

Strategy of Unity:
Eisenhower, the British, and Multinational Operations

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

Strategy of Unity: Eisenhower, the British, and Multinational Operations, by MAJ Jared R. Maxwell, US Army, 50 pages.

With the largest army a US general has ever commanded, General Dwight D. Eisenhower led the Allied forces from their first landings in North Africa to their ultimate victory in Europe. To do this, he had to build unity of effort, particularly with the British, toward a common purpose. This monograph explores Eisenhower's ability to conduct multinational ground operations with the British in the Mediterranean and European Theaters of Operations in World War II. Using the integrated multinational command structure and the tenets of multinational operations of rapport, trust and confidence, and mission focus, Eisenhower's performance in the Tunisian Campaign is compared to his performance in the European Theater of Operations, arguing that he learned from his mistakes and thus improved his abilities. From the defeat at Kasserine Pass in 1943 to the final attack to the Elbe River in 1945, Eisenhower used unity of effort as his guiding principle, basing almost all decisions on how they would impact the alliance. He further developed his integrated command structure based on subordinates', superiors', and his own abilities to employ the tenets of multinational operations. These lessons may prove insightful as the US Army shifts its focus to near-peer threats and large-scale combat operations.

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Acronyms

AEF	Allied Expeditionary Force
AFHQ	Allied Forces Headquarters
CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff
CIGS	Chief of the Imperial General Staff
CINCAF	Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces
COSSAC	Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander
ETO	European Theater of Operations
LSCO	large-scale combat operations
MTO	Mediterranean Theater of Operations
SHAEF	Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force

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Introduction

Extremists on both sides of the water can indulge in all the backbiting and name-calling that they please—they can never get away from the historical truth that the United States and the British Empire, working together, did a job that looked almost impossible at the time it was undertaken.

—General of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower, Letter to British General Hastings Ismay

For two weeks in December 1944, the Allies resisted Germany's thrust through the Ardennes. Known as the Battle of the Bulge, the attack caught the Allies off-guard, creating a sixty mile salient in the Allied lines.¹ The Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, was decisive in his response. He ordered Lieutenant General George S. Patton Jr.'s Third Army to halt its advance on Saarbrücken, which then slammed into the southern flank of the German salient.² He then directed Lieutenant General Omar Bradley to detach his First and Ninth Armies from his Twelfth Army Group to support Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery's Twenty-First Army Group and its attack on the German northern flank.³ The two army groups formed a pincer that threatened to encircle the German forces in the bulge, forcing them to withdraw. The Allies had stopped Germany's last major offensive in the west. Displaying superb leadership, Eisenhower brought his armies together in a moment of unity to defeat the Axis offensive.

However, Eisenhower's transfer of Bradley's two armies to Montgomery opened a festering wound in the alliance. For Operation Overlord, the June 1944 cross-channel invasion of continental Europe, he chose Montgomery as the commander of ground forces for all

¹ Rick Atkinson, *The Guns at Last Light: The War in Western Europe, 1944-1945* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2013), 461.

² Hugh M. Cole, *The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge*, United States Army in World War II: The European Theater of Operations (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1965), 487.

³ *Ibid.*, 423–27.

nationalities.⁴ Though against the practice of independent US armies, Eisenhower saw the necessity to simplify congested ground operations. Once the Allies established a lodgment in August 1944, Eisenhower created the US Twelfth Army Group with Bradley as its commander. This act created two army groups, making Montgomery and Bradley equals. To effectively manage two equal multinational forces, Eisenhower took command of land operations.⁵ However, Montgomery had a taste of command for the whole front, and with the acquisition of the two US armies during the Battle of the Bulge, he would force the issue of command in late December 1944.

At a meeting with Eisenhower on December 28 concerning a counter-offensive to remove the German salient, Montgomery again pressed the idea of him commanding all ground forces. Eisenhower, like numerous times before, denied the request.⁶ Apparently misunderstanding the agreement or in an attempt to force Eisenhower's hand, Montgomery later sent Eisenhower a letter to confirm the conditions of the meeting. In it, Montgomery suggested that "one commander must have powers to direct and control the operations; you cannot possibly do it yourself."⁷ It further implied that Eisenhower already agreed that Montgomery would command Bradley's Twelfth Army Group, suggested exactly how Eisenhower should inform Bradley, and that if his proposed conditions were not met, "then we will fail again," of which Montgomery implied that the Allied autumn campaigns were failures.⁸

⁴ Forrest C. Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, United States Army in World War II: The European Theater of Operations (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1954), 180–81.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 263–65.

⁶ Atkinson, *The Guns at Last Light*, 470–71.

⁷ Letter, Bernard Montgomery to Dwight D. Eisenhower, December 29, 1944, Montgomery, Bernard (11), Box 83, Principal File, DDE's Pre-Presidential Papers, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

⁸ *Ibid.*

The insubordinate tone was too much for Eisenhower. The next day, he drafted a cable to the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) declaring that either Montgomery or himself had to go. He never sent it. Montgomery's chief of staff, Francis de Guingand, was at Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) as Eisenhower drafted the letter and convinced him to give Montgomery one more chance.⁹ In an effort to prevent a schism within the alliance, Eisenhower instead sent a letter to Montgomery both placating and chastising him, while also denying the command over the US Twelfth Army Group.¹⁰ However, de Guingand understood how close Montgomery came to being relieved. Back at Twenty-First Army Group headquarters, he informed Montgomery of Eisenhower's draft letter. Montgomery understood that if the CCS must choose between Eisenhower and himself, they would assuredly choose Eisenhower.¹¹ He sent an apology to Eisenhower on December 31, affirming "Whatever your decision may be you can rely on me one hundred per cent to make it work and I know Brad will do the same. Very distressed that my letter may have upset you and I would ask you to tear it up. Your very devoted subordinate Monty."¹² By being firm with Montgomery, Eisenhower preserved the alliance.

This vignette demonstrates Eisenhower's deftness at the end of the war in managing multinational operations in large-scale combat. However, his performance was not always resolute. Throughout the Tunisian Campaign from 1942 through 1943, Eisenhower at times unveiled his dearth of operational experience and deficient understanding of multinational operations. Yet, as with any commander in war, Eisenhower was resilient and learned from both his successes and mistakes. This monograph addresses this disparity by arguing that Eisenhower

⁹ Francis De Guingand, *Generals at War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964), 108–15.

¹⁰ Letter, Dwight D. Eisenhower to Bernard Montgomery, December 31, 1944, Montgomery, Bernard (11), Box 83, Principal File, DDE's Pre-Presidential Papers, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

¹¹ De Guingand, *Generals at War*, 108.

¹² Bernard L. Montgomery, *The Memoirs of Field-Marshal Montgomery* (Cleveland, OH: The World Publishing Company, 1958), 286.

improved greatly as a commander in his ability to manage combined Anglo-American land operations in large-scale combat operations (LSCO) throughout the Second World War.

With the growing concern over great power competition in the twenty-first century, the possibility of LSCO is increasing. If employed in such an environment, the US military will likely fight alongside partners and allies.¹³ Eisenhower's performance in leading multinational operations in World War II provides deeper insight into the leadership and management of such operations for future commanders.

Theory of Multinational Operations.

Though Eisenhower's superb ability to lead the largest army that any US commander has ever led became common knowledge, a theory specifically aimed at how to manage multinational operations is not. Militaries are the primary custodians of such a theory as they are its practitioners, and the US military's *Joint Publication (JP) 3-16, Multinational Operations* provides the best articulation.

Central to multinational operations is unified action, "the synergistic application of all instruments of national and multinational power."¹⁴ However, national sovereignty disrupts this unity, as each nation will be seeking its own ends that may be different from partners or allies. Each nation will not surrender its own national interests once part of a multinational operation. Thus, two command structures will always exist: a national command structure which is a national army's direct link to its government and a multinational command structure which is the military command linkage within the coalition or alliance.¹⁵ The first will always supersede the second.

¹³ James Mattis, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2018), 8–10, accessed July 10, 2018, <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

¹⁴ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, *Joint Publication (JP) 3-16, Multinational Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), II-2.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

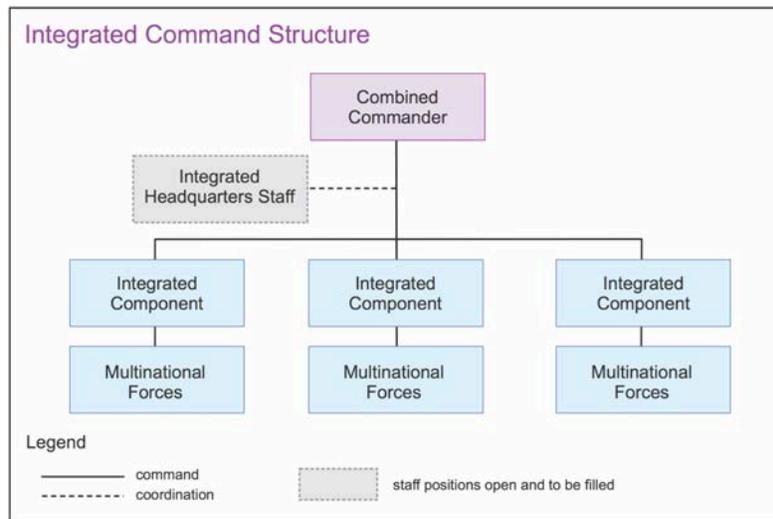


Figure 1. Integrated Command Structure. US Joint Staff, *JP 3-16, Multinational Operations* 2013, II-5.

Two concepts that are applicable to Eisenhower’s performance in World War II are pulled from *JP 3-16*. The first is the development of a multinational command structure, in which *JP 3-16* categorizes as integrated, lead nation, or parallel. No one is perfect for every situation, and each situation will require its own mixture of each. As will be described in later chapters, Eisenhower’s command structure was consistently the former. The first multinational command structure is an integrated command structure, which is the ideal type as it provides the best means for unity of effort (Figure 1). In it, a single commander from one nation is designated, but the staff is filled with a mixture of representatives from each nation and the subordinate commands are combined to the lowest echelon needed to fulfill the mission.¹⁶ The second type is the lead nation command structure (Figure 2). Here, all national forces are placed under the control of a single nation. The leading nation provides the staff structure and bulk of the personnel. Member nations may also provide personnel, but they typically fall in on the existing staff structure. Subordinate commands will also maintain strict national integrity with no intermixing of staffs or forces. This structure is optimal when a member nation is providing a relatively small number of

¹⁶ US Joint Staff, *JP 3-16, Multinational Operations* 2013, II-4.

forces or does not have the capacity to integrate into the headquarters.¹⁷ It is often subdivided into land, air, and maritime commands. The parallel command structure is the final type of multinational command structure, which provides minimal, if any, integration (Figure 3). No single multinational commander is appointed, with each national force operating to achieve its own national interests.¹⁸ This structure may be used due to limited time to form a structure, to maintain national reputations, or if there is a significant divergence in national aims. Obviously, multinational forces will find it difficult to achieve unified action.

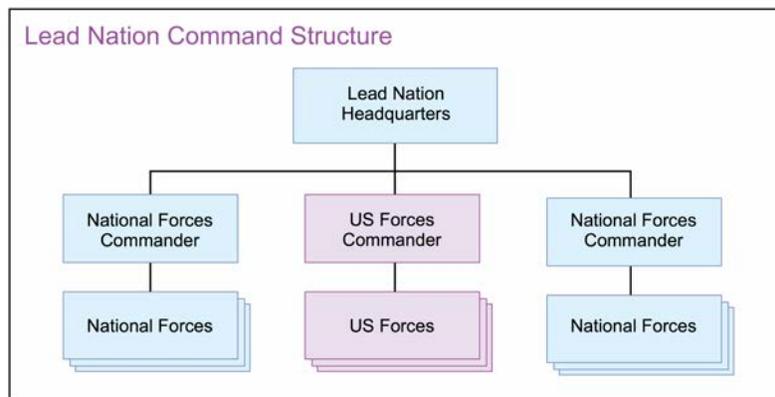


Figure 2. Lead Nation Command Structure. US Joint Staff, *JP 3-16, Multinational Operations* 2013, II-5.

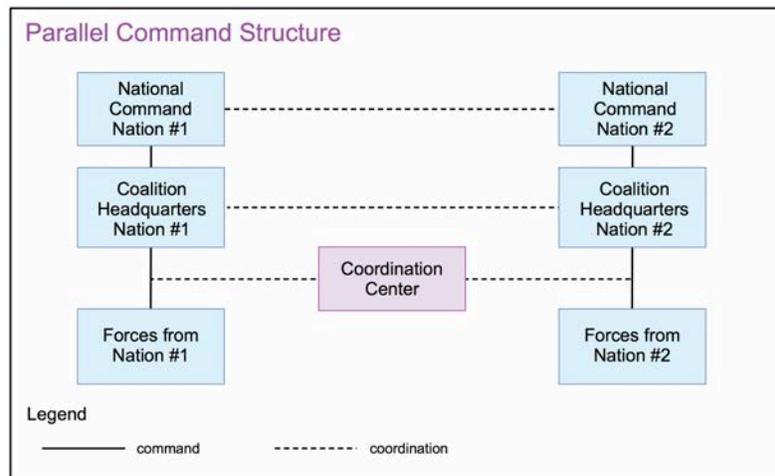


Figure 3. Parallel Command Structure. US Joint Staff, *JP 3-16, Multinational Operations* 2013, II-6.

¹⁷ US Joint Staff, *JP 3-16, Multinational Operations* 2013, II-5–II-6.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, II-6.

The second relevant concept pulled from *JP 3-16* involves the personal relationships among member nations, which is the nature of multinational operations. Six tenets are described. First, respect involves the treatment of member nations as equals. The commander must consider the national honor and prestige of each nation and value the capabilities they provide. Second, leaders must build rapport, which hinges on the personal connections developed within the command. Third, they must also have a thorough knowledge of their partners in order to understand each nation's strategic context and the capabilities they bring to the army. Fourth, with the mixing of different cultures, patience is important to allow time to develop the requisite mutual confidence. Fifth, nations must maintain a mission focus by ensuring all efforts are directed toward the common purpose. Finally, trust and confidence build personal relationships and foster harmony throughout the organization through words and actions.¹⁹

Methodology

These two concepts of multinational command structure and the tenets of multinational operations are used as the criteria to assess Eisenhower's development. Analyzing the Allied command structure provides insight into how Eisenhower understood the relationship between the United States and Britain and the military capabilities each provided. Also important were the relationships Eisenhower developed with both his British and US superiors and subordinates, which factored into how he developed his command structure. Of the six tenets of multinational operations, rapport, trust and confidence, and mission focus are the most applicable to Eisenhower's tenure as a commander in World War II and will be used to evaluate his growth in managing multinational operations.

Eisenhower's service as the Allied forces commander is divided between his tenure as the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces (CINCAF) and as the Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force (SCAEF). As CINCAF, Eisenhower served from the preparation for

¹⁹ US Joint Staff, *JP 3-16, Multinational Operations* 2013, I-3-I-4.

Operation Torch in 1942 through the initial offensives in Italy in 1943. Once designated the SCAEF in December 1943, Eisenhower focused on the planning and execution of Operation Overlord and the resulting offensive to Germany. This argument uses the two periods as case studies to compare and contrast Eisenhower's performance and to scope the study's research.

This scoping deliberately disregards some unrelated, though no less important, aspects of Eisenhower's performance throughout the war. First, due to Eisenhower's almost complete delegation of the Sicilian and Italian campaigns to Field Marshal Harold Alexander in 1943, they are omitted from this study. In addition, the study deliberately excludes Eisenhower's management of French relations throughout the war, only mentioning it when relevant to Anglo-American relations. The subject's heft alone requires its own analysis. Finally, the study disregards Eisenhower's management of the air and naval components due to the focus on ground combat operations.

Strategic Context

The "special relationship" between Great Britain and the United States during World War II is often taken for granted. Yet, it was not inevitable. With beginnings in the American Revolution, numerous Anglo-American clashes from the eighteenth century onward created a consistent state of animosity between the two nations. The divergence was greatly due to a conflict in global outlooks. Britain saw the world as part of its vast empire of colonies, of which they would do anything to maintain. The United States, as a republic, challenged Britain through its existence and developed a possessive influence over the Americas. The First World War was one moment of cooperation, but nothing more, and animosity continued in the interwar years. Hence, this context influenced the alliance between the United States and Britain and served as a lens for their subsequent strategy, the development of personal relationships, and the establishment of a multinational command structure.

Diverged Strategies

The first wartime experience for most of the strategic and operational leaders of the Second World War was in the trenches of the first. Churchill, Marshall, Brooke, Alexander, Montgomery, and Patton all served in Western Europe and witnessed the emergent destruction of modern warfare.²⁰ Bernard Montgomery, who was severely wounded in the first year and watched a soldier die on top of him, believed that few officers understood their profession, and it was at the end of the war that he decided to combat such incompetence by dedicating his life to the military profession.²¹ Such personal experiences directly affected the outlook of warfare twenty years later for the Allied leaders.

Nationally, the length of involvement of each nation during World War I created an aura of superiority for some nations. Britain and its empire, which had fought the war since 1914, had almost three million casualties by its end.²² Throughout the first three years, the United States sat out the war, preferring isolationism over European conflict. However, once declared, the United States threw its full industrial might and manpower into the effort. After arriving in Europe, General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Force, focused on maintaining an autonomous US Army and reintroducing maneuver to the stalemate. Britain, with the other victorious European powers, saw the United States as a latecomer to the war who had not paid the same price in blood. They viewed US soldiers as naive and with little experience of war and argued to use US forces as reinforcements for established British and French formations along the front. US soldiers also had skeptical views of the Europeans, believing the British too

²⁰ Dwight D. Eisenhower was one exception. Though he desperately sought service in the American Expeditionary Force, he was relegated to stateside administrative duties, and the war ended before he was able to deploy to Europe. Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier, General of the Army, President-Elect, 1890-1952* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 61.

²¹ Montgomery, *Memoirs*, 32, 35.

²² The War Office, *Statistics of the Military Effort of the British Empire during the Great War, 1914-1920* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1922), 237, accessed January 3, 2019, <http://archive.org/details/statisticsofmili00grea>.

deliberate and methodical, a culture which contributed to the stalemate.²³ The European and United States divide was sharp and resulted in restrained British and US cooperation. Though the American Expeditionary Force did amalgamate with British and French forces during Germany's final offensive of the war, Pershing quickly reformed the army, fighting independently in the St. Mihiel and Meuse-Argonne Offensives before the war ended. This animosity and division affected the participants' views of multinational operations and influenced the formation of the Allied forces in World War II.²⁴

With the United States' entry in World War II, British and US strategic leaders grappled with the coalition's approach to defeating the Axis powers. They were at odds in how to prosecute the "Europe First" strategy, a division that would remain throughout most of the war. Two arguments were presented. The United States led the effort for a direct offensive on continental Europe. In seeking a strategy of annihilation, the US strategic leaders desired a cross-channel attack into France, which provided the shortest distance, and accordingly the least effort, to Germany.²⁵ The United States had to balance the war in Europe with the war against Japan, with US public opinion supporting the latter.²⁶ The United States developed two operations. Planned for 1942, Operation Sledgehammer would get the United States into action as soon as possible. However, this operation depended on how quickly Allied forces could build combat power in Britain, known as Operation Bolero, for the amphibious assault, and most planners

²³ Niall Barr, *Eisenhower's Armies: The American-British Alliance During World War II* (New York: Pegasus Books, 2015), 56.

²⁴ Maurice Matloff, "Allied Strategy in Europe, 1939-1945," in *Makers of Modern Strategy from Machiavelli to the Nuclear Age*, ed. Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1986), 679–80.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 685.

²⁶ Mark A. Stoler, *Allies and Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 101.

considered it unfeasible. More likely was Operation Roundup, which was a similar operation but planned for 1943 with more combat power.²⁷

In opposition, the British advocated an indirect approach, which included operations along the periphery of Axis Europe at places such as Norway, North Africa, Italy, and Greece. Led by Prime Minister Winston Churchill, this approach would allow Allied forces to relieve pressure on the Soviet Union sooner, reestablish British dominance in the Mediterranean Sea, protect vital sea lines of communication, and facilitate an offensive through the “soft underbelly” of southern Germany. With its focus on the development of air and naval power in the interwar years, Britain could best use this power while minimizing attrition of its small army.²⁸

This division did not end after Roosevelt ordered the US military to execute the invasion of North Africa, in essence executing the British peripheral strategy. General George C. Marshall, the Army Chief of Staff, opposed the Mediterranean approach, arguing that planning for a cross-channel attack should be renewed once the Tunisian Campaign ended. Marshall eventually lost the argument, being defeated by a well-prepared British contingent at the Casablanca Conference in January 1943. US military leaders arrived without a consensus on a grand strategy. Admiral Ernest J. King, the US Chief of Naval Operations, still desired a Pacific first strategy, and with the Solomon Islands campaign in full swing, argued for a shift in effort and resources. The British contingent, however, had a unified desire for an assault through Italy, with the seizure of Sicily as the first phase. With the desire to continue a US ground effort against Germany, Roosevelt sided with the British.²⁹ The decision delayed a cross-channel assault until June 1944. Though

²⁷ Mark A. Stoler, *Allies in War: Britain and America Against the Axis Powers, 1940-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 63, 66–71.

²⁸ Matloff, “Allied Strategy in Europe,” 679, 684.

²⁹ Stoler, *Allies in War*, 86–89.

victorious, the Casablanca Conference was the last concerted effort by the British. Afterward, US predominance in material and manpower nullified almost all British positions.³⁰

Command Philosophies

The final influence on Allied strategy and multinational operations in World War II was each nation's outlook on unity of command and the establishment and application of multinational command structures, on which World War I had a tremendous influence. As mentioned in *JP 3-16*, nations maintain two command structures during multinational operations, a national chain of command and a multinational chain of command.³¹ Britain, with its focus on the Western Front, built a command structure in 1914 around a national chain of command. Though the British Expeditionary Force often supported French operational plans, it was still an autonomous force able to develop and execute its own vision. Not until after the United States entered the war did the Allied nations develop a unified command for all forces. Germany's Operation Michael in the last year of World War I created a crisis within the Allied powers in how to halt the rapid enemy advances. A unified response was needed under a supreme commander. Marshal Foch, with his experience and preponderance of force, was appointed the Supreme Commander and provided the needed unity of effort to defeat Germany.³²

This experience deeply influenced how the British developed command structures after World War I. They used a committee system, in which no single commander over each service was designated. British officers believed that no service could command another as each had its own expertise in its own field. How could an Army officer dictate naval or air operations if not spending an entire career as a practitioner? Thus, British command structures often consisted of two or more commanders, one for each service, without a single unifying commander to guide

³⁰ Barr, *Eisenhower's Armies*, 222.

³¹ US Joint Staff, *JP 3-16, Multinational Operations* 2013, II-1.

³² Barr, *Eisenhower's Armies*, 62.

them all. Strategic and operational consensus resulted from civil and professional discussion amongst the commanders.³³

The United States, however, learned a different lesson from World War I and fervently believed in unity of command for all allied forces. After the war, numerous US military thinkers foresaw that future wars would always be fought as coalitions or alliances. To prevent a stalemate in strategy development, like that existed from 1914 through 1918 on the Western Front, US leaders supported unity of command similar to the construct developed under Marshal Foch. General Marshall was one of these proponents, pushing the concept at the Arcadia Conference. He declared,

I favour one man being in control, but operating under a controlled directive from here [CCS]. We had to come to this in the First World War, but it was not until 1918 that it was accomplished and much valuable time, blood, and treasure had been needlessly sacrificed. If we could decide on a unified command now, it would be a great advance over what was accomplished during the World War.³⁴

Eisenhower's Appointment

Throughout the first half of 1942, US forces were building combat power in Britain as part of Bolero, but without a unified allied commander. Once the British withdrew support for Sledgehammer, Marshall reengaged the need for a unified commander for Allied operations in preparation for Operation Torch, the invasion of Vichy French North Africa. The CCS deemed a US commander should lead the expedition due to British and French animosity. They chose Eisenhower, the senior ranking US commander in Britain at the time, to lead Torch.³⁵

In command, Eisenhower saw the center of gravity of the Allied forces as the alliance itself. The Allied ability to cooperate and conduct multinational operations would determine

³³ Barr, *Eisenhower's Armies*, 130–31.

³⁴ Minutes of the Chiefs of Staff Conference, December 25, 1941, Arcadia, Post-Arcadia, Casablanca, Box 1, Combined Chiefs of Staff: Conference Proceedings, 1941-45, DDE's Pre-Presidential Papers, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

³⁵ Barr, *Eisenhower's Armies*, 186–88.

success. Mentors, especially Brigadier General Fox Connor, instilled within Eisenhower that future wars would be fought as coalitions and that there would be a necessity for unity of effort and unity of command.³⁶ Eisenhower brought this principle with him to Allied Forces Headquarters (AFHQ), Eisenhower's headquarters as the CINCAF, and it guided his strategy throughout the war. This was important not only in establishing a command structure, but also for individual relationships at any rank or echelon. Eisenhower's policy was to send back to the United States any soldier that damaged the alliance in anyway.³⁷ In his memoirs, General Hastings Ismay, Churchill's military advisor and a proponent of Anglo-American relations, described an incident in which Eisenhower dismissed a US officer who had insulted a British officer. When the British officer appealed to Eisenhower to keep the US officer, saying that "He only called me the son-of-a-bitch, sir, and all of us have now learnt that this is a colloquial expression which is sometimes used almost as a term of endearment, and should not be taken too seriously."³⁸ Eisenhower's reply was that "I am informed that he called you a British son-of-a-bitch. That is quite different. My ruling stands."³⁹

Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces

Eisenhower's story as CINCAF is one of success. He understood the two-fold problem within a multinational organization as the need to integrate his army and develop a smooth-

³⁶ Kerry E. Irish, "Cross-Cultural Leadership: Dwight D. Eisenhower," in *The Art of Command: Military Leadership from George Washington to Colin Powell*, ed. Harry S. Laver and Jeffrey J. Matthews (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 93–96; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1948), 18.

³⁷ Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, October 3, 1942, in *The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower: The War Years*, ed. Alfred D. Chandler (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970), 1:591.

³⁸ Hastings Ismay, *The Memoirs of General Lord Ismay* (New York: The Viking Press, 1960), 263.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

functioning unit made of different cultures.⁴⁰ With this, he successfully brought the military forces of a multicultural alliance together to eject the Axis powers from North Africa. However, the fight in the Mediterranean basin had its difficulties. Eisenhower was a learning commander who made many mistakes in managing the cooperation between British and US forces. He effectively integrated the AFHQ as a multiservice and multicultural center for operations, but had difficulty in managing land operations and the national command structures. He also had difficulty in building rapport with subordinates and combating the mistrust between British and US subordinates. Yet, his unwavering mission focus led to his success.

Multinational Command Structure

With unity of command as the guiding principle in establishing the AFHQ in 1942, Eisenhower created an integrated command structure to better fuse the British and US staffs and forces (Figure 4).⁴¹ He believed that an allied staff “must be a beautifully interlocked, smooth-working mechanism” in order to handle the increased information flow and multicultural character of modern warfare.⁴² Two guiding principles were central to the headquarters’ formation: balanced personnel and best man for the job.⁴³ The staff structure integrated both British and US soldiers into almost every position to ensure both nations, with their own expertise, would be equally represented.⁴⁴ If a US officer was assigned as the primary for a certain position, a British officer was assigned as his deputy. This principle was implemented to the lowest level. One exception was based on performance in which Eisenhower placed the best

⁴⁰ Dwight Salmon and Paul Bridesall, *History of Allied Force Headquarters, Part 1* (Caserta, Italy: Allied Force Headquarters, 1945), in the World War II Operational Documents Collection, Combined Arms Research Library Digital Library, accessed December 16, 2018, <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p4013coll8/id/2777/rec/1>, 11.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 75.

⁴³ Salmon and Bridesall, *History of Allied Force Headquarters, Part 1*, 13–14.

⁴⁴ Administrative and supply functions were exceptions as each nation had its own unique requirements in processing and equipping its force. Ibid., 13.

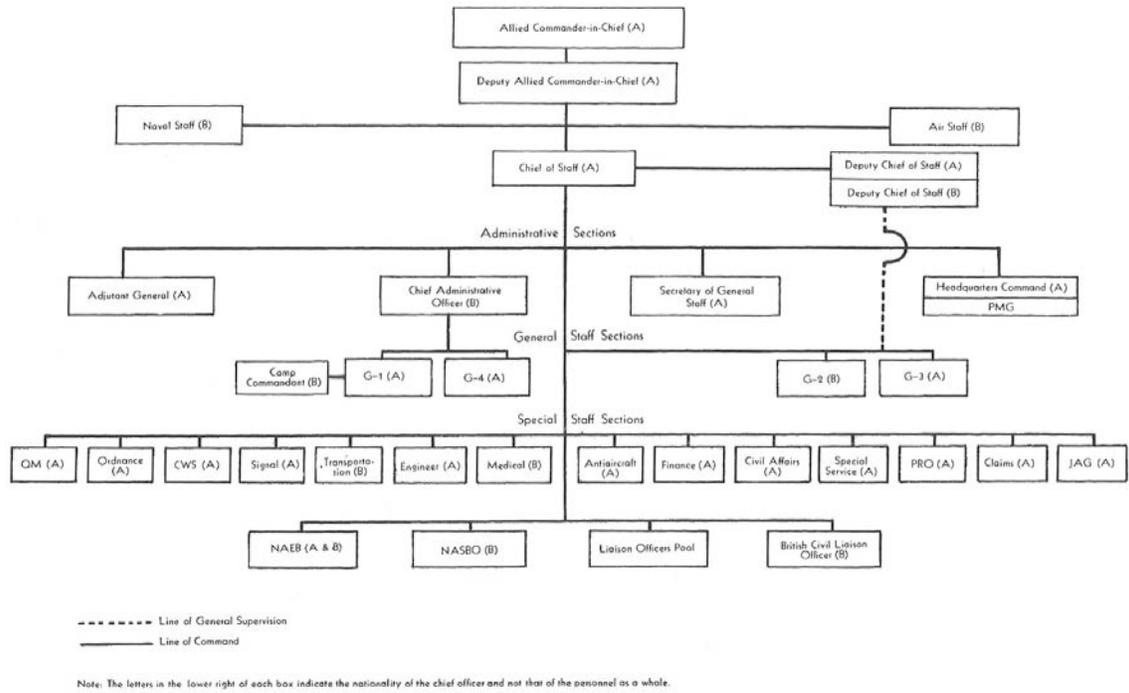


Figure 4. AFHQ Organization, 1 November 1942. George F. Howe, *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West*, United States Army in World War II: The Mediterranean Theater of Operations (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1957), 34.

man for the job in a position, no matter the nationality.⁴⁵ Following the crisis of Kasserine Pass, Eisenhower quickly replaced his senior intelligence officer, a British officer, who had misread Axis intentions before the battle, asking Field Marshal Alan Brooke, the British Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS), for “an officer who has a broader insight into German mentality and method.”⁴⁶ He wanted another British officer to ensure integration. This structure served well-enough in Tunisia that Eisenhower never drastically altered it after the campaign, and used it as a framework for establishing the SHAEF in 1944.

⁴⁵ Commander-in-Chief’s Dispatch, North African Campaign, 1942-1943, Box 16, Smith, Walter Bedell: Collection of World War II Documents, 1941-1945 File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS, 2.

⁴⁶ Beginning on February 14, 1943, Axis forces began a series of attacks against the US II Corps in vicinity of Kasserine Pass, Tunisia. AFHQ intelligence believed that an Axis attack may occur in the British First Army sector. The inexperienced US troops were thus unprepared, resulting in a major defeat for Allied forces. Dwight D. Eisenhower to Alan Brooke, February 20, 1943, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 2:969.

Though his integration of the AFHQ staff was a success, Eisenhower's integration of subordinate commands was incomplete and at times resulted in disunity. National caveats were the foremost reason for a confused land component command structure. With the invasion of Vichy French North Africa, the CCS were concerned that the French would mount a stalwart defense if facing a British attack. This animosity was a result of British anger toward the French surrender and subservience to Germany in 1940 and of France's resentment from the Mers-el-Kebir incident.⁴⁷ After joining the Allies, Henri Giraud, the commander of all French forces in North Africa, refused to subordinate French forces under British command.⁴⁸ Combined with Marshall's desire for US autonomy in the campaign, Eisenhower had no other choice than to serve dual-hatted as both the CINCAF and the land component commander.

Operations were thus executed along national lines, with each nation fighting without coordination with the others. Eisenhower could have coordinated the three national forces, but with his balancing of political and strategic concerns, his commanding a multiservice force, and his limited operational experience, he had difficulty in coordinating Allied ground operations. Ultimately, during the crisis at Kasserine Pass, Alexander was forced to take command of the front earlier than planned to provide much needed leadership. He had an unsatisfactory opinion of US forces upon his arrival on February 19, seeing it as disorganized and inadequate to conduct future operations. He thus sought to realign forces by subordinating the French to the British First Army and removing US units supporting the British and returning them to the US II Corps.⁴⁹ This

⁴⁷ With France's surrender to Germany on June 22, 1940, Britain was concerned that the French fleet in Oran, French North Africa, would fall into German hands. French Admiral Marcel-Bruno Gensoul refused to surrender the fleet, thus a British naval task force destroyed it on July 3, 1940, killing 1,297 French sailors who only weeks before were allies. Barr, *Eisenhower's Armies*, 92.

⁴⁸ Commander-in-Chief's Dispatch, North African Campaign, Smith, Walter Bedell File, 19.

⁴⁹ George F. Howe, *Northwest Africa: Seizing the Initiative in the West*, United States Army in World War II: The Mediterranean Theater of Operations (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1957), 475.

structure was a result of Eisenhower’s unwieldy span of control and his mixture of multinational units (Figure 5).

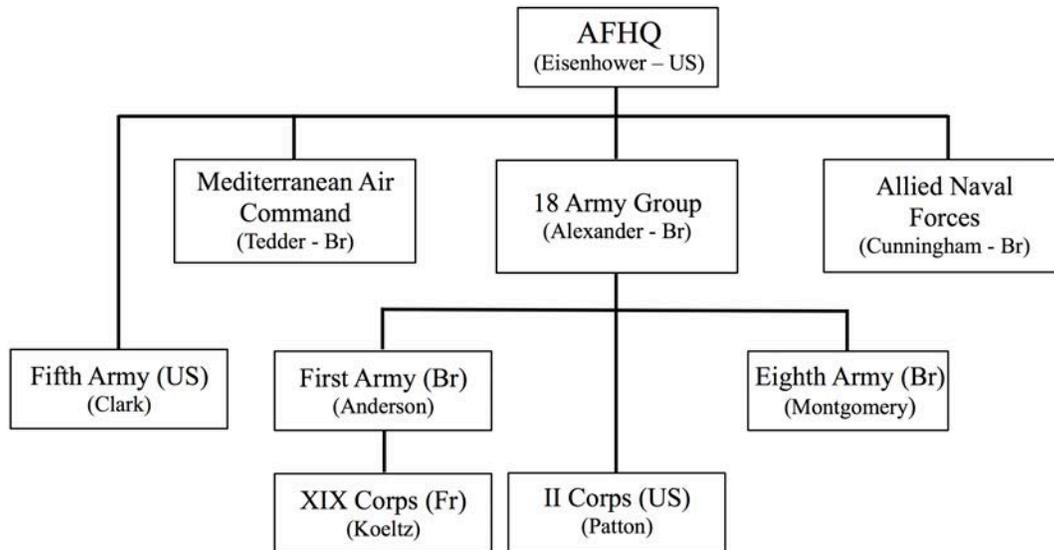


Figure 5. Allied Forces Chain of Command, March 1943. Howe, *Northwest Africa*, 486.

Eisenhower’s diffusion of command responsibilities seemed to go against his guiding principle of unity of command. In Tunisia, the circumstances got the best of him, and as Rick Atkinson surmised in his treatise on the North Africa campaign, “In trying to serve as both the supreme commander and field general, he had mastered neither job.”⁵⁰ Eisenhower acknowledged in his wartime memoirs that the battle-front weakness was his responsibility, stating that he should have insisted upon the French subordinating themselves to the British First Army at the outset of the campaign and that the US II Corps should have had a limited frontage due to their small size and lack of experience.⁵¹ The lesson for Eisenhower, however, was not that he should subordinate all ground forces to a land component commander, but only “ground forces actually committed to an operation.”⁵² He believed that the Allied commander is still the ground force

⁵⁰ Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 335.

⁵¹ Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 146.

⁵² Dwight D. Eisenhower to Louis Mountbatten, September 14, 1943, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 3:1421–22.

commander, even with the increased responsibility on him and the staff.⁵³ Eisenhower seemed to have taken these lessons of multinational command structure to heart as the Allied forces invaded Sicily and then Italy. However, he demonstrated deft understanding of the alliance and rightly discarded this principle in 1944 when leading multinational forces in the European Theater of Operations (ETO).

Eisenhower also had difficulty balancing national and multinational command structures. As CINCAF, he had to keep in mind British caution in the planning and execution of operations while also trying to follow eager guidance from the US national command structure, particularly General Marshall. Field Marshal Brooke, however, thought little of Eisenhower's operational abilities, remarking in his diaries that "Eisenhower as a general is hopeless!"⁵⁴ Marshall, however, wanted Eisenhower more involved in Tunisian operations, telling him to give his complete attention to the front.⁵⁵ He believed Eisenhower was holding back in the drive toward Tunis partly because most of the casualties would be British.⁵⁶

Eisenhower's difficulty in managing this tension manifested in an audacious yet operationally unsound plan to finish the campaign. The US II Corps would attack along the southern flank with Sfax as its objective to split Axis forces, allowing Field Marshal Montgomery's British Eighth Army attacking from the east to destroy Field Marshal Erwin Rommel's army in the south, and Lieutenant General Anderson's British First Army to destroy Field Marshal Hans-Jürgen von Arnim's army in the north.⁵⁷ When Eisenhower briefed the plan at the Casablanca Conference on January 15, Brooke dismantled it, pointing out the operational

⁵³ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Louis Mountbatten, September 14, 1943, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 3:1421-22.

⁵⁴ Alan Brooke, *War Diaries 1939-1945*, Field Marshal Lord Alanbrooke, ed. Alex Danchev and Daniel Todman (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 351.

⁵⁵ Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 246.

⁵⁶ Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 1:793n.

⁵⁷ Howe, *Northwest Africa*, 349-52.

risk in placing the US II Corps between two battle-hardened German armies that still had the will to fight.⁵⁸ Eisenhower, now seeing the operational flaws, discarded the planned attack. In a memorandum for his diary in which he listed recent disappointments, he included the abandonment of the “aggressive action and local attack I had so laboriously planned.”⁵⁹ This incident demonstrated Eisenhower’s difficulty in managing the dual forces of national and multinational command structures in executing multinational operations.

Tenets of Multinational Operations

A multinational command structure is built upon relationships. Otherwise, it is a mere chart with lines connecting names and titles. The tenets of multinational operations are the intangible connections that allow the structure to work. As with the multinational command structure, Eisenhower again had difficulty managing personal relationships within the Allied armies as CINCAF. His ability to build a rapport with his British subordinates were mixed, and his failure to combat the distrust between British and US subordinates led to his first battlefield defeat as a commander. However, Eisenhower’s mission focus allowed him to make corrections, mount a final offensive, and eject Axis forces from the African continent.

First, Eisenhower had mixed results in building rapport with his direct British ground commanders. The first was Lieutenant General Kenneth Anderson, the commander of the British First Army. Anderson was shy and blunt, proving difficult to work with no matter the nationality.⁶⁰ Eisenhower, well known for his charisma, struggled to build a relationship with such a personality. He found Anderson operationally acceptable, but complained that he “blows

⁵⁸ Minutes of the Casablanca Conference, January 15, 1943, in the World War II Operational Documents Collection, Combined Arms Research Library Digital Library, accessed December 16, 2018, <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p4013coll8/id/3688/rec/10>, 199-202.

⁵⁹ Memo for Diary, Dwight D. Eisenhower, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 2:909–10.

⁶⁰ Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 83.

hot and cold, by turns, in his estimates and resulting demands.”⁶¹ Anderson’s caution during the December stalemate certainly influenced Eisenhower’s decision to halt the offensive, increasing the previously mentioned tension between national and multinational command structures. Eisenhower’s congratulatory letter to Anderson on the completion of the campaign best demonstrates the lack of rapport. Eisenhower, who liberally used accolades in most of his letters, tells Anderson that he is “certain that your government—as well as the Allied Forces here—clearly appreciate the extraordinary value of your services toward the common victory.”⁶² A lackluster compliment if a strong rapport had existed.

Eisenhower, however, built a strong rapport with Field Marshal Alexander, who became a trusted agent of Eisenhower’s throughout the war. Per CCS guidance at the Casablanca Conference, Alexander became Eisenhower’s land component commander, leading the Eighteenth Army Group, on February 19 in the midst of the Kasserine Pass crisis, relieving a heavy burden from Eisenhower.⁶³ The CCS were concerned at the conference about who would command Allied forces once Eisenhower’s forces met with the British Eighth Army. Alexander had already impressed Eisenhower by his leadership as Commander-in-Chief, Middle East. With the predominance of British forces in the theater, Eisenhower offered to serve as Alexander’s subordinate upon the two armies’ union. In his memoirs, Alexander remarked that Eisenhower’s graciousness gave him “every reason...to like Ike.”⁶⁴ In a letter to Brooke following the Tunisian Campaign, Eisenhower applauded Alexander in that he “seems to have a genius for getting

⁶¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, November 30, 1942, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 2:780.

⁶² Dwight D. Eisenhower to Kenneth A. N. Anderson, May 12, 1943, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 2:1127.

⁶³ Howe, *Northwest Africa*, 475.

⁶⁴ Harold Alexander, *The Alexander Memoirs, 1940-1945*, ed. John North (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962), 41.

people to work for him just because they want to get a pat on the back from the Commander.”⁶⁵ Later, though unsuccessful, Eisenhower requested Alexander to lead the British army group in the ETO, a role ultimately played by Montgomery.⁶⁶ Eisenhower, thus, had a strong rapport with Alexander as compared with Anderson. If Eisenhower built a relationship with Anderson at the outset of the campaign like which he had with Alexander, the tribulations of December 1942 and February 1943 may have been less impactful.

Not only must rapport be built, but trust and confidence must also exist to create unity of effort, the second tenet in which Eisenhower is evaluated. Though he was able to build this trust in his personal relationships, Eisenhower did not effectively manage the distrust between his British and US subordinates. Due to their biases, British and US commanders were often skeptical of each other’s abilities and intentions. Eisenhower was aware of this. Thus one month before the Torch landings, he emphasized the building of trust with his senior commanders. He discussed the “necessity of avoiding friction between ourselves and the British” and declared “any violation along this line will be cause for instant relief.”⁶⁷ Eisenhower appears to be decisive with the strong statement, but it proved to carry no weight during the Tunisian Campaign.

Major General Lloyd Fredendall had little affinity for his British counterparts. As the US II Corps commander on the British right flank during the Battle of Kasserine Pass, his Anglophobia caused tensions within the Allied army, which hindered coordination before and during the German assault.⁶⁸ Eisenhower insufficiently addressed this distrust. The only rebuke Eisenhower gave Fredendall was a letter on February 4. Eisenhower acknowledged reports that

⁶⁵ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Alan Francis Brooke, July 3, 1943, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 2:1236.

⁶⁶ Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, December 17, 1943, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 3:1605.

⁶⁷ Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, October 3, 1942, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 1:591.

⁶⁸ Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 273.

Fredendall had criticized the British, but he then dispelled such reports based on Fredendall's loyalty and determination and reinforced "that our Allies have got to be partners and not people that we view with suspicion and doubt."⁶⁹ Eisenhower then declared "Generals are expendable just as is any other item in an army."⁷⁰ The passive aggressive letter did not strike Fredendall as a personal admonishment; instead, he scolded his subordinates, thinking the letter was directed at them.⁷¹ In his usual reservation to directly reprimand a subordinate, Eisenhower's letter had little effect on his intended audience, thus not doing enough to counteract Fredendall's distrust. Eisenhower did not relieve Fredendall until after the debacle of Kasserine Pass, and this was not because of disunity but due to Fredendall's poor tactical abilities. At this time, Eisenhower's threat of "instant relief" rang hollow.

Another failure of Eisenhower's was his inability to dispel Alexander's lack of confidence in US fighting ability. Alexander developed this low opinion during his assessment following Kasserine Pass, from which he believed the US II Corps fought poorly due to inexperience.⁷² The battle of Fondouk Gap further reinforced his opinion, though the fault primarily laid with the British IX Corps commander, Lieutenant General John T. Crocker.⁷³ Following the action, Crocker criticized US troops, stating to reporters that their performance was disappointing. Eisenhower was disturbed by the statement and believed it was unnecessary.

⁶⁹ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Lloyd R. Fredendall, February 4, 1943, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 2:940.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 317.

⁷² Howe, *Northwest Africa*, 475.

⁷³ In March 1943, Alexander assigned the British IX Corps to penetrate the Axis defenses in the Eastern Dorsal Mountains and attack the retreating Afrika Corps in the flank. Crocker ordered the US 34th Division, which was attached to IX Corps, to seize the hills around Fondouk Gap to facilitate the penetration. However, Crocker did not provide adequate fire or armor support. The division, attacking over two thousand yards of open terrain, took severe casualties in its attacks, but seized the hills. However, the breakthrough was too late to affect the retreating Afrika Corps. The British blamed the high-cost attack on US inexperience. US leaders blamed British incompetence. Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn*, 468–79.

Though Eisenhower credits Alexander with addressing the slight, the fact that such an incriminating statement was made demonstrated Alexander's lack of control over his subordinates in regards to critical comments as they agreed with his own opinions.⁷⁴ Alexander again displayed his distrust of US fighting ability when he sought to relegate the US II Corps to a training role during the final offensive on Tunis. Eisenhower, understanding the strategic implications of the United States not participating, convinced Alexander to place II Corps on the north flank to seize Bizerte.⁷⁵ These vignettes demonstrate that Eisenhower often looked past Alexander's distrust of US troops due to his admiration for Alexander, which was a detriment to the alliance.

Finally, Eisenhower did not only make mistakes in the Tunisian Campaign. The campaign was ultimately successful in defeating the Axis powers on the continent. Much of this success was due to Eisenhower's mission focus through his insistence on unity of effort. On numerous occasions throughout the planning and execution of the campaign, Eisenhower reasserted the need for unity of effort and positive relations between the British and US forces. He threatened "instant relief" and the "direst punishment that I can possibly inflict" to any US officer who disrespected the British.⁷⁶ Even though he did not always follow through with the threat, as Fredendall's relief demonstrated, the continuous talk and direction toward unity focused his army to work together, most exemplified in the final offensive, to defeat the Axis forces in North Africa.

⁷⁴ Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 151.

⁷⁵ Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, March 23, 1943, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 2:1056.

⁷⁶ Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, October 3, 1942, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 1:591; Dwight D. Eisenhower to Walter Bedell Smith, January 26, 1943, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 2:925.

Summary

As Eisenhower's development of the AFHQ command structure and his implementation of the tenets of multinational operations demonstrated, Eisenhower had varying results as the CINCAF in leading multinational operations. Though he developed an integrated staff, he struggled in the management of land operations due to national caveats and an increased span of control. Combined with his difficulty in managing national command structures, the Allied forces often fought as separate national armies rather than a unified force. Further exacerbating disunity was Eisenhower's difficulty in building a rapport with Anderson. Though Alexander, as the Eighteenth Army Group commander, helped solve the land component issue, his lack of confidence in US fighting ability further hindered alliance relationships. But, Eisenhower's stalwart mission focus and insistence on unity of effort continually opposed such disunifying characteristics.

On December 7, 1943, President Roosevelt was passing through Tunis from the Cairo Conference back to the United States and wanted to meet with Eisenhower. At the Conference, Joseph Stalin pressed Roosevelt to name the commander of Overlord. However, he had yet to decide. Most people believed the likely choice would be Marshall, with Eisenhower replacing him on the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Eisenhower did not want this, preferring to remain in a combat command, but was acceding, as he believed he was simply a servant of his country.⁷⁷ As Eisenhower climbed into the President's car in Tunis, the President made a short and sudden statement, "Well, Ike, you are going to command Overlord."⁷⁸ Eisenhower would now command the largest force in US history. He would also have a chance to employ the many lessons learned as the CINCAF throughout the Mediterranean Theater of Operations (MTO) as the Supreme Commander in the assault across mainland Europe and the eventual defeat of Germany.

⁷⁷ Stephen E. Ambrose, *The Supreme Commander: The War Years of General Dwight D. Eisenhower* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1969), 305–309.

⁷⁸ Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 207.

Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force

Throughout the assault across Western Europe, Eisenhower not only faced problems presented by the enemy but also problems from within the Allied forces. Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, the senior British Army Group commander in the ETO, was a central figure in these problems.⁷⁹ Though Montgomery served as part of Eisenhower's armies in the MTO, Overlord was the first time the two directly worked with each other. Montgomery believed that he was operationally superior to Eisenhower, and he was relentless in his pursuit to exercise this superiority as the land component commander. Eisenhower, however, had learned much in the management of multinational operations. As SCAEF, he was decisive in his leadership of British and US land operations by serving as the convergence of tensions from both his subordinates and superiors. He did this by building a multinational command structure through his skillful application of the tenets of multinational operations.

Multinational Command Structure

As with AFHQ, unity drove the structure within SHAEF, and with his assumption of command in December 1943, Eisenhower had no reason to drastically change what had worked in the MTO. However, a difference with the establishment of AFHQ in 1942 was that the CCS had appointed a Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander (COSSAC), British Lieutenant General Frederick E. Morgan, at the Casablanca Conference in 1943. With an accompanying staff, the COSSAC operated with the understanding that it would eventually serve as the supreme allied headquarters. Throughout 1943, its primary purpose was to plan the upcoming invasion of Europe, planned for 1944, and would provide continuity once the CCS designated a supreme commander.⁸⁰

⁷⁹ Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 159.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

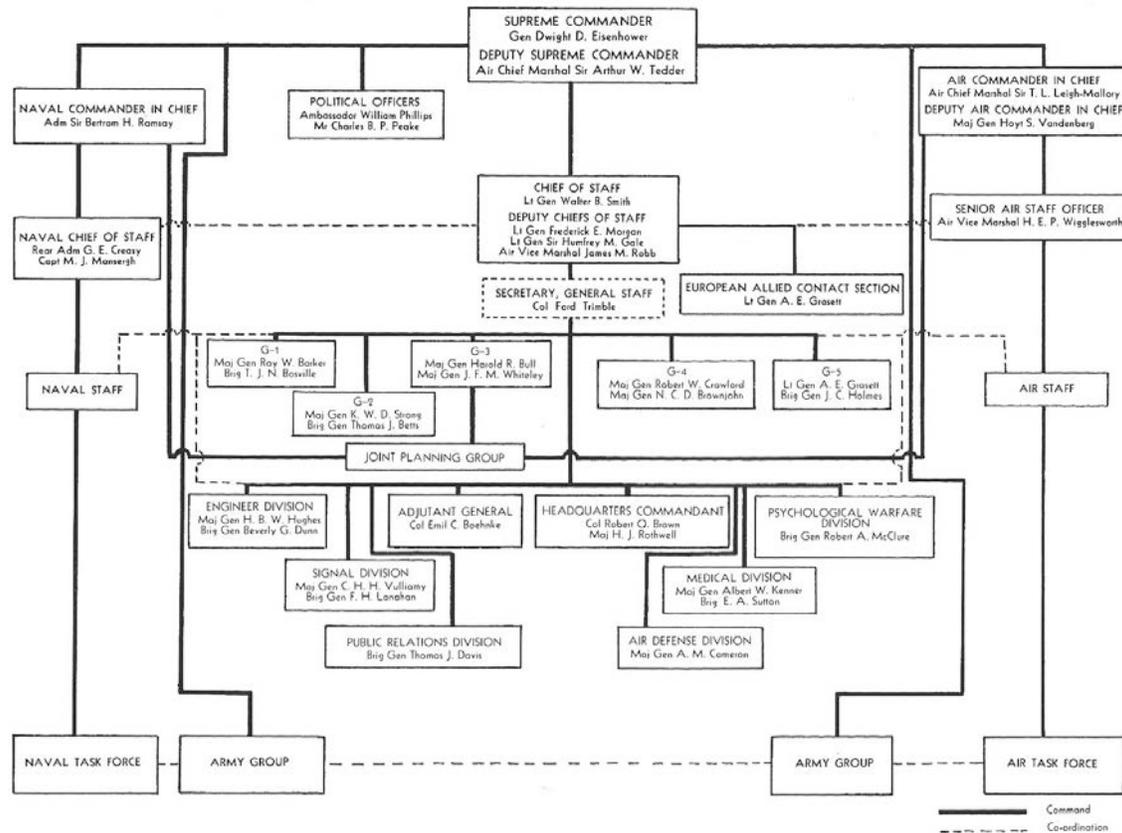


Figure 6. SHAEF Organization, 6 June 1944. Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 67.

Once appointed, Eisenhower blended AFHQ with COSSAC to establish SHAEF (Figure 6). He did this in two aspects. The first was that he brought with him from AFHQ his most trusted subordinates. Though the CCS appointed Morgan as COSSAC with the intent his title represents, Eisenhower was not willing to dispose of his AFHQ chief of staff, Major General Walter Bedell Smith. Morgan, wanting to remain a part of SHAEF, accepted the position of Smith’s deputy.⁸¹ In this, Brooke accused Eisenhower of “raiding” AFHQ of its best talent,” but Eisenhower saw it necessary to bring with him experienced officers in preparation for the more important cross-channel invasion.⁸² The second aspect was that Eisenhower built upon the structure of COSSAC, whose personnel structure drew its inspiration from AFHQ with one US and one British officer to

⁸¹ Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 62–63.

⁸² Harry C. Butcher, *My Three Years with Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1946), 472.

attention than the SCAEF could provide, that it was a “WHOLE TIME job for one man.”⁸⁵

Eisenhower’s reasoning behind taking command of land forces on September 1, 1944, was that only the Supreme Allied Commander could keep a broad view and manage two nationally aligned army groups throughout the campaign.⁸⁶ This reasoning is not logical when compared to the structure of the air and naval components of the Allied Expeditionary Force (AEF), which both have a single commander that is subordinate to the SCAEF. However, this only regards the hierarchical structure of the AEF and not the personalities behind it. Eisenhower, serving as both the Supreme Allied Commander and the land forces commander, was better positioned to manage the national and personal tensions that arose.

Tenets of Multinational Operations

Again, personalities influence multinational command structure, and Eisenhower managed these relations through effective application of the tenets of multinational operations. Though he had difficulty in developing a rapport with Montgomery, he mitigated this through personal positioning as the land component commander, which mitigated distrust between Montgomery and Bradley. Furthermore, he maintained a mission focus by properly weighting forces that supported Allied strategy, regardless of nationality.

First, much of Eisenhower’s problems with Montgomery came from their difficulty in building a rapport. When he took command of SHAEF, Eisenhower was predisposed to Alexander serving as the British Twenty-First Army Group commander and ad hoc land component commander for Overlord due to the strong rapport developed between the two in the MTO.⁸⁷ However, Brooke favored Montgomery and had the CCS appoint him instead without

⁸⁵ Brooke, *War Diaries*, 628–30; Montgomery, *Memoirs*, 240.

⁸⁶ Butcher, *Three Years*, 649.

⁸⁷ Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, December 17, 1943, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 3:1605.

Eisenhower's input.⁸⁸ Though Eisenhower did not protest the decision, Montgomery was a subordinate with whom he had not directly worked. When compared to how Eisenhower filled SHAEF with officers whom he had a history, Montgomery was an outsider.

Furthermore, as the Twenty-First Army Group commander, Montgomery rarely visited SHAEF, removing a critical personal touch point between commander and subordinate. This at times created confusion and delayed decisions at critical moments. Montgomery often sent his chief of staff, De Guingand, who had better relations with personnel at SHAEF but was not a commander and thus could not make decisions. Eisenhower would have been livid if one of the US army group commanders did not visit, but he understood the importance of unity and instead would often visit his subordinate.⁸⁹ In a letter on September 24, 1944, Eisenhower appealed to Montgomery that "I regard it as a great pity that all of us cannot keep in closer touch with each other because I find, without exception, when all of us can get together and look the various features of our problems squarely in the face, the answers usually become obvious."⁹⁰

Tension between Eisenhower and Montgomery was further exacerbated with Montgomery's continuous desire to command all Allied land forces. With the climax in December 1944, the months long struggle degraded the rapport between the two. The first evidence of tension over the issue was Eisenhower's reply to an October 10, 1944 letter that Montgomery sent to Smith, in which Montgomery suggested that he command both the British Twenty-First and US Twelfth Army Groups. Eisenhower's reply was terse. He declared that if Montgomery felt the command arrangements were "such as to endanger the success of operations, it is our duty to refer the matter to higher authority for any action they may choose to

⁸⁸ Pogue, *The Supreme Command*, 49.

⁸⁹ James M. Robb, "Higher Direction of War," Box 1, Robb, James File, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Abilene, KS.

⁹⁰ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Bernard L. Montgomery, September 24, 1944, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 4:2186.

take, however drastic.”⁹¹ Eisenhower was further concerned that Montgomery’s letter “brings up the question of nationalism as opposed to military considerations.”⁹² Eisenhower saw the issue as a degradation of unity of effort, which he saw as a cardinal sin. Though Montgomery professed on October 16 that he would not return to the topic, he did on numerous occasions after this incident, culminating in the December 1944 clash.⁹³ When taken as a whole, the command incidents between Eisenhower and Montgomery created tension between the two that lasted for months, degrading the rapport between them.

Finally, Montgomery further inflamed rapport with Eisenhower by reporting directly to Brooke throughout the campaign without notifying Eisenhower. Brooke was fond of Montgomery, thus correspondence between them was natural. However, considering that Montgomery rarely visited Eisenhower or SHAEF, Montgomery’s sharing of operational concerns with Brooke instead of Eisenhower shows a deep lack of rapport that hindered British Twenty-First Army Group operations.⁹⁴ Brooke exacerbated the tension by supporting Montgomery in almost all of his endeavors, especially concerning the issue of land component command. On November 26, Montgomery flew to Britain to visit Brooke to discuss future strategy, something he should have been doing with Eisenhower. They determined that the US, not Allied, strategy of a broad front needed to be countered and that a commander of land forces needed to be appointed, demonstrating Montgomery’s hollowness in his October 16 letter.⁹⁵ Brooke, a member of the CCS, undermined his subordinate commander, Eisenhower, by not only

⁹¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Bernard L. Montgomery, October 13, 1944, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 4:2222-23.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Montgomery, *Memoirs*, 284.

⁹⁴ Barr, *Eisenhower’s Armies*, 368.

⁹⁵ Brooke, *War Diaries*, 629.

favoring a relationship with Montgomery but also furthering his contentious views with Eisenhower.

Trust and confidence, the second tenet, is built on words and actions, and Montgomery's actions in the attempt to breakout from Normandy began the degradation of Eisenhower's confidence in his abilities.⁹⁶ The Overlord plan called for the seizure of Caen by the British Second Army on D-Day, June 6, 1944.⁹⁷ However, when that date passed without Caen's seizure, many began accusing Montgomery of being overly cautious and overpromising. Eisenhower became apprehensive with the viability of a breakout and, in his first expression of decaying confidence, messaged Montgomery on July 7 to convey his fears of a stalemate. Implying that he thought more could be done, Eisenhower expressed that "We have not yet attempted a major full-dress attack on the left flank supported by everything we could bring to bear."⁹⁸ However, to preserve trust, he further stated that he would "back you up to the limit in any effort you may decide upon to prevent a deadlock..."⁹⁹ Eisenhower provided this promised support to Montgomery for Operation Goodwood, but again, Montgomery did not maximize the effort and a costly battle for Caen ensued.¹⁰⁰ Eisenhower thus became more involved in Montgomery's

⁹⁶ US Joint Staff, *JP 3-16, Multinational Operations* 2013, I-4.

⁹⁷ The scheme of maneuver for Overlord, developed by Montgomery, called for the US First Army to breakout in the west to seize Cherbourg's port while the British Second Army in the East blocked German forces from affecting the breakout. A key objective for the British Second Army was Caen, which was planned to be seized on June 6, 1944, D-Day. Gordon A. Harrison, *Cross-Channel Attack*, United States Army in World War II: The European Theater of Operations (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1951), 180–88.

⁹⁸ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Bernard L. Montgomery, July 7, 1944, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 3:1982-83.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Operation Goodwood was an attack by the British Second Army beginning July 18, 1944, with the task to seize Caen. However, the British met stiff resistance and did not capture Caen until July 21, D+45. Martin Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, United States Army in World War II: The European Theater of Operations (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1961), 188–93.

operations, sending him a letter to “assure myself that we see eye to eye on the big problems.”¹⁰¹ In the letter, he articulates a detailed explanation of his intent in Normandy, thus demonstrating that Eisenhower did not believe Montgomery understood his intent for the breakout.

Eisenhower’s trust in Montgomery was further degraded during Operation Market Garden, Montgomery’s audacious plan to seize a crossing over the Rhine River at Arnhem and to secure the approaches to Antwerp. Eisenhower gave Montgomery the First Allied Airborne Army, a multinational force that served as the AEF reserve, with which Montgomery planned to seize the river crossing leading up to and including Arnhem. In conjunction, an armored force would attack along a single road to relieve the isolated airborne force and eventually securing Arnhem.¹⁰² The operation was a failure. Beginning September 17, 1944, the First Airborne Army parachuted into the Netherlands and began seizing crossings over the river leading to Arnhem. Though dispersed, the British First Airborne Division seized the southern span of the bridge at Arnhem, the operation’s ultimate objective. However, unexpected German forces delayed the armored force along the single highway, resulting in the eventual surrender of the British force at Arnhem and the failure to seize the Arnhem crossing.¹⁰³ Eisenhower never considered Operation Market Garden as the primary operation to breach the German defenses. Nonetheless, Montgomery’s calls for a single thrust were less convincing to Eisenhower after the operation, serving as further weight to the broad front strategy.¹⁰⁴

Though he had limited trust in Montgomery’s abilities, Eisenhower successfully managed trust and confidence amongst his subordinates by compromising competing efforts in the development of a broad front strategy. Once a lodgment on continental Europe was established,

¹⁰¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Bernard L. Montgomery, July 21, 1944, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 3:2018.

¹⁰² Atkinson, *The Guns at Last Light*, 259–60.

¹⁰³ Charles B. MacDonald, *The Siegfried Line Campaign*, United States Army in World War II: The European Theater of Operations (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1963), 198–200.

¹⁰⁴ Atkinson, *The Guns at Last Light*, 288.

the Allies began looking ahead at how to advance to Germany. This developed into a debate between a narrow or broad front. Montgomery argued for a narrow front with a “German ‘Schlieffen Plan’ of 1914 in reverse” with the British in the north to punch through the German defenses and US forces in the south as the base.¹⁰⁵ This would outflank German forces and create maneuver space for Allies. However, to make the plan feasible, Montgomery wanted the US First Army, one of Bradley’s, in order to provide enough combat power for a penetration. Bradley naturally opposed the plan, as it would, like Sicily, relegate the US armies to a supporting role. Airing his distrust of Montgomery, Bradley asserted, “We would be putting all our money on a horse that looked good in the paddock but had a tough time getting out of the starting gate and had never shown well on the fast track.”¹⁰⁶ He was concerned that Montgomery would be too cautious in the plan’s execution, as he had been in Caen.

To bridge the gulf, Eisenhower combined both strategies into a broad front strategy in which both Montgomery’s and Bradley’s army group continued its attack without being relegated to a supporting role. Montgomery would be the main effort in its thrust through the northern lowlands towards Antwerp with support from the US First Army on its right flank. Montgomery would also have logistical priority, but not so much as to prevent Bradley’s advances in the south. This would facilitate the seizure of Antwerp, a vital port for a continued campaign, while also maintaining British prestige and confidence. Bradley, though not the main effort, would maintain army group integrity while continuing its attack toward Metz.¹⁰⁷ Again, the United States would maintain its prestige by operating as an autonomous army group, thus pleasing both Eisenhower’s US superiors and subordinates. At the point of convergence between strategic superiors and operational subordinates, Eisenhower managed the distrust and lack of confidence between US

¹⁰⁵ Montgomery, *Memoirs*, 239.

¹⁰⁶ Omar N. Bradley and Clay Blair, *A General’s Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 311.

¹⁰⁷ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Bernard L. Montgomery, August 24, 1944, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 4:2090-91.

and British forces by compromising with a broad front strategy. Though this may be argued as a diffusion of strategy, Eisenhower understood the center of gravity of his army was its unity, and a compromise maintained this unity.

Eisenhower's only method to manage trust among his subordinates in executing the broad front strategy was to serve as the land component commander rather than appointing a subordinate. Serving in this role placed him in a position in which he could manage the competing interests between his subordinates. Montgomery and Bradley demonstrated that they were biased toward their position, army group, and nation, and if one of them was appointed as the land component commander, they may have developed a strategy that favored their parochial interests. While arguing for the land component command, Montgomery was also insisting that the British Twenty-First Army Group should be the main effort with the full support of Allied sustainment.¹⁰⁸ This would be a conflict of interest. Bradley also insisted on his army group's attack toward Metz and believed Montgomery did not need as much force as he requested.¹⁰⁹ Though Eisenhower had better relations with Bradley, appointing him as the land component commander would likely have upset relations with the British, especially considering Montgomery had already served as the land component commander during Overlord. Eisenhower thus believed that only the supreme commander could coordinate army groups in war, and the competing interests of his army group commanders validated this.¹¹⁰ When considered from an alliance point of view, Eisenhower had no choice but to serve as the land component commander in order to manage tensions and build trust between his US and British army group commanders.

Finally, Eisenhower demonstrated his adept management of multinational operations through his emphasis in the tenet of mission focus. Specifically, he did not consider nationality when assigning main efforts throughout the campaign. On multiple occasions, he designated the

¹⁰⁸ Montgomery, *Memoirs*, 238.

¹⁰⁹ Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951), 398–401.

¹¹⁰ Butcher, *Three Years*, 649.

British Twenty-First Army Group as the main effort and often attached US armies from Bradley's US Twelfth Army Group to support. He first demonstrated this with the initiation of the broad front strategy and Montgomery's attack toward Antwerp. In this attack, Bradley's Twelfth Army Group served in a supporting role to Montgomery by protecting the Twenty-First Army Group's right flank.¹¹¹ Eisenhower again designated the British as the main effort during the German Ardennes Offensive. Here, the German spearhead attacked the US First Army, splitting the front in two with the British Twenty-First Army Group and the US First and Ninth Armies north of the salient and the US Third Army to the south, fracturing Bradley's Twelfth Army Group.¹¹² Eisenhower saw that Bradley had difficulty maintaining lines of communication with his two armies north of the salient and thus could not manage an effective counterattack. Against Bradley's protests, Eisenhower put mission before nationality and gave operational command of the two separated US armies to Montgomery.¹¹³ The final moment where Eisenhower maintained mission focus was when he designated the British as the main effort in the attack to the Rhine River following the December 1944 German offensive, allowing Montgomery to keep the US Ninth Army to maintain combat power for the formidable Rhine River crossing.¹¹⁴ These three instances demonstrate how Eisenhower was not afraid to place operational requirements ahead of national prestige if it meant shortening the war.

Summary

As SCAEF, Eisenhower was decisive in his management of multinational operations throughout the ETO. Concerning multinational command structure, SHAEF maintained an

¹¹¹ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Commanders, August 29, 1944, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 4:2100-01.

¹¹² Barr, *Eisenhower's Armies*, 424-25.

¹¹³ Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, 355; Dwight D. Eisenhower to Army Group Commanders, December 20, 1944, in *Eisenhower Papers*, 4:2363-65.

¹¹⁴ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Army Group Commanders, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 4:2439-40.

integrated structure by building upon the existing structure of COSSAC and from lessons learned from AFHQ. Eisenhower also balanced national strategic desires by personally serving as the land component commander on top of his duties as the SCAEF. In regard to the tenets of multinational operations, Eisenhower demonstrated a deep understanding of each in how he created a command structure and led his forces. Though he had difficulty building a rapport with Montgomery, he addressed it by adjusting his leadership strategy. His serving as the land component commander was one way for him to manage distrust by preventing Montgomery's dominance in land operations while also minimizing tensions between Montgomery and Bradley. Furthermore, as he did as CINCAF, Eisenhower maintained a mission focus, which was best demonstrated by his willingness to shift support to the operationally sensible forces, no matter nationality.

Conclusion

Eisenhower noted after the breakout from Normandy that “as signs of victory appear in the air, I note little instances that seem to indicate that the Allies cannot hang together so effectively in prosperity as they can in adversity.”¹¹⁵ From the difficulties at Kasserine Pass to the success in the breakout from Normandy, Eisenhower understood the difficulties that lied ahead for the Allies. The statement was also prophetic. As 1944 turned into 1945, the Allied armies experienced moments of the utmost unity but also its fair share of crises. What Eisenhower did not mention was his role in balancing the tensions and crises in the preservation of unity, the critical principle of Allied victory. From his less than perfect performance in the deserts of Northwest Africa to his decisiveness through the fields and forests of Northwest Europe, Eisenhower improved in his abilities to lead multinational ground operations.

First, regarding an aspect that Eisenhower had no need to improve, he created and maintained integrated command structures that supported unity of effort. Both AFHQ and

¹¹⁵ Dwight D. Eisenhower to George C. Marshall, August 31, 1944, in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 4:2108.

SHAEF maintained a one-for-one British to US staff structure that ensured cooperation between multicultural forces. In 1942, this integration was an experiment, as Eisenhower knew of no other armies that had attempted it.¹¹⁶ It forced cooperation and naturally compelled the staff to effectively use the tenets of multinational operations. It worked so well that it became the template for SHAEF in 1944. Though the tenets of multinational operations are implied for commanders, they also apply to all members of a multinational army, especially the staff. Eisenhower's integrated headquarters maximized the effects of these tenets.

Second, Eisenhower learned to manage the tension between national and multinational command structures by serving as both the supreme commander and the land component commander. Though he had a much smaller army in Tunisia, Eisenhower had difficulty managing ground operations and multinational tensions. The balancing of national command desires for autonomous forces while also fighting an effective Axis defense proved too much for him, as the debacle of Kasserine Pass revealed. Once the CCS imposed Alexander as Eisenhower's land component commander, the lesson appeared to be that an orderly multinational command structure was needed if looked through a purely operational lens. However, looking through a strategic and political lens, Eisenhower learned the more important lesson that the problem in Tunisia was not tactics. Instead, the problem was a poor application of unity of effort, and with competing national interests, the multinational armies needed a broker to serve as a conduit. As SCAEF, Eisenhower understood the natural tensions that would and did arise between British and US forces. He understood that he must serve as the nexus between Marshall and Brooke who argued for their national forces, and Montgomery and Bradley whose military advice favored their respective armies.¹¹⁷ Eisenhower was the only person at this point in the war who could see the theater as a whole, had the respect of both nations, and could bridge the gulf in strategy.

¹¹⁶ Commander-in-Chief's Dispatch, North African Campaign, Smith, Walter Bedell File, 2.

¹¹⁷ Stephen E. Ambrose, "Eisenhower as Commander: Single Thrust Versus Broad Front," in Chandler, *Eisenhower Papers*, 5:46.

Further demonstrating the need for his serving as the land component commander was Eisenhower's mixed growth in building rapport with his British ground commanders in the war. Alexander's arrival as the Eighteenth Army Group commander in Tunisia replaced the poor rapport Eisenhower had with Anderson with the excellent rapport he developed with Alexander. Yet, with Montgomery in the ETO, Eisenhower's ability to build rapport met a marked regression. Since Eisenhower could not build a rapport with Montgomery, he chose to manage it by placing himself as the land component commander. This is best exemplified with Eisenhower's decisiveness in opposition to Montgomery's request for command of ground forces in December 1944. Though this does not demonstrate growth in his ability to build rapport, it demonstrates his increased understanding of the personal dynamic of rapport and his finding of an effective solution.

His serving as the land component commander also demonstrated his growth in managing trust and confidence with and amongst his subordinate commanders. Distrust between US and British forces in Tunisia often resulted in crises for the Allied forces. Fredendall's Anglophobia contributed to the defeat at Kasserine Pass, and Alexander's lack of confidence in US fighting ability resulted in his wanting to relegate US forces as a reserve. However, in the ETO, Eisenhower better understood the personalities of his subordinates, primarily Montgomery and Bradley, and inserted himself between the two to manage the distrust. He most effectively did this in his enforcing a broad front strategy, a compromise between Montgomery's and Bradley's plans. Though both believed the strategy folly, it gave both commanders enough importance to placate national yearnings.

Finally, in another aspect that did not improve because there was no need, Eisenhower demonstrated mission focus throughout the war in his enforcement of Allied unity. His emphasis on unity of effort is the most common thread throughout his service in the Second World War. He used an iron fist when dealing with any subordinate who damaged allied relations. Furthermore, he saw his army as a true Allied army. He weighed the political risk of relegating a national force

to another, often coming to what he believed to be the most sensible operational decision. In the ETO, he was not afraid of backlash from attaching US armies to Montgomery's army group if it made operational sense.

When seen as a whole, Eisenhower's most notable success was his skillful application of the tenets of multinational operations in the creation and use of the multinational command structure. When designing an allied force, it is natural to favor an integrated command structure. However, more important are the personalities that are within it. Eisenhower understood this. He understood that his rapport with Alexander would not create tensions amongst the Allies, thus he could delegate ground operations to him without worry. Eisenhower also learned during Overlord that building trust and rapport with Montgomery would be difficult. Accordingly, he saw no alternative to his serving as the land component commander, even with the increased responsibilities, if it meant maintaining a mission focus for the Allies. In essence, Eisenhower was an adaptive leader who understood not just the operational but also the strategic and political implications in leading a multinational force.

Since World War II, all US conflicts have been fought as part of an alliance or coalition. Korea, Vietnam, the Gulf War, and the War on Terror have all shown that multinational operations have become a part of the character of modern war. Eisenhower's management of allied forces as CINCAF and SCAEF provides insights in the formation and leading of multinational forces as the US Army shifts to a focus on LSCO.

In researching this topic, areas for further study often emerged that deserve a dedicated analysis. First and foremost is a deeper analysis of Eisenhower's choice to serve as the land component commander in the ETO. Though it was effective as seen through the lens of managing multinational operations, the numerous operational inconsistencies question its efficacy. In Tunisia, the CCS forced Alexander upon Eisenhower as the land component commander due to failures in the ground campaign, and this appears effective in both Sicily and Italy. Yet, Eisenhower discards a land component commander in the planning for Overlord, before his loss

of confidence in Montgomery during Overlords execution. It also increased Eisenhower's span of control, forcing him to manage both strategic and operational problems, something he was ineffective at in Tunisia. Yet, he never took personal command of the air or naval domains, so why only the land? A second topic is Eisenhower's management of civilian-military relations in World War II. When considering such relations, most theorists discuss it in the context of a single national command structure. However, Eisenhower was in a unique position as the operational artist that translated strategic guidance from multiple nations into an operational approach for multinational armies.

In a letter to Louis Mountbatten upon his appointment as Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia, Eisenhower provided his most insightful thoughts on allied command:

It will...never be possible to say the problem of establishing unity in any allied command is ever completely solved. This problem involves the human equation and must be met day by day. Patience, tolerance, frankness, absolute honesty in all dealings, particularly with all persons of the opposite nationality, and firmness, are absolutely essential.¹¹⁸

At the core of Eisenhower's principle of unity of effort were personalities. Eisenhower understood that they provide the foundation for such relationships, and that these relationships require constant maintenance as they can easily wither away, returning to a climate where soldiers look to their flag rather than a common cause. From North Africa to Germany, Eisenhower applied his impeccable character to unite two disparate cultures into a single allied army joined in common cause, a true multinational force.

¹¹⁸ Dwight D. Eisenhower to Louis Mountbatten, September 14, 1943, in *Eisenhower Papers*, 3:1420.

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