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## Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany 1944-1945

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key documents that registered a strong opinion that buildup, rather than reduction, of U.S. military strength was essential was drafted in early 1950 by a Joint State/Defense Department committee. It became known by its National Security Council identifier, NSC 68, and urged an aggressive strengthening of the U.S. military in light of the Communist takeover in China and the Soviet Union's new fission weapon. NSC 68 did not overcome the tendency toward force reductions, however, prior to the beginning of the Korean war in June 1950.

The invasion of South Korea prompted President Truman and his staff to reevaluate the forces needed to thwart the Communists and to prevent the Soviet Union from starting a global war. A revised NSC 68, known as NSC 68/1 and 2, was approved in September and served as the guidance for a massive rearmament effort. While all of the services enjoyed some increases, the Air Force seemed to be the major beneficiary. The priority was supported because the Air Force was believed to be most susceptible to obsolescence due to technological change and it was perceived as the service most likely to deter the Soviet Union from war. Poole sees this trend as a foreshadowing of the later Eisenhower reliance on "massive retaliation."

The second half of this book deals in depth with the development of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and other areas that would later hold great significance in U.S. defense matters. The author touches on the impact of the Korean conflict on NATO matters and the move to rearm West Germany.

The 12th chapter covers the U.S. commitment to Taiwan and increased American involvement in Indochina. These are particularly poignant areas of interest to examine in our present day, post-Vietnam environment.

Taken by itself, this volume provides an excellent look at defense questions in

the era of the Truman years. Together with the other volumes in the series, it will provide long-term views of the evolution of national defense planning since World War II. Besides the excellent narrative, this book also serves as an invaluable seedbed for further reference to JCS documents by virtue of its origin and the reliance on primary documents.

Volume IV is a good piece of official history and will prove useful to anyone interested in the early years of the cold war.

DON RIGHTMYER  
Captain, U.S. Air Force

Weigley, Russell F. *Eisenhower's Lieutenants: The Campaign of France and Germany 1944-1945*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981. 800pp. \$22.50

Professor Weigley entitled his book *Eisenhower's Lieutenants* with Douglas Southall Freeman's portrait of Lee's *Lieutenants* in mind. Like his distinguished predecessor Weigley decided that a study of the principal commanders and their associations offered the best means of approaching his topic—an assessment of "the merits and deficiencies of an army at war," in this case the U.S. Army in Europe during 1944-45. (p. xvi) Weigley is identified with the "new" military history, which he defines as "the history of armies and soldiers in their social and political context," so it may surprise readers of earlier works such as *The American Way of War* to discover that this book concentrates relentlessly on battle. Because the author began with a large question in mind, nothing less than the desire to determine whether an army whose tradition was that of a frontier constabulary could be transformed speedily during the Second World War into "a serious competitor of European armies long accustomed to international contests on a grand scale,"

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he felt compelled to concentrate on combat. "A day's trial by battle often reveals more of the essential nature of an army than a generation of peace." (p. xv)

The outcome is an extraordinarily detailed account of the command performance of the U.S. Army during the campaigns in France and Germany from June 1944 to May 1945. Emphasis is on the commanders under Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower—especially Gen. Omar Bradley and Gen. George S. Patton, Jr., but also on many other army, corps, and division commanders such as Gen. J. Lawton Collins, Jr., Gen. Jacob Devers, Gen. Courtney Hodges, and Gen. Carl Spaatz. Weigley rarely takes the reader to Eisenhower's headquarters, and he deals with the command post in Washington only when decisions made there had to be dealt with to explicate field operations.

Weigley's examination of the course of the battle in Normandy, across France, and into Germany allows him to develop a general thesis that involves a striking paradox; the U.S. Army embraced a "strategic credo" that ran counter to the theoretical basis for the organization of forces in the field. The strategic premise was that "war is won by destroying the enemy's warmaking ability, particularly his armed forces; mere maneuver will not accomplish this destruction; the destruction is to be accomplished by confronting the enemy's main armed forces directly and overwhelming them with superior power." (p. 7) Nevertheless, Weigley insists that the principle of mobility underlay the Army's organization. By 1940 Army practice emphasized the use of infantry to supply power through head-on confrontation of the enemy; armor would be used to exploit infantry successes.

This paradox—a strategy at cross-purposes with organization—accounts for the outcomes of various enterprises in 1944-45. Weigley deals with a

number of subjects in terms of power *versus* mobility, among them the following:

—The reason for the sluggishness of the initial campaign in Normandy was not only that the British sought to avoid heavy casualties but that the terrain required "sustained combat power" rather than mobility. The planners concentrated too much on the landing and not enough on the operations to follow, an error that had much to do with the tendency of operations in Normandy to bog down. Weigley has constantly in mind the chance that a stalemate could have developed in France comparable to that of 1914-1918, a possibility implicit in the failure of the Americans to organize their forces for the kind of war that was likely to materialize in Europe.

—Among the reasons for the avoidance of stalemate was **ANVIL-DRAGOON**, the attack northward through southern France from beachheads on the Mediterranean coast. Weigley argues that those who view this operation as eccentric would logically have to question "the whole American wartime strategy of gathering massive armies to overwhelm the enemy's main strength—the **OVERLORD** enterprise itself." (p. 237) **ANVIL-DRAGOON** created opportunities to come to grips with the enemy that would not have materialized otherwise.

—Although Weigley obviously admires General Patton, he roundly criticizes his operations in a vital respect. Although Patton was aggressive, utilizing speed and mobility, he was not effective in "the application of overwhelming power to crush the enemy. The most aggressive senior American commander remained a soldier of saber and spurs." (p. 245)

—Weigley imputes great significance to the "Autumn Interlude" that occurred from September to December 1944, when the American advance faltered. This pause stemmed from the failure of

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the Allies to provide resources equal to the task in France. The issue was not whether to pursue a broad-front strategy as against deep, narrow penetrations to key locations "the more basic trouble was that the Anglo-American alliance had not given Eisenhower enough troops to carry it [broad-front strategy] out safely . . . . The American army in Europe fought on too narrow a margin of physical superiority for the favored American broad-front strategy to be anything but a risky gamble." (p. 464)

Gen. Sir Bernard Montgomery serves as one of the villains of the piece. Monty is blamed for the failure of **MARKET-GARDEN**, an airborne attack intended to open the way to Germany for the British commander's 21 Army Group. Tactical errors "simply left the 21 Army Group with too many tasks to be done and too few men to do them." (p. 355) Monty's aggressiveness was like that of an "energetic fencer" rather than that of Napoleon, Moltke, or Grant, who annihilated enemy armies. This failing led to an incomplete counterattack in the Ardennes. Montgomery frittered away an opportunity to capture a huge German force and thereby shorten the war.

Weigley is also critical of American command during the Battle of the Bulge. The victory in the Ardennes belonged to the soldier; the commanders failed to foresee the German attack and took a long time to regain control of the battle. Because the American Army normally is superior to its opponents in materiel, the question rises whether it can survive without this advantage. The Ardennes is one of the few engagements that can be cited to quiet such doubts, Guadalcanal being another.

When Weigley describes the final victory, he ventures criticism of Eisenhower and Bradley. After the Ardennes the question of whether to adopt a broad-front strategy or a single-front strategy faded into irrelevance because

"Eisenhower's armies could now pour forward almost everywhere. Strangely, they did not do so." The supreme commander thereby lost an opportunity to annihilate the enemy. He held back "a large share of his American armies from the advance," causing delay in the victory and shaping "the postwar balance of prestige if not of outright power to America's disadvantage." (p. 669) Bradley falls within this indictment; he used his troops to mop up in the Ruhr rather than to continue the offensive. If only, bemoans Weigley, the Americans had been on the left of the Allied front instead of Monty's 21 Army Group, and if only it had been decided to strike at Berlin. In that event there might have been a good prospect of reaching the German capital before the Russians. "There seemed to be no end to the tyranny imposed by those circumstances that had placed the British on the left and the Americans on the right all through the European campaign, persistently denying the opportunities for most rapid movement to the American armies that excelled their Allies in armored mobility." (p. 688) The ironic outcome was that the mobility of the Americans did not come into play at this decisive moment.

After completing his remarkable portrait of Eisenhower's commanders, Weigley offers his general conclusions. For years to come these views will influence much of the scholarship relating to the American Army in general and to its performance during World War II.

Weigley believes that the frontier constabulary made a successful transition to a conventional army of the European type, encompassing the destruction of the "mightiest of Europe's armies." The war in Europe turned into an essentially American campaign, one "shaped by the United States Army's concepts of strategy, operations, and tactics as well as fought on the Allied side mainly by American soldiers." After

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1945 the army would "assume the central responsibility for the military defense of the West against a Red Army grown mightier than the Wehrmacht at its zenith." (p. 729)

However successful, the achievement in Europe fell short of completeness because the army embraced mobility at the expense of power. American formations lacked sufficient punch at critical moments. Moreover, "the paradoxical commitment to a power-drive strategy of head-on assault in an army shaped for mobility further contributed to prolonging the war by undermining the possible uses of mobility itself." Weigley feels that mobility was used mainly in the defense rather than as a means of concentrating troops for breakouts or for pursuit, the exception being **COBRA**, which culminated operations in Normandy. The outcome was a campaign of "unimaginative caution." Eisenhower and his lieutenants were "addicted to playing it safe." Obviously the American Army was correct in avoiding undue risks, given its superior resources, but "bolder generalship might have shortened the war." (p. 729)

The deeper explanation for the imperfections of the U.S. Army was that it lacked a "clear conception of war." It failed to opt either for winning "by direct application of superior power" or "by means of superior mobility." The victory stemmed from resources rather than from "a decisive head-on battle of annihilation" or from mobility through "a consistent strategy of indirect approach." Relative inexperience in large-scale war explains the outcome in 1944-45. The basic question that remains is whether the nation is prepared for a big war in the future. Given a threatening international military balance, "we cannot afford a complacency drawn in part from past military victories, at least one of which—the victory in Europe in World War II—was more expensive and more postponed than it might have been, because American military skills

were not as formidable as they might have been." (p. 730)

What is to be made of Weigley's *tour de force*? There follow comments on three aspects of *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*—its concentration on command in battle; the validity of the conclusions; and the utility of the evidential basis for the study.

Weigley's decision to study higher command directs attention to the most concrete level of strategy, namely to what might be called *operational strategy*—the plan for the use of tactical units in battle. Sometimes the domain of operational strategy is called "grand tactics," a means of highlighting its closeness to combat. (The opposite end of the strategic spectrum is "grand strategy," which mobilizes all the capabilities of the nation—political, economic, and psychological as well as military—to achieve larger political aims during both peace and war.) The military historian who wishes to examine the land battle waged by the U.S. Army in Europe is well advised to stress command. In so doing, however, he leaves important dimensions of the Second War to others, such as Allied operations distinct from those of American forces, operations of all kinds in other theaters, and the most elemental aspect of statecraft related to warfare—the coordination of strategy and policy. Scholars who adopt different approaches may be able to test Weigley's conclusions profitably. Those who do so will find no better point of departure than this study of command.

Weigley's larger conclusions are bound to arouse considerable interest. The first of these, that the European campaign forced a remarkable transformation in the army from frontier constabulary to European type of formation, seems likely to receive general approbation, even if critics carp at details. The second one, concerning the conflict between strategy and organization (power *versus* mobility) is far more

arguable. Some may claim that Weigley does not provide convincing support for his view. Others may say that limiting circumstances precluded any other command decisions than those that occurred in 1944-45. The third conclusion, that preparations for future warfare should take into account the deficiencies of the army during the Second World War as well as its achievements, is of special interest to those concerned with the practical utility of history—its contribution to a list of "lessons learned." Weigley's authority for his present judgments might increase, were he to undertake a study centered on grand strategy. Others might well ask whether Weigley's study provides much help in dealing with the kinds of war that have occurred since 1945 as against a big struggle between superpowers.

What of the sources and authorities that Weigley adduces to support his analysis? He places basic reliance on three types of material—official histories produced in the United States and elsewhere, especially the U.S. Army's multivolume history of the Second World War, published memoirs and biographies, and unpublished primary information such as diaries, letters, and interviews. *Eisenhower's Lieutenants* is largely based on information in the Army's official history. Additional information that has become available supplements this mother lode. Official historians will discover that Weigley deviates frequently from their judgments but relies heavily on their information. The result is a triumph for official history. As the first authoritative treatment of government activity, official history must be judged not by whether those who follow agree with its interpretations but whether it provides a useful point of departure for later investigations. Weigley's favorable citation of the Army's "green books" and other official histories in his notes and in bibliographical commentaries for each chapter demonstrates his confidence in the

initial investigations as a starting point.

*Eisenhower's Lieutenants* makes a superb contribution to military history in both substantive and methodological senses. Weigley already stands in the front rank of his field. His new book adds further luster to his reputation as one of the founders of the "new" military history in the broadcast meaning of that term—a military history that makes a quantum leap beyond the received knowledge. He provides a sound point of departure for those who take up the subject hereafter; as such it is a book for all seasons, one deserving of the highest accolades.

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Coletta, Paolo E. *French Ensor Chadwick: Scholarly Warrior*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1980. 256pp. \$18.75 paper \$10.75

French E. Chadwick is not a household name in America and this solid, well-researched, and scholarly biography by Professor Paolo E. Coletta of the Naval Academy will not make him one.

But he was an interesting man, at least as far as we can find out in the absence of personal papers. Certainly, he was important in the Navy of his time, and highly regarded by the Service's thinkers and doers. Graduated from the Naval Academy toward the end of the Civil War, Chadwick saw some wartime sea service, but no combat.

For the Navy, the next twenty years were a period of decline and torpor. But Chadwick, using his intelligence and his interest in scientific matters positioned himself to play an important part in the rebuilding of the Service which began in the eighties.

He was ordered to London in 1882 as the first American naval attaché ever and for the next seven years kept the U.S. Navy informed on the latest