

Major General Charles Ryder: The Forging of a World War II Division Commander

A Monograph

By

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Abstract

Major General Charles Ryder: The Forging of a World War II Division Commander, by Major Samuel R. Andrews, Minnesota National Guard, 47 pages.

Major General Charles W. Ryder began his military career in 1915, and served in the 16th Infantry Regiment during War I. During the interwar period, he spent fifteen years as a student or as an instructor. He went on to command the 34th Infantry Division in North Africa and Italy. Upon a successful tour as a combat division commander, General Marshall assigned him as the commander US IX Corps.

Ryder successfully commanded the 34th Infantry Division because he was a humble, lifelong learner, who drew from his education and operational experiences, effectively applying those experiences while commanding the 34th Infantry Division. His most significant educational experiences came from the US Military Academy, the Command and General Staff School, and the US Army War College. His experience commanding a battalion during World War I informed his perspective on training, leadership, and personal courage. He combined his experience and education to forge a National Guard division into an effective fighting force.

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Acronyms

ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
ADRP	Army Doctrine Reference Publication
CGSS	Command and General Staff School
FSR	Field Service Regulation
GHQ	General Headquarters
IDR	Infantry Drill Regulation
MG	Major General
LTC	Lieutenant Colonel
RCT	Regimental Combat Team
US	United States

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Introduction

The 34th Infantry Division and the Army career of Major General (MG) Charles Ryder commenced a mere two years apart. When the Army organized the division in July 1917, no one could foretell that a young lieutenant commissioned in 1915 from the US Military Academy would command this division thirty-seven years later with distinction.¹ The 34th Division would amass 597 days of combat in World War II, the most continuous days of combat for any division during the war, and Ryder would become one of the most respected division commanders in the war. Both the division's and MG Ryder's success are intertwined. Ryder's career represents a long process of development and evolution in America's inter-war period, while the 34th represents a shorter transformation during its mobilization in 1941. MG Ryder's career, education, in particular, offers important insights on leader development and successful leadership in combat.

Born Charles Wolcott Ryder in Topeka, Kansas, on January 16, 1928, to Doctor and Mrs. L. A. Ryder, he graduated from the US Military Academy in 1915, and retired as a Major General in 1950. He was a Topeka High School graduate prior to his entry into the academy, and worked as a chainman on a surveying crew in Atchison and Topeka.² Fifty-nine of the one hundred sixty-four graduates of his Academy class, known as the "class the stars fell on," became general officers.³ He attended all of the US Army's professional military education schools. Between his commissioning and his retirement, Ryder had assignments of increasing responsibility in both the

¹ "Lineage and Honors: Headquarters, 34th Infantry Division (Red Bull)," US Army Center of Military History, June 20, 2012, accessed May 1, 2014, <http://www.history.army.mil/html/forcestruc/lineages/branches/div/034id.htm>.

² Personal and School History Sheets of Cadets Candidates, Charles Wolcott Ryder; Personnel Records, Records Relating to Cadet Candidates, Deputy Chief of State, Personnel and Administration; Records of the U.S. Military Academy Record Group 404; National Archives-Affiliated Archives: record on deposit at U.S. Military Academy Archives, West Point, NY.

³ "West Point in the Making of America," Smithsonian National Museum of American History, accessed October 9, 2014, http://americanhistory.si.edu/westpoint/history_6b.html.

operational and generating forces. In the two years prior to World War I, he had three assignments, his first being with the 30th Infantry and the next on border duty near Fort Sam Houston. He then served at the Reserve Officers Training Camp in New York, prior to the outbreak of World War I. By August 1917, he commanded a training company in the 16th Infantry Regiment. His service in World War I was with both the 16th and 26th Infantry Regiments, commanding battalions in each. He returned to the United States in August 1919. His last assignment with 1st Division was a six-month tour in the division G3 section.

Over the next twenty years, he spent fifteen years as a student or an instructor. He spent his first three years after the war training and leading cadets as a tactics instructor and company commander of cadets. He spent the two years from 1924 to 1926 as a student at the Advanced Course at the Infantry School, and then as a student at the Command and General Staff School (CGSS). Following his graduation at CGSS, he was an instructor at the Infantry School until 1930. After a three-year tour in China from 1930-1933, he was a post inspector at Fort Meade. His branch then selected him to attend the US Army War College in 1933; upon graduation in 1934, he worked in the military intelligence division of the War Department general staff. From 1937 until 1941, he was the commandant of cadets at the US Military Academy.

In January 1941, he served at the US IV Corps chief of staff during its organization. A year later, he became the assistant division commander for the 90th Division. Four months later, he assumed command of the 34th Infantry Division. By 1941, Ryder had accumulated experiences in World War I and during the interwar period. What in Ryder's education and experience allowed him to command a division during World War II?

Ryder successfully commanded the 34th Infantry Division because he was a humble, lifelong learner, who drew from his education and operational experiences, effectively applying those experiences while commanding the 34th Infantry Division. This monograph will seek to understand how Ryder's military education at the US Military Academy, Command and General Staff College, and US Army War College set the foundation for his successful command and

framed his operational experiences. MG Ryder was privileged to experience the entire suite of professional military education available to officers of his era. Ryder's troop assignments augmented this education, the most significant being with the 16th Infantry during World War I. Understanding what his education taught him prior to his service in World War I and how his experience changed his understanding of warfare is critical in answering whether he applied his understanding of war and troop leadership to his tenure as the 34th Infantry Division Commander.

This monograph will analyze the relevance of Ryder's operational and educational background in light of contemporary doctrine, and determine whether he exhibited recognizable leadership attributes, competencies, and mission command philosophy while commanding the 34th Infantry Division. This leadership case study uses the Army's doctrine on leadership and mission command to determine retrospectively whether Ryder possessed recognizable leadership attributes and competencies that contemporary leaders can identify and apply. Understanding both his educational and operational experiences, and his application of them as a division commander through the Army's leadership model, will allow the reader to draw relevant conclusions to apply to their own careers.

US Army Doctrine Reference Publications (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* and Army Doctrine Reference Publications 6-0, *Mission Command* are the complementary manuals that guide contemporary leadership doctrine. In ADRP 6-22, the Army's leadership model delineates between attributes (what a leader is) and competencies (what a leader does). Attributes include character, presence, and intellect, while competencies are to lead, develop, and achieve.⁴ Leadership competencies develop throughout a lifetime of service, consisting of institutional

⁴ US Army Doctrine Reference Publications (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-5.

schooling, self-development, realistic training, and professional experience.⁵ During Ryder's time, leadership was not a curricular subject directly taught at the US Military Academy, Command, and General Staff College, or at the US Army War College. Similarly, ADRP 6-0 defines the mission command philosophy is to "exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander's intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of unified land operations."⁶ This, too, was a concept not found in Ryder's instruction, but given these doctrinal shortcomings of Ryder's development, this monograph articulates how he was able to acquire and apply these principals.

The first portion of this monograph focuses on developing an understanding of Ryder's educational experiences. It is broken down into three parts with the first section seeking to understand and analyze his education during his time at the US Military Academy. The second section will develop an understanding of what Ryder learned at the Command and General Staff College, while the third section will investigate and evaluate his educational experiences at the US Army War College. With an understanding of his educational experiences, this monograph will use that lens to look at his significant troop experiences.

The second portion examines his combat and assignments, detailed in two sections. Part One analyzes Ryder's combat experience during World War I. Part Two seeks understanding of how he commanded the 34th Infantry Division during the North Africa Campaign. Taken together, these operational experiences of commanding units were his most significant leadership experiences. His education certainly prepared him to command theoretically, but his troop-leading experience also prepared him to lead at the next level of command.

⁵ ADRP 6-22, 1-5.

⁶ US Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-3.

The conclusion summarizes Ryder’s educational and operational experiences from a contemporary doctrinal perspective to determine how he applied those experiences as the Commanding General of the 34th Infantry Division. Each successive educational and operational experience of leading soldiers was foundational, allowing him to command successfully the 34th Infantry Division.

US Military Academy 1910-1915

Charles Ryder entered the US Military Academy on June 14, 1911, at the age of nineteen. He graduated thirty-ninth in his class. During those four years, he studied civil and military engineering, ordnance, the science of gunnery, law, Spanish, drill regulations, practical military engineering, language, math, and military hygiene.⁷ His education consisted of two phases. The first portion, Years One through Three, established an academic foundation and a military underpinning with a focus on the former. During his senior year, his education emphasized military science. While there is some overlap, there is clearly an emphasis on general academics in Years One through Three, and military sciences in Year Four. Not every officer who attended the academy rose to the rank of general officer, or even made a career out of the military, but this initial education shaped Ryder’s understanding of learning, military-specific training, and broader education.

Table 1. US Military Academy Courses by Year

Department	Year
English and History	Freshman
Natural and Experimental Philosophy	Sophomore
Mathematics	Freshmen

⁷ US Military Academy, *Annual Report of the Superintendent 1915* (West Point, NY: US Military Academy Printing Office, 1915), accessed March 8, 2014, <http://digital-library.usma.edu/libmedia/archives/ars/V1915.pdf>; US Military Academy, *Official Register of the Officers and Cadet 1915* (West Point, NY: US Military Academy Printing Office, 1915), accessed March 8, 2014, <http://digital-library.usma.edu/libmedia/archives/oroc/v1915.pdf>.

	Sophomore
Chemistry, Mineralogy, and Geology	Sophomore
Drawing	Sophomore Junior
Languages	Sophomore Junior Senior
Practical Military Engineering	Freshman Sophomore Senior
Military Hygiene	Junior
Law	Senior
Ordnance and Gunnery	Senior
Civil and Military Engineering	Senior

Source: US Military Academy, *Annual Report of the Superintendent: 1915* (West Point, NY: US Military Academy Printing Office, 1915), accessed 8 March 2014, <http://digital-library.usma.edu/libmedia/archives/ars/V1915.PDF>; US Military Academy, *Official Register of the Officers and Cadet: 1915*, (West Point, NY: US Military Academy Printing Office, 1915), accessed 8 March 2014, <http://digital-library.usma.edu/libmedia/archives/oroc/v1915.pdf>.

General education consisted of English, history, language, science, and math. Each of these academic areas reinforced one another and were gateways to more technical and military topics. These foundational courses ensured graduates had a solid understanding of subjects they would use for the rest of their lives. English had two focus areas: written communication and reading comprehension. Writing focused on clear, direct concise communication while reading included classic literature and poetry. Rounding out the general studies, he also studied the social sciences. Ryder studied the history of the French Revolution, which emphasized the political, social, and economic development of Europe, and principals of civil government. History lessons incorporated lectures by civilian experts, professors from Yale and Princeton Universities, and Governor Baldwin of Connecticut, who lectured about government.⁸

⁸ US Military Academy, *Annual Report of the Superintendent 1912*, (West Point, NY: US Military Academy Printing Office, 1912), accessed March 8, 2014, <http://digital-library.usma.edu/libmedia/archives/ars/V1912.PDF>, 31.

In support of the engineering curriculum, Ryder also studied geometry, advanced algebra, trigonometry, surveying, and calculus. Finally, the sciences consisted of chemistry, mineralogy, and geology. In addition to the traditional sciences, he studied heat and electricity, which were important engineering concepts in the context of the Second Industrial Revolution. The United States did not have a fully developed military-industrial complex during the American Civil War or the Spanish American War. The course in electricity and machining developed an understanding of how to produce war materials, addressing industrial mobilization deficiencies in those previous conflicts. The cadets used their understanding of electricity and machines as they studied the two military topics of ordnance and gunnery. These courses were divided into three parts: theoretical, descriptive, and practical. Study began with a theoretical understanding of how ballistics, guns, and gunnery were supposed to work. The course then introduced students to the manufacturing process of ordnance, such as small arms, cannon, machine guns and their carriages, and ammunition. Finally, students learned the operations of the machines used in the fabrication of modern ordnance.⁹ The theoretical understanding of how internal and external ballistics developed provided Cadet Ryder a basic understanding of the science and application of artillery. With an understanding of manufacturing process and electricity, officers could apply the manufacturing process to ordnance and small arms during the next period of conflict.¹⁰

The general education in English, math, and science provided the foundational knowledge for studying engineering, ordnance and gunnery, and tactics. Ryder would need these skills as a commissioned officer. Civil and military engineering were the primary course of study in the Engineering Department; however, the cadets also studied military history under the supervision of the Engineering Department. Such a connection traces its roots to the very

⁹ US Military Academy, *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets 1915*, 76.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 76

foundation of the Military Academy, which sought to produce officers capable of applying knowledge to the technical problems of a growing country. Civil engineering coursework included the study of engineering materials, framed and masonry structures, and water and sewage supply. Military engineering primarily consisted of field, permanent fortifications, and siege works. Included in civil and military engineering instruction were twenty campaigns to understand general military strategy, logistics, combined arms, organization of armies, and the employment of those armies.¹¹ This study included a detailed analysis of the Battle of Gettysburg, culminating in a battlefield staff ride, which allowed the cadets to understand the effect of terrain on troops and the employment of troops in battle.¹² This education directly related to the creation of both technical and tactical knowledge. After a foundational understanding of the components of warfare, cadets built upon that understanding in the Tactics department.

The title, “Department of Tactics,” is somewhat misleading. Tactics is better understood today as the Department of Military Science or Military Instruction. Tactics consisted of both classroom instruction and summer field training to practice what cadets learned in class. The US Army’s Field Service Regulations served as the primary instructional materials. Studies included infantry, artillery, cavalry, hippology (the study of horses), and coastal artillery.¹³ The two most relevant regulations to Ryder’s education were the 1911 Infantry Drill Regulation (IDR) and the 1914 Field Service Regulation (FSR). The 1911 Infantry Drill Regulations focused largely on what could be considered as drill and ceremonies. The first eighty-eight pages covered drill and ceremonies from the individual soldier to the regiment, intermixing combat employment of each element. Part II, “Combat,” covered basic principles of combat and tactics as they related to infantry. The manual conveyed the intellectual framework or understanding of combined arms

¹¹ US Military Academy, *Official Register of the Officers and Cadets 1915*, 76.

¹² *Ibid.*, 73.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 73.

maneuver and the importance of firepower, but the manual's framework was not related to the conditions found in the trenches during World War I. According to the 1911 IDR, "Attacking troops must first gain fire superiority in order to reach the hostile position. [A]ttack is only possible when the attacking force has decided fire superiority."¹⁴ The 1911 IDR continues, "To gain fire superiority generally requires that the attacker employ more rifles."¹⁵ Supporting artillery was a principle aid, and units employed machine guns only in emergencies. The 1914 FSR, though, explained combat from more of a combined arms perspective, addressing, infantry, artillery, cavalry, and special troops. However, the 1914 FSR assigned the role of the infantry to the entire force, and ascribes the character of battle to the infantry by stating, "The infantry is the principle and most important arm, which is charged with the main work on the field of battle decides the final issue of combat."¹⁶ It is with this understanding of warfare that the cadets participated in their annual field training.

During the summer of 1914, the cadets conducted a five-day field problem. As a senior, Ryder assumed the role of an officer of infantry, artillery, cavalry, or practical military engineer to solve a field problem while students marched from camp to camp. The commandant of cadets, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) M. F. Smith, was pleased to announce no serious breaches of discipline during the field training exercise.¹⁷ During the field exercise was one of the few time cadets were able to practice leadership skills and practically apply course material they studied during the school year.

¹⁴ US Army, *Infantry Drill Regulations United States Army, 1911* (New York: Military Publishing Company, 1911), 100.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹⁶ US Army, *1914 Field Service Regulation* (New York: Military Publishing Company, 1914), 68.

¹⁷ US Army Military Academy, *Annual Report of the Superintendent 1915*, 28.

Summary and Analysis

Cadet Ryder certainly received an exceptional and classical education in math, science, and language. The Academy's focus on writing was also critical to the career of an officer. ADRP 6-22 states, "Competent leadership depends on good communication. Leaders cannot lead, supervise, and build teams, counsel, coach, or mentor without the ability to communicate clearly."¹⁸ While the reason for the focus on writing was not specifically stated in the superintendent's report, it is logical to deduce that leaders must communicate effectively through multiple media and means to lead their organizations. General education subjects in math, science, and English were necessary to pursue advanced classes in engineering, manufacturing, ordnance, and gunnery. A building block approach from simple math formulas in geometry allowed Ryder to use the theory of external ballistics when calculating firing solutions for artillery. It is critical for an infantryman to understand artillery and the math supporting the theory so he can employ artillery to assist his forward movement, suppress hostile artillery, and neutralize hostile infantry.¹⁹ He also received a practical education in infantry, artillery, and cavalry tasks. ADRP 6-22 defines expertise as, "special knowledge, and skills developed from experience, training, and education."²⁰ This foundational knowledge received during his years at the US Military Academy provided Ryder an initial source of understanding of both the art and science of warfare while Army doctrine of the era guided practical application.

Both the 1911 IDR and the 1914 FSR were core texts in Ryder's tactics class and were products of the American warfare experience, which to date did not account for the conditions of trench warfare found on the Western Front during World War I. However, both communicated

¹⁸ ADRP 6-22, 6-12.

¹⁹ US Army, *Infantry Drill Regulations United States Army, 1911*, 104.

²⁰ ADRP 6-22, 5-3.

the importance of firepower, and combined arms. Most importantly, the 1911 IDR stated, “Modern combat demands the highest order of training, discipline, leadership, and morale.”²¹ Although the conditions and character of warfare changed from the country’s previous conflict, the intellectual framework remained valid on the eve of the nation’s entry into World War I. Ryder also learned about leadership from the Infantry Drill Regulation. Although not formally taught as a class, leadership was part of the tactics curriculum. Practical application lessons during the field training exercises allowed cadets to practice what they learned in class, thus leadership was reinforced throughout his tenure at West Point. The cadet chain of command existed wherein the superintendent assigned leadership positions to cadets who performed well in class and demonstrated a general aptitude for soldiering. This cadet chain of command was not an overt leadership tool employed as part of the curriculum of the Academy to develop officers, but an administrative one, which was responsible for keeping good order and discipline. The result, however, was providing numerous opportunities to exercise real leadership. Cadet Ryder graduated as a company First Sergeant.²² Formalized cadets in leadership positions had to extend influence and lead their peers. Ryder’s education, analyzed in hindsight in context of current doctrine, created officers who had expertise of tactical knowledge to the employment of units to fight and win, and technical knowledge of weapons and equipment, which provided him the capacity to lead units as a commissioned officer.

²¹ US Army, *Infantry Drill Regulations United States Army, 1911*, 91.

²² *Ibid.*, 46.

Command and General Staff School 1925-1926

In 1926, Major Ryder completed the Command and General Staff School as a distinguished graduate.²³ The mission of the Command and General Staff School was to instruct officers on “(1) The Combined use of all arms in the division and in the army corps; (2) The proper functions of commanders of divisions and of army corps; and (3) The proper functions of General Staff officers of division and of army corps.”²⁴ To that end, the course focused on “(1) Tactics and logistics of divisions (including a review of the reinforced brigade) and army corps, including branches associated therewith. (2) Functions of divisions and corps commanders. (3) Organization and functioning of divisions and corps staffs.”²⁵ The Command and General Staff School provided Ryder the necessary education to meet the mission and educational objectives of the School, and knowledge to serve first as a division staff officer and then as a World War II division commander.

The three primary subjects taught during Ryder’s year at the School were (1) Tactical Principles, (2) Tactics and Techniques, and (3) Command, Staff and Logistics. These three courses accounted for 253 out of 444 total periods that Ryder spent in class.²⁶ Several other courses provided instruction on military organization, orders, history, and leadership. The Command and General Staff School educated students using conferences and lectures followed by application of their knowledge using map problems and terrain exercises. The school had a

²³ The General Service School, *Annual Report of the Commandant: 1925-1926* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: The General Service School Press), 7, Third Floor Archives, Combined Arms Research Library, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

²⁴ The General Service School, *Annual Report of the Commandant: 1922-1923* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: The General Service School Press, 1923), 36, Third Floor Archives, Combined Arms Research Library, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁶ The General Service Schools, *The Command and General Staff School Schedule for 1925-1926*, 3.

policy of teaching first and testing afterward.²⁷ This was Ryder's only experience as an Army Officer in which he studied and practiced moving, employing, and supplying such large and complex organizations as divisions, albeit using maps.

As part of the tactics and techniques, command and staff, and logistics classes, he studied the capabilities and limitations of infantry, artillery, cavalry, air services, signal, and engineers as well as their combined uses to achieve greater results than if employed independently. He continued his studies of marches, reconnaissance, security, and attack and defense at the division, corps, and army levels. He completed administrative orders to move a division by truck and rail, and supplying it during the attack and defense. Ryder demonstrated his knowledge of the course material by completing seventeen map problems.²⁸ One such example was Map Maneuver Number 13, a corps level exercise that started on April 16, 1926.²⁹

During the exercise, Ryder's instructor assigned him as the Red II Corps chief engineer. The training objectives were to give the class practical exercise in command and staff work in preparing a complete set of field orders, with annexes for a corps attack or defense. Individually, officers were required to solve problems that developed during the course of the exercise and submit solutions to the instructor for grading.³⁰ Ryder, as the corps engineer, had to plan the crossing of an obstacle to permit the corps' divisions to be within supporting distances of each other. Ryder used his understanding of combat orders class to produce the annex his instructor required him to complete. According to CGSS Combat Orders text, "Combat orders give the

²⁷ The General Service School, *Annual Report of the Commandant: 1925-1926*.

²⁸ The General Service School, *The Command and General Staff School Schedule for 1925-1926*, 3.

²⁹ The General Service School, *List of Assignments for Map Maneuver No 13* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: The General Service School Press, 1926), 2, Third Floor Archives, Combined Arms Research Library, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

³⁰ The General Service School, *General Instructions for Map Maneuver No 13*, 3.

situation, state the purpose of the commander, and define the task that each subordinate unit is to perform in the execution of this purpose.”³¹ The class of 1926 learned to communicate orders using an estimate of the situation, friendly and enemy; a commander’s decision, expressed by answering what, how, when, where, and why; and a scheme of maneuver. The amount of detail varied on the size of the subordinate unit: the larger, the more general to allow commanders to employ their units. Finally, combat orders should not trespass upon the subordinate unit’s prerogative; they should contain everything necessary to accomplish the mission, but not exceed the independent authority of the commander.³² This building block exercise provided Ryder an excellent opportunity to function as a staff member, and demonstrate the ability to solve practical problems, by building on previous periods of instruction, from different classes producing staff products to solve an operational problem.

The leadership course of study consisted of eleven, separate lectures on various leadership topics that included the essentials of leadership, physical fitness of officers, relations of a leader with enlisted men, failures of leadership, and case studies of two great American Captains of war, Ulysses S Grant and Stonewall Jackson.³³ The study of leadership in historical context was also part of the course, which exposed students to a critical analysis of leadership actions on the battlefield, including a block of instruction on leadership failure. A peer of Ryder’s remarked in an article in the Cavalry Journal about the failure of McClellan’s leadership in the Army of the Potomac, saying, “One wonders incidentally, to what extent these failures were inherent in the man themselves, or how far the record might have been differently shaped had

³¹ The General Service School, *Combat Orders* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: The General Service School Press, 1925), 2-4, Third Floor Archives, Combined Arms Research Library, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

³² The General Service School, *Combat Orders*, 2-4.

³³ The General Service Schools, *The Command and General Staff School Schedule for 1925-1926*, 27.

better opportunities for previous experience and training been available.”³⁴ A senior leader also lectured about his leadership expectations of the students.

Brigadier General Edward L. King, Commandant of CGSS, lectured on September 11, 1925, on command. He said commanders “must, first of all have character.”³⁵ Then they need to have knowledge and intelligence. The latter allows commanders to use their knowledge, which in turn provides self-confidence. Finally, he said, “a loyal commander can count on loyalty in others.”³⁶ A disloyal commander will infect his entire unit with a fatal spirit and can count on disloyalty in others. CGSS valued leadership as a necessary component for their graduates to employ as they integrated the equally complex concepts of fire, maneuver, and logistics.

Summary and Analysis

The Command and General Staff School provided Ryder the most significant training and educational experience he would have at the division level and above. Prior to World War II, he never commanded above the battalion level, although he spent four months as the 90th Division assistant division commander during its initial organization. However, he was not there during its training. Besides CGSS, no other Army institution mixed education and practice to train officers to serve at that level. King’s lecture about knowledge, character, and loyalty in 1925 is echoed in ADRP 6-2 when it states, “Character is essential to successful leadership.”³⁷ Loyalty is essential to creating strong organizations and is essential in building mutual trust, a requirement of mission command. Finally, “Organizational leaders must be masters of tactical and operational synchronization. They must arrange activities in time, space, and purpose to mass maximum

³⁴ “Command and General Staff School” Cavalry Journal 35 (July 1926), 415-416.

³⁵ Brigadier General Edward L. King, *Command*, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 1925), 9, Third Floor Archives, Combined Arms Research Library, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

³⁶ King, *Command*, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, 1925, 11

³⁷ ADRP 6-11, 3-1.

relative combat power or organizational effort at a decisive point and time.”³⁸ The stated mission, objectives, and classes at the Command and General Staff School provided Ryder a relevant education during the interwar period, preparing him to lead a division during World War II; from these lessons, Ryder learned how to train, employ, and sustain a division in combat. Education and operational experiences create competency. Considering the Army of the 1920s and 1930s lacked divisions and corps headquarters, CGSS created competencies through training and education.

US Army War College 1933-1934

Ryder attended the US Army War College from 1933-1934. This was his final military educational experience before World War II. The purpose of the War College was to prepare officers to command or serve as staff officers at units larger than a corps. Major General William D. Connor, Commandant of the US Army War College, created the curriculum that Ryder studied. Broadly, the instruction consisted of political, economic, social matters that influence the conduct of wars, the study of logistics, and joint operations. The curriculum consisted of both training and education: training provided defined skills that were developed through repetitive practice, while education involved intellect by developing understanding, judgment, and analytical thought.³⁹ Education focused on complex problems not found in doctrine that sought to understand the relationship between political, economic, and social influences on the phenomena of war.⁴⁰ Analytical studies required answering detailed quantitative questions. Ryder’s course of

³⁸ ADRP 6-22, 10-8.

³⁹ Judith Hicks Stiehm, *US Army War College: Military Education in a Democracy*, (Temple University Press, PA., 2002), 33.

⁴⁰ Harry P. Ball, *Of Responsible Command: A History of the U.S. Army War College* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Alumni Association of the United States Army War College, 1984, ©1983), 211.

study consisted of thirteen different courses that focused on achieving the stated learning objectives.⁴¹

Ryder's Conduct of War course was part of his analytical education, which used historical campaigns to study how the military was utilized to achieve national objectives. His assignment was to analyze three different campaigns from political, military, social, and economic perspectives. The three campaigns were Napoleon's campaign in Prussia and Poland, 1806-1807; the America Civil War, inclusive of the Peninsular Campaign and the Shiloh Campaign to the end of the war; and World War I from 1915 to 1918. Ryder studied each campaign from the perspectives of Napoleon, Federal, and German Armies, respectively to determine how each army linked objectives in campaigns to achieve national aims.⁴² Ryder, as part of a student committee, broke down each campaign into national and military objectives, and then analyzed each campaign in detail to understand how each army developed military objectives to achieve strategic aims. He also analyzed the campaign through a technological lens to understand how the nature of warfare had evolved. In his conclusions of campaign analysis, Ryder demonstrated that he understood each campaign and the links between operations and strategic aim.

In his studies, Ryder drew three main conclusions. The most important conclusion was the concept of the "nation in arms," which said, "Campaigns be directed against the enemy's vital powers of resistance, which are: his forces in the field, his economic resources, his political stability, and the morale of his people."⁴³ The second most important conclusion he drew was "to prevent the successive defense of several objectives by one hostile force, campaigns directed at

⁴¹ US Army War College List of Classes Index Card, Charles W. Ryder, 1934, US Army War College Curriculum Archives, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

⁴² Report of Committee No. 7, *Objectives of Campaigns in Furtherance of National Aims*, (Washington DC, 1934), 1, US Army War College Curriculum Archives, Carlisle Barracks, PA.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 2.

such objectives must be aggressive, coordinated, and continuous.”⁴⁴ Finally, he stated, “places and armies offer objectives that are frequently interrelated. The selection of one, usually, brings the inclusion of the other.”⁴⁵ These three conclusions taken together demonstrated an understanding between strategic aims and linking operations to campaigns, which seek the destruction of the enemy’s fielded forces, resources, political stability, and morale of the people. Additionally from an evolution of operational art perspective, he studied the trends in weapons development and the effect of those weapons on campaign objectives.⁴⁶

Ryder understood how, in 1934, weapons, mechanization, and aviation changed operations. These trends, listed in his paper, included increased speed, mobility, and firepower, greater dispersion of tactical formations, striking power of armored vehicles, use of aviation against enemy forces, industrial installations, and civilian population. The technological developments of long-range bombardment aviation, combined with motorized and mechanized forces, “permit the commander to select objectives at a time and at a place not heretofore open to him.”⁴⁷ He recognized the effect of technology on operational objectives and the means available to achieve them. Finally, he understood the need to mobilize the resources of the entire nation.⁴⁸ Mobilization to fight a war was not just a military problem; it was a national issue. This knowledge expanded upon his education at the Command and General Staff School. It continued to build upon division tactics, employment, and sustainment, thus contributing to a corps and army headquarters’ successful campaign.

⁴⁴ Report of Committee No. 7, 2.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 2.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 4.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 4, 7.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 3, 7.

Summary and Analysis

The year that Ryder spent studying at the US Army War College provided both training and education that built on the practical knowledge gained at CGSS. His study of three different campaigns that spanned over a hundred years educated him on the importance of linking military objectives to strategic aims. Although, at the time, linking military objectives and strategic aims was not referred to as operational art, the Army War College provided the intellectual framework to understand the importance of linking the two. Military operations are complex, human endeavors that are unpredictable, where each opponent attempts to impose their will on the other. Military operations must create conditions for favorable conflict resolution.⁴⁹ Each campaign studied, compared, contrasted, and synthesized how each nation used the military to impose their will on their adversary to achieve conflict resolution. Finally, he studied how technology changed the means of warfare and created opportunities for commanders to plan and execute operations previously unavailable, including deep strikes using aviation and armored formations. His analysis of advancements in mechanization, motorization, and aviation allowed him to understand the increased tempo of warfare, lethality, and striking depth of the battlefield. The Army War College's interwar curriculum taught Ryder the importance of linking operations to national aims, as well as how warfare had changed from his World War I experience.

Service in World War I – 1917

Less than two years after Ryder graduated from the US Military Academy, the United States was at war. Captain Ryder was now a company commander in the 16th Infantry Regiment, and his company was one of the first units to land in France on June 25, 1917 as part of the new 1st Division. The 16th Infantry Regiment experienced significant combat and other personnel turbulence; by the end of the war, it had its ranks replaced three times suffering over 3,500

⁴⁹ ADRP 6-0, 1.

casualties. The regiment fought at Cantigny, Soissons, St. Mihiel, the Argonne, and Sedan. The entire wartime experience of the division was instructive in relating the education and development of Ryder as a trainer and combat leader. The manner in which the regiment prepared for war and how it conducted operations proved to be invaluable experience in the development in the Ryder's career.

Initially, Captain Ryder was the company commander of Company B, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment. From July 14, 1917 to October 21, 1917, the French 47th Chasseurs trained Company B and 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment on trench warfare in Gondrecourt, France. The Chasseurs created training areas to replicate the front, complete with barbed wire, trenches, and shell holes. The General Headquarters, American Expeditionary Forces prescribed a three-month training plan. The first month consisted of individual training and small unit trench warfare tactics. The second month, company-sized units occupied a quiet sector of the front under French command, and the final month consisted of tactics in open warfare, although about half of the allotted time went to training in trench warfare. There was a tension, however, between the French combat training method taught and the American Expeditionary Force open warfare training and doctrine. This tension between maneuver warfare and trench warfare seemed natural, based on French combat experiences in the trenches and American doctrine.

During the previous three years, the French had learned to appreciate the power of defensive firepower; therefore, they focused on trench warfare training, which consisted of rolling artillery barrages, machine guns, automatic rifles, hand and rifle grenades, and the 37mm gun. They also taught trench construction and occupation to Company B. Pershing believed that the trench warfare stalemate would have to end through an aggressive war of maneuvers. The 1st Division Histories recorded, "Through keenness of vision, General Pershing had seen that trench

warfare must end before victory could be achieved.”⁵⁰ Therefore, the 1st Division commander, Major General William Sibert, consistent with open warfare doctrine, continued to train the division on close order drill, foot marches with packs, and rifle marksmanship out to three hundred meters.⁵¹ Sibert could not train on open warfare doctrine in the manner he desired because of the amount of direct influence French units had over his units’ training program.⁵² The key was to survive and fight in the trenches with sufficient enough combat power remaining to conduct open warfare beyond the trenches.

Ryder and Company B continued trench warfare training, and occupied a sector of the Sommerviller on the Lorraine front on October 21, 1917. It was their first experience of the war. The French 18th Division was responsible for the company’s employment and instruction. The company remained in the trenches until the night of November 2, 1917, learning more about field craft and training in trench conditions than any actual combat. This training or experience was a process whereby the outgoing unit taught the incoming unit the intricacies of the area of operations. The company received firsthand experience in a lower risk area under the supervision of veteran troops, which ideally reduced the risk when the unit occupied the trenches for the first time on its own. Company B’s experience was relatively quiet, and Ryder’s company had just missed its first enemy contact. On the evening after 1st Battalion rotated out of the trenches, 2nd Battalion occupied the trenches as the German Army raided the sector, killing three, and capturing ten men.⁵³ The final training period brought the entire division together for collective

⁵⁰ The Society of the First Division, *History of the First Division during the World War 1917-1919* (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Company, 1922), 36.

⁵¹ Mark E. Grotelueschen, *The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 61; The Society of the First Division, 20.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 60.

⁵³ The Regimental Chaplain, *The Story of the Sixteenth Infantry in France* (Frankfurt, Germany: Martin Flock Montabaur, 1919), 5.

training. This phase of training coordinated infantry and artillery to attack limited objectives. The division also conducted open warfare training. However, weather and actual training time allotted to open warfare training seemed to limit the division's ability to gain true proficiency in open warfare training. In analyzing its full program of instruction, the division spent more time conducting training on trench warfare than on open warfare. In total, Ryder and 1st Battalion fought in the Soissons offensive after almost a year of training and practical experience in the trenches.

After Ryder was promoted to Major on June 17, 1918, he had two significant combat experiences during World War I. He participated in the Soissons and Meuse-Argonne offensive. He would lead his men from the front and be decorated for bravery twice. His first significant experience was the Battle of Soissons. At 4:35 a.m. on July 18, 1918, Major Ryder led 1st Battalion over the top without artillery preparation trailing a rolling barrage towards Laq Glaux Farm. Ryder seized his first objective near the farm by 5:30 a.m. After a twenty minute pause, artillery concentrated fire on Missy Ravine, which prevented German fire on Ryder's flank, enabling 1st Battalion to seize the second objective and continue to Route National 2. First Battalion passed 2nd Battalion to continue the attack east of National Route 2. By 8:30 a.m., the 16th Infantry Regiment had secured its objective. The regiment consolidated and dug in, preparing to continue the attack on July 19, 1918. Second Battalion was originally designated the lead battalion for the next phase of the attack.

First Battalion suffered heavy casualties from machine gunfire originating from Missy Ravine, but 2nd Battalion fared much worse. As a result, the regimental commander chose 1st Battalion again to lead the regimental assault on July 19, 1918 toward Hill 153. Over the next twelve hours, 1st Battalion met determined enemy resistance in the form of machine gun positions, artillery, and aircraft. The use of tanks and resolute small unit leadership reduced the enemy positions enabling the battalion to seize Hill 153. Late on the second day, German artillery fire wounded Ryder. The following day at 2:00 p.m., 1st Battalion again led the regiment toward

its next objective, cutting off the Soissons-Paris railroad. The battalion met little resistance until starting down the bluffs toward the railroad where German artillery and machine guns had clear fields of fire. By the evening of the 20th, 1st Battalion dug in six hundred meters east of the railroad, preparing for the final assault on the 21st. With only a rolling barrage, 1st Battalion led the remnants of 16th Infantry Regiment to cut the Soissons-Chateau Thierry road, and seized the heights northwest of Buzancy.⁵⁴ Of the 1,100 men who went over the top with 1st Battalion on Day One, there were only thirty or forty survivors by the fifth day. The 16th Regiment had 204 killed, 940 wounded, and 590 missing.⁵⁵ Ryder's personal leadership directly contributed to the success of the mission.

In a memo dated August 5, 1918, the Division Commander, Major General Charles Summerall, cited Ryder for gallantry in action. "For four days led his battalion under increased machine gun and artillery fire displaying during the entire time great personal bravery and complete disregard for danger. His example inspired all with the will and determination to conquer."⁵⁶ His Distinguished Service Medal citation further stated, "Although wounded early in the operation he remained in command and directed the attack until all objectives had been taken."⁵⁷ Personal courage was certainly the defining characteristic of his performance in Soissons, but Ryder also employed applied decision-making and applied key war fighting principals, ensuring he had adequate artillery support while the infantry continued to advance to their subsequent objectives. Artillery preparatory fires on defensive works were critical to

⁵⁴ American Battle Monuments Commission, *1st Division Summary of Operation in the World War* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1944), 29.

⁵⁵ The Regimental Chaplain, *The Story of the Sixteenth Infantry in France*, 33.

⁵⁶ General Order No. 44 Headquarters First Division, American Expeditionary Force, France August 5, 1918, 1917-1950, 201 File, Box 2, Charles W. Ryder Papers (hereafter cited as Ryder Papers), Dwight D. Eisenhower Library, Abilene, KS.

⁵⁷ General Order No. 39, Distinguished Service Cross, War Department, Washington June 25, 1920, 1917-1950, Charles W. Ryder, Papers, 201 File, Box 2, Ryder Papers.

reducing strong points. Ryder also learned from negative lessons when things went awry. These errors included poor maneuver and coordination. Preventing gaps between maneuvering battalions was critical to prevent enfilade fire on an advancing unit. The gap opened up on the left flank of the 1st Battalion, allowing German positions enfilade fire into Ryder's battalion, which caused many of 1st Battalion's casualties on the first day. There were difficulties in moving the guns, ammunition, and supplies forward through the muddy fields and roads while prisoners and injured were evacuated to the rear. If the infantry advanced too rapidly or extended beyond their objective, it would lose its protective rolling barrage. The infantry battalion commanders gave practically no orders to machine gun commanders, resulting in confusion in utilization and employment. Cohesion broke down between infantry units, and their attached machine gun crews prevented the employment of machine guns because of inability to keep up under the heavy loads.⁵⁸ Despite the overall success of the offensive execution was not as desired and Ryder learned, internalized, and applied the lessons during Soissons offensive, during the subsequent Meuse-Argonne.

Major Ryder recovered from his wounds at Soissons, although he carried a sliver of steel in his heart for the rest of his life.⁵⁹ Upon returning to duty, Ryder again assumed command of 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, and led them once more during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive. As chance would have it, Major Ryder and 1st Battalion 16th Infantry faced the difficult task of seizing Hill 272, which was a dominant terrain feature in 1st Division's sector. The German defense had held the division to a three-day standstill, demonstrating that 1st Division was a

⁵⁸ "Notes on the use of machine guns in the operations of the 1st Division south of Soissons and recommendations based thereupon," HQ, 1st Division Memorandum, August 5, 1918, WWRFD, Vol 2, National World War I Museum, Kansas City, MO.

⁵⁹ P. J. M., "Memorial," West Point Association of Graduates, accessed March 8, 2014, <http://apps.westpointaog.org/Memorials/Article/5351>.

learning organization. The division commander made adjustments in his plan to maximize firepower and combined arms maneuver.

On October 5, 1918, 1st Battalion was the division reserve. The 26th Infantry Regiment fought its way just short of Hill 272, and reported it was well defended with machine guns and short-range mortars. The division was forward of the units on its flanks, and was held in place for three days. This pause allowed the division commander to prepare his most complicated attack plan yet to seize Hill 272, which became the ultimate accomplishment of Summerall's set piece, firepower maximization attack.⁶⁰ The deliberate nature of employing artillery barrages, supporting machine gunfire, and rolling barrages were better coordinated and executed than during the battle of Soissons. On the afternoon of the 7th, Ryder was directed to report personally to 1st Brigade Headquarters to receive the order to reposition his battalion near Hill 240 so he could attack Hill 272 on October 9.⁶¹ Ryder rejoined the battalion, and led the company commanders on a reconnaissance of his objective. Before German artillery forced the leader's recon off Hill 240, they observed machine gun and mortar emplacements at the base of the hill covering avenues of approach and machine guns in the woods near Hill 176, which would have enfilade fire on the left flank of the battalion.⁶² Ryder gave his company commanders a verbal order that described his plan of attack. He arranged the battalion from left to right: Company C and Company B were the assault companies with Ryder's command post in the center; Company D supported Company C; and Company A supported Company B; 3rd Platoon of the Machine Gun Company trailed Company A while 1st Platoon Machine Gun Company provided suppressive fires from Hill 240. The division artillery concentrated its fire on Hill 272, starting on

⁶⁰ Grotelueschen, *The AEF Way of War*, 136; The Society of the First Division, 205.

⁶¹ CPT Leonard R. Boyd, "Operations of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, in Their Second Phase of the Meuse-Argonne," Ft Benning, GA: The Infantry School, 1925; Testimony of Major C.W. Ryder, 8.

⁶² Boyd, "Operations of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, in Their Second Phase of the Meuse-Argonne," 9; The Infantry Journal Incorporated, *Infantry in Battle* (Washington, DC: 1939), 147-148.

October 8, 1918, and transitioned to a rolling barrage two hundred meters in front of Ryder's battalion three minutes before he went over the top.⁶³

Ryder's attack on Hill 272 started at 8:30 a.m. on 9 October 1918 under a thick fog. First Battalion moved five hundred meters to the base of the hill with closely synchronized artillery and machine gunfire, which enabled his battalion to get to the foot of his objective. Ryder, moving with Company C, immediately took fire from Hill 176, and Company C turned to attack. Ryder confirmed the commander decision to attack the hill, securing his flank from enfilade fire. After returning to the foot of Hill 272, Ryder halted Company D, and personally checked the positions of his remaining companies. He then verbally ordered them to attack and seize the positions immediately to their front.⁶⁴ The infantrymen worked in small units, flanked machine guns and mortar positions, and destroyed or captured enemy positions. Ryder's personal leadership once again proved invaluable. His Distinguished Service Cross citation read, "[W]hile trying to establish liaison with the front-line companies, he advanced alone and personally directed the action of his command, although under direct fire from two enemy machine guns. He later personally led the final assault on Hill 272."⁶⁵ By 11:00 a.m., they seized Hill 272, occupied a reverse slope defense, and began to consolidate and reorganize. Half of Companies A, B, and D were present along with one platoon from Company C. The machine gun company was attrited to a platoon of four guns. First Battalion captured over fifty machine guns in the process of seizing their objective. This experience was drastically different from Soissons.

⁶³ HQ 1st Division, *Field Orders NO. 49*, October 8, 1918, WWRF, vol 3, National World War I Museum, Kansas City, MO.

⁶⁴ Boyd "Operations of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, in Their Second Phase of the Meuse-Argonne," 8-10.

⁶⁵ The Regimental Chaplain, *The Story of the Sixteenth Infantry in France*, 58; General Order No. 39 Distinguished Service Cross, War Department, Washington June 25, 1920, 1917-1950, 201 File, Box 2, Ryder Papers.

The attack on Hill 272 differed from Soissons in its use of machine guns and artillery. Fires were concentrated from the division artillery, starting the day before Ryder's attack. Artillery fired both smoke and thermite to reduce enemy machine gun emplacement. Following the artillery, a rolling barrage laid down suppressive fire. Ryder had better coordination and employment of machine guns to suppress enemy positions. When his battalion received fire to his flank, he quickly confirmed the decision of the company commander to assault Hill 176 to allow the rest of his battalion to assault Hill 272. The coordinated use of artillery and machine guns allowed his riflemen to close with and destroy the enemy on the objective. The use of liaisons and wire communications improved coordination between the artillery and the infantry. Commanders employed machine gun companies to suppress enemy positions thus, allowing infantry to seize ground while tanks destroyed enemy machine gun strongpoints. Most importantly, commanders had better situational awareness of their front line of troops. When the infantry was unable to keep pace, a rolling barrage of artillery protected the halted infantry regiments while other artillery fired on strong points. Because of the better use of combined arms, Ryder's battalion was able to seize Hill 272.

Summary and Analysis

Ryder's experiences in the First World War are critical to understanding his future perceptions and actions as a division commander. His experiences helped derive his appreciation for realistic training, the effectiveness of well-coordinated combined arms, and the exercise of personal leadership on a chaotic battlefield. The preparation of the 1st Battalion relied on realistic training based in real environments. The year-long training in the trenches in France, in conjunction with experience and American open warfare doctrine, allowed Ryder's regiment to prepare for industrial warfare. It also incorporated a broad understanding of warfare, and was unrestricted through a single French or American lens. Witnessing the initial failure and subsequent success of well-integrated combined arms provided Ryder a better appreciation of

modern warfare. In the battle of Soissons, Ryder's unit was subject to enfilade fire from Missy Ravine, causing many casualties. During his assault of Hill 272, he allowed Charlie Company to deviate from their initial objective to secure his left flank. He better coordinated the use of machine guns in the Muse-Argonne, employing them in an overwatch position to suppress his objective while his infantry companies maneuvered to destroy strong points, a stark contrast from Soissons where he had no suppressive fire from his machine guns. The fires plan incorporated high explosive shells and thermite a day in advance of his assault, aiding in the reduction of enemy machine gun and mortar positions. Finally, his personal actions of bravery allowed Ryder to see the results of effective leadership in difficult situations. In the Battle of Soissons, Ryder earned a Distinguished Service Cross and Purple Heart. Subsequently, upon recovering from his wounds in Soissons, he again assumed command of the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, and fought in the Meuse Argonne offensive, where he subsequently earned another Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest award for valor in the US Army.⁶⁶ Ryder received two of twenty-five Distinguished Service Crosses issued to men of the 1st Division; only 1,881 were issued during World War I.⁶⁷ Ryder's personal actions and leadership made a difference in combat, and were dutifully recognized as such. Leading from the front, he demonstrated personal courage. Ryder's exposure to fire ensured that his unit accomplished their mission. All of these factors brought together the concepts introduced in his education, and brought them to life in a manner not possible in a sterile classroom. Education, followed by practical experience, helped develop Ryder into an effective combat leader.

⁶⁶ Awards, 1917-1950, 201 File, Box 2, Ryder Papers.

⁶⁷ US Army Center of Military History, Awards and Decorations: World War I Statistics, An Extract from the Annual Report of the Secretary of War to the President War Department Fiscal Year ended June 30, 1923 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1923), accessed March 20, 2014, <http://www.history.army.mil/documents/wwi/23awd.htm>.

Commanding General 34th Infantry Division North Africa 1943

This section addresses the training of the 34th Infantry Division conducted prior to Ryder assuming command, and examines Ryder's role in the landings of Operation Torch. It sets the context for the division's attack of Hill 609 by analyzing its performance at Fondouk Gap. The 34th Infantry Division mobilized for World War II in March of 1941 and Major General Ryder would not assume command until after the division had conducted its initial training in Louisiana and was already training in Ireland.

In the context of the 1939 Protective Mobilization Plan, the Army had to man, equip, and train a battle-worthy army of over a million men. In 1939, the Regular Army consisted of less than 190,000 men, and just 200,000 National Guard. After twenty years of neglect, the Army had to modernize its divisions, and man Army and Corps headquarters that only existed until then on paper. The core of this army was built on nine active duty and eighteen National Guard divisions.⁶⁸ Mobilization timelines were constrained due to the enormity of the task, but ensured available manpower and equipment to flow to mobilized units. Facilities, still under construction, were generally inadequate.⁶⁹ Typically, National Guard units had unfit officers and soldiers replaced, were allocated only partial equipment issued, or were stripped of equipment to fulfill the Lend-Lease program.⁷⁰ On the eve of the attack on Pearl Harbor, the 34th Infantry Division was hardly recognizable as a National Guard division.

The 34th Infantry Division mobilized 12,279 Soldiers and Officers, eighty percent of its authorized triangular division strength, and discharged forty percent or 4,900 men from the

⁶⁸ Christopher R. Gabel, *The US Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, US Army, 1992), 8.

⁶⁹ I. Heymount and E. W. McGregor, "Review and Analysis of Recent Mobilizations and Deployments of US Army Reserve Components" (McLean, VA: Research Analysis Corporation, 1972), 2-6.

⁷⁰ Gabel, *The US Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941*, 15.

formation prior to deployment to Ireland. Only twenty percent of the officers had the appropriate military education required for their billet. Selective Service, Regular Army, and Reserve Officer Training Corps provided replacements.⁷¹ Bridger General Lesley J. McNair, Chief of Army Ground Forces, recognized the need to replace officers too old for their grade or incompetent, but carefully balanced the needs of the unit, the greater Army, and the dignity of the officer. He was fully aware of the perception of relieving most National Guard officers and replacing them with Regular Army officers.⁷² At best, only one-third of the original division remained. The 34th Division training regime was initially sequential, basic, and plagued by materiel shortages.

In late February and early March of 1941, the soldiers of the 34th Infantry Division were loaded on boxcars in Minnesota, Iowa, North, and South Dakota, and departed for Camp Claiborne.⁷³ On March 10, 1941, the division started its thirteen-week training program. The first nine weeks of the training program focused on operations at the company level and below, while weeks ten through thirteen were dedicated to battalion and above. Early stages of training incorporated basic training and rifle marksmanship and progressively became more technical, tactical, and logistically oriented. According to the 34th Infantry Division's training plan, the general training philosophy was, "After the individual has been physically hardened, qualified to march to use his weapon, and to care for himself and his means of transportation then small unit training will be emphasized."⁷⁴ This initial progressive training program, though, did not account

⁷¹ Heymount and McGregor, "Review and Analysis of Recent Mobilizations and Deployments of US Army Reserve Components" 2-7; Kent Roberts Greenfield, Robert Palmer, and Bell I Wiley, *The Army Ground Forces: The Organization of Ground Combat Troops* (Washington, DC, 1987), 11.

⁷² Greenfield, Palmer, and Wiley, *The Army Ground Forces: The Organization of Ground Combat Troops*, 50.

⁷³ Heymount and McGregor, "Review and Analysis of Recent Mobilizations and Deployments of US Army Reserve Components," 2-5.

⁷⁴ 34th Infantry Division, *Training Program* (Camp Ripley, MN 1941), 3, Third Floor Archives, Folder N-16734, Combined Arms Research Library, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

for replacements or training requirements of officer. The program started with individual training and ended with collective training. It did not account for having to train replacements or retraining the various, collective echelons. Because the division deployed to Camp Claiborne understrength and many men were found unfit for service, the division received 1,150 replacements in April 1941 alone.⁷⁵ These new replacements required the same mandatory basic training before they could progress with small unit training. The result was a continuous learning and re-learning process across multiple echelons. Collective training did not include combined arms live fire training that incorporated indirect fire, and integration of tanks or planes.⁷⁶ The division was also critically short of machine guns and mortars; virtually every type of equipment was obsolete, or scarce, or both.⁷⁷ In June, the division conducted its first large scale training exercise against the 32nd Infantry Division. This training exercise provided the best opportunity for the division to train from the platoon throughout the battalion level; however, it was not an exercise to train the division as a whole. At this stage of training, the division was more a loose conglomeration of many small parts than an integrated fighting division.

On September 1941, the 34th Infantry Division was assigned to V Corps, Third Army, for the Louisiana Maneuvers. The purpose of the Louisiana Maneuvers was not to train divisions, but to exercise large field armies and corps, which fulfilled General McNair's aim of in creating a heterogeneous assemblage of military manpower into a battle-worthy army for combat under whatever conditions the defense of the country required.⁷⁸ The division played only a minor role during Phase I, where V Corps held it in reserve. During Phase II, though, V Corps tasked the

⁷⁵ 135th Infantry Regiment, *A Partial History Phase I*, 7, Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, Camp Dodge, IA.

⁷⁶ Homer R. Ankrum, *Dogfaces Who Smiled Through Tears in World War II*, Lake Mills, IA: Graphic Publishing Company, 47.

⁷⁷ Gabel, *The US Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941*, 67.

⁷⁸ Gabel, *The US Army GHQ Maneuvers of 1941*, 44.

division to seize a crossing of the Red River near Alexandria to secure the right flank of the V Corps attack. The 34th Infantry Division's performance was no better or worse than other divisions assigned to V Corps, given the enormous task of mobilizing an army with the available resources prior to the declaration of war. The division completed the Louisiana maneuvers as a semi-trained entity, a situation that was largely a product of the larger pre-war mobilization system. To reinforce the British Isles, the General Headquarters (GHQ) shipped the 34th Infantry division to Ireland.⁷⁹ After eleven months of training, the division left in January 1942, the last units arrived in May 1942.

The 34th Infantry Division had three significant training issues in Ireland; including a lack of maneuver space, dispersion of units, and lack of equipment. The division was triangularized at Fort Dix shortly before it departed for Ireland.⁸⁰ Upon arrival in Ireland, the three infantry regiments, with their subordinate battalions and supporting artillery, were scattered across Ireland, which made large unit collective training very difficult. Regimental and division level training was critical because of triangularization; all of the division's previous collective training had been conducted as a square division.

Ryder assumed command of the 34th Infantry Division in June, and led the division through its only divisional training exercise in Ireland in July, which combined the 34th and 1st Armored Divisions against the 59th and 61st British Divisions. Immediately following this

⁷⁹ Greenfield, Palmer, and Wiley, *The Army Ground Forces: The Organization of Ground Combat Troops*, 30.

⁸⁰ When the 34th Infantry Division mobilized, it was configured as a 28,000 soldier square division, consisting of two infantry brigades of two regiments and an artillery brigade. Congressional funding during the interwar period limited the divisions to roughly one-quarter strength. Triangular division organization reduced redundant headquarters while increasing mobility, sustainability, and flexibility. World War II divisions consisted of three infantry regiments of three battalions with supporting field artillery battalion. To offset the loss of personnel triangular units received heavy weapons companies, platoons equipped with mortars and heavy machine guns. For more information on triangularization, see Dan Fullerton, "Bright Prospects, Bleak Realities: The U.S. Army's Interwar Modernization Program for the Coming of the Second World War" (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 2006), 134-57.

exercise, Ryder departed to London to plan Operation Torch, Simultaneously, 168 Infantry Regimental Combat Team departed for Scotland to train for Operation Torch while the remainder of the division conducted retraining by battalion in the division training area.⁸¹ Each battalion in the division conducted attack, defense, and night training, which included live overhead artillery firing.⁸² Even though battalions received additional training while RCT 168 trained specifically for Operation Torch, it was impossible for Ryder to train his division in its entirety. Just following a division collective exercise, a time when the commander can retrain, coach, and mentor units and commanders, he departed to plan Operation Torch. Following the divisional exercise, the division's stability from both a training and personnel perspective was further damaged by the loss of six hundred men who formed the core of the newly-forming Rangers.⁸³ Ryder later stated in the division's report to the Adjutant General, "As a result of poor training, equipping, and troop labor requirements, the infantry units (less RCT 168) were not prepared for combat service."⁸⁴ With only three or four additional months of training, Regimental Combat Team 168 and 3rd Battalion, 135th Infantry Regiment, departed with Ryder for the invasion of North Africa. The few opportunities for large-scale training and the diversion of resources and equipment shortages all contributed to a generally low state of training and readiness.

⁸¹ Ankrum, *Dogfaces Who Smiled Through Tears in World War II*, 96; Lt. Col John H. Hougen, *The Story of the Famous 34th Infantry Division* (Nashville, Battery Town Press 1949), 96; 135th Infantry Regiment, *A Partial History*, Chapter IX.

⁸² Leslie W. Bailey, *Through Hell and High Water: The Wartime Memories of a Junior Combat Infantry Officer* (New York: Vantage Press, 1994), 24.

⁸³ Ankrum, *Dogfaces Who Smiled Through Tears in World War II*, 96; Eighty percent of the first ranger battalion came from the 34th. They trained under the British commandos in Scotland. The Rangers went through the most difficult training provided during the war and trained with every weapon in the inventory. They were assigned the most dangerous missions. Colonel William Darby, earned a distinguished service cross in Africa, commanded "Darby's Rangers."

⁸⁴ The 34th Division, *Historical Record of the 34th Division, In the Tunisian Campaign* (Tunisia December 1943), 2, Third Floor Archives, Combined Arms Research Library, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

Operation Torch was the first large scale offensive operation against the Axis by an Anglo-American force. It was a joint multinational operation consisting of three simultaneous amphibious operations, East, Center, and West, to seize Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, hopefully allowing for the complete annihilation of Axis forces confronting the British Eighth Army in Libya.⁸⁵ The initial objectives of the operation were to invade and occupy French North Africa to reopen the Mediterranean. Ryder's mission as the commander of Eastern Assault Force was to capture the port of Algiers and adjacent airdromes to facilitate the passage of the Eastern Task Force to Tunisia.⁸⁶

Ryder sailed for North Africa in October 1942 as the Commander of the Eastern Assault Force with his headquarters consisting of only twenty-five officers and one hundred enlisted men. He landed at Beer White at 9:00 a.m., November 8, 1942, with Regimental Combat Team 168. Only four hundred men of Combat Team 168 landed in the correct location while the remainder of the regiment landed eighteen miles south. By 4:00 p.m., Ryder and four hundred men from RCT 168 advanced toward the height that overlooked Algiers. Meanwhile, the remainder of the Eastern Assault Force was close to surrounding Algiers.

Not only was Ryder a task force commander and a division commander, he also was tasked as diplomat. Shortly after arriving to the heights, Ryder received Mr. Pindar, a staff representative from the commander of all French forces in North Africa, General Alphonse Juin, in his headquarters. Mr. Pindar asked, "Would you be interested in receiving the surrender of

⁸⁵ George F. Howe, *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1993), 15-16.

⁸⁶ Provisional Directive to Commanding General, Eastern Assault Force, September 16, 1942, General Records 1917-1949, Box 4, Ryder Papers.

Algiers?”⁸⁷ Ryder replied, “Yes, I will go anywhere to talk to anyone who wished to surrender Algiers to me.”⁸⁸ Mr. Pindar departed and returned with the American diplomat, Robert Murphy, and together with Ryder and his G2, went to Algiers to negotiate the surrender of the city. Ryder demonstrated an understanding of his operational environment, which allowed him to capture Algiers and set the conditions for the surrender of French North Africa. After a short negotiation with General Juin, Ryder allowed the French to keep their arms, colors, and remain in their barracks. By 8:00 p.m., Ryder’s forces controlled key locations in the city while French Gendarmes maintained order amongst the population. Ryder informed General Eisenhower of the surrender of the city. Over the next few days, Major General Mark Clark, Deputy Commander in Chief Allied Force, and Lieutenant General Ken Anderson, Commander 1st British Army, expanded negotiations to include all of French North Africa. The French signed the final surrender at 11:00 a.m. on November 11, 1942, exactly twenty-six years after the World War I Armistice.⁸⁹ Ryder’s role in providing light surrender terms for Algiers was critical; it allowed General Clark to negotiate the surrender of all of French North Africa.⁹⁰ Furthermore, Ryder’s initial treatment of the French allowed the Allies to add the French XIX Corps to the order of battle against the German forces in North Africa. Ryder passed command to General Anderson, and continued to function as commander of all US Forces in Algiers until January. Ryder filed two reports on his lessons learned from Operation Torch, covering each of the staff sections’

⁸⁷ Answers To Questions Submitted To General Ryder by Dr. Howe, Army Historical Division, March 18, 1949, 3, General Records 1917-1949, Box 4, Ryder Papers; Brief Report of Operations of Eastern Assault Force, November 1943, 1918-1949, Unit Histories and Campaign Reports, Box 9 Ryder Papers. No first name was given for Mr. Pindar in Ryder’s response to Dr. Howe. Pindar was Robert Murphy’s assistant.

⁸⁸ Answers To Questions Submitted To General Ryder by Dr. Howe, 3.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

pertinent aspects of joint multinational amphibious operation.⁹¹ These first lessons of amphibious landing were later used to assist the planners for the amphibious landing in Sicily and Italy.

While the lessons Ryder provided on Operation Torch were important, perhaps invaluable to future joint amphibious planning, the lost opportunity to train his division between July 1942 and January 1943 became evident in the 34th Infantry Division's initial performance once the division moved inland and faced combat proven German forces. With the landings complete and objectives secure, the 34th Infantry Division, less RCT 168 and 2nd Battalion, 133rd Regiment, moved to Tlemcen, Algeria, and conducted an additional month of training. The division's training was intensive, consisting of maneuvers and live fire ranges, but was incomplete, considering it was missing a significant portion of its combat formations.⁹² Regardless of the task organization issues, the division training was sufficient to allow it to accomplish its defense of Sbiba Gap and the withdrawal from Pichon-Hadjeb-El Aioun sector during its initial phase of the Tunisia Campaign between February and March.

The division certainly did not perform brilliantly during the campaign, but it was adequate for the conditions encountered. Preparations for its first offensive operation were seriously challenged by reapportionment of units, low strength, and inadequate division-level training in offensive operations. Between February and April 24, 1943, the division was assigned to French XIX Corps, British First Army, US II Corps, and British IX Corps. During the periods of employment with the French and British headquarters, the division was often broken up and employed inconsistently with its doctrinal organization.⁹³ For instance, Weapons Company, 133rd Infantry Regiment was attached to the French Territorial Army on border duty, and the

⁹¹ Lessons from Operation Torch, December 1942, 1918-1949, Unit Histories and Campaign Reports, Box 9, Ryder Papers.

⁹² 133rd Infantry Regiment, *Narrative History North African-Tunisian Campaign 1943* (Tunisia, June 1943), Third Floor Archives, Combined Arms Research Library, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

⁹³ The 34th Division, *Historical Record of the 34th Division, In the Tunisian Campaign*.

175th Field artillery battalion was assigned to six different organizations prior to reunification with the 34th. Each of those units represents a critical capability necessary for a RCT to conduct operations.

A more tragic example of improper employment of a RCT was the battle for Faid Pass. On January 29, 1943, Allied Force Headquarters ordered Colonel Thomas Drake, Commander of RCT 168, to report to General Anderson, Commander First British Army, who in turn ordered the Regiment to report to US II Corps. Drake was informed that portions of his combat team were already at the front under command of 1st Armored Division. By February 18, 1943, 3rd Battalion and most of 2nd Battalion, Combat Team 168 would be killed or captured defending Faid Pass, totaling 2,860 men.⁹⁴ Replacements would total 2,149 to reconstitute the regiment.⁹⁵ The loss of the 34th Infantry Division's most well-trained unit was costly, taking over a month to reconstitute and train Combat Team 168. The division could not incorporate the lessons of its Tunisian experience, or fully incorporate all of its units, complete with organic supporting arms, into its training program.

Even though Ryder could not bring his division together as a completely trained entity, he fundamentally understood what it would take for his division to win battles. He communicated it to the officers in a memo, in which he stated, "What is the offensive spirit? It has been defined as the will to win, as the desire to fight and conquer. It is the only means by which battles are won." He continued, "The offensive spirit is found in the flaming desire of the infantry man to close with the enemy with the rifle and bayonet and kill him. . . . The offensive spirit in a unit is dependent solely on leadership."⁹⁶ Ryder's message to his division was clear. He wanted his men

⁹⁴ The 34th Division, *Historical Record of the 34th Division, In the Tunisian Campaign*, 16.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁹⁶ Charles Ryder, "The Aggressive Spirit," Tunisia, March 1943, 1917-1949, General Records, Box 4, Ryder Papers.

to understand that winning the war meant winning battles, engagements, and firefights, which required his leaders to instill violence of action and aggressiveness in the infantrymen to kill the enemy.

Ryder would apply this concept of leadership in the division's next engagement, but did so in less than desirable conditions. Not only was the division unable to train adequately to incorporate past lessons, but a late change in the orders put the unit in a disadvantaged position, requiring a frontal attack. On April 4, 1943, the 34th Infantry Division was attached to British IX Corps for the attack on Fondouk Gap. After attending the Corps Commander's planning conference, Ryder developed a plan of attack on April 4, 1943. He issued Field Order Number 30, ordering two regiments in a column of battalions to attack east from the line of departure to seize and hold objectives, which would allow the British 6th Armored Division to penetrate deeper into enemy territory.⁹⁷ The order integrated and synchronized both artillery and aviation fires. The division's flanking attack was dependent on the British 128th Infantry Brigade's attack on Djebel Rhorab.

Hours before the attack, though, Lieutenant General Sir John Crocker, Commander British IX Corps, changed the corps scheme of maneuver, sending the British 128th Infantry Brigade five miles north of Djebel Rhorab. Ryder, understanding the importance of the Anglo-American coalition, did not protest. This change to the corps created the conditions for the 34th Infantry Division to conduct a frontal attack across 2,000 yards of open ground on fortified German positions, and desynchronized the supporting artillery and aviation fires. Between April 8th and 9th, the German defense held against several division frontal assaults while German artillery and anti-tank fires stopped the penetration attempt by 6th Armored Division. During the

⁹⁷ Field Order #30, Tunisia April 1943, The 34th Division, *Historical Record of the 34th Division, In the Tunisian Campaign*.

morning of April 10, 1943, the attacking regiments found the German positions empty.⁹⁸ The failure of the division to destroy the Germans infuriated General Crocker and caused Allied commanders to doubt the effectiveness of the division.

General Omar Bradley, Commander US II Corps, said, “The 34th was no better and no worse than our other II Corps divisions, but it was in need of self-confidence, the self-confidence that comes from winning battles and killing Germans.”⁹⁹ Crocker’s severe criticism of Ryder’s inexperienced and overly cautious performance resulted in General Anderson’s blacklisting the 34th Infantry Division. Bradley sided with Ryder’s perspective of the attack on Fondouk Gap, and went to Anderson to ask for the 34th. Anderson released the division to Bradley with his promise that the 34th “would take and hold their very first objective.”¹⁰⁰

On the April 15, 1943, the division moved to US II Corps’ area of operations and conducted an intensive ten-day training period, which focused on night attacks following artillery barrages and wireless training to improve communication and coordination.¹⁰¹ General Ryder was a taskmaster, and he insisted his men be the most hardened fighters.¹⁰² This was also the first time the division trained as an entire entity in its triangular configuration, as outlined in doctrine, utilizing the combined capabilities of triangularization. The most critical lesson from Fondouk Pass was coordinating artillery to allow infantry to close with German defensive positions. Colonel Robert Ward, the Commander of RCT 135, said, “Operations against Fondouk Pass, just completed, have taught invaluable lessons. These teachings will be emphasized, explained, and practiced, without delay, so that the entire command will derive the maximum benefit from

⁹⁸ The 34th Division, *Historical Record of the 34th Division, In the Tunisian Campaign*.

⁹⁹ Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier’s Story* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951), 67.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁰¹ The 34th Division, *Historical Record of the 34th Division, In the Tunisian Campaign*, 12.

¹⁰² Philip A. St John, *Thirty-Fourth Infantry Division* (Paducah, KY: Turner Pub. Co., 1989), 18.

them.”¹⁰³ The 135th Infantry Regiment conducted an aggressive training plan that met Ryder’s training focus areas. As an example of how regiments trained, Ward’s plan directed a company night attack supported by machine guns and artillery. Platoon and company teams trained with tanks. Artillery, mortars, and machine guns trained to fire on suspected enemy positions while platoons closed the last 100-200 yards to the objective. Most importantly during the training maneuvers, Ward emphasized leadership, initiative and the aggressive spirit.¹⁰⁴ The training ordered by Ryder was critical to the success of the division’s attack on Hill 609.

The Battle of Hill 609 was decisive to US II Corps because German artillery fire had previously prevented the 1st Armored Division’s advance through the pass. Bradley made good on his promise to Anderson, and ordered Ryder to Attack Hill 609, “Get me that hill and you will break up the enemy’s defenses clear across our front. Take it and no one will ever again doubt the toughness of your division.”¹⁰⁵

Bradley issued Ryder an order with three essential tasks: protect the flank of 1st Infantry Division, maintain contact with 9th Infantry Division, and assume the offensive in the zone of action.¹⁰⁶ The battle for Hill 609 was a series of mutually supporting German defensive positions consisting of Hills 407, 473, and 375, west of Hill 609; north and west were Hills 435, 490, and 461; to the south was Hill 531. Ryder issued orders to his regiments, sequentially attacking the German defensive positions, and securing his flanks so his main effort could attack and seize Hill 609. From April 25-29, the division reduced the German defenses supporting Hill 609,

¹⁰³ 135th Infantry Regiment, *A Partial History Phase IV*, 6. Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, Camp Dodge, IA.

¹⁰⁴ 135th Infantry Regiment, 6. The training program is a true copy of Training Program Number 1 issued by Col Ward inserted in the 135th Infantry History based on the 34th Division’s training memorandum 14 or 15, Third Floor Archives, Combined Arms Research Library, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

¹⁰⁵ Bradley, *A Soldier’s Story*, 85.

¹⁰⁶ Employment of 34th Infantry Division, 24 April 1943, The 34th Division, *Historical Record of the 34th Division, In the Tunisian Campaign*.

attacking two regiments abreast, supported by all of the division's artillery. On the 29th, Bradley offered Ryder seventeen Sherman tanks for Ryder's final attack on Hill 609. Field Order 37 ordered 135th Infantry with Company I, 1st Armored Regiment, and 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry, to seize and hold Hill 609.¹⁰⁷ By the evening of the 30th, the infantry and armor teams seized the northwest slope of Hill 609. The division defeated several German counterattacks with massed artillery fire, causing them heavy casualties. By noon on May 1, 1943, the division completed their combined infantry and armor attack and secured the objective, unhinging the entire German defense and allowing 1st Armor Division to penetrate into the coastal plain.

Summary and Analysis

The Battle for Hill 609 brought together Ryder's twenty-seven year career of education and experience. The 34th Infantry Division was a partially trained, manned, and equipped organization when it mobilized for World War II, spending eleven months training in Louisiana as a square division before being triangularized and then departing for Ireland. Personnel turnover due to age limit restriction, incompetence, and health reasons caused trained personnel to be replaced with new, untrained soldiers and leaders. While in Ireland, maneuver space continued to hamper the division's ability to train as an entire formation. Troop labor and equipment shortages made collective training from platoon to battalion more difficult. Ryder spent roughly a month training his division before departing to plan and execute Operation Torch. It was not until January 1943 that most of his division came together to conduct division level training; however, it was not until April 1943 that his entire division came together to train as a combined arms team. Circumstances and timing conspired against the 34th Division and Ryder. However,

¹⁰⁷ Field Order #37, Tunisia, April 1943, The 34th Division, Historical Record of the 34th Division, In the Tunisian Campaign.

Ryder's leadership, education, and operational experiences turned a blacklisted division into a successful one.

Ryder drew on his World War I training experience to harden his division, his education to destroy Germany's fielded force and teach the division to fight as a combined arms team. His education at the US Army War College taught him that his division needed to destroy the German Army for his commander to achieve national aims. It also taught him contemporary conflict had a faster tempo enabled by technological developments of mechanized and motorized formations supported by aviation and artillery. This change in tempo, therefore, required him to mass his combat power violently and decisively on the enemy's defensive position before they could react. CGSS, through lectures reinforced through map maneuvers and map problems, taught him how to employ, move, and sustain a division. He learned how to communicate his plans through orders that provided subordinate commanders with sufficient direction to accomplish the mission. Ryder implemented an aggressive training program that resulted in a team capable of executing combined arms maneuver against a veteran German army. His training program focused on night attacks, followed by rolling barrages, and utilizing armor and infantry teams, which resulted in the division's successful attack.

Ryder communicated his mission and intent to attack Hill 609 in Division Field Orders 36 through 38, which were one-page, mission-type orders with one page supporting graphics; the artillery annexes were single pages, which supported the infantry maneuver.¹⁰⁸ While the five-paragraph format used during that era did not provide a section for commanders intent, his field orders communicated clearly by simply stating, "Attack in zone of action." The clarity of the orders allowed the regimental commanders to develop executable plans to close with and destroy the German defenders, while maintaining flexibility to repel counter attacks with overwhelming

¹⁰⁸ The 34th Division, *Historical Record of the 34th Division, In the Tunisian Campaign*.

indirect fire support. Finally, Bradley issued a clear mission type order, which allowed Ryder to employ his division according to the 1941 FM 100-5, which was a reflection of what was learned through the triangularization process. The significant difference between the attack on Fondouk Pass and Hill 609 was that Ryder was able to attack using a division trained in triangularization doctrine and employing the organization consistent with its strengths. Ryder reduced the hostile outposts surrounding Hill 609, secured his flanks, broke through the fortifications at the most favorable point, and used an envelopment to isolate the German main defensive position.¹⁰⁹ Ernie Pyle, an imbedded reporter, summarized the division's performance best when he stated, "The American Thirty-Fourth Division, in magnificent offensive operations, unhinged the whole German line and made possible the entire quick victory."¹¹⁰

Conclusion

At the conclusion of the Tunisian Campaign, Bradley confirmed Ryder's reputation as a skilled tactician, noting that he lacked the dash of Terry Allen by subordinating himself to the division.¹¹¹ Ryder and the 34th Division, with combat operations in North Africa behind them went into another training cycle. A few months later, Fifth Army ordered the division to Italy early to reinforce the beachhead at Salerno. Ryder and the division served together until July 1944 when he relinquished command. In a personal letter from General Mark Clark to Ryder, Clark expressed his regret to see him leave his division and Fifth Army, and thanked him for his

¹⁰⁹ War Department, FM 100-5, *Operations* May 22, 1941, Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1941.

¹¹⁰ Ernie Pyle, "Every Yank Outfit Did a Great Job" The 34th Division, *Historical Record of the 34th Division, In the Tunisian Campaign* (Tunisia: December 1943), Section XIII – Part 4, Third Floor Archives, Combined Arms Research Library, Ft. Leavenworth, KS.

¹¹¹ Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 100. Bradley thought Allen excelled in leading the 1st Division. Allen championed his Division, although, at the expense of other divisions and his peers. He was charismatic leader and army rebel who disapproved of instilling discipline in his unit, which created friction with Bradley and senior leadership.

leadership during the Italian campaign. General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, recognized Ryder's performance as a division commander. Before he even returned from the Italian theater of operations, Marshall ordered Ryder to take leave, and selected him for corps command. By September of 1944, Ryder was in route to Hawaii to command US IX Corps.¹¹²

This monograph developed the educational and operational experiences of MG Charles Ryder, a World War II division commander. By the end of the war in 1945, he had served for thirty years in the Army. He gave his country a lifetime of service, starting at the US Military Academy. His experience and education at the Academy provided him the knowledge, skills, and abilities to lead men in the trenches during World War I. The first American division to land in France, the 1st Division was raw, untrained, and untested, cobbled together from units across the United States. After months of training in France that broadened his perspective of the Academy's lessons of modern warfare, he was exposed to industrialized warfare, complete with trenches, barbed wire, massive artillery barrages, and machine guns. He led men 'over the top' at Soissons, where only forty men of his company survived and he was wounded. He returned to lead his battalion months later during the second phase of Meuse-Argonne offensive, to seize Hill 272, the division's decisive operation. Better supported with machine guns and artillery, his casualties were significantly less. Training and experience forged 1st Division into a veteran fighting force. Ryder experienced the transformation from the beginning, and would find himself in a similar situation twenty-seven years later. When the war ended, the Army downsized its large formation.

Ryder's best experiences came from the Army's professional military education schools. Ryder attended both the Command and General Staff School and the US Army War College. CGSS taught Ryder about division operations, training, and logistics. This education was his only significant exposure to a division prior to commanding the 34th. In light of his World War I

¹¹² Memorandum for General Handy, Morning Conference, July 11, 1944, Box 70, Folder 4, The George C. Marshall Foundation, Lexington VA.

experience, his education helped shape his understanding of large unit training and employment. Leadership case studies informed his perspective on officership and combat leadership. The US Army War College added to his understanding of war and warfare. The conclusions he drew when he analyzed historical case studies illuminated the importance of strategic aims and the linkages to operations. Critical to this understanding was the destruction of the enemy forces and resources. Ryder studied operational art viewed through developments in technology and understood that warfare was evolving; warfare's tempo, shock, and firepower increased operational reach and lethality. With his experiences in World War I interwoven with his interwar education, he went to war as a commander of a National Guard division from Minnesota, Iowa, and the Dakotas.

His experiences as the 34th Infantry Division commander were eerily similar to his experiences in World War I. In both instances, he commanded an undertrained, underequipped unit, and was thrown into the breach against a veteran German Army. It was his personal leadership and ability to assess and train that transformed a raw division into veteran one. ADRP 6-22 defines leadership as "the process of influencing people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to improve the organization."¹¹³ Consistent with contemporary doctrine, Ryder's memorandum to his officers on the offensive spirit, combined with his training program, improved the 34th's performance in combat. ADRP 6-22 says, "Improving for the future means capturing and acting on important lesson of ongoing and completed projects and mission."¹¹⁴ Analyzing his division's shortcomings in combat allowed him to conduct retraining in those areas. In France during World War I, he was the recipient of tough, realistic training that improved his battalion's ability to fight and win; as a result, his battalion seized Hill 272. As a

¹¹³ ADRP 6-22, 1-1.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 1-2.

division commander, he imposed tough, realistic training, which improved his division's performance in combat. Interwoven into his message and training program, were twenty-seven years of education and experience. He exercised command in a manner that contemporary commanders should aspire to. His division orders were one-page long with supporting graphics that gave commanders task and purpose, allowing for disciplined initiative. He also maintained his division's task organization, allowing his regimental commanders to employ their organic fires and weapon companies. Ensuring subordinate commanders have the capabilities to accomplish the mission is what ADRP 6-22 requires of organizational of leaders; they must understand and effectively employ systems and synchronize operations.¹¹⁵

Ryder made the most of his interwar education and experiences. His performance as a division commander demonstrated understanding from the lessons of his education. CGSS taught him how to fight and win at division and above levels, exposing him to leadership. King's lecture on leadership provides insight into what mattered to senior leaders in 1925. His speech explained the need for leaders to have character, knowledge, and intelligence. Brigadier General Christopher P. Hughes, the Deputy Commanding General for US Army Combined Arms Center, Leader Development and Education, said at the School of Advanced Military Studies' formal, "I would take character over competence."¹¹⁶ ADRP 6-22 says, "Character is a person's moral and ethical qualities, helps determine what is right."¹¹⁷ Regardless of the era or conflict, senior leaders expect officers of character to exude positive leadership. King also lectured that a leader needed intelligence to use knowledge. ADPR 6-22 states, "An Army leader's intelligence draws from the conceptual abilities, and is applied to one's duties and responsibilities." The character of a leader

¹¹⁵ ADRP 6-22, 10-8.

¹¹⁶ Brigadier General Christopher P. Hughes, "Keynote Speech" (lecture, School of Advanced Military Studies Formal, Kansas City, KS, April 2014).

¹¹⁷ ADRP 6-22, 1-5.

resides in his values, combined with intellect and knowledge, allows a leader to provide purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission. Finally, US Army War College expanded his intellect by incorporating the social, political, and economic factors that influence war. His campaign analysis afforded him the insights into the reasons nations go to war, and how military objectives support national objectives. Then he critically analyzed developments in technology that would influence future warfare. These two concepts taken together prepared him for division command in World War II.

Ryder's leadership competence developed from a balanced combination of institutional schooling, realistic training, and professional experience.¹¹⁸ He mastered individual competencies by building on his previous education, training, and experience, and applying them to current problems. Upon assuming command of the 34th Infantry Division, he drew upon twenty-seven years of education and experience to command the "Red Bulls" successfully.

¹¹⁸ ADRP 6-22, 1-5.

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