

Command Relations at the Operational Level of War

Kenney, MacArthur,
and Arnold

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AS GEN DOUGLAS MACARTHUR'S air commander in the Southwest Pacific theater during World War II, Gen George C. Kenney applied operational insights, intellectual acumen, and innovative drive that made airpower a vital part of the Allied victory. An important, indeed critical, part of Kenney's success was

his ability to juggle the demands placed on him by the theater commander, MacArthur, with those imposed by Gen Henry H. "Hap" Arnold, commanding general of the Army Air Forces. Establishing MacArthur's trust and confidence proved essential to gaining the flexibility and authority Kenney needed to employ airpower effectively, but he remained

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dependent on Arnold for the supplies, people, and planes necessary to fight the war, making his association with the commanding general equally important. Balancing the demands levied by officers with very different perspectives and goals created a source of tension and conflict for Kenney throughout the war. In the end he decided that he owed his primary loyalty to MacArthur, a decision highlighted in Kenney's debates with fellow airmen over the use of B-29s in the Pacific.

The fact that personal relationships among commanders are important and have an impact on military affairs in both peace and war is not new. Although the armed forces spend a great deal of time and energy designing organizational relationships and arrangements that will ensure success, harmonious relationships among commanders and other senior leaders often provide the necessary lubrication for making the military machine run smoothly. In the face of less-than-optimum circumstances, good working relations can make a military operation effective. Conversely, even the best-designed organization cannot overcome problems created by personal friction. Although Kenney's dilemma is important for understanding the war in the Pacific, it also points out a more enduring lesson: the considerable weight that personal relationships bear in any theater of war.

Kenney and MacArthur

When, as a newcomer, Kenney assumed command of Allied Air Forces in the Southwest Pacific in August 1942, gaining MacArthur's backing was his top priority as well as his greatest challenge. During meetings in Washington, D.C., before leaving for the Pacific, Kenney heard plenty about the considerable friction between MacArthur and Lt Gen George Brett, the incumbent air commander.

Although many problems in Australia—such as the lack of supplies, a paucity of trained staff officers, and ill-equipped aircraft—were not entirely Brett's fault, as the

commander of the American air units, he bore the brunt of the blame. MacArthur's reports to Washington made his unhappiness with Brett clear. In May 1942 President Franklin Roosevelt sent a three-man team to investigate conditions in Australia. When Lt Col Samuel Anderson returned to Washington at the end of June, he told Gen George C. Marshall, Army chief of staff, that Brett had to be relieved: "As long as Brett is there, you won't have any cooperation between ground and air, and I don't think you plan to relieve General MacArthur." In early July Marshall offered either Brig Gen James H. Doolittle, "who had impressed all of us as an organizer, as a leader and as a dependable type," or Maj Gen George Kenney, "who is rated tops by General [John L.] DeWitt [Kenney's immediate superior officer]," as a replacement for Brett. MacArthur opted for Kenney because, he said, "It would be difficult to convince the Australians of Doolittle's acceptability."¹⁵ MacArthur claimed that the Tokyo Raider's break in service during the 1930s would be viewed "unfavorably" by the Australians. More likely, MacArthur did not want Doolittle because he would take publicity away from MacArthur.

Extenuating circumstances might have explained the problems in Australia, but Arnold clearly blamed Brett, telling Kenney that "Brett should have done the 'getting along' since he was the junior."¹⁶ In addition to the problems between MacArthur and Brett, Marshall cryptically warned Kenney about some "personality clashes" in the headquarters that were causing problems.¹⁷ In short, when Kenney landed in Australia, he was thoroughly convinced of the need to get along with MacArthur. He knew that "his life would be very unhappy" if he did not.¹⁸

Kenney's initial meeting with MacArthur was not an auspicious beginning for forming a partnership. MacArthur began by delivering a lecture on the wretched state of air units in his command and ticked off a number of complaints: the poor bombing accuracy of the aircrews, the lack of discipline among the air units, and—most damning to MacArthur—disloyalty from the airmen. As



Kenney (left) and Arnold. Arnold was undoubtedly annoyed by a perception of excessive parochialism in some of Kenney's actions. Nevertheless, Kenney's ability to make things happen with the resources he was given made him indispensable as a senior Air Force commander.

far as he was concerned, the accomplishments he had seen to date did not "justify all the boasting the Air Force had been indulging in for years."⁷ After listening to MacArthur vent his displeasure for nearly an hour, Kenney finally broke in, bluntly promising that he would straighten things out because "he knew how to run an Air Force as well or better than anyone else."⁸ Kenney clearly saw that he had "two important bits of salesmanship that had to be put over if the Air Force was to play the role it was capable of. I had to sell myself to the General and I had to sell him to the kids."⁹

An indirect but important part of Kenney's effort to "sell himself" involved confronting the personality clashes that Marshall had warned of. The Army chief of staff directed his admonition primarily at the struggles between previous air commanders and Maj Gen Richard K. Sutherland, MacArthur's chief of staff. Acknowledged as a brilliant though arrogant staff officer, Sutherland was known both for his intense loyalty to MacArthur and his ability to antagonize people through vindictive and unscrupulous behavior.¹⁰

Prior to Kenney's arrival, Sutherland had frequently interfered with air matters and kept Kenney's predecessors isolated, making it almost impossible for the air comman-

ders to communicate with MacArthur or provide advice on using airpower. Maj Gen Lewis Brereton, air commander in the Philippines, rarely spoke with MacArthur and had to deal almost exclusively with Sutherland.¹¹ Like-wise, Brett complained that "he had so much trouble getting past Sutherland to see MacArthur that he hadn't seen the General for weeks." The chief of staff so irritated Brett that he "just talked to Sutherland on the telephone when he had to." In his parting words, Brett described Sutherland as a man with a limited knowledge of air matters and "a bully, who, should he lose the ability to say 'by order of General MacArthur' would be . . . a nobody." The departing airman recommended a "show-down early in the game with Sutherland."¹²

Kenney had at least one advantage over his predecessors in dealing with Sutherland. The two officers had been classmates at the Army War College almost 10 years earlier. Although it is unclear how friendly the two became over the year, they did work together on one project for several weeks, and the exposure undoubtedly gave Kenney an edge over the other air commanders in understanding Sutherland's personality.¹³

Armed with his own knowledge of Sutherland and Brett's advice about an early showdown, Kenney looked for an opportunity to confront the chief of staff. He didn't have long to wait. On 4 August 1942, the day Kenney officially took command, he received orders for upcoming air operations. Rather than broad mission guidance, Sutherland sent detailed instructions, directing takeoff times, weapons, and even tactics. Kenney was furious. He immediately marched into Sutherland's office, arguing, in typical Kenney fashion, that he was the "most competent airman in the Pacific" and that he had the responsibility to decide how the air units should operate—not Sutherland. Kenney shot down Sutherland's rebuttal by suggesting that they "go into the next room, see General MacArthur, and get this thing straight. I want to find out who is supposed to run this Air Force."¹⁴ According to Kenney, Sutherland backed down, re-

scinded the orders, and then apologized, claiming that he had been forced to write the detailed instructions prior to Kenney's arrival.

Although this was not the final disagreement between the two, it was the last time Sutherland directly interfered with Kenney's combat operations. Perhaps the showdown vindicated Brett's analysis of Sutherland as a bully who backed down when someone stood up to him. More likely, both Sutherland and Kenney knew that the chief of staff should not have issued detailed orders to the air component commander and realized that MacArthur would back Kenney in this situation. In Kenney's words, Sutherland "knew he was going to lose."⁵

Adding to Kenney's self-confidence in this confrontation was the knowledge that he was already hard at work establishing a close personal and professional relationship with MacArthur. Although the two had had little contact before the war, the working and living arrangements in Australia aided Kenney's efforts in this regard.⁶ Both Kenney and MacArthur had their headquarters offices in the Australian Mutual Provident (AMP) Insurance building on the corner of Queen and Edward Streets in Brisbane. MacArthur's office was on the eighth floor, and Kenney's was on the fifth, making it convenient for the airman to see the theater commander at any time. Kenney took full advantage of the proximity, visiting MacArthur at least once a day, often timing his call so that they could eat lunch together. Also, since both men lived in the same hotel, Kenney began visiting MacArthur "quite often" in the evenings. During these occasions, the two discussed both personal and professional matters.⁷

Kenney's efforts quickly paid off. Whether due to a fortuitous blending of personalities, the improved performance of Kenney's air men, or a combination of factors, Kenney earned MacArthur's trust and confidence. In early September MacArthur told Kenney that "it has been little more than a month since you assumed command of the air component in this area. The improvement in its per-

formance has been marked and is directly attributable to your splendid and effective leadership."⁸ MacArthur was equally laudatory

Kenney's credibility with the theater commander helped him convince MacArthur of the advantages that airpower offered in the theater. At the same time, MacArthur's support provided the air commander the opportunity to implement his ideas with little interference.

tory in a message to the Army chief of staff a week later: "General Kenney with splendid efficiency has vitalized the Air Force and with the energetic support of his two fine field commanders, [Maj Gen Ennis] Whitehead and [Brig Gen Kenneth] Walker, is making remarkable progress. From unsatisfactory, the Air Force has already progressed to very good and soon will be excellent. In comparatively few weeks I confidently expect it to be superior."⁹ Not surprisingly, two weeks later MacArthur recommended Kenney for promotion to lieutenant general.²⁰

Other officers who served in the Southwest Pacific clearly recognized the close relationship between Kenney and MacArthur, which proved instrumental in establishing Kenney's independence as an air commander. Kenney's chief of staff judged that his boss and MacArthur got along "very well" and that the theater commander "seemed to have a pretty poor opinion of the air business and what it could do before Kenney got there."²¹ One ground officer said Kenney was the "only one who could tell MacArthur off,"²² and Sutherland warned another never to get into a dispute with the Army Air Forces because MacArthur would always rule in favor of Kenney.²³

Kenney's relationship with MacArthur was important in exploiting the capabilities that airpower offered in the Southwest Pacific.



MacArthur (seated) and Kenney (far right, front row, looking to his right). The formal Japanese surrender was conducted aboard the USS Missouri, Tokyo Bay, 2 September 1945. MacArthur credited Kenney above all others for the victory in the Pacific.

Not long after he arrived in the region, Kenney told Arnold that victory in the Southwest Pacific depended on the ability to control islands that could be used as air bases to cut off air and sea lines of supply. In some cases these were true islands, but the inability to move into the interior of large land areas in the Southwest Pacific, such as New Guinea, converted airfields and garrisons along the coast into "islands" as well.²⁴ Kenney's credibility with the theater commander helped him convince MacArthur of the advantages that airpower offered in the theater. At the same time, MacArthur's support provided the air commander the opportunity to implement his ideas with little interference. A very pleased General Arnold summed up the importance of Kenney's efforts by telling him, "I don't believe the units could possibly perform the missions in the manner that they are doing without the most sympathetic support from General MacArthur. It requires complete understanding between General MacArthur and you."²⁵

Near the end of the war, MacArthur summed up his thoughts on Kenney's contribution, leaving little doubt about his admiration: "I believe that no, repeat, no officer suggested for promotion to General has rendered more outstanding and brilliant service than Kenney. . . . Nothing that [Gen Carl] Spaatz or any other air officer has accomplished in the war compares to what Kenney has contributed and none in my opinion is his equal in ability."²⁶ This was fitting testimony to Kenney's service as an air component commander.

Kenney and Arnold

In contrast to the generally smooth rapport that Kenney established and maintained with MacArthur throughout the war, his dealings with Hap Arnold were more troubled. Kenney's meetings in Washington before leaving for the Southwest Pacific in the summer of 1942 established the tone of their relationship. At that time America was

still gearing up to produce the large numbers of troops and supplies needed to fight a world war. In keeping with the “Europe first” strategy of the United States, Arnold was determined to pit the maximum number of aircraft against Germany, despite impassioned pleas from every commander. He told Kenney that he could expect no more than the six hundred aircraft already in the Pacific and pointedly commented that Brett “kept yelling for equipment all the time, although he should have enough already.”²⁷ The message for Kenney was clear: make do with what you have.

Although warned not to expect any more aircraft and aware that the national strategic priority called for defeating Germany before Japan, Kenney—after seeing the situation in the Pacific firsthand—began pestering Arnold for more planes, people, and supplies. Arnold firmly told Kenney that he could count on having enough aircraft to defend against Japanese attacks and “carry out a limited offensive” but nothing more.²⁸

Despite the cordial and professional nature of this exchange, the discussion points out that the two airmen saw the war through very different lenses. As commanding general of the Army Air Forces and a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Arnold focused on the entire global struggle. He had to balance strategic guidance with the current situation and upcoming operations in order to have the right number of airplanes and people in the appropriate areas. In addition he had to continually assess the costs and benefits of producing existing aircraft and equipment against the need to start research-and-development work on newer types. All the while he worried about the image of the Army Air Forces and the debates about service independence that would follow the war. Fittingly, Arnold emphasized this expansive view of the war in his postwar memoir, symbolically entitled *Global Mission*.²⁹

At the theater level, things looked quite different. Kenney viewed the war from a much narrower focus and devoted his attention to more immediate decisions. He concentrated on the near term and what he had

to fight with each day, giving little consideration to the broader and more long-term problems that Arnold faced. Not surprisingly, his book about the war, *General Kenney Reports: A Personal History of the Pacific War*, captures this perspective.

The tension between these dissimilar outlooks surfaced over many issues during the war—some important, others almost trivial. Kenney complained frequently about aircraft arriving with unneeded equipment, such as heaters (not used by aircrews flying at low altitude in the tropics), or unwanted modifications, such as the installation of a bottom gun turret on B-24s to defend against fighters attacking from below (unnecessary since most of the B-24 attacks in Kenney’s command took place from low altitude). The removal of the copilot’s position in one bomber incensed Kenney because of the importance of this airman in combat operations. He told Arnold, “I emphatically want [the] provision for the copilot left in the airplane.”³⁰

These complaints highlight Kenney’s outlook, while Arnold’s responses provide a glimpse of the wider view of the war. Arnold agreed that heating equipment might have little value in Kenney’s theater but pointed out that other commanders needed it and that production lines lacked the flexibility to make aircraft without heaters. Similarly, he noted that other places needed bottom gun turrets and that building planes slated for Kenney’s use without them would entail excessive delays and costs. Finally, the commands in the Army Air Forces had thoroughly debated and tested the elimination of the copilot’s position, concluding that the advantages outweighed the drawbacks.³¹

Kenney matched his imprudent demands for equipment changes in aircraft production with a lack of appreciation for the tactical differences between his area of operations and others. Based on his previous experience and observations in the South-west Pacific, Kenney believed in low-altitude attacks, using the tactics of what was then called at-tack aviation. Although such tactics might have been valid for the enemy he faced, Kenney argued that they were “in evidence

every day all over the world.⁸² Arnold informed Kenney that he was flat wrong: "Attack tactics have *definitely not* . . . proven

In his efforts to control the B-29s, Kenney found himself not only working to carry out the theater commander's wishes but also going so far as to work against the desires of his service.

sound 'every day all over the world' " (emphasis in original).³³ Arnold realized, as Kenney evidently did not, that antiaircraft guns were causing heavy losses to low-flying aircraft. When the Army Air Forces had attempted such low-altitude tactics in Europe, the results were disastrous. On one mission all 11 aircraft in a formation that used these tactics were lost.³⁴

One can excuse Kenney for not knowing everything that occurred in other theaters, but his comments reflect an attitude that ignored the wider realities of the war and the implications of his suggestions. He may not have known the conditions in other theaters, but this should have made him cautious in proposing tactics. Similarly, his background in aircraft production should have given him more insight into the problems that his proposed modifications would cause. At times Kenney displayed an attitude that melded arrogance with ignorance—a dangerous combination.

Kenney's provincial attitude extended to personnel matters. As commanding general of the Army Air Forces, Arnold believed in rotating officers between his staff in Washington and the combat areas. Arnold was especially sensitive to this issue and gave it his personal attention because during World War I, he had been stuck in Washington and missed out on combat duty. To him, moving people boosted morale and benefited the service. Although this approach proved successful in most theaters, Arnold had difficulty convincing Kenney of its

importance. Kenney preferred to promote officers who had proven themselves in combat under his command and distrusted senior officers with no combat experience. Although Arnold eventually managed to send some officers to the Southwest Pacific, Kenney felt he was getting Arnold's castoffs and quickly ended the experiment.³⁵ Kenney dispatched one officer back to Washington with a comment that he probably applied to many other senior officers sent out: "His mind is not flexible enough and he does not think clearly or fast enough."³⁶ In keeping with his attitude of going against Arnold's wishes in this area, when asked to send his deputy back to Washington, Kenney howled in protest.³⁷

Kenney's prodding for more planes, supplies, and people—although often conducted with a lack of grace and tact—does not suggest that he had no knowledge of the pressures Arnold faced. Indeed, Kenney realized that Arnold must have found his attitude exasperating. At one point he even apologized for his incessant complaining: "I know you are harassed to the point of exhaustion and that you are doing your damndest to keep me quiet, but I will trust to your continued good nature and keep on telling you my troubles."³⁸

No doubt Kenney's grumbling was a source of friction, but throughout most of 1942 and 1943, Arnold overlooked much of the griping, realizing—as did Kenney—that many of the requests were part of the normal give-and-take between commander and subordinate. Arnold expected Kenney to solve the problems that he could but knew that Kenney would sometimes need assistance. In a very real sense, Kenney competed with the other theater air commanders for people and equipment. A B-24 sent to England or the Mediterranean for combat was one fewer aircraft that would see action in the South-west Pacific. As Kenney put it, his complaints were "about the only way I can present the picture as it confronts me."³⁹ In short, Arnold expected Kenney's requests, and his position required him to weigh the demands put forward by various



B-29s on Guam, 1945. More than any other issue, Kenney's attempts to gain operational control over the B-29s strained his relationship with Arnold.

air commanders. For his part Kenney had to “lobby” for the things he needed.

The record of Kenney’s command—a bright spot for the Army Air Forces during this time—also underlay the commanding general’s forgiving mood: “You are doing great things,” Arnold told him.⁴⁰ Perhaps the strongest evidence of Arnold’s esteem came in October 1943, when he asked Kenney for advice on using airpower in the cross-channel invasion of Europe. This was a particularly bad time in the European air campaign, and a troubled Arnold turned to Kenney because “there has probably been more ingenuity displayed in your operations than in any other theater.”⁴¹

In a letter to Arnold, Kenney gave a straightforward reply about his views on air warfare: “I stick to one principle—get control of the air situation before you try anything else.”⁴² The best way to accomplish that end was to strike aircraft while they were on the

ground or “entice the enemy fighters into combat and destroy them in the air” by selecting targets that the opposing air force would have to defend. The primary objective during these latter attacks was not the target per se, although that might be important too, but the hostile fighters. Kenney admitted that the plan sounded deceptively simple, but in reality it made for “a long and difficult job.”⁴³

Arnold appreciated the advice and forwarded the letter to several officers on his staff, General Marshall, and General Brereton—the senior American air officer in England planning the cross-channel invasion. In addition, Arnold arranged for Kenney to meet with Gen Dwight D. Eisenhower to explain his thoughts further. Arnold even sent one of Kenney’s deputies, Brig Gen Freddie Smith, to Europe to help implement the ideas.⁴⁴

Even as Arnold approached Kenney for advice on the air war in Europe, however,

their relationship had started to sour and would actually deteriorate over the coming months. Although differing perspectives between the service headquarters and the theater air commander account for some of the strain between the two, the debate over the B-29 highlights the fact that the source of the tension was Kenney's loyalty. Although Kenney identified with Arnold as an airman, he felt that he owed his primary loyalty to his immediate commander, General MacArthur. As Kenney argued, "Every once in a while Arnold would get sore at me about something or other. He thought I was still working for him, but I wasn't. I was working for MacArthur."⁴⁵ Kenney felt that Arnold exerted a great deal of influence over air operations in Europe and wanted to do the same in the Pacific. Kenney realized that MacArthur resented any interference from Washington and would never have agreed to the level of control over theater air operations that he thought Arnold hoped to exert. Although Kenney believed that he acted as a buffer between the two, he clearly went beyond this neutral role.⁴⁶ In his efforts to control the B-29s, Kenney found himself not only working to carry out the theater commander's wishes but also going so far as to work against the desires of his service.

Kenney had started pushing for the B-29 soon after his arrival in Australia. Although the bomber was then in the earliest stages of its development, he proposed using it to eliminate or neutralize oil refineries and petroleum-production sites.⁴⁷ Perhaps prompted by reports of B-29 test flights, Kenney queried Washington for information a year later under the assumption that he would "get the first B-29 unit."⁴⁸ Arnold cautioned against putting too much hope in acquiring the aircraft in the near future, pointing out that "no units are scheduled for your theater prior to June of next year."⁴⁹

Although the commanding general held out some hope that Kenney would receive these aircraft, Arnold and his staff viewed the B-29s as weapons that would contribute the most to the war if the Army Air Forces

used them against the home islands of Japan—not the peripheral areas Kenney mentioned. Even before Kenney's request, Arnold had initiated a study of possible bases in China from which to use them against Japan itself. The Chinese locations, however, would serve only as an interim solution. Arnold's real hope for using the B-29s to defeat Japan lay in acquiring bases in the Mariana Islands.

Even after hearing about the plans for the Chinese bases, Kenney continued to lobby for the aircraft, asking to "borrow" them as they flew from the United States to China. Arnold told Kenney he would think about the proposal but "could not commit himself to routing any B-29s via Australia." Even this ambiguous response buoyed Kenney's spirits, and he told engineers to give immediate priority to building an air depot and lengthening the runways at Darwin, Australia, to handle 50 of the new bombers.⁵⁰

The dispute between Kenney and Arnold over the B-29s grew more divisive in early 1944, when it became clear that the bombers would never fly in the Southwest Pacific. In January Kenney attended a conference at Pearl Harbor to coordinate plans for the coming year, a meeting that pitted him squarely against Arnold's ideas for deploying the B-29s. On the one hand, the offensive through the Central Pacific under the direction of Adm Chester Nimitz would attack the Mariana Islands and Formosa en route to Tokyo. MacArthur, on the other hand, would continue his advance through New Guinea, move north, and liberate the Philippines before invading Japan. Although both options would eventually defeat the Japanese, combining forces along one axis of attack might end the war sooner.⁵¹

An important consideration behind the Central Pacific thrust was the desire to capture the Mariana Islands and base the B-29s there. Kenney disagreed with the logic behind the plan, asserting that the bombing missions against Japan—a "series of costly stunts"—would accomplish little.⁵² Although Kenney's opinion was just one factor in the discussions, it must have carried a great

deal of weight. Ultimately, the planners agreed to recommend to Washington that they bypass the Mariana Islands and consolidate forces under MacArthur—a significant change from the proposed plans. The recommendation obviously displeased Arnold, and he likely did not receive Kenney's comments well. In arguing against the Central Pacific drive, Kenney set himself directly against Arnold's plans. Without bases in the Marianas, the Army Air Forces could not use the B-29s in great numbers against the Japanese homeland. Likely, the Air Staff thought that denying the bombers this strategic role would endanger the arguments for an independent air force.

Despite the unanimity of opinion in the Pacific, the plan would be a tough sell in Washington. Arnold and Adm Ernest King, chief of naval operations, strongly supported the Central Pacific advance. General Sutherland flew to Washington to present the option worked out in Hawaii. Throughout Sutherland's visit, Kenney kept hammering on the appeal of the B-29 raids on Japan. Citing the supply problems involved with basing the aircraft in the Mariana Islands, he called the whole plan "absurd." He also predicted that the attacks would prove to be little more than "nuisance raids."⁵³

Kenney's fervent pleas fell on deaf ears. The joint chiefs rejected the option presented by Sutherland, and planning for the attack on the Marianas continued. Although disgusted with the decision, Kenney did not give up. Shortly before the first mission from the Marianas, he predicted that "the Japs would shoot [the B-29s] out of the air" and that losses would drastically lower morale.⁵⁴ Such remarks infuriated Arnold. He warned Kenney to stop his "agitation" about the B-29s or risk being relieved of his command.⁵⁵ Although the strength of Kenney's relationship with MacArthur would have made it difficult for Arnold to make good on the threat, the comment reveals the level of discord between the two airmen. Although Kenney's loyalty to MacArthur benefited combat operations, when the same trait ran counter to Arnold's plans, the service chief disparaged it.

The press of combat operations in 1944 largely overshadowed the acrimony between Kenney and Arnold, but the underlying tension remained. At this stage in the war, however, the dispute seems to have had little impact on Kenney's ability to carry out his missions. But by early 1945, the situation had changed. With Germany close to defeat and the end of the war with Japan on the horizon, both Kenney and Arnold began focusing on the future. If Kenney wanted to advance in the postwar Air Force, he needed to repair the damage with Arnold. Similarly, in preparing for the upcoming battles in Washington over an independent Air Force, Arnold no doubt realized that Kenney could play an important role in these debates. Although vaguely aware of Arnold's displeasure with him, Kenney became concerned when he heard about derogatory remarks making the rounds in Washington. At the urging of General Smith, who had heard the rumblings, Kenney flew to the United States to "make peace with Arnold."⁵⁶

The two officers met in Florida, where Arnold was recuperating from a massive heart attack. They met in private and had a cordial, amicable talk. According to Kenney, they "agreed to bury the hatchet." Although Kenney remained loyal to MacArthur, he stopped his outspoken comments and closed ranks with his fellow airmen in preparation for the impending interservice disputes sure to follow the war. When General Spaatz arrived in the Pacific to take command of the strategic air forces in June 1945, Kenney—undoubtedly disappointed that Spaatz had received the job—privately complained about "another needless complication" in the command structure. Publicly though, he supported Spaatz and persuaded MacArthur of the merits of the command arrangements. In fact, Kenney pledged to "present a unified front" to all parties.⁵⁷

Conclusion

The problem of dual loyalty that Kenney faced during the war was never entirely re-

solved; rather, its importance ebbed and flowed, depending on the situation. Establishing a good relationship with MacArthur proved essential to meeting the war aims in the theater and employing airpower effectively—in Kenney's words, mentioned above, it allowed "the Air Force . . . to play the role it was capable of." At the same time, he needed Arnold's help to meet the demands of combat through a constant flow of people and equipment. Kenney's position demanded that he constantly negotiate a satisfactory course between two very different perspectives throughout the war.

Early on, Kenney worked hard to establish a satisfactory professional and personal relationship with MacArthur. Realizing the importance of doing this before he left for the Southwest Pacific, Kenney made it a top priority. By working well with MacArthur, he could explain the benefits of airpower to the theater commander and gain the freedom and flexibility to employ his forces to their fullest. Although Kenney's loyalty to MacArthur proved important for the conduct of the war in the theater, it also became a source of tension and conflict in dealing with the priorities of Hap Arnold.

Kenney might have mitigated the problems with Arnold by taking a broader view of the war. A better understanding on Kenney's part would have allowed him to realize the implications of his ideas and the fact that many of them, when applied across the entire service, were impractical. Although one can accuse Kenney of failing to understand the problems facing other air commanders, had he not remained so insistent in putting his demands before Arnold, he ran the risk of not getting what he needed to carry out his assigned tasks.

Ultimately, though, Kenney's loyalty to MacArthur made his dealings with Arnold

difficult. During most of the war, Kenney tended to put aside his service loyalty, even to the point of angering Arnold and alienating other officers in his service in the competition for the B-29. With the end of the war in sight by early 1945, however, loyalty to service started to assume more importance, given the more enduring tensions between the branches of the armed forces in the United States military.

No one should suggest that Kenney's actions represent the ideal recipe for a commander or officer caught between the conflicting demands of a theater commander and a service chief. Indeed, an investigation of the relationships between other air commanders and their theater chiefs might reveal other patterns. The combination of situational variables, personalities, and organizational differences makes it problematic to develop one template for all circumstances, let alone posit that Kenney was a role model worthy of emulation. Nevertheless, Kenney's experience does teach something. Most importantly, it points out the significance of the personal relationship and trust between the air commander and the theater commander in meeting military aims, while at the same time negotiating a satisfactory resolution to demands put forth by the service chief. At the very least, Kenney's predicament offers a view of the problems and pitfalls for officers serving in World War II and some insight into the problems of current command relationships. Recognizing the inherent nature of the conflict and perhaps managing the tension with more tact and finesse than Kenney displayed would allow officers to handle the invariable tensions present at the operational level of war. ■

Notes

1. Samuel E. Anderson, transcript of oral history interview by Hugh N. Ahmann, Santa Monica, Calif., 28 June to 1 July 1976, 186, file 239.0512-905, United States Air Force Historical Research Agency (hereinafter AFHRA), Maxwell AFB, Ala.; and Thomas M. Coffey, *Hap: The Story of the U.S. Air Force and the Man Who Built It, General Henry "Hap" Arnold* (New York: Viking Press, 1982), 271. The other members of the three-man team were Lt Col Francis R. Stevens and Lt Comdr Lyndon B. Johnson. Stevens was killed on a bombing mission on 9 June, and Johnson and Anderson left for Washington on 18 June. See Robert A. Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson*, vol. 2, *Means of Ascent* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), 33–45.
2. Message, Marshall to MacArthur, 6 July 1942, Record Group 4, Douglas MacArthur Memorial Museum and Archives (hereinafter MMMA), Norfolk, Va.
3. Message, MacArthur to Marshall, 7 July 1942, Record Group 4, MMMA; and diary of Gen George C. Kenney, 11 July 1942, Gen George C. Kenney Papers (hereinafter KP), Center for Air Force History, Bolling AFB, Washington, D.C.
4. H. H. Arnold, *Global Mission* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1949), 331.
5. Diary of Gen George C. Kenney, 12 July 1942, KP; and George C. Kenney, *General Kenney Reports: A Personal History of the Pacific War* (1949; reprint, Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1987), 11.
6. George H. Brett, "The MacArthur I Know," *True*, October 1947, 149.
7. Diary of Gen George C. Kenney, 29 July 1942, KP; and *General Kenney Reports*, 28–29.
8. *General Kenney Reports*, 29.
9. Gen George C. Kenney, transcript of oral history interview by James C. Hasdorff, Bay Harbor Islands, Fla., 10–21 August 1974, 88, file K239.0512-806, AFHRA.
10. D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur*, vol. 1, *1880–1941* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970–1985), 565–67; idem, *The Years of MacArthur*, vol. 2, *1941–1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970–1985), 77–78; and Paul P. Rogers, *The Good Years: MacArthur and Sutherland* (New York: Praeger, 1990), 36–40, 231–32.
11. Lewis H. Brereton, *The Brereton Diaries: The War in the Air in the Pacific, Middle East and Europe, 3 October 1941–8 May 1945* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1946), 17–34.
12. For all comments of Lt Gen George H. Brett, see "Comments of Gen. Brett re: Personnel, Etc.," 2 August 1942, KP.
13. Report of committee no. 3, "Tactical Doctrines," 26 September 1932, Curricular Archives of the Army War College, Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, Pa.
14. Diary of Gen George C. Kenney, 4 August 1942, KP.
15. Kenney interview with Hasdorff, 62; and Gen George C. Kenney, interviewed by D. Clayton James, New York, N.Y., 16 July 1971, 5–6, file 168.7103-24, AFHRA.
16. Geoffrey Perret's accounts suggest a close relationship between Kenney and MacArthur prior to the war, but the two did not have frequent contact. Geoffrey Perret, *Winged Victory: The Army Air Forces in World War II* (New York: Random House, 1993), 170; and idem, *Old Soldiers Never Die: The Life of Douglas MacArthur* (New York: Random House, 1996), 302.
17. *General Kenney Reports*, 91; Diary of Gen George C. Kenney, 28 July and 3 August 1942, KP; George C. Kenney, *The MacArthur I Know* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1951), 57; David Horner, "Strategy and High Command," in *The RAAF [Royal Australian Air Force] in the Southwest Pacific Area, 1942–1945* (Canberra: RAAF Air Power Studies Centre, 1993), 58; Donald Wilson, *Wooing Peponi: My Odyssey thru Many Years* (Monterey, Calif.: Angel Press, 1974), 254–60; James, *The Years of MacArthur*, vol. 2, 246; and Clare Stevenson and Honor Darlings, eds., *The WAAF Book* (Sydney: Hale and Iremonger, 1984), 135–36.
18. MacArthur to Kenney, letter, 6 September 1942, KP.
19. Message, MacArthur to Marshall, 16 September 1942, Record Group 4, MMMA.
20. Draft message, chief of staff, Southwest Pacific Area, to War Department, 30 September 1942, KP.
21. Donald Wilson, transcript of oral history interview by Hugh N. Ahmann, Carmel, Calif., 10–11 December 1975, 203, file K239.0512-878, AFHRA.
22. Gen Clyde D. Eddleman, interviewed by D. Clayton James, Washington, D.C., 29 June 1971, 8, Record Group 49, MMMA.
23. Lt Gen Clovis E. Byers, interviewed by D. Clayton James, Washington, D.C., 24 June 1971, 6, Record Group 4, MMMA.
24. "Notes to Discuss with General Arnold," 24 September 1942, KP; Kenney to Arnold, letter, quoted in Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, eds., *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, vol. 4, *The Pacific: Guadalcanal to Saipan, August 1942 to July 1944* (1950; new imprint, Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 119; Kenney to Arnold, letter, 10 December 1942, KP; and diary of Gen George C. Kenney, 16 December 1942, KP.
25. Arnold to Kenney, letter, 23 September 1943, KP.
26. Message, MacArthur to Marshall, 17 January 1945, Record Group 4, MMMA.
27. *General Kenney Reports*, 11; Grace P. Hayes, *The History of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in World War II: The War against Japan* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1982), 118–20; and Craven and Cate, vol. 4, x, xi–xii.
28. Arnold to Kenney, letter, 6 December 1942, 1, KP.
29. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *A World at Arms: A Global History of World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 919.
30. Kenney to Arnold, letter, 19 June 1943, 2–3, KP; and Kenney to Arnold, letter, 7 September 1943, 2, KP.
31. Arnold to Kenney, letter, 16 July 1943, 2, KP; and Arnold to Kenney, letter, 8 October 1943, 2, KP.
32. Kenney to Arnold, letter, 19 June 1943, 3, KP.
33. Arnold to Kenney, letter, 5 July 1943, KP.
34. *Ibid.*
35. Message, Kenney to Arnold, 6 March 1944, KP; diary of Gen George C. Kenney, 17 March 1945, KP; and Maj Gen John H. McCormick, interviewed by Murray Green, San Antonio, Tex., 3 May 1970, Murray Green Collection, United States Air Force Academy Library, Colorado Springs, Colo.
36. Message, Kenney to Arnold, 6 March 1944, KP.
37. *General Kenney Reports*, 365.
38. Kenney to Arnold, letter, 19 June 1943, 5, KP.
39. *Ibid.*
40. Arnold to Kenney, letter, 5 July 1943, KP; Arnold to Kenney, letter, 31 August 1943, KP; Arnold to Kenney, letter, 8 October 1943, KP.
41. Arnold to Kenney, letter, 11 October 1943, KP.
42. Kenney to Arnold, letter, 21 October 1943, 1, KP.
43. *Ibid.*, 2.
44. Arnold to Kenney, letter, 26 October 1943, 1, KP; diary of Gen George C. Kenney, 5 January 1944; transcript of tele conference between Kenney and Sutherland, 6 January 1944,

KP; and Arnold to Brereton, letter, 19 January 1944, H. H. Arnold Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

45. Kenney interview with Hasdorff, 54.

46. *Ibid.*, 57.

47. For a thorough account of the B-29s in the Southwest Pacific, see Stanley Falk, "General Kenney: The Indirect Approach and the B-29s," *Aerospace Historian* 27 (September 1981): 147–55.

48. Kenney to Arnold, letter, 28 July 1943, 3, KP.

49. Arnold to Kenney, letter, 31 August 1943, KP.

50. Col William L. Ritchie, memorandum to Gen George Kenney, subject: Notes on Conference in General Arnold's Office, 14 January 1945, KP; Falk, 153; and Office of the Chief Engineer, General Headquarters Army Forces, Pacific, *Engineers of the Southwest Pacific, 1941–1945*, vol. 6 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950), 18–19.

51. For more details on the conference, see Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943–1944* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1959), 457–59; Craven and Cate, vol. 4, 551–52; and Hayes, 545–47.

52. Kenney to Arnold, letter, 19 February 1944, box 46, Green Collection; and diary of Gen George C. Kenney, 27 January 1944, KP. Hayes, 547, uses a slightly different quotation.

53. Diary of Gen George C. Kenney, 19 February 1944, KP; and message, MacArthur to Sutherland, 16 February 1944, Richard K. Sutherland Papers, Record Group 200, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

54. Haywood S. Hansell to Maj James M. Boyle, letter, December 1964, file 168.7004-64, AFHRA, cited in Alexis Gregory Grynkeiwich, "Advisable in the National Interest? The Relief of General George C. Kenney" (master's thesis, University of Georgia, 1994), 63; Kenneth P. Werrell, *Blankets of Fire: U.S. Bombers over Japan during World War II* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996), 131; and Kenney to Arnold, letter, 19 February 1944, 4, box 46, Green Collection.

55. Gen Frederic H. Smith, interviewed by Murray Green, Washington, D.C., 24 April 1970, 11, Green Collection.

56. Diary of Gen George C. Kenney, 23 February 1945, 8, KP.

57. *Ibid.*, 10, 16, 17 June and 5 July 1945, KP; and Craven and Cate, vol. 5, *The Pacific: Matterhorn to Nagasaki, June 1944 to August 1945* (1953; new imprint, Washington, D.C.: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 648–88, 701.

Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.

—Theodore Roosevelt

