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WHAT ARE THE KEY ATTRIBUTES REQUIRED  
BY AN OPERATIONAL LEVEL COMMANDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL ?

*Any complex activity, if it is to be carried on with any degree of  
virtuosity, calls for appropriate gifts of intellect and temperament.  
If they are outstanding and reveal themselves in exceptional  
achievement, their possessor is called a genius.*

*Clausewitz*

The operational level of war is the purest level o

understand what attributes are required by the  
commander to have success at the operational level, we must first define both operational level  
of war and operational art.

In simple terms, the operational level of war is the link between strategic and tactical levels. The Joint Doctrine for Canadian Forces Joint and Combined Operations manual defines operational level of war as *“The level of war at which campaign and major operations are planned, conducted and sustained to accomplish strategic objectives within theatres or areas of operations.”*<sup>2</sup> It also defines operational art as *“The skill of employing military forces to attain strategic objectives in a theatre of war or theatre of operations through the design, organisation and conduct of campaigns and major operations.”*<sup>3</sup> Campaigns are defined as *“A series of*

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<sup>1</sup> Department of the Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, FMFM 1-1, *Campaigning*, (Washington: Government Publishing Office, 1990), pp 6-7.

<sup>2</sup> Department of national Defence, B-GG-005-004/AF-000, *Joint Doctrine for Canadian Forces Joint and Combined Operations*, (Ottawa: DND, Canada, 6 April 1995), p GL-E-11.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p GL-E-10.

*military operations in one theatre of operations designed to achieve a specific strategic objective.*"<sup>4</sup>

The definitions point out that some skills are required in order to wage war at the operational level. These skills reside in the commander who is ultimately responsible for planning the campaign, and employing the military forces that are assigned to him to accomplish strategic objectives. To possess these skills, a commander at the operational level must have some specific attributes. These attributes may vary from one commander to another. One commander may be characterised with a specific set of attributes, some being predominant and others not so evident. Another commander may be characterised with a second set of attributes with completely different emphasis.

Based on an analysis of LGen Slim's performance in the Burma campaign, this paper will demonstrate that intellect, vision, and determination are key attributes required by an operational level commander to be successful.

The concise Oxford dictionary defines intellect as the faculty of knowing, reasoning, and understanding.<sup>5</sup> It defines vision as imaginative insight, foresight, and sagacity in planning.<sup>6</sup> And finally, it defines determination as being fixated of purpose, and resolute.<sup>7</sup> These definitions will serve as official interpretation of these attributes for the purpose of this paper.

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p GL-E-3.

<sup>5</sup> J. B. Sykes, ed, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p 521.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p 1200.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p 261.

The paper will first discuss the attributes of an operational commander who mastered the operational art and was very successful in changing defeat into victory. During the Second World War, Lieutenant-General (LGen) William Slim commanded troops at the tactical and operational level in Burma. As a tactical commander he had to withdraw his troops across Burma to a safe haven in India. Upon being appointed commander of the XIV Army, he demonstrated his military genius by rebuilding confidence in its Army through the conduct of extensive training, impressing upon his soldiers his vision, and attending to logistic, medical support, welfare, and discipline of his soldiers. He then led his Army in a successful campaign to repossess Burma and destroy the Japanese Army. LGen Slim's experience or success in Burma will be used as a case study to illustrate that the key attributes that a commander must possess to be successful at the operational level of war are the commander's intellect, vision, and determination.

To better understand the campaign, a brief description of the background and strategic context of the war in Burma will be provided. Then, a brief description of the Allied withdrawal through Burma will be discussed to illustrate the state of the Allied troops before Slim took command of the XIV Army. The paper will then discuss the actions taken by Slim to prepare and train his Army before launching them in combat. Finally, the paper will discuss how Slim led his troops to victory during the offence through Burma. The paper will then discuss in general terms what other sources recommend as the required attributes for a commander to be successful. The paper will conclude, based on LGen Slim example, with a summary of the reasons why intellect, vision and determination are key attributes required by an operational level commander to be successful.

## BURMA CAMPAIGN

To better understand Slim's character before the Burma campaign is discussed, you will find at Annex A a short resume of his biography.

Japan, in 1939, frustrated with not having a complete victory over Chinese forces and with the problems of controlling a hostile population in occupied China, decided to shift to a strategy of attrition. In 1939 they captured most of China's remaining seaports, hoping to cut off all foreign supplies from China and thus force the collapse and surrender of Chiang Kai Shek's government. The Chinese, however, were able to keep open two supply routes, by means of which they could still obtain a trickle of military supplies. One of these routes was through British Burma, then over the twisting and narrow cart track known as the Burma Road.

In December 1941, the Japanese began their offensive and occupied Siam (Thailand). They started to invade Burma on 16 January 1942, and by 6 March Rangoon had fallen (see Annex B). The British, Indian, Burmese and Chinese forces (the latter under command of the American General Stilwell) had moved to positions several miles to the north of the city. General Alexander, who had flown from England to command the Allied Forces in Burma, planned to deny the enemy the two main routes leading from Rangoon to the capital Mandalay. The Allies situation was desperate. It is in this chaotic environment that LGen Slim was transferred from the Middle East to the Burma theatre. In the words of Lieutenant General Sir Geoffrey Evans in *The War Lords*,

*"Few commanders can have been faced with a more unfavourable situation than was Slim when he arrived on 19 March 1942 to assume command of what was termed Burcorps. In the place of desert and open country to which he had been accustomed until then, the terrain was jungle and rivers; the troops he was to command did not know him; their training, equipment and transport were unfitted for operations in this type of country and their morale*

*had undergone a severe shaking as a result of continuous withdrawals. His skeleton headquarters had been hastily made up from officers drawn from Headquarters Burma Area Army, wireless communication was practically non-existent except through the cavalry regiment; there were no maps and transport was at a premium. Most disturbing was the fact that there was no hope of reinforcements nor of replacing casualties to men and material, so that both had to be carefully preserved.”*<sup>8</sup>

Despite the pressing problems, both present and future, Slim quickly inspired confidence among his juniors by his personality and his frequent visits to the troops. Crisis followed crisis as the corps withdrew northwards. Throughout the withdrawal, Slim displayed robustness and determination of a very high order, and whatever he may have felt inwardly he always appeared to his subordinates, commanders and staff alike, both imperturbable and in complete charge of the situation.<sup>9</sup> On 19 April, the decision was taken to withdraw Burcorps to north-eastern India. There was a long way to go, the 600 yard wide river Chindwin had to be crossed while in close contact with the Japanese and time was short before the monsoon broke in May.

Continually harassed by an enemy whose morale was at its highest due to a succession of victories, with the British and Indian soldiers in rags, starving, racked with malaria and soaked to the skin, the rearguard of Burcorps, still carrying their personal arms, reached India and safety on 19 May 1942.<sup>10</sup> The corps, without once losing cohesion had retreated nearly 1000 miles in some three and half months carrying over 2000 sick and wounded. Even if this posed some risks, the corps members would refuse to abandon them. It was the longest retreat ever carried out by British troops. During the withdrawal Slim had commanded his corps for exactly two months. Evidence that his soldiers realised he had done all that was humanly possible was the

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<sup>8</sup> Geoffrey Evans, “Field Marshal The Viscount Slim,” in *The War Lords*, ed by Field-Marshal Sir Michael Carver (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976), p 380.

<sup>9</sup> Geoffrey Evans, “Field-Marshal The Viscount Slim,” in *The War Lords*, p 381.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p 380.

rousing farewell they accorded him when he relinquished command shortly after the retreat was completed.<sup>11</sup>

In the words of Duncan Anderson:

*“Slim acted on Burma Corps like a tonic. His diagnosis of its problems was correct, his remedies were sound. Yet even after his arrival, the corps continued to stagger from defeat to defeat. Slim was only a corps commander, subject to confusing and often contradictory orders issued by Alexander’s headquarters... Alexander handling of the campaign at Army level proved little short of disastrous... he tended to waver and delay, allowing the campaign to drift. As corps commander Slim desperately needed clear and attainable objectives. Was he to attack the enemy, retain territory, or keep Burma Corps intact and withdraw to India? Such clear direction was never given.”<sup>12</sup>*

Within a few weeks of returning to India, Slim was appointed to command the newly raised XV Corps with his headquarters in Calcuta. His responsibility was to defend Bengal from seaborne attack and assist the civil authorities to maintain law and order over many thousands of square miles. That task was made no easier by the fact that one of his three divisions was immobilised in Calcuta through lack of transport. XV Corps was plagued with lack of troops, discipline, and basic hygiene as stated by Evans: *“So bad did the situation become that the army was called in though stretched for numbers, even to the extent of employing the venereal patients in the hospitals, Slim gradually restored order and was able to concentrate on training his corps.”<sup>13</sup>*

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p 380.

<sup>12</sup> Duncan Anderson, “Slim, Field Marshal Lord Slim,” in *Churchill’s Generals*, ed by John Keegan, (London: George Weindenfeld & Nicolson Ltd, 1991), p 308.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p 381.

## PREPARATION/TRAINING

In October 1943, Slim was appointed Commander of the XIV Army. His first challenge was to invigorate a demoralised army. His method of dealing with this task permits a first glimpse of his attributes. In his memoirs, *Defeat into Victory*, Slim described that he immediately set out consciously to raise the fighting spirit of his army.<sup>14</sup> Through a series of unit visits, he impressed upon his soldiers his vision and the end-state sought for the XIV Army as “...not to defend India, to stop the Japanese advance, or even to occupy Burma, but to destroy the Japanese Army, to smash it as an evil thing.”<sup>15</sup> Through his meticulous attention to the logistic situation, the health, welfare and discipline of his soldiers, by his insistence on an aggressive outlook and the confidence he inspired in his staff and subordinate commanders, he laid the foundation for a series of resounding victories.<sup>16</sup> In order to minimise the requirement to replace casualties, it was imperative to have efficient medical support. Slim mastered the organisation, capabilities and tactics of deployable medical units from battalion aid stations to fourth echelon hospital. He applied his knowledge to improve the situation of his troops. His attention to medical problems was successful in maintaining a higher rate of retention of his troops and improve their moral.<sup>17</sup>

By December 1943, the situation had improved to the extent that offensive operations, at least on a limited scale, could be contemplated. Stocks of food, ammunition and petrol were

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<sup>14</sup> William Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, (New York: David McKay Company, 1961), p 155.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p 157.

<sup>16</sup> Geoffrey Evans, “Field-Marshal The Viscount Slim,” in *The War Lords*, ed by Field-Marshal Sir Michael Carver (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976), p 383.

<sup>17</sup> Ronald F. Bellamy and Craig H. Liewellyn, “Preventable Casualties: Rommel’s Flaw, Slim’s Edge,” *Army*, May, 1990, p 56.



increasing, airfields had been built and roads forward to the Burma frontier were nearing completion. It was Slim's intellect that provided both their depth analysis of XIV Army shortcomings and the proper remedies required to restore what was missing to transform it in a combat effective formation. Also, it was his intellect, vision, and determination that saw him directly or indirectly involved in the implementation of many innovations like the reorganisation of units to make them more suitable for air transport, the construction of parachutes out of local jute for equipment/supplies drops, construction of boats to safely cross and patrol the rivers, and the construction of a rubber based cloth using local materials to guaranty the use of roads during the monsoon. Meanwhile the Japanese, who were aware of the preparations to make the Imphal plain a base for the re-conquest of Burma and considered their best hope of remaining in Burma was to capture that British base before an offensive could be launched, were planning an all out assault on Imphal.<sup>18</sup>

In order for his troops to regain confidence in themselves, Slim had the vision to make sure that they would have victory during the first battles. Slim stated that his operations initially,

*“...were carefully staged, ably led, and, as I was always careful to ensure, in greatly preponderating strength. We attacked Japanese company positions with brigades fully supported by artillery and aircraft, platoon posts by battalions. Once when I was studying the plan for an operation of this kind submitted by the local commander, a visiting staff officer of high rank said, ‘Isn’t that using a steam hammer to crack a walnut?’ ‘Well,’ I answered, ‘if you happen to have a steam hammer handy and you don’t mind if there’s nothing left of the walnut, it’s not a bad way to crack it.’ Besides, we could not at this stage risk even small failures.”<sup>19</sup>*

For a number of reasons it had been clear to Slim that the re-occupation of Burma would have its beginnings in the northern (Stilwell in command of the Chinese troops) and central (IV

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<sup>18</sup> Geoffrey Evans, “Field-Marshal The Viscount Slim,” in *The War Lords*, p 383.

Corps) fronts. It was equally clear that with the precarious lines of communication, it was unlikely that he would ever be able to concentrate a force across the river Chindwin, the first major obstacle. To restore confidence, his first major battle had to be a success. This was likely to be achieved only if the Japanese attacked first and it seemed that this they were about to do.<sup>20</sup>

Slim prepared his campaign plan under the strategic direction:

*“Your first duty is to engage the enemy as closely and continuously as is possible so that his forces... may be worn down and consumed by attrition and to establish our superiority to the extent of forcing a diversion of his forces from the Pacific theatre. Secondly, but of no less importance, you are to maintain and enlarge our contacts with China, both by the air route, and by making direct contact in Northern Burma by the use, amongst, of the strongest possible ground forces specially organised and supplied from the air.”<sup>21</sup>*

Slim identified the Japanese 15th Army as being the enemy centre of gravity in his theatre of operations and sent out to destroy it. He identified Mandalay, the capital and transportation hub of Burma, and Rangoon, the all season port-city, as operational objectives which under his control would threaten all Japanese operations in Burma. Slim’s campaign plan was phased and included a broad-front advance to secure these objectives. The campaign was broken into four distinct operations: the overland advance of XV corps in Arakan, the advance of Stilwell’s Chinese on Myitkyina, a long-range penetration operation by Wingate’s special forces to help Stilwell, and an advance on the main front in Assam by IV Corps to the Chindwin river.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Ronald F. Bellamy and Craig H. Liewellyn, “Preventable Casualties: Rommel’s Flaw, Slim’s Edge,” pp 162-163.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*, p 384.

<sup>21</sup> United Kingdom, *Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff by the Supreme Allied Commander South-East Asia, 1943-1945*, (London: HM Stationary Office, 1951), p 226.

<sup>22</sup> William Slim, *Defeat into Victory*, p 185-186.

To destroy the enemy centre of gravity, the destruction of the Japanese 15th Army, Slim concluded that initially, because of the force ratio, he would only be able to seriously weaken the Japanese. To achieve this at an early stage, he would entice the enemy into a major battle in circumstances so favourable to his troops that he could destroy three or four Japanese divisions. Slim maintained *“I do not want the first big clashes to be on equal terms, division for division. I wanted superior strength at the decisive point for the opening of the struggle; after one victory to confirm the spirit of the Fourteenth Army, I should not worry so much about the odds against us.”*<sup>23</sup>

It is Slim’s intellect and vision that provided this judicious analysis of the enemy and friendly strengths and weaknesses, the terrain, and time and space, that allowed the development of a sound campaign plan that would give him victory.

## **OFFENSE**

In late November 1943, Slim launched XV Corps into the Arakan against an estimated two enemy divisions as per his campaign plan. XV corps immediately experienced good success by regaining a good portion of the lost territories. It soon became apparent that Lieutenant-General Kawabe, the Commander of the Japanese Burma Army, was receiving reinforcements diverted from the Pacific theatre, which indicated that part of the allied strategic objectives were being met.

In February 1944, Kawabe launched the first of a two pronged attack with the ultimate objective of capturing Imphal, the major British administrative base (see Annex C). Kawabe’s

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<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, pp187-188.

initial attack against XV Corps in the Arakan was intended to cause Slim to divert forces from Imphal. Kawabe's second thrust, which constituted the majority of his available forces, would strike to capture Imphal.<sup>24</sup> The Japanese plan had two weaknesses; it was tied to a strict timetable and demanded the capture of British logistics to sustain it. The Japanese reliance on captured logistic stocks derived from their earlier experience fighting the British. Each prior offensive against the British resulted in the British retreating to shorten their lines of communications and clear up their rear areas. The speed with which the Japanese advanced, in combination with the British retreat, resulted in the continuous capture of logistical supplies by the Japanese.

Slim's intellect and vision had allowed him to anticipate the Japanese offensive actions and weaknesses. He ordered his forces to adopt defensive strong points, which he re-supplied with "*the greatest air supply operation in the history of the war.*"<sup>25</sup> In reverting into a defensive posture, Slim imposed upon Kawabe the major battle that he had sought. Temporarily adopting a defensive posture gave him the advantage of force ratio. Slim's determination to maintain the defensive strong points by aerial re-supply and reinforcements rather than retreating in the face of the Japanese offensive, destroyed Kawabe's timetable and denied him urgently needed logistic supplies. Moreover, it forced Kawabe into an attritionist battle, which Kawabe could ill afford. "*For four months, March to June, the battle raged at Imphal and Kohima. Crises were almost daily occurrences in the early stages, but due to Slim's resilience and determination never to admit defeat, together with strong backing given him by Mountbatten and Gifford, they were*

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<sup>24</sup> William Slim, *Defeat Into Victory...*, p 301.

<sup>25</sup> Geoffrey Evans, *Slim as Military Commander*, (London: Collins, 1970), p 161.

overcome.<sup>26</sup> The Japanese offensive against Imphal/Kohima failed. The Japanese casualties were estimated at between 53,000 and 90,000 and included the destruction of three to five of its divisions when compared to 24,000 allied casualties (there is discrepancy between these figures depending of the references). Evans, in his chronicle of Slim wrote: “*the defeat at Imphal and Kohima was the greatest on land ever suffered by the Japanese in their history, and a victory second to none in the Second World War.*”<sup>27</sup>

With the Japanese in retreat, Slim was determined to take the initiative despite the Allied casualties and re-supply limitations. He ordered an immediate pursuit to the Chindwin River (see Annex D). Many commanders would have allowed time for an operational pause before undertaking a major offensive. It was Slim’s determination that provided the allied the required momentum to quickly pass from a defensive posture to a pursuit that eventually will give them victory. The Supreme Allied Commander South-East Asia, Lord Mountbatten, removed XV Corps, in the Arakan, from Slim’s command thereby enabling him to focus on the advance. XXXIII Corps, which had been committed to reinforce Imphal and Kohima remained under Slim’s command. Hence, XIV Army maintained a two corps organisation (IV and XXXIII Corps).

Following a pause at the Chindwin, Slim launched his army on an advance to the Irrawaddy River where he intended to pause before crossing it to secure the operational objective of Mandalay. Slim’s continuous analysis of the situation, the condition of his troops, the logistic situation, the terrain and lines of communications, and the enemy, were key in his decisions to

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<sup>26</sup> Geoffrey Evans, “Field-Marshal The Viscount Slim,” in *The War Lords*, ed by Field-Marshal Sir Michael Carver (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976), p 384.

<sup>27</sup> Geoffrey. Evans, *Slim as a Military Commander*,...p 176.

order operational pauses to allow replenishment of his army and strike the enemy on his conditions i.e. at the time and place of his choosing. During his advance to the Irrawaddy, it remained Slim's intent to draw the Japanese into open battle, this time on the Swebo plain, where superior Allied air, armour and artillery resources would completely destroy the enemy.

General Kimura, who had a decidedly different concept of operational fighting, had (unknown to Slim) replaced Kawabe. Kimura had been ordered to defend the capital Mandalay to the end. His plan was to force the allies to cross the Irrawaddy River where light Japanese forces would hold the Allies while armour heavy reserves would push them back into the river. Kimura's aim was to hold Slim up until the fast approaching monsoon, after which Slim would be forced to retire to shorten his lines of communication during the bad weather. Kimura would then refit his Army and renew the offensive the following year.

Slim perceived a change in the Japanese tactics during the advance of his army. The Japanese were now surrendering or giving ground at a faster rate than ever before. The build up of Japanese forces concentrated on the capital Mandalay became apparent to Slim. This concentration of forces at Mandalay is what permitted Slim to once again demonstrate his superior intellect and vision.

Updated intelligence permitted Slim to identify the Japanese communications and supply centre at Meiktila as Kimura's army Achilles' Heel. Slim recognised the opportunity to deliver a decisive blow to the enemy. In gaining Meiktila, Slim would be superbly poised to envelop Mandalay, and he would then prevent both Kimura's retreat southward and any reinforcement or re-supply from both Meiktila and Rangoon. Slim superior intellect was again illustrated in his flexibility to amend and adapt his campaign plan to the new opportunity. He ordered XXXIII

Corps to fix the Japanese at Mandalay. He deceived the enemy into believing that IV Corps would continue its advance and cross the Irrawaddy River further north, when in fact he moved IV Corps over 150 miles south, through dense jungle, to cross the Irrawaddy and capture almost unopposed Meiktila. The movement of IV Corps took over three weeks, during which Slim's front was guarded by XXXIII Corps to reinforce the deception. Slim took great risks in conducting a wide envelopment and leaving his front weakened, but his intellect, vision, and determination enabled him to exploit a situation to his advantage. An opportunity presented itself; he recognised it, and took advantage of it by changing his campaign plan, a change that brought about "*one of the most brilliant strokes of strategy of the Second World War.*"<sup>28</sup>

The fighting for Mandalay remained ferocious but Slim's possession of Meiktila had cought Kimura off balance and permitted the ultimate capture of Mandalay. The destruction of the Japanese 15th Army was in hand and the road to Rangoon lay open.

During the race to Rangoon, in one month, Slim's mobile corps advanced 370 miles against a series of fight to the end delaying actions by courageous Japanese remnants. By 5th May it joined up with the sea borne landing in Rangoon, just as the rain began. Except for destroying isolated formations and units, the campaign was over. In nine months of fighting, from 6 August 1944 to 5 May 1945, Slim had taken his army, including heavy tanks and vehicles, through 1000 miles of largely undeveloped country and crossed two wide rivers – one of which was strongly defended – with inadequate equipment, to inflict a mortal defeat upon the most resolute of opponents.<sup>29</sup> The measure of Slim's greatness as a successful commander lies in

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<sup>28</sup> Geoffrey Evans, "Field-Marshal The Viscount Slim," in *The War Lords*, ed by Field-Marshal Sir Michael Carver (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976), p 385.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p 386.

the fact that he never had enough to do what he had to do. It is Slim's intellect, vision, and determination more than any other attributes that made him the commander with the capabilities to provide the XIV Army with the impetus and direction to change its misfortune into success.

## **DIFFERENT VIEWS ON WHAT ARE THE ATTRIBUTES REQUIRED BY AN OPERATIONAL LEVEL COMMANDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL**

The study of Slim's as a commander at the operational level revealed that his key attributes were intellect, vision, and determination. The paper will now presents different views on what are the attributes required by an operational level commander to be successful. The Canadian Army and most of its allies have developed during the past few years, a new doctrine of command to face the dynamic challenges of the information age. Major-General Jeffery, then commandant of the Canadian Land Force Command and Staff College wrote as a foreword for the new Land Force Command doctrine manual: *"The human component of a command system has primacy. No technology will replace it – the importance of our leaders cannot be overstated, as they alone will bring about success."*<sup>30</sup> The human dimension and especially the commander at operational level are central for success in military operations.

Command is defined in the Canadian Army as: *"The authority vested in an individual of the armed forces for the direction, co-ordination, and control of military forces."*<sup>31</sup> Command has a legal and constitutional status, codified in The National Defence Act.<sup>32</sup> This is a legalistic

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<sup>30</sup> Department of National Defence, *B-GL-300-003/FP-000 Land Force Command*, (Ottawa: DND, Canada, 1995), p i.

<sup>31</sup> Department of National defence, *B-GL\_300-001/FP-000 Conduct of Land Operations – Operational Level Doctrine for the Canadian Army*, (Ottawa: DND, Canada, 15 September 1996), p G-3.

<sup>32</sup> The National Defence Act (NDA), Chapter N-5, Part1, para 19.



definition of command; it is also defined as a combat function.<sup>33</sup> Command is not solely the authority and responsibility vested in an individual; more importantly, it is the *exercise* of that authority and responsibility. Used as a verb, it is clear that command is a human endeavour, and relies more on the dynamics that exist between a commander and his subordinates than it does on the legal authority. The Army identifies the components of command as human, doctrinal, and organisational. The doctrinal and organisational components of command will not be discussed any further as it is not in the scope of this paper. The human component centres on the ability to get soldiers to fight based on the leadership and personal attributes of the commander.<sup>34</sup>

Before discussing specific attributes that a commander must possess at the operational level to be successful, it is necessary to understand the environment in which the commander exercises his leadership. Command is the most important activity in war. Command by itself will not ensure victory, nor will it drive home a single attack. It will not destroy a single enemy target, nor will it carry out an emergency re-supply. However, none of these warfighting activities is possible without effective command. Command integrates all combat functions to produce deadly, synchronised combat power, giving purpose to all battlefield activities.<sup>35</sup>

To be successful, a commander must master the art of decision-making, motivate and direct all ranks into action to accomplish missions. He requires a vision of the desired end-state, an understanding of military science (doctrine), military art (the profession of arms), concepts, missions, priorities, and the allocation of resources. He requires an ability to assess people and risks, and must continually re-evaluate the situation. He must have a clear understanding of the

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<sup>33</sup> DND, *Land Force Command*, p iii.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p iii.

dynamics that take place inside and outside his command. Above all, he must possess the ability to decide on a course of action and inspire his troops to carry out that action.<sup>36</sup>

When officers are enrolled in the Canadian Armed Forces, they are expected to have some of the attributes that will make them successful commanders. The Canadian Armed Forces Commissioning Scroll states:

*We reposing especial trust and Confidence in your Loyalty, Courage and Integrity, do by these Presents Constitute and Appoint you to be an Officer in our Canadian Armed Forces. You are carefully and diligently to discharge your Duty as such...*<sup>37</sup>

Those basic attributes are further developed in the different doctrine manuals of different services and armed forces. There is no definite list nor a universal understanding and acceptance of what are the attributes for a commander to be successful. They vary depending of the culture of the forces and their commander, and the three levels of war (tactical, operational, or strategic) that the commander is exercising his authority and his command.

A commander must consistently make decisions in a climate of uncertainty, while constrained by time. Uncertainty pervades the battlefield, in the form of unknowns about the enemy, time and space, even our own forces. In the words of Carl Von Clausewitz:

*War is the realm of uncertainty; three quarters of the factors on which action in war is based are wrapped in a fog of greater or lesser uncertainty. A sensitive and discriminating judgement is called for; a skilled intelligence to scent out the truth...*<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> DND, *Land Force Command...*, p 1.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p 5.

<sup>37</sup> Canadian Armed Forces Commissioning Scroll.

<sup>38</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, (Princetown, NJ: Princetown University Press, 1976), p101.

The Land Force Command manual state that “*Much scope for success will depend upon the commander’s experience, flexibility, will, determination and above all, his decisiveness in the face of uncertainty.*”<sup>39</sup> These attributes are the first officially defined in a Canadian Army doctrine manual. They will be part of the spectrum of attributes that we will further elaborate in our discussion.

The successful commander must adapt and thrive under circumstances of complexity, ambiguity and rapid change. Because war is a clash between human wills, each with its respective freedom of action, commanders cannot be expected to anticipate, with absolute certainty, the enemy’s intentions. The interactive and complex nature of war guarantees uncertainty, or more commonly called “fog of war.” It is the commander’s intellect and vision that will make it possible for him to see through the fog of war by analysing and anticipating the enemy actions as accurately as possible, despite the uncertainty of war.

Command at lower levels is closely linked with a direct style of leadership. Much has been written on military leadership, and particularly leadership at unit level in war. “*Leadership, essentially, is the art of influencing others to do willingly what is required in order to achieve an aim or goal. It is the projection of the personality, character and will of the commander.*”<sup>40</sup>

Commanders, at the operational level, require leadership but they must possess above all intellect, vision, and determination. These attributes are not exclusive but should be viewed as key to the success of the operational commander. Among various authors, there is no unique formula for describing the right combination of attributes required of commanders. However, as

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<sup>39</sup> DND, *Land Force Command...*, p 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p 6.

will be seen intellect, vision, and determination are common elements that are often repeated in one form or another.

Clausewitz, for example, described two “indispensable” attributes of command: “*First, an intellect that, even in the darkest hour, retains some glimmerings of the inner light which leads to the truth; and second, the courage to follow this faint light wherever it may go.*”<sup>41</sup>

Sun Tzu specified five attributes that general should possess *wisdom, sincerity, humanity, courage and strictness.*

*If wise, a commander is able to recognise changing circumstances and to act expediently. If sincere, his men will have no doubt of the certainty of rewards and punishments. If humane, he loves mankind, sympathises with others, and appreciates their industry and toil. If courageous, he gains victory by seizing opportunity without hesitation. If strict, his troops are disciplined because they are in awe of him and are afraid of punishment.*<sup>42</sup>

Bevin Alexander in his book *How Great Generals Win*, analyses the mindset that distinguishes a truly great commander from a merely good one: unpredictability, vision, charisma, and an ability to play on the opponent’s mind.<sup>43</sup> In his book, the author has focussed his study more on the commander ability to apply the principles of war rather than his human attributes. But to know what principle of war to apply and when, the commander must have a vision of the upcoming battle to decide which one is more pertinent to apply.

The British, in their publication *Army Doctrine Publication Volume 2 Command*, identify a combination of height attributes required by a commander to be successful. They are leadership, professional knowledge, vision and intellect, judgement and initiative, courage and

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<sup>41</sup> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*, p 102.

<sup>42</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), p 65.

resolve, self-confidence, the ability to communicate, and integrity and example.<sup>44</sup> They argue that there is no ideal pattern of leadership or simple prescription for it, different commanders will motivate subordinates in different ways. They describe Generalship as being the highest form of military leadership, and marks an officer suited for operational command at the highest levels. It involves professional knowledge and proficiency, intellect, and judgement to a higher degree than required at lower levels of command.<sup>45</sup>

Field-Marshal B.L. Montgomery wrote a pamphlet on High Command in War when he was Commander in Chief of 21 Army Group in June 1945 in Germany. He stated that “in war it is the man that matters.”<sup>46</sup> He further mentioned that commanders in all grades must have attributes of leadership; they must have initiative; and they must have the “drive” to get things done; they must have that character and ability which will enable them to stand firm when the issue hangs in the balance. A commander in chief must be a good judge of men, and be able to have the right man in the right place at the right time. He has got to be a very clear thinker, and able to sort out the essentials from the mass of factors that bear on every problem.<sup>47</sup>

The U.S. Marine Corps publication on Campaigning discuss leadership at the operational level and state that it requires clarity of vision, strength of will, and extreme moral courage.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Bevin Alexander, *How Great Generals Win* (New York: W.W. Norton & company, Inc., 1993) p 305.

<sup>44</sup> United Kingdom, *Army Doctrine Publication Volume 2 Command*, Army Code No 71564. (London: Ministry of Defence, April 1995) p 2-15.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, p 2-17.

<sup>46</sup> B.L. Montgomery, 21 Army Group, *High Command in War* (Germany: 21 Army Group, 1945), p 9.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*, pp 10-13.

<sup>48</sup> United States, Department of the Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, FMFM 1-1, *Campaigning*, (Washington: Government Publishing Office, 25 January 1990), p 82.

Edgar F. Puryear in his book *Nineteen Stars* did a study of four U.S. generals: Eisenhower, MacArthur, Marshal, and Patton. He argues that to be successful a commander requires a willingness to devote twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, to his command.<sup>49</sup> He concludes that there is a pattern of common leadership attributes that were shared by the four generals: integrity, selflessness, concern for others, reverence, and showmanship. Also a successful commander had to be dedicated to one's career, willingness to work and study, and the ability to make decisions quickly and well.<sup>50</sup>

Field Marshal Sir William Slim argues that command was the projection of personality. So it is question of what sort of personality a commander should have. He ought to have a whole lot of attributes, but there are certain ones that are basic and without which, he will never be a successful commander. In accordance with Slim, these attributes are will power, judgement, flexibility of mind, knowledge, and integrity.<sup>51</sup>

Military leadership is the projection of personality and character to get soldiers to do what is required of them. Various commanders will motivate subordinates in different ways. A commander determines his own objective and, while his staff assists, it is the commander who conceives the plan and provides the drive, motivation and energy to attain this objective. At the operational level, a successful commander must not only have professional knowledge, intellect, and judgement to a higher degree than required at tactical level of command, but he must also have the ability to think at the macro level, understand the political dimension, the ability to deliver an appropriate message through the media, and the additional responsibilities that are

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<sup>49</sup> Edgar F. Puryear, *Nineteen Stars* (Orange, Virginia: green Publishers, 1971), p 393.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, pp 395-396.

associated with joint and combined command. The operational level commander is not only a commander who has proven himself at the tactical level, but also one who is truly suited to higher command.<sup>52</sup>

Without intellect, a commander will not be able to understand a complex situation in a campaign or major operation, nor be able to envisage courses of action and take decisions. Apart from intelligence, intellect embraces discernment (including the ability to seek and identify the essentials), originality (based on imagination), judgement, and initiative.<sup>53</sup> Intellect is closely linked to vision. It is possible to have intellect without vision but it is impossible to have vision without intellect.

No coherent plans of a campaign can be written without a clear vision of how it should be concluded. It establishes the framework by which command at lower levels is developed, practised and sustained. The way in which a commander communicates his vision to his subordinates will depend upon his own leadership style; he may address large audiences, visit his subordinates and units, issue directives or use a combination of these methods.

At the tactical level, judgement is a matter of common sense, tempered by military experience. As responsibility increases, a greater judgement is required from the commanders. Increasingly, it becomes a function of knowledge and intellect.<sup>54</sup> To succeed, a commander must be able to read each major development in a tactical or operational situation and interpret it

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<sup>51</sup> William Slim, "Higher Command in War," *Military Review*, May, 1990, p 11.

<sup>52</sup> DND, *Land Force Command...*, p 13.

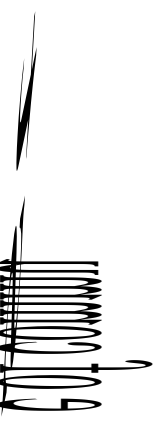
<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*, p 14.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, p 15.

correctly in the light of the intelligence available. This will allow him in taking timely decisions.<sup>55</sup> A successful commander requires honed powers of decision-making. He needs a clear and discerning mind to distinguish the essentials from a mass of details, and a sound judgement to identify practical solutions.

Barbara Tuchman asserts that the key attribute of command is “the absolute unbreakable, unbendable determination to fulfil the mission no matter what the obstacles, the antagonists or the frustrations.”<sup>56</sup>

Determination (synonymous to decisiveness, resolve, or willpower) is central to the exercise of command requiring a balance between analysis and intuition. A commander must have confidence in his own judgement. He should maintain his chosen course of action until persuaded that there is a sufficiently significant change in a situation to require a new course of action. A commander requires the moral courage to adopt a new course of action and then the mental flexibility to act purposefully when the





When we talk about determination, it is related to or is synonymous to willpower.

General Von Seeckt places willpower above intellect:

*The essential thing is action. Action has three stages: the decision born of thought, the order or preparation for execution, and the execution itself. All three stages are governed by the will. The will is rooted in character, and for the man of action character is of more critical importance than intellect. Intellect without will is worthless, will without intellect is dangerous.*<sup>60</sup>

This definition or statement will certainly raise discussions. Depending of one's opinion, intellect or determination may take precedence. What is important is that both are required. At the tactical level, willpower or determination is more predominant than intellect and vice versa at the operational level. A commander must possess determination, a quality that relates directly to the first Principle of War – *Selection and Maintenance of the Aim*. Determination helps the commander to remain undaunted by setbacks, casualties and hardship; it gives him the personal drive and resolve to see the operation through to success. He must have the courage, boldness, robustness and determination to pursue that course of action that he knows to be right.<sup>61</sup>

As we have seen so far, everybody has his own understanding what attributes are required by a commander to be successful. In general, the higher the level of command, the wider is the scope of attributes required. The emphasis on a particular quality, or the selection of the required attributes, is subjective. The attributes required at higher level of command are likely to require greater moral than physical courage, and will have increasing demands placed on their intellect. Increasingly abstract and conceptual skills such as vision will complement those of leadership, judgement, initiative and self-confidence. Determination is required to

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<sup>60</sup> Von Seeckt, *Thoughts of a Soldier*. (London: E. Benn Limited, 1930), p 123.

<sup>61</sup> DND, *Land Force Command...*, p 17.

exercise command but it must be balanced with mental flexibility to avoid degenerating into obstinacy.

Other attributes such as courage, physical and mental fitness, self-confidence, ability to communicate effectively, and integrity are some other attributes required by successful commanders at the tactical and operational levels of war. You will find at annex A a list of attributes that different authors or official doctrine manuals submit as being required by commanders to be successful. Some or a combination of the attributes listed at annex A are required by commanders to be successful at the tactical, operational, or strategic levels of war. Some are more important or predominant than others depending at what level of war the commander is operating. Most of the authors recognise that the commanders at higher levels of command require various attributes including intellect, vision, and determination or their synonyms.

## **CONCLUSION**

The study of the Burma Campaign has highlighted Slim's military genius through his actions during three significant events: the invigoration of his army, his defeat of the Japanese at Imphal and Kohima, and finally his operationally superb deception manoeuvre to envelop and capture the operational objective of Mandalay. Slim was without doubt a great commander at the operational level.

The analysis of Slim as a commander during the Burma campaign has demonstrated that his intellect and vision enabled him to analyse rapidly the situation and exploit opportunities, while his determination enabled him to continuously push his army to achieving its end-state, the destruction of the Japanese 15th Army, in one of the most difficult theatre of operations of the

Second World War. He was able to read his enemy's mind and sequenced his actions to force the enemy to fight on time and ground of his choosing. It is Slim's intellect, vision, and determination which successfully led the allied forces over 1000 miles in the liberation of Burma. And it is the same attributes that present day officers, striving to command at the operational level, must reflect upon and develop. Professor John Keegan, many years after the campaign, described Slim as "*the only general of the Second World War to defeat a major Japanese army on the Asian mainland and liberate a conquered territory by ground fighting alone.*"<sup>62</sup>

In the words of Lieutenant General G. Evans in *The War Lords*, "*In the operational field Slim's success in Burma sprang from his meticulous strategic and logistic planning based on an uncanny ability to see into the future. Always one move and sometimes more in advance of his enemy, he was also at times ahead of his superior commanders.*"<sup>63</sup> This underlines Slim's superior intellect and vision that are attributes that a commander at the operational level should possess to be successful.

Slim's intellect made him realise the potentialities and value of air support in the jungles of Burma even quicker than even most air force officers. He realised that air superiority, the movement of troops by air, supply dropping and air landing supplies, would allow for operations to be staged in a country lacking adequate communications and likewise would nullify the normal Japanese tactics of envelopment and penetration.<sup>64</sup> Above all, Slim proved beyond doubt

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<sup>62</sup> John Keegan, *Who's Who in Military History*, (London: Routledge, 1996), p 274.

<sup>63</sup> Geoffrey Evans, "Field-Marshal The Viscount Slim," in *The War Lords*, ed by Field-Marshal Sir Michael Carver (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976), p 387.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.* p 387.

that jungle warfare is primarily a matter of logistics in which vision must play a major part. It is his determination that transformed a defeated army into a victorious one.

Many authors recognise that a commander at higher level of command requires greater moral than physical courage, and will have increasing demands placed on his intellect. Vision is often cited as required by the commander at higher level to give him, the sagacity in planning. Also they recognise the requirement for having determination in order to win through or fulfil the mission no matter what the obstacles.

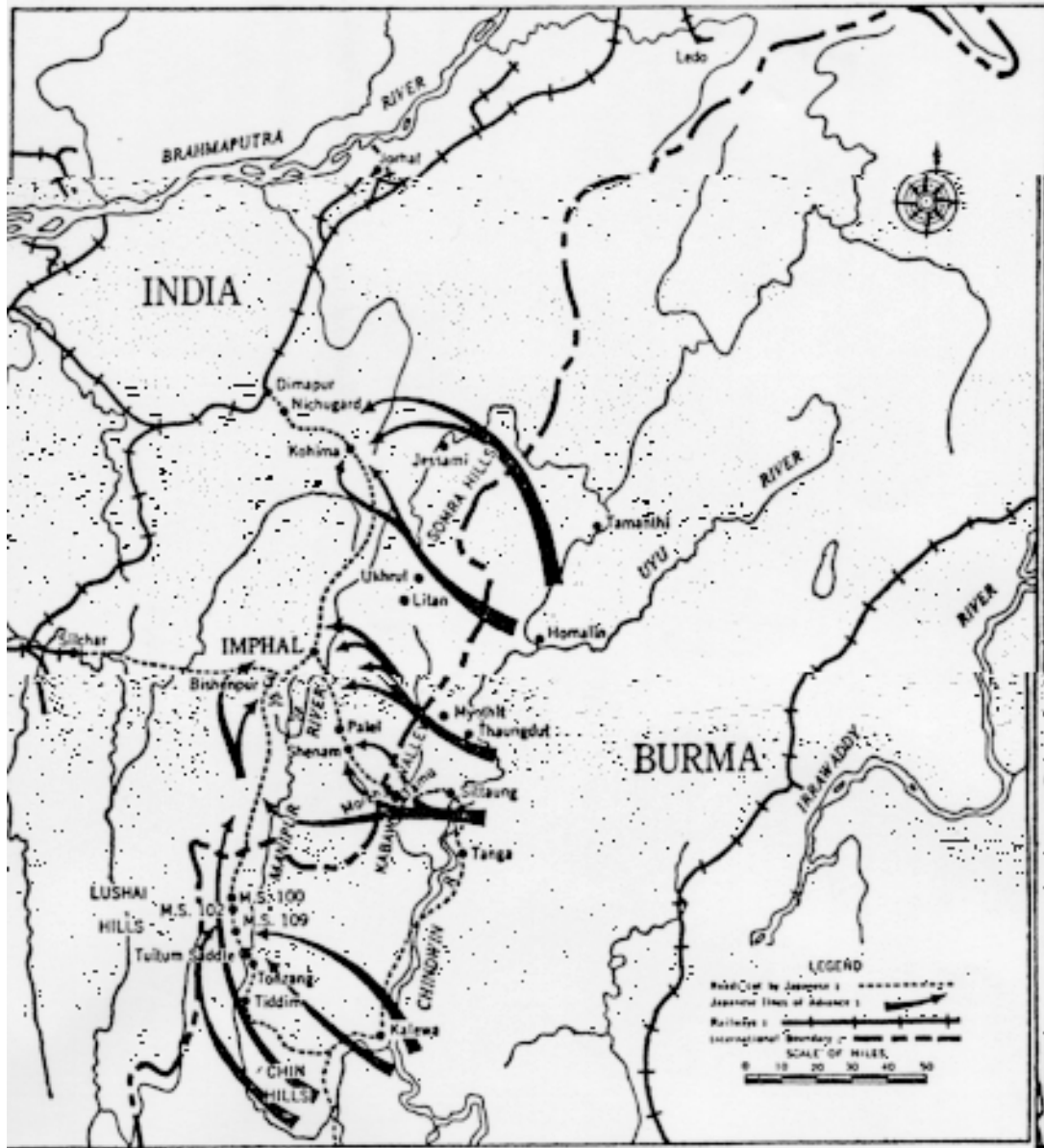
A large number of other attributes are cited, as listed at Annex E, as being required by commanders to be successful. Many are synonymous, and some are more predominant at the operational level of command. Intellect, vision, and determination, or their synonyms are key attributes commonly cited by various authors as required by commanders at higher level. As demonstrated by the analysis of LGen Slim performance during the Burma campaign, intellect, vision, and determination are key attributes required by an operational level commander to be successful.



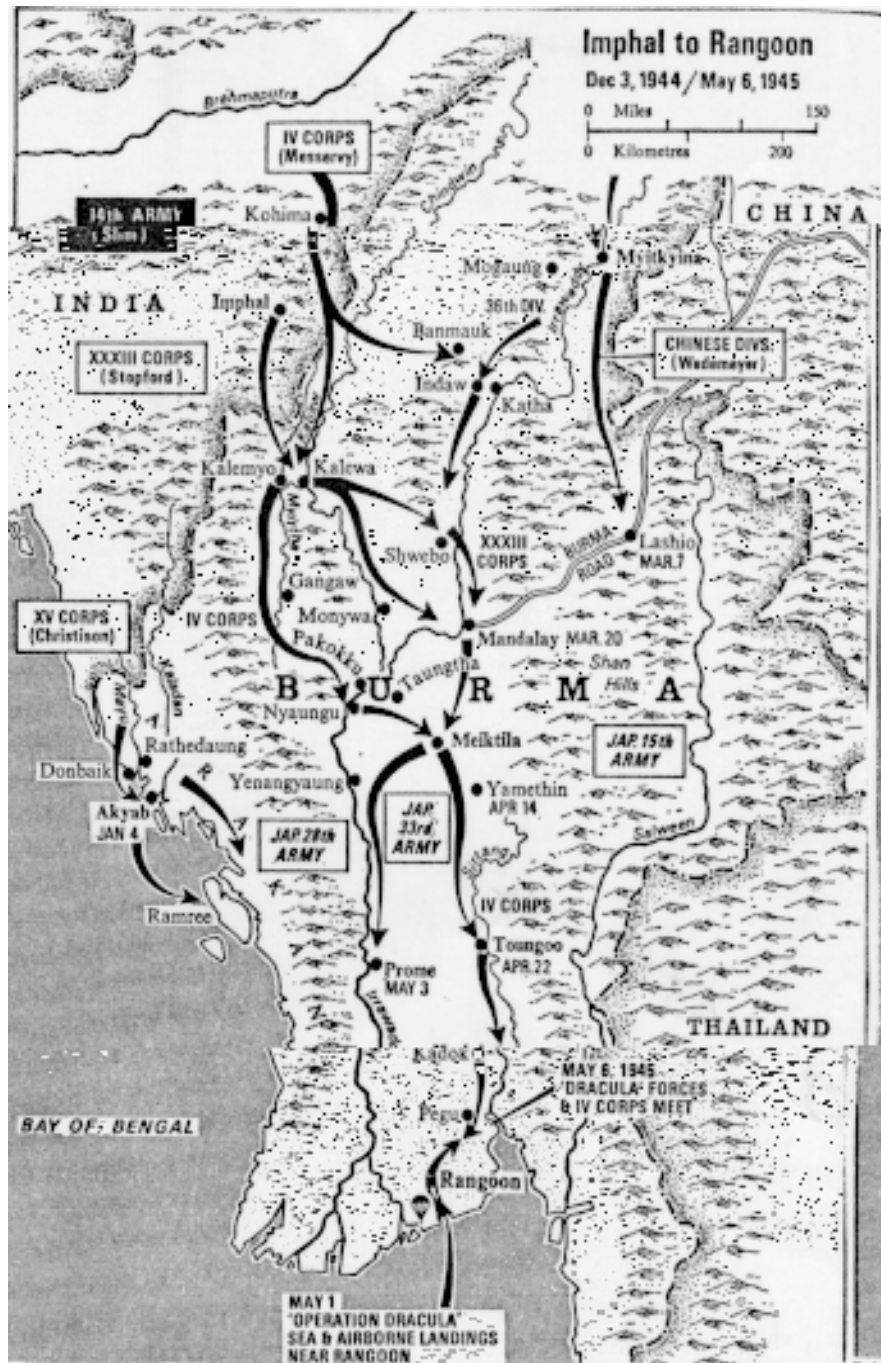
- 6 August 1891: William Joseph Slim was born in Bristol, England
- Before First World War he joined the Birmingham University Officer Cadet Corps
- 1914: commissioned in the Warwickshire Regiment
- 1915: wounded in action at Gallipoli
- 1917: wounded in action and awarded MC for actions at Baghdad and
- 1919: transferred to Indian Army
- 1920: posted to Gurkha Rifles
- 1926: attend Indian Staff College
- 1934-1936: instructor Camberly Staff College
- 1937: attend the Imperial Defence College
- 1938: CO of 2/7th Gurkhas
- 1939: promoted Brigadier and take command of 10th Brigade of 5th Indian Division in Sudan
- 1941: promoted Major General and take command of 10th Indian Division in Iraq and is wounded in action

- 1942: promoted Lieutenant General and take command of the Burma Corps, then the XV Corps in Calcuta
- 1943: took command of 14th Army
- 1945: promoted to General and take command of Allied Land Forces in South East Asia
- 1946: appointed Commandant IDC
- 1948: promoted Field Marshal and appointed Chief Imperial General Staff
- 1953: appointed Governor General of Australia
- 1959: appointed Knight of the Garter
- 1960: elevated Viscount Slim of Burma
- 1963: appointed Constable of Windsor Castle
- 14 December 1970: died in London









**Map 2**  
**Imphal to Rangoon**  
December 1944 - May 1945  
Liddell Hart, *History of the Second World War*, p 632.

### **ATTRIBUTES REQUIRED BY COMMANDERS TO BE SUCCESSFUL**

The following is not an exhaustive list; it provides a spectrum of attributes from different authors or official doctrine publications submitted as being required by commanders to be successful. Some apply more to the tactical level of command and others apply more to the operational level:

- Ability to plan in detail
- Ability to translate strategic aims into operational objectives
- Ability to communicate effectively
- Ability to play on the opponent's mind
- Ability to make decisions quickly and well
- Adaptability
- Analytical ability
- Approachable
- Assessment of subordinates/good judge of men
- Audacity
- Boldness
- Broad perspective
- Character
- Charisma
- Clear thinker
- Communication skills
- Concern for others
- Courage
- Creativeness
- Dedication
- Determination

- Discipline
- Drive to get things done
- Duty before self
- Effective communication
- Example
- Fairness
- Firmness
- Flexibility
- Fortitude
- Humanity
- Humility
- Humour
- Imperturbable
- Improvisation
- Initiative
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Intellect
- Intuition
- Judgement
- Kindly
- Leadership
- Loyalty
- Luck
- Moral courage
- Originality
- Personal application

- Persuasion
- Physical and mental fitness
- Professional experience
- Professional knowledge
- Proficiency
- Reliability
- Respect
- Resolve
- Reverence
- Risk-taking
- Robustness
- Sagacity
- Self-confidence
- Selflessness
- Self-enhancement
- Showmanship
- Sincerity
- Strictness
- Strength of will
- Thoroughness
- Trust
- Understanding logistics
- Unpredictability
- Vision
- Will power
- Willingness to work and study
- Wisdom

## ANNOTATED LIST OF WORKS CITED

Alexander, Bevin, *How Great Generals Win*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1993.

This book provides a review of 13 Great Generals from Hanibal Barca to Douglas MacArthur. It describes what principles of war or strategy/tactics they were using to win great victories. It argues that the principles of war over the years have not changed but it depends on the Great General to know and have the vision which one to apply at the proper time.

Anderson, Duncan. "Slim, Field Marshal Lord Slim." *Churchill's Generals*. Edited by John Keegan. London: George Weindenfeld & Nicolson Ltd, 1991. John Keegan has assembled an outstanding group of military historians to examine the careers of twenty key generals – the men who lost the battles of 1940-42 as well as those who from 1942 to 1945 helped to turn the tide of world war from defeat into victory.

Bellamy, Ronald F. and Craig H. Liewellyn, "Preventable Casualties: Rommel's Flaw, Slim's Edge." *Army*, May, 1990, pp 52-56. This article provides a surprising well-documented statistics on casualties and the link between them and the commander's attention, or lack of it, to medical support in the field. It gives a good insight on the importance for the commander to pay attention to medical support to his troops.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *B-GL-300-003/FP-000 Land Force Command*.

Ottawa: DND Canada, 21 July 1996. This publication provides a very good overview of the relationship between leadership and command. It gives the official Canadian Army understanding of these concepts and is a very useful guide for any officers who wants to

learn what he should know about Generalship or what is required from an officer to become a successful commander.

Canada. Department of National Defence. *B-GG-005-004/AF-000 Joint Doctrine for Canadian Forces*. Ottawa: DND Canada, 6 April 1995. This official publication has a chapter devoted to Command and Control of Joint Operations. It briefly discusses the principles of command and the commander. It provides a different perspective of the attributes that a commander must possess to be successful at the operational level of war.

Canada. Department of National Defence. Canadian Forces College, *Aide Memoire: Campaigning and Operational Concepts*. Toronto: DND, Canada, 1995. This précis provides a concise explanation of the operational level of war and the vocabulary associated with modern campaigning doctrine. As his title indicates, it is a good Aide Memoir, but to have a deeper comprehension of the topic it is recommended to do additional reading.

Clausewitz, C., Von, *On War*. Translated by M. Howard and P. Paret. Princetown: Princetown University Press, 1984. This is a classic on operational art that all professional officers should not only read but also study. It conceptualises and discusses warfighting in a way that it is still relevant in today modern warfare. A very good reference for an officer that wants to develop his understanding of operational art in anticipation of future senior appointments at the operational level.

Evans, Geoffrey. "Field-Marshal the Viscount Slim," *The War Lords, Military Commanders of the Twentieth Century*. Edited by Field-Marshal Sir Michael Carver. London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976. It has different chapters on different military leaders

written by different authors. Lieutenant General Sir Geoffrey Evans wrote the chapter on Field Marshal The Viscount Slim. It provides a brief description (15 pages) of Slim's life with an emphasis on his time as commander of the XIV Army during the Burma Campaign. It provides a concise description of the Burma campaign and in doing so, it highlights Slim's attributes as an operational level commander that contributed to his success. Very well written and a good source of reference.

Evans, Geoffrey, *Slim as Military Commander*. London: Batsford, 1969. Lieutenant General Geoffrey served under Slim as a Brigadier and Major General in Burma. He eyewitness Slim's leadership from first hand. He describes Slim as humane and a commander who had his art for his soldiers. He was kinder to Slim than the Field Marshal was to himself in his book *Defeat Into Victory*. It was a lucid and very detailed study of Slim's character and the Burma campaign.

Keegan, John and Andrew Wheatcroft, *Who's Who in Military History*. London: Routhledge, 1996. The book looks at those people who have shaped the course of war. Broad in geographical and chronological scope, it concentrates on all periods and conflicts up to and including the Gulf War. It provides detailed biographies of the most interesting and important figures in military history from 1453 to the present day. It is a good reference for those who want to study the character of successful military leaders.

Montgomery, B.L., *High Command in War*. Germany: 21 Army Group, June 1945. This pamphlet was written by the colourful Field-Marshal Montgomery at the end of the Second World War when he was the Commander in Chief of 21 Army Group. This pamphlet provides directives to his subordinates commanders and deals with the

principles of war, command and control, and the chief of staff. In the part on command and control, Montgomery gives his views on what attributes are required by a commander in high command to be successful.

Puryear, Edgar F. *Nineteen Star*. Orange, Virginia: Green Publishers, 1971. This book is a study in military character and leadership. It discusses the character and military careers of Generals Eisenhower, MacArthur, Marshal, and Patton. It focus more on the fact that a leader is not born, he has to work hard all his life and study to become a great general. It has specific ideas about command, like showmanship and the need to have a godfather, that questionable. This book is one person opinion.

Seeckt, Von. *Thoughts of a Soldier*. London: E. Bonn Limited, 1930. Seeckt was questioning the status quo and wrote a book about what he knew best, the military. The book is a reflection on the military affairs, which will have an impact on the structure of the new German Army before the Second World War. He discusses the role of the Generals versus the politicians and draws some interesting conclusions that we could apply today. Interesting book to open up one's mind about the military.

Slim, W., *Defeat into Victory*. New York: David McKay Company, 1961. The author provides a detailed description of the Burma campaign with all the insights of the commander that turned the tide from defeat to victory. Through the book, the reader can detect the attributes or attributes that the commander did possess: intellect, vision, and determination. In addition of providing a good example of the attributes required by a commander to have success, it also provides a very good description of the Burma campaign.



Slim, William, *Higher Command in War*. Military Review, May 1990, pp 10-21. This article provides another perspective on Command. It discusses what Field Marshal Sir William Slim views on Command in War from an operational level commander perspective. Well written and easy to understand. It provides good insight and personal view on the subject.

Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963. The writing of Sun Tzu on the Art of War was written around 400 BC. His description of the art of warfare is still pertinent and applicable today. He is an author still widely quoted which makes him a very credible author on the operational art. This is a classic that as lasts over 2400 years and still provides very useful teaching for the apprentices of operational art.

Sykes, J.B. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982. Official dictionary used by the Canadian Forces. It provides a good start-point or common base of understanding our key attributes selected in this paper.

Tuchman, Barbara W. *Practicing History*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc, 1981. The book assembles a collection of 33 essays written by Barbara Tuchman. She has a special way to report history that one could question the essays' objectivity. The Description of General Stilwell provides an insight of his attributes. The predominant attribute was his determination.

United Kingdom. *Army Doctrine Publication Volume 2 Command*. London: Ministry of Defence, 1995. This official British manual on Command provides another perspective on the attributes or attributes required by commander at the operational level to be successful. It is very similar to the Canadian publication on the same topic.

United Kingdom. *Report to the Combined Chiefs of Staff by the Supreme Allied Commander South-East Asia, 1943-1945*. Vice Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma. London: HM Stationary Office, 1951. This is a report that provides more facts than analysis. It may have some bias to influence what history will say about Mountbatten. I did not do enough reading of different other sources to come with a definite conclusion on the objectivity, or lack of it, of this report to come with a definite opinion. Certain figures relating to Allied and Japanese casualties vary from other sources.

United States. Department of the Navy. U.S. Marine Corps. FMFM 1-1. *Campaigning*. Washington: Government Publishing Office, 1990. This publication provides a very good and concise discussion on campaigning. It discusses mainly the nature of a campaign, its design, and its conduct. Unfortunately it discuss only briefly the attributes required by the commander at the operational level to be successful.