

A STUDY OF THE LEADERSHIP IN THE FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION
DURING WORLD WAR II:
TERRY DE LA MESA ALLEN AND CLARENCE RALPH HUEBNER

A thesis presented to the faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements of the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

R. J. Rogers, Major, U.S. Army

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A STUDY OF LEADERSHIP IN THE FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION
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(Abstract)

The most critical commodity on the battlefield is leadership and each war has provided the background for many leadership studies. Our Armed Forces service schools have conducted numerous of these studies in an effort to establish leadership guidelines which can be presented to military students for their own evaluation and application. Leadership is not an exact science; no two leaders are identical, nor should they be. Our service schools have recognized this and have cautioned students against copying the mannerisms of a particular leader. Each leader must preserve his own identity and capitalize on his dominant leadership characteristics.

The leadership of Major Generals Terry Allen and Clarence R. Huebner in commanding the First Infantry Division during World War II is a fine example of two generals who in succession, commanded a division with great success. As leaders they were entirely different. Each capitalized on his dominant characteristics.

General Allen, with his magnetic personality and his bold aggressive leadership, achieved an identification with his troops, probably unparalleled in the history of the United States Army. He had a great common touch and was literally loved by his officers and men. They emulated his aggressiveness and his independence with the result that esprit de corps in the Division was extremely high. It was the magnificent spirit of the First Division which made up for training deficiencies and lack of combat experience during the early days of the North African campaign.

The First Division landed near Oran, Algeria, 8 November 1942, and drove inland to seize the city. Shortly after the Oran operation, the Division was fragmented, most of the units being attached to the British forces in North Africa. General Allen bitterly protested this action and became antagonistic toward higher headquarters; it was a feeling which he retained throughout the campaign in North Africa and later in Sicily.

The First Division was reunited in March of 1943 and made successive night attacks at Gafsa and later El Guettar where it won a great victory in defeating the 10th Panzer Division.

At the end of the Tunisian campaign, the Division went through a training period in the Oran area. It was during this period that the "Oran incident," involving the First

Division troops and Service of Supply troops, took place.

The Division's next combat operation was the invasion of Sicily. The "Big Red One" landed at Gela, Sicily, and on D+1 stopped the Herman Goering Panzer Division's attack and literally saved the beachhead. The next major action was the battle of Troina during which the Division withstood twenty-four counterattacks before taking its objective.

The spirit and independence of the First Division had grown with each victory until finally General Bradley decided that in order to insure the proper teamwork in his corps, he had to separate General Allen and the First Division; an act which was bitterly resented by the officers and men of the First Division.

General Huebner, in taking command of the Division, had the difficult task of gaining the confidence of the Division while preparing it for Normandy. He was bitterly resented at first and in his efforts to gain control of the Division, he made himself as unpopular as Allen had been popular. Gradually through his personal ability, sound training methods, insistence on professionalism, and his calm determined manner, he earned the confidence and respect of the Division. To complement its great fighting spirit, the First Division, under Huebner, developed renewed pride and confidence in its fighting ability.

At Omaha Beach the "Big Red One" came through "in the clutch" just as it had at Gela, Sicily, under Allen. General Bradley felt that the First Division had to lead the assault at Omaha Beach, just as General Patton earlier had demanded the use of the Division for the Sicily invasion. In the light of history, their decisions were sound.

After the invasion, the Division played a key role in Operation Cobra, the breakthrough at St. Lo. The Division drove to Mortain and then to Mons. Later, when the Siegfried Line was reached, Huebner's First Division was given the mission of penetrating the Line and seizing Aachen, the first major German city to be taken by the United States Army during World War II. Aachen was taken only after prolonged rugged fighting, and here the "Fighting First" showed the same dogged determination that it had displayed at Troina, Sicily under Allen.

Immediately after the fall of Aachen, the Division made the main attack for VII Corps in the November offensive in the Huertgen Forest. At the conclusion of the battle of the Huertgen Forest, General Huebner was given command of V Corps. When he left the Division the officers and men missed him almost as much as they missed General Allen.

Both General Allen and General Huebner fought the First Division with skill, aggressiveness, determination, and

success. Both loved the Division, had great concern for the welfare of their men, and did everything possible to enhance the esprit de corps. They were, however, complete opposites in personality, attitude toward discipline, and manner of operation.

Allen was warm, friendly, sincere, and enjoyed a "back slapping" informal relationship with subordinates. He was not a strict disciplinarian. He depended on a combination of teamwork, unit esprit, and strong personal leadership. He operated in a relaxed manner, did not concern himself with details, and placed maximum responsibility on his staff and commanders.

Huebner, in contrast, was reserved but maintained a dry sense of humor. He maintained a formal military relationship with subordinates. He was a strict disciplinarian and believed that a well-disciplined unit would function more efficiently in combat with fewer casualties. He was a stickler for detail and exercised close supervision over his staff and commanders, not that he tried to do their jobs, but he was aware of all aspects of their operations.

In conclusion, both generals were completely successful leaders but the manner and the techniques by which they each achieved great leadership were completely different. Allen was unorthodox and a "persuasive" leader whereas Huebner was orthodox and "authoritarian."

Both leaders capitalized on their natural character and personality traits; each was perfectly suited for the time and circumstances which confronted the "Big Red One" during the critical phases of World War II.

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PREFACE

The study of leadership is one of the most fascinating pursuits of military science. General Terry Allen and General Clarence R. Huebner, two of the greatest division commanders of World War II, are ideal subjects for a study of leadership contrasts.

I am indebted to both General Allen and General Huebner for their interest and assistance in providing a wealth of information which, otherwise, would not have been available.

The third great division commander of the "Big Red One," Major General Cliff Andrus, Ret., who served as division artillery commander for both Allen and Huebner, has also been an invaluable source of information and I am grateful to him for the time he has devoted to providing answers to my questions.

I am also grateful to Lieutenant Colonel Gene Perry and Lieutenant Colonel Tom Maertens of the Department of Command, U.S.A.C.&G. S. C., for their encouragement, advice, and editorial assistance in the preparation of this paper.

Finally, and by no means least, my wife, Jean, is to be thanked, not only for typing this paper, but for her

constructive criticism and encouragement during the preparation of this thesis.

I hope that the value of this paper will in some way justify the expenditure of many hours in its preparation.

R.J.R.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The First Infantry Division, the "Big Red One," enjoys a position and esprit which is unique in the United States Army. Probably no division in our Army has such fierce pride in its accomplishments--accomplishments which in many instances in the past saved an operation or turned apparent defeat into victory.

During World War II wearers of the "Big Red One" were among the first to carry the fight to the enemy in the Mediterranean Theater when combat teams of the 16th Infantry and 18th Infantry splashed ashore near Arzew, Algeria, during the early morning hours of 8 November 1942.¹ The Division quickly made a name for itself as a fighting division. It became, if any can be called such, the indispensable division--the division which was a must for the invasion of Sicily and later, Normandy. After the long campaign in North Africa, General Eisenhower decided to rest the First

¹George F. Howe, United States Army in World War II, The Mediterranean Theater of Operations North West Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1957), p. 205.

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Division and use the untested Thirty-Sixth Infantry Division for the invasion of Sicily. When General Patton, the Seventh Army Commander who commanded the Sicily Invasion, learned of General Eisenhower's intention, he stormed into the supreme commander's headquarters in the St. George Hotel in Algiers and roared, "I want those sons . . .! I won't go without them!"²

Later General Omar N. Bradley, the First Army Commander, whose troops made the assault landings on the Normandy beaches, was faced with the decision of including the "Big Red One" in the assault or leaving it in England. Since the Division had already fought through North Africa and Sicily and had suffered heavy casualties, it was felt that it was entitled to relief from the ordeal of a third D-Day amphibious assault on an enemy-held shore. However, General Bradley states that he had no choice:

In the accomplishment of that mission there was little room for the niceties of Justice. I felt compelled to employ the best troops I had, to minimize the risks and hoist the odds in our favor in any way that I could. As a result the division that deserved compassion as a reward for its previous ordeals now became the inevitable choice for our most difficult job. Whatever the injustice, it is better that war heap its burdens unfairly than that victory be jeopardized in an effort to equalize the ordeal.³

²Ladislas Farago, Patton Ordeal and Triumph (New York: Ivan Obolensky Inc., 1963), p. 292.

³Omar N. Bradley, A Soldier's Story (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951), p. 237.

However, the Division's importance as a "clutch performer" did not end at Omaha Beach. It played a key role during Operation Cobra, better known as the Normandy Breakout.⁴ Later, the "Fighting First" was called on to assault the Siegfried Line, or the West Wall, and capture the first German city, Aachen.⁵ So it continued throughout the war in Europe; time after time the First Division was assigned a mission which required a division with the ability and dedication to accomplish a task, no matter how great the odds.⁶

There are many factors which contributed to the success of the Division. It was an elite regular Army unit steeped in the heritage of a fighting tradition born in World War I at Lorraine, Aisne-Marne, Picardy, Montdidier-Noyone, St. Mihiel, and the Meuse-Argonne.⁷ Equally important was the cadre which took the Division into combat and through the campaigns. The officers who held key command and staff

⁴Ibid., p. 332.

⁵Charles B. McDonald, US Army In World War II; European Theater of Operations: The Siegfried Line Campaign (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1963), p. 316.

⁶Ibid., p. 464. Immediately after the fall of Aachen the First Division made the main attack of the VII Corps attack at the start of the November Offensive in the Battle of the Huertgen Forest. VII Corps made the main attack of First Army

⁷H. F. Knickerbocker, et al, Danger Forward (Atlanta: Albert Love Enterprises, 1947), p. 405

positions were young, enthusiastic, and well-schooled.⁸ Unlike many other divisions, The First was, for the most part, able to retain its officers without being cadred to form new divisions or to help others which were in need of good commanders or staff officers.⁹

Overshadowing all other reasons for the performance of the "Big Red One," however, were its outstanding commanding generals. The first two, Major Generals Terry de la Mesa Allen and Clarence Ralph Huebner, led the Division for the major part of the war, from November 1942 - December 1944. These two officers provide a study of extreme contrasts in the methods used to command a division and to achieve truly outstanding results in combat.

General Bradley described Allen as a maverick, who was stubborn, independent, skillful, adept, aggressive, and who frequently ignored orders and fought in his own way.¹⁰ Bradley considered Allen as a poor disciplinarian but a commander who was unexcelled in the leadership of troops.¹¹

⁸Letter from Maj. Gen. Stanhope B. Mason, Ret., G-3 and C/S First Infantry Division during World War II, December 8, 1964.

⁹Letter from General of The Army Omar N. Bradley, CG II Corps April 1943--September 1943; CG First Army Sept. 1943--July 1944, CG 12th Army Group August 1944--April 1945; November 16, 1964.

¹⁰Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 81.

¹¹Ibid., p. 100. Also Bradley letter.

In sharp contrast to Allen, Bradley described Huebner as a "flinty disciplinarian."¹² Colonel Stanhope B. Mason (later Maj. Gen.), First Division chief of staff, said that General Huebner demanded that the Division operate in accordance with regulations.¹³ General Eisenhower characterized Huebner's First Division as one of two divisions which were, "tops in the Theater."¹⁴

This study of contrast represents a wealth of information of great value to those interested in the study of high level leadership. Thus, my purpose is to compare and analyze the leadership characteristics and techniques of both generals and to develop appropriate conclusions.

Chapters two and three concern Generals Allen and Huebner respectively and are organized chronologically. No attempt has been made to give equal emphasis to each campaign and battle. Since some of these incidents provide greater information and insight as to the leadership qualities, traits, and characteristics of the principals, the most significant have received the greatest attention.

¹²Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 156.

¹³Mason letter.

¹⁴Martin Blumenson, US Army in World War II, European Theater of Operations: Breakout and Pursuit (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1961), p. 308.

CHAPTER II

TERRY ALLEN

Formative Years

Terry de la Mesa Allen was born at Fort Douglas, Territory of Utah, April 1, 1888. His father, Colonel Samuel Edward Allen, was an artillery officer. His mother, whose maiden name was Conchita de la Mesa, was the daughter of Colonel Carlos de la Mesa, a Spaniard who had served in the Union Army during the Civil War.

As a boy Terry Allen lived on army posts, mostly in Texas, and at an early age began to associate with the enlisted men of the various garrisons. It was inevitable that this hardy lot who taught him to smoke, drink, chew tobacco and shoot dice would have a profound effect on his later career. Allen's great affection for the enlisted men did not diminish through the years. As a division commander it was this deep affection which was reciprocated by his troops.

Terry Allen entered West Point in 1907 with the Class of 1911. In his fourth year he failed a course in Ordnance and Gunnery and was discharged. He then entered Catholic University and studied with great vigor for the 1912 army

competitive examination for a commission which he received that summer. His first assignment was to the Fourteenth Cavalry stationed on the Mexican Border. A year later he and six troopers captured twenty rustlers. During the skirmish he had a horse shot from under him. He took part in four encounters with Mexican bandits, rode with Pershing on the Punitive Expedition into Mexico, and was promoted to captain in the same year that the United States entered World War I.¹

Captain Terry Allen volunteered for overseas duty with the infantry and because he knew little or nothing about trench warfare and the infantry tactics of that day, he hired an infantry sergeant to teach him these tactics.² He was assigned to the 90th Infantry Division and went overseas as a battalion commander. In this capacity he had a distinguished record during World War I.³ The following anecdote is quite illuminating:

As a battalion commander, Allen showed a shrewdness and dash that are not acquired from textbooks. One day, in the Argonne, his battalion was ordered to take an objective the next morning, after the customary heavy-artillery preparation. Allen decided that to attack then under

¹A. J. Liebling, "Profiles, Find 'Em, Fix 'Em, and Fight 'Em--1," New Yorker (April 24, 1943), pp. 22-24.

²Letter from Col. Redding F. Perry, Ret., C/S 2d Armd. Div. during WWII and long time friend of Terry Allen, December 4, 1964.

³Ibid.

the prevailing conditions would be too costly and ordered his battalion to attack the night before instead. He did this on his own responsibility, risking court-martial if the operation went wrong. "I had one goddam company commander who was a pessimist," Allen recalls. "'This is suicide,' he said. I pulled out my revolver and shot him in the behind. 'There. You're out,' I said. 'You're wounded.' He was glad to get out of it, and I sent a second lieutenant up to take the company and he did fine. We took the position with a loss of twenty killed, and if we'd done it by day we would have lost three hundred."⁴

He was wounded four times--once through the face. The bullet knocked out his back teeth and hospitalized him for an extended period. While convalescing he learned to speak French.

When the war ended, he stayed in the Occupation Army, and in 1920, led the United States Army Polo Team against the British Army Team in England. In 1921, he returned to cavalry service in Texas.

He attended the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, with Major Dwight Eisenhower. Eisenhower attracted attention by graduating number one in the class. Allen graduated 221 out of 241 and also attracted attention, according to the following incident.⁵

The head of the school described Allen as the most indifferent student ever enrolled there. Allen says that this estimate was the result of the impression he made on his first day, when he had a date to play tennis with the blonde daughter of a senior officer and consequently had no time to spend on his first tactical problem. "It was

⁴Liebling, p. 24.

⁵Ibid., pp. 24-25.

all full of silly questions like 'What are the enemy's intentions?'" Allen says, "I wrote 'The enemy didn't tell me' and beat it. I was five minutes late for my tennis date already."⁶

A few years after graduating from Leavenworth, Terry Allen was an instructor at the Infantry School where Lieutenant Colonel George C. Marshall was the Assistant Commandant.⁷ Marshall's opinion of Allen was that, "he was a soldier of uncertain future in the peacetime Army but certainly should be entrusted with a division in time of war."⁸

In June of 1928, he married Mary Frances Robinson of El Paso, Texas, and approximately a year later their son Terry Junior was born. As a junior officer, Allen was happy-go-lucky and popular. He excelled as a polo player and more than held his own at the bar without showing any ill effects.⁹ The following incident which took place during the 1920's at Fort Bliss is illustrative of his devil-may-care attitude.

The Colonel of the regiment one day made a speech to his officers on the hazards of drinking . . . he had just uttered the last word of his speech when Terry asked the crowd over to the Officer's Club for a drink.¹⁰

Mrs. Paul M. Martin, whose husband Colonel Paul Martin served under Terry Allen during the 1930's said, "Terry is

⁶Ibid., p. 25.

⁷Perry letter.

⁸Liebling, p. 25.

⁹Letter from Mrs. Paul M. Martin, a long time friend of Gen. & Mrs. Allen, February 10, 1965.

¹⁰Ibid.,

a wonderful person . . . a real diamond in the rough . . . certainly not a ladies man, BY ANY MEANS but A REAL MAN'S MAN . . . the ladies all admired him and liked him . . . the men loved him."¹¹

During the 1930's, he served with the famed Seventh Cavalry Regiment at Fort Riley, Kansas, and quite naturally was the player-coach of the regimental polo team. He took his lightly regarded team to the finals of an Army Tournament in Texas although there was only one well-known player--himself--on the team. Almost everyone thought this team would be thoroughly beaten. But during the week before the match Allen had his team practice shooting goals every day at a target only a yard and a half wide (Ordinary polo goals are eight yards wide). During the match, the other team had forty shots and made seven. Allen's team had only eight shots but made all eight.¹² This was the serious side of Terry Allen, a fierce competitor who did not worry about odds. He also had a serious side as an army officer, contrary to the beliefs of the Commandant of the Command and General Staff School. As an instructor at Fort Riley he rewrote the Cavalry Field regulations.¹³ He also wrote a book, Reconnaissance by Horse Cavalry Regiments and Smaller

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Liebling, p. 22.

¹³Perry letter.

Units, which was published in 1939.¹⁴

In October 1940, as the Army began to mobilize, Lieutenant Colonel Allen was promoted to Brigadier General. For the next two years he served as assistant division commander in three divisions, and in each, "he succeeded in convincing his charges . . . that they were in the best outfit in the Army."¹⁵

Division Commander

Assumption of command and movement overseas.--General Allen assumed command of the First Division at Camp Blanding, Florida, during the winter of 1942, and was promoted to Major General shortly thereafter.¹⁶ The Division was undergoing final training prior to movement overseas, and during this period General Allen used every opportunity to impress the already tradition-conscious Division with its proud heritage and the responsibility which every man assumed when he joined the First Division.¹⁷

¹⁴Terry Allen, Reconnaissance by Horse Cavalry Regiments and Smaller Units (Harrisburg: The Military Service Publishing Co., 1939.).

¹⁵Liebling, p. 26.

¹⁶Interview of Lt. Gen. Robert W. Porter, G-2 1st Inf. Div. during WW II, by Capt. E. W. Martin, 14 November 1964. Also Liebling, p. 26.

¹⁷Interview with Sgt. Maj. Theodore Dobel, Plat. Sgt. Co. k, 26th Inf. during WW II, December 29, 1964.

General Allen retained the staff which he inherited. The only addition was Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Porter (Later Lt. Gen.).¹⁸ General Allen did not retain all of the junior officers, however. If an officer had questionable potential as a combat leader, he was reclassified and transferred. By the time that the Division departed from its overseas staging area at Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, approximately seventy-five officers had left the Division.¹⁹

The First Division sailed overseas on the Queen Mary. Aboard ship General Allen spent a great deal of time talking to the men in an attempt to keep their spirits high. Discipline was loose, gambling was condoned. In fact, upon seeing a dice game in progress he welcomed the chance to participate. On at least one occasion he was seen to turn to his chief of staff, Colonel Norman D. Cota (Later Maj. Gen.), and say, "Dutch, give me a dollar so that I can break this game up."²⁰ Few, if any, division commanders have had the personal rapport with their troops that General Allen enjoyed. His troops not only referred to him as Terry, but some actually addressed him as Terry. When meeting one of

¹⁸Porter interview.

¹⁹Interview with Col. Peter Mirakian, Plat. Ldr. and Exec. O., Co. C, 18th Inf. during WW II, 10 November 1964.

²⁰Interview with Colonel Barnhart, S-3 5th F.A. Bn during WW II, 10 November 1964.

his officers or soldiers, he would often give him a soft playful punch to the jaw followed by a warm hand shake.²¹

The First Division arrived in Scotland 8 August 1942 and proceeded to Tidworth Barracks in the south of England for an extensive period of amphibious training. By 22 October 1942, when the Division sailed for North Africa, the "Big Red One" was almost as much at home aboard ship as on land.²²

Oran.--Shortly after midnight, 8 November 1942, the First Division, divided into two forces, landed near Oran, Algeria.²³ Terry Allen was not long in showing his color as a combat commander. As his troops were landing his confidence, competitive spirit, and sense of humor were apparent. When he received a signal that the first wave had landed, he went to a large room where troops of the second assault wave were awaiting their turn to go ashore and announced: "Boys, I think you'd like to know that our first assault

²¹Letter from Lt. Gen. John W. Bowen, CO 3d Bn. 26th Inf. Nov. 1942-July 1943, CO 26th Inf. July 1943-June 1944, December 15, 1964.

²²Knickerbocker, et al, p. 407 and p. 420.

²³Terry Allen, A Factual Situation and Operations Report on the Combat Operations of the 1st Infantry Division During Its Campaign in N. Africa During the Period 8 November 1942 to 7 August 1943 (By the author, n.d.), p. 2. Cited hereafter as Allen, Situation and Operations Report.

wave landed and took up positions without opposition. . . . I've just sent a signal to the French to put in their First Team."²⁴

The landings were not strongly opposed by the French and the drive toward Oran proceeded in good order. The main stumbling block was the village of St. Cloud. Colonel Frank Greer's 18th Infantry, reinforced, attacked at 0700, 9 November. By noon the Regiment had suffered heavy casualties and the attack had stalled. Colonel Greer planned to pull his infantry back and fire a thirty-minute artillery preparation and then attack with all three of his battalions. General Allen, however, made a rapid estimate of the situation and demonstrated decisiveness and good judgment in halting the operation. He decided that the village of St. Cloud could be contained by a reinforced battalion and bypassed.

We are going to bypass it. First, because I don't want to kill civilians and there are 4,000 of them there; second, regardless of sentiment, it would make a bad political impression; third, if we bombarded it, and yet failed to take it by attack, it would be disastrous; fourth, it would take too much ammunition; fifth, it is unnecessary because we can reach our objective, Oran, without it.²⁵

The advance pushed on toward Oran. That night General Allen and his staff prepared the plan for the final phase of

²⁴Knickerbocker, et al., p. 40.

²⁵Knickerbocker, et al., p. 46.

the attack. The command post mirrored Allen's informality. He sat in the schoolroom under the light of a gasoline lantern hanging from a beam. His staff surrounded him. On the floor and under the desks two officers and a half dozen enlisted men slept. Several sergeants, orderlies, and clerks squatted between the staff officers. An enlisted stenographer kneeled on the floor and stenoyped the operation order which General Allen dictated. When the dictation was completed, Colonel Cota, the chief of staff, asked if there were any general instructions for the units. General Allen answered with the cogent words, "Nothing in Hell must delay or stop the attack."²⁶ Thus the phrase was coined which became a fixture in the combat orders of the First Division in North Africa and later in Sicily. H. R. Knickerbocker, the war correspondent, who was in the command post while the order was being written commented on it as follows:

That sounds at best unorthodox, at worst commonplace, here, now on paper, but it did not sound commonplace to the men in that room. From General Allen it became an [sic] imperative that they would have given their lives to obey.²⁷

During the drive to Oran, General Allen drove his division night and day, and men were pushed to the point of exhaustion. Oran had to be taken as soon as possible and the division

²⁶Ibid., p. 47.

²⁷Ibid.

responded admirably.²⁸

During the morning of 10 November, General Allen went forward to see how the attack was progressing. He came upon an exhausted rifle company which, instead of leading the attack, had taken cover from enemy artillery fire in a ditch along the side of a road. General Allen calmly walked along the road in front of the troops and looked toward the objective. Major Thomas Lancer (later Col.), the First Division provost marshal, said,

General Allen didn't say, "why are the men sitting in this ditch?" He knew that they were tired. He said "There are a lot of good looking girls in that town ready to welcome the liberating Americans." The Company moved out immediately without further orders.²⁹

This incident shows General Allen's technique of getting a task accomplished without embarrassing a subordinate commander. He was an aggressive combat leader but at the same time a sensitive man, and had great concern for the feelings of his subordinates. Major Leonard G. Robinson (later Col.), executive officer of the 5th Field Artillery Battalion, said,

I never heard of General Allen's "chewing" any subordinate, yet he was extremely effective at getting the most out of people when the going got rough.³⁰

²⁸Knickerbocker, et al., p. 49.

²⁹Interview of Col. Thomas Lancer, 1st Div. Provost Marshall during WW II, by Capt. E. W. Martin, November 1964.

³⁰Letter from Col. Leonard G. Robinson, Exec. O. 5th Field Artillery Battaion, 1st Inf. Div. Arty during WWII, 4 January 1965.

Tunisia.--Almost as soon as the fighting ended in the Oran area the First Division began to be stripped of units which were urgently needed in Tunisia.³¹ As a consequence the period from just after the capture of Oran to the reunification of the Division in March was extremely frustrating for Terry Allen. While the organization was fragmented, he commanded mixtures of American, British and French troops which were deployed over great expanses of real estate in positions which could not be adequately defended. This situation plus the miserable weather and German air superiority caused him to experience periods which bordered on depression.³² He made weekly trips to Allied Headquarters to protest this treatment of his beloved division until finally General Eisenhower, hounded to his limit, told him that he didn't want to hear any more about it.³³ Allen had started making himself unpopular with his senior commanders and it was a trend which would continue and increase in intensity as the war in North Africa and Sicily progressed. Allen's fierce loyalty to the First Division and his love

³¹Knickerbocker, et al., pp. 58-59. Many units of the 1st Div. were attached to the British forces during this period.

³²Letter from Maj. Gen. Cliff Andrus, (Ret.), C.G. Div. Arty. and C. G. 1st Inf. Div. during WW II, 12 Jan. 65.

³³Interview with Lt. Col. Marvin W. Flora, Btry. Cmdr. 5th F.A.Bn. during WW II, 5 November 1964

for his troops were more important to him than maintaining harmonious relations with his superiors.

On 6 March, Major General George S. Patton, Jr., took command of the United States Army's senior tactical headquarters in North Africa, II Corps, and, in his effort to stamp out all traces of casualness, he emphasized "spit and polish."³⁴ He was a stickler for proper uniforms, and his necktie-and-helmet-at-all-times policy was a source of irritation to almost everyone in II Corps.³⁵ General Patton always presented an immaculate appearance, wearing, in addition to his now famous "pearl handle pistols," pink riding breeches, shirt and tie and, of course, his always-well-shined boots.³⁶ General Allen's concern for sartorial splendor during combat is well illustrated by General Bradley's description of him later in the campaign.

He wore the same dark green shirt and trousers he had worn through the Gafsa campaign. His orderly had sewn creases into his pants but they had long since bagged out, the aluminum stars he wore had been taken from an Italian private.³⁷

Like its commander, the Division did not win any prizes for being the best dressed unit in the Corps. It is a matter

³⁴Howe, pp. 487-492.

³⁵Mirakian interview.

³⁶Knickerbocker, et al., p. 92.

³⁷Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 81.

of record that the previously mentioned Patton uniform policy made less than the desired impression on the soldiers of the First Division.³⁸ This lack of concern with uniform regulations certainly helped to convince General Bradley that Terry Allen was not much of a disciplinarian.³⁹ Terry Allen thought that these uniform policies were fine for other divisions but not his.⁴⁰ In his eyes, his First Division could do no wrong.⁴¹

General Allen had very definite ideas on discipline, and there are writers who have deprecated his appreciation for its importance. Actually he was acutely aware of the necessity for discipline, but to him its meaning was oriented strictly toward the efficient functioning of a unit in combat.⁴² Procedures which did not contribute to the combat effectiveness of the unit were not stressed. As Allen later said:

Discipline is the foundation of teamwork and efficiency in any organization. Military discipline has been defined as being a mental attitude that renders proper military conduct instinctive on the part of the soldier.

³⁸Bradley letter.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Andrus letter.

⁴²Porter interview.

It further signifies a deep sense of loyalty and cooperation and cheerful obedience to constituted authority.

With so much talk today of the need for social reforms, military discipline has often been maligned and criticized by an unthinking public, who connect the term "discipline" solely with military punishment; whereas DISCIPLINE in its true sense really means cooperation and team work. The American youth learns team discipline on school athletic teams, where he must "play ball, for the good of the team," or "turn in his suit."

Discipline cannot be attained by fear of punishment. It can only be attained by the precept and example of the leaders. For that reason any military leader must make sure that his orders and instructions are sound and explicit and that they are issued with firmness and impartiality toward all concerned.

With honest forthright leadership the men soon realize that the demands made upon them are made in their own best interests. The American soldier is often a rugged individualist; but deep down in his own heart, he takes pride in serving in a tough, well-disciplined outfit where duty and training requirements are sound and exacting and where his own needs are skillfully attended to.

DISCIPLINE enables green troops to withstand the first shock of battle to react under fire like veterans, and to win when the odds are against them. Excessive casualties are the exception in a well-disciplined unit that has been trained to react instinctively under any emergency.

A well-disciplined combat unit can be recognized by its alert, confident bearing and by its efficient functioning in the field. One cannot expect officers or soldiers to maintain a parade ground appearance during the stress of front line combat conditions. But, an alert soldierly bearing should be instinctive, even under the most trying conditions. Some individuals are inclined to become slovenly in their performance of routine duties when the going gets tough. But this slipshod attitude is never condoned in any outfit that has a deep pride in itself.

The noncommissioned officers are the backbone of any military organization in maintaining high standards of discipline and training. Give them definite responsibilities, honest support, and authority to act on their own initiative. But, make sure that this authority is intelligently and rightfully exercised.⁴³

Lieutenant Colonel Porter (later Lt. Gen.), the First Division G-2 during World War II, said that General Allen put the responsibility on the regimental commanders for the discipline of their regiments and that he did not get involved unless there was a serious incident.⁴⁴ On the subject of discipline, Lieutenant Colonel John T. Corley, III, (later Brig. Gen.), the commanding officer of the 3d Battalion of the 26th Infantry, said,

If he [General Allen] had any weaknesses, he overstepped bounds of propriety of discipline. He was too friendly with subordinates. When there was business, however, he was as rough a cob as you'll ever find.⁴⁵

During the period 1 March thru 15 March 1942, the First Division was reunited near Morsott, Algeria. Replacements were received and vehicles and weapons were maintained. For the weary veterans, it was a chance to catch up on some long overdue rest.⁴⁶ With his Division together again

⁴³Terry Allen, "Combat Leadership," an address at the US Army Air Defense School, n.d. Cited hereafter as Allen, Leadership.

⁴⁴Porter interview.

⁴⁵Interview of Brig. Gen. John T. Corley, III, C.O. 3d Bn. 26th Inf. during WW II, by Capt. E. W. Martin, 14 November 1964.

⁴⁶Allen, Situation and Operations Report, p. 11.
Also Andrus letter.

General Allen's morale soared. His enthusiasm and aggressive attitude infused the Division with confidence and an arrogant cockiness which became imprinted on those who served with the Division throughout the war. In describing this surge of confidence and cockiness which was born at Morsott, General Andrus, the Division Artillery Commander, said, "It was a tribute to the affection in which Terry was held by the personnel."⁴⁷

During this rest period at Morsott, General Allen ordered the establishment of a "Battle School" for the incoming replacements of the Division.⁴⁸ This school was in reality a twenty-two day period of tough combat physical training which included an orientation of the traditions of the First Division, instruction in all infantry weapons, day and night patrolling, night combat operations, and first-aid. The instructors were officers and NCO's who were rotated to the school from front line units. It operated during the remainder of the campaign in North Africa and resulted in a higher level of combat efficiency in front line units, fewer casualties and, of course, much higher morale among the new replacements.⁴⁹

⁴⁷Andrus letter.

⁴⁸Allen, Situation and Operations Report, p. 11.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 12.

In the mud and cold of North Africa, as the First Division prepared to resume offensive operations, General Allen told his troops, "We've been given a wet ball on a muddy field. Watch us run with it."⁵⁰ This analogy was not an isolated incident. General Allen frequently discussed tactical operations in football terms such as, "We'll send Smith on this off-tackle smash, or around left end."⁵¹ In fact, Colonel John W. Bowen (later Lt. Gen.), Commanding Officer of the 26th Infantry, described General Allen as: "the type portrayed as the captain of the football team, yet one of the 'boys' and players."⁵²

On the night of 16-17 March 1943, operating as a complete Division for the first time since the capture of Oran, the "Big Red One" made an approach march of approximately forty-five miles, on an exacting schedule, to a position just north of Gafsa.⁵³ The attack was successful and the initial objectives were taken before daylight. General Patton arrived early in the morning to watch the attack and when he did not see any evidence of movement, he stormed up to General Allen and asked, "What the hell is this? When

⁵⁰H. R. Knickerbocker, et al., p. 81.

⁵¹Bowen letter.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Howe, pp. 547-548.

are you going to move?" General Allen answered, "General, we are already on our first objectives."⁵⁴ He indicated that although he had not had permission to make a night attack; on the other hand, he had not been told that he couldn't.⁵⁵ When General Patton asked for an explanation Allen answered, "Do you know about Knute Rockne?" Patton answered, "What does a Swede football coach have to do with night attacks?" Allen replied, "Why beat your brains out for a yard and a half when you can throw for forty yards?" "Oh," Patton said, "The forward pass?"⁵⁶ Allen said that the night attack is the forward pass of the infantry.⁵⁷

The success of the Gafsa operation was due, in no small part, to the excellent work of General Allen's staff. General Allen had great confidence in his staff, and relied on it to determine requirements and to come up with solutions for the problems at hand.⁵⁸ It was an authoritative staff which definitely was not over supervised.⁵⁹ During combat General Allen was often at the critical point of the

⁵⁴Interview of Maj. Gen. Terry Allen by Capt. E. W. Martin, 10 June 1964.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Robinson letter.

⁵⁹Interview with Brig. Gen. Charles P. Stone, C.O. 3d Bn. 16th Inf. and Ass't G-3 1st Div during WW II, 9 Jan. 1965.

action and was not immediately available to the staff.

Colonel John W. Bowen (later Lt. Gen.), commanding officer of the 26th Infantry, said,

While his staff was often in the dark over what he was doing on the spot, he had implicit faith in them, which they well deserved. He accepted their ideas, concepts and plans with little questioning and about as they were offered.⁶⁰

Lieutenant Colonel Robert W. Porter, the division G-2 in North Africa, described General Allen as a brilliant tactician who had an amazing appreciation for the use of terrain, and an uncanny ability to anticipate his opposing commander's moves. In spite of his brilliance and great ability as a staff officer, General Allen did not dictate to his staff. He simply told them what he wanted done but not how to do it.⁶¹

Colonel Stanhope B. Mason (later Maj. Gen.), who was the Division G-3 and later the chief of staff, described General Allen's use of the staff as "cavalry style--that is--quick orders, tell somebody to do something, maybe duplicate effort, but go, go, go."⁶² The staff assumed the responsibility for coordinating details to prevent duplication of effort. This caused problems for the staff according

⁶⁰Bowen letter.

⁶¹Porter interview.

⁶²Mason letter.

to Colonel Mason, but, in his words, "we managed to get the job done. . . . I might add, we had a lot of fun doing it and morale was good."⁶³

Following seizure of Gafsa on 17 March, General Allen, on the basis of information received, estimated that his next mission would be to seize the high ground east of El Guettar, twelve miles to the east of Gafsa. Plans were made and reconnaissance was accomplished so that when the Division received the corps operation order, "to attack east along the GABES Road and secure the commanding positions east of El Guettar," the Division was able to move immediately to attack positions and then to attack to seize the initial objectives.⁶⁴ Again the First Division made a night attack.⁶⁵

. Complete surprise was achieved and all preliminary objectives were taken prior to noon 21 March in spite of stubborn resistance and numerous counterattacks.⁶⁶

The attack continued on 22 March against increasing German resistance, including numerous bombing and strafing

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Allen, Situation and Operations Report, pp. 14-15.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 15.

⁶⁶Terry Allen, A Summary of the El Guettar Offensive (20 March-6 April 1943) with Special References to the Offensive Drive and Night Attacks of the First Infantry Division, US Army, (By author, n.d.), pp. 3-5. Cited hereafter as Allen, El Guettar Summary.

attacks by the Luftwaffe. At dawn on 23 March the Germans launched a strong counterattack against the south flank of the division. German infantry and tank columns infiltrated the position of the 3d Bn., 18th Infantry and overran some of the positions of the 5th and 32d F.A. Bns. which were supporting the 18th Infantry. The 601st Tank Destroyer Battalion of the First Division, although out-gunned, fought a furious battle with the more heavily armed German tanks. This counterattack was repulsed only after the 16th Infantry Regiment, in reserve, was committed.⁶⁷

That afternoon ^{from 1600} First Division intelligence personnel broke the enemy battle code and learned that the attack was to be resumed at 1600. Later another message was intercepted which informed the German units that the attack would be postponed until 1645. Again the competitive fire, devil-may-care attitude, and a bit of a small boy's mischievousness which were a part of General Terry Allen's make-up were obvious. In his words,

This was too good to keep, and the 1st Division Signal Company was directed to broadcast this message over the German radio battle net at 4:15 PM, 23 Mar., "What the hell are you guys waiting for? We have been ready ever since 4: PM." signed First Division.⁶⁸

) ⁶⁷Ibid., p. 6.

⁶⁸Ibid.

The message was addressed to Rommel and the Tenth Panzer Division. The word spread rapidly through the Division that Terry was giving the dickens to Rommel. General Patton, who was up front in the Division area, heard what the troops were saying. He went to the command post and, with a smile on his face, said, "Terry when are you going to learn to take this damned war seriously?"⁶⁹ The German attack was launched at 1645 and was stopped without loss of ground by the First Division.⁷⁰ On 6 April after seventeen days of hard fighting the final objectives were taken.

The final phase of the campaign in North Africa was the drive on Tunis. The First Division had the mission of breaking through the German defenses in the mountainous area west of the Tine Valley to clear the way for the First Armored Division. The defensive positions were ten miles in depth.⁷¹

Major General Omar N. Bradley, the new II Corps commander, visited the First Division on the eve of the attack and observed that--

Here more than anywhere else on the line, an air of easy relaxation hid the tension that comes on the eve of

⁶⁹Allen interview.

⁷⁰Farago, p. 251.

⁷¹Maj. Gen. Terry Allen, A Summary of the Final Drive on Tunis, During World War II (22 Apr-7 May 43) with Special reference to the Continued Offensive and Night Attacks of the 1st Infantry Division, U.S. Army (by author, n.d.), Cited hereafter as Allen, Summary of Drive on Tunis.

attack. . . that, the initiative of the 1st Division was apparent even in Allen's mess, where his rough table boasted rare roast beef while the other division CO's made do with conventional tinned rations. The meat Terry explained, was 'casualty' beef, from cattle accidentally killed by enemy fire. Despite the warnings of vets on sick cattle, those casualties happened with suspicious frequency.⁷²

It is also interesting to hear General Bradley's description of General Allen because in practically every word picture or photograph, General Allen had a grin on his face. This was no exception and General Bradley recalled that, "Terry sat with his black hair disheveled, a squinty grin on his face."⁷³

In characteristic fashion, Allen launched the offensive with a night attack.⁷⁴ The fighting was in rugged mountainous terrain. In General Allen's own words it was, "Rock Em and Sock Em by continuous day and night attacks."⁷⁵ The penetration was achieved and on 2 May, General Harmon's Second Armored Division roared toward Mateur.⁷⁶ The First Division had suffered heavy casualties and was halted in the hills north of Chouiqui. When the enemy situation began to deteriorate, General Allen, without authorization from II Corps,

⁷²Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 81.

⁷³Ibid., p. 81.

⁷⁴Allen, Summary of Drive on Tunis, p. 3.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 91.

ordered an attack which pushed into the Chouiqui foothills. The position was strongly defended by the elite Barenthin Regiment and the First Division suffered heavy losses and withdrew to its assigned defensive positions.⁷⁷ Here General Allen's initiative and aggressiveness got him into trouble. Undoubtedly General Bradley had this incident in mind when he described General Allen as:

Skillful, adept, and aggressive, he frequently ignored orders and fought in his own way. I found it difficult to persuade Terry to put his pressure where I thought it should go. He would halfway agree on a plan, but somehow once the battle started this agreement seemed to be forgotten.⁷⁸

Although he was an aggressive commander, Allen was extremely concerned about needless expenditure of lives. His feeling on the subject of casualties is shown by the following incident. One day as General Allen walked into a staff meeting, Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, the assistant division commander, was reciting the First Division motto, "No Mission too Difficult, No Sacrifice too Great: Duty First." General Allen rebuked General Roosevelt and said, "The First Division would never lose a single man more than necessary, none if possible."⁷⁹

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 93.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 81.

⁷⁹Allen interview.

General Allen's extensive use of night attacks to secure objectives with the least loss of life has been mentioned. Although not used exclusively to avoid setting a pattern, Allen liked them because they kept the enemy guessing.⁸⁰ He also made extensive use of envelopments in his operations in order to secure objectives as economically as possible.⁸¹

The Oran incident and preparation for Sicily.--When the fighting ended in Tunisia, the division was trucked back to the Oran area. The troops eagerly looked forward to their return to Oran and no doubt this anticipation was magnified by the actions of Brigadier General Teddy Roosevelt, the popular assistant division commander. During the rugged fighting in Tunisia, Roosevelt, like Allen, spent many hours with the front line rifle companies.⁸² In an effort to keep morale high he liked to tease the troops, "on the pleasures that awaited their return to Oran."⁸³ He also told them that, "once we've licked the Boche, . . . we'll go back to Oran and beat up every MP in town."⁸⁴

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Corley interview.

⁸²Mirakian interview.

⁸³Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 111.

⁸⁴Ibid.

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The Oran incident, as it is popularly known, is not discussed here with the intention of judging any of the participants. It is included because it vividly shows some of the attitudes and characteristics of the First Division which were the result of General Allen's leadership.

In order to fully understand the situation, it is necessary to examine the situation which existed at the end of the fighting in Tunisia and the events which took place in the First Division. In Tunisia the rumor had been rampant in the Division that it would be sent home to train new divisions at the conclusion of the Tunisian campaign. This rumor was, to some extent, the result of Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt's statements in the press that the First Division should be brought home. There was considerable speculation in the United States that the Division would return home, but with the Division's return to the Oran area it was obvious that there would be no quick trip home.⁸⁵

When the woolen-clad First Division troops visited Oran they found that the khaki-clad supply troops had put all of their clubs and installations off limits to the officers and men of the "Big Red One."⁸⁶ In Oran there was more than

⁸⁵Interview of Lt. Gen. C. R. Huebner, (Ret.), by Col. John D. Hoile, Huebner was CG of 1st Div Aug 43-Dec 44, 2 December 1964. Mrs. Roosevelt later stated that her comments had pertained to the First Marine Division.

⁸⁶Barnhart interview.

friction between the front-line troops and the communication zone troops--there was open hostility. To the proud, battle-hardened troops of the First Division it was inexcusable that they would be treated as second-class citizens in the city that they had liberated only a few months ago.⁸⁷ General Bradley said:

Thus the woolen uniform in Oran became the unmistakable badge of troops from the Tunisian Front. As long as bands of the 1st Division hunted down khaki-clad service troops in Oran, those sweaty woolens were the only assurance of safe-conduct in the city's streets.

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While the Oran outbreak demonstrated the need for tightening discipline within the division, it also indicated how woefully we had overlooked a soldier's need for relaxation once he emerges from combat. Had we sped the division into a rest cantonment on the seashore where it might gradually unwind itself, we could probably have avoided this rioting in Oran. Instead, we rushed the 1st into a dreary tent bivouac for the resumption of its strenuous field training.⁸⁸

Although General Bradley acknowledged the error of his headquarters, he said,

It also indicated a serious breakdown in discipline with the division. Allen's troops had now begun to strut their toughness while ignoring regulations that applied to all other units.⁸⁹

There is considerable evidence that this "serious breakdown in discipline with the division" was not an internal situation

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 110 & p. 111.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 110.

but was a manifestation of the growth of the intense pride and individualism of the Division. The Division showed disdain for some of the customs and regulations. Here the Division mirrored the personality of its commanding general, and this is a vivid example of the axiom that a unit mirrors the commander's image. General Bradley in describing General Allen and General Roosevelt wrote:

Despite their prodigal talents as combat leaders, neither Terry Allen nor Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, the assistant division commander, possessed the instincts of a good disciplinarian. They looked upon discipline as an unwelcome crutch to be used by less able and personable commanders. Terry's own career as an army rebel had long ago disproved the maxim that discipline makes the soldier. Having broken the mold himself, he saw no need to apply it to his troops. "We'll all play by the same ground rule," I once told Terry Allen, "Whatever the patch we wear on our sleeve." I'm afraid Allen gave little notice to my admonition.⁹⁰

The following incident illustrates the outward rebellious attitude of the Division and the corresponding internal discipline and comradeship. Captain N. H. Barnhart (later Col.), S-3 of the 5th Field Artillery Battalion, and another officer were walking down a street in Oran when two First Division enlisted men approached. One was heard to tell the other: "We'll salute them; they are from the First Division."⁹¹

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 110.

⁹¹Barnhart interview.

The indications of poor discipline in Oran did not portend the disintegration of the First Division as an effective fighting machine. On D+1 and D+2 at Gela, Sicily, less than sixty days after the Oran incident, the First did a magnificent job which will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

The First Division was described by one author as, "one great big mutual admiration society."⁹² There appears to be a certain accuracy in that description. General Allen had gone to great length to impress the Division with its heritage and with the responsibility that each man had to the Division.

Years later in answering the question of why does an American soldier fight, General Allen said,

The average American soldier is a self thinking individual with basic motives of patriotism and love of country. But, once his own unit is committed to battle, his most urgent incentive is the fact that he is fighting for his unit. When American soldiers are imbued with an intense belief in their outfit, they will never let their units down regardless of their fatigue or battle weariness. They wear their division insignia with a fierce pride and will fight for their outfit at the drop of a hat. Units that have this pride of accomplishment have a cocky self-assurance, all their own, which pays off in battle.⁹³

⁹²Farage, p. 291.

⁹³Allen, Leadership.

The following anecdote illustrates Allen's attitude toward unit pride. One day while General Allen was having a drink with friends in a hotel, a disturbance took place just outside of the hotel. General Allen went outside to break up the disturbance. He pulled a First Division sergeant out of the brawl, but the sergeant got back into the fight. When General Allen pulled the sergeant out of the fight a second time, he said, "Sergeant, didn't I tell you to get out of here?" The sergeant replied, "But, General, you don't know what they said. They said that the First Division could not fight their way out of a paper bag." General Allen then told the sergeant, "Get back in there."⁹⁴

Few division commanders in our Army's history have led by force of personality in the manner of Terry Allen. It has been mentioned previously that he spent considerable time with the front line rifle companies. He was solicitous of the wants of his troops, and he put great stress on the fact that the officers and NCO's had to take care of their men and look after their welfare.⁹⁵ He shared the dangers of the front line troops and they loved him for it. Often he was with the leading battalion in an attack.⁹⁶ His

⁹⁴Corley interview.

⁹⁵Mirakian interview.

⁹⁶Dobel interview.

language was rough, colorful and down to earth. He talked to his troops in their language and had great rapport with them.⁹⁷ His face had the leather-like appearance of a cowboy or the horse cavalry officer which he had been for so many years.⁹⁸ He was a man's man and the troops idolized and emulated him. If he had been Private First Class Terry Allen of Company K, 26th Infantry, instead of the Commanding General, it is not unreasonable to picture him as a ring-leader in the Oran festivities, instead of a spectator.

With less than sixty days to prepare for the invasion of Sicily the First Division started a strenuous training program. Allen believed in rugged and realistic training.⁹⁹ He has stated,

Training must be realistic with emphasis on combat technique and team work. Every soldier in the outfit must know why he is doing what. Top physical fitness must be stressed. A soldier's technical expertness is nullified unless he has the physical stamina and "guts" to sustain all out efforts when the going is tough. Officers or enlisted men who cannot survive a tough training program have no place in combat. The slogan, "Get Smart and Get Tough," summarizes unit training needs. Mistakes made in training can be corrected. Mistakes made in battle are paid for in the lives of your men.¹⁰⁰

While he believed that his troops should work hard. General Allen also believed that they should play hard.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷Mirakian interview.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Allen, Leadership.

¹⁰¹Barnhart interview

In Oran a curfew had been established and, due to the long training days, it was impossible for First Division troops to get into the city before the curfew hour. In characteristic fashion, Terry "went to bat" for his troops and the curfew hour was changed.¹⁰²

He earned the respect and loyalty of his men in other ways, one of which is described by Private N. N. Peters of Company C, 16th Infantry. One day during the training for the invasion of Sicily General Allen arrived at the platoon training site, introduced himself, and asked the men to sit down. He then asked how many had survived the entire North African campaign. About fifteen men stood up. General Allen thanked them for the fine work that they had done during the campaign. When he finished with the platoon that Pvt. Peters was in, he moved on to others to express his thanks to them. Pvt. Peters said,

I was deeply impressed with the humble and sincere gratitude General Allen demonstrated on that day near the beach in North Africa. I am certain that this impression gave all of the men a feeling of warmth and loyalty for their division commander which was later demonstrated in combat in Sicily.¹⁰³

General Allen did not hesitate to protest to higher headquarters if he thought that their orders imposed a

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Letter from Mr. N. N. Peters, member of Co. C, 16th Inf. during WW II, 25 August 1964.

hardship on his troops or if he thought that the headquarters was trespassing on his prerogative as a division commander.¹⁰⁴

In fact, as General Bradley stated, "always fighting to keep his 1st from being dumped on by the high command, Terry was fiercely antagonistic to any echelon above that of division"¹⁰⁵

Allen's altercations with higher headquarters were not always one-sided, however.

One such session had to do with First Division supply procurement procedures which were described by General Bradley as, "its old freebooting procurement habits."¹⁰⁶ Simply stated, if supplies could not be obtained through normal supply channels, they were obtained by chicanery.¹⁰⁷ Once General Allen sent an officer to General Eisenhower's headquarters to get help in obtaining critical supplies directly without having to deal with depots. When General Bradley, whose headquarters had not been consulted, confronted Allen with this information, "he grinned like a boy caught in a pot of jam"¹⁰⁸ It was also General Bradley's opinion that, "The First Division was parricidal at heart; regulations were not likely to change it."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴Barnhart interview.

¹⁰⁵Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 81.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 118.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

Sicily.--At approximately 0230 hours, 10 July 1943, Terry Allen's "Fighting First" made its second D-Day assault on enemy soil.

The landing of the infantry went as planned and the troops moved inland against light opposition. The landing of artillery, armor and regimental cannon companies during the morning and afternoon of 10 July was seriously hampered by enemy air strikes and rough seas.¹¹⁰ By late afternoon the 33d Field Artillery Battalion supporting the 26th Infantry, the 7th Field Artillery Battalion supporting the 16th Infantry and the 5th Field Artillery Battalion in general support were all ashore and in action although they had suffered severe losses of equipment and personnel.¹¹¹

During the afternoon of D-Day the enemy opposition began to stiffen and there was confused fighting during the night.¹¹² At 0640, 11 July or D+1 General Roosevelt called General Allen from the 26th Infantry Command Post to let him know that they were being attacked and that the 26th

¹¹⁰ Maj. Gen. Terry Allen, (Ret.), A Summary of the Sicily Campaign, during World War II (10 July-16 August 43) with Special Reference to the Continued Offensive and Night Attacks of the 1st Infantry Division, U.S. Army (By author, n.d.), p. 5. Cited hereafter as Allen, Sicily Summary. Also Perry letter.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 5.

¹¹² Ibid.

Infantry had been penetrated. Colonel Redding F. Perry, chief of staff of the 2d Armored Division which was afloat, said that the following radio message was monitored, "Teddy to Terry. We need tanks ashore at once." Later a garbled message was heard, "Terry looks bad, Situation not favorable. 3d Battalion, 26th Infantry attacked by tanks, 2d Battalion in support. If we could get a company of mediums it sure would help. Is there any possibility of hurrying the mediums it sure would help. If we are to take Ponte Olivia (airport) we must have mediums."¹¹³

The First Division had been attacked by sixty tanks of the Herman Goering Panzer Division which at the time of the invasion was located eighteen miles northeast of Gela. The 26th Infantry was penetrated and tanks headed toward the beach where supplies, supporting artillery, tanks, and anti-tank guns were being landed.¹¹⁴

Although overrun by tanks, the infantry had not moved. They had burrowed into their holes when the Panzers overran their position, but they stopped the German infantry which accompanied the tanks. General Allen ordered every gun in the Division to be positioned to stop the tanks which thundered toward the beach.¹¹⁵ Brigadier General Cliff Andrus

¹¹³Perry letter.

¹¹⁴Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 130.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 131.

division artillery commander, got the artillery into direct fire positions and told his artillery to, "slug it out," with the German tanks.¹¹⁶ The artillery with help from naval gunfire support stopped the attack. The 33d Field Artillery Battalion, in direct support of the 26th Infantry, claimed to have destroyed seventeen tanks. The destroyer USS Edson painted thirteen miniature German tanks on its forward smoke-stack--its claim of kills in the action.¹¹⁷

After the first attack, General Allen had a series of visitors at his command post, which amounted to a long shallow fox hole dug in the sand dunes not far from the beach.¹¹⁸ General Patton and General Bradley were there as was Colonel Perry, the chief of staff of the 2d Armored Division. This was one time that General Allen did not wear the famous Terry Allen grin. The Division was still under attack and was in serious need of anti-tank support. General Bradley described General Allen as, "dog-tired," and "His eyes were red from loss of sleep."¹¹⁹ When General Bradley asked General Allen if he had the situation in hand he

¹¹⁶Allen, Sicily Summary, p. 6.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Perry letter.

¹¹⁹Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 130.

replied. "Yes, I think so, but they've given us a helluva rough time."¹²⁰ Colonel Perry had come ashore to find out if the 2d Armored Division could help. In describing General Allen he said, "I wouldn't say that General Allen had his wind up. He had a bad situation and he wanted help." When Colonel Perry asked what help he needed General Allen said, "I want some tanks and I don't care where in hell they come from."¹²¹

Later that afternoon another German counterattack was launched. Although it involved fewer tanks it got to within 2,000 yards of the beach before being stopped.¹²²

The events which transpired on D-Day and into the afternoon of D+1 have been examined in considerable detail because it is necessary for the reader to have this background to fully appreciate General Allen's subsequent actions. The events which followed show to an extraordinary degree his mission orientation, his audacity, his optimism, his faith in his subordinate leaders, and his intimately personal and unusual style of troop leading.

At dusk the 26th Infantry was, in the words of the regimental commander, "still holding key terrain but was a

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Perry letter.

¹²²Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 131.

bit disorganized and out of hand at the moment."¹²³ At that moment General Allen arrived at the regimental command post. He took Colonel Bowen (later Lt. Gen.) to a nearby rise in the ground and pointed to a hill mass on the horizon several miles away. Then he said, "There is the high ground that dominates Ponte Olivio Air Field. Omar Bradley says we have to have it by tomorrow daybreak. Will you get it for me?" Colonel Bowen, in reviewing the incident, said, "My first impulse was to be wary and unpromising, in view of the short summer night remaining, state of organizational disarray at the moment, the distant objective, and the sure knowledge that there were strong dispositions of enemy in depth ahead of us. So I announced, 'Well, Sir, what is the division plan and order for doing this?' He replied, "There is no Division plan - I am just asking you to do it and I will help you the best I can. What do you want?' 'Well,' I (Col. Bowen) faltered, 'Ben (Lt. Col. Ben Sternberg, Commander of a battalion of the 18th Infantry) is over there somewhere on my right, and he could help.' He (Gen. Allen) answered without hesitation, 'You can have Ben Sternberg-- take him and good luck, and I will see you on the objective at sunrise.' Then he jumped in his jeep and drove off waving a friendly goodbye. I called after him asking him

¹²³Bowen letter.

not to forget to tell his staff about our arrangement."¹²⁴

During the early evening hours all senior commanders were informed of the plan for the attack. Later that evening, in General Allen's words, "when many elements of the division were still holding on desperately to their hard won position, the following brief order was then announced, to all units in the division: 'THE DIVISION ATTACKS at MIDNIGHT.'"¹²⁵

The attack was preceded by a preparation fired by Division artillery and the U.S. Navy. German units were preparing their own dawn attack and were completely surprised. There was a great lift in the morale of the First Division troops as the attack rolled forward, and by dawn the Division objectives had been taken.¹²⁶

True to his word, Terry Allen arrived at the 26th Infantry's objective at daybreak to greet the victorious "Blue Spaders." Colonel Bowen's (later Lt. Gen.) description of the scene shows another facet of General Allen's personality and his appreciation for a leader's responsibility to reward and praise for a job well done. Bowen said

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Allen, Sicily Summary, p. 7.

¹²⁶Ibid., p. 8.

He arrived at the objective at daybreak to greet us there and toast our mutual success with wine drunk from canteen cups as he strode around shaking hands and dictating citations. . . . His leadership was by leading rather than beating or driving. When issuing an order, He did it in terms of putting his trust and dependence in a commander to produce the desired result for a dear friend. My personal reaction (and this was true for others) was to produce in order to avoid failing him whom I admired and owed so much.¹²⁷

In reviewing the attack, General Allen stated that during the afternoon of 11 July, enemy infantry reinforcements arrived in assembly areas in front of the First Division, and it was apparent to him that the enemy was preparing for an attack, probably at dawn on 12 July. In his words,

This situation necessitated immediate positive action by the First Division. All assembly areas were taken under fire by the division's artillery and the Navy.¹²⁸

He also said that the word went out to the troops to, "sock hell out of those damned Heinies before they can get set to hit us again."¹²⁹

The accomplishments of the "Big Red One" from D-Day to D+2 had, indeed, been great. General Patton's appreciation of the necessity of having the First Division for the invasion had been fortunate. General Bradley has stated that General Patton's insistence on having the division for the assault may have saved the II Corps from disaster.

¹²⁷Bowen letter.

¹²⁸Allen, Situation and Operations Report, p. 28.

¹²⁹Ibid.

I question whether any other U. S. division could have repelled that charge in time to save the beach from tank penetration. Only the perverse Big Red One with its no less perverse commander was both hard and experienced enough to take that assault in stride. A greener division might easily have panicked and seriously embarrassed the landing.¹³⁰

After the capture of the Ponte Olivio Airport on 12 July the division drove north covering a distance of seventy miles in ten days. On 23 July they reached Petralia and changed direction, marching east toward Troina which was to be the Division's final battle of the war in Sicily. Nicosia was taken on 28 July, and on 31 July the First Division attacked Troina.¹³¹

Troina, the key to the Etna defense line, was a town of 12,000. It was a rugged defensive position which gave the enemy excellent observation and fields of fire over the steep rocky terrain which would tax a mountain goat.¹³² It was against this strongly defended position that Colonel Paddy Flint's 39th Infantry Regiment, which had been attached to the First Division, led the attack. It seized the German outpost at Cerami on 31 July, but was stopped on 1 August

¹³⁰Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 130.

¹³¹Allen, Situation and Operations Report, pp. 32-35.

¹³²Albert N. Garland and Howard M. Smythe, Draft manuscript for Sicily: Surrender of Italy. To be published by the Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army. Cited hereafter as Garland and Smythe Manuscript.

after making little further progress. At this point it became obvious to General Allen that it would take the entire division to take Troina and it would be a real battle.¹³³

On 2 August, Colonel Bowen's 26th Infantry attacked to support the north flank of the 39th Infantry and made considerable progress in spite of strong resistance. On 3 August the 16th Infantry and the 2d Bn., 18th Infantry joined in the coordinated attack. The general plan called for a repeat of the tactics used previously at Sperlina and Nicosia --a double envelopment to seize a strong defensive position.¹³⁴

Every yard was bitterly contested and General Allen, like a quarterback looking for weak spots in the opponent's defense, frequently changed signals. At one point he modified his plan of attack twice within an hour.¹³⁵ On the night of 3-4 August the 18th Infantry Regiment, less the 2d Battalion, was committed against the enemy south flank. By 2015, 5 August, the 1st Battalion of the 18th Infantry had seized Mount Pellegrino which dominated the enemy flank.

During the early morning hours of 6 August, Lieutenant Colonel Corley's 3d Bn., 26th Infantry cut the road which ran

¹³³Allen, Situation and Operations Report, p. 36

¹³⁴Garland and Smyth manuscript, p. 29.

¹³⁵Ibid., p. 30.

northeast from Troina. That same morning, 6 August, patrols from the 16th Infantry entered Troina. The German defenders had withdrawn all but covering forces during the night.¹³⁶

The battle of Troina was an exhibition of grim determination by General Allen and his "Fighting First." It was captured only after six days of continuous fighting in which the Germans had launched twenty-four counterattacks in a desperate attempt to hold the town.¹³⁷

Relieved of Command

During the battle for Troina, Major General Clarence R. Huebner and Brigadier General Willard Wyman appeared at the First Division as observers.¹³⁸ On the afternoon of 6 May, General Huebner broke the news that Allen was being relieved of his command and that he (Huebner) was his successor.¹³⁹ This was a terrible blow to General Allen. General Andrus was present when General Allen received these orders and said,

It was painful to see Terry break down. Many wondered if he would ever recover but the answer was provided later in the Huertgen Forest when the splendid new 104th Division . . . soon established itself as excellent.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁶Allen, Situation and Operations Report, pp. 37-38.

¹³⁷Allen, Sicily Summary, p. 16.

¹³⁸Andrus letter.

¹³⁹Huebner interview.

¹⁴⁰Andrus letter.

The relief of General Allen was bitterly assailed by the officers and men of the First Division who felt that it was unwarranted. To these men Terry Allen was more than a great division commander; he was a good friend who could not be replaced.¹⁴¹

General Bradley, the corps commander at the time of the relief, has assumed the responsibility for the decision to relieve General Allen. The decision had to be approved by both General Patton, the army commander, and General Eisenhower, the theater commander. In discussing reasons for the relief General Bradley wrote,

Early in the Sicily campaign I had made up my mind to relieve Terry Allen at its conclusion. This relief was not to be a reprimand for ineptness or for ineffective command. For in Sicily as in Tunisia the 1st Division had set the pace for the ground campaign. Yet I was convinced, as indeed I still am, that Terry's relief had become essential to the long-term welfare of the division.

. . . Under Allen the 1st Division had become increasingly temperamental, disdainful of both regulations and senior commands. It thought itself exempted from the need of discipline by virtue of its months on the line. And it believed itself to be the only division carrying its share of the war.

Yet to fight effectively under corps command, a division must always subordinate itself to the corps mission and participate willingly as part of a combination. This the 1st found increasingly difficult to do. The division had already been selected for the Normandy campaign. If it was to fight well there at the side of inexperienced divisions and under the command of an inexperienced corps,

¹⁴¹Barnhart interview.

the Division desperately needed a change in its perspective.

By now Allen had become too much of an individualist to submerge himself without friction in the group undertakings of war. The 1st Division, under Allen's command, had become too full of self-pity and pride. To save Allen both from himself and from his brilliant record and to save the division from the heady effects of too much success, I decided to separate them. Only in this way could I hope to preserve the extraordinary value of that division's experience in the Mediterranean war, an experience that would be of incalculable value in the Normandy attack.¹⁴²

Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, the assistant division commander was relieved along with General Allen. Little has been said about him thus far because this chapter is about General Allen. However, it is difficult to examine General Allen without being aware of the tremendous influence which General Roosevelt had on the Division. This is especially noteworthy when the causes for relief are discussed. Roosevelt had many of the characteristics of Allen--a warm friendly personality, a disdain for disciplining subordinates, a relaxed attitude toward regulations, and great courage. Like Allen, he was literally worshipped by the troops.¹⁴³ General Bradley said,

Had he been assigned a rock-jawed disciplinarian as assistant division commander, Terry could probably have gotten away forever on the personal leadership he showed his troops.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴²Bradley, A Soldier's Story, pp. 154-155.

¹⁴³Stone interview.

¹⁴⁴Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 110.

This is not to belittle General Roosevelt who added so much to the combat successes of the First Division, and who was in General Stone's words, "The bravest man I have ever known."¹⁴⁵ It is cited only to provide a further understanding of the situation that existed in the First Division.

In his discussion of the relief of General Allen, General Bradley included the following discussion concerning General Roosevelt.

There had also developed in the 1st Division an unintentional rivalry between Terry Allen and Ted Roosevelt, his assistant division commander. This was inevitable in any such association of two strong and assertive personalities. Allen, I realized, would feel deeply hurt if he were to leave the division and Roosevelt were to remain. He might have considered himself a failure instead of the victim of too much success.

.....

Indeed the whole unpleasant situation had been nurtured by a succession of excesses: Too much brilliance, too much success, too much personality, and too strong an attachment of two men for the 1st Division.¹⁴⁶

In this chapter Terry Allen's career, up to and including his command of the First Division, has been examined chronologically in order to present various incidents, actions, and campaigns which illustrate the characteristics and traits of his leadership. The next chapter is a similar study of General Clarence R. Huebner who succeeded General Allen as the Commanding General of the First Infantry Division.

¹⁴⁵Stone interview.

¹⁴⁶Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 155.

CHAPTER III

CLARENCE R. HUEBNER

Formative Years

Clarence Ralph Huebner was born 24 November 1888 in Bushton, Kansas, and spent his boyhood on a large wheat farm. His first schooling was in a one-room school. He spent two years at Bushton High School and then transferred to a business college at Grand Island Nebraska. During his school years he played baseball, football, basketball and participated in track as a pole vaulter.

In 1908, at the age of twenty, Huebner finished his schooling and went to work for a railroad as a secretary. The following year he began his remarkable Army career by enlisting in the 18th Infantry Regiment as a private. By 1916 he had worn the stripes of every rank up to and including master sergeant. While serving as the 18th Infantry regimental supply sergeant, he took and successfully passed the examination for a commission, which he received on 26 November 1916.¹ He was promoted to first lieutenant at once

¹Letter from Lt. Gen. Clarence R. Huebner, Ret., March 8, 1964. Unless otherwise noted, all background information concerning Gen. Huebner is from this reference.

but did not receive notification until the spring of 1918.

Lieutenant Huebner was a charter member of the First Infantry Division which was organized 25 May 1917, and designated as "The First Expeditionary Division." Less than a month later the Division sailed for France, landing at St. Nazaire 21 June 1917. After a four month training period the Division entered combat in the Somerville Sector in October, 1917.²

As a result of his performance during the heavy fighting in the Montdidier and Cantigny Sectors, Lieutenant Huebner was promoted to captain in May and to major in June. In October 1918, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel while commanding the 28th Infantry Regiment. During this spectacular rise from second lieutenant to lieutenant colonel, Huebner was twice wounded, earned the Distinguished Service Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Distinguished Service Medal.

When the war ended Huebner went to the 16th Infantry to command a battalion; later, as the regimental commander, he led that unit in the victory parades in New York and Washington.

²The Society of the First Division, History of the First Division during the World War 1917-1918 (Philadelphia: The John C. Winston Co., 1922) pp. 1-65. Also Huebner letter.

From the 16th Infantry, he returned to the 28th Infantry where he served as executive officer and regimental commander until June, 1920.³

During the 20's Huebner's career followed the peacetime pattern of schooling and instructing. He served at Fort Benning, Georgia, as a tactics instructor. After this tour he attended the Infantry Officers Advanced Course and was then assigned as regimental S-3 of the 11th Infantry. He then attended the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, graduated with honors, and was assigned to another instructor tour at Ft. Benning. In 1928 he was sent to the Army War College. After completing the course, he was assigned as an instructor at the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth.

In 1934 Huebner was detailed to the Office of the Chief of Infantry. Next he went to Hawaii as executive officer of the 19th Infantry Regiment. After two years he was transferred to Washington for duty with the War Department staff as the head of training in the G-3 division.

In January 1941, Colonel Huebner was promoted to Brigadier General and given command of Camp Croft, South Carolina. After a month he was assigned as the director of training for the Army Service Forces, a position which he held until March, 1943.

³Huebner letter.

In 1943 Huebner went to North Africa as the theater G-3 designate. After a month at theater headquarters, he was sent to General Alexander's 21st Army Group headquarters to be the deputy chief of staff.⁴ General Sir Harold Alexander, like many British officers, missed few opportunities to disparage the fighting ability of the American troops in North Africa. Since General Huebner stood firm in his defense of the U. S. Army's fighting ability, considerable friction developed between them. It was a happy day for both Huebner and Alexander when Huebner was nominated to command the First Division.⁵

Division Commander

Assumption of Command.--General Huebner assumed command of the "Big Red One" under difficult conditions. He followed Major General Terry Allen, a brilliant and successful commander who was idolized by the officers and men of the division and, although he (Huebner) had previously served in the Division in every grade from private through colonel, the majority of the men in the division resented him as an outsider.⁶ This was in spite of his indorsement by General Allen who, prior to his departure, accompanied General Huebner

⁴Ibid.

⁵Garland and Smythe Manuscript.

⁶Mirakian interview.

to every battalion to introduce him. Huebner, himself, has said that if it had not been for Allen's personal indorsement and his acquaintance with a number of lieutenants and warrant officers of the unit, he doubted that he would ever have been accepted by the division. As it was, he was not fully accepted as a legitimate member of the division for nine months.⁷ General Bradley said,

A more sensitive man than Huebner might have cracked under the strain, for it was not until after the Normandy invasion, one year later, that the last resentful adherents to Terry Allen conceded Huebner the right to wear the Big Red One.⁸

General Huebner came to the division with a reputation of being a tough disciplinarian.⁹ He was also known as a stickler for detail. Anything that was done, be it saluting or shooting, had to be done right.¹⁰

His first objective after taking command was to let the division know that he was the boss, and he decided to use the salute as the vehicle by which he would impress his will on the division.¹¹ To accomplish his purpose, he had a series of luncheons to which he invited one at a time his

⁷Huebner interview.

⁸Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 157.

⁹Ibid., p. 156.

¹⁰Stone interview.

¹¹Huebner interview.

at the CS mess all the time.

chief of staff, division artillery commander, regimental commanders, and commander of special troops. At the conclusion of the meal, the officer was taken outside where an MP detail waited. General Huebner then announced that he was not pleased with the execution of the salute in the division. He explained the proper method of saluting, had the MP's demonstrate and then told his luncheon guest that he had twenty-four hours to train his officers and men to salute perfectly.¹² At the time this program was initiated the division was still in combat and the general reaction was, "We are fighting a battle and do not like all this 'chicken.'"¹³ Nevertheless, Huebner, in a move to strengthen and emphasize the importance he attached to this program, had delinquency-type reports mimeographed, which he personally passed out to soldiers who saluted improperly. These reports stated that the individual concerned did not salute properly or that his military bearing or appearance was unsatisfactory; and further directed that the reported man's platoon leader and company commander would explain the circumstances of the violation to the division commander. This had immediate results.¹⁴

¹²Andrus letter. Also Huebner interview.

¹³Andrus letter.

¹⁴Huebner interview.

General Huebner in relating the details of the saluting program said, "I'm sure that General Andrus, my Division Artillery commander, thought that I was crazy."¹⁵ General Andrus did have some doubts and related the following:

I too, wondered what we could expect from this introduction. One evening at dinner shortly after this experience he said to me: "You don't get my orders down to your Artillery." I thought that we were pretty good and was [sic] a loss to comprehend his meaning so I asked him what was wrong.¹⁶ His answer was: "I went down to the Artillery this morning and when I came to the 5th Field Artillery Battalion I was met by a big major who saluted like this." And he demonstrated a most unorthodox salute. I broke out laughing and told him that the major that he had met was one of the finest and most dependable officers in the Division. After a few minutes he broke into his slow smile as it was explained that the major had a broken hand and could not straighten it out. Then the reason for the demonstrations at Troina came out. He desired to know if an order given to a commander would reach the squad.¹⁷

During the few days that the division was in action in the Troina area under his command, General Huebner observed other procedures and training deficiencies which needed to be corrected. To prevent indiscriminate use of vehicles, he ordered that trucks could not leave a regimental area unless cleared by the G-3 and approved by the commanding general.¹⁸

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., General Huebner shared General Andrus' opinion. In fact, he was convinced that the 1st Division Artillery was the best in Army.

¹⁷Andrus letter.

¹⁸Stone interview.

He was also dissatisfied with staff procedures. He demanded that the staff officers rigidly adhere to the provisions of FM 101-5 in accomplishing their duties. Colonel Stanhope B. Mason (later Maj. Gen.), his ^{C/S Stone} G-3 at the time, said, "it took us a while to make the change to his type of command and we all were chewed out frequently and beautifully in the process of learning."¹⁹ Colonel John W. Bowen (later Lt. Gen.) said,

He gave his staff and commanders a hard time with his querulous questioning and his rejection out of hand of many of their ideas, concepts and plans. It was his way of starting out tough to show who was boss and disciplinarian.²⁰

During the final days of combat in the Troina area General Huebner became convinced that the infantry was putting too much reliance on supporting artillery fire and not making maximum use of its small arms. With a penetrating thoroughness which was to become well-known to his staff and senior commanders, he had his G-3 and G-4 get the ammunition expenditure figures for the Troina operation. His analysis of this data confirmed his suspicion that there had not been maximum utilization of light infantry weapons.²¹ He felt that this situation was caused in part by the individual rifleman's lack of confidence in his marksmanship ability. As a

¹⁹ Mason letter.

²⁰ Bowen letter.

²¹ Stone interview.

result, he ordered a check of every enlisted man's record and found that over 2,000 men had not qualified with a rifle. Although some of these men were replacements who had joined the division in North Africa or Sicily, the majority had come overseas with the unit.²²

Although General Huebner had inherited a division which had great pride and a magnificent fighting spirit, he was convinced that they needed more training in fundamentals-- especially rifle marksmanship. At the same time he did not want to do anything that would injure the fine qualities which the division had, nor did he want to undermine the confidence which the men had in their officers.²³

When General Huebner assumed command of the First Division, he said that he knew what it could do and that he was happy to get back to it. He also said that he had inherited a real fighting unit that merely needed a bit of polishing here and there.²⁴ In the days that followed, it appeared to the men of the First Division that the polishing had turned into a full scale grind.

²²Huebner interview. Huebner stated that this situation was caused by the 1st Div's. requirements prior to combat; tests of new organizational structures, amphibious training, etc., and was in no way a reflection on the manner in which General Allen had trained the Division.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Andrus letter.

Training in Sicily.--Upon being relieved by the Ninth Infantry Division, the "Big Red One" returned to the Gela area. Most of the men thought they were about to enjoy a well-earned rest on the shore of the Mediterranean. Gela had been, "inaccurately called a 'rest area.'"²⁵ The infantry soon found, to their disgust, that it would be no rest area, at least for them. The Division Artillery was in General Huebner's words, "The best in the Army,"²⁶ so they were assigned occupation duties and their training was left to the discretion of their commander, Brigadier General Cliff Andrus.²⁷ This arrangement permitted the Commanding General to personally supervise the infantry units.

The first order of business was the construction of known distance rifle ranges and a field target combat course. As soon as these were completed, training started in earnest.²⁸

During this training period, Huebner himself served as the division rifle marksmanship instructor. His assistant was the Assistant G-3, Lieutenant Colonel Charles P. Stone (later Maj. Gen.), who had fired at Camp Perry in the National Rifle Matches.²⁹ General Huebner, too, was an expert

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Huebner interview.

²⁷Andrus letter.

²⁸Huebner interview.

²⁹Stone interview.

shot and his standard was perfection. No detail of a man's firing position was too small to escape his attention. When he found a deficiency in a soldier's position or firing technique, he would ask the squad leader what was wrong. If the squad leader did not know the answer, he would ask the platoon leader, and, if necessary the company commander. This had an immediate effect of the NCOs and officers. They not only took great interest in the training of their men, but rapidly became very knowledgeable of proper firing techniques.³⁰

When he made corrections, General Huebner never raised his voice. He made it plain that there was nothing personal in his criticism of a man's firing technique, but it was just a job that had to be done.

As previously stated, General Huebner was in a difficult situation by succeeding the popular Terry Allen. The saluting program, the marksmanship training and other efforts to improve the general level of discipline within the division were not intended to, nor did they raise Huebner's popularity. In his own words, "I got the reputation of being an unreasonable and mean old bastard."³¹ He also said

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Huebner interview.

that the popular saying concerning marksmanship was that he pushed rifle training because he must have written the field manual on rifle marksmanship.³²

General Huebner felt that the marksmanship program was important not only for the welfare of the men but also for the combat effectiveness of the division.³³ To obtain a wholehearted acceptance of it, he established a policy that any rifleman, who could not qualify as an expert shot could not serve in a rifle platoon. (Under General Allen's leadership, service in a rifle platoon had become a most revered assignment, in spite of its dangerous and demanding nature.) This policy had a positive effect on the motivation of the rifleman. Later, when the squads went through the combat firing course, the General went right with them. When a target was missed, he would hit it with his carbine. His own marksmanship ability also had a great impact on the troops.³⁴

When General Huebner believed that he had pushed the division to its limit, he requested the corps commander to inspect the division. He specifically requested a "tough" inspection, where nothing would be found to be right. He

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

asked further that the corps commander strongly express his dissatisfaction with General Huebner in front of the troops. He felt that this psychology would accomplish a dual purpose: first, it would let the men see that they were not the only ones subject to criticism; and second, that it was not only their own Commanding General who was dissatisfied with their state of discipline and training.³⁵

On 23 October 1943, the First Division departed Augusta, Sicily for Liverpool, England. On 9 November 1943, it closed at Blandford, England, where it would stay until 2 June 1944.³⁶

Pre-invasion training in England.--If General Huebner's troops thought that Sicily ended their training and that they had come to England to rest before the Invasion, they were mistaken. England was an extension of the training program begun in Sicily. General Andrus said,

Training and planning were constant and there was no rest period there. Terry Allen never had such a long period for polishing his Division and battlefield experience had to take its place.³⁷

There was more range firing, more conditioning marches, and amphibious training.³⁸ In addition, combined arms training

³⁵ Huebner interview.

³⁶ Knickerbocker, et al, pp. 420-421.

³⁷ Andrus letter.

³⁸ Stone interview.

was stressed. Infantry-artillery coordination was pushed and it became standard procedure for at least a rifle company to ride the vehicles of an artillery battalion.³⁹ In discussing the training period in England, General Andrus said,

All of General Huebner's activities were directed at the Infantry and every detail in every unit was carefully supervised. He personally handled the various Infantry weapons and he even went into a foxhole and let a tank run over him. As one Infantry G. I. told me; "The 'Old Man' surely knows his business."⁴⁰

At last it was June, 1944, and the invasion was near at hand. Press reporters joined the divisions they were assigned to cover. Don Whitehead drew the "Big Red One." Although he had covered the Division during the North African fighting and knew many of the officers, he had not met General Huebner.⁴¹ His description of their introduction is as follows:

We walked into the headquarters and Bob Evans introduced us to Major General Clarence R. Huebner--one of the finest soldiers and gentlemen I've ever known.

The General welcomed us warmly and with sly humor.

"We're glad to have you with us," he said. "We'll do everything we can to help you get your stories. The people at home must know what we are doing. If you are

³⁹Andrus letter.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Knickerbocker, et al., p. 205.

wounded, we will put you in a hospital. If you are killed, we will bury you. So don't worry."

I looked closely at this man whose division had been given the tremendous responsibility of leading the invasion assault. I saw a kindly face with square jaw and direct blue eyes that twinkled with humor. I judged he was in his early fifties. He was physically fit and there was an air of confidence about him that I liked.

I found that Huebner had a great love for his 1st Division. . . . He knew the job of every man in his division as well or better than the men knew the jobs-- because he had once held those jobs himself.

The general wanted his division to be the best in the entire Army. It wasn't entirely a matter of personal pride because Huebner knew that the toughest, straightest-shooting division won its objectives with the least loss of life. And if he was stern in his discipline, it was because battle casualties have a direct relation to discipline.⁴²

On 3 June 1944, the Division moved to Portland, England, and two days later sailed with the greatest armada in history.⁴³ For the third time the "Big Red One" had been selected to spearhead an invasion. On the shoulders of its Commanding General fell the awesome responsibility for the assault of Omaha Beach.

Normandy.--The initial assault wave was composed of the 16th Infantry Regiment of the First Division with the 116th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division attached.⁴⁴

⁴²Knickerbocker, et al, pp. 205-206.

⁴³Ibid., p. 241.

⁴⁴Gordon A. Harrison, U. S. Army in World War II, European Theater of Operations, Cross-channel Attack (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1951), p.305.

The 352d German Infantry Division (previously unknown to Allied intelligence), the strong defensive fortifications, and the six foot waves combined to make Omaha Beach a scene of death, destruction and heroism.⁴⁵ The situation gradually improved and small groups were able to fight their way off the beach and move inland. Between 1100 and 1400 hours, the 18th Infantry landed, and finally at 1800 the last regiment (the 26th) started ashore.⁴⁶ General Huebner landed at 1900 hours and immediately joined General Wyman at the advanced command post in a draw just off of the beach.

As the battle moved across the bluff, Huebner moved his command post with it. It was difficult to tell whether Danger Forward was in or behind the front line.⁴⁷ All night rifles and burp-guns crackled around headquarters. Guns blazed as small groups of Germans attempted to fight their way from behind the American lines. Snipers were flushed from within a few yards of the command post and no one knew from what direction a bullet might come.⁴⁸

Don Whitehead, the correspondent, wrote of the First Division's part in this action:

In all its battles in Africa, Sicily, France, Belgium and Germany, there never was one quite like the battle of Omaha Beach. In that battle alone the Fighting First won a niche among the immortals of American history. Huebner's men smashed the main strength of the Germans

⁴⁵ Knickerbocker, et al, p. 177.

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 188-189.

⁴⁷ Ibid., Preface. "Danger Forward," the code name for 1st Division headquarters.

⁴⁸ Knickerbocker, et al, p. 216.

and by so doing turned the key that unlocked the door to victory in Europe.⁴⁹

Later, in reviewing D-Day operations, General Bradley said, "had a less experienced division than the 1st hit this resistance it might have failed. The Division probably saved Omaha from catastrophe."⁵⁰

The division drove inland from the beach a distance of twelve miles, and by 11 June had reached the Cerisy Forest.⁵¹

By this time a genuine feeling of mutual respect and confidence had developed between Huebner and the Division. For the first time, many of its members accorded him the right to wear the "Big Red One" on his shoulder.⁵²

In Sicily, General Huebner had been concerned about the infantry's lack of confidence in their weapons (especially the riflemen) and an over-dependence on the artillery. In the rugged fighting in the hedgerows of Normandy it became obvious to General Andrus that one of the regiments had become so impressed with its ability to use organic infantry weapons that it was not making adequate use of artillery support. As a result, this regiment was bogged down while

⁴⁹Knickerbocker, et al, p. 190.

⁵⁰Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 272.

⁵¹Knickerbocker, et al, p. 198.

⁵²Huebner interview.

the other two progressed.⁵³ When the situation became increasingly apparent, Andrus went to see the regimental commander. As he entered the regimental command post, General Huebner was just leaving. General Andrus said,

I found the Regimental Executive . . . with a tear stained face and whole atmosphere was one of stunned man. The colonel seemed the most shocked. The reason for this unusual gloom . . . was that General Huebner had frankly told them what was wrong. I found the source of the trouble quickly when the Colonel said, "This is an Infantry war and Artillery is of not much use." And that attitude explained it all. Afterward Artillery-Infantry coordination became exemplary and the Regiment was steady and dependable under all conditions. That Colonel required some time to learn his lesson but when he did his Regiment was unbeatable.⁵⁴

This incident again shows General Huebner's decisive action to correct a situation which affected the combat effectiveness of the division.

On 13 June, General Bradley ordered a halt to the V Corps advance because of the appearance of the 2d Panzer Division on the left of the Division. Along with other divisions of V Corps, the First Division was ordered to dig in and defend while the remainder of the First Army concentrated on the capture of Cherbourg.⁵⁵

This was a period of relative inactivity for the "Fighting First," and General Huebner immediately established a division rest area where the troops had an opportunity to

⁵³Andrus letter.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Harrison, p. 377.

take showers, change clothes, eat a steak, and have some time to rest. He also discovered that dental care was a problem in the division and secured the services of a mobile dental unit.⁵⁶ Such actions brought home to the troops the realization that their Commander was concerned about their welfare. Although Huebner was never as openly solicitous of the desires of troops as General Allen, he had the same concern and did everything possible to help them.⁵⁷

Another effective leadership technique used by General Huebner was the manner in which he recognized heroic action. He habitually carried several Silver Star Medals in his pocket, and upon seeing a heroic act performed, made an award on the spot. He then told the decorated soldier's commanding officer to write up a citation to be properly processed.⁵⁸ In this way, he insured that, although he had presented a decoration on the spot, there would be no relaxation of his requirement for proper administrative procedures.⁵⁹

Although justifiably proud of his Division's fighting ability and its great esprit de corps, General Huebner never missed an opportunity to improve the aggressiveness of the

⁵⁶Huebner interview.

⁵⁷Stone interview.

⁵⁸Huebner interview.

⁵⁹Mirakian interview.

troops. For instance, he made it known that anyone who destroyed a German tank with a "bazooka" would be awarded the Silver Star.⁶⁰

Just as Huebner constantly looked for ways to increase the aggressiveness of his troops, so did he constantly analyze the combat effectiveness of the "Big Red One." The account which follows is an interesting example of this practice. Late in the Normandy campaign, General Huebner interviewed a captured German doctor. The doctor stated that the German units opposing the First Division had suffered an unusually high percentage of gun shot wounds in the arms, resulting in about 400 amputations. He asked General Huebner to explain this unusually high rate of arm wounds from rifle fire. Huebner replied laconically that the troops were jerking their shots instead of squeezing them; which simply meant that instead of bullseyes, they were getting threes.⁶¹ To General Huebner this information vindicated the arduous hours of marksmanship training in Sicily and England,⁶² because even though the troops were getting a lot of threes, it was apparent they were scoring more hits than any other division in Normandy. It also supported his belief that a well-trained

⁶⁰Huebner interview.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

and efficient division would accomplish its missions with fewer casualties.⁶³

The Breakout at St. Lo.--On 14 July the First Division was relieved by the Fifth Infantry Division, and moved into an assembly area near Colombiers for rest and refitting. The troops believed this to be a prelude to something big, probably another spearhead operations. They had been told many times by General Huebner:

The First Division would never sit on the side lines when the high command had a job to be done, a job requiring dash and competence, coordination, a job which must not fall behind schedule.⁶⁴

General Huebner and his "Fighting First" had not underestimated their importance. They were chosen to play a key role in Operation Cobra. The Division was motorized and Combat Command B of the Third Armored Division was attached.⁶⁵ General Bradley said, "to make certain the blitz would get off to a fast start, I called on the Big Red One to pace it."⁶⁶

For Operation Cobra or the Normandy Breakout, as it is more commonly known, the First Division was transferred to General J. Lawton Collins VII Corps. After the carpet bombing by the Air Force on 25 July, the Ninth, Fourth and

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Knickerbocker, et al, p. 226.

⁶⁵ Blumenson.

⁶⁶ Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 332.

Thirtieth Infantry divisions were to make the penetration through which the exploiting divisions would pass.⁶⁷ At 0700 hours, 26 July, the leading elements of the 18th Infantry passed through the Ninth Division and drove toward Marigny where it was to secure a vital crossroads. Meanwhile, the attached Combat Command B had bypassed Marigny and fought its way through the disorganized German defenders to reach the high ground north of Coutances, which placed it in the rear of the German position. The 16th Infantry Regimental Combat Team, which according to the plan was to follow the combat command, was unable to do so because the Germans succeeded in re-establishing their positions after the passage of the armored unit. A narrow gap of 300 yards in the German line just north of the crossroads was discovered by a patrol. An old trail which required bulldozing to make it passable ran through the gap. In this situation General Huebner's prompt action showed his bold and decisive leadership. He knew that with the coming of daylight, the combat command would be in a precarious position. At the same time he realized that to move the 16th Regimental Combat Team through the narrow gap would be risky because the unit would have to pass the nose of the strong German position at Marigny crossroads where small arms fire could enfilade the column.⁶⁸

⁶⁷Knickerbocker, et al, p. 227.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 231.

The General's decision was prompt. Combat team 16 must go through the gap at once. Preferably it would go through quietly with minimum or no disturbance of Jerry's position.⁶⁹

The 18th Infantry which was opposing the Germans in that area ~~were~~^{was} cautioned to do nothing to arouse the Germans; and, during the hours of darkness, the 16th Infantry Regimental Combat Team slipped through the gap with very few casualties. During the following morning, they ran into heavy resistance, but smashed through to Coutances to reach Combat Command B of the Third Armored Division and also unit of the Fourth Armored Division which had driven into the city from the north. It had been the most bitter fighting since 6 June.

Subsequently, the First Division and Third Armored Division changed directions to cover the left flank of General Patton's Third Army which raced south to seal off the Brittany peninsula.⁷⁰ The First Division drove to Mortain where it was relieved by the Thirtieth Infantry Division.⁷¹ Next it was committed to the northeast in the race to seal the German armies in a great trap. In this drive toward Mons, Belgium, there was a great amount of confused fighting as German units tried to fight their way back to the safety

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 233-234.

⁷¹Ibid., p. 237.

of the Siegfried Line. General Andrus said,

. . . desperate Germans were everywhere. . . . They even hit the Division C.P. one night. Some were organized units while others were in groups--but all were bent on gaining the shelter afforded by the strong defensive lines around Aachen. . . . I saw another of the effects of the training made in England [sic]. Each Artillery Battalion had at least a rifle company riding its vehicles. Each time a battery was coming along a road when a German attack hit. Both times the Infantry quickly left the battery, formed and counterattacked while the battery drew off the road and went into action with direct fire.⁷²

Aachen.--The next major action for the "Fighting First" was the capture of Aachen. The mission involved penetrating the Siegfried Line and enveloping the city to seal it off from reinforcements and supplies. The task fell to the 16th and 18th Infantry Regiments, and they launched their attacks at 0800 on 12 September.⁷³ "General Huebner naturally desired quick reduction of Aachen, yet he saw no point in a pyrric victory."⁷⁴

Fighting was bitter as the Germans gave ground grudgingly and then, often as not, counterattacked to try to retake what they had lost. General Andrus in describing the battle for the first German city said of General Huebner:

It was there and in the bloody Huertgen Forest that was a continuation of the battle of Aachen, that General

⁷²Andrus letter.

⁷³Knickerbocker, et al, p. 257.

⁷⁴MacDonald, The Siegfried Line Campaign, p. 308.

Huebner's tactical skill, iron determination and leadership were magnificent. . . . He was constantly in touch with his subordinate commanders and invariably ended the conversations with, "Give 'em Hell."⁷⁵

Hitler had proclaimed, in his own innimicable bombastic style, that Aachen would be the supreme test, a Stalingrad defense?⁷⁶

This ancient fortress city was surrounded by hills on three sides with a strongly fortified ridge to the east, later named by the Division as Dawson's Hill and Crucifix Ridge. While the 16th sealed off the south flank, the 18th worked up the ridge from south to north to meet the 30th Infantry division driving south. The 26th Infantry had the mission of clearing the city by house to house fighting.⁷⁷

Vicious attempts to relieve the place from the east were fought out by close combat and the proper use of Infantry weapons manned by dedicated and determined men. Companies were reduced to less than seventy men, there were no reserves such as are insisted upon in all our schools. The reserves were the artillery.⁷⁸

Such an attempt to relieve Aachen is described by General Andrus as follows:

One dark night an especially strong and violent attack came in on the 16th Infantry. It hit on a battalion boundary. The two companies mostly involved had about 135 in them (total). That attack was opened with a heavy concentration of Artillery. . . . These splendid Infantry went into their foxholes and the Artillery

⁷⁵Andrus letter.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

joined all infantry weapons within range. Two or our own Artillery battalions placed fire on our front line at the request of the infantry. When the attack was beaten off Div. Arty. had concentrated over two hundred guns to keep them there. The uproar [sic] was so great that the far-away Army called down to see what was going on!⁷⁹

Another attack by a well-trained and determined German battalion was defeated after successive attempts which resulted in almost total destruction of the battalion.

A wounded German who was hauled into our lines spoke with admiration of his captors. "We have been three years on the Russian front," he said, "and we have been beaten before. But this is the first time we have ever been stopped by small arms fire."⁸⁰

If there were any men left in the division who doubted the wisdom of General Huebner's marksmanship program, they became strong believers at Aachen.

At 1000 hours on 10 October, the German commander in Aachen rejected an ultimatum to surrender within twenty-four hours so the 26th Infantry undertook operations to clear the city which was defended by approximately 5,000 men of the 246th Panzer Division garrison defense troops.⁸¹ It became apparent that Aachen contained too much real estate for the casualty riddled 26th Infantry to clear and hold, and as a result, two additional tank battalions and an armored

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Knickerbocker, et al, p. 281.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 262.

infantry battalion were attached to the First Division for this operation.⁸² Finally at 1205 hours, 21 October, after approximately ten days of bitter fighting, Aachen fell to troops of the 26th Infantry.⁸³ Drew Middleton, the correspondent with the "Big Red One," said of the battle--

Aachen was a great battle. For it was the first German city to be taken by an invading army in over a hundred years and the effects of this blow to German pride were widespread and important. . . . The battle was unique in two other respects; it was fought and won almost entirely by the First Division and at that time the Division having been in action almost continuously since June 6 was very tired.⁸⁴

It has already been mentioned that General Huebner demanded that the Division adhere closely to regulations and that it be a model of professionalism. On the other hand, he did not believe that it was necessary for his men to endure any unnecessary hardship. Drew Middleton said,

One thing I always liked about the First Division was that it took care of itself. There were other outfits who boasted a sort of hairshirt austerity in battle, but since the First Division was seldom out of battle, or at least out of contact with the Germans, it decided that there was no use killing itself with hardship. The Germans were doing all the killing necessary. So when you went to company or battalion headquarters up around Aachen you found that their people were living well.⁸⁵

⁸²MacDonald, The Siegfried Line Campaign, p. 314.

⁸³Knickerbocker, et al, p. 265.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 402.

⁸⁵Knickerbocker, et al, p. 401.

The Huertgen Forest.--It was immediately apparent that the Division's next major effort, the Huertgen Forest, was going to be a bitter slugging match.

The Hurtgen [sic] Forest was as deadly as miserable, as unrewarding and as relentless a battle as the First Division ever engaged in. The woods were treacherous: the mud was thick and slimy. The roads were practically nonexistent and the weather became worse and worse.⁸⁶

The enemy was well dug in behind earth and log fortifications and fought with great tenacity.⁸⁷ Once again the First Division made the main attack for VII Corps, which in turn made the main effort of First Army.⁸⁸ Only a part of the Division was in the forest. The remainder had to fight through the adjacent built up area.

Also in this fight was the new 104th Infantry Division under command of General Terry Allen. It had already established a fine reputation in its baptism to combat while attached to the First Canadian Army.⁸⁹ One day while visiting one of his units, General Huebner noticed that the company was short of telephones. He asked for and received this explanation from a sergeant:

Well Sir, General Allen's got this new division and they are short of phones and since those boys don't know

⁸⁶Ibid., p. 286.

⁸⁷MacDonald, The Siegfried Line Campaign, p. 416.

⁸⁸Ibid., p. 408.

⁸⁹Letter from Lt. Gen. G. G. Simonds, A/GOC First Canadian Army to CIC 21st Army Group, 7 November 1944.

their way around yet, we let them have some of ours; but don't worry General we'll get them back in short order.⁹⁰

Huebner observed that this was more evidence of the great affection that the troops had for General Allen. Then he added, "They respected me; they loved General Allen."⁹¹

Day after day the bloody fighting went on in the cold wet gloom of the forest.

The 1st Division, one of five divisions in the battle, was one of the more severely hurt participants in the Huertgen Forest fighting. The 26th Infantry, which fought fully within the Forest lost more than any of the other regiments, 1,479 men, including 163 killed and 261 missing.⁹²

The 18th Infantry lost 871, including 188 killed and 71 missing. The 16th Infantry lost 1,002 including 156 killed and 63 missing.⁹³ These losses were of great concern to General Huebner--

By November 1944, being a part of the 1st Division seemed to the VII Corps Commander, Joe Collins, to have affected even the steel-willed Ralph Huebner. To Collins, Huebner appeared to be protecting the division, commendable trying to hold down casualties, but in the process failing to push hard enough. This was in Collins' mind when on

⁹⁰Huebner interview, under General Allen the Division had acquired far more than the authorized number of telephones. In General Huebner's words "General Allen wanted everyone to be able to communicate."

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²MacDonald, The Siegfried Line Campaign, p. 492. (These were battle casualties and did not include cold weather injuries or accident injuries.)

⁹³Ibid.

November 19 he went to Huebner's command post. In three days fighting, the 1st Division, making the corp's main effort, had taken only Hamich and Hill 232 and made inconclusive gains in the Huertgen Forest. Collins in typical fashion spared no words in letting Huebner know how thoroughly dissatisfied he was.

With the counterattacks of the 47th Volks Grenadier Division fresh in mind. General Huebner said something about holding the enemy in check. This was unfortunate, Collins pounced on it. "Holding the enemy in check!" he thundered. "I knew you could do that. I want you to advance. This is an offensive."⁹⁴

This paper will not make an effort to examine the Huertgen Forest campaign in detail, but the foregoing two paragraphs are cited to emphasize the sincere concern which General Huebner had for his men and his earnest desire to hold casualties to the minimum. This campaign was extremely frustrating for the army and corps commanders who had hoped for a quick victorious sweep. Unfortunately this was not the case. General Huebner was not the only outstanding division commander to incur the wrath of General Collins in this battle, because three days earlier Collins had told Terry Allen, "in no certain terms to get moving and get moving fast."⁹⁵

After punching through the Forest on 5 December an exhausted First Division turned its sector over once more to an old friend, the Ninth Infantry Division. For all practical

⁹⁴ Charles B. MacDonald, The Battle of the Huertgen Forest (Philadelphia and New York: J.P. Lippincott Co., 1963), pp. 165-166.

⁹⁵ MacDonald, The Siegfried Line Campaign, p. 426.

purposes the Battle of the Huertgen Forest was over. Since 14 September when the Ninth Infantry Division first entered the fringe of the forest, American units were continuously therein. Five divisions, a ranger battalion, a combat command and an armored infantry battalion suffered tragic losses there, with the divisions averaging more than 5,000 casualties each.⁹⁶

Under such trying conditions, a commander is put to the supreme test. In reflecting on General Huebner's leadership during this period General Andrus said,

Throughout those dreadful days at Aachen and in the gloomy and deadly Huertgen Forest, General Huebner preserved his calmness. This is an important attribute in a commander and its influence is felt to the lowest unit.⁹⁷

On 10 December 1944, with the Huertgen Forest behind him, General Huebner relinquished command of his beloved "Big Red One" to General Andrus, and moved on to the command of V Corps.⁹⁸ It had been sixteen difficult months of solid achievement during which the resentment of the troops in Sicily changed to one of respect and admiration in Normandy. His imprint on the Division was as noticeable as the "Big Red One" shoulder patch.

⁹⁶Ibid., pp. 492-493.

⁹⁷Andrus letter.

⁹⁸Knickerbocker, et al, p. 408.

He earned the nickname of "The Coach" by his staff.⁹⁹

Colonel Stanhope B. Mason, his chief of staff, described him as having, "the God given gift of making a person fear him, love him, and respect him--all at the same time."¹⁰⁰ Colonel John W. Bowen (later Lt. Gen.), commander of the 26th Infantry, said,

He was admired by all for his native intelligence and common sense, his bravery, his past record as a distinguished combat soldier and his tactical brilliance. As time wore on, he became very much admired, yet his leadership was achieved through driving rather than enticing and persuading. In retrospect, he gave the Division a good shaking and reorientation, which did a lot of good and enabled it to maintain its already established and enviable record.¹⁰¹

Of General Huebner's departure General Bradley said, "when he finally left to command a corps they missed him almost as much as they did Allen."¹⁰²

⁹⁹Mason letter.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Bowen letter.

¹⁰²Bradley, A Soldier's Story, p. 157.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS, COMPARISON, AND CONCLUSIONS

Analysis

Allen.--The key to Terry Allen's leadership was his identification with his troops. He was an outstanding tactician who mastered the use of night attacks. He appeared to have an uncanny ability to anticipate his opponents and "beat them to the punch." His ability to project his character and his personality throughout all echelons of his command influenced the men of the First Division to mirror his spirit and regard him as a great commander. His personal characteristics and his manner of operation had natural appeal such that he was literally worshiped by his officers and men.

His magnetic personality was one of contrasts. He was warm, friendly, sympathetic, and sincere. Above all he was constantly concerned for the welfare of his men. On the other hand, he was daring, aggressive, and highly competitive. His language was profane; he fit the part of a hard living, rough and tough combat leader.

His appearance epitomized that of the combat soldier. He wore no pearl-handle pistols at his side or grenades on his field jacket. His trademarks, if they can be called such, were his battle worn uniform and his ever present grin.

Allen operated in a relaxed manner. He was not a strict disciplinarian. Procedures or policies which he felt did not contribute to the esprit de corps and combat effectiveness of the "Big Red One" were not stressed. He placed maximum responsibility on his staff and commanders and did not concern himself with details. This trust in his subordinates was more than repaid by their fine performance and their willingness and determination to accomplish any task, regardless of the risk or difficulty, rather than let him down. It is obvious that Terry Allen did not "run scared" for fear that his career would be ruined by the mistake of a subordinate.

In fact, Allen cared little about his future. His only interest was his First Division. He was antagonistic toward higher headquarters and frequently considered their orders detrimental to the welfare of the Division. Allen resented being told how to accomplish a mission. Overall, he felt that his prerogatives as a division commander were violated.

Esprit de corps in the Division was extremely high. General Allen's routine pep talks were very effective and reflected his great enthusiasm, sincerity, and the rapport which he enjoyed with his troops.

This then was Allen, the leader; skillful, bold, highly competitive, independent, and unorthodox; but above all, a leader who was genuinely loved by his troops. It was this extreme devotion, which more than any other single factor, was responsible for his great success as a division commander.

Huebner.--The most significant aspect of General Huebner's leadership of the First Division was his professional competence and his insistence on professionalism. Few Generals, if any, could have competed with General Allen's popularity. Huebner did not enter the competition. His first task was to earn the respect and confidence of the First Division; for this he was well equipped.

His appearance and manner typified his brand of leadership. His uniform was always neat, conformed to regulation and was not ostentatious. His eyes, which could appear as cold as ice or twinkle with humor, were his dominant feature. He compensated for his serious and reserved manner with a dry sense of humor.

As a strict disciplinarian, Huebner ran the Division "by the book." He paid close attention to every detail during training or combat. He did not interfere with subordinates by trying to do their jobs, but he did exercise strong control and was aware of all aspects of their operations.

His self-confidence and his confidence in the Division had a tremendous effect on the officers and men. The following policy on inspections illustrates the high degree of confidence he felt in himself and the Division. When the First Division was scheduled for inspection by higher headquarters, no special preparations were made. General Huebner believed that the Division should be seen as it normally functioned; and if its day to day operations were conducted properly, there was no need to make special preparations.¹

In combat Huebner was a calm, aggressive, and determined commander who had great concern for the welfare of his troops. He was a fine tactician and planned his operations in great detail.

This then was Huebner, the leader: skillful, calm, aggressive, a team player, determined and orthodox. Everything about him expressed an air of confidence and competence. Both are important attributes for a commander but for Huebner it was the latter, in the author's opinion, which, along with his drive to achieve professionalism in the First Division, was the key to his great success. It enabled him to gain the respect and confidence of the "Big Red One" and to maintain the inherited fighting spirit of the Division while establishing new pride and confidence in its ability to do a job better than any division in the U. S. Army.

¹Stone interview.

Comparison

Military leadership is defined in Field Manual 22-100 as: "The act of influencing and directing men in such a way as to obtain their willing obedience, confidence, respect and loyal cooperation in order to accomplish the mission."²

Complete achievement of ideal leadership, as defined above, is sought by most commanders but accomplished by few. Each commander must carefully adapt leadership techniques and methods to his own personality and characteristics. In this regard, each commander tends to have his own brand of leadership. Thus, no two commanders achieve effective leadership in an identical manner.

In order to satisfy the needs of his command a leader must demonstrate certain qualities and react properly to the demands of any given situation. Leadership is a personal quality and reflects the leader's personality and character which he attempts to impress upon his command. Each commander must examine himself to ascertain those dominant traits or characteristics which can be used to strengthen his own leadership ability. Leadership traits listed in FM 22-100 are bearing, courage, decisiveness, dependability, endurance, enthusiasm, initiative, integrity, judgment, justice, knowledge, loyalty, tact, and unselfishness. Strong application

²Field Manual 22-100, Military Leadership (Washington: Department of the Army, 1961), p. 3.

of any or all of these properly emphasized in a natural manner have a significant impact on subordinates.

Most of these traits occur in varying degrees among all leaders and their proper exploitation results in effective leadership and fosters successful interaction between the leader and the led. Thus, the leader who is able to project his own unconquerable personality into his officers and men can win inspite of overwhelming odds. Terry Allen was such a leader.

Although Allen and Huebner made maximum use of their outstanding individual leadership characteristics, they were complete opposites in personality, attitude toward discipline, and manner of operation. Allen enjoyed a "first name," "back slapping" informal relationship with his officers and men and was loved by them. Huebner, on the other hand, was stiff and formal in his relations with subordinates but earned their respect. Allen's appearance, often untidy, was like that of his troops. Huebner was always neat, proper, and precise in his military manner.

Allen cannot be considered a strict disciplinarian, however he had very definite ideas on the subject which he stated as follows:

Discipline is the foundation of teamwork and efficiency in any organization. Military discipline has been defined as a mental attitude which renders proper military conduct instinctive on the part of the soldier. It

further signifies a deep sense of loyalty and cooperation and cheerful obedience to constituted authority. . . .DISCIPLINE in its true sense really means cooperation and team work. . . . Discipline cannot be obtained by fear of punishment. It can only be obtained by the precept and example of the leaders.³

Whereas Allen considered the essence of discipline to be teamwork and cooperation; Huebner's brand of discipline was keyed to military courtesy, prompt obedience, rigid inspections, and performance "by the book." In this sense, Huebner was a tough disciplinarian who believed that a well disciplined unit would have fewer casualties and would function more effectively in combat.

In terms of their manner of operating, there was also considerable contrast. Allen operated informally, did not concern himself with details, and gave his staff and commanders maximum authority. He seldom gave much guidance; he left the "how" of a job to the initiative and imagination of his subordinates. His orders were functional, full of short cuts, and featured such exhortations as: "Nothing in hell must delay or stop the attack."⁴ Huebner, on the other hand, operated in an orthodox manner and exercised close control over his staff and commanders. His orders, directives,

³Allen, Leadership.

⁴Knickerbocker, et al., p. 47.

and guidance were specific and in considerable detail following closely the procedures outlined in the staff officer's field manual.

Despite their many differences Allen and Huebner had some important similarities. Both loved the First Division, recognized the value of its proud heritage, and did all in their power to enhance the esprit de corps. Each had great concern for the welfare of the troops and a missionary's zeal to keep casualties to the minimum. Both fought the First Division skillfully, aggressively, and successfully.

Leadership methods and techniques of these two great leaders have been discussed and compared; however, there is no common denominator upon which a comparison of the results of their leadership can be made since each commanded the Division at different times and under completely different environmental circumstances.

General Allen took command of the First Division shortly before its movement overseas. Due to War Department requirements to test proposed organizations and to conduct amphibious and other necessary training, adequate time was not available to devote to such things as rifle marksmanship, maintenance, and other fundamental subjects.⁵ When the "green"

⁵Interview of Lt. Gen. Clarence R. Huebner, Ret., by Captain E. Martin, 27 March 1965.

Division landed in North Africa, it had no previous combat experience to bolster its confidence. What it had was a tremendous fighting spirit to compensate for the lack of training and experience. This magnificent spirit, supplied by Terry Allen's personal leadership, grew with each campaign until finally the Division became so independent and self-satisfied that General Bradley had to separate the two--Allen and the "Big Red One."

General Huebner inherited a proud and combat experienced Division. His mission was to prepare for Normandy, and to do so he had to earn the respect of the Division, train it in fundamentals, and at the same time dampen its individualistic attitude while retaining its magnificent fighting spirit. It was a difficult and challenging assignment, complicated by having to follow Terry Allen. Huebner was well qualified to meet the challenge.

Conclusions

General Allen and General Huebner were especially suited to command the First Division during their particular periods of command.

Each General used his personal leadership characteristics to best advantage and each projected his personality into the First Division.

Both Generals, Allen and Huebner, were outstanding