



## The Officer at Work: Command

14. *Command is the authority which an individual in the military service lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment.*

15. *Command and leadership are inseparable. The qualities of leadership are indispensable to a commander. Whether the command be large or small and whether the exercise of the functions of command be complex or simple, the commander must be the controlling head, his must be the master mind, and from him must flow the energy and the impulse which are to animate all under him.*

16. *In the practice of his task, the commander must keep in close touch with all subordinate units by means of personal visits and observation; it is essential that he know from personal contact the mental, moral, and physical state of his troops, the conditions with which they are confronted, their accomplishments, their desires, their needs, and their views, and that he promptly extend recognition for services well done, extend help where help is needed and give encouragement in adversity, but never hesitate to exact whatever effort is necessary to attain the desired end. Considerate and devoted to those whom he commands, he should be faithful and loyal to those who command him.*

—War Department  
*Field Service Regulations, United States Army, 1923*

Command is the acme of military leadership, the goal toward which officers most often aspire, and the route to the highest positions of trust in the profession of arms. Command is “the authority that a commander in the armed forces lawfully exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank or assignment.”<sup>1</sup> Commanders at every echelon have a unique responsibility to *make sense* of the situation in which they find their forces and take all necessary actions to achieve their superiors’ assigned or implicit ends. Commanders are uniquely empowered to enforce their orders and those issued under their authority. They retain comprehensive responsibility for the conduct, efficiency, effectiveness, and health and welfare of all the forces entrusted to them. Though seldom mentioned explicitly today, commanders are still expected, as the 1923 Army Field Service Regulation required, “never [to] hesitate to exact whatever effort is necessary to attain the desired end.”<sup>2</sup> The French historian Marc Bloch, who was a World War I infantry officer, World War II staff officer, and Resistance martyr, wrote about the determination, even ruthlessness, required in adversity, in his stinging critique of French defeatism in 1940:

*What, probably, more than anything else marks the true leader is the power to clench his teeth and hang on, the ability to impart to others a confidence that he feels himself. . . . Above all, he must be willing to accept for the men under him, no less than for himself, sacrifices which may be productive of good, rather than a shameful yielding which must remain forever useless.*<sup>3</sup>

Command is held only by virtue of appointment or, temporarily, by succession in cases of unexpected vacating of office by an incumbent, either by relief or incapacitation. There is some ambiguity in the Armed Forces over the issue of who may command. The third definition of Section 801 of Title 10, U.S. Code, the opening section of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), says that “the term ‘commanding officer’ includes only commissioned officers,” while the *Marine Corps Manual*, under “Eligibility to Command,” states that “any commissioned, warrant, or noncommissioned officer of the Marine Corps is eligible to command activities of the Marine Corps subject to limitations imposed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps or

higher authority.”<sup>4</sup> Army Regulation (AR) 600-20, *Army Command Policy*, following Section 801, states:

*A commander is . . . a commissioned or WO [warrant officer] who, by virtue of grade and assignment, exercises primary command authority over a military organization or prescribed territorial area that under pertinent official directives is recognized as a ‘command.’... A civilian, other than the President as Commander-in-Chief (or National Command Authority), may not exercise command.*<sup>5</sup>

The Secretary of Defense, placed in the chain of command by the 1986 Department of Defense Reorganization Act, is included within the term National Command Authority.

The exercise of command involves visualizing a future state, normally within the intentions of a superior commander, planning and directing the activities of the subordinate organization to achieve that state, following through to ensure and harmonize performance, rewarding good performance, and correcting or sanctioning bad. The *Marine Corps Manual* lists the following as the inherent attributes of command:

1. precedence over all persons commanded
2. power to enforce the official will of the commander through the issuance of necessary directives
3. authority to make inspections to ensure compliance with such directives
4. authority to initiate or apply authorized disciplinary measures.<sup>6</sup>

Command, like other forms of leadership, involves human as well as legal relationships, and therefore relies on character as much as formal authority for its effectiveness. In 2011, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Gary Roughead wrote to prospective Navy commanding officers that “a Commanding Officer must possess professional competence, intelligent good sense, the ‘nicest sense of personal honor’ and meet our highest standards of personal conduct and leadership.”<sup>7</sup> Earlier, Roughead reminded command selectees that:

*As a Commanding Officer, you must build trust with those Officers and Sailors under your command. You build trust through your character and in your actions which demonstrate professional competence, judgment, good sense, and respect for those you lead. This trust can only be built through personal interaction on a daily basis at every level in your chain-of-command. Human interaction remains the dominant factor in leading Sailors.<sup>8</sup>*

In the Armed Forces, command is exercised within a chain of command, a web of appointed commanders with the President at the top and the lowest privates, seamen, or airmen at the bottom, and with parallel and overlapping responsibilities necessary to ensure effectiveness within a large and decentralized organization. This chapter addresses specifically the purpose of the chain of command; notions of individual authority, responsibility, and accountability shared by the Armed Forces; and the character attributes expected of Armed Forces officers in command.

## Chain of Command

Large forces are articulated by chains of command for purposes of flexibility and to accommodate limits on span of control. The forces of the overall commander are divided among subordinate commanders in accordance with the superior's vision of operations. Each subordinate commander is given a grant of authority, and assigned his or her own responsibilities within the scope of the superior's, yet the superior retains full responsibility over all functions of the whole force.

In any large force, tension exists between the senior commander's comprehensive responsibility and the need to decentralize action. Local commanders must have the ability to exercise initiative to adapt their actions to local conditions and immediate contingencies, within the superior commander's intentions and without disrupting the coherence of the entire force of which subordinate units are only a part. Senior commanders establish standards for their subordinates and inspect periodically to ensure their maintenance. The goal, according to Admiral Ernest King, is that "each does his own work in his own sphere of action or field of activity."<sup>9</sup>

The proper balance between decentralized execution and comprehensive action under centralized responsibility is a perennial concern. In 1941, Admiral King was worried that over-centralization, manifested in detailed instructions, would sap the exercise of initiative by local commanders when the U.S. Navy entered the war. He sent out two memorandums, in January and April 1941, to address the issue. In the first, he emphasized the importance of senior commanders freeing subordinates from restrictive orders. In the second, King addressed the obligation of subordinates to exercise their initiative within the framework of the higher commander's intentions and as "a correlated part of a connected whole."<sup>10</sup>

King did not settle the issue for all time. Following the war in Vietnam, prompted by civilian defense critics, the Marine Corps and the Army spent a good deal of time debating the necessity for what became known as *mission orders*, instructions issued with expectation of the exercise of individual initiative and adaptation in execution. Both services adopted the principle of intelligent obedience as the standard method of command. The Army emphasized use of initiative within the commander's expressed purpose or "intent."<sup>11</sup> The Marine Corps combined the expectation of "leaders with a penchant for boldness and initiative down to the lowest levels" with what it called "Mission Tactics."<sup>12</sup> Notably, while both services attempted to get away from what was perceived to be a "zero defects" mentality to allow for a degree of risk-taking, the Marine Corps, like King before, warned that initiative was not to be understood as license. "It does not mean that commanders do not counsel subordinates on mistakes; constructive criticism is an important element of learning. Nor does it give subordinates free license to act stupidly or recklessly."<sup>13</sup>

In August 2003, the Army published what remains its most thorough doctrinal investigation into the concept of command, Field Manual (FM) 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces*. The primary focus of the manual was to deconstruct the then-overarching concept of command and control into the individual practice of command (*Command*), characterized as an art, from the technical and organizational systems, characterized as a science, created to carry it out (*Control*).<sup>14</sup> Within this construct, the manual recognized two archetypes of command: directive command and mission command. FM 6-0 adopted explicitly a preference for *mission*

*command*, which it defined concisely as “the conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based upon mission orders for effective mission accomplishment.”<sup>15</sup>

More recently, based on his conclusions drawn from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, General Martin Dempsey, first as commander of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (2008), then as Chief of Staff of the Army (2011), and later as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (2011-2015), adopted mission command as a personal signature issue. The month Dempsey left the office of Army Chief of Staff to become Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Army published the successor volume to the 2003 FM 6-0 titled simply, *Mission Command* (September 13, 2011), signed by Dempsey’s successor, General Raymond T. Odierno. This manual restructured the 2003 concept by expanding the notion of Mission Command, *as a philosophy*, to comprehend the entire function formerly called Command and Control and divided it into an art or philosophy of command, and what it called “the mission command warfighting function.”<sup>16</sup> Mission Command was now defined (as an Army term) as the “exercise of authority and direction by the commander using mission orders to enable disciplined initiative within the commander’s intent to empower agile and adaptive leaders in the conduct of full spectrum operations.”<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, joint doctrine writers adopted the Mission Command terminology as well. In August 2011, before the retirement of Admiral Mike Mullen as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Joint Staff published Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations*, which defines Mission Command as “the conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based upon mission-type orders.” The joint manual goes on to say that “successful mission command demands that subordinate leaders at all echelons exercise disciplined initiative and act aggressively and independently to accomplish the mission.”<sup>18</sup> General Dempsey, who succeeded Mullen in September, subsequently issued a White Paper on Mission Command that supplemented and extended the August 2011 JP 3-0 discussion.<sup>19</sup> All of this history seems to suggest that achieving the proper vertical balance between centralized responsibility and decentralized execution can be expected to remain a matter of continuous adjustment, but that certain principles involving the balance between authority and responsibility remain lasting.

## Authority—Responsibility—Accountability

The concepts of authority, responsibility, and accountability are associated inextricably with one another within the idea of command. It is all but impossible to speak of one without reference to the other two. Since the ancient Greeks, the idea of *responsibility* has meant that an individual or collectivity is expected to perform some duty in a satisfactory manner based upon commonly accepted standards.<sup>20</sup> The most common evidence that such an expectation exists is the anticipation of some sanction (accountability) in the event of failure or omission. A necessary prior condition is that the individual said to be responsible has the power and ability to do what is expected on the basis of some recognized authority. Absent authority and accountability, it is difficult to see how responsibility can be said to attach.

**Authority.** Today, one premise on which all the Services agree is the notion that in order to be effective in accomplishing assigned responsibilities, there must be a corresponding grant of authority and necessary freedom of action. The separate Services all agree in principle on the comprehensiveness and irreducibility of a commander's responsibility. A commander's authority is derived in the first instance from grants of power in law, Department of Defense Directives, and Service Regulations. The Uniform Code of Military Justice underwrites the chain of command and assigns important procedural roles to senior commanders. The legal and regulatory authorities vested in commanders generally are further enhanced by specific powers granted under the authority of immediate commanders.

**Responsibility.** The Air Force leadership manual follows joint doctrine when it says: "Command includes the authority and responsibility for effectively using available resources and for planning the employment of, organizing, directing, coordinating, and controlling military forces for the accomplishment of assigned missions. It also includes responsibility for health, welfare, morale, and discipline of assigned personnel."<sup>21</sup> The Army Command Regulation charges its commanders with promoting a positive environment, developing in Soldiers a sense of duty, defined as "obedient and disciplined performance"; integrity; and respect for their authority. The last they are to do by developing "the full range of human potential in their organization,"

informing troops of the need for military discipline, and “properly training their Soldiers and ensuring that both Soldiers and equipment are in the proper state of readiness at all times.”<sup>22</sup>

Because of the unique character of the responsibility of command at sea, it is the Navy that has traditionally emphasized the greatest authority in command. This authority responds to the conditions under which command at sea occurs and the unitary responsibility of the ship’s captain for both the security of the vessel and the welfare of its Sailors. Because warships operate in a hostile environment, and very often independently, distant from close oversight, ship captains have traditionally enjoyed significant authority and independence of action while underway.<sup>23</sup> The English author Joseph Conrad wrote of the ship captain’s unique responsibility for the welfare of his ship, describing the observations of an officer of the watch on a merchant ship whose captain comes on deck during a violent storm:

*Jukes was uncritically glad to have his captain at hand. It relieved him as though that man had, by simply coming on deck, taken most of the gale’s weight upon his shoulders. Such is the prestige, the privilege, and the burden of command.*

*Captain MacWhirr could expect no relief of that sort from anyone on earth. Such is the loneliness of command.*<sup>24</sup>

Former Coast Guard Commandant Thad Allen notes another aspect of the loneliness of command (or any senior leadership position):

*you’ve got to learn how to manage your own morale. When you’re in a situation like many commanding officers are in or people that are running large complex responses, there are not a whole lot of people around that can buoy your spirits, give you positive feedback. There are going to be a lot of times where you’re going to get negative feedback for a long, long time before you get any positive feedback. You have to be able to ascertain what you need to do, lay out a course of action, identify the effects to be achieved, and then go after that; and you have to do that with a fairly stable emotional base to work from. That’s not easy to do because you can get very angry and frustrated.*<sup>25</sup>



The U.S. Navy's submarine service offers an iconic example of the captain's responsibility for his ship in the final actions of Commander Howard W. Gilmore, the skipper of the submarine U.S.S. *Growler* in February 1943. Mortally wounded though still conscious, lying outside on the deck of his boat during a surface fight with a Japanese gunboat, Gilmore gave a final decisive order: "*Take her down,*" he stated, ending his own life but saving his boat and its crew.<sup>26</sup> Gilmore's gallantry and intrepidity were recognized by posthumous award of the Congressional Medal of Honor and a memorial plaque and room at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis.

In the early 1970s, as the Vietnam War ran down and serious acts of indiscipline were reported in U.S. military forces, Admiral Arleigh Burke addressed an audience at the Naval War College on "The Art of Command." Known as "31-knot Burke," the admiral was a famous destroyer commander during World War II. He participated in the United Nations delegation to the initial peace talks in Korea (led by U.S. Vice Admiral C. Turner Joy) and, while only a rear admiral, was selected to be Chief of Naval Operations by President Dwight Eisenhower. "Every man in the military service spends his whole time in the service seeking to improve his role in the command system," Burke told his audience, "both by being ready to carry out in an effective manner all orders he may receive and by being capable and willing to give orders to his unit to further the operation his outfit is undertaking."<sup>27</sup>

Burke went on to argue for the importance of matching responsibility with authority and expressed concern that local authority was being undermined by over-supervision from on high. At the same time, he recognized the need for higher-level commanders to maintain control by establishing and demanding adherence to strict standards. "The most important responsibility of every commander," he said, was "the responsibility to insure that the standards he sets for his unit are high enough to enable his unit to be successful and, as a corollary, to reward those subordinates who do extraordinarily well and to punish those who fail." He was critical of a force he thought too willing to reward people and too hesitant "to punish those who fail to measure up to high standards."<sup>28</sup>

Commanders are responsible for speaking truth to authority. In fact, senior commanders depend upon frankness from those responsible to them for execution of their orders. In his memoir, General Matthew Ridgway addressed the responsibility of a commander to identify and oppose bad ideas that will lead to unnecessary, or at least improvident, losses to his Soldiers. Discussing a scheme to drop his 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division on Rome in an attempt at a *coup de main*, Ridgway relates that he went all the way to the Allied Theater Commander, then General Sir Harold Alexander, to express his concerns. With help from Alexander's Chief of Staff, Walter Bedell Smith, he was able to convince Alexander to send a two-man reconnaissance team to meet with the Italian government, which was supposed to be prepared to assist in the landing. Maxwell Taylor, Ridgway's artillery commander, led the party. He retired in 1959 but was recalled by President Kennedy to serve as Military Advisor to the President, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and subsequently as ambassador to South Vietnam.

Taylor reported back by radio that conditions were not propitious, and the mission was canceled with Soldiers and planes on the runway. Ridgway wrote:

*It seems to me, too, that the hard decisions are not the ones you make in the heat of battle. Far harder to make are those involved in speaking your mind about some hare-brained scheme which proposes to commit troops to action under conditions where failure is almost certain, and the only results will be the needless sacrifice of priceless lives. When all is said and done, the most precious asset any nation has is its youth, and for a battle commander ever to condone the needless sacrifice of his men is absolutely inexcusable. In any action you must balance the inevitable cost in lives against the objectives you seek to attain. Unless, beyond any reasonable doubt, the results reasonably to be expected can justify the estimated loss of life the action involves, then for my part I want none of it.<sup>29</sup>*

Easily lost sight of is that, in addition to aggressively opposing the mission, Ridgway first offered a useful alternative (sending Taylor to Rome) to mitigate the risk. Then, having apparently failed to convince

his superiors of the futility of the effort, Ridgway was prepared to lead his troops in the attempt and give his best efforts to make it succeed. Coincidentally, in a 1920 letter to a retired friend at the Virginia Military Institute, George C. Marshall had written that an officer should “make a point of extreme loyalty, in thought and deed, to your chiefs personally; and in your efforts to carry out their plans or policies, the less you approve the more energy you must direct to their accomplishment.”<sup>30</sup>

As key members of the profession of arms, commanders are responsible for the professional development of their subordinates, particularly subordinate officers, for success in positions in leadership. This calls for observing subordinates’ state of individual training, correcting them when they make mistakes, and seeing that they are retrained to the necessary standards when that is required. Ultimately the commander is called upon to distinguish the successful from the unsuccessful so the institution can reward those most capable and remove those less so.

As the senior representative of the profession in any unit, the commander has a special responsibility both to model the behaviors valued by the profession and to encourage subordinates in their emulation. The commander must set the example, and create an ethical space within which collective reflection on the military calling is frequent, accepted, and instructive. Normally this requires the human touch, an ability to engage informally with subordinates, and to coach and mentor without creating a sense of unease with those whose professional futures are very much in the commander’s hands. The truly gifted commanders can have a life-long influence on the profession by this action alone.

***Accountability.*** Like responsibility, accountability is not limited to commanders, but extends to all leaders in authority, indeed all members of the Armed Forces. Accountability involves accepting the consequences for the outcomes of action or inaction in circumstances for which one bears responsibility—whether it results from individual action, inaction, or inattention. Accountability may result in judicial or administrative sanction. The professional grant of discretionary authority enjoyed by Armed Forces officers, and especially commissioned officers, does not extend to violation of law, even for very senior commanders otherwise granted wide latitude. Officers can be relieved

of their offices for misconduct, and retired at a lower grade, even when no judicial action is called for.

In all the Services, the priority necessarily given judicial action delays and obscures the importance of the administrative sanction in assignment of accountability. In 1995, General Ronald Fogleman, the Air Force Chief of Staff, distributed a video tape to the Air Force titled "Air Force Standards and Accountability." In it, he explained administrative action he had directed against Air Force personnel deemed responsible for a 1994 incident in which Air Force aircraft shot down two Army Black Hawk helicopters in Northern Iraq. The incident gained immediate notoriety, as incidents of fratricide can do, and it took some time for the normal processes to arrive at the legal determination of what action was called for under the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

In the video, the Chief of Staff said that the Secretary of the Air Force had directed him to review all actions taken subsequent to judicial inquiry, including "adequacy of evaluations, decorations, subsequent assignments, promotions and retirements." One major concern was "that Air Force standards be clearly understood [as well as] the necessity that individuals be held accountable for meeting those standards," even where punitive legal action was not called for. Observing that the judicial process in the Black Hawk case had produced no criminal prosecutions or convictions, the Chief declared that "Air Force standards require far more than mere compliance with the law. They require that people display the extraordinary discipline, judgment and training that their duties require and the American people expect."<sup>31</sup>

General Fogleman's review had disclosed a number of inconsistent post-incident administrative actions, particularly with regard to performance evaluations that did not reflect the seriousness of the incident in which 26 friendly Soldiers, Airmen, and civilians lost their lives. As a result, the Chief of Staff issued supplemental performance evaluations and removed the responsible officers from flight status for a minimum of 3 years. The Chief admonished all Air Force rating officers, stating that

*It is important for commanders and raters to remember that your ratings, comments and actions do not represent arbitrary action against the individual, but reflect an appropriate response*

*to their misconduct or failure to meet standards. And recognize that your loyalty and commitment must be to the larger organization—to the Air Force as an institution. Air Force standards must be uniformly known, consistently applied and non-selectively enforced. Accountability is critically important to good order and discipline of the force. And, failure to ensure accountability will destroy the trust of the American public.*<sup>32</sup>

In the naval Services, the unique responsibility of command at sea is coupled with what to other services often seems a kind of draconian accountability. In the words of Commander Roger D. Scott:

*The doctrine of command accountability is most strictly applied to command at sea in recognition of the fact that naval vessels frequently operate independently, far from sources of assistance, in an environment made hostile by the elements or by enemies. Life at sea is surrounded by dangerous forces on the ship and around it. Mistakes and omissions can mean death of all hands on board.*<sup>33</sup>

Naval officers can be, and often are, relieved of command for no more stated reason than “loss of confidence in an officer in command.”<sup>34</sup> Even though other services adopt similar formulations, the Navy often seems more rigorous in its application. Subsequently, Scott wrote: “The traditional scope of duties and accountability that attach to command at sea [have] no parallel in the military or civilian spheres.”<sup>35</sup>

The doctrine of command accountability in the Navy is enshrined in paragraph 0802 of Navy Regulations. “The responsibility of the commanding officer for his or her command is absolute. . . .”<sup>36</sup> In 1991, Captain Larry Seaquist, USN, a prior captain of the battleship *Iowa*, wrote to the *Navy Times* on the occasion of the publicity and discussion of the gun explosion on the *Iowa*, which killed all those manning a main gun turret:

*Accountability is a severe standard: The commander is held responsible for everything that occurs under his command. Traditionally, the only escape clause was “an act of God,” an incident that no prudent commander could reasonably have*

*foreseen. And “reasonably” was tied to the requirement to be “forehanded”—a Sailor’s term dictating that even unlikely contingencies must be thought through and prepared for. The penalties of accountable failure can be drastic: command and career cut short, sometimes by court-martial.*<sup>37</sup>

Sequist’s article echoed a 1952 *Wall Street Journal* editorial addressing an inquiry into the sinking of the destroyer-minesweeper USS *Hobson* by the carrier USS *Essex* in a collision at sea in which 176 Sailors were lost:

*It is cruel this accountability of good and well-intentioned men. But the choice is that or an end to responsibility and finally, as the cruel sea has taught, an end to the confidence and trust in the men who lead, for men will not long trust leaders who feel themselves beyond accountability for what they do . . . when men lose confidence and trust in those who lead, order disintegrates into chaos and purposeful ships into floating derelicts.*<sup>38</sup>

In keeping with the democratic foundation of the United States, the UCMJ makes the actions of any commander subject to superior review in cases where subordinates feel they have been wronged. Any military subordinate may file a formal request for redress under Article 138 (Section 938 of Title 10). Such a request must be forwarded for resolution to the officer exercising general court-martial jurisdiction over the commander in question. He or she must report to the Service secretary the action taken to resolve the issue. Additionally, officers, including senior commanders possessing wide latitude of discretion otherwise, are held to strict standards for financial propriety, as in use of government transportation and submission of claims for reimbursement for official travel, and for observance of the financial strictures that Congress imposes as part of their Constitutional role of executive oversight. More than one commander, with an otherwise extraordinary record, has stumbled on such limits, when an aggressive “can do attitude,” and a bit of hubris and impatience with fiscal regulation, run into legal restrictions that seem unduly confining in view of the good anticipated from the deviation taken.

Commanders possess authority to charge subordinates with criminal offenses under the UCMJ, convene military courts-martial, and review findings and sentences as elements of their command authority. Recently, however, the extent of senior commanders' review authority, under Article 60 of the Uniform Code, has been reduced significantly in light of perceived command failures in enforcing sexual misconduct policies.<sup>39</sup> Two Air Force general officer commanders, one female and one male, were denied promotion and continued service by Congress for failing to uphold courts-martial decisions in cases of sexual assault.<sup>40</sup> Both officers acted within their existing authorities. They were sanctioned for what members of the Senate believed was bad faith or bad judgment, and consequently the professional leadership of the Armed Forces lost a measure of its authority over administration of the system of military justice through congressionally driven changes in the UCMJ. These actions are indicative of the inherent subjugation of commanders to individual accountability for the execution of their offices. These incidents also demonstrate the divided authority between the President's authority of appointment and Congress's ability to enforce standards under its Constitutional authority to raise and support armies and "to make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval forces," and the Senate's authority to confirm general officer appointments.

## Character

Command of ground forces is, for the most part, less independent than command at sea, precisely because senior officers can visit subordinates and observe the state of the command with some regularity. At least theoretically, the command of ground forces is as encompassing as that at sea: the commander is responsible for everything the command (or its members) does or fails to do. The character of ground combat commanders too is a subject of frequent comment.

In the earliest versions of *The Armed Forces Officer*, one of S.L.A. Marshall's strongest chapters addressed *Esprit*. Marshall believed that the commander's authority stemmed largely from the soldiers' perception of his character. He further argued that

*the custodianship of esprit must ever be in the hands of the officer corps. When the heart of the organization is sound, officership is able to see its own reflection in the eyes of the enlisted man . . . insofar as his ability to [mold] the character of troops is concerned, the qualifying test of the leader is the judgment placed upon his military abilities by those who serve under him. If they do not deem him fit to command, he cannot train them to obey.*<sup>41</sup>

The source of their approval was not to be won simply by courageous acts. Troops, Marshall wrote, “can be kept in line under conditions of increasing stress and mounting hardship, only when loyalty is based upon a respect . . . won by consistently thoughtful regard for the welfare and rights of his men, and a correct measuring of his responsibility to them.”<sup>42</sup>

World War II provided numerous examples of company commanders who, through strength of character, established emotional ties with their men. One was Captain Henry T. Waskow of Belton, Texas, immortalized by Ernie Pyle in a wartime column and portrayed by Robert Mitchum in the postwar movie, *G.I. Joe*. Waskow, killed by a mortar round in Italy, “had led his company since long before it left the States,” wrote Pyle. “He was very young, only in his middle twenties, but he carried in him a sincerity and a gentleness that made people want to be guided by him.”<sup>43</sup>

Eugene B. Sledge’s memory of his company commander was quoted in chapter 5. Sledge reflected further on the impact of Captain Haldane’s death:

*Our company commander represented stability and direction in a world of violence, death, and destruction. . . . We felt forlorn and lost . . . he commanded our individual destinies under the most trying conditions with the utmost compassion . . . the loss of our company commander at Peleliu was like losing a parent we depended upon for security—not our physical security, because we knew that was a commodity beyond our reach in combat, but our mental security.*<sup>44</sup>



Leadership by more senior commanders is less intimate. Higher-level commanders lack the personal relationship to troops that regimental officers and division chiefs enjoy. But senior commanders also derive authority from the character they exhibit.

General Matthew Ridgway gave his views on the importance of a commander's character in a speech to the Army Command and General Staff College in May 1966. He told a story about the fight on the north shoulder of the Battle of the Bulge during the German Ardennes offensive:

*Another corps commander just entering the fight next to me remarked: "I'm glad to have you on my flank. It's character that counts." I had long known him, and I knew what he meant. I replied: "That goes for me, too." There was no amplification. None was necessary. Each knew the other would stick however great the pressure; would extend help before it was asked, if he could; and would tell the truth, seek no self-glory, and everlastingly keep his word. Such feeling breeds confidence and success.<sup>45</sup>*

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Joint Publication 1-02, *The Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, November 8, 2010, as Amended Through 15 January 2015), 40, available at <[www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new\\_pubs/jp1\\_02.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/new_pubs/jp1_02.pdf)>.

<sup>2</sup> Extracted from Chapter II: Command and Staff of War Department, Field Service Regulations United States Army 1923 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1924), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Marc Bloch, *Strange Defeat: A Statement of Evidence Written in 1940* (New York: Norton, 1968), 111.

<sup>4</sup> *Marine Corps Manual* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Navy, 1980), section A, Organization, Functions and Command, paragraph 1006, subparagraph 3, 1-13.

<sup>5</sup> Army Regulation 600-20, *Army Command Policy* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, November 6, 2014), paragraph 1-5, 1. Section 162 of Title 10 specifies the chain of command runs from the President, through the Secretary of Defense, to combatant commanders.

<sup>6</sup> *Marine Corps Manual*, 1-13.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of the Navy, Chief of Naval Operations, "Memorandum for All Prospective Commanding Officers, Subject: The Charge of Command," June 9, 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Admiral Ernest King, Memorandum: From Commander-in-Chief, United States Atlantic Fleet, Subject: “Exercise of Command—Correct Use of Initiative,” April 22, 1941, reprinted in “Set and Drift,” *The Naval War College Review* 28, no. 3 (Winter 1976), 95, available at <[www.usnwc.edu/Publications/Naval-War-College-Review/ArchivedIssues/1970s/1976-Winter.aspx](http://www.usnwc.edu/Publications/Naval-War-College-Review/ArchivedIssues/1970s/1976-Winter.aspx)>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 96. The January memorandum is on pages 93-94 under the section titled “Set and Drift.”

<sup>11</sup> Field Manual (FM) 100-5, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, May 1986), 3-4, 15.

<sup>12</sup> Marine Corps Doctrinal Publication (MCDP 1) [Formerly Fleet Marine Force Manual 1], *Warfighting* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Navy, 1997), 57-58, 87-91.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>14</sup> FM 6-0, *Mission Command: Command and Control of Army Forces* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, August 11, 2003), 1-1-1-4.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 1-17. The preface to the manual states that “FM 6-0 establishes mission command as the C2 concept for the Army,” viii.

<sup>16</sup> All taken from the “Introduction” to FM 6-0, *Mission Command* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Army, September 13, 2011), in the form of a Kindle book. The Army has since replaced the 2011 version with Army Doctrine Publication and Army Doctrine Reference Publication 6-0, both dated May 17, 2012, both titled *Mission Command*. A May 2014 version of FM 6-0 is titled *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations*, and contains very different subject matter than the original 6-0 series.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., “Glossary.”

<sup>18</sup> Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, August 11, 2011), 11-2.

<sup>19</sup> Martin E. Dempsey, “Mission Command White Paper,” April 3, 2012, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Andrew Eshleman, “Moral Responsibility,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Stanford, CA: The Metaphysics Research Lab, Center for the Study of Language and Information, 2014), available at <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2014/entries/moral-responsibility/>>.

<sup>21</sup> *Leadership—Volume 2* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Curtis E. LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, August 2015), 10-11, available at <<https://doctrine.af.mil/dnvlvol2.htm>>.

<sup>22</sup> Army Regulation 600-20, paragraph 1-5, “Command,” 2.

<sup>23</sup> This sentence is intentionally written under influence of the Scott quotation on following page. (note 30).

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Conrad, *Typhoon* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1902), 75.

<sup>25</sup> Rich Cooper, “An Interview with Adm. Thad Allen (USCG-Ret.),” *Defense Media Network*, November 16, 2010, available at <[www.defensemedianetwork.com/stories/an-interview-with-adm-thad-allen-uscg-ret/](http://www.defensemedianetwork.com/stories/an-interview-with-adm-thad-allen-uscg-ret/)>.

<sup>26</sup> Edwyn Gray, *Captains of War: They Fought Beneath the Sea* (London: Leo Cooper, 1988), 154 et seq.

<sup>27</sup> Arleigh A. Burke, "The Art of Command: A Lecture Delivered by Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, U.S. Navy (Ret.)," *The Naval War College Review* 24, no. 10 (June 1972), 25, available at <[www.usnwc.edu/Publications/Naval-War-College-Review/ArchivedIssues/1970s/1972-June.aspx](http://www.usnwc.edu/Publications/Naval-War-College-Review/ArchivedIssues/1970s/1972-June.aspx)>.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

<sup>29</sup> Matthew B. Ridgway, as told to Harold Martin, *Soldier: The Memoirs of Matthew B. Ridgway* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1956), 81-83.

<sup>30</sup> George C. Marshall, Letter to Brigadier General John S. Mallory, November 5, 1920, in *The Papers of George Catlett Marshall*, Vol. I, "The Soldierly Spirit" December 1880-June 1939, ed. Larry I. Bland and Sharon R. Ritenour (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 202.

<sup>31</sup> Ronald R. Fogleman, "Air Force Standards and Accountability," text of a videotape on the topic of Air Force Standards and Accountability produced following administrative actions taken against officers involved in last year's [1994] shutdown of two U.S. Army helicopters. Date of Video: August 10, 1995. Page 2 of 4. Available at <[www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/readings/air\\_force\\_standards\\_and\\_acc.htm](http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/readings/air_force_standards_and_acc.htm)>.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Roger D. Scott, "Kimmel, Short, McVay: Case Studies in Executive Authority, Law, and the Individual Rights of Military Commanders," *Military Law Review*, vol. 156 (June 1998), 169-170, available at <[www.loc.gov/tr/frd/Military\\_Law/Military\\_Law\\_Review/pdf-files/277C79~1.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/tr/frd/Military_Law/Military_Law_Review/pdf-files/277C79~1.pdf)>.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 72-73. In the Army, the general policy statement is, "When a higher ranking commander loses confidence in a subordinate commander's ability to command due to misconduct, poor judgment, the subordinate's inability to complete assigned duties, or for other similar reasons, the higher ranking commander has authority to relieve the subordinate commander." However, in practice, only general officers (or "frocked" colonels) may relieve a subordinate without first obtaining written approval of a general officer in the chain of command. Paragraph 2-17, "Relief for cause," Army Regulation 600-20, *Army Command Policy with Rapid Action Revision (RAF) Issue Date: 20 September 2012*, 17.

<sup>35</sup> Scott, 168.

<sup>36</sup> *U.S. Navy Regulations 1990* (Washington, DC: Headquarters Department of the Navy, 1990), 47, available at <<http://doni.documentservices.dla.mil/US%20Navy%20Regulations/Chapter%208%20-%20The%20Commanding%20Officer.pdf>>.

<sup>37</sup> Larry Seaquist, "Iron Principle of Accountability Was Lost in Iowa Probe," *Navy Times*, December 9, 1991, quoted in Scott, "Kimmel, Short, McVay," note 548, 195.

<sup>38</sup> See also the editorial addressing the Navy inquiry into the 1952 sinking of the USS *Hobson* by collision with the *Essex* in "Hobson's Choice," *Wall Street Journal*, May 14, 1952, available at <[www.thecommandingofficer.com/charge-of-command/hobson's-choice](http://www.thecommandingofficer.com/charge-of-command/hobson's-choice)>.

<sup>39</sup> David Vergun, “New Law Brings Changes to Uniform Code of Military Justice,” Army News Service, January 8, 2014, available at <[www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=121444](http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=121444)>. See also Claire McCaskill, “An Evidence-Based Approach to Military Justice Reform,” *Time*, March 15, 2014, available at <<http://time.com/26081/claire-mccaskill-military-sexual-assault-bill/>>.

<sup>40</sup> Craig Whitlock, “National Security: General’s Promotion Blocked over Her Dismissal of Sex-assault Verdict,” *Washington Post*, May 6, 2013, available at <[www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/generals-promotion-blocked-over-her-dismissal-of-sex-assault-verdict/2013/05/06/ef853f8c-b64c-11e2-bd07-b6e0e6152528\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/generals-promotion-blocked-over-her-dismissal-of-sex-assault-verdict/2013/05/06/ef853f8c-b64c-11e2-bd07-b6e0e6152528_story.html)>. One of the officers, Lieutenant General Susan J. Helms, a former astronaut, was denied confirmation for appointment to command Air Force Space command by Senator Claire McCaskill. See also Robert Draper, “The Military’s Rough Justice on Sexual Assault,” *New York Times Magazine*, November 26, 2014, available at <[http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/30/magazine/the-militarys-rough-justice-on-sexual-assault.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/30/magazine/the-militarys-rough-justice-on-sexual-assault.html?_r=0)>. The other officer was the Commander, Third Air Force, Lieutenant General Craig Franklin, who was retired as a major general based on his reversal of a court-martial decision in Europe.

<sup>41</sup> *The Armed Forces Officer* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1950), 163.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>43</sup> Ernie Pyle, *Brave Men* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1944), 106–107.

<sup>44</sup> Eugene B. Sledge, *With the Old Breed at Peleliu and Okinawa* (New York: Presidio Press, 1981; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 140–141.

<sup>45</sup> Matthew B. Ridgway, “Leadership,” *Military Review* 46, no. 10 (October 1966), 41, available at <<http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/p124201coll1/id/634/rec/11>>.