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ARMY TALKS



The Good General



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EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS, UNITED STATES ARMY

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ARMY TALKS



EUROPEAN THEATER OF OPERATIONS

THE GOOD GENERAL

COMPARATIVELY few of you are perhaps likely to become generals; and all of you are likely to have opportunity to criticize generals. I should like your criticism to be as well informed as possible. Generalship, and especially British generalship, has had a bad press since the late war. I am not proposing to deliver to you an apologia for generals, but to explain the qualities necessary for a general and the conditions in which he has to exercise his calling.

Administration Comes First

Socrates' description of a general reads as follows:—

The general must know how to get his men their rations and every other kind of stores needed for war. He must have imagination to originate plans, practical sense and energy to carry them through. He must be observant, untiring, shrewd; kindly and cruel; simple and crafty; "a watchman and a robber; lavish and miserly; generous and stingy; rash and conservative. All those and many other qualities, natural and acquired, he must have. He should also, as a matter of course, know his tactics; for a disorderly mob is no more an army than a heap of building material is a house.

Now, the first point that attracts me about that definition is the order in which it is arranged. It begins with the matter of administration, which is the real crux of generalship, to my mind; and places tactics, the handling of troops in battle, at the end of his qualifications instead of at the beginning, where most people place it. Also it insists on practical sense and energy as two of the most important qualifications; while the list of the many and contrasted qualities that a general must have rightly gives an impression of the great field of activity that generalship covers and the variety of the situations with which it has to deal, and the need for adaptability in the make-up of a general.

Robustness is Also Needed

But even this definition of Socrates does not to my mind emphasize sufficiently what I hold to be the first essential of a general, the quality of robustness, the ability to stand the shock of war. Probably this factor did not apply so much in Socrates' time.

People did not then suffer from what is now elegantly known as "the jitters." I can perhaps best explain what I mean by robustness by a physical illustration. I remember long ago,

This issue of ARMY TALKS was condensed from the book "Generals and Generalship," by Field Marshal Lord Wavell, formerly commander of British Forces in the Middle East, Commander-in-Chief in India and now Viceroy of India. It is reproduced by special permission of the Wavell family, and was prepared by the ARMY TALKS section for American troops in the European Theater of Operations.

when I was a very young officer, being told by a mountain gunner friend that whenever in the old days a new design of mountain gun was submitted to the Artillery Committee, that august body had it taken to the top of a tower, some hundred feet high, and thence dropped on to the ground below. If it was still capable of functioning it was given further trial; if not, it was rejected as flimsy. The committee reasoned that mules and mountain guns might easily fall down the hillside and must be made capable of surviving so trivial a misadventure. On similar grounds rifles and automatic weapons submitted to the Small Arms Committee are, I believe, buried in mud for 48 hours or so before being tested for their rapid firing qualities.

Ross Rifle Failed in 1918

The necessity for such a test was very aptly illustrated in the late war, when the original Canadian contingent arrived in France armed with the Ross rifle, a weapon which had shown its superior qualities in target shooting at the Bisley range in peace. In the mud of the trenches it was found to jam after a very few rounds; and after a short experience of the weapon under active service conditions the Canadian soldiers refused to have anything to do with it and insisted on being armed with the British rifle.

Generals Get Similar Test But it Lasts for Weeks

Now, the mind of the general in war is buried, not merely for 48 hours, but for days and weeks, in the mud and sand of unreliable information and uncertain factors, and may at any time receive, from an unsuspected move of the enemy, an unforeseen accident, or a treacherous turn in the weather, a bump equivalent to a drop of at least a hundred feet on to something hard.

Delicate mechanism is of little use

in war; and this applies to the mind of the commander as well as to his body; to the spirit of an army as well as to the weapons and instruments with which it is equipped. All material of war, including the general, must have a certain solidity, a high margin over the normal breaking strain.

The civil comparison to war must be that of a game, a very rough and dirty game, for which a robust body and mind are essential. The general is dealing with men's lives, and must have a certain mental robustness to stand the strain. How great that strain is you may judge by the sudden deaths of many of the commanders of the late war. When you read military history take note of the failures due to lack of this quality of robustness.

Personal Courage Takes Secondary Place Today

I propose to say a few words about the physical attributes of a general: courage, health, and youth. Personal appearance we need not worry about: an imposing presence can be a most useful asset: but good generals, as they say of good racehorses, "run in all shapes." Physical courage is not so essential a factor in reaching high rank as it was in the old days of close-range fighting, but it still is of very considerable importance today in determining the degree of risk a commander will take to see for himself what is going on; and in mechanized warfare we may again see the general leading his troops almost in the front of the fighting, or possibly reconnoitring and commanding from the air.

Casualty Rate Has Altered

As an example of the extent to which generals came under fire in the old days you may like to know that at Marlborough's assault on the Schellenberg during the Blenheim campaign six lieutenant-generals were killed and

five wounded in the Allied army, while the 1,500 British casualties at the action included four major-generals and 28 brigadiers, colonels or lieutenant-colonels.

Courage, physical and moral, a general undoubtedly must have. Voltaire praises in Marlborough "that calm courage in the midst of tumult, that serenity of soul in danger, which is the greatest gift of nature for command."

Joffre's Calm Offset Blunders

A later military writer, who had no great admiration for Joffre, was compelled to admit that his stolid calm and obstinate determination in the darkest days of the retreat had an influence which offset many of the grave strategical blunders which he committed. Health in a general is, of course, most important, but it is a relative quality only. We would all of us, I imagine, sooner have Napoleon sick on our side than many of his opponents whole. A great spirit can rule in a frail body, as Wolfe and others have shown us. Marlborough during his great campaigns would have been ploughed by most modern medical boards.

Both Young, Old Generals Have Been Great Leaders

At exactly what age a general ceases to be dangerous to the enemy and a Don Juan to the other sex is not easy to determine. Hannibal, Alexander, Napoleon, Wellington, Wolfe, and others may be quoted as proof that the highest prizes of war are for the young man. On the other hand, Julius Cæsar and Cromwell began their serious soldiering when well over the age of 40; Marlborough was 61 at the time of his most admired maneuver, when he forced the Ne Plus Ultra lines; Turenne's last campaign at the age of 63 is said to have been his boldest and

best. Moltke, the most competent of the moderns, made his name at the age of 66 and confirmed his reputation at 70. Roberts was 67 when he went out to South Africa after our first disastrous defeats, and restored the situation by surrounding the Boer Army at Paardeburg and capturing Bloemfontein and Pretoria. Foch at 67 still possessed energy and vitality and great originality. We must remember, in making comparisons with the past, that men develop later nowadays; for instance, Wellington, Wolfe, Moore, Craufurd were all commissioned at about the age of 15, and some of them saw service soon after joining.

Age-youth Comparison Is Impossible To Make

It is impossible really to give exact values to the fire and boldness of youth as against the judgement and experience of riper years; if the mature mind still has the capacity to conceive and to absorb new ideas, to withstand unexpected shocks, and to put into execution bold and unorthodox designs, its superior knowledge and judgement will give the advantage over youth. At the same time there is no doubt that a good young general will usually beat a good old one; and the recent lowering of age of our generals is undoubtedly a step in the right direction, even if it may sometimes lose us prematurely a good commander. I don't think I need expatiate for long on the moral qualities of a leader. No amount of study or learning will make a man a leader unless he has the natural qualities of one.

Leader Must Know What He Wants

He must have "character," which simply means that he knows what he wants and has the courage and determination to get it. He should have a genuine interest in, and a real knowledge of, humanity, the raw

material of his trade; and, most vital of all, he must have what we call the fighting spirit, the will to win. You all know and recognize it in sport, the man who plays his best when things are going badly, who has the power to come back at you when apparently beaten, and who refuses to acknowledge defeat. There is one other moral quality I would stress as the mark of the really great commander as distinguished from the ordinary general. He must have a spirit of adventure, a touch of the gambler in him. As Napoleon said: "If the art of war consisted merely in not taking risks glory would be at the mercy of very mediocre talent."

Napoleon Demanded "Luck"

Napoleon always asked if a general was "lucky." What he really meant was, "Was he bold?" A bold general must be lucky, but no general can be lucky unless he is bold. The general who allows himself to be bound and hampered by regulations is unlikely to win a battle.

SUMMARY

The first duty of a general is administration, knowing how "to get his men their rations and every other kind of stores needed for war." Perhaps even more important is the quality of robustness, the ability to absorb punishment. Physical courage of a personal nature is not so important as it once was.

What is the nearest equivalent of war? What were the fighting years of some of history's greatest generals? What is the general conclusion to be drawn in answer to the question: Is mature judgement or youthful enthusiasm the more valuable? Are fighting generals in this war younger, or older than in the last?

So far we have dealt with the general's physical and moral make-up. Now for his mental qualities. The most important is what the French call *le sens du praticable*, and we call common sense, knowledge of what is and what is not possible. It must be based on a really sound knowledge of the "mechanism of war," i.e., topography, movement, and supply. These are the real foundations of military knowledge, not strategy and tactics as most people think. It is the lack of this knowledge of the principles and practice of military movement and administration—the "logistics" of war, some people call it—which puts what we call amateur strategists wrong, not the principles of strategy themselves, which can be apprehended in a very short time by any reasonable intelligence.

Books Stress Strategy, Ignore Administration

Unfortunately, in most military books strategy and tactics are emphasized at the expense of the administrative factors. For instance, there are 10 military students who can tell you how Blenheim was won for one who has any knowledge at all of the administrative preparations that made the march to Blenheim possible. There were months of administrative planning to make Allenby's maneuver at the third battle of Gaza practicable. Again, Marlborough's most admired stratagem, the forcing of the Ne Plus Ultra lines in 1711, was one that a child could have thought of but that probably no other general could have executed.

Thorough Planning Succeeds

Roberts's maneuver before Paardeburg in 1900, Allenby's at Gazabeersheba in 1917, were both variations of the same very simple theme as Marlborough used in 1711; but again

it required very intelligent and careful preparation to execute it. I should like you always to bear in mind when you study military history or military events the importance of this administrative factor, because it is where most critics and many generals go wrong.

In conclusion, I wonder if you realize what a very complicated business this modern soldiering is. A commander today has now to learn to handle air forces, armored mechanical vehicles, anti-aircraft artillery; he has to consider the use of gas and smoke, offensively and defensively; to know enough of wireless to make proper use of it for communication; to understand something of the art of camouflage, of the business of propaganda; to keep himself up to date in the developments of military engineering: all this in addition to the more normal requirements of his trade.

Battlefields Completely Changed

On the battlefield, of course, conditions are completely different. Marlborough at Blenheim, after placing the batteries himself and riding along his whole front, lunches on the battlefield under cannon fire waiting for his colleague Eugene on the right flank, four miles away, a great distance for those days. Napoleon at Austerlitz can with his own eyes see the enemy expose himself hopelessly and irretrievably to the prepared counter-stroke, and can judge the exact moment at which to launch it.

War a Confused Mass Of Conflicting Reports

In the conditions of the late war no battalion commander launching his reserve company had anything like such a clear picture of the situation as any of these, while the Commander-in-Chief was not on the battlefield at all, but sitting in an office many miles

back or restlessly pacing the garden of a chateau waiting for news that seemed never to come, and when it came was usually misleading.

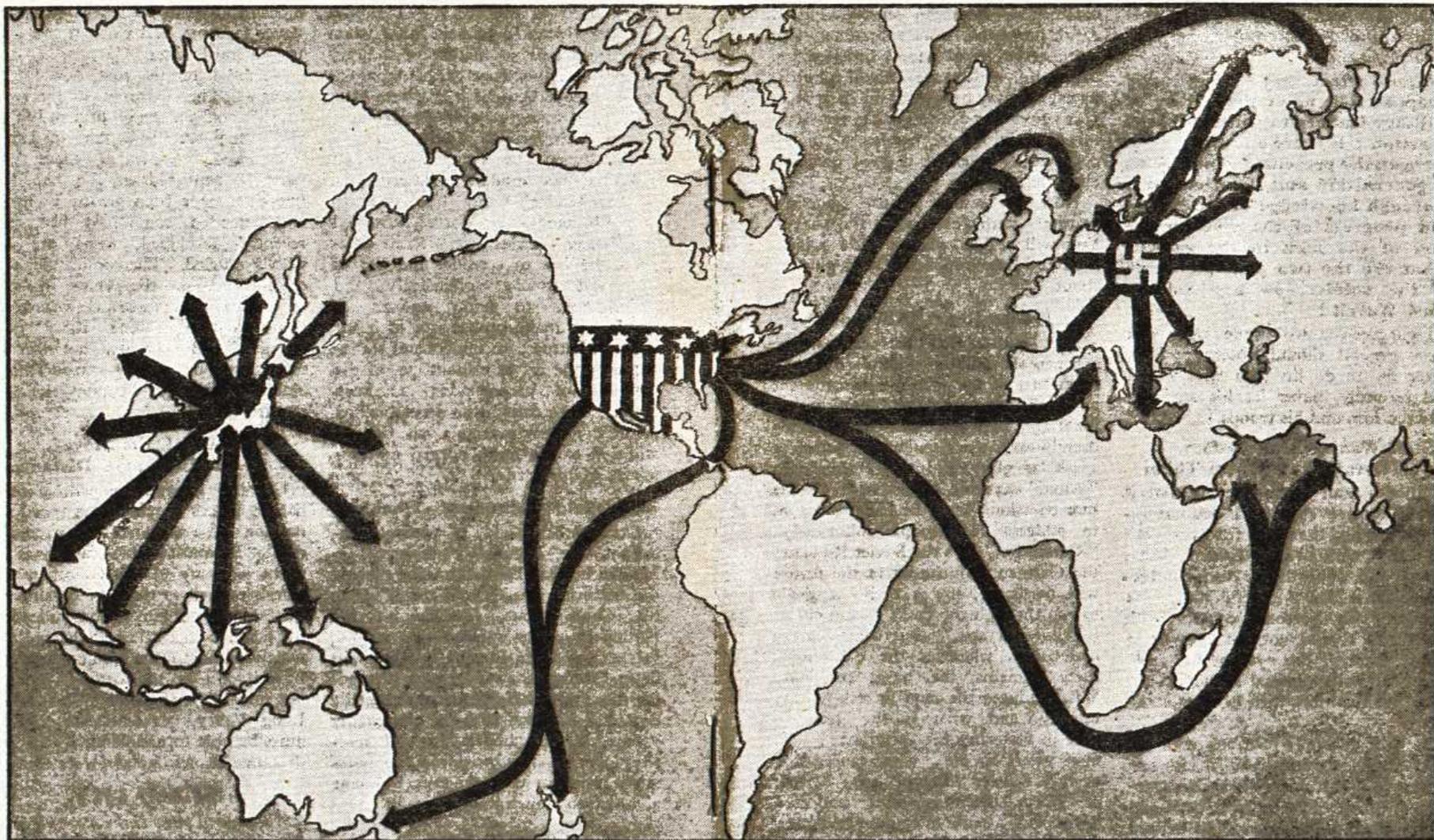
So much for the past, now for the future. There are new forces to handle, both on the ground and in the air, with potentialities that are largely unexplored. Some of them were partially exploited in the late war, but have since been greatly improved and extended, some have been only recently developed, some are still wholly untried. The commander with the imagination—the genius, in fact—to use the new forces may have his name written among the “great captains.” But he will not win the title lightly or easily; consider for a moment the qualifications he will require.

High-speed Units Move At Enormous Distances

On the ground he will have to handle forces moving at a speed and ranging at a distance far exceeding that of the most mobile cavalry of the past; a study of naval strategy and tactics as well as those of cavalry will be essential to him. Some ideas on his position in battle and the speed at which he must make his decisions may be derived from the battle of Jutland; not much from Salisbury Plain or the Long Valley. Needless to say, he must be able to handle air forces with the same knowledge as forces on land.

SUMMARY

Common sense is the most important factor in the good general's make-up—particularly as it has to do with administration, supply and movement of troops and their equipment. Modern generalship is highly complicated, requiring a knowledge of air forces, armored units and anti-aircraft, to mention only a few modern branches. It is the



The Stars and Stripes Map by Fay

Field Marshal Lord Wavell makes it clear that, in his opinion, Socrates was on the right track when he cited, as the first duty of a general, that he know "how to get his men their rations and every other kind of stores needed for war."

The above map, reprinted from an earlier issue of ARMY TALKS, graphically illustrates the supply problem which must be faced by modern generals fighting this war.

Note how the enemy is able to operate on short interior lines while the United Nations must transport arms, munitions and food from the "arsenal of Democracy" over extended sea-lanes to far-flung fighting areas.

The first battle to be won was the battle of the supply lines. With that victory in our grasp, we are now able to send men and equipment, in comparative safety, to every part of the world where they are needed against the enemy.

last test of a soldier's confidence in the command and his pride in service and sense of personal participation.

What effect have long-range weapons had upon the ability of military leaders to control troops in action? Is there any connection between the present-day problems of generalship and the need for a thorough knowledge of the causes and progress of the war on the part of the men in the ranks? What are the two principle cares of the soldier, as outlined by Lord Wavell?

I will give you two simple rules which every general should observe: first, never try to do his own staff work; and secondly, never let his staff get between him and his troops.

Staff Wants Clear Orders, Details Left Up to Them

What a staff appreciates is that it should receive clear and definite instructions, and then be left to work out the details without interference. What troops and subordinate commanders appreciate is that a general should be constantly in personal contact with them, and should not see everything simply through the eyes of his staff. The less time a general spends in his office and the more with his troops the better.

As to a general's relations with his subordinate commanders, it is important to him to know their characteristics: which must be held back and which urged on, which can be trusted with an independent mission, and which must be kept under his own eye. Some want very detailed and precise orders, others merely a general indication.

Many Generals Fail Alone

There are many generals who are excellent executive commanders, as

long as they are controlled by a higher commander, but who get out of their depth at once, and sometimes lose their nerve, if given an independent command. Others are difficult subordinates, but may be trusted on their own. It is important not to get the two sorts mixed: in other words, a higher commander must be a good judge of character.

Now to come to the general's relations with the troops themselves. You will realize what a wide subject it is, and how impossible to dogmatize about.

Troops React Differently

The outlook of the officer—the regimental officer—differs naturally from that of the men. And different nationalities demand different treatment. "Mes enfants"—"My children"—says the Frenchman, and may speak of glory and the Fatherland; "Men," says the Englishman on the rare occasions when he feels called on to address his troops collectively; "Comrades," says the Soviet Russian; the German commander of the future will perhaps cause a thrill of pride to run through the ranks with a cry of "Fellow Aryans." But whatever the nationality, whatever the conditions, there remains the basic problem: What induces the man to risk his life bravely, and what is the general's part in fostering his endurance? No man wants to die; what causes him to face death? Maybe hope of loot or glory, discipline and tradition, devotion to a cause or country, devotion to a man.

Loot and Glory Now Appeal to Very Few

Glory or loot appeals to few these days; nor, indeed, is much glory or loot to be had. Decorations and promotions count for something, but may cause much heart-burning unless

carefully distributed. Belief in a cause may count for much, especially if fostered by mass propaganda; yet there is truth in the following from a book on the late war:—

A man does not flee because he is fighting in an unrighteous cause, he does not attack because his cause is just; he flees because he is the weaker, he conquers because he is the stronger, or because his leader has made him feel the stronger.

Soldiers Will Accept Severe but Just Code

Devotion to a man has sometimes inspired soldiers in the past. Will it do so again in the totalitarian countries?

But tradition and discipline, anyway as far as the British are concerned, are the real root of the matter. I have not the time here to enter into any discussion on the subject of discipline; I will only remark that with national armies—as all armies, even the British, will be in a future war—and general education, discipline should be a different matter from the old traditional military discipline.

Comfort Soldier's First Need

It has changed greatly since I joined, and is changing still. But whatever the system, it is the general's business to see justice done. The soldier does not mind a severe code provided it is administered fairly and reasonably. As an instance, here is the verdict of a private soldier on Craufurd in the retreat to Corunna: "If he flogged two, he saved hundreds from death." Discipline apart, the soldier's chief cares are: First, his personal comfort—i.e., regular rations, proper clothing, good billets, and proper hospital arrangements (square meals and a square deal, in fact); and secondly, his personal safety—i.e., that he shall be put into a fight with as good a chance as possible of victory and survival. Guns and butter, in other

words. It may be remarked that Russian morale in the late war broke through lack of guns, Germans largely through lack of butter.

Consideration Wins Confidence

The general who sees that the soldier is well fed and looked after, and who puts him into a good show and wins battles, will naturally have his confidence. Whether he will also have his affection is another story. Wellington was most meticulous about his administrative arrangements, and was a most successful general who never lost a battle. But he was certainly not popular, though on one occasion some of his troops, put into a tight place by a blunder of one of his subordinates, gave a spontaneous cheer at his arrival on the scene of action.

Men's Appreciation, Respect is Sufficient for General

But does it matter to a general whether he has his men's affection so long as he has their confidence? He must certainly never court popularity. If he has their appreciation and respect it is sufficient. Efficiency in a general his soldiers have a right to expect; geniality they are usually right to suspect. Marlborough was perhaps the only great general to whom geniality was always natural.

SUMMARY

Two rules for generalship: he should never try to do his own staff work, he should never let his staff get between him and his troops. Generals should know the characteristics of their subordinates. The less time he spends in his office and the more with his troops the better. The confidence of the men will repose in the general—and the whole structure of command—if he is well fed, well clothed and well looked after: if he goes into battle with

a reasonable chance of winning and does, in fact, participate in victories.

Does Lord Wavell's summary of the duties of generalship aid in understanding our Allies better? Is the admiration and popularity of General Montgomery traceable to such qualities as Lord Wavell outlines? Are these qualities apparent in our own generals?

Modern generals are hardly known to the large armies they command. Few of his troops can have known Haig, who incidentally was a very reserved man, never at his ease with troops. The times are past when generals can put themselves at the head of their men in a crisis, as did Napoleon on the bridge at Lodi, or Lannes at Ulm ("I was grenadier before I was a marshal," he said, as he led the storming troops to a fresh effort), and inspire troops by their personal example. The nearest modern example I can think of is Haig at the crisis of the first battle of Ypres, when the last man of his last reserve was in, mounting his horse and riding forward up the Menin road with some of his staff. A useless gesture, you may say: still, the right kind of gesture.

Modern Generals Command Without Leading Charges

But without placing himself at the head of his troops in battle a modern commander can still exercise a very real influence over the morale of his men. An outstanding example is Allenby's regeneration of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force in the summer of 1917 after their two repulses at Gaza in the spring of that year. Australians are not easily impressed by British generals, but the following extract from the Australian Official History shows the impression made by Allenby:

There was nothing familiar about Allenby's touch with his regiments and

battalions. He went through the hot, dusty camps of his army like a strong, fresh reviving wind. He would dash up in his car to a Light Horse regiment, shake hands with a few officers, inspect hurriedly, but with a sure eye to good and bad points, the horses of perhaps a single squadron, and be gone in a few minutes, leaving a great trail of dust behind him. His tall and massive, but restlessly active, figure, his keen eyes and prominent hooked nose, his terse and forcible speech, and his imperious bearing radiated an impression of tremendous resolution, quick decision, and steely discipline. Within a week of his arrival Allenby had stamped his personality on the mind of every trooper of the horse and every infantryman of the line.

Few Speeches a Good Rule

Should a general address his troops, collectively or individually? Only, I think, if he has a gift that way, a gift not of eloquence necessarily but of saying the right thing. He must be very sure of himself. He risks more loss of reputation than he is likely to gain. An unfortunate remark or tone, or even appearance, may lower his stock and do more harm than good. I only once remember Allenby addressing a large body of troops, and that was not in commendation. Napoleon in his maxims says:

It is not set speeches at the moment of battle that render soldiers brave. The veteran scarcely listens to them, and the recruit forgets them at the first discharge. If discourses and harangues are useful, it is during the campaign; to do away with unfavorable impressions, to correct reports, to keep alive a proper spirit in the camp, and to furnish materials and amusement for the bivouac.

When you study military history don't read outlines on strategy or the principles of war. Read biographies,

memoirs, historical novels, such as "The Road to Glory" or "Schönbrunn Get at the flesh and blood of it, not the skeleton.

Napoleon's Greatness Was Knowledge of Human Nature

Napoleon did not gain the position he did so much by a study of rules and strategy as by a profound knowledge of human nature in war. A story of him in his early days shows his knowledge of psychology. When an artillery officer at the siege of Toulon he built a battery in such an exposed position that he was told he would never find men to hold it. He put up a placard, "The battery of men without fear," and it was always manned.

Strictness a Leadership Maxim

Here are a few principles that seem to me to embody the practice of successful commanders in their relations with their troops. A general must keep strict, though not necessarily stern, discipline. He should give praise where praise is due, ungrudgingly by word of mouth or written order. He should show himself as frequently as possible to his troops, and as impressively as possible. Ceremony has its uses. He should never indulge in sarcasm, which is being clever at someone else's expense, and always offends. He should tell his soldiers the truth, save when absolutely necessary to conceal plans, etc.

A general must drive his men at times. Some of the best and most successful riders and horsemasters are not those who are fondest of horses. A general may succeed for some time in persuading his superiors that he is a good commander: he will never persuade his army that he is a good commander unless he has the real qualities of one.

No Interference a Rule

The relations of that great and wise man Lincoln with his generals are well worth study. Having after many trials found a man whom he trusted in Grant, he left him to fight his campaigns without interference. I am going to quote an extract from a letter written by Lincoln to one of his generals which will, I think, show you his quality.

It was written to General Hooker, informing him that he had been placed in command of the Army of the Potomac during a critical period of the American Civil War. In it President Lincoln said:

I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appears to me sufficient reason, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skilful soldier, which, of course, I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable, if not an indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm; I think that during General Burnside's command of the Army you have taken counsel of your ambition and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the Army and the Government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up as dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I

will risk the dictatorship. The Government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have decided to infuse into the Army of criticizing their commander and withholding confidence from him will now turn upon you.

I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it; and now beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.

Fighting Joe Not The Man

Doesn't that strike you as the letter that only a great man and a wise man could have written?

Lincoln did not find in "Fighting Joe Hooker" the general he wanted. It was Ulysses Grant whom he even-

tually selected as his commander-in-chief; and then he trusted him through thick and thin, though he, Grant, suffered many reverses and had often very heavy casualties. To a critic who alleged that Grant drank, he replied by asking him to ascertain his brand of whisky so that he could send a case to some of his other generals.

Books Don't Win Wars

War is not a matter of diagrams, principles or rules. The higher commander who goes to Field Service Regulations for tactical guidance inspires about as much confidence as the doctor who turns to a medical dictionary for his diagnosis. And no method of education, no system of promotion, no amount of commonsense ability is of value unless the leader has in him the root of the matter—the fighting spirit.

This is the first and true function of the leader, never to think the battle or the cause lost.



Preparation

You may wonder why ARMY TALKS, intended for use among the men, should concern itself with Generals and what they do. But if you consider the whole problem for a moment you will agree no doubt that what the men think is a matter of importance to the commanding officer and further what the commanding officer does and thinks is a matter of prime importance to the men. Upon the ability of the commanding officer to handle his job may depend their lives.

As a consequence, it may not be too "ivory-towered" to take a brief look at the business of being a general and see whether there is any practical connection between his work and your work, between his planning and your operation, between his responsibility and your efficiency. If he is a clever

and shrewd soldier the connection will be there, regardless of the operation or form of duty. The chances are that you will be able to discover it. The connection would be less visible in a large headquarters than in a fighting zone. For as the author has stated, a good general never lets his staff get between him and his troops.

A word about the Author of the article is appropriate as he has become one of the foremost soldiers of his time. When the contents of this issue were first made public in addresses delivered at Cambridge University in 1939, General Sir Archibald Wavell was recognized as a distinguished officer among members of his own profession, and was almost unheard of outside it. The fortunes of war altered his status, and he helped to mould history as Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, and later in 1941 as Commander-in-Chief, India. Now, as Field Marshal Lord Wavell, he has been appointed the Viceroy of India.

Interestingly enough the fame of these rather simple and unassuming words has soared to a place almost as remarkable as that of the author who wrote them. In its own sphere, Wavell's work has become a classic, and yet, like so many notable works, appears upon scrutiny, quiet and disarmingly easy. It is the easiness of a man as much at home with words as with weapons. No one who is soldiering today can fail to have a finer understanding of the profession he has adopted after reading the text. And all of you who have been in active operations will recognize at once the sure touch of a master.

In preparing for the discussion it is suggested that the leader invite the commanding officer, and if he is not available, the highest ranking officer, to lead the discussion on this topic. Ask him to read ARMY TALKS and come to the group ready to show the need for a mutual understanding and respect between officers and men. It might prove helpful to secure a number of pictures, sketches, or photographs of prominent generals of the present war and examine in what way each one filled the measure of being a good general, or where he failed, if he has failed. For example, the pictures of Generals Gamelin, De Gaulle, Rommel, Montgomery, MacArthur and Eisenhower would offer an interesting survey of accomplishment and defeat. Gamelin's position has now become history and represents a particular school of thought. Rommel has scored in victory and suffered in defeat. Montgomery has an enviable battle record. The other three Generals are at the high points of their careers. No matter how the fortune of war has dealt with them, each one has made some contribution to the art of warfare, and will find a niche in history.



QUESTIONS FOR THE DISCUSSION

In organizing the discussion period it is advisable to go over the details with the officer who is to lead the group. It might add interest to the discussion to have an enlisted man prepared to speak for a few minutes, following the officer, on soldiers and soldiership, stressing the qualities needed in a man to be a good soldier. It may be advantageous to ask some British officers and non-coms to come in as visitors, and plant them with some opening questions. It may be that a British general in the vicinity will be willing to lead the group on this occasion. However it is conducted, the topic deserves attention and planning; the following questions are listed as indicators and source material:

- Q.: What is the first essential of a general? p. 3. Why?
- Q.: What is the first essential of a good soldier?
- Q.: Which is the better general, a young man or an older man? p. 5.
- What does history prove? p. 5.
- Q.: What did Napoleon mean when he asked if a general was lucky? p. 6.
- Q.: Can a general afford to be bound and hampered by regulations? p. 6. Can he afford not to be?
- Q.: What is meant by "character" in a fighting man?
- Q.: Why is the administrative factor more important to sound generalship than a knowledge of strategy and tactics? p. 10.
- What is meant by the administrative factor?
- Q.: What is the general's part in fostering the endurance of his men?
- Q.: Why should a general court the popularity of his men? Why should he not? p. 11.
- Q.: If war is not a matter of diagrams, principles or rules, why must professional soldiers be trained so carefully with them?
- Q.: What is the true function of the leader? p. 13.
- Q.: In what way does the study of Generals and Generalship increase your knowledge and understanding of:
- Confidence in the command.
 - Pride in service and a sense of personal participation.
 - Knowledge of the causes and progress of the war.
 - A better understanding of our allies.
 - An interest in current events and their relation to the war and the establishment of the peace.

The three following books offer additional reading in the field of military biography and accomplishment:

- Great Soldiers of the Two World Wars—H. A. De Weerd.
Great Contemporaries—Winston Churchill.
Reputations Ten Years After—Liddell Hart.

For additional copies of ARMY TALKS see your Special Service Officer.

