* (New York: Viking Press, 1982), 253.

⁷⁵ Ethel Kuter notes to Thomas M. Coffey, *Hap: The Story of the US Air Force and the Man Who Built It: General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold* (New York: Viking Press, 1982), 253, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 2, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

⁷⁶ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 252.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ MS 18, Series II, Box 1, Folders 6, 7, 10, and 12, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel

officer deserving of the recognition and responsibility. In the early years of his career, Kuter honed his skills as a bomber pilot, taught bombardment theory at the Air Corps Tactical School, and codified these concepts as an author of AWPD-1. Additionally, through his contribution to the War Department Reorganization Committee, Kuter not only refined command relationships, he forced the War Department General Staff to focus on generating broad strategic guidance while leaving theater commanders responsible for the details of waging war.

Chapter 3: Combat over Europe and North Africa

In the spring of 1943, General Sir Bernard Law Montgomery warned Brigadier General Kuter, “if you Americans try to put that Air Force under your soldiers, you will continue to lose the war exactly as you were losing it in Kasserine Pass.”⁷⁹ Montgomery was speaking from experience, having fostered an effective command relationship with his air component commander, Air Vice Marshall Sir Arthur Coningham, the previous year in the Western Desert. While serving as Coningham’s deputy in Tunisia, Kuter mastered the command and control structures the British created for the employment of air power during their campaign to eject *Generalfeldmarschall* Erwin Rommel’s forces from Egypt.

Chapter 3 studies the influences that helped shape Kuter’s ideas about the command and control of air power. The discussion focuses first on the unique role Kuter played in empowering the execution of AWPD-1 while serving as the Deputy Chief of Air Staff. His reliance on personal correspondence to follow the plan’s progress is important to this narrative. Additionally, research focuses on emerging theories regarding the command and control of both air power and the combined Allied forces that influence Kuter during this period. The examination then explores Kuter’s actions as a commander. In the European Theater of Operations Kuter became disillusioned by the way strategic resources were applied to tactical targets based on priorities of the theater commander. The Mediterranean Theater of Operations provided him with the opportunity to employ new command relationships designed to enhance the versatility of air power. Ultimately, Kuter’s synthesis of theory and practical experience imbued him with a vision of the future control structures required to maximize air power’s efficiency.

After his promotion to brigadier general, Kuter left the War Department General Staff to become the Deputy Chief of Air Staff. Lieutenant General Arnold was the Chief of the US Army

⁷⁹ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 297.

Air Forces and “Miff” Harmon, now a major general, was the Chief of the Air Staff.⁸⁰ Kuter saw his job as primarily encompassing three tasks. First, he had to assure the work of the “new autonomous [USA]AF was coordinated and smooth inside and in harmony” with external agencies, such as the Combined Chiefs of Staff, War Department General Staff, Army Ground Forces (AGF), and Army Service of Supply.⁸¹ Kuter’s second major problem was empowering Arnold’s internal coordination within the fledgling Air Staff, an organization devoid of defined channels for communication.⁸² Third, he had to ensure that the US Army Air Forces adhered to the provisions of AWPD-1, while continuing to mature and update the operational plan and target list to match future requirements projected through at least the spring of 1944.⁸³ Together Kuter and “Miff” Harmon tackled the first two problems, while Kuter shouldered most of the burden for the third task.

Following Arnold’s guidance, “Miff” Harmon focused most of his energies on the internal management of the Air Staff.⁸⁴ That meant the coordination USAAF policy among external agencies fell upon Kuter.⁸⁵ Fortunately, he was able to leverage the joint knowledge he accumulated as an ACTS instructor, along with his experience on the War Department General Staff to assist in the execution of his duties. Additionally, Kuter saw this task as extending from the strategic to the tactical. He sent USAAF aircraft to support base-level AGF demonstrations.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ “Lieutenant General Millard F. Harmon,” The Official Web Site of the US Air Force, <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=10235> (accessed January 15, 2012).

⁸¹ Laurence S. Kuter, Gen, USAF, “AAF – ETO Outline,” MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 3, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ C. W. “Jan” Howard to Laurence S. Kuter, Brig Gen, USA, June 17, 1942, MS 18, Series II, Box 1, Folder 9, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

These actions not only facilitated air-to-ground coordination, but also paved the way for the complete execution of AWPDP-1, should an invasion of the continent be necessary. Kuter's natural familiarity with AWPDP-1 made him the ideal conduit for ensuring the enactment and modernization of the plan. The Air War Plans Division produced AWPDP-42, a follow-on to the original plan.⁸⁷

Beyond updating AWPDP-1, Kuter safeguarded the resources allocated for the US Army Air Forces to execute the plan. In March 1942, Kuter began working with aircraft manufacturers to increase their output, while simultaneously training the mechanics required for future operations.⁸⁸ This also meant he had to keep his finger on the pulse of public opinion and congressional lobbies. Major General Robert Olds wrote an editorial for the *Spokane-Review*, that according to Kuter drew attention to “the Navy criticism of the heavy bomber and its alleged inability to damage major Naval warcraft [*sic*].”⁸⁹ Kuter forwarded the editorial to Arnold, with the intent that he, in turn, pass it on to Marshall.⁹⁰ Similarly, Marshall sent Kuter, Bob Sibley's *Boston Traveler* article “NAVY, ARMY CLASH OVER AVIATION—Concerted, Insidious Campaign Seen To Prove Navy Aircraft Superior,” for the Deputy Chief of Air Staff to take action upon.⁹¹ Sibley claimed, “It plainly looks as though the Navy is running a campaign to get planes now being made for the Army.”⁹² Additionally, Kuter had to ensure the US Army Air Forces retained the proper allocation of warplane production to execute AWPDP-1/42, while still

⁸⁷ Ethel Kuter to Reed.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Laurence S. Kuter, Brig Gen, USA, to Robert Olds, Maj Gen, USA, October 7, 1942, MS 18, Series II, Box 1, Folder 11, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

supplying the Allies under the provisions of lend-lease.⁹³ To assist the US Army Air Forces with achieving operational readiness in England and beginning the employment of forces in accordance with AWPD-1/42, Kuter depended on feedback from American observers stationed in the United Kingdom and the perspectives of RAF liaison officers.

Kuter relied upon the ideas dispatched by Colonel McClelland, a former colleague from the WDGS G-3, now in Britain observing the RAF Bomber Command. McClelland introduced Kuter to Group Captain Airey, an RAF liaison officer inbound to Washington, DC. Prior to his move to North America, Airey commanded an RAF bomber station.⁹⁴ McClelland told Kuter that Airey “knows the answers in so far as this theater is concerned. His ideas are based on reality and not theory.”⁹⁵ McClelland also used metaphor to drive home the realities of contemporary European aerial warfare. He told Kuter “This theatre, in so far as air operations are concerned, is now comparable to the stabilized front in France in the last war. It is air ‘trench warfare.’ Both sides have interposed across the only routes of approach possible with available equipment [and] air defenses in great...depth.”⁹⁶ The initial feedback regarding the practicality of AWPD-1/42 arrived predominately through personal correspondence between Kuter and American airmen stationed in the United Kingdom.

By the summer of 1942, the USAAF 97th Bombardment Group and 31st Pursuit Group began operations against occupied Europe from bases in the Britain. Immediately, RAF and USAAF officers realized certain aspects of AWPD-1/42 required clarification. While AWPD-1/42 provided an operational plan for the air war, it lacked many of the specific details required to

⁹³ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 208.

⁹⁴ Harold M. McClelland, Col, USA, to Laurence S. Kuter, Brig Gen, USA, March 6, 1942, MS 18, Series II, Box 1, Folder 8, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

make it viable. Shortly after 8th Air Force arrived in the United Kingdom, Group Captain C. H. “Bobby” Sharp wrote Kuter to begin defining and coordinating the details absent in AWPDP-1/42. Sharp said “the Chief intends to send me over to Washington for two or three weeks...to discuss some of the outstanding problems of organization, particularly the allocation of air fields to your people.”⁹⁷ Similarly, in September 1942, the Assistant Chief of Air Staff, G-3, of the European Theater, Brigadier General Howard A. Craig wrote Kuter to discuss similar issues. Craig told Kuter, “I have just finished reading AWPDP-42. It is a splendid, convincing job. However, I did miss some indication of the ‘flow’ of units, airplanes, etc. by dates. That is the big question—when will we receive so and so and how much?”⁹⁸ AWPDP-1 and AWPDP-42 did not provide commanders with the clarity they needed to accomplish subordinate planning. Specifically, while projecting the forces required to execute the plan, AWPDP-1/42 failed to furnish the equivalent of contemporary time-phased force deployment data or a bed-down plan for those forces once they arrived in theater.

American airmen stationed in the United Kingdom began developing their own concepts about the relationship between operational planning and the command and control of their forces. Later, as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations and Training of the Special Army Observer Group in London, McClelland approached Kuter with his thoughts concerning the relationship between strategic aims and operational command and control. McClelland argued “I can suggest only two things now: (1) Give us our mission, the means to accomplish it, and let us run things according to requirements we only are in positions to know; (2) keep us informed of what’s

⁹⁷ C. H. “Bobby” Sharp, G/C, RAF, to Laurence S. Kuter, Brig Gen, USA, June 14, 1942, MS 18, Series II, Box 1, Folder 9, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

⁹⁸ Howard A. Craig, Brig Gen, USA, to Laurence S. Kuter, Brig Gen, USA, September 6, 1942, MS 18, Series II, Box 1, Folder 10, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

coming.”⁹⁹ While simple in appearance, his thoughts are actually quite profound. For years, American airmen sought to concentrate, under their command, the aircraft distributed throughout the Army. McClelland’s letter further refined the concept of centralized control. He was suggesting to Kuter that the US Army Air Forces follow a policy more eloquently expressed as centralized control and decentralized execution; a concept today considered one of the core tenants of air power. According to McClelland, the US Army Air Forces must not only control all military aircraft, they should push the responsibility for executing the mission down to the lowest possible command echelon.

Arnold began circulating ideas related to command and control that pertained to both air power and the greater Allied war effort. In the summer of 1942, Arnold summarized his ideas in a multi-page handwritten note for the president. Arnold starts by claiming, “fundamental principles of air warfare demand that successive vital objectives be selected after careful study, that air forces be massed against those objectives and be employed with determined persistence until the objectives are destroyed. The failure of the democracies to recognize any of those simple facts has contributed to a large measure to the axis success to date.”¹⁰⁰ According to Arnold, the answer resided with command and control; “The solution is as simple as it is urgent. The disunited[,] dispersed and, to date, impotent strength of the democracies can defeat the efficient Axis military machine, if an American is appointed supreme command of the armed forces of the UN” (United Nations).¹⁰¹ Regardless of the type of component employed, American airmen saw

⁹⁹ Harold M. McClelland, Col, USA, to Laurence S. Kuter, Brig Gen, USA, May 2, 1942, MS 18, Series II, Box 1, Folder 8, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁰⁰ Laurence and Ethel Kuter, “Kuter Papers Vol. 3, Pt. 1, May 1939 – February 1942,” Henry H. Arnold, Lt Gen, USA, to President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1942, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

centralized control and decentralized execution of combatant forces as the key to victory against the Axis powers.

The military did not hold a monopoly on this subject; civilian proponents of air power advanced their own theories regarding proper control mechanisms. Corliss C. Moseley, a First World War US Army Air Service pilot, now the President of the Curtiss-Wright Technical Institute, wrote Kuter to emphasize the importance of modernizing USAAF command relationships. Moseley advocated the ideas of another Great War fighter pilot, Alexander P. de Seversky, who after emigrating from Russia founded the Seversky Aircraft Corporation. In a letter to Kuter, Moseley said “There is attached reprint from the Reader’s Digest, ‘Victory Through Air Power’ by Major Alexander P deSeversky [*sic*], of which I have ordered fifty thousand copies. These are being sent out...to the editors of all newspapers in the country. My whole idea (which I felt was well worth doing) in sending these out is to call their attention to paragraph No. 7.”¹⁰² This paragraph starts by claiming, “*The principle of unity of command, long recognized on land and on sea, applies with no less force to the air.*”¹⁰³ Moseley marked the last few sentences of the paragraph, in which Seversky asserts, “There can be no artificial line at which one aerial command bows out politely while the duplicate command takes over. Imagine the Battle of Britain if the Royal Air Force had been split into segments, one under the Admiralty and the other under the Army! That is precisely the situation which we face as long as we lack a homogeneous air force, under a single command.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Corliss C. Moseley to Laurence S. Kuter, Brig Gen, USA, July 30, 1942, MS 18, Series II, Box 1 Folder 9, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁰³ Alexander P. de Seversky, Maj, USA, “Victory Through Air Power,” *The Reader’s Digest* 41, no. 243 (July 1942), MS 18, Series II, Box 1 Folder 9, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁰⁴ Corliss C. Moseley notes to Alexander P. de Seversky, Maj, USA, “Victory Through Air Power,” *The Reader’s Digest* 41, no. 243 (July 1942), MS 18, Series II, Box 1 Folder 9, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF

It is obvious that Kuter internalized many of Seversky's concepts by the way he marked the copy of "Victory Through Air Power" that Moseley sent him. After grasping at the notion of vertical envelopment with Orvil Anderson during the writing of AWPD-1, Kuter highlighted Seversky's validation of the concept. He underlined the passage where Seversky iterated, "Crete showed air power not only as a direct striking force, but a self-contained military force—the only one able to operate alone."¹⁰⁵ Similarly, in the section Seversky wrote to address the Empire of Japan, Kuter began contemplating basing, one of the failures of AWPD-1, when he penned "B-29 - ? 4000 mile radius - ?"¹⁰⁶ Finally, with regard to both the planning and command of air power, Kuter underlined de Seversky's comments that "It is not technique but strategic thought that lags so sadly in our country. We are merely building weapons for the Army and Navy. True air power depends upon unified air strategy."¹⁰⁷ These were the influences shaping Kuter's perspective as the Deputy Chief of Air Staff until the time came for him to depart for his baptism of fire.

On September 12, 1942, Arnold wrote Major General Carl A. "Tooley" Spaatz, the USAAF commander in the United Kingdom, and Major General George C. Kenney, the lead airman on General Douglas MacArthur's staff in the Southwest Pacific.¹⁰⁸ Arnold's message requested "In keeping with policy desire, my Deputy Chief of Air Staff, Brig Gen [(Brigadier General)] L. S. Kuter, date of rank 2 2/42, be given duty in your theatre for 6 months. No replacement required by you. I want him back. What can you do for me?"¹⁰⁹ Kenney replied,

Academy, CO.

¹⁰⁵ Laurence S. Kuter, Brig Gen, USA, notes to Alexander P. de Seversky, Maj, USA, "Victory Through Air Power," *The Reader's Digest* 41, no. 243 (July 1942), MS 18, Series II, Box 1 Folder 9, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ethel Kuter to Reed.

¹⁰⁹ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 243.

“Glad to have him,” while Spaatz’s responded “Heartily agree in temporary duty here for Kuter. Propose 10 days Hqs [(Headquarters)] 8th Air Force, 10 days 8th Bomber Command, 10 days Heavy Bomber Wings Hqs, 15 days B-17 Group, 15 days B-24 Group, 1 month group commander, in operations 3 months, heavy bombardment wing commander, okay.”¹¹⁰ Based on Spaatz’s plan for seasoning Kuter, Arnold decided to send him to Britain. On October 14, Kuter left Washington for Sebring and Valparaiso, Florida, where he qualified on four new USAAF bombers.¹¹¹

Following his training, Kuter flew a Consolidated B-24 “Liberator” destined for 8th Air Force (8th AF) to the United Kingdom, arriving in London on 7 November.¹¹² Shortly thereafter, he took command of VIII Bomber Command’s 1st Bombardment Wing at Brampton Grange.¹¹³ The 1st Bombardment Wing consisted of four understrength groups of Boeing B-17 “Flying Fortresses” tasked with attacking German submarine pens.¹¹⁴ At King Albert Frederick Arthur George VI’s request, 1st Bombardment Wing was striking tactical targets on the French coast instead of the naval yards manufacturing submarines in Hamburg.¹¹⁵ According to Kuter, by attacking the submarines, “we weren’t doing what AWPD planned.”¹¹⁶ This caused him great frustration, because pressures internal to the European Theater of Operations were trumping the strategic priorities he established in AWPD-1/42 and the concepts Arnold recommended to President Roosevelt. In other words, the realities of the operational environment were shifting

¹¹⁰ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 244.

¹¹¹ Ethel Kuter, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 1, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹¹² Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 261.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 262.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 265.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 279.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 265.

previously established targeting priorities. Additionally, 1st Bombardment Wing was making attack runs from very loose formations, resulting in little physical damage.¹¹⁷

Unable to affect target selection, Kuter enacted a policy intended to increase 1st Bombardment Wing's effectiveness. Realizing the impotence of understrength formations, he created two provisional "combat" wings from his four independent groups.¹¹⁸ In essence, the "combat" wings massed 1st BW bombers into formations malleable enough to still control in flight. The "combat" wings, commanded by Colonels Curtiss E. LeMay and James H. Wallace, enabled more robust mutual defense, while improving the accuracy of their bombing.¹¹⁹ In early 1943, 1st Bombardment Wing was renamed 1st Bomb Division and the "combat" wings became permanent subordinate formations.¹²⁰

On 3 January 1943, Kuter relinquished command and reported to Major General Eaker, the 8th AF Commander.¹²¹ Spaatz sent Eaker a message requesting he send Kuter to North Africa.¹²² In early February, Kuter assumed command of 12th Air Support Command near Aix Les Bains in Tunisia, under Maj Gen Lloyd Fredendall, commander of the US Second Corps. Kuter described 12th Air Support Command as "a bunch of fighter squadrons and light bombardment squadrons in support of the Second Corps, and Friedendahl [*sic*] had them parceled out here and there, flying umbrellas, and other piece-meal defensive chores."¹²³ Additionally, Kuter's first cipher to subordinate and adjoining units warned of a potential retrograde because

¹¹⁷ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 264.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 268.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 268-269.

¹²⁰ "General Laurence S. Kuter," The Official Web Site of the US Air Force, <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=6114> (accessed October 10, 2011).

¹²¹ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 278.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 280.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 283.

battlefield intelligence led the US Army to expect “major thrusts in area SOUTH of PONT DU FAHS and in area NORTH of FAID.”¹²⁴

Kuter’s first task was to prepare his forces for the impending German assault, known to posterity as the Battle of Kasserine Pass. He immediately asserted the importance of centralizing the control of air power, declaring that “because of abnormal frontage and communications this HQ will not[,] repeat not[,] restrict scale of support available to the three Corps Commanders by holding units in readiness for later orders.”¹²⁵ By 7 February, Kuter began exercising operational control of both 12th Air Support Command and 242 Group Royal Air Force.¹²⁶ To facilitate the control of this broad force, Kuter established a forward headquarters named the Advanced Command Post Allied Air Support Command.¹²⁷ Kuter empowered the centralized control and decentralized execution of the air forces allocated to the Advanced Command Post Allied Air Support Command, stating “They will have executive authority over such units as this headquarters allots to the support of the First Army but will refer all matters of broad policy and future planning to me.”¹²⁸ When guiding his planning staff, he instructed them to project the results of past performance, specifically mission results and attrition, into the future to determine the force structure required.¹²⁹ Finally, by applying the lessons he learned from AWPD-1/42, Kuter identified the availability of basing as a weakness. Realizing that the current battlefield

¹²⁴ Allied Air Support Command ADV Comd Post, to 12th Air Support Command, 242 Gp, HQ Allied Air Forces, and 12 Bomber Command., February, 1943, MS 18, Series II, Box 2, Folder 1, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Allied Air Forces HQ Freedom to AASC Beaver, February 7, 1943, MS 18, Series II, Box 2, Folder 1, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ AASC Adv Comd Post to AASC Beaver, February, 1943, MS 18, Series II, Box 2, Folder 1, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

framework inhibited air power's flexibility in "the somewhat fluid situation," he requested "the development of additional aerodromes for permanent bases and for advanced bases."¹³⁰ On February 12, Kuter gave Dwight D. Eisenhower a bottle of Dewar's White Label to celebrate Ike receiving his fourth star.¹³¹ While sipping Scotch with Eisenhower, Kuter stressed the "necessity to retain the southern air bases" despite any reversals along the front.¹³²

Following their success pooling resources to interdict German aerial resupply efforts, Kuter and his counterpart in 12th Bomber Command, Brigadier General Cannon, developed a plan to execute centralized control over the fighters assigned to both commands.¹³³ The same day he met with Eisenhower, Kuter wrote Spaatz saying "Concerning more economical use of fighters,...believe Cannon and I can work out [a] system of rapid interchange of units in the front with those at bomber bases to get more fighting per airplane and less rapid exhaustion of any single unit."¹³⁴ In only a matter of days, Kuter began reorienting command relationships within the Anglo-American air forces to maximize their efficiency.

On 16 February, Coningham delivered a speech to senior Anglo-American leaders detailing the lessons he learned in the Western Desert concerning the control of air power. Coningham stated, "An Army has one battle to fight, the land battle. The Air has two. It has first of all to beat the enemy air, so that it may go into the land battle against the enemy land forces

¹³⁰ AASC Beaver to CG Allied Air Forces, February, 1943, MS 18, Series II, Box 2, Folder 1, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹³¹ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 289.

¹³² Laurence S. Kuter, Brig Gen, USA, February 12, 1943, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 1, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹³³ KUTER to General SPAATZ, February 9, 1943, MS 18, Series II, Box 2, Folder 1, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹³⁴ Kuter, AASC, to Commanding General, ALLIED AIR FORCES, February 12, 1943, MS 18, Series II, Box 2, Folder 1, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

with the maximum possible hitting power.”¹³⁵ To this end, he asserted, “The fighter governs the front, and this fact forces the centralisation [*sic*] of air control into the hands of one air commander operating on that front.”¹³⁶ Three days before the Battle of Kasserine Pass, Coningham assumed command of the newly established Northwest African Tactical Air Force, a component of the Northwest African Air Force.¹³⁷ As 12th Air Support Command fell under the control of the Northwest African Tactical Air Force, the command arrangements Kuter emplaced married up well with Coningham’s ideas. Kuter recalled that Coningham immediately issued “orders that there would be no more umbrellas, there would be no more parceling out of forces, we would go get the enemy.”¹³⁸ Additionally, with the reorganization, Kuter became the American Deputy Commander of Northwest African Tactical Air Force.¹³⁹

Two new structures empowered these changes within the USAAF elements of Northwest African Tactical Air Force. First, the establishment of Tactical Air Control Centers helped achieve air superiority through the centralized control and decentralized execution of fighters.¹⁴⁰ “Fighter Control,” as they were better known, proved their worth during the Allied advance on Tunis. During the “Great Turkey Shoot,” an RAF Fighter Control massed Allied fighters to protect ground forces from a swarm of *Junkers* Ju-87 “Stukas.”¹⁴¹ Similarly, on 5 April, Kuter

¹³⁵ Sir Arthur Coningham, AVM, RAF, “Army-Air Operations,” *Air Force Magazine*, January 2008, under “KEEPER FILE,” <http://www.airforce-magazine.com/MagazineArchive/Documents/2008/January%202008/0108keeperfull.pdf> (accessed February 3, 2012).

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Laurence S. Kuter, Brig Gen, USA, interview by Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Intelligence, Washington, DC, May 25, 1943, transcript, Air Force Historical Research Agency, Maxwell AFB, AL.

¹³⁸ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 293.

¹³⁹ “General Laurence S. Kuter,” The Official Web Site of the US Air Force, <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=6114> (accessed October 10, 2011).

¹⁴⁰ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 191.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 308.

used Fighter Control to initiate Operation Flax.¹⁴² The “Palm Sunday Massacre,” broke the back of the Axis’ aerial lines-of-communication between Italy and North Africa.¹⁴³ Additionally, building upon the British model, tactical air parties worked in conjunction with Tactical Ground Control Centers to facilitate close air support.¹⁴⁴

These changes sparked both conflict and praise from American ground forces. After assuming command of the US Second Corps, Major General George S. Patton used his April 1 situation report (sitrep) to criticize the Northwest African Tactical Air Force (NATAF). According to Kuter, Patton blasted the “NATAF for failure to provide adequate umbrella,” and “he gave the sitrep much wider distribution than normal.”¹⁴⁵ The next day Coningham and Patton got into a shouting match with each other; however, Major General Bradley soon replaced Patton.¹⁴⁶ Kuter later said, “Omar was intimately familiar with our thousands of sorties” and “he saw the virtue of being able to concentrate all the airpower [*sic*] there was at the point where it was needed.”¹⁴⁷ Beyond this, Coningham and Kuter’s innovations received praise from the highest echelon of Allied command in Africa. According to Kuter, “General [Sir Harold Rupert Leofric George] Alexander said that I might quote him to the extent he had never issued any order, as theater commander, to any air unit, and he never would.”¹⁴⁸ Built upon early war theory and practice, the control relationships Coningham and Kuter forged empowered Allied success.

¹⁴² Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 309.

¹⁴³ Laurence S. Kuter, Gen, USAF, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 10, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁴⁴ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 307.

¹⁴⁵ Laurence S. Kuter, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 2, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 315.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 298.

As the Allies closed the noose on Rommel, Spaatz and Arnold agreed to allow Kuter to remain in place until the Germans surrendered in North Africa.¹⁴⁹ Two days after the Axis capitulation, Kuter started his journey home.¹⁵⁰ He landed at Bolling Field, Washington, DC at 11pm on 18 May with family and friends there to greet him.¹⁵¹ Kuter was so excited to relay his lessons from combat that he stayed there until 2am talking to USAAF colleagues.¹⁵² The shifting of targeting in reaction to the reality of the European operational environment left a lasting impression upon Kuter. He also returned from North Africa greatly affected by the experience of applying and maturing air power theory in combat, particularly the command and control concepts he helped emplace.

¹⁴⁹ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 322.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 323.

¹⁵¹ Ethel Kuter, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 4, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

Chapter 4: A “Pattern for Victory”

On May 19, 1943, Arnold informed Kuter that he would succeed Brigadier General Orvil Anderson as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans.¹⁵³ Throughout Kuter’s tenure, the job encompassed both Plans and Combat Operations.¹⁵⁴ Upon hearing the news, Kuter said, “My first priority in the Plans Division was to establish the Pattern for Victory, the doctrine of coordinate coequal status that a Tactical Air Force could accomplish. The proof of the worth had been confirmed by the success in Northwest Africa/Tunisia that had smashed the axis defense into surrender.”¹⁵⁵ Kuter’s experiences in Europe and Africa provided him with a foundation upon which to design USAAF structures capable of delivering victory.

Chapter 4 focuses on the ways Kuter leveraged his combat experience to continue forging a “Pattern for Victory” as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans. First, Kuter codified his concepts on the command and control of air power into doctrine. To this end, he helped edit FM 100-20. Second, he enhanced the effectiveness of both strategic and tactical air forces by mediating the competing and often conflicting goals generated by disconnects between strategic objectives and the realities of the operational environment. Finally, to prevent theater commanders from directing strategic resources against tactical targets, Kuter designed a command relationship that upheld strategic aims within the operational environment, by establishing the centralized control and decentralized execution of strategic air power in the Pacific Theater. Until he returned to combat in May 1945, Kuter leveraged his theoretical and practical background to create the

¹⁵³ Ethel Kuter, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 4, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁵⁴ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 347.

¹⁵⁵ Laurence S. Kuter, Gen, USAF, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 4, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

structures that would guide the US Army Air Forces through the Second World War and serve as basic tenants of the future US Air Force.

Kuter spent his first month home sewing his combat experience into the draft FM 100-20 prior to its approval. He recorded the following comments about his contribution to the effort:

I will take a substantial proportion of the credit for the change in Field Manual 100-20 which is quoted in full herewith: "Land power and air power are co-equal and interdependent forces, neither is an auxiliary of the other. The gaining of air superiority is the first requirement for the success of any major land operation...Land forces operating without air superiority must take such extensive security measures against hostile air attack that their mobility and ability to defeat the enemy land forces are greatly reduced. Therefore, air forces must be employed primarily against the enemy's air forces until air superiority is obtained...The inherent flexibility of air power is its greatest asset...Control of available air power must be centralized and command units be exercised through the air force commander if this inherent flexibility and ability to deliver a decisive blow are to be fully exploited. Therefore, the command of air and ground forces in a theater of operation will be vested in the superior commander charged with the actual conduct of operations in the theater, who will exercise command of air forces through the air force commander and command of ground forces through the ground force commander." The doctrine was a simple one. It emancipated the air arm, making it a coordinate, not subordinate battle force. Air power was divided into functional divisions—strategic and tactical.¹⁵⁶

From the passage above, it is clear that three priorities stood out from Kuter's time as a commander: air superiority, centralized command, and the separate co-equal status of air and ground forces unified under a theater commander. Additionally, he envisioned separate roles for strategic and tactical air forces. Kuter knew that winning the war required more than writing new doctrine—it meant finding ways to make air power more effective.

Throughout the war, Kuter continued to study the command and control of air power, while offering solutions to further its evolution. He attempted to increase the efficiency of Allied air power by incorporating the Soviet Air Force into the tactical command network employed by the Royal Air Force and US Army Air Forces. After ineffective attempts to emplace a limit line,

¹⁵⁶ Ethel Kuter, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 4, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

Kuter proposed, “that plans be made forthwith to permit concentrating the entire weight of all three Air Forces, if necessary in front of any of the armies that might most need such tactical air support.”¹⁵⁷ In March, the Soviet Union agreed to imbed USAAF and RAF tactical control parties with the Red Army.¹⁵⁸ Unfortunately, the Soviets lacked the ability to reciprocate on the Western Front, and the war in Europe ended before any USAAF or RAF airmen reached the Red Army on the Eastern Front.¹⁵⁹

Two letters highlight Kuter’s enduring role in forging a responsive command structure that empowered airmen to better support surface forces. While commanding the Third Infantry Division’s Artillery during the Battle of the Bulge, Brigadier General William T. Sexton took the time to write Kuter and express his pleasure with USAAF command and control. Sexton told his former WDGS Secretariat colleague, “a few minutes ago my artillery marked with white smoke a target for dive bombers about 600 yards in front of our Infantry [*sic*]. The system seems to work very well.”¹⁶⁰ Similarly, near the end of the war in Europe, General Bradley sent Kuter a note stating, “Right now our forces are really making grand progress. I am sure you know what close coordination we have had between our Ground and Air Forces. I hope we can carry our teamwork into the future.”¹⁶¹ Kuter’s role in modernizing control mechanisms consisted of more than editing FM 100-20, it also included his ongoing efforts to improve the entire system.

Tactical command and control structures were not the only complex system to require Kuter’s attention while serving as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans. He also had to balance the

¹⁵⁷ Laurence Kuter, *Airman at Yalta*, 149.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ William T. Sexton, Brig Gen, USA, to Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, December 23, 1944, MS 18, Series II, Box 8, Folder 6, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁶¹ Omar N. Bradley, Gen, USA, to Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, April 18, 1945, MS 18, Series II, Box 8, Folder 2, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

tension linking strategic objectives with the realities of the operational environment. While commanding 1st Bombardment Wing, Kuter became acutely aware of a growing disconnect between the strategic aim of destroying Germany's ability to wage war, as defined by AWPDP-1/42, and the shifting of resources within the European Theater of Operations to engage tactical targets deemed more threatening by the theater commander. In *On War*, the classic Prussian military theorist Carl von Clausewitz asserts that a strategist is prevented from making detailed plans because of the assumptions he must make.¹⁶² Therefore, according to Clausewitz, the plan must "be adjusted to the modifications that are continuously required" and "the strategist, in short, must maintain control throughout."¹⁶³ Observing similar conditions to those described by Clausewitz, Kuter's unique insight as both a planner and commander enabled him to maintain consistency of aim within the Allied system by moderating the tensions linking strategic objectives with operational reality.

While Kuter first observed the friction generated from the misalignment of strategic and operational aims as a commander, he continued moderating the resulting tensions as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans. A projected shortage of American manpower prompted General Arnold to form a committee consisting of Major Generals Stratemyer and Giles, Brigadier General Kuter, and Colonel O'Donnell to quantify the strategic effectiveness of AWPDP-1/42.¹⁶⁴ Specifically, Arnold tasked the committee with answering the question, "What change, if any, should be made in the troop basis for the United States Army because of the success or failure of the combined bomber offensive against Germany?"¹⁶⁵ Kuter posed this question to Eaker, who in

¹⁶² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 177.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ira C. Eaker, Maj Gen, USA, to Larry S. Kuter, Brig Gen, USA, July 22, 1943, The Papers of Ira C. Eaker, Box I:16, Folder 9 "Eighth Air Force Correspondence Army Air Forces Headquarters Washington DC Dec 1942 - Jan 1944 (1 of 2)," Document 38, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

turn, developed a mechanism for calculating the effects of the Combined Bomber Offensive for Allied strategic planners.¹⁶⁶ Eaker tasked Captain Robert S. McNamara and one other officer to use operations research to quantify the performance of 8th Air Force.¹⁶⁷ McNamara's Statistical Control Unit sent its findings to Arnold every two weeks and furnished the Combined Chiefs of Staff with monthly summaries.¹⁶⁸ These reports constituted the creation of a formal system of evaluation and feedback loop linking strategic planners with the operational environment. Kuter extended this reporting process to other theaters of operation. Late in his tenure as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, Kuter informed Major General William E. Lynd, Director of the Air Evaluation Board for the Southwest Pacific Area, "that evaluation reports for over-all operations are a necessity in addition to the regular monthly reports."¹⁶⁹ Kuter's solicitation of feedback from commanders was just the start of the major role he played in shaping strategic decision making by balancing overarching aims with the circumstances presented within the operational environment.

As the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, Kuter also served as the air planner on the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Combined Chiefs of Staff.¹⁷⁰ Within this greater capacity, Kuter began attending the combined planning conferences, starting with the Cairo Conference.¹⁷¹ Shortly after returning from Cairo, Marshall directed him to lead strategic planners on a flight around the globe

¹⁶⁶ Laurence S. Kuter, Brig Gen, USA, to Ira C. Eaker, Maj Gen, USA, July 6, 1943, The Papers of Ira C. Eaker, Box I:16, Folder 9 "Eighth Air Force Correspondence Army Air Forces Headquarters Washington DC Dec 1942 - Jan 1944 (1 of 2)," Document 38, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

¹⁶⁷ Ira C. Eaker, Maj Gen, USA, to B. E. "Hungry [*sic*]" Gates, Col, USA, February 22, 1943, The Papers of Ira C. Eaker, Box I:16, Folder 10 "World War II 8 Air Force Correspondence Army Air Forces Headquarters Washington DC Dec 1942 - Jan 1944 (2 of 2)," Document 58, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

¹⁶⁸ Eaker to Laurence Kuter.

¹⁶⁹ Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, to William E. Lynd, Maj Gen, USA, October 21, 1944, MS 18, Series II, Box 8, Folder 4, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁷⁰ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 351.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 404.

“to post our theater commanders on the thinking of the Combined Chiefs of Staff.”¹⁷² In essence, Marshall requested Kuter provide feedback to theater commanders about the political considerations guiding, and resource constraints limiting, the Combined Chiefs of Staff. On February 22, 1944, the same month Kuter became a major general, he, Brigadier General Gates, and a party of air, ground, and naval planners departed from National Airport in Washington, DC aboard a Douglas C-54 “Skymaster” to begin their trip to visit Anglo-American theater commanders.¹⁷³

The party flew east, meeting commanders from the European, Mediterranean, and China, Burma, India (CBI) Theaters. When the 14th Air Force Commander, Major General Chennault, met the party at Kuming, he emphasized his critical shortage of resources by dropping a dipstick into the fuel tanks of the C-54 and siphoning off the extra fuel not required to return to India.¹⁷⁴ Upon leaving China, the party flew southwest to Ceylon to meet with Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, the Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia Theater and the staff of the South East Asia Command.¹⁷⁵

Kuter’s party then flew the longest and most dangerous leg of their journey, completing a 3,200-mile flight over Japanese controlled territory to reach Australia, arriving in Brisbane on March 26.¹⁷⁶ Kuter said, “MacArthur was not very happy with anything that the Combined Chiefs

¹⁷² Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 405.

¹⁷³ Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, February 22, 1944, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 5, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁷⁴ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 364.

¹⁷⁵ Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, March 24, 1944, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 5, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁷⁶ Laurence S. Kuter, March 25, 1944, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 5, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

of Staffs were doing because, of course, his priorities were second.”¹⁷⁷ Weaving around Japanese held islands, Kuter’s C-54 landed on Guadalcanal on March 31, where his party briefed the headquarters of the Southwest Pacific Command.¹⁷⁸ On April 2, Kuter arrived in Hawaii to find Admiral Chester W. Nimitz’s disposition to be the opposite of MacArthur’s.¹⁷⁹ He remembered, “Nimitz was keenly interested in every aspect of the Combined Chiefs of Staff positions and particularly, in my view of the American Chiefs’ positions, hoping for higher priorities but knowing full well that I wasn’t the person who would get them.”¹⁸⁰ Kuter’s party completed their 38,000-mile on April 6, landing at the same place that they had departed forty-six days earlier, National Airport, Washington, DC.¹⁸¹ Armed with first-hand knowledge from the various commanders, Kuter continued to maintain control of the strategic plan despite the continuous modification and adjustment required for implementation in the different theaters of operation.

In moderating this friction, Kuter served as an advocate alternatively for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Combined Chiefs of Staff, and theater commanders, carefully choosing sides as necessary to resolve issues. Kuter often advised the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Combined Chiefs of Staff to direct efforts within theaters. Following the Japanese campaign to open the Pin-Han Railway from the Yellow River to Hankow, the Combined Chiefs of Staff considered what resources to earmark for China.¹⁸² Having seen CBI operations firsthand, Kuter recommended the

¹⁷⁷ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 407.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, April 2, 1944, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 5, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁸⁰ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 407.

¹⁸¹ Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, to Sir Arthur Coningham, A/M, RAF, May 18, 1944, MS 18, Series II, Box 8, Folder 3, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁸² Claire L. Chennault, Maj Gen, USA, to Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, May 15, 1944, MS 18, Series II, Box 8, Folder 3, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

Combined Chiefs of Staff specify where the resources went in theater by making “a couple of speeches on the effect Chennault was having on the Japanese in contrast with the lack of effect that Stilwell was producing.”¹⁸³ At times, Kuter attempted to explain the Joint Chiefs of Staff or Combined Chiefs of Staff’s decisions to the affected theater commander. Following Lieutenant General Kenney’s appeal for combat cargo-air commandos, Kuter defended the strategic planner’s position, replying that the request “leaves us in a most precarious position if we are to justify your need for these units to the Combined Chiefs of Staff.”¹⁸⁴ He continuously evaluated force structure and training in an effort to ensure operational commanders had the forces they required to reduce risk while accomplishing their missions.¹⁸⁵ Kuter also supported theater commanders when their interpretation of the operational environment stood at odds with the Joint Chiefs of Staff or the Combined Chiefs of Staff. When airmen began flying relief missions in support of the Polish uprising, Major General Frederick L. Anderson Jr., Deputy Commander of Operations for US Strategic Air Forces in Europe, wrote Kuter to stress, “Warsaw supply operations should be discouraged in the very highest U.S. circles.”¹⁸⁶ From Frederick Anderson’s information, Kuter was able to inform President Roosevelt that the last mission flow to Warsaw “resulted in our loss of the offensive use of 107 heavy bombers and 64 fighters for a period of 5

¹⁸³ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 363.

¹⁸⁴ Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, to George C. Kenney, Lt Gen, USA, July 15, 1944, MS 18, Series II, Box 8, Folder 3, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁸⁵ Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, to William D. Old, Brig Gen, USA, November 20, 1944, MS 18, Series II, Box 8, Folder 5, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁸⁶ Frederick L. Anderson Jr., Maj Gen, USA, to Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, September 24, 1944, MS 18, Series II, Box 8, Folder 1, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

days,” while accomplishing “the effective delivery to the Poles of only 130 of the total 1280 containers dropped on that mission.”¹⁸⁷

Kuter also realized that factors outside the direct links uniting planners with commanders forced adjustments to strategic plans, and worked to resolve these issues. For example, when negotiations broke between the United States and Portugal over the construction of an airbase on the Island of Santa Maria in the Azores, he encouraged the Under Secretary of State, the Honorable Mr. Edward B. Stettinius Jr., to elevate the issue to the Secretary of State and President for resolution.¹⁸⁸ Kuter also interacted with the American scientific community and armaments industry to ensure the development and production of the weapons required by both strategic planners and commanders.¹⁸⁹ These efforts reduced friction by increasing options at both the strategic level and within the operational environment.

Ultimately, the creation of the 20th Air Force (20th AF) shows how Kuter leveraged his personal theories on the command and control of air power to maintain strategic consistency despite operational reality forcing modifications to the plan. Frustrated over the way the King George VI directed 1st Bombardment Wing to attack submarine pens in 1942, Kuter wanted to ensure that “waste of effort” would not happen with the B-29 in the Pacific.¹⁹⁰ In *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age*, American air power theorist Everett C. Dolman proposes, “The purpose of military strategy is to link military means with political aims

¹⁸⁷ “A proposed addition to memorandum to the White House concerning additional mission to aid the Poles in Warsaw,” MS 18, Series II, Box 8, Folder 1, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁸⁸ Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, to The Honorable Mr. Edward R. Stettinius Jr., September 30, 1944, MS 18, Series II, Box 8, Folder 9, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁸⁹ Vannevar Bush to Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, November 2, 1944, MS 18, Series II, Box 8, Folder 9, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

¹⁹⁰ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 387.

in pursuit of a continuing advantage.”¹⁹¹ To King George VI, the German submarine menace was the biggest threat to the continuing survival of his nation. In 1942, enemy U-boats were starving his nation and combating them was his highest strategic goal. Kuter saw this as a “knee-jerk” reaction to the operational environment that distracted 1st Bombardment Wing from pursuing its strategic aim.¹⁹² In Kuter’s eyes, the United States would gain an advantage by destroying Germany’s ability to make war, either securing victory or paving the way for follow-on land forces.¹⁹³ Both men thought strategically by attempting to secure a continuing advantage; however, their goals differed due to their perspective. King George VI had to ensure the survival of an island nation, while Kuter attempted to secure victory through the application of air power, regardless of the consequences to the United Kingdom. In other words, their environment shapes the strategic goal a leader considers most critical to securing a continuing advantage.

To avoid similar diversions in the Pacific, Kuter designed the 20th AF command structure in a way that prevented its subjugation to a theater commander. On April 4, 1944, while serving as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans, Kuter also became the 20th AF Chief of Staff.¹⁹⁴ Similarly, in addition to being the Chief of the US Army Air Forces, Arnold was “dual-hatted” as the 20th AF Commander.¹⁹⁵ Kuter said that he “was the principal architect of that command structure. We finally had all strategic air under a single command reporting back to Arnold, and that was the great accomplishment.”¹⁹⁶ He further explained the logic behind this command structure, arguing “the idea of parceling out some B-29s to Nimitz and some to MacArthur where

¹⁹¹ Everett Carl Dolman, *Pure Strategy: Power and Principle in the Space and Information Age* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 14.

¹⁹² Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 276.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 275.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 412.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 278.

each was so focused on surface Navy and surface Army matters would have been abhorrent, at that stage of the game, to any of the strategic planners or thinkers, Army or Air Force or...Navy.”¹⁹⁷

Despite rapid evolution of both air power theory and operational art wrought by years of global war, the centralized control of 20th Air Force generated mixed reactions in the Pacific.

Kuter articulated that:

I was the person sent over on General Arnold’s instructions to tell MacArthur that he was never ever going to get even one B-29; that they were being centrally directed and controlled; that they were being used for the defeat of Japan; and that, if any were available for targets like the oil fields of Sumatra, they would be directed against those targets by General Arnold or one of his authorities.¹⁹⁸

MacArthur refused to meeting with Kuter. Nimitz was a completely different story. His chief of staff, Rear Admiral Forrest P. Sherman, was particularly helpful, even when the success and increasing frequency of B-29 operations forced the Navy to deliver four times the bombs and aviation fuel originally forecast in the Guam base development plan.¹⁹⁹

Just as it had been throughout the war, basing remained a crucial aspect of 20th AF operations; however, the centralized control of B-29 operations enabled flexibility that would not have occurred otherwise. Until the capture of the Mariana Islands, the B-29 could not range Japan. Three prominent New York socialites served on the Headquarters USAAF Plans and Operations Staff. Fred Wildman, Bradley Gaylord, and George Carey devised a plan to attack Japan with B-29s from the west prior to the capture of the Marianas.²⁰⁰ Based in Calcutta, B-29s flew to Chengtu, China, prepositioning bombs and siphoning off the extra fuel not required to

¹⁹⁷ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 388-389.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 236.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 389.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 349.

return to India.²⁰¹ For raids against the Japanese mainland, the B-29s departed Calcutta without bombs and landed at Chengtu to arm from the pre-positioned stores prior to the attack.²⁰² While this was a logistically intensive endeavor, it solved the 4,000-mile range limitation Kuter pondered while reading Seversky. The raids also forced the Japanese to pull fighters back from the central and southern Pacific to defend the home islands; ultimately helping the efforts of both MacArthur and Nimitz.²⁰³ It was for similar reasons that at Yalta, Kuter unsuccessfully pressed the Soviets to allow the US Army Air Forces to open B-29 bases along the lower Amur River.²⁰⁴ Such flexibility is only inherent in an organization centrally controlled in the pursuit of strategic objectives and free from the subjugation of a theater commander.

After the capture of the Marianas, 20th Air Force redeployed to the Central Pacific and began operations against Japan from the east. In September 1944, Arnold designated Lieutenant General “Miff” Harmon the Deputy Commander of 20th Air Force and Commander-in-Chief, Air Force Pacific Ocean Area.²⁰⁵ On April 4, 1945, the Joint Chiefs of Staff established 20th Air Force as a third command in the Pacific Theater, alongside those of MacArthur and Nimitz.²⁰⁶ Following the tragic disappearance of “Miff” Harmon while on a flight over the Pacific Ocean in March 1943, Lieutenant General Giles became Commander-in-Chief, Air Force Pacific Ocean Area and began executing administrative control of B-29 operations.²⁰⁷ In May 1945, Kuter

²⁰¹ Army Air Forces Historical Office, *History of the Twentieth Air Force: Genesis*, <http://ibiblio.org/hyperwar/AAF/AAFHS/AAFHS-112.pdf> (accessed April 5, 2012).

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 349.

²⁰⁴ Laurence Kuter, *Airman at Yalta*, 46.

²⁰⁵ “Lieutenant General Millard F. Harmon,” The Official Web Site of the US Air Force, <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=10235> (accessed January 15, 2012).

²⁰⁶ Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, to Haywood S. Hansell Jr., Brig Gen, USA, April 6, 1945, Series II, Box 8, Folder 5, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

²⁰⁷ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 411.

moved to Guam and assumed duties as Giles' deputy.²⁰⁸ In this role, he laid the groundwork for the creation of US Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific.²⁰⁹ From his vantage point on Guam, Kuter recommended to Fairchild, what would become the war winning information operation:

It is clear that our B-29's are rapidly destroying Japan's physical capacity to wage successful war. Since Japan has one of the most centralized governments the world has ever seen, it is possible that a careful study of the Emperor, the Privy Council, the Premier, the Ministers and possibly the peers may indicate some action that we may take to release this "trigger-force." Surrender may not be achieved directly from the bombing but it may be gained by specific air attacks closely coordinated with effective verbal and written pressure that might be brought to bear upon the above individuals by the OWI [Office of War Information], the OSS [Office of Strategic Services] and diplomatic means.²¹⁰

Upon the cessation of hostilities in Europe, General Spaatz relieved Giles and became the Commander of US Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific.²¹¹ When Major General LeMay arrived in Guam after having led the 20th AF efforts in China, he replaced Kuter, becoming Spaatz's chief of staff.²¹² Kuter went on to a new assignment with Air Transport Command; however, the organization he walked away from was the embodiment of his theories concerning the centralized control of air power in a structure that pursued objectives without suffering from excessive shifts in targeting caused by subordinating resources under a theater commander.²¹³ As Kuter forecast, Japan finally capitulated after receiving a double-dose of atomic weapons combined with information operations directed at their national leaders.

²⁰⁸ "General Laurence S. Kuter," The Official Web Site of the US Air Force, <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=6114> (accessed October 10, 2011).

²⁰⁹ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 278.

²¹⁰ Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, to Muir S. Fairchild, Maj Gen, USA, July 19, 1945, MS 18, Series II, Box 8, Folder 4, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

²¹¹ "General Carl A. Spaatz," The Official Web Site of the US Air Force, <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=7210> (accessed February 12, 2012).

²¹² "General Curtiss Emerson LeMay," The Official Web Site of the US Air Force, <http://www.af.mil/information/bios/bio.asp?bioID=6178> (accessed February 12, 2012).

²¹³ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 417.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

Kuter accomplished as much in the next seventeen years of service as he did in the first half of his career described in this study. Arguably, he achieved his greatest contributions in the evolution of air power during the Second World War. First among these is designing the war-winning US Army Air Forces and future US Air Force through his co-authorship of AWPDP-1. Second, Kuter codified air power theory into doctrine with his contributions to AR 95-5 and FM 100-20. Third, he learned to balance strategic objectives with the realities of the operational environment. These lessons range from simple ideas such as the importance of basing and the need to provide details regarding the projected flow of forces into theater, to more advanced concepts, like the functional combatant command or the proper way to ensure the flow of feedback between commanders and their strategic planners.

Kuter contributed to the success of AWPDP-1 by grounding profound strategic expansion in the reality of the details required to execute the plan.²¹⁴ He reached out to subject-matter experts for advice on areas in which he had limited experience. Kuter realized that accomplishing the President's 100,000 aircraft production program would require proficient pilots and competent mechanics in addition to the material. Having learned first-hand Marshall's penchant for detail, Kuter provided the justification for each aspect of the planned expansion.²¹⁵ Additionally, he had to forecast "the optimum that could be reasonably obtained."²¹⁶ Finally, Kuter attributed the success of AWPDP-1 to confidence in the cause—victory for the United States.²¹⁷

²¹⁴ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 204.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 205.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 206.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 204.

In Kuter's opinion, two events validated the success of AWPD-1, both occurring on June 6, 1944. That morning, despite a solid overcast at 12,000 feet covering a scattered deck at 2,000 feet, Kuter flew into battle in a B-17 with the 1st Bombardment Division.²¹⁸ After returning from the mission, Kuter wrote, "If Goering and all the meteorologists of the Luftwaffe had prescribed ideal weather to permit the German air force to operate most effectively against our invading fleet, they could not have set up a more favorable condition than the weather that actually existed from the center of the Channel to the invasion beaches."²¹⁹ The conditions were perfect for German fighters to intercept the bombers. At altitude, the American bombers were silhouetted against high-altitude overcast and the low-level clouds precluded Allied fighter escort from pursuing enemy aircraft as they attack naval vessels below the scattered deck. Despite this, the *Luftwaffe* did not show up to the fight because the Combined Bomber Offensive defeated it months before the Allied invasion.

The second validation of AWPD-1 was the overall success the US Army Air Forces enjoyed on D-day. Kuter elaborated on this at some length saying:

Those 1,864 heavy bombers were manned by 20,000 officers and men. As a general statement, any one of those 20,000 men might have pushed the wrong button or bumped into an emergency release and dumped a load of high explosives into the densely packed Channel below. Those 20,000 men proceeded over a solid overcast to a shoreline which could be seen only through the radar instruments which themselves were inventors' dreams only 2 years before, and which no one of the men had ever seen until 9 months earlier. They continued on to target assignments which none had ever seen. Security considerations having kept this entire force away from the area of the invasion for the preceding several months. They dropped all of their bombs successfully and returned to their bases. Of the 20,000 Americans, no single blunder. It is truly a miracle of training. The fact of that great number of recent farm boys, school boys, and ribbon clerks could aim bombs precisely at a wholly invisible target is truly a scientific miracle. So I maintained we did have a high order of confidence, and it was justified.²²⁰

²¹⁸ Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 248.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid., 250.

The confidence and attention to detail George, Walker, Hansell, and Kuter displayed while writing AWPD-1 contributed immeasurably to the plan's success.

Beyond his role planning AWPD-1, Kuter made significant contributions to the evolution of American air power doctrine. This started with his role in the rewrite of AR 95-5 while serving on the War Department General Staff. AR 95-5 put one airman in command of the Army's air arm and highlighted long-range bombardment as a unique and distinct USAAF mission. Kuter consistently perpetuated these concepts in his subsequent doctrinal endeavors. After the publication of FM 100-20 in the summer of 1943, Kuter said, "It was not difficult to secure concurrences of Eisenhower, Arnold and Marshall to this radical change in the concept that the Air Force proponents had been advancing. It will be noted that the language is consistent throughout [*sic*] to the concept of a separate co-operative, co-equal United States Air Force."²²¹ Kuter's goal was the establishment of an independent US Air Force and he used each evolution of doctrine to advance this idea.

Kuter's belief in the principles established in FM 100-20 is evident by the way he continued refining the command and control of air power throughout the rest of the war. He did not want to see long-range heavy bombers committed piecemeal against tactical targets, yet he realized that in the operational environment commanders felt different pressures than those influencing strategic planners. Following the Cairo Conference, Kuter travelled the world visiting theater commanders, disseminating strategic political guidance to independent operational commanders. At the same time, he saw first-hand the way local conditions shaped commander's perspectives. Moving beyond reliance on personal correspondence to discuss these factors, Kuter's role in creating a reporting process between 8th Air Force and the Air Staff initiated a

²²¹ Ethel Kuter, MS 18, Addendum 1, Box 4, Folder 4, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

formal method for strategic planners to receive feedback on the operational environment. The Statistic Control Unit provided data useful in measuring a plan's effectiveness. This enabled strategic planners and commanders to both discuss the conflicting interests created by the dynamics of the operational environment and find ways to moderate these tensions.

Reporting mechanisms are not the only way that Kuter's actions shaped the future. In his attempt to maintain control of the strategic plan, despite the adjustments and modifications required to make it compatible with the operational environment, Kuter designed 20th Air Force, which served as the framework for US Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific. In essence, this organization was the first functional component command, empowering Arnold to direct the centralized control and decentralized execution of B-29 operations. Kuter believed that Spaatz, the first commander of US Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific, later shaped the Strategic Air Command in its image while serving as the USAF Chief of Staff.²²² The contemporary US Strategic Command is a direct descendant of both 20th Air Force and US Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific. Similarly, Kuter also felt that US Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific served as the inspiration for Spaatz's 1948 decision to consolidate the Naval Air Transport Service and USAF Air Transport Command under the Military Air Transport Service.²²³ In turn, the Military Air Transport Service served as the forerunner of Military Airlift Command, which became part of another functional component command, US Transportation Command, upon its creation in 1988. Finally, Kuter's differentiation of strategic and tactical air forces within the US Army Air Forces foreshadowed the creation of the Strategic Air Command and Tactical Air Command.

Larry Kuter is unique in American military history for many reasons. Beyond being America's youngest general officer at the start of the Second World War, he had the unique opportunity to write AWPD-1 and then serve as a commander executing the plan. After serving in

²²² Laurence Kuter, interview by Sturm and Ahmann, 286.

²²³ Ibid.

Europe and North Africa, he again returned to planning and applied the lessons of combat. His contribution to FM 100-20 is just part of his overall effort. The creation of 20th Air Force and US Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific are the result of Kuter's theories. In balancing the competing demands created by a mismatch between strategic aims and the reality of the operational environment, Kuter designed the forerunner of the first functional combatant commands. All of this occurred in the first half of his career. While Kuter's name is relatively obscure in the contemporary military, that has not always been the case. After his sudden promotion to brigadier general, he caught the eye of the American public and stayed there throughout the war. Upon his return from the Cairo Conference, he had the following letter from Ms. Selma Taeni of New York City waiting for him. Her words are a fitting way to close this study:

I am taking the liberty of writing to you to welcome you home after the successful conference which you attended. We Americans are happy, indeed, that the plans for a durable peace were worked out so intelligently, and we are proud and humble at the ability of our leaders to guard our future destinies. Yet we are aware, that all this can only be made possible by the brilliant strategy and careful planning which has been carried out by the brave men on the battlefields, on the seas, and in the air. You must be gratified, indeed, about the prominent role you have played in carrying us along the road to victory. As a lasting memento of World War II, and particularly of a man who has co-ordinated [*sic*] the tenacity of our airmen into a well-oiled striking power, I would be eternally proud and grateful if you could spare a moment to honor me with your signature.²²⁴

²²⁴ Selma Taeni to Laurence S. Kuter, Maj Gen, USA, February 12, 1944, MS 18, Series II, Box 8, Folder 8, Gen Laurence S. Kuter Papers, Gimbel Aeronautical History Collection, Brig Gen Robert F. McDermott Library, USAF Academy, CO.

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