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INFLUENCES AND MILITARY THEORIES**

Turner, Alex C.

Monterey, CA; Naval Postgraduate School

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# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

## THESIS

**DOUGLAS MACARTHUR: STRATEGIC INFLUENCES  
AND MILITARY THEORIES**

by

Alex C. Turner

September 2018

Thesis Advisor:  
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**DOUGLAS MACARTHUR: STRATEGIC INFLUENCES AND MILITARY  
THEORIES**

Alex C. Turner  
Lieutenant, United States Navy  
BS, U.S. Naval Academy, 2011

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES  
(STRATEGIC STUDIES)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL  
September 2018**

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## **ABSTRACT**

How did Douglas MacArthur's experiences throughout his career influence his strategic methodology and shape his potential theories on the conduct of war? This thesis explores MacArthur's life and military career to determine the foundation behind the man and identify critical areas. His wartime experience is unlike any other in history, but also his military education, and his tours as the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point, and as Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, are part of the story surrounding MacArthur. This thesis is an attempt to remain objective and unbiased about one of the more polarizing characters of the United States. His theories of the three levels of warfare: strategic, operational, and tactical, and his own theories on personal leadership, have been pulled from his career experiences and compared to the standards in military theory: Baron Antoine-Henri De Jomini and Carl von Clausewitz. MacArthur's theories on war are as relevant today as they were against the enemies of yesterday. Shortly after his return to the United States, MacArthur gave an address to a joint session of Congress. He said, "Once war is forced upon us, there is no other alternative than to apply every available means to bring it to a swift end. War's very object is victory—not prolonged indecision. In war, indeed, there can be no substitute for victory." This thesis proves this theory needs to be considered today during America's longest conflict.



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AEF	American Expeditionary Force
CCC	Civilian Conservation Corps
CINCFE	Commander in Chief, Far East Command
DSC	Distinguished Service Cross
DSM	Distinguished Service Medal
<i>FRUS</i>	Foreign Relations of the United States
GHQ	General Headquarters
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff
KMAG	United States Military Advisory Group to the Republic of Korea
NSC	National Security Council
PRO	Public Relations Officer
ROK	Republic of Korea
ROTC	Reserve Officer Training Corps
SCAP	Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, Japan
SWPA	Southwest Pacific Area
UN	United Nations
USAFFE	United States Armed Forces Far East
USMA	United States Military Academy
USNA	United States Naval Academy
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WPO-3	War Plan Orange - 3
WDOP-R5	War Department Operational Plan - Rainbow 5
WPD	War Plans Department
WTMA	West Texas Military Academy

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Sometimes it is the order one disobeys that makes one famous.<sup>1</sup>

Douglas MacArthur was a complex man. His theories and methods often contradict rational military doctrine. He was a remarkable soldier who led his men to victory in WWI, but he was also difficult to control and openly spoke his mind when denied something he wanted. He denied orders or augmented them to suit his style, but the choices he made worked in his favor. He was prideful and purposefully set himself apart from his peers in order to outshine them. He sought recognition and fame, often regardless of the consequences. However, these tactics can be attributed to his success as a Soldier's General. He was adored by his classmates at West Point, beloved by his men in the trenches of WWI, and revered as a combat hero by his peers *and* superiors. His success added to his own image of personal exultance, and helped shape the MacArthur the public remembers from WWII. Despite his exceptional traits, or possibly because of them, Franklin Roosevelt once called MacArthur "The most dangerous man in America."<sup>2</sup>

Graduating from West Point in 1903, MacArthur's career spanned half a century, thrusting him into the heart of the most challenging and transformative times of the 20th century. Throughout his fifty-two-year-long army career, he developed theories on how war should be conducted. These theories can be categorized into four different elements, three of which reflect what modern strategic leaders identify as the levels of war in descending order: strategic, operational, and tactical. MacArthur also had personal theories on command and leadership. How did his experiences throughout his career shape these theories on the conduct of war? What shaped Douglas MacArthur's strategic views?

Douglas MacArthur is also a controversial figure among historians. Numerous historical and biographical works exist on MacArthur, yet none of these studies provides a

---

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Herman, *Douglas MacArthur: American Warrior* (New York: Random House, 2016), 129.

<sup>2</sup> D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur: 1880–1941 (Volume I)* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), 411.

critical examination of his theories and influences. By highlighting MacArthur's influences concurrently with the identification of his theories, a comparison can be made to the two most influential military theorists: Antoine Henri de Jomini and Carl von Clausewitz. These two timeless theorists represent how the United States conducted warfare during MacArthur's lifetime. Jomini was followed by American military strategists through World War I and shortly after the armistice was signed, there was a transition to Clausewitz.<sup>3</sup> Clausewitz was then adopted as the model for how the United States fought in the Second World War and beyond. The United States has been at war for the past seventeen years, and MacArthur's theories have potential to change the landscape and reshape how military strategists weigh their decisions. These biographies, memoirs, oral histories, recollections, and primary documents present his theories. Thus, this thesis aims to use MacArthur's theories from yesterday and the current war's mistakes, to provide some points of consideration for the officer corps of tomorrow.

The United States military machine believes in the Clausewitzian principle that "war is merely the continuation of policy by other means."<sup>4</sup> This principle evokes the precedent that the military is subordinate to the civilian leadership. MacArthur had a different interpretation that could influence how the United States determines when and how to engage in a conflict. He believed that in times of war the military should determine policy and drive strategy. In his farewell address to Congress on April 19, 1951, he proclaimed "War's very object is victory—not prolonged indecision. In war, indeed, there is no substitute for victory."<sup>5</sup> Ensuring there is a detailed plan for victory prior to the committal of forces overseas is vital when planning strategy, and today's policymakers are struggling to understand that concept. A limited war, fought with limited means, with no plan for victory, is a recipe for a protracted conflict fraught with public discontent.

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<sup>3</sup> Christopher Bassford, "Jomini and Clausewitz: Their Interaction," February 26, 1993, accessed July 14, 2018, <https://www.clausewitz.com/readings/Bassford/Jomini/JOMINIX.htm#CONC>.

<sup>4</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 87.

<sup>5</sup> Douglas MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks: Public Papers and Speeches of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1965), 251.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The first source to consult is Eugene Rasor's *Historiography* as it identifies important primary and secondary sources.<sup>6</sup> After that, the first biography to examine is D. Clayton James' seminal three-volume set, *The Years of MacArthur*, which provides a comprehensive examination of his life and career.<sup>7</sup> Additional invaluable biographers include William Manchester, Geoffrey Perret and Arthur Herman, whose works provide complete accounts of MacArthur's entire life and career.<sup>8</sup> Their studies all cover aspects of Douglas's father, Arthur, a critically important figure in MacArthur's development ignored by his other biographers. Arthur's attempts to achieve an appointment to West Point in 1862, his participation in the U.S. Civil War as a soldier in the 24th Wisconsin Volunteer Regiment (during which he won the Medal of Honor at Missionary Ridge in 1863), his China Memorandum of 1882, and his tenure as the first counter-insurgency officer of the United States military in the Philippines at the turn of the century, exerted a great influence on his young son. There were everlasting experiences that when reflecting upon Arthur's death, Douglas MacArthur stated, "My whole world changed that night. Never have I been able to heal the wound in my heart."<sup>9</sup>

Monographs by Mark Perry, Russell Buhite, Frazier Hunt and Courtney Whitney focus on particular areas of MacArthur's career.<sup>10</sup> For example, Mark Perry's book follows MacArthur from 1930, when he was Chief of Staff of the Army, to 1945, and the end of

---

<sup>6</sup> Eugene Rasor, *General Douglas MacArthur, 1880–1964: Historiography and Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994).

<sup>7</sup> James, *Years Vol. I; 1941-1945 (Volume II)* (1975); *1945–1964 (Volume III)* (1985).

<sup>8</sup> William Manchester, *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur, 1880–1964*, 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1978); Geoffrey Perret, *Old Soldiers Never Die: The Life of Douglas MacArthur*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 1996); Arthur Herman, *Douglas MacArthur: American Warrior*, 1st ed. (New York: Random House, 2016).

<sup>9</sup> Douglas MacArthur, *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 36.

<sup>10</sup> Mark Perry, *Most Dangerous Man in America: The Making of Douglas MacArthur* (Philadelphia: Basic Books, 2015); Russell D. Buhite, *Douglas MacArthur: Statecraft and Stagecraft in East Asian Policy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2008) hereto referred to as *Statecraft and Stagecraft*; Frazier Hunt, *The Untold Story of Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Manor Books, 1977); Courtney Whitney, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History* (New York: Knopf Publishers, 1955).

World War II. Perry is particularly useful during his account of MacArthur at Fort Myer in the early 1930s and the works MacArthur studied. Covering a similar period, Russell Buhite views MacArthur through a disapproving lens in an analysis of the way he was perceived by his subordinates, his superiors, Washington, and the public. In comparison, Rasor describes Frazier Hunt and Courtney Whitney as hagiographers.<sup>11</sup> According to several authors, Whitney's account was heavily influenced by MacArthur himself, who helped write it, so a hagiographic account is almost expected. Yet, both provide counter-arguments to other views, even if one must treat them carefully.

Primary sources exist for the entire career of Arthur MacArthur. Letters written by Arthur MacArthur Sr. collected by the National Archives provide sources for the Civil War, such as the letters Arthur MacArthur Sr. wrote to President Lincoln in the 1860s, are available. There are letters, written in 1890, from Arthur's Civil War comrades to the War Department, advocating Arthur's heroic actions at Missionary Ridge in 1863.

Douglas's career has been documented since his birth in 1880. The *Foreign Relations of the United States* are an excellent digitized primary source. A staggering amount of information is there including top secret documents about the Joint Chiefs of Staff's plan for the defeat of Japan, MacArthur's correspondence with President Roosevelt and General Marshall, the correspondence of Manuel Quezon to President Roosevelt and MacArthur's own Chief of Staff's report on the Pacific Campaigns.

Key sources during his military career include the memoirs of people who knew and worked with MacArthur. Of course, memoirs need to be used with caution due to personal biases and the amount of time that has passed between the events and the memoirs' writing. An example is George Kenney's *The MacArthur I Know*. The book's first sentence warns the reader "I am a MacArthur man."<sup>12</sup> MacArthur's own memoirs, *Reminiscences*, require scrutiny. The historiographer Rasor cautions that MacArthur's *Reminiscences* are problematic because as a hubristic individual, MacArthur was quick to dismiss the naysayers and use his own prose to justify his actions in an effort to re-write

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<sup>11</sup> Rasor, *Historiography*, 18.

<sup>12</sup> George C. Kenney, *The MacArthur I Know* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1951), 9.

the narrative.<sup>13</sup> His memoirs do, however, provide support throughout the research due to MacArthur's excellent memory, his ability to recall specific events and how they happened according to him.

MacArthur did not write a journal, nor did he ever write anything down until his own autobiography in the 1960s. Keeping a library of the men closest to him throughout his career and researching their memoirs can assist in the foundation building of understanding who MacArthur was during critical times in his life, while acting as a measuring stick for MacArthur's autobiography, for example: William Ganoe (Chief of Staff when MacArthur was Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy), Paul Rogers (stenographer from 1941–1945), George C. Kenney (Air Boss during WWII), Charles Willoughby (Intelligence Officer in WWII and Korea), Stephen Chamberlain (Head of Plans, WWII), Doc Roger Egeberg (personal physician), and Whitney (Chief of Staff, 1945–1951).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Rasor, *Historiography*, 14.

<sup>14</sup> William A. Ganoe, *MacArthur Close-Up* (New York: Vantage Press, 1962); Paul P. Rogers, *The Good Years: MacArthur and Sutherland* (New York: Praeger, 1990); Paul P. Rogers, *The Bitter Years: MacArthur and Sutherland* (New York: Praeger, 1991); George C. Kenney, *The MacArthur I Know*; Charles A. Willoughby, *Maneuver in War* (Pennsylvania: Telegraph Press, 1939); Charles Willoughby and John Chamberlain, *MacArthur 1941–1951* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1954); Roger Olaf Egeberg, *The General: MacArthur and the Man He Called "Doc"* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1983); Whitney, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History*.

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### **III. THE SOLDIER'S GENERAL: DOUGLAS MACARTHUR 1880–1918**

Be self-confident, self-reliant, and even if you don't make it, you will know you have done your best. Now, go to it.<sup>15</sup>

Douglas MacArthur was born on January 26, 1880, in Little Rock, Arkansas. What does this date signify when it comes to the pursuit of identifying his theories and the influences behind MacArthur's strategic thinking? MacArthur had a long career. At the time of his birth, the flag of the United States only had thirty-eight stars. He was thirty-seven-years-old during America's involvement in World War One and nearing fifty on "Black Tuesday" in October 1929. He was sixty-four when the Allies crossed the English Channel during Operation Overlord, and seventy when the Korean War began. He lived an extraordinary life, covering an immense span of time, which brought him to the doorstep of history on several occasions.

This chapter will cover MacArthur's early years through 1918, which will establish a foundation. These thirty-eight years are the bedrock of MacArthur's influences and helped create the basis of his military theories expressed throughout his career. An investigation into the role of his family, military education, and experience, especially in WWI, is vital for understanding MacArthur. Several themes will be dissected: Arthur MacArthur's influence on Douglas, the role of his mother, West Texas Military Academy, West Point, command at Leavenworth, being assigned to the General Staff, and leading his forces in World War I. This chapter will introduce MacArthur and the beginnings of the most complex character in American military history.

The story begins fifty-five years before Douglas's birth, when Douglas's grandfather Arthur MacArthur arrived from Scotland with his family and settled in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts.<sup>16</sup> Arthur attended Wesleyan University, studied law in

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<sup>15</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 47.

<sup>16</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 7.



New York and established a practice in Massachusetts.<sup>17</sup> In 1844, Arthur married Aurelia Belcher and a year later gave birth to Douglas's father, Arthur MacArthur Jr. The following year, the MacArthurs moved to Milwaukee. After operating in Wisconsin state politics for twenty years, the president nominated Arthur Sr. to a position on the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia, where he resided until his death in 1896.

The key influences that Arthur MacArthur had over his son were the influence of a well-placed letter and the grand stories Douglas was told of his father. Douglas's grandfather believed there was no problem a quick letter or visit could not fix, and he frequently entangled himself in the career of his son, imbuing that characteristic upon Arthur, who followed the model with Douglas. "Why wait and do nothing when a brief but well-placed letter, a friendly meeting over lunch or after dinner, or a kind word from one powerful friend to another could help to speed up the inevitable?"<sup>18</sup> In 1862, Arthur Sr. tried to garner an appointment for his son to the United States Military Academy by writing to President Lincoln. Although Lincoln refused the appointment, it was a lesson that was passed down to future MacArthurs, as will be seen in Douglas's military career. After being refused to the Military Academy, Arthur joined the 24th Wisconsin Volunteer Regiment under the Union banner to fight the Confederate south.<sup>19</sup>

In the 1890s, the old Arthur Sr. would bring young Douglas and his brother next to him to tell the tales of their father's heroic accomplishments during the Civil War. "It was his grandfather who turned a rather stuffy and unapproachable father into a figure of heroic, even epic proportions."<sup>20</sup> This nurture of premature adulation for his father may have influenced Douglas, or possibly encouraged him to pursue an officer's career in the military. In *American Caesar*, Manchester describes the Douglas's intense feelings toward his father and their lasting effect. "No adolescent rebellion for him; all his life he would

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<sup>17</sup> James, 8.

<sup>18</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 11.

<sup>19</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 13.

<sup>20</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 26.

seek to be a man-at-arms in whom his father could have exulted.”<sup>21</sup> There is no doubt MacArthur revered his father.

Arthur often told the young MacArthurs how their father won the Medal of Honor at Missionary Ridge in Chattanooga, Tennessee. In November 1863, after witnessing the color bearer of the 24th fall, Arthur Jr. ran and grabbed the flag. He charged to the top of the hill and planted his Regiment’s standard. His actions shifted the tide of battle and for that, was nominated for the Medal of Honor. Memories of Arthur’s charge up Missionary Ridge remained with Douglas throughout his career.

Douglas MacArthur’s bravery helped develop his reputation of being without fear of death in combat. He was often quoted saying things like “the Japanese haven’t yet made the bomb with my name on it,” and when enemy planes were making strafing runs, he calmly remarked, “These things aren’t going to hit me.”<sup>22</sup> He did not seek cover as shells exploded around him in WWI, nor as bombs were falling all around in WWII. He sought glory, often with reckless abandon, to prove himself as a warrior and a leader. When reflecting on this type of behavior, MacArthur wrote: “Leadership is often crystallized in some sort of public gesture.... In war, to be effective it must take the form of a fraternity of danger welded between a commander and his troops by the common denominator of sharing the risk of sudden death.”<sup>23</sup> Clearly, he abided by that doctrine. In WWI he went on midnight trench raids without carrying a weapon. During the invasion of Leyte in 1944, MacArthur landed in the third assault wave.<sup>24</sup> He asked the driver of his landing craft where the heaviest fighting was, the driver replied: Red Beach. MacArthur then ordered the coxswain directly to Red Beach.<sup>25</sup> It is unclear whether his father’s Medal of Honor added to Douglas’s lack of proper risk assessment, or if that was his character from the

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<sup>21</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 44.

<sup>22</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 348, 716.

<sup>23</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 131.

<sup>24</sup> MacArthur, 216.

<sup>25</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 537; MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 216.

start. Either way, Arthur's memory built by his grandfather's stories, remained a fixture of Douglas for his entire life.

Arthur MacArthur's personal reconnaissance missions during the Civil War influenced an Army Field Manual and taught Douglas appropriate methods for understanding a battlefield.<sup>26</sup> During the Atlanta campaign in the Civil War, Arthur was able to reconnoiter the enemy while maintaining control and order within his own forces. It was "an exception to the general rule of severe losses on special reconnaissance."<sup>27</sup> Arthur MacArthur's textbook mission potentially influenced the young Douglas as witnessed throughout his combat career and the importance he placed on reconnaissance.

Douglas's father's influence can be seen in a number of key areas: combat in WWI, Superintendent of the United States Military Academy, and the campaign for the Philippines in WWII. Prior to WWI, Douglas MacArthur went on special reconnaissance in Mexico, which many believed deserved the awarding of the Medal of Honor. Throughout the Great War, just as his father did in Atlanta, MacArthur conducted silent surveys of the enemy, often against orders of his superiors. When appointed Superintendent of West Point he used personal reconnaissance missions to learn what and how the cadets were learning during class. His Chief of Staff, William Ganoe, recalls asking him how he was going to be able to make intelligent decisions about the Military Academy? MacArthur responded, "Chief, I am determined to enter the Academic buildings, see with my own eyes and hear with my own ears."<sup>28</sup>

He maintained this primacy of knowledge of the enemy, taught by his father, as Supreme Commander in WWII. During the operation to retake Manila in February 1945, MacArthur, made countless trips to the front, during which he and his staff would "get out and walk until we found somebody who could tell us what the General wanted to know. That was: the tenacity of the enemy, his apparent strength, his firing power, and of course,

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<sup>26</sup> Arthur MacArthur's reconnaissance missions also influenced an Army Field Manual. A chapter in Arthur L. Wagner, *The Service and Security of Information*, 3rd ed. (Kansas City: Hudson-Kimberly Publishing, 1896), deals directly with Arthur's actions during the Atlanta campaign. See pages 107–117.

<sup>27</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 15.

<sup>28</sup> Ganoe, *MacArthur Close-Up*, 40.

ours; what our immediate objective was and where we hoped to be in the next two or three days.”<sup>29</sup> MacArthur described the importance of knowing the terrain in his memoirs: “I knew every wrinkle of the terrain, every foot of the topography. I was able to avoid many a pitfall, to circumvent many an enemy trap. To have saved lives in this way is perhaps my most gratifying memory of the war.”<sup>30</sup>

After the Civil War, Captain Arthur MacArthur Jr. and his wife, Mary Pinckney MacArthur, “Pinky,” started a family: beginning with Arthur III, born in 1876, Malcolm, 1878, and Douglas in 1880. However, grief struck when in 1883, Malcolm succumbed to measles and died.<sup>31</sup> MacArthur recalled the effect Malcolm’s premature death had upon his mother “His loss was a terrible blow to my mother, but it seemed to only increase her devotion to Arthur and myself. This tie was to become the dominant factors of my life.”<sup>32</sup>

Pinky played an important role in MacArthur’s life and it began with Douglas’s introduction to education under his mother’s tutelage. Hampered by lack of formal teaching tools, Pinky focused on instilling moral principles on her boys from a young age. Douglas described it as “a sense of obligation. We were to do what was right no matter what the personal sacrifice might be. Our country was always to come first. Two things we must never do: never lie, never tattle.”<sup>33</sup> MacArthur’s mother had purposefully shifted her focus to her youngest son and would not let him down for years to come. The MacArthurs shifted from base to base along the frontier where Douglas was raised until, in 1889, Arthur received orders to report to Washington as assistant adjutant general. It was here Pinky’s priority on education became an opportunity for Douglas when he joined his first military institution: West Texas Military Academy (WTMA).

Beginning with Pinky’s basic teachings and then WTMA, Douglas MacArthur’s education was a critical enabler for Douglas. Each biographer is clear that West Texas

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<sup>29</sup> Egeberg, *The General: MacArthur and the Man He Called “Doc,”* 124.

<sup>30</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 246.

<sup>31</sup> Perret, *Old Soldiers*, 15.

<sup>32</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 14.

<sup>33</sup> MacArthur, 15.

Military Academy is where *it* began for Douglas. *It* was the fire, the drive, the passion, the penetrating focus, the zeal for more, and the courage to pursue a military career began. Studies became a personal challenge, but being the best academically was not so much a goal, as it was personally demanded. WTMA was a four-year program, and by the time he graduated, there was little he had not accomplished. The small corps of cadets' education "included classes, chapel services, military drills, and athletics."<sup>34</sup> Upon graduation in 1897, he was the valedictorian by a wide margin and had successfully matured into a young and promising adult. Looking back on his experience at West Texas six decades later, Douglas put it simply, "This is where I started."<sup>35</sup>

But WTMA was only the start and did not sate his real goal: attending the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, what Douglas described as "the greatest military academy in the world."<sup>36</sup> Upon Arthur's transfer to the Department of the Dakotas in winter of 1897–98, Douglas and his mother moved back to Milwaukee where Douglas studied incessantly for the upcoming entrance exam to West Point. The young MacArthur tackled every subject with passion and vigor with his mother helping him at every opportunity. The day of the exam, as Douglas walked up the steps to take the exam, his mother's words followed him, "Doug, you'll win if you don't lose your nerve. You must believe in yourself, my son, or no one will believe in you. Be self-confident, self-reliant, and even if you don't make it, you will know you have done your best. Now, go to it."<sup>37</sup> MacArthur passed with an average of 93.3%, the next best was 77.9.<sup>38</sup>

MacArthur's biographers all describe MacArthur's focus more on what MacArthur accomplished at West Point, rather than the impact it had on him. Even MacArthur himself only spends four pages on it in his memoirs. Yet, the importance of this institution should not be understated, because it *did* help shape MacArthur into a gifted Army officer. West

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<sup>34</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 59.

<sup>35</sup> James, 61.

<sup>36</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 18. - I attended the United States Naval Academy. I do not share the same opinion of young, Douglas MacArthur.

<sup>37</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 47.

<sup>38</sup> Hunt, *The Untold Story of Douglas MacArthur*, 17.

Point illustrated to him the power of loyalty, helped add to the already exalted image of his father, and allowed him to reap the rewards of hard work. WTMA exposed him to the spirit de corps of the military; however, West Point baptized him in Army culture. He had to strive to overcome the natural deficits awaiting him at the Military Academy. He understood he was not the most talented, most athletic, or even the smartest cadet. West Point brought out the best in MacArthur. He strove for greatness in all his actions and was a model cadet. He was rigorous in his studies, rewarding him with first in class academically. He understood the rigidity of the framework around the Academy and knew when rules could be bent to serve a greater purpose. West Point became a home for him, and coming from someone who moved from post to post with his family, the Academy meant sanctuary to him. It left its mark till his death. In a speech given to the Corps of Cadets, in 1962, two years before he died, he ended it with “my last conscious thoughts will be of the corps, and the corps, and the corps.”<sup>39</sup>

During his freshman year (“Plebe Year”), MacArthur began to understand loyalty as a virtue. MacArthur was brutally hazed as a Plebe because of his father’s impressive exploits in the Philippines at the time, being the son of a general, and the fact that his mother was staying in a boarding house down the street. Yes, hazing was a culture at the Academy, but MacArthur was particularly singled out. This culture eventually caused a congressional investigation after a Cadet died due to the torturous rituals that happened behind the walls at West Point. MacArthur was called for questioning in Congress. This experience firmly instilled the power of loyalty and its usefulness. Congressmen interrogated MacArthur, exhorting him to relinquish the names of his classmates. MacArthur’s refusal to divulge the names left the Congressmen no choice but to order the release of the names on pain of expulsion from the Academy. In response “I grew weak and pleaded for mercy: that my whole life’s hope lay in being an officer; that always I had been with the colors; that my father, then on the battleline 10,000 miles away, was their comrade-in-arms of the Civil and Indian wars; that I would do anything in the way of

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<sup>39</sup> MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks*, 358.

punishment, but not to strip me of my uniform.”<sup>40</sup> The investigation was able to procure the names through other means and MacArthur was allowed to return the Academy. MacArthur was loyal to his classmates. In response, the Corps accepted him with open arms. As Perret describes, the Corps was “proud of him, and they would practically give him the glad hand after that.”<sup>41</sup> MacArthur was asked once “What kind of qualities would you like to find in men working with or for you?” His response included the three most important qualities: “loyalty came first, very much so—loyalty to his superior, loyalty to the cause that both are fighting for, or working for, loyalty to the people down the line as well as loyalty upwards.” Then came courage, and lastly intelligence, but most of all, loyalty.<sup>42</sup>

For the rest of his career, MacArthur would continuously express loyalty to his staff, and in response expect similar loyalty in return. An example of this can be found in his willingness to delegate to his subordinates. “MacArthur was an instinctive delegator, a habit that found not only saved time but won trust and loyalty. He always delegated with a specific goal in mind—not to raise anyone’s self-esteem or to groom successors (few on his staffs ever qualified for either category) but to free himself to think about the bigger picture.”<sup>43</sup> Just like any good leader, he purposefully entrusted his staff to accomplish tasks assigned. General George Kenney offers further insight after meeting with MacArthur in World War II to discuss resupply missions. It was winter, 1942, and the Buna campaign was underway. “‘George,’ said the General, ‘the Fifth Air Force hasn’t failed me yet and I believe they can work themselves out of any trouble they run into. I’m not worried about it anymore [sic].’... He certainly stuck by me that day when the chips were down. I liked to work for Douglas MacArthur and I think he knew it.”<sup>44</sup> Overshadowed by the positive results, a negative symptom of MacArthur’s belief in his subordinates was his willingness

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<sup>40</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 26.

<sup>41</sup> Perret, *Old Soldiers*, 37.

<sup>42</sup> Egeberg, *The General: MacArthur and the Man He Called “Doc,”* 127.

<sup>43</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 100.

<sup>44</sup> George C. Kenney, *General Kenney Reports: A Personal History of the Pacific War*, USAF Warrior Studies (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, U.S. Air Force, 1987), 145–46.

to forgive and forget mistakes. This was a critical flaw of MacArthur and cost him on several occasions as will be seen with his intelligence officer: Charles Willoughby in World War II.

While MacArthur's was at West Point, his father was busy in the Philippines waging a war against the Spanish and the Filipino rebels. This pushed him to try to match his father's success and gave him purpose to work hard academically and physically to ensure his father's approval. A classmate of MacArthur's recalled how MacArthur "often wondered if he could ever become as great as his father, and he told me that if hard work had anything to do with it, he had a chance."<sup>45</sup> The stories Judge MacArthur had woven about Douglas's father, combined with the acts of Arthur in the Philippines had made Douglas's reverence of his father complete. This idolatry often influenced Douglas to accept higher risk in certain situations. Arthur was a war hero for his whole career, Douglas felt the need to match that same level heroism during his own Army career.

The next lesson MacArthur learned after graduating from West Point, would not be taught in the classroom, but by his father and the handling of politicians. It began when Washington sent a civilian commission to relieve Arthur as the established head of the Philippines. Washington's plan was to end the military occupation and restore order in the form of William Howard Taft as civilian governor of the islands.

Taft arrived to relieve MacArthur as governor to fulfill Washington's wishes to see the end of hostilities and make the Philippines an extension of the United States' influence in the Pacific. Arthur MacArthur had other ideas. The General had been ruling the Philippines as the military and civilian leader since May 5, 1900, and upon Taft's arrival in June, the two did not get along. After combatting insurgent forces since the summer of 1898, MacArthur believed that the Philippines required a military occupation for the next decade to fully rid the islands of the rebels, and allow for its proper introduction into the world under "American guidance."<sup>46</sup> Taft and MacArthur agreed in America's continued presence in the Pacific, but little else. The crux of the disagreement was the issue of the

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<sup>45</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 53.

<sup>46</sup> Manchester, 31-32.



insurgency itself. “Taft considered the insurgency as good as over. MacArthur considered it had reached a point where, unless he acted swiftly, it would soon get out of control.”<sup>47</sup> This disagreement is the lesson Arthur bestowed to his son “politicians in Washington, and their emissaries like William Howard Taft, never understand the real situation on the ground in making policy and so most of their recommendations are grounded ignorance or bias, or both.”<sup>48</sup> Arthur lost the battle with Taft and was sent back to the States. This lesson, this mistrust of politicians, and utter refusal to accept their far-off opinion remained with Douglas MacArthur. It even went so far, as to Douglas being mistrustful of his superiors in World War I, who were making battlefield decisions in their command tents miles away.

Douglas MacArthur’s heated debates with his commander, General John J. Pershing, during the campaigns of WWI, highlights MacArthur’s lack of accepting no for an answer. Just like his father in the Philippines, it would take a firm hand to restrain MacArthur. During the St. Mihiel offensive September 1918, MacArthur was leading the 84th Brigade of the 42nd Rainbow Division toward the town of Chaumont. “At H hour ... MacArthur was the first man to leap over the parapet and lead the 84th’s assault columns toward the enemy’s works.”<sup>49</sup>

The offensive was incredibly successful. In terms of the Great War, the Americans advanced miles the first day, and more the day after. In a war where the warring powers had been stuck in the same trenches for years without advancing inches, Pershing’s AEF had advanced miles in a couple of days. MacArthur believed in using this rare momentum to continue the advance toward the German held town of Metz. After the advance, MacArthur, along with his adjutant, traversed through no-man’s land, behind enemy lines, to observe the next potential objective: the enemy held city of Metz. He witnessed the German garrison, unsuspecting of the allies and of a possible advance. MacArthur recalled, “As I had suspected, Metz was practically defenseless for the moment. Its combat garrison had been temporarily withdrawn to support other sectors of action. Here was an

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<sup>47</sup> Perret, *Old Soldiers*, 41.

<sup>48</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 50–51.

<sup>49</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 101.

unparalleled opportunity to break the Hindenburg Line at its pivotal point. There it lay, our prize wide open for the taking.”<sup>50</sup> MacArthur went directly to command to argue his plan for the capture of Metz and to explain what he had observed of the light defenses around the city. Pershing and his staff denied him. The AEF Commander had to weigh the risks of acting unilaterally, without the support of the French and British, and their possible reaction to the AEF’s unexpected drive.<sup>51</sup> In addition, the Meuse-Argonne offensive had already been planned. Adjusting these dedicated plans based on the conviction of MacArthur’s testimony about Metz was not adequate evidence to change Pershing’s mind.

MacArthur stated in his memoirs, “Had we seized this unexpected opportunity we would have saved thousands of lives lost in the dim recesses of the Argonne Forest.”<sup>52</sup> As D. Clayton James states, “Historians and other authorities on the war have disagreed over the years as to the wisdom of terminating the St. Mihiel operation short of Metz.”<sup>53</sup> This operation kindled the flame in MacArthur that if presented with a situation where he could take advantage of an enemy’s situation and fully exploit tactical successes, then he was going to do it, regardless of his superior’s plan. MacArthur expressed this in his memoirs:

It is part of my military philosophy that a senior officer should not be silenced for being at variance with his superiors in rank and with accepted doctrine. I have always felt that country’s interests was paramount, and that when a ranking officer, out of purely patriotic motives, risked his own personal future in such opposition, he should not be summarily suppressed. Superior authority can, of course, do so if it wishes, but the one thing in this world that cannot be suppressed is a sound idea. The individual may be martyred, but his thoughts live on.<sup>54</sup>

Although MacArthur did not say this until the summer of 1925, the sentiment that created this philosophy had its roots in the St. Mihiel offensive.

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<sup>50</sup> Manchester, 102.

<sup>51</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 131.

<sup>52</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 64.

<sup>53</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 208.

<sup>54</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 85.

In August 1905, First Lieutenant Douglas MacArthur was assigned to be the aide-de-camp to his father, Major General Arthur MacArthur, who was scheduled to embark upon a tour of Asia. The two MacArthurs were to be accompanied by Mrs. MacArthur, and the family began a journey across the Orient.

The MacArthur family's journey across Asia allowed Arthur the opportunity to teach Douglas the importance of Asia, and his belief that Asia's destiny would be forever intertwined with the destiny of the United States. In 1900, Senator Albert Beveridge gave a speech on the Senate floor signifying the importance of Asia: "The power that rules the Pacific, therefore, is the power that rules the world."<sup>55</sup> Arthur believed in that message and was inclined to have his son share in that sentiment. Although such a duty might appear insignificant when researching the fifty-two-year military career of Douglas MacArthur, its importance is critical to how it influenced the young Army officer. According to MacArthur "we were nine months in travel, traversing countless miles of lands so rich in color, so fabled in legend, so vital to history that the experience was without doubt the most important factor of preparation in my entire life." He continued, "It was crystal clear to me that the future and, indeed, the very existence of America, were irrevocably entwined with Asia and its island outposts. It was to be sixteen years before I returned Far East, but always was its mystic hold upon me."<sup>56</sup>

Following MacArthur's tour with his father and prior to the outbreak of the Great War, Douglas held several posts. In 1906, he was appointed as Aide to President Theodore "Teddy" Roosevelt; 1907, he attended Engineer School; 1908, he was given his first command of Company K, 3rd Battalion of Engineers at Fort Leavenworth; and from September, 1913, to August, 1917, he served as a member of the General Staff, in Washington, DC.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Albert J. Beveridge, *The Meaning of the Times, and Other Speeches* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1908), 60.

<sup>56</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 31–32.

<sup>57</sup> Adjutant General's Office, "Statement of Military Service of Douglas MacArthur," accessed March 13, 2018, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/2595395>.

If West Point was where MacArthur was officially indoctrinated into the armed forces, then command at Fort Leavenworth was where he found his vocation. He was assigned as the Commanding Officer of Company K in April 1908. Although his efforts are indistinguishable from other leadership styles: praise in public, scold in private, break down only to build back up; the influence this command had on him was great. It was MacArthur's first real taste of what was to become a stalwart feature of his career: command. Upon transferring, a veteran sergeant at Leavenworth observed Company K during one of the final parades MacArthur led, "Boys, there goes a soldier." MacArthur remembered the comment with great reverence, "the tribute Sergeant Major Corbett paid me is the one which, perhaps, I prize more than any other."<sup>58</sup>

After Leavenworth, Douglas was assigned to the General Staff in Washington, DC, Being assigned to the General Staff exposed MacArthur to high-level decision-making processes without the burden of responsibility.<sup>59</sup> This assignment also helped cultivate the mentorship of MacArthur by Army Chief of Staff, General Leonard Wood. General Wood took an immediate liking to MacArthur, and MacArthur took advantage by outperforming his peers on his regular duties to earn high praise on his efficiency reports from the General, "Captain MacArthur is a highly intelligent and very efficient officer."<sup>60</sup>

Wood also introduced MacArthur to the media and the utility of shaping the narrative in your favor. "Senior officers tended to be suspicious of newspapermen and contemptuous of newspapers. Wood, however, welcomed them openly. Every day he met with the journalists assigned to the War Department and tried to give them something they could turn into a story."<sup>61</sup> This would be especially relevant in the upcoming years when MacArthur was assigned as the Army's first Public Relations Officer (PRO).

MacArthur's relationship with Wood was so fortuitous that it led to MacArthur seeing action in Veracruz in 1914, as Wood's personal choice for an advance

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<sup>58</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 35.

<sup>59</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 79.

<sup>60</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 115.

<sup>61</sup> Perret, *Old Soldiers*, 68.

reconnaissance mission during President Wilson's directed occupation of the port.<sup>62</sup> Soon after arriving at Veracruz, MacArthur gained awareness of the allied situation and recognized the lack of transportation in the area of operation. MacArthur found the answer in the shape of locomotives, held forty miles away in Alvarado. Without gaining explicit approval from the commander on the ground, MacArthur set forth at dusk toward Alvarado with a local Mexican as his guide. After an adventurous night, Captain MacArthur returned the following morning with both the necessary railroad engines and a harrowing story. The story included fighting off Mexican raiders on three separate occasions, and bullets whizzing through MacArthur's clothes, but leaving the Captain unscathed. It was a spectacular account, that appeared to most as too good to be true. Biographers of MacArthur all debate the validity of MacArthur's account of his solo expedition to Alvarado, some stating it was embellished and seeking glory, others giving the young MacArthur the benefit of the doubt.<sup>63</sup> All the same, believing a fantastic story without sufficient corroboration is difficult; however, MacArthur, although dramatic, would not have lied for glory's sake. Still, MacArthur was ultimately considered for the Medal of Honor, but without sufficient proof and more reliable witnesses, he was denied the award his father had won fifty years prior. Regardless of the truth, the lesson for MacArthur after his actions was "never again would he perform great deeds of bravery and skill, and allow the world not to hear about them."<sup>64</sup>

After his return from Mexico in August 1914, he was reassigned to the General Staff. MacArthur, now a Major in the Army, was placed under the Secretary of War Newton D. Baker, as his military assistant. In this position, he was given special responsibility for a new bureau of information, becoming the Army's first Public Relations Officer (PRO).

This new position taught MacArthur proper methods for handling the media, and ways to shift their focus in directions the War Department, and MacArthur, saw fit.

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<sup>62</sup> Perret, 70.

<sup>63</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 87–89; Hunt, *The Untold Story*, 51–60; Perret, *Old Soldiers*, 69–73; James, *Years Vol. I*, 123–127; Manchester, *American Caesar*, 75–76.

<sup>64</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 93.

MacArthur's time spent as PRO was highly instrumental. MacArthur, while fighting for survival on Corregidor in early 1942, was able to spin the narrative that MacArthur, despite being cut off and surrounded, was fighting back the Japanese. "When the hordes of the north swept down on the south like wolves the legend of Japanese military superiority preceded them. The enemy's initial successes seemed to bear this out, but the legend is now shattered. The superiority of the Japanese military machine has been reduced in the crucible of war."<sup>65</sup> This prose was not written by the press, but by MacArthur himself. The effect his dispatches had upon the American people was astounding. After being struck a deadly blow at Hawaii in December 1941, the public needed a hero. Douglas MacArthur provided that hero by his manipulation of the press. This deliberate manipulation was a risky gamble that could have resulted in disaster. Yes, it worked for MacArthur in 1942, but 1950 would provide different results with far worse consequences.

While PRO, MacArthur was a pivotal piece in the next act Congress signed, the Selective Service Act of 1917. On May 18, 1917, the Selective Service Act was signed into law. It was MacArthur's job to sell it to the public. The war in Europe had finally reached the United States six weeks earlier, April 6, 1917, and President Wilson needed an Army. Despite the changes implemented from the National Defense Act the previous year, the Army was in dire need of sudden and dramatic growth. The president now had the power "to raise, organize, officer, and equip" the Regular Army "to the maximum enlisted strength authorized by law."<sup>66</sup> MacArthur helped President Wilson by modifying the draft boards across the United States. Working closely with Judge Advocate General Enoch Crowder and Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Johnson—the two men who created the draft plan—MacArthur had the idea of having civilian-run draft boards instead of having a military run conscription. "Young men about to be drafted felt more comfortable sitting across the table from the president of the local bank or the local doctor or dentist rather than a row of expressionless men in khaki uniforms and Sam Browne belts."<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Herman, 377.

<sup>66</sup> U.S. House, 65th Congress, *Public Acts of the Sixty-Fifth Congress of the United States* (Washington, DC: 1917), 76.

<sup>67</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 92.

The next step while the conscription was in progress, was sending Americans immediately to the frontlines. MacArthur had an idea for that as well. Working with Secretary of War Baker, MacArthur sprung the idea of utilizing the National Guard as the first units sent to Europe as Allied reinforcements. To dispel state favoritism of using particular Guard Units, MacArthur's plan selected Units from across the United States and created a new division. "A division that would stretch over the country like a rainbow;—from that time on it was known as the Rainbow Division."<sup>68</sup> MacArthur's vision of a citizen soldier army came into effect. A draftee army, taught to be professional by the Regular Army, while the National Guard and the rest of the Army fought the war. "On August 1, 1917 Baker directed that the 42nd 'Rainbow' Division be formed as a composite National Guard division. Four days later he signed MacArthur's commission as a full colonel in the National Army, as the new force of citizen-soldiers would be called."<sup>69</sup> The next month MacArthur was appointed as the 42nd Rainbow's Chief of Staff and reported to Camp Mills, New York, to get Rainbow ready for combat.

After a brief training period, the Rainbow Division left Camp Mills on October 18, 1917, and proceeded to the Naval Yard in Brooklyn to board their transports to France. On November 7, the 42nd had arrived in Europe and were directed to in-theater training in France. The Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force (AEF), General John J. Pershing's plan was to have the 42nd sent into combat by May of 1918 after several months of rigorous combat training. However, pressure from the allies and from Washington truncated the training plan and the 42nd was sent into combat in February of 1918.<sup>70</sup>

The effect this must have had on Colonel MacArthur, a professional soldier, who created and was now leading National Guard Units in the first major global conflict for the United States, must have been astounding. MacArthur placed his reputation on the line by advocating for his citizen soldier army of National Guard Units, and if it failed against the veteran combat units of the Kaiser's German Army, MacArthur and his army would be

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<sup>68</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 46.

<sup>69</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 135.

<sup>70</sup> James, 144–154.

destroyed. This shows MacArthur's willingness to fight for what he believed in. This is a character trait that MacArthur emulated throughout his career. He believed in the primacy of air power. While MacArthur was Chief of Staff of the Army in the 1930s, he supported the B-17 "Flying Fortress" production. He believed in the role of amphibious operations and their pivotal opportunities on the battlefield. He then pioneered combined arms on the battlefields of World War II. MacArthur believed in his Rainbow Division and led them over the trenches to glory and victory over the vaunted German Army. His actions on the battlefields of France and Germany in 1918 were a direct example of fighting for what you believe in, a motto that MacArthur championed.

MacArthur arrived in France "set on one thing: to make himself famous, as his father had, by a combination of bravery and leadership that would make him stand far above his colleagues. He intended to be constantly on the front lines, serving under fire along with his men."<sup>71</sup> This is exactly what happened. When the Great War was over, MacArthur was recognized as a daring combat hero known as the "Fighting Dude," "D'Artagnan of the A.E.F.," and "the greatest fighting front-line general."<sup>72</sup> He had defied the odds and won glory for himself and his country.

World War I introduced several of MacArthur's theories, some positive while others negative. They included setting yourself apart, disobeying orders, and leading from the front. Not all of MacArthur's theories should be taught and passed down. He was a complex character that has been disputed for years. He believed in setting himself apart from his peers to garner recognition and be noticed. He believed in the need to sometimes disobey an order to further his own goals or to prove a point to his superiors. Above all else, WWI illustrated MacArthur's zeal for leading from the front. He required of himself to be the first over the trench into no-man's-land, and the first to face the enemy. Yes, he did this for glory, but he also did this for the man beside him. If a private saw a Lieutenant Colonel leap into danger without hesitation, this act inspired him to follow suit. Just as

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<sup>71</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 103.

<sup>72</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 89; James, *Years Vol I.*, 160.



MacArthur said, “leadership is often crystallized in some sort of public gesture.”<sup>73</sup> MacArthur leading was the public gesture.

The Great War also deeply influenced MacArthur. MacArthur’s years in France were a true baptism in combat and exposed him to the horrors of warfare. He was promoted to Brigadier General, won multiple Silver Stars, Distinguished Service Crosses (DSC), and Distinguished Service Medals (DSM) for bravery in combat. World War I not only introduced MacArthur to the world, but it introduced the world to Douglas MacArthur.

MacArthur set himself apart from his peers by his unique uniform choices. In time, it received its own nickname: the Look. MacArthur adjusted his uniform by making several radical changes and some not so radical changes. MacArthur removed the metal wiring from the inside of his cover to give it a more fashionable appearance. By doing so he gave it a more floppy, haphazard facade that went against his strictly manicured physical appearance. One of the radical changes was his decision to not carry a firearm. Radical, because while conducting trench raids and engaging directly with the enemy, MacArthur’s weapon was a riding crop. “I went unarmed because it was not my purpose to engage in personal combat, but to direct others,” said MacArthur.<sup>74</sup> Not only was he unarmed, the young MacArthur did not wear a helmet and never carried a gas mask (despite being almost blinded by poison gas on separate occasions). He was often found in his command post wearing his grey West Point tunic with the blue letter “A” stitched to it from his days on the baseball diamond at the Military Academy. “The fact that he perspired very little, together with his unusual dress and great concern for neatness, made him appear like a dandy from the council tables in Paris. Actually, MacArthur visited the frontline trenches more often than most, perhaps all, other divisional chiefs of staff in the A.E.F.”<sup>75</sup> MacArthur had set himself apart, but he supported his eccentricity by his courageous—some considered it reckless—exploits throughout his tour of duty in World War I. From

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<sup>73</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 131.

<sup>74</sup> MacArthur, 70.

<sup>75</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 156.

leading—often unapproved—midnight trench raids through no man’s land to the capture of Côte de Châtillon, MacArthur proved his military skill despite his uniform.

“Sometimes it is the order one disobeys that makes one famous.”<sup>76</sup> This was the famous line MacArthur gave Colonel Henry J. Reilly, who later became the 42nd Rainbow Division’s official historian. This quip describes MacArthur and his actions on more than one account during his career both as a strength and as a weakness. In World War I, MacArthur pushed the boundaries of a subordinate, often leading, surprisingly, to successful results. This was a surprising shift of MacArthur. Ever the military man, he knew since he was born the importance of hierarchy and how to follow orders. By defying them, mostly for his own gain, was against the finely manicured grain of MacArthur’s military demeanor. This might be due to the shadow his father cast over Douglas’s career, or Douglas’s own volition. Either way, it was a highly dangerous practice. Often his defiance of orders was in the form of him organizing and leading midnight raids into enemy territory, but at other times MacArthur would adjust orders from the Division Command as to what he saw fit. On September 11, 1918, MacArthur was given an order to reduce the amount of shelling upon the Germans to maintain the element of surprise. MacArthur disagreed and instead ordered his artillery crews to increase the shelling, thus a directly insubordinate act. Yet, the results worked in MacArthur’s favor due to the surprise factor being maintained despite the increase shelling the night prior.<sup>77</sup>

This model of leadership is where MacArthur made his mark. By conducting raids, disobeying orders, and displaying undaunting courage in the face of danger, he had created an image. A dangerous image in the face of leadership. One that could not be controlled. But to the soldiers below MacArthur, it made him a venerable genius. It was an indistinguishable quality that preceded MacArthur. It was MacArthur’s destiny, or so he believed, that would elevate him to the pedestal of greatness and would not allow for an errant enemy bullet or projectile to derail MacArthur on his journey to exalted prominence.

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<sup>76</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 103, 111, 129; Perret, *Old Soldiers*, 101; Henry J. Reilly, *Americans All: The Rainbow at War, Official History of the 42nd Rainbow Division in the World War* (Columbus, Ohio: F. J. Heer Printing Co., 1936), 540–569.

<sup>77</sup> Reilly, *Americans All*, 540–545.

MacArthur played a dangerous game by augmenting orders to suit his methods. Disobeying orders, changing orders, or acting on your intuition disrupts the hierarchy the military is built upon and inserts a measure of calculated chaos. It is never recommended to any officer or enlisted soldier or sailor, to disobey an order unless it is immoral or unlawful. MacArthur's actions go against the very nature of the institution he joined. Surprisingly, his actions did not inflict any severe consequences resulting in disciplinary action. MacArthur would continue to adjust orders, and disobey commands for the rest of his career and ultimately, it resulted in his untimely dismissal and shrouded his legacy in doubt and shame.

There are several instances throughout his career of bullets whizzing overhead or through his clothes yet he is unflinching, such as the time when MacArthur met Lieutenant Colonel George S. Patton on the battlefield.<sup>78</sup> The following is Patton's account of the fateful meeting: "Here I met Gen McArthur (Douglas) ... he was walking about too ... I joined him and the creeping barrage came along toward us, but it was very thing and not dangerous. I think each one wanted to leave but hated to say so, so we let it come over us."<sup>79</sup> What happened next is disputed by historians, but emblematic of MacArthur: "MacArthur and Patton ... stood erect, eyeing each other as the shell burst dangerously close to their position. Patton flinched instinctively, then looked annoyed with himself. Doug grinned. 'Don't worry, Colonel,' he said dryly. 'You never hear the one that gets you.'"<sup>80</sup> MacArthur was a Soldier's General: "The men of the 84th Brigade wanted no other leader. He slept where they slept, ate what they ate, and shared every danger. He knew every man and every man knew him."<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Martin Blumenson, *The Patton Papers: 1880–1940 (Vol. I)* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972), 505. James and Manchester list Patton as a Major, Herman and Archer list him as a Colonel.

<sup>79</sup> Blumenson, 585.

<sup>80</sup> Jules Archer, *Frontline General: Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Messner, 1963), 57. See Footnote 110.

<sup>81</sup> Allen Phelps Julian, *MacArthur: The Life of a General* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1963), 32.

On June 21, 1918, MacArthur was promoted to Brigadier General and awarded his first combat command: the 84th Brigade of the 42nd Division. Three weeks later he was given his first test of command during the German offensive in the Marne salient.

In July, the German attack along the Marne began. This campaign was highly significant for MacArthur due to its explicit illustration of the horrors of warfare (which would haunt him for the rest of his life). On July 15, 1918, the Germans launched a massive offensive against the American-held lines. The Rainbow Division was strategically placed along the line, and successfully repulsed the attack thanks to the planning of the French General Henri Gouraud, whom the 42nd had been assigned to since mid-June. Gouraud had anticipated the German attack after Bastille Day the day prior, and had planned his artillery targets accordingly.<sup>82</sup> According to MacArthur, “[Gouraud] had already worked out a complete new theory of a defense against the German tactic of breaking through and then by-passing strong points to exploit the lightly held rear areas.” MacArthur describes how Gouraud would abandon his first line of trenches, leaving only “suicide squads.” These squads would then alert the support echelon in the rear when the Germans began their attack. “Gouraud would wait until the attack reached his now evacuated first line, then lay down a withering fire, thus destroying the enemy’s momentum and solidarity. By the time our main line would be reached, the enemy would be spent and ready for destruction.”<sup>83</sup> Gouraud introduced the defense-in-depth concept to the battlefield, and MacArthur made it a standard in his defense structure in future campaign strategies.

The German infantry plunged directly into Allied firepower and were decimated along the front. After successfully defending the line, MacArthur helped lead counterattacks against an enemy that was uncoordinated and disorganized. The German attack was a failure, Gouraud and his men knew it. MacArthur recalls telling his artillerymen “Their legs are broken.”<sup>84</sup> “The German’s [sic] last great attack of the war

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<sup>82</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 119–122.

<sup>83</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 57.

<sup>84</sup> MacArthur, 58.

had failed and Paris could breathe again.”<sup>85</sup> After the battle, MacArthur was able to step back and inspect the battlefield, what he saw remained with him the rest of his life. He recalls “the vision of those bodies hanging from the barbed wire or the stench of dead flesh still in my nostrils.”<sup>86</sup> These horrors kept him up at night during future campaigns. After Marne was the St. Mihiel offensive culminating in the Meuse-Argonne offensive in September 1918.

The AEF-led, Meuse-Argonne offensive was the operation that would end the war in Europe. During this lengthy campaign, MacArthur showed the importance of being on the front and conducting personal reconnaissance, and a willingness to be flexible in command based on frontline intelligence. He displayed these characteristics during the battle of Côte de Châtillon from October 14–16, 1918.

Côte de Châtillon was an impregnable fortress. MacArthur called it “the pivot of the entire *Krunhilde Stalling*.”<sup>87</sup> The *Krunhilde Stalling* was the collection of fortified, German held, hills that were facing the 42nd Rainbow upon their entry to the front line in the Argonne.<sup>88</sup> It was one of the last remaining German strongholds and was required to be taken in order to end the war. Henry Reilly, the 42nd Division official historian, states that the challenges the Rainbow faced that October was to be its hardest of the war. “First, because of the unusual strength of the enemy’s position which it had to attack and through which it finally broke. Secondly, because to do this it had to pass through the hardest moral test it is possible for soldiers to be subjected to in battle; that is, to see defeat face to face but instead of yielding to grimly, hang on even though ultimate success seems impossible.”<sup>89</sup>

Prior to the attack on the Côte, Major General Charles Summerall, Rainbow Division Commander, met with MacArthur and gave him an order “You will give me Côte

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<sup>85</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 180.

<sup>86</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 58.

<sup>87</sup> MacArthur, 65.

<sup>88</sup> Also referred to as *Kriemhilde Stellung*.

<sup>89</sup> Reilly, *Americans All*, 641.

de Châtillon tomorrow or turn in a report five-thousand casualties.” MacArthur replied, “This brigade will capture Côte de Châtillon tomorrow, sir, or you can report every man in it as a casualty. And at the top of the list will be the name of the brigade commander.”<sup>90</sup> It was the night of October 15, 1918. After a grueling day of fighting the Germans along the Côte, the Americans had been unable to shake the enemy from their positions. MacArthur was determined to seize the objective and defeat the Germans. That night he devised a plan to commence a pre-dawn bayonet raid that would surprise the enemy and shift the initiative toward the Americans. He met with his two battalion Commanders, Lieutenant Colonels Ross and Bare, that night to relay his plan. Instead of accepting the plan and moving forward, they countered MacArthur. They offered up a pincer style movement to take advantage of the weak sides of the Côte and allow allied forces to cut through the weaker barb wire on the sides to press forward unheeded.<sup>91</sup> MacArthur agreed, but he still wanted to conduct his own reconnaissance to verify his battalion commander’s intelligence.

At midnight, MacArthur grabbed a squad and proceeded out of the trenches and into the night to inspect the German defenses’ weak sides. During the recon mission, the Germans opened up with an artillery bombardment which caught MacArthur and his tactical unit off guard. MacArthur recounted the raid to William Ganoe a few years later, saying that after the attack, he stayed in the shell hole in which he had taken cover until darkness fell and in a muffled voice, ordered his men to get up on his signal. When no one responded, he crawled from hole to hole and found each man dead.<sup>92</sup> This experience taught MacArthur the importance of up-close leadership. He had shown loyalty to his battalion officers by accepting their changes and adjusted the attack. The next day, the Americans were able to cut through the German defenses and finally take Côte de Châtillon. MacArthur learned a valuable lesson about maintaining flexibility of command, and had been victorious.<sup>93</sup> Less than a month later, World War I was over with the signing of the armistice at the eleventh hour, on the eleventh day, of the eleventh month of the year.

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<sup>90</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 66; Hunt, *Untold Story*, 88.

<sup>91</sup> Reilly, *Americans All*, 679; Herman, *American Warrior*, 140.

<sup>92</sup> Ganoe, *MacArthur: Close-Up*, 143–144.

<sup>93</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 143.

The war to end all wars was finally over and MacArthur was sent back to the United States as a war hero.

The power of influence, loyalty, using the media to your advantage, leading from the front, disobeying orders and being willing to speak your mind, and using momentum to achieve objectives, constructed MacArthur as a leader. His theories on how to build an army, recognizing shifts in paradigms, and challenging the status quo of policy driving strategy is MacArthur as a strategist. These theories will be challenged in the final chapter to express MacArthur's relevance today. Determining his relevance has potential to shape current foreign policy by shifting the focus of U.S. national security in the direction of MacArthur's most critical question about war: is there a substitute for victory?

#### **IV. SUPERINTENDENT AND CHIEF OF STAFF: DOUGLAS MACARTHUR 1918–1941**

It is man that makes war, not machines, and the human element must always remain the dominant one.<sup>94</sup>

MacArthur's career spanned half a century, and during this twenty-three-year timespan, two significant milestones helped shape Douglas MacArthur's strategic views and influenced him greatly. First, his tenure as Superintendent at the United States Military Academy from 1919–1922 and second, his role as Chief of Staff of the United States Army from 1930–1935. These illustrate MacArthur as a reformist and a liberal thinker, capable of experimenting with his position of authority, and being willing to recognize the shifting paradigms of warfare. MacArthur, like many of his counterparts in World War II, helped lead the way in the break from the Old Guard who followed the now-extinct nature of war.<sup>95</sup>

##### **A. SUPERINTENDENT UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY 1919–1922**

World War I taught Brigadier General MacArthur that the previous methods of conducting warfare were not capable of meeting the demands this new type of war had presented to the Allied powers. The Allies were forced to adapt quickly to “total” war and had to raise a massive army in a manner of months instead of years. As Stephen Ambrose states in *Duty, Honor, Country*, “In the United States both the tradition and the training were absent. American boys would not be called up until the last possible minute, at which time the army would expand enormously. Officers had to be prepared to take these civilians, train them, persuade them to accept discipline, supply them, and get them

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<sup>94</sup> Douglas MacArthur, *Report of the Secretary of War to the President, 1934* (Washington, DC: United States, Government Printing Office, 1934), 43.

<sup>95</sup> The Old Guard represents the generation of warfighters and leaders that adhere to the Napoleonic style of warfare, and the glory of professional armies fighting against each other in open combat.



overseas before a single American unit could participate in combat.”<sup>96</sup> This new type of war involved entire populations of nations. It was nothing the world had ever seen up to this point. Previous wars had helped shape nations and conquer territories, yes, but no other war involved the entirety of populations in a fight against an enemy. It was a distinctive paradigm shift in how wars were fought and how they would be fought in the future. To win, each member of society was required to contribute to the war effort in some manner or form. The armies engaged in combat were no longer comprised of purely professional soldiers, but instead were a composite, amorphous shape compiled of members from every economic class. Farmers fought next to bankers, soldiers next to draftees, and professionals next to national guardsmen. The citizen-soldier had been born on the battlefield of France, and a new type of officer was required to lead these men on the next battlefield.

MacArthur quickly recognized these facts. Upon returning from France in 1919, he was ordered to West Point, New York, to become Superintendent. At 38, MacArthur would be the youngest Superintendent since Sylvanus Thayer, the early 19<sup>th</sup> century Superintendent regarded as the father of West Point.<sup>97</sup> To be placed in similar company was quite an achievement, and MacArthur aimed to make Thayer’s legacy and his West Point proud.

MacArthur’s implicit goal upon assumption of the superintendency in June 1919 was to construct the Corps of Cadets in an image of himself. The changes he made were as he saw fit based on his own experience and intimate knowledge of the Regular Army and of West Point. His proposals all share the same quality of being a personal reflection of MacArthur’s character and personality. The young General was intensely loyal, a fierce competitor, and a brilliant tactician, while also having highly narcissistic tendencies, an egotistical air about him, and a sometimes-overwhelming superiority complex. Despite

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<sup>96</sup> Stephen E. Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 286.

<sup>97</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 261.

these traits, he sought to change the Academy along the Plain for the good of the Army and the Cadets.

This paradigm shift involving citizen soldiers changed the landscape of warfare. As D. Clayton James states, “The citizen soldiers of the National Guard and National Army divisions constituted the vast majority of American troops in the war,” he continues, “And they represented the highest physical and educational standards of any soldiers the United States had ever sent into battle.”<sup>98</sup> Recently returning from the Rhineland occupation, MacArthur had been witness to the feats of the Regular Army and understood the challenges newly graduated Cadets from West Point would face upon their commission into this *new* Army. No longer would the Monastery on the Hudson be sufficient preparation for a large portion of the Officer Corps of the United States Army. A new breed of officer was needed to satisfy the leadership responsibilities found in the Regular Army, comprised of these highly educated, and physically fit, citizen soldiers. In the 1920 *Annual Report of the Superintendent*, MacArthur wrote about how the type of officer to lead this new army must possess “all of the cardinal military virtues as of yore, but possessing an intimate understanding of the mechanics of human feelings, a comprehensive grasp of world and national affairs, and a liberalization of conception which amounts to a change in his psychology of command.”<sup>99</sup> This was his goal for the Cadets.

In his memoirs, MacArthur said, “With the termination of the World’s War the mission of West Point at once became the preparation of officer personnel for the next possible future war.”<sup>100</sup> Yet, postwar United States was in no such mood to prepare for any future war after the Great War had just ended. After all, it was referred to as “the war to end all wars.” Why should the United States citizenry and government be preparing for another war? The catalyst of war is often the reason of innovation of the military and the conduct of warfare. Peacetime offers little motivation to continue the innovation process simply because innovation is typically based in an effort to solve a problem, without the

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<sup>98</sup> James, 264.

<sup>99</sup> Douglas MacArthur, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy* (West Point, NY: United States Military Academy Press, 1920), 4.

<sup>100</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 78.

problem genesis there is low acceptance of innovation opportunities. MacArthur returned from France with the problem emblazoned on his mind: the current officer corps is ill equipped to lead. West Point proved to be the grounds where he would stage his answer: create an officer capable of leading the highly talented citizen soldiers.

The Academic Board was his toughest opponent, or as his Chief of Staff, Colonel William A. Ganoë said, “the stoutest blockade,” on his march for reformation at the West Point.<sup>101</sup> The Old Guard as mentioned previously was manifested in the Academic Board. It was comprised of all tenured professors, a dozen in total—five of them taught MacArthur when he was a Cadet. “As they saw all the other personnel come and go, and exercised complete direction of their instructors, they naturally assumed the prerogatives of oldest settlers, guardians and controllers of the fortunes of the Academy.”<sup>102</sup> James describes the Academic Board as “responsible for preserving the hallowed traditions and standards of the institution,” and that superintendents were “passing phenomena.”<sup>103</sup> MacArthur believed that for change to be effective it must be evolutionary, and not revolutionary.<sup>104</sup> So, MacArthur recognized the position of the academy upon his arrival in 1919, and was determined to use the assets there to sow the seeds of change that would “that would bring West Point into a new and closer relationship with the Army at large” for that was “the aim and purpose of [MacArthur’s] administration.”<sup>105</sup> He would evolve the Monastery on the Hudson into a mechanism to feed the Regular Army, well-rounded officers, which, MacArthur believed, the Army deserved. Therefore, he took on the Academic Board and strove to make the changes necessary regardless of their cooperation or obstruction.

The changes MacArthur implemented were a personal reflection. He disliked the rigidity of rules as seen in his frequent disobeying of rules and standards in World War One, so, he therefore decided to change the status quo at West Point. In the early months

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<sup>101</sup> Ganoë, *MacArthur Close-Up*, 35.

<sup>102</sup> Ganoë, 36.

<sup>103</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 267.

<sup>104</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 78.

<sup>105</sup> MacArthur, 79.

of his superintendency, MacArthur sat down with Ganoë to review routine matters. This type of meeting was a daily occurrence, however, this particular session stood out amongst the rest according to Ganoë. During the meeting, Ganoë suggested a punishment for an offender based on the traditional way of relying on prior regulations, and MacArthur responded “Fudge the regulations! ... They’re sometimes made to be broken for the good of the whole. Rules are mostly for the lazy to hide behind.”<sup>106</sup> After a lengthy discussion about the particular case, MacArthur proclaimed: “Rules! Rules! What damage have they caused! Some little thing goes wrong. Instead of mending the situation on the spot, we make a rule.... We’re not going to be embroiled in that sort of unjust mishandling. We’re going to take up each individual case, good or bad, on its merits or demerits. We’re not going to shirk.”<sup>107</sup> That was MacArthur’s style. He despised the yoke of regulations. This is a dangerous practice to uphold. By throwing out prior regulations you can be interpreted as being inconsistent. Inconsistency is the antithesis of military doctrine. Typically, the goal is consistency in every practice to ensure clarity and openness. This is especially important in a military setting. Consistency also makes it easier when the tour of Superintendent is so short with regular turnover. Each Supe working under their own agenda is difficult for both the hierarchy of West Point to support, and for the Cadets to benefit from. This was MacArthur’s character. He had shown his perspective on what rules meant in WWI, and now he was carrying on this practice at West Point.

The rigidity of rules and the Institution proved too much for MacArthur. When describing the state of the Academy in 1919, every biographer uses MacArthur’s words: “[The Cadets] were thrust out into the world a man in age, but as experienced as a high school boy. They were cloistered almost to a monastic extent.”<sup>108</sup> MacArthur sought to amend the strictness surrounding the Cadet’s mentorship and seclusion. He vied to expose them to the outside world, and allow them certain privileges which would introduce them to the civilian population they were being bred to eventually lead. He was on a mission to

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<sup>106</sup> Ganoë, *MacArthur Close-Up*, 47.

<sup>107</sup> Ganoë, 47–48.

<sup>108</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 81.

break down barriers that had cloistered the Corps previous. “They no longer were to be walled up within the Academy limits, but were to be treated as responsible young men,” MacArthur said.<sup>109</sup> He granted upperclassmen time off the campus grounds on the weekends, which allowed them to travel even to New York City during the summer months.<sup>110</sup> MacArthur went so far as to administer a monthly allowance. Each cadet would receive five dollars a month in cash “to be expended at their own discretion.”<sup>111</sup> It may appear trivial now, but to allow such freedoms at that time was a momentous occasion and a tremendous morale victory for the Corps of Cadets. These privileges espoused trust in the Corps, which incurred loyalty, a trait of paramount importance to MacArthur.

MacArthur’s reforms were not all for the benefit of the Cadets. MacArthur not only wanted “relaxation from the rigid grind of study and training,” but also wanted the young future-officers to be introduced to the enlisted men they would soon be leading.<sup>112</sup> Up to the time of MacArthur’s superintendency, the Cadets had attended a summer camp at Fort Clinton. According to Ambrose it was filled with rather frivolous merrymaking and formal dances. “For over a century the cadets had gone to camp to do a little drilling in the morning, rest or gossip in the afternoon, and attend formal hops in the evening. It was a carefree life.”<sup>113</sup> MacArthur attended Fort Clinton when he was a cadet himself at the turn of the century. Removing such an established tradition was a distinct break from the Old Guard and a way of evolving the Academy into the modern age. The Academic Board did not have any say over the change to Camp Dix because it did not involve the education of the cadets but was military training. This allowed MacArthur free reign to make the change without battling with the Board. Instead of attending Fort Clinton for weeks of enjoyment, the Cadets would be heading to Camp Dix for an introduction to the Regular Army.

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<sup>109</sup> MacArthur, 81.

<sup>110</sup> Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country*, 272. During the summer, the Cadets were authorized two-day leave passes which allowed for travel to New York City. During the academic term, upperclassmen were only offered 6-hour periods outside the grounds.

<sup>111</sup> Douglas MacArthur, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy* (West Point, NY: United States Military Academy Press, 1922), 8.

<sup>112</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 81.

<sup>113</sup> Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country*, 271.

According to MacArthur, Camp Dix would transform the training regimen at the Academy. “We bring them up as fashion-plate soldiers in a rich man’s vacation spot.” MacArthur roared at Ganoë.<sup>114</sup> “The youngster may be graduated right into a conflict, as has been the case recently. The young civilian of six weeks’ training was more able than the graduated cadet to cope with discomfort, disease and the bullet.”<sup>115</sup> According to 1920’s *Annual Report of the Superintendent*, MacArthur made the change clear: “The summer instruction is this year being held at Camp Dix, N.J. This is a departure from established custom that promises marked progress and improvement. The instruction has been arranged as to bring the cadet in close touch with, and understanding of the Army and life of the enlisted man.”<sup>116</sup> MacArthur wrote that the Camp Dix experiment was to help the cadets “gain in those qualities of self-confidence and assurance which are so valuable to efficient leadership.” He explained, “They learn more of human nature, acquire understanding, sympathy, and tact. The entire experience both broadens and deepens their character.”<sup>117</sup> Camp Dix was MacArthur’s way of subverting the Old Guard and any obstacle they could put in his path and changing the face of the Academy and the Cadets it graduated, in preparation of the shift in paradigms of warfare.

This was a bold move by MacArthur. Fort Clinton was beloved by the Corps. Camp Dix was hated and reviled. However, this change was for the betterment of the Corps. No longer were West Point graduates both only a soldier and a gentleman. WWI changed the requirements of graduates to become leaders of regular U.S. citizens, not other professional soldiers. This was a great change the Corps desperately needed. Lounging in the summers at dinner parties was insufficient preparation for the world they were about to meet. Training and living in a strict military environment at Camp Dix introduced the Cadets to Army life. The Cadets went to West Point to learn how to lead men, and MacArthur saw to accomplish that mission.

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<sup>114</sup> Ganoë, *MacArthur Close-Up*, 33.

<sup>115</sup> Ganoë, 32.

<sup>116</sup> MacArthur, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy* (West Point, 1920), 46.

<sup>117</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 81.

MacArthur's theory of leading from the front continued while as Superintendent. In a move not done by any Superintendent since the Academy was founded in 1802, the Supe attended classes, and then critiqued the lesson afterward with the professor in a one-on-one private session. One day on his way to a class, he exclaimed to Ganoe: "I'm getting an education. I don't know yet how liberal!"<sup>118</sup> Ganoe even described MacArthur's investigative efforts as a form of personal reconnaissance.<sup>119</sup> Yet, the theory remained strong for MacArthur; the only way to learn personally the effect of your efforts was to bear witness to them firsthand.

MacArthur helped shape West Point for generations by instituting one of the most significant changes: the implementation of intramural sports and increased physical competition amongst the Corps of Cadets. MacArthur required that all students participate in some sort of physical activity while at the Academy, because he viewed physicality as a prerequisite of a successful officer leader. This change, unlike the Fort Clinton to Camp Dix change, was such a resounding success with the Corps that they fully embraced the new competitive spirit MacArthur was trying to imbue. In fact, the new intramurals were often nicknamed: intra-murder.<sup>120</sup>

These experimental changes that MacArthur attempted, such as, the freedoms for the Cadets, the change to Camp Dix, attending classes, and the implementation of intramural athletics, all exhibit MacArthur's character. They were experiments, because there was no guarantee his amendments would continue upon his transfer. There had not been a Superintendent like MacArthur. No superintendent had advocated for such change and attempted to transform the Academy in their own vision. Previous superintendents took on the position as a representation of the end of a successful career. MacArthur had no such intention to end his career upon turnover. These transformations show how involved he was and his willingness to make changes he saw fit. Previous Superintendents always offered their advice and mentorship to the current Superintendent to help them along.

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<sup>118</sup> Ganoe, *MacArthur Close-Up*, 41.

<sup>119</sup> Ganoe, 42.

<sup>120</sup> Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country*, 275.

MacArthur, as Superintendent, listened, but then made his own choice. He pursued what he believed was right even in the face of continued adversity from critics.

An example of MacArthur dealing with critics is when West Point's newspaper did a spread on MacArthur or as Manchester states "lampooned the administration," MacArthur immediately had all of the newspapers on campus confiscated and discarded.<sup>121</sup> He disavowed any public critique of his administration by his subordinates. For fear it would reach the War Department and affect his career progression.<sup>122</sup> If there was an issue with how MacArthur did business, he expected immediate and direct resolution, not a public mockery.

The Cadets regularly thought of him as being too far removed from the Corps to intimately understand them. This was an unjustified review of MacArthur as Superintendent. He tried to do more than any other Superintendent before him. No Superintendent ever attended classes before and no Superintendent had instituted a physical regimen and athletic program. If any Superintendent up to that point intimately understood the Cadets, it was MacArthur. He knew where they came from, who they were, and how to prepare them for the future. MacArthur was focused on the future, and the dangers his Cadets would face in the next world war. One cadet recalled that he rarely saw the General except "when he was walking across Diagonal Walk, apparently lost in thought, his nose in the air, gazing at distant horizons."<sup>123</sup>

James describes MacArthur at West Point as having a majestic aloofness.<sup>124</sup> Ambrose considers MacArthur as a "supreme egotist."<sup>125</sup> Contemporaries frequently described MacArthur this way. He knew he had challenged the Old Guard, but in his mind, he had done it for the betterment of the Army. Now it was up to MacArthur's successors to take on the mantle of reformist and continue the strive toward change. In June 1922,

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<sup>121</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 121.

<sup>122</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 167–168; Perret, *Old Soldiers*, 120.

<sup>123</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 269.

<sup>124</sup> James, 268.

<sup>125</sup> Ambrose, *Duty, Honor, Country*, 266.



MacArthur was relieved and assigned to Manila, Philippines to be the Commanding General of the American forces at Manila.

It was a tumultuous road in upstate New York, one fraught with challenges that MacArthur both found solutions yet also contributed to the problems. He was a difficult person to work with from the perspective of the Academic Board and his lack of tact, coupled with a distinct tone of condescension, did not increase his chances of integrating meaningful change. MacArthur's immediate successor, General Fred W. Sladen, from the class of 1890, began renouncing the majority of MacArthur's changes from the moment he had officially taken over as Superintendent.<sup>126</sup> Sladen graduated from West Point thirteen years prior to MacArthur, and like the Academic Board, was committed to the "old" ways of handling business. He reverted from Camp Dix to Fort Clinton, he removed the leave periods awarded to the Cadets, and attempted to return to the "monastic cloistering."<sup>127</sup> However, the later superintendents had similar experiences to MacArthur in WWI and believed in the paradigm shift of warfare. These Superintendents continued the reformations instituted by MacArthur. They "accepted the MacArthur thesis that West Point existed to produce leaders of citizen-soldiers."<sup>128</sup> This shift back to MacArthur's changes demonstrated how MacArthur was ultimately proven right. Despite initial doubts and concerns, MacArthur was right. They continued MacArthur's work and believed that the changes implemented would pay heed to the words written in his first *Annual Report*: "the results have transcended my most sanguine expectation; they will be felt throughout the Army at large."<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Ambrose, 282.

<sup>127</sup> Ambrose, 282–283.

<sup>128</sup> Ambrose, 285.

<sup>129</sup> MacArthur, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of the United States Military Academy* (West Point, 1920), 4.

## **B. CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY 1930–1935**

### **1. The Trial of General William “Billy” Mitchell**

When MacArthur assumed the duty as Chief of Staff of the Army eight years had passed since West Point, including several command tours within the United States and in the Philippines. However, those tours pale in comparison to MacArthur’s tenure as Chief of Staff. The one significant highlight to discuss during those eight years was the trial of United States Army General William “Billy” Mitchell. Mitchell had been at odds with the high command of the U.S. Army since the close of World War I in 1918. He strongly advocated for aviation and its potential including the use of strategic bombardment as a critical mission area of the Army Air Corps. On July 21, 1921, Mitchell’s bombers, in a display of Mitchell’s beliefs, successfully targeted and sank the German submarine *Ostfriesland*.<sup>130</sup> The *Ostfriesland* operation’s purpose was to display the future of American air power capabilities and the need for the Army to establish new doctrines including aircraft into warfare practices and procedures. Instead of adopting to the new change, they did what wartime leaders do in peacetime and reverted back to their tried and true methods of conducting war. Aviation, although demonstrated in the World War, had not yet found its footing on the steps of policy. As seen with many technological innovations in warfare, a catalyst is required to accept the transformation in methodology. Such was the case with the aircraft carrier and World War II. Up till December 7, 1941, the Battleship was the flagship of the United States’ fleet. The Japanese were the catalyst for the shift toward the carrier as the primary fighting platform in the Pacific theater. Mobile air platforms allowed for a successful island-hopping campaign, and the great battleships of yore, were kept as supporting units in the periphery. Mitchell had the same issues in the early 1920s, and no amount of petitioning or grandstanding changed the old-fashioned opinions of the command structure.

In 1925, Mitchell published *Winged Defense*, which stated how much of a critical enabler airpower was to the battlefield. It meant traversing the globe in record time, old

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<sup>130</sup> David E. Johnson, *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1998), 83.

defense systems and proverbial barriers to forces on the ground were no longer applicable to nations equipped with substantial air power. As Mitchell stated, “There is no part of the civilized world that cannot be reached at present in a fraction of the time that was required fifty or a hundred years ago. Within the last decade the advent of air transportation has added a decidedly new element in the relations of nations to each other.”<sup>131</sup> He argued that air capability will be the first option for enacting justice upon a belligerent, “As physical means are employed by nations to impress their will on an adversary only when other means of adjusting a dispute have failed, air power will be called on as the first punitive element.”<sup>132</sup> The hierarchy did not want to accept Mitchell’s thesis and were forced to put an end to Mitchell’s insubordinate tirades. It came to a head after the Navy airship *Shenandoah* crashed in September 1925. On September 5, Mitchell produced a statement to the Press in San Antonio, Texas. Within he claimed the Navy and War Departments had committed a treasonous act. “These accidents are the direct result of the incompetency, criminal negligence and almost treasonable administration of the national defense by the Navy and War departments.”<sup>133</sup> This was too much for the Departments to handle, so they court-martialed the General.

In October 1925, Mitchell was summoned to Washington, DC to stand trial for the charges of “discredit upon the military service and conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline.”<sup>134</sup> One of the panel judges was General Douglas MacArthur. According to MacArthur, “it was one of the most distasteful orders I ever received.”<sup>135</sup> In his memoirs, MacArthur said that he was “thoroughly in accord with the concept of the massive power of the air and that its development should be greatly accelerated.”<sup>136</sup> Not only did he

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<sup>131</sup> William Mitchell, *Winged Defense: The Development and Possibilities of Modern Air Power—Economic and Military* (Tuscaloosa, Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1925), 131.

<sup>132</sup> Mitchell, 131.

<sup>133</sup> William Mitchell, “Statement of William Mitchell Concerning the Recent Air Accidents,” *Air Force Magazine*, July 2006, <http://www.airforcemag.com/MagazineArchive/Documents/2006/July%202006/0706keeperfull.pdf>.

<sup>134</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 188.

<sup>135</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 85.

<sup>136</sup> MacArthur, 85.

support Mitchell's theories on air power, MacArthur did not like the idea of another senior officer being targeted for being at odds with his superiors.

MacArthur had an unusual relationship with aviation. His words were often contradictory to his actions, both before and after the trial. A few years after the trial, when MacArthur was asked about aviation while he was the Chief of Staff of the Army, he said, "its value as an instrument of war was still un-demonstrated."<sup>137</sup> This statement is difficult to understand, because if he supported Mitchell's theories, then he knew that air power had been tested against the *Ostfriesland*. MacArthur went so far as to recommend the forfeiture of American aviation for something more economical.<sup>138</sup> Another example of MacArthur's back and forth relationship was summarized by James: "[MacArthur] has vehemently opposed extra funds for the Air Corps," but he "argued for Army torpedo planes, and concurred in the Air Corps' bid for a long-range aircraft which would become its mainstay of heavy bombardment in the Second World War."<sup>139</sup> It is unclear on what side of the table MacArthur sat. Did he support Mitchell's air power theories or not, or was the trial more so a matter of defying superiors? Based on MacArthur's actions leading up to 1925, the thesis that he distasted the assignment as a panel judge was possibly that he saw himself in Mitchell. Based on MacArthur's experiences, Mitchell had not done anything wrong, and if so, MacArthur might be just as guilty.

There is controversy among historians and military leadership as to how MacArthur voted, to acquit or to find guilty. Regardless, the main consequence of the trial was how it affected MacArthur's feelings on the civilian-led institution he was a member of: the U.S. Army. His vote of innocence or guilt was not a deciding factor to the trial. There was no one swing vote, the majority voted guilty. The judges' choices were never officially tallied.<sup>140</sup> As James wrote, "the verdict was almost a foregone conclusion from the

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<sup>137</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 379.

<sup>138</sup> James, 380. Although this point was made in reference to the manpower verses innovation argument that lasted the entirety of MacArthur's tenure as Chief of Staff, MacArthur's stance was clearly against Mitchell's.

<sup>139</sup> James, 371.

<sup>140</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 309.

start.”<sup>141</sup> This trial led to MacArthur making the statement: “It is part of my military philosophy that a senior officer should not be silenced for being at variance with his superiors in rank and with accepted doctrine.”<sup>142</sup> MacArthur said this in reference to Mitchell, but it is just as applicable to his own military career.

## 2. Man vs. Machine

Mitchell’s trial added to the complex relationship MacArthur had with aviation. Witnessing Mitchell’s demise for his own beliefs possibly influenced MacArthur’s belief that aviation could play a role in the Army. This placed MacArthur in a difficult position as a senior Army officer. In the 1920s supporters of aviation were “few and conspicuous” as James wrote.<sup>143</sup> This is an appropriate assertion of the time period, as attempting to innovate, especially with a radical and recent development in aircraft was a dubious endeavor. MacArthur was smart to appear on the fence. Billy Mitchell’s trial was a window into how MacArthur played the bureaucratic game of Army hierarchy. He made sure to say and do the right things at the right time so as to not have a similar fate as Mitchell.

Although, it is not certain, the idea of a long-range, strategic bomber might have sprung from the trial of Billy Mitchell. As will be seen later, MacArthur supported the creation of the experimental model B-17 strategic bomber while he was Chief of Staff in 1933.<sup>144</sup> The Army Air Force’s Official History states: “It is significant that the story of the Army’s long-range bomber has its beginning in proposals of 1933 for the construction of an ultra-long-range bomber that immediately would have relegated such a plane as the B-I 7 to the category of medium range. Equally significant is the fact that the proposed plane was intended for a mission of coastal defense and that the proposal was advanced under circumstances decidedly favorable to its acceptance.”<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> James, 310.

<sup>142</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 85. See St. Mihiel operation in Chapter III.

<sup>143</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 311.

<sup>144</sup> James, 370.

<sup>145</sup> Wesley Frank Craven, James Lea Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II: Plans and Early Operations January 1939 to August 1942* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1948), 61.

If the Mitchell trial positively influenced MacArthur's perspective on aviation as a tool in future conflicts, then another area was the transformation of the General Staff. When Douglas MacArthur was sworn in as the Chief of Staff of the United States Army on November 21, 1930, he began a pivotal tour in his career.<sup>146</sup> For the next five years he helped shape the Army in preparation for the next World War. Under President Hoover, MacArthur was able to transform the Army and the General Staff. The new Chief of Staff helped fix the bureaucracy and inner-department rivalry within the General Staff, and laid out a plan for the Army similar to how the U.S. Military is organized today by Combatant Commands or COCOMs. COCOMs were a result of WWII. Geographic combatant commands were established to deconflict and centralize command structures composed of multiple services and allies under one commander.<sup>147</sup> Although today there are several different COCOMs covering the globe, MacArthur built his plan around four based solely in the United States. They were region based: North, South, East, and West with the General Staff acting as the central coordinating body.<sup>148</sup> It was a successful decentralization of authority with a burden of trust between the regional commanders and the General Staff. Region commanders were authorized greater latitude in their decision-making process, which empowered their commands.

The four-army plan also cultivated a joint-ness to the Army that was unseen prior to MacArthur's actions. This was an innovative decision that influenced the army for years. Organizing the army this way forced the four army commanders to work together for logistics and planning purposes. It was great preparation for WWII when dealing with two theaters on different halves of the world. "The army commanders, who would be the senior corps commanders in the respective army zones, would assume responsibility for the training of the tactical units as field forces, which would be concentrated periodically for army-level maneuvers."<sup>149</sup> Joint operations within the Army was foreign, yet MacArthur

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<sup>146</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 203.

<sup>147</sup> MacArthur is not the creator of COCOMs; however, the four-army plan was a possible forerunner to the current strategic framework of the U.S. military today.

<sup>148</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 367.

<sup>149</sup> James, 367.

made sure to maintain a peak level of readiness and preparation in case of a global event igniting and the Army needed to mobilize its citizens for war. This was one of the hallmarks of MacArthur's tour: preparation and readiness. As with any Chief of Staff, readiness is typically a top mission priority, yet MacArthur was able to take it to a whole new level.

When MacArthur assumed command, he described the current state of the General Staff as "small bureaus, entirely too self-contained." He was dissatisfied by the lack of cooperation amongst the staff, "there has been little or no proper meeting of the minds on important subjects. Uncoordinated action has too often resulted."<sup>150</sup> Therefore, to solve the problem, and coinciding with the organizational reform of the Army, MacArthur transformed the General Staff. He organized it into separate divisions: Administration, Intelligence, Training and Operations, Supply, and War Plans Division. MacArthur promised, "Such an organization will have a far-reaching effect. Many problems of first importance are awaiting solution or proper coordination by such a body.... Better work and better feeling throughout the War Department will result."<sup>151</sup> As MacArthur stated in his memoirs, these changes were the "basic outline of a broad plan for the United States to meet an inevitable war."<sup>152</sup> MacArthur's continued purpose was to prepare the nation for war; this was the case in 1901, again in 1919, and now in 1931.

Considering the stock market crashed in 1929, and the global financial markets being in ruin, choosing between man and machine became a necessity when fighting for a budget. Would the commander either invest in his men to try and develop a more capable soldier, or invest in technology to ensure the men had the deadliest weaponry on the battlefield? This is an age-old debate, rife with complexity, that has spanned centuries, and often hindsight provides the best answer. As MacArthur's drafting and selling of the Selective Service Act, the creation of the Rainbow Division, and his handling of the cadets at the Military Academy, demonstrate, MacArthur placed his emphasis on man over machine. A letter MacArthur wrote to Representative Bertrand D. Snell, the minority leader

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<sup>150</sup> Douglas MacArthur, *Report of the Secretary of War to the President, 1931* (Washington, DC: United States, Government Printing Office, 1931), 70.

<sup>151</sup> MacArthur, *Report of the Secretary of War, 1931*, 71.

<sup>152</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 90.

of the House of Representatives on May 9, 1932, exemplifies MacArthur's earnest faith in the officers of the Army. The letter was then published the next day in the *New York Times*. MacArthur argues, "An army can live on short rations, it can be insufficiently clothed and housed, it can even be poorly armed and equipped, but in action it is doomed to destruction without the trained and adequate leadership of officers."<sup>153</sup>

An important consideration behind MacArthur's choice to choose manpower over machine is found in the state of the economy at the time of MacArthur's tour as Chief of Staff, especially under President Hoover. After the financial collapse in 1929, the government was looking in every direction and every department for opportunities to cut excess to stabilize the economy. The War Department, just like every other Department was targeted. MacArthur had to make the choice to either use the extremely limited funds allotted to maintain the "16th strongest army in the world" or to invest in untested technology, that might make the difference in the next war.<sup>154</sup> In regards to his decision, he offered in his memoirs that the "modern war would be a war of massive striking power, a war of lightning movement, a war of many machines." He even referenced technological innovation in World War I, "We had learned at bitter price the lesson of the last war, that one new innovation, the perfected machine gun, had foiled plans and planners, and had driven great armies into a stalemate of mud and trench."<sup>155</sup> Despite the vernacular, MacArthur chose the army over technology to increase weapon lethality and operability. Herman defends MacArthur, and in his description of MacArthur as Chief, he highlights the few moments which MacArthur advocated for greater interest in innovation, such as when MacArthur stated, "nothing is more important to the future efficiency of the Army than to multiply its rate of movement."<sup>156</sup> Although MacArthur did in fact help the innovation process of the Army while he was Chief he consistently supported financing of

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<sup>153</sup> "MacArthur Warns on Cut in Officers," *New York Times*, May 10, 1932, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1932/05/10/100733758.pdf>.

<sup>154</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 361.

<sup>155</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 91.

<sup>156</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 244.



manpower and the citizen soldier over technology and innovation.<sup>157</sup> As David Johnson states in *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers*, “the Army made a conscious decision to defer modernization until appropriations increased to such a degree that personnel would not have to be cut in favor of equipment.... The critical choice belonged to the Army.”<sup>158</sup>

A consequence of MacArthur’s choice is found in mechanization innovation. According to MacArthur “It is man that makes war, not machines, and the human element must always remain the dominant one.”<sup>159</sup> In 1931 MacArthur ordered the decentralization of the mechanization development of the Army: “Every arm is authorized to conduct research and experiment with a view of increasing its own power to perform promptly the missions it has been especially organized and developed to carry out.” He continued that “Every part of the Army will adopt mechanization—and motorization—as far as is practicable and desirable ... but not separate corps will be established in the vain hope that through a utilization of machines it can absorb the missions, and duplicate the capabilities, of all others.”<sup>160</sup> The most interesting facet of MacArthur’s decision was what came before the paragraph containing MacArthur’s authorizations. He accurately described the global climate and the problems both the United States and international partners faced with maneuver warfare:

Mechanized forces were expected to supplant the established order, or at least to constitute a corps d’élite, to be supplemented where necessary by foot troops, which would hold defensively the advantages gained by the mechanized striking force. This was the controlling idea in the establishment of ‘mechanized forces’ in our own and other armies, but continued study and experimentation have since resulted in its virtual abandonment. Inherent weaknesses and limitations in the machines themselves are such as to preclude their employment in many types of terrain. Moreover, the impossibility of having any considerable number of suitable armored vehicles immediately available upon the outbreak of war

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<sup>157</sup> There were three exceptions to MacArthur’s choice: the B-17, the M-1 Garand semi-automatic rifle, and the 105mm howitzer cannon.

<sup>158</sup> Johnson, *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers*, 114.

<sup>159</sup> Douglas MacArthur, *Report of the Secretary of War to the President, 1934* (Washington, DC: United States, Government Printing Office, 1934), 43.

<sup>160</sup> MacArthur, *Secretary of War to the President, 1931*, 43.

is sufficient proof that such a doctrine is not applicable in any case to the stages of a future emergency.<sup>161</sup>

The next year, instructors at the Infantry Tank School were reiterating MacArthur's words: the tank should be used "in the roles of exploitation, envelopment, deep penetration, and decisive action."<sup>162</sup> However, the innovation necessary to adapt the armed forces to a more maneuver-based mechanism was stalled and delayed until the brink of war.

The unintentional consequence of MacArthur's decentralization caused the United States Army to be fighting an uphill battle for the majority of World War II against far superior armored vehicles, and proven tactics employed by the enemy. Despite traveling abroad in 1931, visiting European military field exercises, and witnessing firsthand the capabilities of a mechanized force, he was still unconvinced that mechanization could shift the tide in battle more than a highly capable soldier in the U.S. Army. "[MacArthur] was not persuaded that an army as skeletonized and financially starved as his own should strive for large-scale mechanization until its funds were sizable enough to avoid further sacrifices of manpower."<sup>163</sup> The decision was made: man is more decisive than the machines he operates.

MacArthur's decision makes sense in hindsight to favor man over machine. Significant economic constraints handcuffed much of MacArthur's financial decisions causing him to prioritize. Although, at the time of America's entry into WWI he witnessed firsthand the United States' potential to raise an army. Instead of trying to save the Army, he should have relied on precedence and the fact that the citizen soldier would rise again in the face of a global, existential threat. If he would have chosen machine over man, and placed a greater emphasis on technological innovation, then the American military might not have been playing catch-up in the armor and tank field throughout WWII. The men on Bataan might have been equipped with updated equipment instead of struggling operating materiel from WWI and earlier. MacArthur believed in the fighting soldier, but he should

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<sup>161</sup> MacArthur, 43.

<sup>162</sup> William C. Lee, "Fast Tanks as Leading Tanks and Exploiting Tanks," *Tank Notes*, March 1932, 3: Quoted in Johnson, *Fast Tanks and Heavy Bombers*, 117.

<sup>163</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 372.

have given greater credit to the country behind the soldier. MacArthur would end up eating his words in WWII when he said, “if necessary we will fight them with sticks and stones ... but I find that sticks break in our hands and stones can’t go very far.”<sup>164</sup>

### **3. The Bonus March**

In the waning months of Hoover’s Presidency, the Bonus March took place, and Douglas MacArthur played a critical role as Chief of Staff. It was the summer of 1932 and veterans of World War I had journeyed from across the country to visit the nation’s capital and to make their collective voices heard. The crux of the issue was centered around a promised bonus payment to all veterans of WWI, hence the title “Bonus March.” It was promised to be paid out in full in 1945, yet the panic of 1929, had caused veterans to seek immediate payment instead of waiting another 16 years. The answer was to meet in Washington, rally together, and force the government to issue the payment. Over the course of three months, from May to July, more than 20,000 veterans had positioned themselves along the Anacostia Flats near the Capitol Building in DC. According to Manchester, “A Veteran’s Administration survey would later show that 94 percent of the bonus marchers had army or navy records, 67 percent had served overseas, and 20 percent had been disabled.”<sup>165</sup> The District police had been managing the situation in peaceful form by aiding the veterans however they could: distributing food, providing shelters, blankets, and basic first aid. Although, there were thousands of passionate men huddled together in the summer heat, there was little violence and the operation was running smoothly. The gathering had even garnered support by Congressman who drafted a bill to issue the payment or least offer concessions. In July, after three months of anxiously awaiting the answer from their civilian leaders, the bill was defeated. The result was that the president mandated that any veterans who were willing to depart the DC area would be provided with full transportation back to their residences across the United States. A few thousand took the bait and left, but what remained was an even more tense group that was losing its ability to maintain order and discipline.

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<sup>164</sup> James, *Years Vol. II*, 88.

<sup>165</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 149.

It is necessary to understand in 1932, communism was a very real fear for the public, but it was rampant in the microcosm of the U.S. capital. The president, Secretary of War, and the Chief of Staff all supported anti-communist political movements and were struck by the fear of a possible revolution in the DC area, led by a small soviet contingent. “Hoover, Hurley and MacArthur, among others of official Washington, were sure that the march was not an isolated incident, but was closely connected with the previous disturbances.”<sup>166</sup> The Bolsheviks had only recently overthrown the Czar; Hoover was not going to be the next domino to fall. As the tension grew he ordered General MacArthur to disperse the crowds immediately. So, MacArthur gathered his staff and prepared for the quick and immediate evacuation of the thousands of veterans housed near the Capitol Building. The controversy begins here.

Douglas MacArthur believed he should be the Commander in charge on the ground. In preparation, he could not allow himself to wear his normal Chief of Staff attire, which was a basic suit or a comfortable uniform, instead he must be wearing something fitting of a commander and ordered for a more fitting uniform. His dress uniform, outfitted with shiny medals and ribbons extending beyond his shoulders was presented to him, and MacArthur, without complaint or question, donned the uniform. He then led his small Army into the camp.

MacArthur’s biographers debate his decision to lead the detail in parade uniform. Manchester offers the Chief wanted to use his uniform as a means to impress the deposed veterans, it “was a measure of his greatness; he refused to delegate the odious task to a subordinate.”<sup>167</sup> It did not have the effect intended, instead of discouraging resistance, it only made matters worse. James defends MacArthur and states, “Few accounts of the events of that day fail to include a barbed comment on the chief of staff’s ‘parade attire.’” Yet, James claims that “such criticism is sheer pettiness.”<sup>168</sup> Herman defends MacArthur as well by saying that to the “ignorant (or malicious) eye” MacArthur’s uniform was

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<sup>166</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 386.

<sup>167</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 150.

<sup>168</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 399.

inappropriate, but he does confess that MacArthur's staff was in "more modest military attire."<sup>169</sup> Manchester, James, and Herman, agree MacArthur's reasons for being present include MacArthur's belief that there was "incipient revolution in the air."<sup>170</sup> Perret, surprisingly, offers a distinct insight into MacArthur that day in July 1932. MacArthur left for the scene accompanied by General, 16th Infantry Brigade Commanding Officer, Brigadier General Perry L. Miles. MacArthur told Miles "he had come at the suggestion of the President and secretary of war," and this is where it gets interesting, MacArthur said he would "take the rap if there should be any unfavorable or critical repercussions."<sup>171</sup> Mainly, what it represented was not so much a show of strength, or a measure to impress the veterans, or to be in a position as to accept responsibility. Yes, those all impacted MacArthur's decision, but the strongest was MacArthur's convictions that the Bonus March was organized by, comprised of, and led by Communist infiltrators bent on the overthrow of the United States government.

In his memoirs, written over 30 years after the incident, MacArthur was still convinced of his convictions, "The American Communist Party planned a riot of such proportions that it was hoped the United States Army, in its efforts to maintain peace, would have to fire on the marchers. In this way, the Communists hoped to incite revolutionary action." MacArthur claimed, "Red organizers infiltrated the veteran groups and presently took command from their unwitting leaders."<sup>172</sup> Researchers have clarified that the Communist involvement in the Bonus March, although present, was merely inconsequential. Communists, after the fact, have even testified that they failed in every aspect MacArthur claims they were successful.<sup>173</sup> The takeaway from MacArthur's statement is that his anti-communist tendencies were not a passing fancy, but a fundamental part of MacArthur's character. James displays this in his summation of events: "Once MacArthur was convinced that the affair was a Communist assault against the federal

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<sup>169</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 218.

<sup>170</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 399.

<sup>171</sup> Perret, *Old Soldiers*, 158.

<sup>172</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 93.

<sup>173</sup> James, *Years Vol. I*, 408.

government, he acted with overzealous determination and reckless impulsiveness.”<sup>174</sup> It affected him and drove him, as will be seen in September of 1950 with the Korean War.

MacArthur “had an ideological bond with Hoover,” and wanted to ensure he followed the president’s order by quickly ridding DC of the vagrants.<sup>175</sup> To achieve his mission, he placed military effectiveness higher than using proper tact in dealing with his downtrodden comrades. MacArthur made several mistakes during the Bonus March. He jumped to conclusions about the presences of communists in the area, the validity of the Bonus Marcher’s claims, and was too assertive in his role as Commander of the operation. He should have distanced himself and remained a skeptic witness to the peaceful expulsion of the veterans, regardless of the timeliness of the dispersal. He should have acted more rationally, and less passionately, and used the advice of his aide, Major Dwight Eisenhower, that any action by MacArthur himself would “offend congressmen ... and make approval of military budgets that much harder.”<sup>176</sup> As John Killigrew wrote in *Military Affairs* in 1962, “MacArthur associated himself with an extremely unpopular and unpleasant duty ... directing the use of federal troops against civilians.”<sup>177</sup> MacArthur should have been able to recognize that fact. Roosevelt was right in his assertion about MacArthur, which MacArthur remembered in his memoirs, “Douglas, I think that you are our best general, but I believe you would be our worst politician.”<sup>178</sup> MacArthur was simply the wrong man, at the wrong time, and it would haunt him for the rest of his career.

The Bonus March was the final highlight of MacArthur’s tenure under President Hoover. In November of 1932, Franklin Delano Roosevelt was elected as the 32nd President of the United States. While Chief of Staff under Roosevelt, MacArthur continued his crusade to maintain the army in a constant state of readiness through extensive preparation, and the economic struggles he faced under Hoover only grew under Roosevelt

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<sup>174</sup> James, 409.

<sup>175</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 150.

<sup>176</sup> Manchester.

<sup>177</sup> John Killigrew, “The Army and the Bonus Incident,” *Military Affairs* 26, no. 2 (Summer 1962): 65.

<sup>178</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 96.

as he fought to save the army. As MacArthur finished his tour he was confident that he had prepared the Army for the next war, and had readied the current force structure, on a road of economic recovery, to meet the enemy of the future.

In October 1935, he was relieved and sent to the Philippines to help the Filipinos construct a national defense system with MacArthur acting as the Military Advisor. He later became the Field Marshal of the Filipino Military leading up to the outbreak of World War II. It was in July 1941, that Roosevelt recognizing the pending danger of the expanding Japanese empire established the United States Army Forces in the Far East (USAFFE) Command in Manila with Douglas MacArthur as the Supreme Commander. This was the job MacArthur would be in when the first bombs landed on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

## **V. “I HAVE RETURNED.” DOUGLAS MACARTHUR 1941–1950**

Let no heart be faint. Let every arm be steeled.<sup>179</sup>

This chapter will focus on World War II and MacArthur’s tour during the occupation of Japan leading up until the outbreak of the Korean War in June of 1950. Two themes will be explored: MacArthur’s failure during the defense of the Philippines from December 1941 to March 1942, and a review of MacArthur’s theories on strategy, operations, tactics, and personal leadership. The majority of scholarly work about MacArthur focuses primarily on World War II. This thesis will look at the most significant time period of MacArthur during the war: the Philippines and its influence upon him and his methodology for the rest of the war. The second half of the chapter is a review of all of his theories that were displayed during the war. Instead of reading through chronologically, this chapter will be thematic in its approach.

### **A. CLARK FIELD DISASTER**

At 0340, on December 8, 1941, Douglas MacArthur, United States Armed Forces Far East (USAFFE) Commander, received official notification from Washington of the attacks on Pearl Harbor; the Second World War had begun.<sup>180</sup> During these initial three months, MacArthur made a series of critical mistakes, and although he attempted to reconcile the errors he and his staff made, the consequences of his actions over the next several weeks on the Philippines haunted him for the rest of the war. This section highlights MacArthur’s failings during the beginning of the war, illustrated by the Clark Field disaster. These significant errors by Douglas MacArthur impacted his campaign strategy and strengthened his determination to return to the Philippines and absolve them of his mistakes. It begins with MacArthur’s reliance on aircraft defense.

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<sup>179</sup> MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks*, 132–133.

<sup>180</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 117.



One important element of MacArthur's war plan involved using B-17s to defend the coastline. He planned to use the island's communications network to launch B-17 Flying Fortresses and their fighter escorts to defend the coasts, while Filipino ground forces held the invaders at bay. The problem with this plan was that there were only two airfields capable of accommodating B-17s: Clark Airfield on Luzon and Del Monte on the northern end of Mindanao. Although these airfields were out of range of any potential Japanese attack and could be called upon to defend the islands in short notice, Mindanao's airfield did not have the necessary housing buildings for the aircraft. MacArthur's stenographer, Paul Rogers stated that early in December, MacArthur ordered half the B-17s at Clark to Mindanao. MacArthur made plans to order the other half over, but an upcoming delivery of B-17s to Mindanao, in the first weeks of December, meant there was not enough space to store all of Clark's 17s at Del Monte.<sup>181</sup> Additionally, Mindanao was constructing more airfields, but did not finish prior to the attack.<sup>182</sup> However, on the 8th of December, the delivery had not arrived, and the option to rush the Luzon based B-17s was still viable, but never ordered or carried out.

MacArthur's critics have often blamed him for failure to protect the B-17s at Luzon and the early loss of the Philippines in general. However, the memoirs and papers of Brereton and Rogers prove that MacArthur cannot be solely held accountable. Upon hearing of the attack on Hawaii on December 8, MacArthur's Air Chief, Major General Lewis Brereton intended to speak directly to MacArthur to advocate engaging the Japanese forces on Formosa, 500 miles north.<sup>183</sup> But Sutherland intercepted him, stating that MacArthur was too busy to see him, and instead suggested to the Air Chief that a reconnaissance flight precede the operation.<sup>184</sup> In his memoirs, MacArthur argued that had he heard Brereton's plan, he would have denied it right away "an attack on Formosa, with its heavy air concentrations, by our small bomber force without fighter cover, which

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<sup>181</sup> Paul Rogers, *The Good Years*, 94. See James, *Years Vol. II*, 11–12.

<sup>182</sup> Louis Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries: 3 October 1941 - 8 May 1945*, "Manila, 9 November 1941," (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1946), 32.

<sup>183</sup> Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries*, 39; Manchester, *American Caesar*, 207–209.

<sup>184</sup> James, *Years Vol. II*, 7.

because of the great distance involved and the limited range of the fighters was impossible, [it] would have been suicidal.”<sup>185</sup>

Around 0800 on December 8, approximately five hours after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the island’s early warning radar system spotted an incoming aircraft formation. This alert forced the bombers, staged at Clark, to get airborne to avoid being caught on the ground. The attack, however, was meant for the northern cities in Luzon, yet the planes remained aloft.<sup>186</sup>

Herein lies the historical issue surrounding the Clark Field disaster. Who ordered the attack on Formosa and why did MacArthur delay? According to MacArthur, Brereton, and Rogers’ accounts, one thing remains clear about the morning of December 8: MacArthur and Brereton only spoke through a proxy, Sutherland. Historiographers have several varied accounts of that morning all in agreement that MacArthur ordered the attack, but primary sources fail to support this claim. According to biographer D. Clayton James, MacArthur waited three hours, and between 10:00 to 11:00 A.M. decided to delegate to Brereton operational discretion of the B-17s.<sup>187</sup> William Manchester states that Brereton “received a call from MacArthur himself, approving an attack on Japanese bases late in the afternoon, after the aerial photographs had been developed and evaluated.”<sup>188</sup> Geoffrey Perret says that MacArthur called Brereton at 10:14 A.M. and “gave him permission to make a reconnaissance flight over Formosa.”<sup>189</sup> Brereton never claimed he was awarded such authority. He stated in his diary that “General Sutherland advised that General MacArthur had decided that a reconnaissance mission could be sent to Formosa.”<sup>190</sup> He never claimed he spoke directly with MacArthur. Either way, with orders received, the

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<sup>185</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 120.

<sup>186</sup> Rogers, *The Good Years*, 95.

<sup>187</sup> James, *Years Vol. II*, 8.

<sup>188</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 209.

<sup>189</sup> Perret, *Old Soldiers*, 250.

<sup>190</sup> Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries*, “8 December 1941,” 40.

bombers landed back at Clark so equipment could be installed for the Formosa recon flight.<sup>191</sup>

When the B-17s returned to Clark, it had been eight hours since receiving notice of the Pearl Harbor attack. The reason behind the delay has been debated, but no definitive answer has been reached. Manchester excuses MacArthur by comparing his lack of action similar to Napoleon at Waterloo and Washington at Brandywine, simple: input overload.<sup>192</sup> MacArthur, like most Americans in December 1941, was shocked at the news of the attack on Hawaii. Regardless of the excuse, it is unmistakable that MacArthur failed that morning to lead his forces on the Philippines. The consequences of waiting, and then (possibly) delegating control ended in catastrophe for General MacArthur with his own war plan hanging in the balance.

In regard to the B-17s' return to Clark, Brereton wrote that the Clark Field Commander, Colonel Eubank, "sent a coded radio message recalling the bombers. The bombers trickled back to Clark Field, refueled, and prepared to execute the orders—three planes to go on reconnaissance to Formosa and the rest to be briefed for an attack."<sup>193</sup> Frazier Hunt agrees with Brereton's account, that the Clark Field Commander ordered their return, but for an undisclosed reason, and no mention of Brereton's plan.<sup>194</sup> MacArthur vehemently denied the conversation ever happened, "Brereton never at any time recommended or suggested an attack on Formosa to me."<sup>195</sup> Just like he said earlier, it would have been suicidal. This means no one is exactly right about what happened that morning and the Clark Field disaster. The fog of war descended upon the Philippines, and Sutherland and Brereton are both culpable when it comes to the disaster, but neither held overall command. The military attributes blame to the most senior commander in the case of a disaster or accident. As USAFFE, MacArthur was ultimately responsible, and thus

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<sup>191</sup> James, *Years Vol. II*, 8.

<sup>192</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 206.

<sup>193</sup> Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries*, "8 December 1941," 41.

<sup>194</sup> Hunt, *Untold Story*, 224.

<sup>195</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 120.

charged with the loss of his aircraft. He should have personally conferred with Brereton that morning and drawn up a cohesive plan for his air force. If that authority was delegated, or if Sutherland took initiative, does not alleviate the fact that MacArthur failed to work with his Air Chief. At the time of the attack, the new order of B-17s had not yet arrived. In this emergency, MacArthur should have recognized his air force's vulnerability and immediately sent them out of range.

It was now 1130, and the air warning system alerted Clark again of a new attack inbound for Luzon. The dedicated air defense fighter squadron for Clark airfield was in the process of refueling and unexpected dust clouds had furthered delayed the fighters launch schedule. The B-17s were still stuck at Clark awaiting the reconnaissance equipment, which had to be flown in from Manila, and now they were without air cover as the incoming Japanese fighters and bombers zeroed in on the helpless aircraft.<sup>196</sup> The communication hub was destroyed, making it impossible to contact other airfields for support.<sup>197</sup> It was a perfect storm, that all could have been prevented by MacArthur.

Of the 35 B-17s on the islands, seventeen were all that had survived the attack, because they were safe on the southern island of Mindanao. 55 of the 72 P-40s on the islands had all been destroyed.<sup>198</sup> MacArthur had every opportunity in those early hours on the 8th to sortie his aircraft to Mindanao, which was safe and secure. Yes, Del Monte field on Mindanao was waiting for a separate delivery of B-17s, but still had the proper field space to accommodate the B-17s at Clark for emergency purposes.<sup>199</sup> In the event of an attack upon the sovereignty of the United States, the first step in any war plan should be to guarantee the safety of the country's defensive assets by ensuring their positions are secure. Even the Japanese believed in the dispersion of critical aircraft. Captain Bunzo Shibata was a Japanese pilot who participated in the raid against Clark Field. Shibata gave a testimony in 1945 to the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey stating: "We were very worried

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<sup>196</sup> James, *Years Vol. II*, 9.

<sup>197</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 211–212.

<sup>198</sup> James, *Years Vol. II*, 4.

<sup>199</sup> Hunt, *Untold Story*, 224.

because we were sure after learning of Pearl Harbor you would disperse your planes or make an attack on our base at Formosa.”<sup>200</sup> Luzon was a natural striking point and well within range of the enemy’s air fields on Formosa. MacArthur knew this and it was the driving reason why he ordered the previous bombers to Del Monte airfield. At 0340 that morning, he should have sent for Brereton to discuss options instead of having Sutherland act as surrogate. MacArthur knew the status of his aircraft, knew they were within range of the enemy, and should have dealt directly with Brereton to save them. Losing airstrips can be salvaged, but losing squadrons of fighters and bombers is irreconcilable. MacArthur made a critical error, that impacted the rest of the Philippine campaign.

In hindsight, saving his air force would not have delayed the eventual capitulation of his command in the Philippines. Even MacArthur concedes his air force was nothing more than a “token force” and “they were hopelessly outnumbered and never had a chance of winning.”<sup>201</sup> The American garrison on the Philippines was doomed from the beginning. It was not included in the defensive structure of the United States before the war began, and the Rainbow-5 war plan stated the command “should hold out for from four to six months.”<sup>202</sup> Even the Army’s Official History of WWII states that according to Rainbow-5: “The only American possession of importance in the area, the Philippines, had virtually been written off as indefensible in a war with Japan.”<sup>203</sup> Adopting the MacArthur Plan in an effort to save the archipelago was done in vain. No matter what MacArthur did after the Japanese attacked Hawaii, his actions only delayed the inevitable. Instead of being forced to escape the Philippines in March, with remaining forces surrendering in May, saving his air force might have meant escaping in May and the surrender happening later that summer. A map of the Philippines and the disposition of the allied airfields is shown in Figure 1.

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<sup>200</sup> United States Strategic Bombing Survey, “Interrogation of Captain Shibata, Bunzo, 18 Nov 1945,” In *Interrogations of Japanese Officials Vol. II* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1946), 379.

<sup>201</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 120.

<sup>202</sup> MacArthur, 121.

<sup>203</sup> Louis Morton, *The War in the Pacific: Strategy and Command: The First Two Years* (Washington, DC: United States Army, 1962), 87.

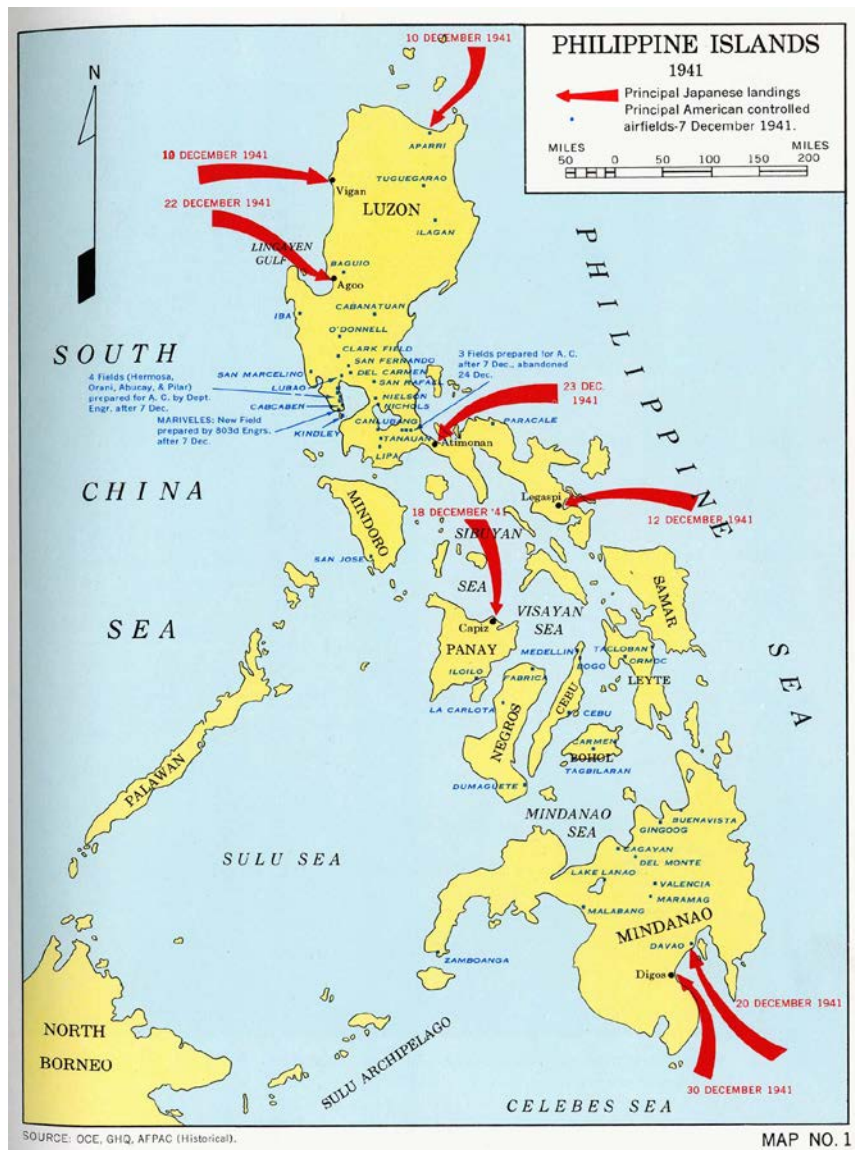


Figure 1. The Philippines, December 1941. Japanese Landings and Allied Airfield Locations.<sup>204</sup>

From January to March 1942, MacArthur deservedly earned the nickname: Dugout Doug. After January 10, MacArthur did not visit the front lines on Bataan again. MacArthur’s command was based on the island of Corregidor, lying in Manila Bay, in plain view of the Bataan peninsula. All it took was a short boat ride to the peninsula and then a ride in an

<sup>204</sup> Source: “Philippine Islands,” University of Texas Library, accessed July 15, 2018, [https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/engineers\\_v1\\_1947/philippine\\_islands\\_1941.jpg](https://legacy.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/engineers_v1_1947/philippine_islands_1941.jpg).

awaiting jeep to take him to the front. This directly contradicted his actions during WWI. His daring midnight trench raids and living like his soldiers had earned him fame in France, but when faced with an opportunity to inspire his soldiers in the face of destruction, he stayed on Corregidor until his fateful departure in March. This can be interpreted as a change in his character, however, it is more so a change of position that adjusted MacArthur's methods. MacArthur was still the same man he was in 1918, but now he was in position of supreme command. If a mission MacArthur led failed there was always someone above him who could be blamed or attributed to the loss, however, the Philippines in 1942 presented a different prospect. After his visit in early January, he recognized the fate of his command, the soldiers he led, and the plan he had constructed: defeat. There was no one else to blame except MacArthur himself, and he could not face his greatest failure by visiting the soldiers he had doomed. This failure was the driving force behind each of MacArthur's actions following his escape from the Philippines. He did recover and reconcile the mistakes made, but it took nearly three years of bloody fighting to return and free the soldiers he left behind. The grand strategy he developed while in Australia, and defended to Admiral Chester Nimitz and President Roosevelt, was always meant to lead back to the Philippines so he could right his wrongs and turn defeat into victory.<sup>205</sup>

## **B. MACARTHUR'S THEORIES: WWII**

### **1. Strategic/Operational**

The strategic level of war incorporates the theater and national politics level; whereas the operational level involves campaigns and major operations. Strategy as defined by the military theorist, Antoine Henri de Jomini is "the art of properly directing masses upon the theater of war, either for defense or invasion."<sup>206</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz defined strategy as "the use of an engagement for the purpose of the war."<sup>207</sup> Strategic theory involves both definitions through the incorporation of operations and campaigns to achieve victory in either defense or invasion. Strategy is the end game, and operational theory is the means to

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<sup>205</sup> See the entire ballad of "Dugout Doug" in James, *Years Vol. II*, 66.

<sup>206</sup> Antoine Henri de Jomini, *The Art of War* (Virginia: Wilder Publications, 2008), 7.

<sup>207</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 177.

accomplish victory. It encompasses the development of policy, the employment of forces, the plan for victory, and how to enforce the peace. Based on Clausewitz's writings, in war there are only two potential aims: limited or unlimited. Clausewitz dictated identifying your aim is "the first, the supreme, the most far-reaching act of judgment that a statesman and commander have to make."<sup>208</sup> Limited means anything less than regime change and unlimited means the goal is overthrow the regime. Strategic theory is used to determine that aim and operational theory determines how to accomplish it. Although MacArthur never wrote down his own definition of strategy, he agrees with both theorists. He did come close in 1939 when he inspired Charles Willoughby's *Maneuver in War*. Willoughby wrote: "Battle in the broadest sense should mean the ensemble of operations; the operation of a large unit is not a single act; it is an aggregate of smaller, individual operations." He continues, "The battle is the aggregate of a series of separate combats, the sum of which produces success."<sup>209</sup> MacArthur learned during WWI how strategy covers the theater, and during WWII how decisive campaigns can drastically affect the outcome of the war, ultimately leading to victory.

**a. *Envelop, Isolate, and Bypass and Using Combined Arms***

Envelop, isolate, and bypass, or as MacArthur would say "hit 'em where they ain't" and then "let 'em die on the vine."<sup>210</sup> MacArthur's goal in 1942 was to render the Japanese base at Rabaul, on the island of New Britain, ineffective. The plan took over a year and a half to accomplish, but was the first step to returning to the Philippines. This strategic theory was the basis of MacArthur's campaigns and major operations for the majority of World War II and MacArthur claimed this style of victory as his own.

The plan for Rabaul, just like the plan for most of the Japanese fortresses in MacArthur's path, was not to attack the base by meeting the mass of the enemy's force on their turf, but instead, cut-it-off piecemeal from its supply and communications chain. MacArthur would invade nearby islands, that were not heavily defended, to establish airfields

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<sup>208</sup> Clausewitz, 88.

<sup>209</sup> Willoughby, *Maneuver in War*, 58.

<sup>210</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 169.



and bases of his own to isolate the Japanese main force. From these nearby island bases he could effectively envelop the Japanese stronghold, removing it from the strategic equation. This theory was founded from MacArthur's WWI experiences at Côte de Châtillon from when the 42nd enveloped the fortress and isolated it from the rest of the Germans. The objective was ultimate destruction at the battle of Côte de Châtillon, but now, in WWII, the theory had evolved to bypassing the stronghold.

As MacArthur described it to Chief of Staff, General George Marshall, "My plan which is now being worked out in detail contemplates a progressive movement."<sup>211</sup> This progressive movement was the strategic theory behind Operation Cartwheel. This type of strategy was not quick. It was meant to beat the enemy not by killing him, but by removing him from the war. By invading lightly defended areas, MacArthur pushed inland quickly. He built airfields to support the ground element and his forces pushed out. The Japanese on either side of MacArthur's landing areas were then cut off from each other causing disorganization and lack of communication between the two sides.

It was April 1942, and MacArthur had arrived in Australia under orders of the president to assume supreme command of the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA). Over the course of the next five months, the Japanese sphere of influence and power reached its zenith and began to recede after suffering defeats to the Americans at Coral Sea in May, followed by Midway in June. The Japanese attempts to encircle Australia had been halted. Now it was the American's turn to shift the tide of battle. The main offensive had begun against Japanese strongholds, starting with the Solomon island chain leading to New Britain and Rabaul as the first critical objective.

The Japanese had been building a substantial naval and air base on the tip of New Britain since they captured the small port in January 1942. By August, it was a virtual fortress. Paul Rogers, MacArthur's stenographer, provides a description of the base: "The airfields and harbor were ringed with an array of antiaircraft batteries whose gunners fired with a consistent precision that soon became the grudging admiration and despair of Allied pilots." Rogers recorded the pilot's reactions after baring witness to Rabaul's antiaircraft

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<sup>211</sup> Rogers, *The Good Years*, 302.

defense, “heavy, intense, and accurate.”<sup>212</sup> General George Kenney, MacArthur’s Air Chief remarked to Sutherland about Rabaul’s defenses and encouraging his own bombers to take on the raids, “Dick, you know what it’s like up over Rabaul. But my boys will kick their behinds or I’ll know why.”<sup>213</sup>

MacArthur wanted to avoid direct engagement. He allowed for air raids against Rabaul, but avoided an amphibious landing. Instead he devised Operation Cartwheel. MacArthur described his plan in his memoirs, “I accordingly applied my major efforts to the seizure of areas which were suitable for airfields and base development, but which were only lightly defended by the enemy.”<sup>214</sup> He needed airfields because he lacked carriers to maintain air supremacy. The restrictions placed on him by the ground-based aircraft requirement forced him to adjust his strategy. One of the key ingredients in MacArthur’s strategy was the use of long-range bombers as strategic assets to inflict heavy losses upon the enemy. In a letter to Marshall he wrote, “air supremacy is essential to success.” Kenney’s air force of land-based aircraft was “utterly essential and will immediately cut the enemy lines from Japan to his conquered territory to the southward.”<sup>215</sup> Kenney told MacArthur that the “primary mission ... was to take out the Jap air strength until we owned the air over New Guinea.”<sup>216</sup> MacArthur agreed.

MacArthur adamantly refused to conduct an offensive without ground-based support.<sup>217</sup> Waiting until the air is owned means stretching the timeline of the campaign which could afford the enemy valuable time to regroup, reinforce, and seize the initiative. MacArthur’s approach eliminates this concern. As he said, “I have always felt, however, that to endeavor to formulate in advance details of a campaign is hazardous, as it tends to warp

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<sup>212</sup> Rogers, 295.

<sup>213</sup> Rogers, 277.

<sup>214</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 169.

<sup>215</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 480.

<sup>216</sup> Kenney, *General Kenney Reports*, 44.

<sup>217</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 546. Quoted from Kenney’s Diary October 20, 1944, MacArthur to Kenney: “I’m never going to pull another show without land based air, and if I even suggest a thing, I want you to kick me where it will do some good.”

the judgment of a commander when faced with unexpected conditions brought about by the uncertainties of enemy reaction or enemy initiative.” “I therefore never attempted fixed dates for anything but the start of operations,” he claimed.<sup>218</sup> If the enemy reinforced Rabaul, it was inconsequential to MacArthur’s operation. MacArthur was still going to strategically bombard the base, and still invade lightly defended areas. He was not going to attack the main enemy force because it did not support his aim of letting the enemy “die on the vine.” Owning the sky and relying on ground-based aircraft, long-range bombers were a critical enabler for his campaigns across the Southwest Pacific Area.

On August 7, 1942, Kenney’s air force led a bombing raid on Rabaul’s airfields. For the next five days Kenney’s pilots bombed Rabaul and the surrounding airfields in New Guinea. “The photographs showed a lot of wrecks that wouldn’t fly for a long time if ever, some piles of ashes where airplanes used to be, and runways full of bomb craters which had not been filled up for the past two days. We hadn’t seen a Jap airplane over New Guinea for five days.”<sup>219</sup> Japanese air superiority had been crushed in a week; MacArthur’s plan was coming to fruition.

Over the course of the next ten months, MacArthur led landing after landing in an effort to isolate and envelop the Japanese stronghold. Operation Cartwheel strove to advance through western New Guinea “because that route would provide the best opportunity for the complete utilization of the Allied ground-air-navy team. Such a drive, penetrating Japan’s defense perimeter along the New Guinea line, would permit the by-passing of heavily defended areas.” MacArthur’s goal was to keep the pressure on and use a combination of arms to fulfill his strategy: “the land-based bomber line would again be moved by the successive occupation of new air sites; ground forces would be rapidly deployed forward by air transport and amphibious movements; additional plane and ship bases would be established as each objective was taken.”<sup>220</sup> This is where MacArthur shines as a strategist. His use of the combined arms strategy to seize objectives decisively changed how war was fought. No one

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<sup>218</sup> Whitney, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History*, 185.

<sup>219</sup> Kenney, *General Kenney Reports*, 63.

<sup>220</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 187.

before MacArthur had ever incorporated amphibious landings with airborne operations; all while being supported by ground-based aircraft. It was an evolution of the conduct of war. As MacArthur stated: “New conditions and new weapons require new and imaginative methods for solution and application. Wars are never won in the past.”<sup>221</sup> This was a genius move by MacArthur that shaped how the United States conducted warfare for the future.

After nearly a year since MacArthur took command, Operation Cartwheel began as shown in Figure 2 with the invasion of the Admiralty Islands on February 29, 1943; Gloucester, March 9; Atiape and Hollandia, April 22; Wakde, May 17; Biak, May 27; Noemfoor, July 2; and Sansapor, on July 30.<sup>222</sup>



Figure 2. MacArthur’s Westward Drive Along New Guinea<sup>223</sup>

<sup>221</sup> MacArthur, 169.

<sup>222</sup> MacArthur, 186. See Herman, *American Warrior*, 479–491.

<sup>223</sup> Source: MacArthur’s General Staff, *Reports of General MacArthur: The Campaigns of MacArthur in the Pacific Vol. I* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1966), 135.

MacArthur's strategy worked exactly as he had planned. He later claimed the Japanese combined force "could have beaten me, but I could destroy the parts individually." Avoiding the Japanese economy of force, isolating the enemy, and enveloping them had worked beautifully. He did lament "With carriers I would not have to creep along this way, but could strike quickly and decisively."<sup>224</sup> However, this methodical approach removed the Japanese threat from the region. By being forced to attack lightly defended areas for the sake of his land-based aircraft, he was able to cut the supply lines of enemy troops in the immediate area. This meant MacArthur could take advantage of the disorganization of the Japanese and essentially mop them up without causing heavy allied casualties. Before MacArthur's strategy, the enemy's force was considered a center of gravity. By destroying that center of gravity, it meant winning the battle. MacArthur flipped that theory upside down. No longer was it required to attack the main enemy mass. MacArthur followed Sun Tzu's teachings, "Thus, those skilled in war subdue the enemy's army without battle."<sup>225</sup> Now there was a new solution that meant for less Allied deaths. This was how MacArthur eventually claimed those styles of victory as his own, because he was writing a new book on war. The Central Pacific Supreme Commander had carriers at his disposal and was able to strike "quickly and decisively," not methodically. MacArthur denounced the island-hopping campaign espoused by his counterparts in the Pacific:

I explained that this was the very opposite of what was termed "island-hopping," which is the gradual pushing back of the enemy by direct frontal pressure, with the consequent heavy casualties which would certainly be involved. There would be no need for storming the mass of islands held by the enemy. "Island-hopping," I said, "with extravagant losses and slow progress, is not my idea of how to end the war as soon and as cheaply as possible."<sup>226</sup>

The strategic theory behind Operation Cartwheel and the Papuan campaign of 1942 and 1943 all led to the fulfillment of MacArthur's promise to the Philippines and the

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<sup>224</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 167.

<sup>225</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, trans. Samuel B. Griffith (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), 79.

<sup>226</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 169.

survivors on Bataan: “I shall return.”<sup>227</sup> Cartwheel was a stepping-stone to isolating the Philippines. The Papaun campaign forced the Japanese to shift their defensive perimeter northward, providing a window to the Philippines.

## **2. Tactical/Personal**

The tactical level of war involves individual battles and small-unit engagements, all adding to the success of the campaign, which contributes to the grand strategy set forth by the Commander. MacArthur’s role as a tactician is illustrated during the capture of Manila as part of the Philippines Campaign between January and February 1945. During this campaign, he exhibited not only his theories on tactics, but also offered insights into how to personally lead on the front. The primacy of the objective and leading from the front was how MacArthur led his men upon his fateful return to the men he had abandoned nearly three years prior.

### ***a. Primacy of the Objective and Leading from the Front***

MacArthur outlined his strategy:

With my 8th Army off the southern coast of Luzon, with a firm hold on Mindoro, I will threaten landings at Legaspi, Batangas and other southern ports and draw the bulk of the Japanese into the south. This done, I will land the 6th Army in an amphibious enveloping movement on the exposed northern shore, thus cutting off the enemy’s supplies from Japan. This would draw the enemy back to the north, leaving the 8th Army to land against only weak opposition on the south coast in another amphibious movement. Both forces ashore, with but minor loss, will then close like a vise on the enemy deprived of supplies and destroy him.<sup>228</sup>

MacArthur’s plan made sense and abided by the strategic and operational theories explained previously. Landing north, behind the enemy, exposed their supply lines. The northern force could then seize that advantage, sever the vulnerability, and inflict disorganization. Then, following the disorganization, land to the south, and catch the

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<sup>227</sup> Byron Darnton, “General Tells Aim,” *New York Times*, March 21, 1942, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1942/03/21/85523871.html?pageNumber=1>.

<sup>228</sup> Whitney, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History*, 181.

enemy at a disadvantage with little opportunity to regain their previous positions without engaging in deadly combat.

Securing Lingayen Gulf was essential, but the main objective was always the re-taking of Manila. Manila was a logistics hub that offered rail, road, and shipping transportation; therefore its military significance is without question. MacArthur knew this, however, the principle driving factor for the General was the prisoners still being held within the city limits of Manila. Those prisoners comprised the men he had left behind and freeing them weighed heavily on MacArthur's mind. "The thought of their destruction after so many years and with deliverance so near, struck him to the soul," described one of MacArthur's staffers, Courtney Whitney.<sup>229</sup> Intelligence gathered from escapees encamped with Filipino guerillas told the advancing Americans that "with every step that our soldiers took toward Santo Tomas University, Bilibid, Cabanatuan and Los Banos, where the prisoners were held, the Japanese guarding them had become more sadistic."<sup>230</sup> MacArthur needed to capture Manila.

Therefore, it makes sense that MacArthur emphasized the importance of the objective over the destruction of the enemy. When the land force commander, General Walter Krueger, was hesitating, MacArthur barked at him, "Where are your casualties? Why are you holding the I Corps back? It ought to be moving south."<sup>231</sup> "Go to Manila. Go around the Nips, bounce off the Nips, but go to Manila!"<sup>232</sup> MacArthur pushed his forces incessantly even though Krueger had every right to be tactically cautious in advancing his forces. He argued that the pace "depended upon reconstruction of the many destroyed bridges, some very large ones, rehabilitation of the roads, and the Manila-Dagupan Railroad," not to mention the Japanese, waiting for them behind every corner of

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<sup>229</sup> Whitney, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History*, 188.

<sup>230</sup> Gerald Astor, *Crisis in the Pacific: The Battles for the Philippine Islands by the Men Who Fought Them* (New York: Random House, 1996), 488.

<sup>231</sup> Kevin Z. Holzimmer, *General Walter Krueger: Unsung Hero of the Pacific War* (Kansas City, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 216.

<sup>232</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 571.

the jungle.<sup>233</sup> MacArthur might have been too adamant in his demands and unnecessarily risked the lives of his men, but the port of Manila offered relief for his forces stuck in the Lingayen Gulf being harassed by Japanese kamikaze attacks, and it meant the rescue of the American prisoners. The objective was the most important tactically. It meant the survival of the Luzon operation and a timely completion of the Philippine campaign building toward the strategy behind Operation Downfall and the invasion of Japan.

MacArthur believed in the tactical objective and he visited the front regularly to ensure its success. The ballad of “Dugout Doug” had been created on this island three years prior, but now it was no longer heard, if even remembered. The situation had changed. MacArthur now had the full support of both the U.S. military as well as the U.S. government. Prior to the United States involvement in WWII, the policy-makers wrote the Philippines off as expendable. Secretary of War Stimson, when asked about MacArthur’s army by the Prime Minister of England, Winston Churchill, said “There are times when men have to die.”<sup>234</sup> Times had changed. The “Fighting Dude” had returned since those dark days on Corregidor and Dugout Doug had all but faded away.

These visits demonstrated MacArthur’s courage under fire had return and the positive influences they had on the morale and fighting spirit of the men on the front. MacArthur made that point to Egeberg, “It does help morale, you know, when they see a major or colonel or a general with them.” He argued that, “Something happens to the men.”<sup>235</sup> MacArthur, always recognizable by “the Look” that he had maintained since WWI, with his floppy hat and sunglasses, became such a regular along the front lines that the soldiers rarely were startled when they saw the general walking alongside them. After the amphibious landing on Leyte the morning of October 20, 1944, MacArthur went ashore, leaving his battleship for Red Beach at 1:00pm. Upon his landing, MacArthur remembered “our beachhead troops were only a few yards away, stretched out behind logs and other cover, laying down fire on the area immediately inland. There were still Japanese

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<sup>233</sup> Holzimmer, *General Walter Krueger*, 217.

<sup>234</sup> William Manchester and Paul Reid, *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill, Defender of the Realm, 1940–1965* (New York: Little Brown and Company, 2012), 468.

<sup>235</sup> Egeberg, *The General: MacArthur and the Man He Called “Doc,”* 153.



in the undergrowth not many yards away.”<sup>236</sup> It was there that he made the most memorable speech of his entire career:

I have returned. By the grace of Almighty God our forces stand again on Philippine soil—soil consecrated in the blood of our two peoples. We have come, dedicated and committed, to the task of destroying every vestige of enemy control over your daily lives, and of restoring, upon a foundation of indestructible strength, the liberties of your people...rally to me. Let the indomitable spirit of Bataan and Corregidor lead on. As the lines of battle roll forward to bring you with the zone of operations, rise and strike. Strike at every favorable opportunity. For your homes and hearths, strike! In the name of your sacred dead, strike! Let no heart be faint. Let every arm be steeled. The guidance of divine God points the way. Follow in His Name to the Holy Grail of righteous victory.<sup>237</sup>

Delivering this speech in the midst of battle as the waves of Americans are crossing the beach means show much more than from the deck of his flagship out in the harbor. MacArthur used that effect to his advantage.

MacArthur’s visits to the front, although impactful, were rather reckless. It should never be recommended to the commander in the field to expose himself to enemy fire. Teaching this method of leadership to both junior and senior officers is dangerous, for it might encourage imitators who get killed as a consequence of trying to be MacArthur-esque. MacArthur’s style of leadership means accepting an unduly amount of risk. However, just as Arthur Herman stated, “running risk is the price of leadership.”<sup>238</sup> He has a point, and a combat veteran should understand the necessary risk to accept. Leaders should visit their men and assist them in any capacity they can, but instead of standing in the face of bullets, they should seek cover first.

MacArthur’s tactics and leadership style gained him both positive and negative notoriety. Throughout WWII, MacArthur allowed his passions to dictate his actions, yet remained calculated. Since leaving in March 1942, returning to the Philippines and fulfilling his promise had been in the forefront of MacArthur’s mind. Justifiably so,

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<sup>236</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 216.

<sup>237</sup> MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks*, 132–133.

<sup>238</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 610.

however it can be seen that such a passionate influence upon MacArthur's strategy can certainly lead to potential disaster. Admiral Chester Nimitz reflected on MacArthur's passion after the Pacific Strategy Conference in July 1944, stating MacArthur "made an oration of some length on the impossibility of bypassing the Philippines, his sacred obligations there—redemption of the 17 million people—blood on his soul—deserted by American people—etc., etc."<sup>239</sup>

Yes, MacArthur's passion played a role, but it did not lead to disaster. Building his strategy based on a return to the Philippines was fundamentally sound when compared to the Formosa strategy of the Central Pacific theater. President Roosevelt and Admiral Nimitz doubted MacArthur's strategy; however, MacArthur was able to prove them wrong. The airbases on the Philippines seriously threatened the fleets advancing toward Formosa, and with the introduction of the kamikaze there was little defense of this new type of weapon. Its effect was devastating for the Americans. Whitney recalls the kamikaze attacks in *MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History*: "This kind of suicide attack, with the Japanese pilot turning himself and his plane into a huge, sacrificial bomb, was virtually impossible to stop, and the only defense against it was evasive action. The most massive wall of steel sent up by anti-aircraft seemed completely ineffective."<sup>240</sup> Capturing the Philippines in the buildup toward a possible invasion of the Japanese home islands was necessary in hindsight, proving MacArthur's strategy as the correct course of action. Seizing the objective and leading from the front helped MacArthur secure his place as one of the greatest generals in U.S. Army history. MacArthur's post-war role as the effective ruler of occupied Japan has been well covered in scholarly literature and is outside the scope of this thesis. He was in Tokyo when he learned of North Korea's invasion of South Korea in June 1950.

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<sup>239</sup> E. B. Potter, *Nimitz* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1976), 291.

<sup>240</sup> Whitney, *MacArthur: His Rendezvous with History*, 183.

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## VI. MACARTHUR KNOWS BEST: DOUGLAS MACARTHUR 1950–1964

As you point out, we must win. There is no substitute for victory.<sup>241</sup>

These fourteen years include the most controversial moments in MacArthur's military career. This timeframe represents when MacArthur transformed from a military genius into a political pariah. He had orchestrated and executed one of the boldest and most successful military operations in American military history, cresting the peak of his career, and only five months later he was shamefully dismissed by the president. MacArthur was sent back to the country he had not set foot in since 1935. This chapter will focus primarily on the Korean War, specifically the landings at Inchon and MacArthur's dismissal. The goal will be to establish what led to the invasion of Inchon and its impact on the war and to explain Truman's influences behind his firing of MacArthur in April 1951.

At the outset of the Korean War, President Truman faced a new and difficult situation. The North Korean Communists invaded the Republic of Korea (ROK) with 90,000 troops on June 25, 1950. Truman was responsible to provide a legitimate response to the Communist threat.<sup>242</sup> Shortly after the North crossed the border, the United Nations Security Council met to draft a resolution in response to the unprovoked aggression. On 25 and 27 June, they issued an American sponsored statement, declaring the attack as a "breach of peace," and that "urgent military measures are required to restore international peace and security."<sup>243</sup> Within a week, Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command (CINCFE), Douglas MacArthur, committed ground forces to the peninsula. Several factors influenced Truman's decision leading to the war to include the Soviet Union gaining nuclear capability, the loss of China to Communism, and Senator Joseph McCarthy's

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<sup>241</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 386.

<sup>242</sup> H. W. Brands, *The General vs. the President: MacArthur and Truman at the Brink of Nuclear War* (New York: Doubleday, 2016), 76–77.

<sup>243</sup> United Nations Security Council, "Resolution 83: Complaint of Aggression Against the Republic of Korea," June 27, 1950, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/82\(1950\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/82(1950)).

speech in Virginia, February 1950. These elements coupled with Truman's reliance on the United Nations' collective security agreements, meant a highly volatile situation at the start of the Cold War, with MacArthur leading the American troops in Korea. Truman had to manage the strategic picture influenced by these existential elements.

The United States, prior to the outbreak of hostilities in June of 1950, faced a bipolar world and a new type of war against Communism. An atomic monopoly held by the United States, helped maintain a delicate balance between the United States and the USSR. America's atomic capability kept in check the superior conventional forces of the Soviet Union and the demobilized forces of the United States. Once the Soviets successfully tested their first atomic weapon, the balance officially shifted toward the Russians. The loss of the monopoly and this shift in the balance created a window of vulnerability, exacerbated two months later by the forfeiture of support for Chiang Kai-shek. Truman's decision to withdraw support for Chiang and the Nationalist party doomed Chiang's party, ultimately forcing him into exile on Formosa.

Four months after China's capitulation to Communism, Senator Joseph McCarthy gave his speech in Wheeling, West Virginia, sparking the Red Scare with his accusations of hundreds of congressmen as being supporters of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party.<sup>244</sup> The Red Scare affected members close to Truman with Secretary of State Dean Acheson being accused by the Senator. America was losing the fight to Communism internationally, and McCarthyism's grip on Washington and the public, made it appear Truman was losing the war domestically. June 25, 1950 proved almost fortuitous for the Truman Presidency. It provided him an opportunity to turn the tide against the Republicans and McCarthyism. Winning the war in Korea would substantiate Truman as a capable president and the leader of a strong political party.

When war began, Truman and the United Nations developed a conflict limiting policy, which meant strictly avoiding any provocation of the Soviet Union or their now-Communist partner China. The president made it abundantly clear to MacArthur, and the UN forces in Korea, not to antagonize or attack any Soviet or Chinese forces either on the

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<sup>244</sup> Brands, *The General vs. the President*, 42.

peninsula or along the borders to Manchuria or the Soviet Union. On June 29, just four days after the invasion, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) explicitly ordered MacArthur to take “special care...to insure that operations in North Korea stay well clear of the frontiers of Manchuria or the Soviet Union.”<sup>245</sup> The goal, per the UN resolution of June 27, 1950, involved the restoration of peace and international order to the region. This meant the initial policy set forth called for the removal of North Korean forces from South Korea, and the reestablishment of South Korean sovereignty. The JCS directed this policy toward MacArthur and his forces under the direction of the United Nations’ police action. As will be seen, despite direct orders and explicit resolutions, Douglas MacArthur believed he knew better than the policymakers and his strategy tried to subvert the policy as ordered.

MacArthur knew of the existential pressures Truman faced regarding the Soviet Union, Formosa, and the UN. He understood Truman’s policy, but MacArthur believed it was the *wrong* policy. The hot war during the Cold War would not be fought in Europe as the administration and its allies thought. War was inevitable and it was going to be fought in Asia, beginning with Korea. MacArthur’s policy strove to defeat Communism in the Far East and he constructed a strategy to fulfill that policy. Once the Chinese intervened and changed the war’s landscape, MacArthur attempted to force the administration to change their policy by strongly advocating for a stronger military strategy against China. His actions from June 1950 to April 1951 demonstrated how he challenged Truman’s policy with his own policy. MacArthur attempted to supplant the policy of the United States with his own to achieve ultimate victory in Korea.

#### **A. MACARTHUR IN COMMAND**

MacArthur turned seventy-years old when he assumed command of the Korean situation. He had just finished five years as the defunct supreme leader of Japan, a country of nearly 80 million. MacArthur and his staff at General Headquarters (GHQ), Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers, Japan (SCAP) had reconstructed war-torn Japan into a

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<sup>245</sup> Department of State, “The Joint Chiefs of Staff to the Commander in Chief, Far East (MacArthur), June 29, 1950,” *Korea, FRUS, 1950*, Vol. VII (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1950), 240–241, <http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs2/1950v07/reference/frus.frus1950v07.i0008.pdf>.

new nation. MacArthur, a five-star general, had not seen the United States since he left, fifteen years prior at the end of his tour as Chief of Staff of the Army. He was regarded as the savior of the Philippines and one of the great American strategists who won World War II in the Pacific theater. Korea presented MacArthur an opportunity to use all of his power and influence to implore the United States to shift its Eurocentric focus to Asia. MacArthur believed this conflict was not solely against the North Koreans, but all of Communism. The Truman administration agreed Korea presented an opportunity to actively roll back Communism in Asia, but maintained that if a hot war were to occur against the Soviet Union, Europe would be the arena, not the Far East. MacArthur made his stance clear in the Senate hearings after his dismissal, “It is my own personal opinion that the greatest political mistake we made in a hundred years in the Pacific was in allowing the Communists to grow in power in China.”<sup>246</sup> Considering he had just defeated the Japanese at the cost of thousands of American and allied lives, this statement is rather significant. Korea meant he could squash Communism in the Far East and restore peace and democracy to the region he called home. MacArthur saw the progress of Asian power as unstoppable. In his address to Congress he highlights this shift in focus,

Whether one adheres to the concept of colonialization or not, this is the direction of Asian progress and it may not be stopped. It is a corollary to the shift of the world economic frontiers, as the whole epicenter of world affairs rotates back toward the area whence it started. In this situation it becomes vital that our own country orient its policies in consonance with this basic evolutionary condition rather than pursue a course blind to the reality that the colonial era is now past and the Asian peoples covet the right to shape their own free destiny. What they seek now is friendly guidance, understanding, and support, not imperious direction; the dignity of equality, not the shame of subjugation.<sup>247</sup>

MacArthur was bold by predicting the future of the world’s economy lies in Asia, not in Europe. His claim that colonialism had ended was profound, but also in line with most of

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<sup>246</sup> United States Senate, *Military Situation in the Far East: Hearings Before the Committee on Armed Services and the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, Eighty-Second Congress, First Session, To Conduct an Inquiry Into the Military Situation in the Far East and the Facts Surrounding the Relief of General of the Army Douglas MacArthur From His Assignments in That Area* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1951), 32. Herein cited as *Hearings*.

<sup>247</sup> MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks*, 244–245.

the political leaders of the day. The issue was that Washington did not share the same sentiment about the future of the world and the balance of power when combatting the Soviet Union in the Cold War. MacArthur's address demonstrated another example of him being doubted and criticized by his contemporaries. He was doubted before WWI and the use of National Guardsmen on the frontlines, he was doubted at West Point for changing the curriculum and reinforcing the citizen-soldier paradigm, he was doubted in WWII when planning the strategy to defeat the Japanese, but each and every time his predictions and methods proved correct. These consistent episodes imbued unbridled self-assurance upon MacArthur and emboldened his actions when dealing with the administration during the Korean War.

From June 1950 to April 1951, MacArthur stood against his contemporaries and superiors in the pursuit of victory. Despite the restraints established by President Truman and the JCS, MacArthur believed in the use of unlimited means. Whatever it took to accomplish the mission, as MacArthur said himself, "to support our forces committed to Korea and bring hostilities to an end with the least possible delay and at a saving of countless American and Allied lives."<sup>248</sup> When policy or indecision affected MacArthur's strategic goals he responded by acting under his own authority and discretion, because he believed he was right. Military officers who act on their disagreements with orders, or who act without permission, are guilty of insubordination. When the potential consequences of a rogue general could result in the outbreak of a third world war, or worse, a nuclear exchange, these actions must be kept in check and prevented.

MacArthur and Truman's contradictory interpretations of Formosa's greater strategic role led the two men to a near breaking point in late July 1950. Prior to the war, there had been strong support for the White House to reconsider sending American forces to Formosa in support of Nationalist China and Chiang Kai-Shek. When the North invaded, the Nationalists saw it as an opportunity to assist the United States and gain favor in return. Truman rejected the request of Formosan support to fight the North Koreans, but remained concerned the Chinese might use the North Korean's invasion as a catalyst to launch their

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<sup>248</sup> MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks*, 249.



own invasion of Formosa. On July 27 the National Security Council proposed a survey of Formosa's military capability and Truman approved.<sup>249</sup> MacArthur made the trip on July 31. Afterwards, MacArthur supported Chiang's plight. He wrote "Arrangements have been completed for effective coordination between the American forces under my command and those of the Chinese government the better to meet any attack which a hostile force might be foolish enough to attempt. Such an attack would, in my opinion, stand little chance of success."<sup>250</sup> Although MacArthur was referring to an outside invasion of Formosa, this agreed upon arrangements held diplomatic considerations between the two leaders, and thereby the government of the United States and Nationalist China.

This trip illustrated the long-standing difference between MacArthur and the JCS, the cabinet, and the president. After returning from Formosa, MacArthur reported to the JCS about his meeting with Chiang and the intended support. The Secretary of Defense, Louis Johnson, wrote back tersely, "No one other than the President as Commander-in-Chief has the authority to order or authorize preventive action against concentrations on the 'Chinese' mainland...The most vital national interest requires that no action of ours precipitate general war or give excuse to others to do so."<sup>251</sup> MacArthur argued that he understood the president's policy on Formosa, and knew Truman previously rejected Chiang's proposal to join the fight under the UN. Despite claiming he understood the policy, he went forward with the agreements he made with Chiang. MacArthur planned to dispatch a Command Liaison Group to survey the military establishment on Formosa, order the Seventh Fleet to continue its patrols in the Formosa Strait, and have his aircraft conduct reconnaissance flights over coastal China to determine the imminence of any attack. MacArthur also made provisions to have American fighters land on Formosa to refuel as well, an explicit act of military cooperation between nations. Truman wanted a more first-hand perspective into MacArthur's actions and his interpretations of the strategic priorities

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<sup>249</sup> James, *Years Vol. III*, 453.

<sup>250</sup> Douglas MacArthur, "General MacArthur's Statement on His Trip to Formosa," August 1, 1950. *Truman Papers*, accessed August 1, 2018, [https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-08-01&documentid=ma-2-3&pagenumber=1](https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-08-01&documentid=ma-2-3&pagenumber=1).

<sup>251</sup> Louis Johnson to Douglas MacArthur, August 3, 1950, as quoted in James, *Years Vol. III*, 454.

of the United States. Under Truman's orders, Special Assistant to the president, Averell Harriman traveled to Tokyo to confer with MacArthur and report to DC.<sup>252</sup>

Harriman gained an in-depth review of MacArthur and his perceptions of the war in Korea. MacArthur and Harriman both felt hesitant after the conference. MacArthur wrote, "He left me with a feeling of concern and uneasiness that the situation in the Far East was little understood and mistakenly downgraded in high circles in Washington."<sup>253</sup> Harriman told Truman that "I did not feel that we came to a full agreement on the way he believed things should be handled on Formosa and with the Generalissimo. He accepted the president's position and will act accordingly, but without full conviction. He has a strange idea that we should back anybody who will fight Communism."<sup>254</sup> In essence, the crux of the situation behind MacArthur's actions lies in Harriman's statement. The Korean War represented a fight against all of Communism for MacArthur. He wanted to reconcile the greatest mistake made in Asia and rescue China from the throngs of Communism and restore Chiang to power. MacArthur's convictions founded his diplomatic assertions. Harriman noticed it and reported it to Truman. MacArthur wanted to open the war in the peninsula, exactly what Truman and the rest of Washington's inner circle did not. The General posed a significant risk to the administration and his proclivity to represent himself as spokesperson for the United States government. He should have deferred to Truman prior to making promises, which he had no authority to make. Thus, he placed *his* policy over *American* policy.

Despite the Secretary of Defense's firm response and the meeting with Harriman, MacArthur did not change his position. He decided to use one of the lessons he learned prior to WWI: the power of the media and the influence of a letter. On August 17, he responded to a request from the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Chicago with a letter stating that Formosa could be the next target of a "military power hostile to the United States,"

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<sup>252</sup> James, *Years Vol. III*, 455–456.

<sup>253</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 341.

<sup>254</sup> Department of State, "Extracts of a Memorandum of Conversations, by Mr. W. Averell Harriman, Special Assistant to the President, With General MacArthur in Tokyo on August 6 and 8, 1950" *Korea, FRUS, 1950*, Vol. VII (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1950), <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v06/d253>.

and if that happened, then Formosa would be regarded as an “unsinkable aircraft carrier.” MacArthur identified Formosa as a critical member of America’s defensive perimeter in the Pacific, claiming that this perimeter, “if properly maintained would be an invincible defense against aggression. If we hold this line we may have peace—lose it and war is inevitable.”<sup>255</sup> This VFW letter ostensibly linked Truman and his failure to maintain the line against Communism, to the war the United States faced on the peninsula and any future war in the Far East. MacArthur’s words depicted a departure from Truman’s policy, illustrate MacArthur’s policy, and misrepresented United States’ intentions with China and Formosa. This was another instance of MacArthur’s policy challenging Truman’s policy.

## **B. INCHON**

Since late June, MacArthur had been working to conceive a master stroke capable of turning the tide in Korea. While on his first trip to the front, at the Han River in South Korea, he observed the fighting between the two countries. It had been only four days since the North invaded and MacArthur recognized two truths: (1) South Korea was doomed without direct American intervention. MacArthur would be forced to throw his “occupation soldiers into this breach,” and (2) an envelopment operation would be necessary to “destroy his main forces,” to “wrest victory from defeat.”<sup>256</sup> Inchon, codenamed Operation Chromite, was that enveloping maneuver, the prototypical MacArthur amphibious operation that he trademarked in WWII.<sup>257</sup> General Matthew Ridgway, MacArthur’s successor as CINCFE, offered an insight into MacArthur’s planning and situational assessment, “Almost before the rest of us fully comprehended that our nation was at war, MacArthur had begun to plan the amphibious enveloping movement, so characteristic of all his Pacific strategy, that would sever his supply lines, and trap him between anvil and hammer. While others thought of a way to withdraw our forces safely, MacArthur planned victory.”<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 341; MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks*, 219–221.

<sup>256</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 332–334; James, *Years Vol. III*, 426.

<sup>257</sup> MacArthur, 334.

<sup>258</sup> Matthew B. Ridgway, *The Korean War* (New York: Doubleday, 1967), 33.

MacArthur abided by the theories formulated in WWII and planned an envelopment maneuver beginning with an amphibious assault in a lightly defended area. Inchon proved to be the ideal location to launch an assault due to its unnatural tidal ranges that lessened the enemy's conviction of an allied assault. Inchon also supported MacArthur's primacy of the military objective as well through its strategic location to the capital city of Seoul. MacArthur designed this operation as "a turning movement deep into the flank and rear of the enemy that would sever his supply lines and encircle all his forces south of Seoul." MacArthur claimed he "had made similar decisions in past campaigns, but none more fraught with danger, none that promised to be more vitally conclusive if successful."<sup>259</sup> In this instance, MacArthur abided by Clausewitz's principle of understanding the enemy's culminating point and shifting forces from the defensive to the offensive to strike at the disadvantaged. "While he is enjoying this advantage, he must strike back, or he will court destruction...A swift and vigorous transition to attack—the flashing sword of vengeance—is the most brilliant point of the defensive."<sup>260</sup>

The military operational objectives involved establishing a beachhead, seizing Kimpo airfield, and the capture of Seoul. At the same time, the Eighth Army, bogged down in Seoul, would shift to the offensive and force their way north to rendezvous with the landing force, code named X Corps.<sup>261</sup> After capturing the first objectives, the next and most vital step awaited the invading force: destroy the vulnerable North Korean supply and logistic lanes that stretched down the peninsula. The destruction of these veins bled the North Koreans around Pusan dry, and supported Eighth Army's advance. MacArthur wanted to insert calculated chaos at Inchon. His armies would destroy the confused and disorganized North Korean forces, shift the tide of the war, and achieve the strategic goals of the UN Resolution of June 27, 1950: restore the sovereignty of South Korea.

On September 15, X Corps landed at Inchon. Two days later, Kimpo airfield returned to American control. By the 27th, the United States flag flew above the South

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<sup>259</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 346.

<sup>260</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 370. As quoted in David Rees, *Korea: The Limited War* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1964), 77.

<sup>261</sup> Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, 79.

Korean capital, claiming it for the United Nations. And, on September 29, General MacArthur restored the South Korean government to its rightful home. The Inchon operation worked exactly as planned. “The ‘one great blow’ had succeeded and the strategist’s dream of complete annihilation had come about.”<sup>262</sup> Just as MacArthur had anticipated, Chromite forced the North Korean forces surrounding Pusan northward to reinforce Seoul. The forces at Pusan were waiting for the enemy’s lines to thin and began their offensive in concert with Inchon and broke out of the Pusan Perimeter. MacArthur’s expert maneuver represented a brilliant pincer movement that decimated the North Korean forces. Confusion and disorganization proved insurmountable for the North Koreans as the Americans began mopping-up. The addition of Kimpo airfield coupled with air superiority meant eventual doom for the North Korean forces. The move by MacArthur deserved the praise he received. It was a masterful stroke composed by a strategic genius at the height of his military career.

On September 11, 1950, four days before the scheduled landings at Inchon, the president signed National Security Council’s resolution: NSC 81/1. It provided analysis that “the political objective of the United Nations in Korea is to bring about the complete independence and unity of Korea.” Despite this change in strategic aims, MacArthur did not receive a directive. Not knowing Chinese and Soviet intentions caused the resolution to conclude with “Final decisions cannot be made at this time concerning the future course of action in Korea.”<sup>263</sup> MacArthur still needed ordered to pursue action above the parallel and shift his strategy to support the change in aims. After the incredible success of Inchon, MacArthur received exactly that on September 27, in a JCS Directive to the United Nations Commander. It stated, “Your military objective is the destruction of the North Korean armed forces. In attaining this objective you are authorized to conduct military

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<sup>262</sup> Rees, *Korea: The Limited War*, 94.

<sup>263</sup> National Security Council, “United States Courses of Action with Respect to Korea,” Wilson Center. Report No. National Security Council Report 81/1, September 9, 1950, accessed July 24, 2018, <http://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/116194>.

operations...north of the 38 parallel in Korea.”<sup>264</sup> The Secretary of Defense, George Marshall wrote MacArthur personally, “We want you to feel unhampered tactically and strategically to proceed north of 38th parallel.”<sup>265</sup> Following the action of the United States, on October 7, 1950, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for “the establishment of a unified, independent, and democratic government in the sovereign State of Korea.”<sup>266</sup> The policy in Korea officially changed from a limited aim: restoring the sovereignty of the Republic of Korea, to an unlimited aim: overthrowing the North Korean regime and establishing a unified peninsula under democratic rule. Inchon proved the deciding factor in the change in strategy, because the intentions of the Communists states stayed unknown.

### C. CHINESE INTERVENTION

As early as April of 1950, intelligence had shown the Chinese began building up forces along the Manchurian border with Korea and steadily grew as the war continued.<sup>267</sup> A study completed by RAND in 1960, identified the buildup as possible evidence that China wanted “Peking’s best troops in a position to backstop Pyongyang, in the event North Korean plans went awry.”<sup>268</sup> Although RAND claimed China did not participate in the planning of the invasion, they were very interested in its outcome. “Communist control of all Korea would prevent a resurgent Japan from gaining a foothold on the continent and might even halt the rising tide of United States influence in Japan itself.” As well as “Coming close on the heels of Communist victory in China, a sudden, fresh success by

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<sup>264</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Directive to the Commander of the United Nations Forces in Korea,” September 27, 1950, accessed July 24, 2018, [https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-09-27&documentid=ki-18-3&pagenumber=1](https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-09-27&documentid=ki-18-3&pagenumber=1).

<sup>265</sup> George Marshall to Douglas MacArthur, September 29, 1950, *Truman Papers*, accessed July 24, 2018, [https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-09-29&documentid=ki-22-19&pagenumber=1](https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-09-29&documentid=ki-22-19&pagenumber=1).

<sup>266</sup> United Nations General Assembly, “Resolutions Adopted on the Reports of the First Committee: 376 (V). The Problem of the Independence of Korea,” accessed July 26, 2018, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/376\(V\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/376(V)).

<sup>267</sup> James, *Years Vol. III*, 490.

<sup>268</sup> Allen S. Whiting, *Project RAND: China Crosses the Yalu, the Decision to Enter the Korean War* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1960), 23.

Pyongyang could not help cementing Peking's claim that a 'new turning-point in history' had arrived throughout 'the colonial and semi-colonial world.'<sup>269</sup> If the invasion failed, China would be ready to prevent greater American influence in Asia.

Despite the intelligence of the Chinese troop movements, Washington, its intelligence structure, and MacArthur, all did not foresee China's involvement in the Korean War in 1950. When asked about possible Chinese intervention after Inchon, MacArthur remarked their time for an invasion had passed, "Had they interfered in the first or second months it would have been decisive. We are no longer fearful of their intervention."<sup>270</sup> DC felt the same sentiment as well. An American diplomat was quoted in early October by the *New York Times* asking "Why didn't [Communist China] get into it then if they were going to? Why would they suddenly consider crossing the Thirty-eighth Parallel an invasion if they labeled the South Korean defense an invasion all along?"<sup>271</sup> MacArthur gave his assessment of possible Chinese intervention to the president at the Wake Island Conference on October 15, 1950. "My own military estimate was that with our largely unopposed air forces, with their potential capable of destroying, at will, bases of attack and lines of supply north as well as south of the Yalu, no Chinese military commander would hazard the commitment of large forces upon the devastated Korean peninsula."<sup>272</sup> China did not share the same opinion as MacArthur.

MacArthur ignored the intelligence. He knew of the Chinese buildup and the potential of a Chinese intervention, but was too confident in his abilities to take the risk seriously. He failed to understand the international ramifications of his actions and let his personal desire to reconcile Washington's mistake, allowing China to fall to Communism, lead him to pursue ultimate victory. If MacArthur decided against NSC 81/1 as well as the military doctrine of the time (to destroy a retreating enemy), and end the at the parallel, the

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<sup>269</sup> Whiting, 45–46.

<sup>270</sup> James, *Years Vol. III*, 507.

<sup>271</sup> "Chou Says Peiping Won't Stand Aside," *New York Times*, October 2, 1950, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1950/10/02/89422377.pdf>. Quoted in H. W. Brands, *The General vs. the President: MacArthur and Truman at the Brink of Nuclear War*, First edition (New York: Doubleday, 2016), 194.

<sup>272</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 362.

Chinese would likely still have entered the war against the UN forces. According to MacArthur's biographer, Arthur Herman, "the Chinese were committed to war the moment the first Americans set foot in the Korean peninsula."<sup>273</sup> RAND's study along with China's actions support that claim. Secretary of State, Dean Acheson, described China's movements as the gradual lifting of "the cloak of Chinese neutrality." "There has always been some Chinese involvement in the fighting in Korea," said Acheson. "First, the Chinese let the Koreans in Manchuria go back home to fight in Korea. Then they let a few 'volunteers' go into Korea. Now there is a mass movement of Chinese Forces into Korea." He ended by saying, now "we have an open, powerful, offensive attack."<sup>274</sup> Mao Zedong, being a smart strategist, waited until the Americans closed in on the Yalu to strike. He insured his forces a viable chance at a stunning victory by waiting until he raised his armies sufficiently to repel the American forces south. MacArthur's victory at Inchon and the UN's resolution to unify Korea did not provoke the Chinese to war, instead it merely kindled the flame. Mao's forces crossed the border on their own schedule, not because MacArthur crossed the parallel. These events acted as coincidences. In a warning given in October to the United States through Chinese diplomatic channels, Peking reminded Washington that China "will not tolerate foreign aggression."<sup>275</sup> This stance remained as true in October, as it did in June.

Now that China entered the war in strength, the policy on how to combat the new landscape required re-shaping. An open war with China or worse, a war with the Soviet Union, concerned Truman. Truman also worried about his alliances and the countries fighting under the UN banner in Korea. If war broke out against the Soviet Union, could they be counted on to back the United States? Or, would they blame the United States and label Truman as the instigator of World War III? China's intervention quickly gave a new perspective to Truman and his cabinet as they tried to mitigate the political and diplomatic

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<sup>273</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 752.

<sup>274</sup> National Security Council, "Minutes of the National Security Council Meeting with Harry S. Truman, November 28, 1950," *Truman Papers*, accessed on August 7, 2018, [https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-11-28&documentid=ci-2-11&pagenumber=1](https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-11-28&documentid=ci-2-11&pagenumber=1).

<sup>275</sup> James, *Years Vol. III*, 490.



fallout of a possible war with Communist China. Acheson articulated this posture perfectly during the NSC meeting on November 28, 1950, “Our great objective...must be to hold an area, to terminate the fighting, to turn over some area to the Republic of Korea, and to get out.”<sup>276</sup> MacArthur gained a different perspective and a new policy he developed himself in support of the October 7, UN Resolution. He saw Washington’s failure to respond to China’s intervention as a danger that “would not only perpetrate military disaster in Korea, but would enable Communism to make its bid for most of Asia. This was a far larger, more complex, long-range problem than Washington seemed to comprehend.”<sup>277</sup> Their participation in the conflict classified them as the enemy and MacArthur’s forces must take action to destroy this new enemy.

The Chinese intervention acted as the impetus for MacArthur’s policy development. Now, Korea was an entirely new war. MacArthur’s policy was centered around the achievement of ultimate victory on the peninsula to include the unification of the peninsula (in conjunction with the October 7, 1950 UN Resolution) and cease Chinese aggression over the border. In order to accomplish this policy, his strategy required engaging Chinese bases across the Yalu in Manchuria and the prevention of further Chinese reinforcements. China’s intervention acted as the turning point of the war and the beginning of MacArthur trying to force the administration to adopt his own policy through the implementation of his strategy upon the peninsula. If MacArthur’s strategy were to be executed it meant Truman’s policy of limiting further provocation of the Chinese and preventing the instigation of the Soviet Union into war would be impossible.

MacArthur updated the policy directed to him by the JCS Directive and the UN Resolution of October 7: unify Korea. Upon China’s entry, the steps to achieve victory changed. To fulfil the UN’s policy of unifying the peninsula it meant ceasing further Chinese aggression in Korea. MacArthur had to adjust his strategy to staunch the flow of Chinese crossing the border. He ordered to have all of the bridges crossing the Yalu

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<sup>276</sup> National Security Council, “Minutes of the NSC Meeting, November 28, 1950,” accessed August 2, 2018, [https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-11-28&documentid=ci-2-11&pagenumber=1](https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-11-28&documentid=ci-2-11&pagenumber=1).

<sup>277</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 370.

destroyed. Washington modified his order, forbidding American entry into Manchurian airspace, a direct interference of MacArthur's policy of destroying the Chinese. MacArthur, frustrated by Washington involving themselves voiced to a staff member, "For the first time in military history, a commander has been denied the use of his military power to safeguard the lives of his soldiers and safety of his army. To me it clearly foreshadows a future tragic situation in the Far East and leaves me with a sense of inexpressible shock."<sup>278</sup> Washington's modification represented the first of many strategical/political interventions that frustrated MacArthur.

In November, after fighting the combined forces of Chinese and North Koreans, he developed a new offensive to destroy the new invaders and secure the peninsula once and for all. If his plan failed, he told the American Ambassador in Tokyo visiting MacArthur, "He saw no alternative, from a military point of view, to bombing key points in Manchuria." Understanding the consequences of this act, he then said "such operations would, in his opinion, bring about a counter-move by Soviet Russia. Such counter-move, he felt, could only lead to a spreading of the war." Truman wanted to avoid exactly that, "the spreading" of war to the Soviets.<sup>279</sup> The crux of the issue surrounding Truman and MacArthur's policy differences lies in this statement by MacArthur. MacArthur believed the hot war of the Cold War was to be fought in Asia and if the Soviets wanted to engage against the United States over Korea, then let them come. Truman's policy strove to deter the possibility of general war with China and Russia. He did not attribute China's committal of forces as a declaration of war with the United States, more so he viewed the act as one ally assisting another. MacArthur's policy conflicted with Truman's and MacArthur's strategy blatantly disrupted Truman's intentions and plans as Commander-in-Chief. MacArthur believed that if he destroyed the Chinese and prevented further incursion of Communist forces he could accomplish his mission and win the war. This difference in policy perspective created frustration with strategy for Truman, and

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<sup>278</sup> MacArthur, 370.

<sup>279</sup> Department of State, "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Political Adviser in Japan [with Douglas MacArthur], November 14, 1950," *Korea, FRUS, 1950*, Vol. VII (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1950), accessed August 3, 2018, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v07/d821>.

frustration with policy for MacArthur. Neither reconciled their views and it led to MacArthur's ultimate dismissal in April 1951.

#### **D. MACARTHUR'S LAST STAND**

The strategy MacArthur employed in November through the winter, was sound militarily and took advantage of his superior air power to confront the Chinese in the event his offensive failed. He described this strategy in his memoirs:

If I went forward and found the Chinese in force, my strategy would be to immediately break contact and withdraw rapidly, so as to lengthen and expose the enemy's supply lines. This would result in a pyramiding of logistical difficulties for the Reds and an almost astronomical increase in the destructiveness of our air power. Every step forward, his strength would decrease as compared with mine, until a degree of parity would be reached between the opposing forces. I would then rely upon maneuver, with my objective his supply lines. I would withdraw the X Corps to Pusan by sea when it had completed its covering of the right flank of the Eighth Army, build up my communications northward, and estimate the new situation that would develop.<sup>280</sup>

It exemplified a genius mixture of a layered defense network combined with a potential amphibious assault behind enemy lines. It merged the Philippines of 1942 with the landings at Inchon, mixed into a grand strategy to defeat the Chinese. The JCS approved and it went according to plan. By the end of December, the UN forces successfully withdrew to Pusan just as MacArthur intended, and Chinese supply and logistics lines extended down the peninsula. After he assessed the conditions in Korea, MacArthur wrote, "the basic policies and decisions which had governed operations against the North Korean Army were still in effect, but the situation had entirely changed. This was a new war against the vast military potential of Red China." He went further and argued, "What I needed, as much as more men and arms and supplies, was a clear definition of policy to meet this new situation. Washington, however, again seemed uncertain and doubtful as to what course to pursue."<sup>281</sup> To achieve his own policy of the defeat of the Chinese in Korea and the unification of the peninsula he needed reinforcements.

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<sup>280</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 371.

<sup>281</sup> MacArthur, 377.

The United States military machine could not and would not supply MacArthur with the men and materiel required to accomplish the mission due to risk of opening the war. MacArthur was free to act strategically unhampered in Korea, just as Marshall's note stated, but he had to fight with what he had. The JCS, Acheson, and Marshall all agreed that the United States "can't get completely sewed up in Korea. We can't tie up everything we have there."<sup>282</sup> Committing more forces took away from the American defensive structure supporting NATO and its allies. Removing those divisions meant impacting alliances in Europe and threatening their support of a potential war with the Soviets. Also, if the JCS committed more forces to Korea, then more Chinese would follow. Acheson highlighted this issue, "the more we put in, the more [the Communists] would put in and they would enjoy doing it very much...It would get us no place."<sup>283</sup> The JCS forced MacArthur to settle with the current composition for the time being. This limitation impacted his overall strategy and meant for protraction and delay with little offense, or as MacArthur described it, "the rule of the day was timidity and appeasement."<sup>284</sup>

If America refused to provide the necessary requirements to unify Korea, then MacArthur suggested the use of Chinese Nationalists from Formosa as reinforcements. Washington considered the request and replied to MacArthur that "it involves world-wide consequences. We shall have to consider the possibility that it would disrupt the united position of the nations associated with us in the United Nations."<sup>285</sup> MacArthur refused to comprehend Washington's stance on the war and their lack of support of his policy. "The thought of defeat in Korea had never been entertained by me," said MacArthur. "It was my belief that, if allowed to use my full military might, without artificial restrictions, I could not only save Korea, but also inflict such a destructive blow upon Red China's capacity to

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<sup>282</sup> "Minutes of the NSC Meeting, November 28, 1950," Truman Library, accessed August 3, 2018, [https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study\\_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-11-28&documentid=ci-2-11&pagenumber=1](https://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/koreanwar/documents/index.php?documentdate=1950-11-28&documentid=ci-2-11&pagenumber=1).

<sup>283</sup> Truman Library.

<sup>284</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 357.

<sup>285</sup> Department of State, "Joint Chiefs of Staff to Douglas MacArthur, 29 November 1950," *Korea, FRUS, 1950*, vol. VII (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1950), accessed August 4, 2018, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950v07/d899>; MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 375.

wage aggressive war that it would remove her as a further threat to peace in Asia for generations to come.”<sup>286</sup>

MacArthur then provided alternatives to support his mission, to include further consideration of Formosa. The plan consisted of four steps: “(1) blockade the coast of China; (2) destroy through naval gunfire and air bombardment China’s industrial capacity to wage war; (3) secure reinforcements from the Nationalist garrison on Formosa to strengthen our position in Korea if we decided to continue the fight for that peninsula; and (4) release existing restrictions upon the Formosan garrison for diversionary action, possibly leading to counter-invasion against vulnerable areas of the Chinese mainland.”<sup>287</sup> Again, these measures made sense militarily and sought to destroy the Chinese while possibly deterring further aggression, but the consequences would only accomplish the one thing the Truman administration refused to allow: opening the war.

After the UN offensive got under way in January and pushed the lines back toward Seoul, the Truman administration had only one viable option: attempt to strike for a cease-fire. On March 21, 1951, MacArthur again pleaded with the JCS, “Recommend that no further military restrictions be imposed upon the United Nations Command in Korea.”<sup>288</sup> The JCS again denied his request, meanwhile Truman began planning a cease-fire to try and curb an all-out war with Red China.<sup>289</sup> The president sent MacArthur a draft of a presidential statement, inside read “The Unified Command is prepared to enter into arrangements which would conclude the fighting and ensure against its resumption. Such arrangements would open the way for a broader settlement for Korea, including the withdrawal of foreign forces from Korea.” Truman wanted “a prompt settlement of the Korean problem,” and believed peace “would greatly reduce international tension in the Far East and would open the way for the consideration of other problems in that area by

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<sup>286</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 378.

<sup>287</sup> MacArthur, 379.

<sup>288</sup> Department of State, “Douglas MacArthur to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, March 21, 1951,” *Korea and China, FRUS, 1951*, vol. VII (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1951), accessed August 4, 2018, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v07p1/d178>.

<sup>289</sup> David McCullough, *Truman* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 835.

the processes of peaceful settlement envisaged in the Charter of the United Nations.”<sup>290</sup> MacArthur then responded with the most insubordinate act to date, more so than the VFW message from August. Without consulting Washington, he released a communique to the Chinese:

Even under inhibitions which now restrict activity of the United Nations forces and the corresponding military advantages which accrue to Red China, it has been shown its complete inability to accomplish by force of arms the conquest of Korea. The enemy therefore must by now be painfully aware that a decision of the United Nations to depart from its tolerant effort to contain the war to the area of Korea through expansion of our military operations to his coastal areas and interior bases would doom Red China to the risk of imminent military collapse. These basic facts being established, there should be no insuperable difficulty arriving at decisions on the Korean problem if the issues are resolved on their own merits without being burdened by extraneous matters not directly related to Korea, such as Formosa and China’s seat in the United Nations.<sup>291</sup>

This communique marked the end of MacArthur as the United Nations Commander in Korea and resulted in his dismissal by President Truman. It cancelled any option for a ceasefire and ruined Truman’s chances of ending the war in early 1951. MacArthur’s remarks defied the president’s and the United Nations policy and threatened China. The *New York Times* covered the issue the next day and explained it to the public, “General MacArthur’s statement not only offered to negotiate a cease-fire in Korea but it was open to the interpretation that if the Chinese Communists did not accept the truce offer the whole question of extending the war to the mainland of China might be reopened.” It also mentioned Truman’s initiative and the result of MacArthur’s statement, “General MacArthur’s intervention, however, was not coordinated with the plans of the government

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<sup>290</sup> Department of State, “Draft Text of a Proposed Presidential Statement on Korea,” March 23, 1951. *Korea and China, FRUS, 1951* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1951), accessed August 5, 2018, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v07p1/d182>.

<sup>291</sup> Department of State, “The Secretary of State to Certain Diplomatic Offices, March 24, 1951. *Korea and China, FRUS, 1951* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1951), accessed July 31, 2018, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1951v07p1/d184>; Quoted in MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 387–388; McCullough, *Truman*, 836.

here, and indeed interfered with an important diplomatic plan that was in process of negotiation.”<sup>292</sup> MacArthur needed to be relieved of his command.

In Truman’s memoirs, he discussed MacArthur’s communique to the North Koreans: “This was a most extraordinary statement for a military commander of the United Nations to issue on his own responsibility. It was an act totally disregarding all directives to abstain from any declaration on foreign policy.” Another way of phrasing Truman’s words, MacArthur placed his strategy over Truman’s policy. The president continued, “It was in open defiance of my orders as President and as Commander in Chief.” Truman classified it as “a challenge to the authority of the president under the Constitution. It also flouted the policy of the United Nations.”<sup>293</sup> The accumulation of all of the previous insubordinate acts MacArthur committed, piled onto him forfeiting the option of a potential cease-fire, forced the president’s hand. MacArthur no longer served his Commander-in-Chief and disrupted the policy in Korea extensively, protracting it further and incurring greater risk for a general war with China and Russia.

Truman had to retain civilian control over his military and enforce the Clausewitzian principle that policy drives strategy. He mentioned this hierarchy in his memoirs, “I have always believed that civilian control of the military is one of the strongest foundations of our system of free government.” “The words that dominate [a military officer’s] thinking are ‘command’ and ‘obedience,’ and the military definitions of these words are not definitions for use in a republic,” argued the president. “That is why our Constitution embodies the principle of civilian control of the military. This was the principle that General MacArthur threatened. I do not believe that he purposefully decided to challenge civilian control of the military, but the result of his behavior was that this fundamental principle of free government was in danger. It was my duty to act.”<sup>294</sup> Truman

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<sup>292</sup> James Reston, “Officials Say They Did Not Know of His Plan and Would Not Have Approved It--State and Defense Aides Confer,” *New York Times*, March 25, 1951, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1951/03/25/87190971.pdf>.

<sup>293</sup> Harry S. Truman, *Memoirs by Harry S. Truman, Volume Two: Years of Trial and Hope* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), 441–442.

<sup>294</sup> Truman, *Memoirs Vol. II*, 444–445.

spent the next several days meeting with the Joint Chiefs and his advisors after making up his mind. Over the course of these days, MacArthur placed the proverbial nail in his coffin.

On April 5, 1951, the House of Representatives Minority Leader, Joseph Martin, read aloud a letter MacArthur had written him on March 20. It is copied below in its entirety:

My view and recommendations, with respect to the situation created by Red Chinese entry into war against us in Korea, have been submitted to Washington in most complete detail. Generally these views are well known and clearly understood, as they follow the conventional pattern of meeting force with maximum counter-force as we have never failed to do in the past. Your view with respect to the utilization of the Chinese forces on Formosa is in conflict with neither logic nor this tradition. It seems strangely difficult for some to realize that here in Asia is where the Communist conspirators have elected to make their play for global conquest, and that we have joined the issue thus raised on the battlefield; that here we fight Europe's war with arms while the diplomats there still fight it with words; that if we lose the war to Communism in Asia the fall of Europe is inevitable; win it and Europe most probably would avoid war and yet preserve freedom. As you point out, we must win. There is no substitute for victory.<sup>295</sup>

MacArthur was right...to an extent. He felt restrained by his government and their unwillingness to support the cause in the Far East. He truly believed the fight against Communism resided in Asia, not in Europe. If Truman and the United Nations supported him and removed the artificial shackles, MacArthur could then annihilate the Communist threat in the Far East for good, or so he believed. MacArthur's strategy involved unlimited means without restraints to achieve the policy set forth by the administration. The United States had committed itself to the peninsula and after China's involvement, MacArthur had been handcuffed by Washington. If the administration was unwilling to accept MacArthur's strategy then why did it get involved in June? China's involvement was always a possibility; it was the timing that was uncertain. MacArthur's theory was astute and profound. If the administration refused to accept the requisite conditions for victory, then clear direction should have been given to the battlefield commander. An American life lost in the pursuit of anything less than ultimate victory is futile. When Truman made

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<sup>295</sup> MacArthur, *Reminiscences*, 386.



the decision to no longer pursue victory, MacArthur should have been informed. MacArthur was wrong by his efforts to have strategy drive policy. He should not have tried to persuade the administration to change the policy through the means he employed, and was justifiably dismissed for his actions. The acts described are clearly insubordinate. MacArthur should have been able to recognize that as a career military officer, but it does not take away from MacArthur's claim that there is no substitute for victory. MacArthur's theory that his strategy should drive policy and there is no substitute for victory will be expounded upon in the final chapter.

Scholarly research on MacArthur's dismissal typically takes either the side of President Truman or MacArthur. The predominant view, asserted by HOW. Brands, Russell Buhite, and David McCullough is that MacArthur was wrong, his strategy meant the provocation of an open war with China, and Truman's dismissal of MacArthur was justified.<sup>296</sup> MacArthur's proponents, such as Frazier Hunt, Charles Willoughby, and John Chamberlain, contend he was wrongfully restrained, the administration failed to deliver a definitive policy, and Truman's dismissal, although justified, was improperly administered.<sup>297</sup> The exception is MacArthur's foremost biographer, D. Clayton James whose book *The Years of MacArthur Vol. III*, was intentionally ambiguous to avoid generating a bias.<sup>298</sup> His most recent biographer, Arthur Herman, not surprisingly, given his overtly favorable impression of the general, defends MacArthur. He discussed MacArthur's strategy against China, "The Plan might have triggered a full-scale confrontation with China, and even the Soviet Union. But it was a confrontation that the United States would have decisively won." Herman then quoted MacArthur staffer, "If this had happened, we wouldn't be in Vietnam." "It's difficult to see how that judgment was wrong, then or later," argued Herman.<sup>299</sup> William Manchester in *American Caesar*, as with

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<sup>296</sup> Brands, *The General vs. The President*, 271–306; Buhite, *Statecraft and Stagecraft*, 135–161; McCullough, *Truman*, 837–851.

<sup>297</sup> Hunt, *The Untold Story of Douglas MacArthur*, 504–516; Willoughby and Chamberlain, *MacArthur 1941–1951*, 418–425

<sup>298</sup> Rasor, *Historiography*, 17. James, *Years Vol. III*, 584–604.

<sup>299</sup> Herman, *American Warrior*, 802.

other controversies, painted a complex picture of the dismissal. It should be noted other scholars treat Manchester's work with some consternation because of these types of weaknesses. Manchester agreed with Truman's decision, but discredited the power of the executive: "By acting firmly, the administration had crossed the Rubicon, if not the Yalu, and had resolved, as far as the White House was concerned, the vexing problem posed by the intractable commander in Japan." Manchester ultimately agreed with the decision, but condoned the method used: "Great though the provocation in the Dai Ichi undeniably was, the problem could have been met another way." He quoted Acheson's description of the dismissal, "There was no doubt what General MacArthur deserved; the sole issue was the wisest way to administer it," then offered his own interpretation, "So it was, and it could scarcely have been administered more unwisely."<sup>300</sup> Geoffrey Perret completely agreed with Truman's choice and highlighted MacArthur's insubordinate acts, summing them up "If this was not the action of a man trying to get himself fired, it certainly was not the action of a man eager to hold on to his job."<sup>301</sup> Secondary sources are understandably divided along the spectrum.

On April 11, President Truman released a statement confirming the dismissal of General MacArthur as Supreme Commander Allied Powers, United Nations Commander, and as Commander-in-Chief, Far East Command. MacArthur set foot back in the United States on April 17, 1951 after being away for sixteen years. On April 19, the MacArthurs flew to Washington for the General's address to a Joint Session of Congress. Here he made his last final stand as the primary prosecutor of freedom for Asia and reaffirmed "there can be no substitute for victory."<sup>302</sup>

In May 1951, Douglas MacArthur was brought back to Washington to testify on his behalf about the dismissal. Over the course of the two-month Senate hearings MacArthur, the four members of the JCS, Dean Acheson, and others testified. MacArthur reaffirmed his four-point plan to defeat the Chinese and claimed his strategy would not

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<sup>300</sup> Manchester, *American Caesar*, 643. MacArthur worked in the Dai Ichi Insurance building in Tokyo during the occupation of Japan and the Korean War.

<sup>301</sup> Perret, *Old Soldiers*, 568.

<sup>302</sup> MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks*, 251.

spark a war with the Soviet Union. He believed that the Korean War could be “brought to a decisive end without the calamity of a third world war. I believe if you let it go on indefinitely in Korea, you invite a third world war.”<sup>303</sup> The Secretary of Defense and the JCS completely disagreed and collectively dismantled MacArthur’s strategy, beginning with George Marshall.

General MacArthur, on the other hand, would have us, on our own initiative, carry the conflict beyond Korea against the mainland of Communist China, both from the sea and from the air. He would have us accept the risk involvement not only in an extension of the war with Red China, but in an all-out war with the Soviet Union. He would have us do this even at the expense of losing our allies and wrecking the coalition of free peoples throughout the world. He would have us do this even though the effect of such action might expose Western Europe to attack by the millions of Soviet troops poised in Middle and Eastern Europe.<sup>304</sup>

The JCS discussed each phase of the plan, claiming the troops from Formosa could not be relied upon, a naval blockade against China would be disrupted due to Soviet submarines if the war was opened, and that air strikes in Manchuria could not be executed effectively due to the limited air force. All MacArthur’s plan would accomplish, according to the JCS and Marshall, would be to open the war and force the United States into a quagmire it could not free itself from. MacArthur’s policy and strategy had been systematically torn apart. The most notable quote regarding MacArthur in Korea came from the testimony of General Omar Bradley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, when he claimed that MacArthur’s strategy “would involve us in the wrong war, at the wrong place, at the wrong time, and with the wrong enemy.”<sup>305</sup> This epitomized the fundamental difference between the JCS, Marshall, and Truman’s administration, for MacArthur believed his policy, calling for ultimate victory in Korea and the ceasing of Chinese aggression, was the right war, at the right place, at the right time, and with the right enemy: Communism in the Far East.

After the hearings, his fifty-two-year military career had finally ended. The grandeur of his return had faded and the hearings had resulted in tarnishing his military

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<sup>303</sup> United States Senate, *Hearings*, 81.

<sup>304</sup> United States Senate, 325.

<sup>305</sup> United States Senate, 732.

prestige. Although he was called back to the White House for counsel on several occasions, he never again held command. The end of his address to Congress sums up the remaining years of his life. He recalled to the crowd an old Army ballad he heard while at West Point, “which proclaimed, most proudly, that ‘Old soldiers never die. They just fade away.’”<sup>306</sup> MacArthur concluded his service to country in that fashion, he faded away.

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<sup>306</sup> MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks*, 252.

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## **VII. DOUGLAS MACARTHUR: MILITARY THEORIST**

War's very object is victory.<sup>307</sup>

This thesis has displayed the influences behind Douglas MacArthur's strategic thinking and introduced several theories on the conduct of war MacArthur employed throughout his career. These theories covered the spectrum of warfare: strategic, operational, and tactical. MacArthur also developed personal theories on leadership and command. In order to determine if MacArthur was truly unique in his thinking, his theories require testing. Carl von Clausewitz and Antoine Henri de Jomini are recognized as the premier military theorists in modern times. The United States followed Jomini's teachings until WWI, then transitioned to Clausewitz, which has maintained to this day. MacArthur was a complex man with strong convictions on how wars should be fought. Although not all of his theories can be attributed directly to him and it was clear he did follow both Jomini and Clausewitz on certain occasions, he was a master of understanding theory and its utility on the battlefield. His genius implementation of such military theory created the mythical persona that followed MacArthur from appointment as an officer in the U.S. Army to the success at Inchon forty-eight years later. It was not until his military career had nearly ended that he gave his most profound theory on war: there is no substitute for victory. The theories MacArthur employed in war will be re-examined and measured against Jomini and Clausewitz. The end of this chapter will challenge MacArthur's boldest theory and attempt to answer the question: is there a substitute for victory?

### **A. COMPARING THEORIES**

After review of MacArthur's military career, eight theories will be compared to Carl Von Clausewitz and Antoine Henri de Jomini to determine which theories are unique:

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<sup>307</sup> MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks*, 251.

1. Primacy of the military objective
2. Invading weak points to envelop, isolate, and bypass
3. The use of combined arms
4. The use of momentum in strategy
5. Personal reconnaissance
6. Disobeying commands
7. Separating yourself apart from your peers
8. Power of the media

Several theories that have been discussed are not listed. These include MacArthur's theories on the power of loyalty and delegation, the citizen soldier army, the decentralization of the army in his four-army plan, his choice of man over machine, and bomber aircraft used for coastal defense. These will not be compared to the two theorists. The power of loyalty and delegation was a characteristic of MacArthur, not a theory about the conduct of warfare. The citizen soldier army was a distinctive paradigm shift in how wars were fought, and was adopted by most national armies from WWI on. When MacArthur chose man over machine he participated in an ongoing debate that has troubled the military for centuries, and not a reflection of his theories on war. The decision to create the four-army command was a great organizational theory, and it did assist with the mobilization of the military in WWII, but failed to involve strategy, operations, or tactics. Bomber aircraft used for coastal defense was a tactical theory based on untested military technology unknown to either Jomini or Clausewitz; therefore, it does not qualify. This leaves the eight theories listed to be measured against the two great military theorists.

MacArthur's biographers claim MacArthur was an avid student of history and war, but it is difficult to associate MacArthur with any one specific military theorist. For example, D. Clayton James, in all three of his volumes, never once mentions either Jomini or Clausewitz. However, when researching both theorists there are reflections of

MacArthur in each. The purpose of this chapter is not to claim MacArthur was primarily Jominian or Clausewitzian; it is to compare the theories MacArthur used on war to the theorists the U.S. military structure utilizes to determine if he is unique.

The first four theories blend the teachings of Jomini and Clausewitz. Antoine Henri de Jomini defined the fundamental principles of war: (1) “To throw by strategic movements the mass of an army, successively, upon the decisive points of a theater of war, and also upon the communications of the enemy as much as possible without compromising one’s own.” (2) “To maneuver to engage fractions of the hostile army with the bulk of one’s forces.” (3) “On the battle-field, to throw the mass of the forces upon the decisive point, or upon that portion of the hostile line which it is of the first importance to overthrow.” (4) “To so arrange that these masses shall not only be thrown upon the decisive point, but that they shall engage at the proper times and with energy.”<sup>308</sup> As can be seen, MacArthur followed each these principles when conceiving his campaign strategies. For example, the progression across New Guinea in WWII demonstrated all four principles. He made sure to attack only lightly defended areas with a large army, maintain momentum, and had his forces move directly to the military objective.

MacArthur also followed Clausewitz’s work on centers of gravity. Clausewitz defined center of gravity as “the hub of all power and movement, on which everything depends. That is the point against which all our energies should be directed.”<sup>309</sup> Centers of gravity did take several forms throughout his work, “the battle must always be considered as the true center of gravity of the war,” and “a center of gravity is always found where the mass is concentrated most densely. It presents the most effective target for a blow; furthermore, the heaviest blow is that struck by the center of gravity.”<sup>310</sup> Rabaul is a perfect example of MacArthur recognizing the enemy stronghold as a “hub of all power and movement,” and adopted a strategy to envelop, bypass and isolate that center of gravity. MacArthur’s strategy in Operation Cartwheel completely nullified Rabaul as a

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<sup>308</sup> Jomini, *The Art of War*, 52.

<sup>309</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 595–596.

<sup>310</sup> Clausewitz, 248, 485.



Japanese center of gravity. The landings at Luzon also represent MacArthur's understanding of the center of gravity when he led his forces to capture Manila.

Jomini's third fundamental principle: "to throw the mass of the forces upon the decisive point, or upon that portion of the hostile line which it is of the first importance to overthrow," and Clausewitz's center of gravity definition perfectly describes MacArthur's theory on the primacy of the objective. As discussed in chapter three, Manila was the objective when the allies returned to the Philippines. MacArthur valued the city over the destruction of the enemy forces, for it was the military objective that carried the most importance to determine the outcome. Manila was what Jomini would describe as a decisive point or "the hub of all power and movement" which MacArthur recognized and strove to capture.<sup>311</sup>

Jomini offered, "In imparting to troops the greater possible mobility and activity, so as, by their successive employment upon points where it may be important to act, to bring superior force to bear upon fractions of the hostile army."<sup>312</sup> This was how MacArthur utilized generated momentum for the progressive movement in the SWPA. It was also this momentum that MacArthur felt so strongly should have been employed during the St. Mihiel offensive in WWI. Momentum has factored as a constant feature of MacArthur's war plans.

Even MacArthur's greatest military operation, Inchon, can be regarded as an elementary maneuver for Jomini, "It may be laid down as a general principle that the decisive points of maneuver are on that flank of the enemy upon which, if his opponent operates, he can more easily cut him off from his base and supporting forces without being exposed to danger."<sup>313</sup> Cutting supply and communication lines was the prime objective of Inchon and followed Jomini exactly.

MacArthur's pioneering in the use of combined arms—airborne, naval fire support, and amphibious landings—are illustrated in Jomini's and Clausewitz's teachings. Jomini

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<sup>311</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 595.

<sup>312</sup> Jomini, *The Art of War*, 134.

<sup>313</sup> Jomini, 65.

wrote in *The Art of War* “It seems a waste of breath to say that the commander of a body of troops composed of the three arms should employ them so that they will give mutual support and assistance; but, after all, this is the only fundamental rule that can be established.”<sup>314</sup> Jomini was referring to cavalry, infantry, and artillery, but the parallel is apparent. Clausewitz wrote in *On War* “a combination of the three arms leads to a more complete use of all of them. It enables the combatant to reinforce at will any one of the functions which, in the infantry, are inseparably united.”<sup>315</sup>

These four theories, although not unique to MacArthur, are a testament to MacArthur’s military genius. He masterfully followed the fundamental principles espoused by Antoine Henri de Jomini and Carl von Clausewitz and was victorious. By reviewing MacArthur’s expert employment, today’s commanders can incorporate these tried and proven principles into their own strategies with potentially similar results. The following four theories are purely unique to MacArthur.

MacArthur’s personal reconnaissance theory lasted his entire career. At Côte de Châtillon he reconnoitered the proposed advancement plan the night before the attack. He visited classrooms at West Point. During the battle of the Philippines, he knew the terrain so well that he planned his tactics around it, knowing the most likely positions of the enemy. Personal reconnaissance was a stalwart feature of MacArthur’s military theory. Clausewitz mentions reconnaissance a few times, but never affords it the great utility demonstrated by MacArthur’s actions. “Ever since the right method of defense was adopted, reconnaissance has gone out of fashion—or, rather, it has become impossible. Some reconnaissance is still carried out now and again, but as a rule nothing much comes of it,” argued Clausewitz.<sup>316</sup> He claimed reconnaissance does not bring the success in battle that its prospects promise. No matter what method the offense takes in a battle, the defense “will always be certain of having the benefit of terrain, and this will generally ensure its natural superiority; for today the peculiarities of the topography and the ground

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<sup>314</sup> Jomini, 243.

<sup>315</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 285.

<sup>316</sup> Clausewitz, 361.

have a greater effect on military action than ever.”<sup>317</sup> MacArthur disagreed with Clausewitz; he took considerable advantage of the knowledge gained through personal surveillance. MacArthur built his strategies upon his understanding of the battlespace and mastered the art of implementing his forces while incorporating the topography. Although he was not unique in the development or understanding of this theory, he did exhibit an expert understanding of its utility in warfare.

Both disobeying commands and separating yourself from your peers by act are unique MacArthur’s theories. As mentioned previously, disobeying commands is hazardous to the military profession. It is written in the Uniformed Code of Military Justice that all military members are constitutionally obligated to obey all lawful orders. If a service member who, “willfully disobeys a lawful command of his superior commissioned officer; shall be punished, if the offense is committed in time of war, by death or such other punishment as a court-martial may direct.”<sup>318</sup> Therefore, by abiding by MacArthur’s theory you are willfully subjugating yourself to all awarded punishment. This theory is purely unique to MacArthur and should not be taught for it encourages reckless behavior and deteriorates the military command structure. There is credibility in MacArthur’s theory about separating yourself in deed, however. If the commander outshines his peers through deed it is assumed his efforts will be awarded. MacArthur accomplished this by being the first over the parapet, unflinching in the face of danger, going unarmed into enemy territory, and in WWII, landing in assault waves with the rest of his troops during amphibious operations. These actions separated himself immensely and bolstered his career ahead of his contemporaries.

The power of the media was unique to Douglas MacArthur. Few other commanders during MacArthur’s time ever considered involving the media on such a scale to create a narrative. While defending the Philippines, MacArthur’s dispatches influenced the public through the creation of a heroic last stand, similar to the Alamo. The media was a powerful

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<sup>317</sup> Clausewitz, 362.

<sup>318</sup> Uniform Code of Military Justice, “890. Article 90. Assaulting or Willfully Disobeying Superior Commissioned Officer,” accessed August 18, 2018. <http://www.ucmj.us/sub-chapter-10-punitive-articles/890-article-90-assaulting-or-willfully-disobeying-superior-commissioned-officer>.

tool that both supported MacArthur's career and ultimately aided in his dismissal. When his strategy in Korea was consistently denied, he relented his views on the administration to the media and in letters to Congress. These letters contributed to the loss of his prestige and his supporters both in the military and out. The Senator Martin letter in March 1951 is normally pinpointed as the last straw for Truman. Media can be a useful tool for today's officer as the world is more connected than ever, but it needs to be handled delicately and with incredible oversight. Its power should be respected and treated accordingly. In today's social media age, a military officer should never be as cavalier as MacArthur was with the media, but can draw poignant insights into constructing a narrative to support policy.

Eight theories were measured, and although some are not unique to MacArthur and others are recommended not to be used, understanding these theories and how to generate useful parallels can help increase the battlefield efficiency of commanders today. In the following section MacArthur's most important questions posed on war: should strategy drive policy and is there a substitute for victory will be examined in detail.

## **B. SHOULD STRATEGY DRIVE POLICY AND IS THERE A SUBSTITUTE FOR VICTORY?**

When General Douglas MacArthur returned to the United States, he posed a theory to a joint session of Congress: "there can be no substitute for victory."<sup>319</sup> Measuring this theory next to the teachings of Carl von Clausewitz and Antoine Henri de Jomini, does MacArthur have a legitimate claim? In MacArthur's case, he referred to the "inhibitions" of the United States government—or so he identified them as—limiting to his achievement of the United Nations' Resolution's stated mission.<sup>320</sup> A Senator questioned MacArthur during MacArthur's hearings, and asked "Suppose the United Nations should withdraw their inhibitions under which you have been acting in Korea. Then, would that change your point of view as to the policy?" MacArthur responded, "I do; and that is the very essence and point that I have tried to make here."<sup>321</sup> MacArthur argued that by abiding by

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<sup>319</sup> MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks*, 251.

<sup>320</sup> United States Senate, *Hearings*, 45–47.

<sup>321</sup> United States Senate, , 46.

Washington's rules, the policymakers were denying MacArthur victory: the defeat of enemy on the peninsula corresponding with the Chinese ceasing their aggression in Korea. This meant to MacArthur, Truman and his cabinet must have an alternative to MacArthur's victory definition. Whom do the two theorists agree with and why? To answer this question, an understanding of MacArthur's perspective of his policy challenging the administration, and his efforts to have his strategy drive the administration's policy is required.

Parallels can be drawn from Jomini's, *The Art of War*, and MacArthur's interpretation of the basic principle that policy drives strategy. Although Jomini used a monarchy as his primary choice of government, his work still provides comparisons with MacArthur's situation. Jomini stated if a monarch cannot rule his military, then a prince can be entrusted to lead the armies in the field. If, however, the prince "possess[es] no military ability, if his character be feeble," Jomini claims, "his presence with the army, instead of producing good results, will open the way for all manner of intrigue." He continued and offered a solution in this case: "It may be said that a sovereign might accompany the army and not interfere with his general, but, on the contrary, aid him with all the weight of his influence." For a general, "interfered with and opposed in all his enterprises, will be unable to achieve success, even if he have [*sic*] the requisite ability."<sup>322</sup> MacArthur's main complaint involved either DC's involvement, or lack of direction. He proclaimed he never received the requisite support necessary to accomplish his mission. Jomini goes further, "the action of a cabinet in reference to the control of armies influences the boldness of their operations. A general whose genius and hands are tied by an Aulic council five hundred miles distant cannot be a match for one who has liberty of action, other things being equal."<sup>323</sup> MacArthur echoed Jomini's teachings in his testimony: "You have got to trust at that stage of the game when politics fails, and the military takes over, you must trust the military."<sup>324</sup> Here the fundamental difference between MacArthur and

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<sup>322</sup> Jomini, *The Art of War*, 38.

<sup>323</sup> Jomini, 30.

<sup>324</sup> United States Senate, *Hearings*, 45.

the administration is highlighted. MacArthur advocated for trust. This meant for MacArthur, Truman should have followed MacArthur's policy of achieving ultimate victory on the peninsula, and supported MacArthur's four-step plan to defeat the Chinese in Korea. MacArthur believed he was Jomini's military savvy prince that needed the sovereign behind him, supporting him and his actions. MacArthur needed the trust Jomini described. Jomini's description supports MacArthur's argument that his policy should have been followed, and his strategy supported, thus driving Truman's policy. This is where Jomini falls short in the analysis of MacArthur's actions. Jomini provided the necessary elements a commander must possess to achieve success, but does not include a categorical examination of the policymakers. He does not discuss friction, the fog of war, and the influences behind why a belligerent goes to war. Clausewitz's *On War* helps to add clarity to these subjects and thereby completes the analysis.

Clausewitz claimed, "war is nothing but the continuation of policy with other means."<sup>325</sup> "In short, at the highest level the art of war turns into policy—but a policy conducted by fighting battles rather than by sending diplomatic notes," argued Clausewitz.<sup>326</sup> The nation's policy was to drive the commander's strategy not vice versa. "Policy will determine its character," this meant the intention of Truman's policy should have been considered when developing strategy through the levels of war. Clausewitz did contend that tactics should be left to the commander, but added "Political considerations do not determine the posting of guards or the employment of patrols. But they are the more influential in the planning of war, of the campaign, and often even of the battle."<sup>327</sup> When including the variables Truman had to cope with and understanding the international arena, Jomini's support for MacArthur's theory that his strategy should drive the administration's policy appears naïve. It is very clear in Clausewitz's writings that policy should always drive strategy: "Subordinating the political point of view to the military would be absurd, for it is policy that has created war. Policy is the guiding intelligence and war only the

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<sup>325</sup> Clausewitz, *On War*, 69.

<sup>326</sup> Clausewitz, 607.

<sup>327</sup> Clausewitz, 606

instrument, not vice versa. No other possibility exists, then, than to subordinate the military point of view to the political.”<sup>328</sup> Clausewitz even addressed a situation similar to MacArthur and his frustration with Truman’s policy:

No major proposal required for war can be worked out in ignorance of political factors; and when people talk, as they often do, about harmful political influence on the management of war, they are not really saying what they mean. Their quarrel should be with the policy itself, not with its influence. If the policy is right—that is, successful—any intentional effect it has on the conduct of war can only be to the good. If it has the opposite effect the policy itself is wrong.<sup>329</sup>

According to Clausewitz, “The aim of war should be what its very concept implies—to defeat the enemy.”<sup>330</sup> That was exactly how MacArthur understood warfare. Korea presented a new case to MacArthur, where defeat of the enemy was not allowed for risk of greater escalation. How was MacArthur supposed to accomplish his aim if the very concept had been modified? Clausewitz stated, “the object of military activity can only be one of two kinds: seizing a small or larger piece of enemy territory, or holding one’s own until things take a better turn.”<sup>331</sup> MacArthur saw to seize the initiative, launch an offensive, and secure a large piece of territory (being the entire peninsula), and prevent further Chinese aggression. Washington wanted to retreat behind the 38th parallel to hold territory gained, until things took a better turn. Neither side compromised in their strategies, and MacArthur attempted to have his strategy drive the administration’s policy by encouraging an aggressive military campaign against China, which cost him his command.

This is not to say Truman was right and MacArthur was wrong for the military strategy ultimately chosen. Determining who was right as far as strategy in Korea is not the purpose of this chapter, it is to determine if MacArthur’s theory that strategy should drive policy should have been followed. The answer, no. If MacArthur’s theory should not have been followed, and thereby his strategy resultantly not employed, then is there a

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<sup>328</sup> Clausewitz, 607.

<sup>329</sup> Clausewitz, 608.

<sup>330</sup> Clausewitz, 595.

<sup>331</sup> Clausewitz, 601.

suitable answer to MacArthur's final question posed to Congress, is there a substitute for victory?

Considering MacArthur's definition of victory being the ultimate defeat of the enemy and fulfilling the United Nations' resolutions, anything less than that qualified as defeat; therefore, the United States lost. Truman's definition of victory was the prevention of an escalatory war involving the Soviet Union and China, thus sparking a global conflict. In that sense, the United States was victorious. However, this does not satisfy the purpose of the question. What MacArthur meant was through restraint the policy prevented the implementation of his strategy. He believed the United States had willingly chosen to forego the strategy and settled for defeat. MacArthur understood the end game and what would happen if the United States failed in Korea: everlasting turmoil following failure and the potential of more countries falling to Communism. He attributed the administration's shackles to appeasement, "For history teaches with unmistakable emphasis that appeasement but begets new and bloodier war."<sup>332</sup> Was the administration willing to accept those contingencies by accepting defeat? Stopping the spread of communism, securing and unifying the Korean peninsula, and showing courage in the face of timidity was MacArthur's plan. If Washington refused to see the same result and agree to support MacArthur's efforts, then why engage in the conflict in the first place? Pursuing total victory was the epitome of conducting war for MacArthur. Anything less is unnecessary loss of life. Clausewitz argued, "if the political initiative lies with the smaller power, it should take the military offensive. Having had the nerve to assume an active role against a stronger adversary, it must do something definite—in other words, attack the enemy unless he obliges it by attacking first. Waiting would be absurd."<sup>333</sup> MacArthur agreed, "war's very object is victory—not prolonged indecision."<sup>334</sup> The United States held the political initiative in Korea. China's invasion was an act of lawlessness that

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<sup>332</sup> MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks*, 251

<sup>333</sup> Clausewitz, 602.

<sup>334</sup> MacArthur, *A Soldier Speaks*, 251.



deserved punishment. MacArthur believed the ends justified the means, and the administration saw it differently.

In conclusion, MacArthur was convinced that there was no substitute for victory and limited wars were a mistake. He viewed ceding territory and relinquishing military advantages to the enemy in efforts to abide by international considerations represented a direct challenge to his strategy of ultimate victory. Any constraint of the means of warfare for diplomatic purposes resulted in the unnecessary loss of allied life and protracted the war, the two exact conditions MacArthur despised above all else. Limited wars, according to MacArthur, were synonymous with appeasement and timidity.

At the height of the Truman-MacArthur controversy, MacArthur radiated with unbridled confidence. Korea had proven to be another instance of MacArthur being doubted by his contemporaries and he had proven them wrong with his masterstroke at Inchon. MacArthur's career was culminating. At almost every turn during his career, whenever MacArthur was doubted he was eventually shown to be right. When he was denied entrance to West Point twice, he finally received his appointment. At the battle of Côte de Châtillon, his commanders doubted his ability to capture the impenetrable stronghold, but he proved them wrong. When his strategy in WWII deviated from the island-hopping campaign, essential to Nimitz's Central Pacific strategy, he was doubted again. Both President Roosevelt and Admiral Nimitz needed extreme convincing that the Philippines was the right direction for the Pacific theater, but MacArthur was proven right. After the incredible success at Inchon, the doubters had finally subsided and gave way to his strategic genius. This, coupled with MacArthur's confidence, influenced MacArthur to believe he would always be right. That is why he went so far in Korea to flout the orders of the Commander-in-Chief, to act on his own initiative, and issue insubordinate communiques. He became convinced he truly knew best and there was no substitute for victory.

If the ends do not justify the means, then why engage in the conflict at all? If the United States is willing, then the inherent goal should be the accomplishment of an achievable policy in the shortest time, with the least loss of allied life. The complete defeat of the enemy through the use of unlimited means without restraints are the elements

required for victory. If the administration is unwilling to accept these conditions then a conflict avoidance strategy should be adopted. If going forward, the American military revisits MacArthur's strategic thinking, there may be conflicts that will prove MacArthur right again, in which limited wars are not necessary. A reasonable commander-in-chief has to always recognize that there are limits to power, no nation can get everything it wants, but there have been times since Korea, and there may be times in the future when the United States accepted limited results too easily. MacArthur believed one American life lost in the pursuit of anything less than complete victory is an unnecessary loss and that there is no substitute for victory, the future may prove him right.

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