

THE OTHER WAR IN THE PACIFIC:
THE CONFLICT BETWEEN GENERALS ROBERT EICHELBERGER
AND WALTER KRUEGER DURING THE LUZON CAMPAIGN, 1945

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by

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ABSTRACT

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General Walter Krueger and Lieutenant General Robert Eichelberger, the two army commanders subordinated to General Douglas MacArthur during the Luzon campaign in the latter months of the Pacific War, were personal rivals before and during the campaign with Eichelberger being the antagonist in the relationship while Krueger

focused on matters of military importance rather than squabbling with Eichelberger. MacArthur used the strife between these two officers to effect his own personal goal of quickly returning to and liberating the whole of Philippines, despite the rivalry's interference with specific and general military objectives during the campaign. MacArthur's poor generalship and manipulation of the dispute between Krueger and Eichelberger delayed the progress of the American campaign on Luzon, wasted military resources and manpower, and contributed to the needless destruction to Filipino civilian infrastructure in Manila.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION AND HISTORIOGRAPHY

“The art of war deals with living and with moral forces... With uncertainty in one scale, courage and self-confidence must be thrown in to correct the balance. The greater they are, the greater the margin that can be left for accidents.”

-Carl von Clausewitz¹

World War II occupies a special place in the American mind. Few wars, save for perhaps the American Civil War, have such a readily identifiable cast of characters that played out their parts in the great tragedy of war. The European Theater had no shortage of personalities which the American people readily knew of during the war. Omar Bradley, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and George S. Patton were household names by the end of 1945. Many foreign generals such as the German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel and the British General Sir Bernard Law Montgomery were also recognizable to the folks at home.

But what of the personalities of the Pacific War? Of the many men who participated in the Pacific Theater, General Douglas MacArthur stands out as one of the prominent men of the Pacific. It was MacArthur who proclaimed in 1942, “I shall return” amidst President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s order for the energetic and proud corn-cob pipe-

¹ Carl von Clausewitz. *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 86

smoking general to escape to Australia from the embattled Philippine islands during the initial Japanese invasion.² Two-and-a-half years later, it was MacArthur who waded to the shallow beach of Leyte Gulf and set up a mobile broadcasting unit in the midst of his soldiers' clearing the nearby underbrush of Japanese defenders so that he could confidently and emotionally announce to the Americans and Filipinos on the islands: "I have returned."³ On 2 September 1945, MacArthur stood triumphant on the deck of the American battleship *Missouri* to receive formally the Japanese Empire's surrender in the name of the Allied Powers.

Yet, MacArthur did not stride from one end of the Pacific to the other without help from two of his army commanders: Walter Krueger and Robert L. Eichelberger. Krueger, an old soldier from the days of the Spanish-American War of 1898, was a stoic, confident, and highly professional officer who commanded the Sixth Army in the Southwestern Pacific Theater. Eichelberger, initially the commander of the I Corps and later the commander of the Eighth Army, was Krueger's counterpart and antithesis; Eichelberger was personable, charismatic, and had a need for publicity. Both were personally brave in battle and were aggressive and competent leaders in New Guinea and in the Philippines under General MacArthur's overall command.

Yet Krueger and Eichelberger did not get along well and their personal animosity interfered with the completion of the American war aims in the Luzon Campaign of 1945, the first campaign when both generals enjoyed independent commands in the same operation although still under the command of Douglas MacArthur. MacArthur's desire

² Douglas MacArthur. *Reminiscences* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 145.

³ *Ibid.*, 216.

to liberate all of the Philippine Islands as soon as possible drove him to manipulate his two generals to that end. In the words of historian D. Clayton James, MacArthur, “a confirmed believer in laissez faire... knew that the best results would come from wide-open competition.”⁴ MacArthur was unsuccessful in manipulating the professional and serious Krueger but had more success with the more malleable Eichelberger, a younger officer who detested Krueger.

The rivalry between the Sixth and Eighth Army commanders is often overlooked amongst historians of the Pacific War. Historians usually do not acknowledge the animosity’s effects on the Luzon Campaign. It was this rivalry, combined with General MacArthur’s conduct of the Philippine Campaign as a personal crusade that contributed to the destruction of Manila and the delay of the ultimate American victory in Luzon. The fact that the United States was successful in the Luzon campaign does not detract from the fact that the interpersonal rivalry between two of MacArthur’s prominent commanders was detrimental to the stated military objectives during the Luzon Campaign.

Unsurprisingly, military officers wrote some of the first histories on the Pacific War. These memoirs, written in the 1950s, often reflected the authors’ personalities and emphasized the combat operations that they participated in, usually minimizing or excluding entirely the greater picture of the war. Equally disappointing is that the memoirs usually lack critical analysis of the campaigns and the personal disputes of the generals. Regardless of the weaknesses of the personal memoirs, certain records are of some use in discerning the causes and effects of the feud between Eichelberger and

⁴ D. Clayton James. *The Years of MacArthur, 1941-1945* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 500.

Krueger because of the fact that the books are first hand accounts of the men who were present at the time of events.

Eichelberger's war memoirs, entitled *Our Jungle Road to Tokyo*, began as a series of articles for the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1949.⁵ These articles won acclaim from many people including the former Chief of Staff of the Army George C. Marshall and first lady Eleanor Roosevelt, despite a common criticism that the articles largely ignored the accomplishments of Walter Krueger and Eighth Army's XI Corps. As one may expect, *Our Jungle Road to Tokyo* provides Eichelberger's account of the events that surrounded his service in the Pacific War. Eichelberger placed great attention on the sufferings of the common soldiers under his command. *Our Jungle Road* does not provide much analysis of the battles or personal disputes that Eichelberger was involved in. Equally notable is Eichelberger's lack of mention of Krueger's contributions to the war effort or the personal squabbles between the two generals.

Walter Krueger's *From Down Under to Nippon: The Story of Sixth Army in World War II* is as the title indicates the story of Sixth Army, not a auto-biography of him. Whereas Eichelberger is a frequent character in the narrative-driven *Our Jungle Road*, Krueger appears only as the commanding officer of a combat unit. As such, he gives minimal attention to himself. Similar in style to the other early histories, Krueger generally omits the personal disagreements and conflicts he had with his fellow officers such as MacArthur and Eichelberger, leaving only a lengthy and detailed account of Sixth Army's operations in the Pacific Theater of Operations.

⁵ Eichelberger did not write the articles or the memoirs himself. He employed a ghost writer named Milton MacKay to assist him.

General Douglas MacArthur's *Reminiscences* is, in the general's own words, "neither history, biography nor a diary, although they compromise something of each of these categories."⁶ Unlike *Our Jungle Road* and *From Down Under to Nippon*, *Reminiscences* is a narrative where MacArthur himself is the prime protagonist in what reads like a public relations platform to the exclusion of nearly all other characters in his book. MacArthur spares no detail in describing the throng of congratulatory telegrams from prominent politicians and military officers. Similarly with the other early memoirs of the Pacific War, MacArthur does not provide specific details of his campaigns, but unlike the memoirs from Eichelberger and Krueger, *Reminiscences* often provides erroneous details on the political aspect of his campaigns, such as MacArthur's own desire to capture the major Japanese base at the island of Rabaul north of New Guinea. Considering the drawbacks of the narrative, *Reminiscences* lacks in historical quality but is of great use in providing examples of MacArthur's mindset and personality at the time he wrote it.

Major General Charles A. Willoughby, MacArthur's Chief of Intelligence during the Pacific War, composed *MacArthur, 1941-1951* in 1954 shortly after President Harry Truman fired MacArthur for insubordination during the Korean War (1950-1953). *MacArthur* continues the spirit of *Reminiscences* and omits the conflict between Krueger and Eichelberger and glorifies MacArthur's leadership role in the Pacific War. In Willoughby's mind, MacArthur was the *deus ex machina* of the Pacific War. It was MacArthur and no one else who led the Americans to victory over the Japanese. An example of Willoughby's narrow thinking is in his recording of the rescue of the American Prisoners of War at Cabanatuan in 1945:

⁶ MacArthur, v.

General MacArthur was determined to rescue these unfortunate people, although it seemed almost hopeless task. In a series of surprise movements made with stunning suddenness, he penetrated behind the enemy's lines at all four points, and without the loss of a single prisoner released them all.⁷

While the rescue was a praiseworthy event in the war, the rescue action was accomplished by rangers under the command of Krueger, not MacArthur.⁸

It took more than a decade after the Pacific War's end for other histories to shed light on the controversy between Krueger and Eichelberger. The United States Army published a massive multivolume account of the Pacific War accounting for many aspects of the war, ranging from the medical service to strategy to the campaigns themselves. The *U.S. Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific* series is heavily based on unit after-action reports and official unit records, because during the war in the Southwest Pacific Area no teams of historians accompanied the fighting units in the various engagements and operations to collect materials, conduct interviews, and otherwise procure primary sources for historical works. While the Army itself sponsored the creation of the comprehensive *U.S. Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific* series and the books naturally focuses their attention on the American Army during the Pacific War, the series differs from the officer memoirs in many remarkable ways. First, many prominent and professional civilian and military historians such as C. Vann Woodward, M. Hamlin Cannon, Louis Morton, and Robert Ross Smith participated in the writing and editing process. Thus, these histories, while naturally focusing on the American Army, discussed

⁷ Charles A. Willoughby and John Chamberlain. *MacArthur, 1941-1951* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1954,) 268.

⁸ The raid on Cabanatuan is described in more detail in Chapter III.

and analyzed the campaigns, and provided context, planning, battles, and the results of the campaigns in more sophisticated and polished detail than the memoirs. Additionally, the *U.S. Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific* series includes the Japanese perspective and role in more detail than the memoirs allowed.

In 1972, historian Jay Luvaas edited many of Eichelberger's letters to his wife Emma Eichelberger and published them as *Dear Miss Em*. These letters added greatly to the understanding of the conflict between Eichelberger and Krueger since for the first time a commercial copy of Eichelberger's letters was available. Luvaas provides some contextual commentary throughout the book for the reader's benefit and keeps the focus on Eichelberger's letters. Unlike condensed and generally placid field reports, Eichelberger's letters to Miss Em contain Eichelberger's startling, candid, and sometimes humorous commentary on not only his relationship with Krueger and MacArthur, but also on how he viewed the war itself. *Dear Miss Em's* primary value is revealing Eichelberger as a man, rather than as a corps or army commander. Thus, Eichelberger's letters in *Dear Miss Em* are paramount to any understanding of his conflict with Krueger.

Also during the 1970s the first comprehensive and scholarly accounts of MacArthur's life emerged. Historian D. Clayton James' three volume series *The Years of MacArthur* is a much more balanced and impartial account of MacArthur's life than the views offered in Willoughby's work. The second volume of James' series covers the period between 1941 through 1945 and, consequently, as much a history of the Southwest Pacific Area as it is a biography of MacArthur. James' work analyzes MacArthur's choices during the war and is the first work to criticize MacArthur's handling of the Luzon Campaign, suggesting that "the wisdom of sending the Eighth Army southward

rather than using it to expedite the reconquest of Luzon was highly questionable and... counter to the Joint Chiefs' intentions."⁹ William Manchester's *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur*, a less thorough but nevertheless probing account into MacArthur's personal life followed James' work in 1978. Manchester's book praises MacArthur as a general: "... he had no peer in any World War II theater, in any army."¹⁰ Regarding the Luzon Campaign, Manchester glosses over the issue when MacArthur sent Eichelberger to liberate militarily unimportant islands in the central and southern Philippines.

The fiftieth anniversary of the Pacific War set off a multitude of scholarship and publication on the Pacific War. Studies and recollections of individual units surfaced during this time, such as Anthony Arthur's *Bushmasters: America's Jungle Warriors During World War II* and E. B. Sledge's classic *With the Old Breed: At Peleliu and Okinawa*. These books focused on the individual combat soldiers themselves, rather than the bird-eye-view of the war from the general's chair. These histories are generally removed from the war's events save for those that directly involve the unit in question. Consequently, while in the unit and individual soldiers' memoirs and histories there is usually little if any context on military policy in the Pacific or how the engagements in question influenced the war, there is a realistic and earthy depiction of the war itself. Although the generals' memoirs explained that the soldiers inevitably suffered in wartime, the soldiers' memoirs explain in gritty detail how they suffered. These histories are of immense value as they show the consequences that common soldiers experience when their commanders order them into battle. For example, there is an incident in

⁹ James, 671.

¹⁰ William Manchester. *American Caesar Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978), 332.

Bushmasters which depicts the encounter of one member of the 158th Infantry Regiment with a Japanese sniper during the Luzon campaign:

Ray's moment nearly came January 21, as the 1st Battalion was probing a ravine off the Damortis road. He heard a loud explosion and thought "My God, that was close!" Then he looked at his arm. It was shattered, hanging like a broken tree branch from an impossible angle from his body... Ray Acuna's five-year career with the 158th was over: the sniper had not ruined Ray's arm directly with his shot, he had hit a grenade in Ray's battle pack.¹¹

During the 1990s and after the turn of the century, scholars produced military biographies of Krueger and Eichelberger, figures who until the turn of the century were generally overlooked in Pacific War historiography. John Shortal filled in the first glaring hole in the history of the Pacific War with *Forged by Fire: General Robert L. Eichelberger and the Pacific War*, a chronicle of Eichelberger's military experiences from Buna to the close of the Pacific War. Shortal referred to Eichelberger as MacArthur's "fireman," a role that he develops in his book. The primary use of Eichelberger's memoirs and letters to Miss Em to the exclusion of Krueger's views influenced *Forged by Fire* in that Krueger is depicted as a plodding and exceedingly cautious commander whereas Eichelberger constantly solved MacArthur's tactical problems with quick and generally flawless campaigns. Shortal recognizes that MacArthur's behavior towards Eichelberger was detrimental to Eichelberger's career, but neglects the contributions from Krueger's Sixth Army during the campaign and the costs to Krueger's operations when Eichelberger's desire for glory clouds his better military judgment.

¹¹ Anthony Arthur. *Bushmasters America's Jungle Warriors of World War II* (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1987), 186.

Paul Chwialkowski's *In Caesar's Shadow: The Life of General Robert*

Eichelberger contributed a more critical account of Eichelberger. Unlike Shortal's account, Chwialkowski delves into the personality of Robert Eichelberger and his formative experiences as well as providing accounts of Eichelberger's military career. While Chwialkowski used many of the same sources as Shortal, Chwialkowski added Eichelberger's personal letters, diaries, and dictations that Shortal overlooked, making *In Caesar's Shadow* a more thoroughly researched work on Eichelberger. Chwialkowski recognizes Eichelberger's leadership gifts while at the same time offering the first concrete suggestion that Eichelberger allowed "sinister forces that had originated in his youth" to undermine not only his relationship with MacArthur and Krueger, but his military career as a whole.¹²

Historian Kevin Holzimmer filled in another gaping chasm in Pacific War historiography with the first biography of Walter Krueger in 2007. In *General Walter Krueger: Unsung Hero of the Pacific War*, Holzimmer explores Krueger as a man, as a military scholar, and as a decisive battlefield commander. In Holzimmer's view, Krueger was a consummate soldier whose competency and devotion to duty and brought victory in the Southwest Pacific Area. The book suggests that Krueger contended with MacArthur more than Eichelberger during the Luzon Campaign. According to Holzimmer's analysis, MacArthur's demands on Krueger undermined Sixth Army's war effort and violated many principles of war for petty reasons. "MacArthur, Krueger surmised, wanted to enter Manila on his birthday, January 26. Understandably, Krueger concluded that this was hardly a sound reason to risk an entire corps and the future of

¹² Paul Chwialkowski. *In Caesar's Shadow: The Life of General Robert Eichelberger*. (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1993), 207.

U.S. Army operations in SWPA.”¹³ Holzimmer’s use of numerous accounts of Krueger, such as his letters to friends and family, records from the War Plans Office, Krueger’s lectures at the Naval War College, provide a very detailed account and is invaluable for any serious research on the Sixth Army commander.

Mid-way through the first decade of the twenty-first century, the existing literature on the Pacific War became very comprehensive. In addition to the unit accounts, general biographies, and surveys, there exists histories and interpretations of history which are periphery to the Eichelberger-Krueger dispute, but nevertheless notable for their contribution to Pacific War history as a whole. One such history, John Dower’s *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, describes the influence of racism in the American army in combat against the Japanese during the Pacific War. This history, while generally discredited today, made an early splash in Pacific War historiography. Victor Davis Hanson’s thesis in *Carnage and Culture: Landmark Battles in the Rise of Western Power* views the Western reliance on firepower, shock infantry tactics and a heritage of dissent, adaptation, and the concept of citizenship as prime factors in why the United States won the Pacific War. There is now even a place for military histories of universities, such as historian Henry Delthoff’s *Texas Aggies go to War*, an account of alumni of Texas A&M University who fought in America’s wars.

To the existing scholarship on the Pacific War, this thesis attempts to answer the following previously discussed but never fully synthesized questions, what was the origin of the discord between Robert Eichelberger and Walter Krueger? To what extent did the personal strife between them detract from the military objectives of the Luzon

¹³ Kevin Holzimmer. *General Walter Krueger Unsung Hero of the Pacific War*. (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 219.

Campaign? And to what measure did General Douglas MacArthur abuse the circumstances surrounding Eichelberger and Krueger?

CHAPTER II

CAESAR'S CENTURIANS AND THE RETURN TO THE PHILIPPINES

“In addition to his emotional qualities, the intellectual qualities of the commander are of major importance. One would expect a visionary, high-flown and immature mind to function differently from a cool and powerful one.”

-Carl von Clausewitz¹

The destruction of much of the United States Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 made War Plan Orange (WPO), the pre-war American operational plan for war with Japan, obsolete.² Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the Japanese military achieved remarkable victories against American, British, and Dutch ground and naval forces in the Pacific and Southeast Asia. Regardless of the initial Japanese offensive's success, the United States blunted the Japanese onslaught in the Pacific with the naval victories at Midway and Coral Sea in late Spring 1942 and the defense at

¹ Carl von Clausewitz. *On War*, ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 139.

² By the time of the outbreak of hostilities between the United States and Japan in 1941, WPO went through a number of revisions, with the final plan a compromise between offensive and defensive policies in the Pacific. In short, WPO envisioned a pre-bellum period of strained political relations between the United States and Japan. This period would give the United States time to mobilize its forces. Planners expected hostilities to commence with a Japanese surprise attack without a formal declaration of war. War planners did not anticipate that Japan would receive substantive assistance from its military allies (Germany and Italy after the signing of the Tripartite Treaty in 1940). The Philippines and other American outposts in the Pacific were expected to resist the Japanese on their own while the Army and Navy assured the defenses of the West Coast, the Alaska-Oahu-Panama “strategic triangle,” and the coastal defenses of the continental U.S. and its overseas possessions, after which the U.S. military would take the offensive as soon as possible, relieve the beleaguered garrisons in the Pacific, and defeat Japan. On the development of WPO, see Louis Morton, “War Plan Orange: Evolution of a Strategy.” *World Politics* 11, no. 2 (1959), 221-250.

Guadalcanal from August 1942 to February 1943. With the Japanese military reeling from combat losses by early 1943, the United States and its allies initiated Operation Cartwheel, a counter-offensive against the Japanese in occupied New Guinea. This operation was the first in a series of campaigns that took American combat forces from the embattled tropical island marches of the Japanese Empire to the triumphant liberation of the Philippines.

Allied victories against the conquerors of much of the Pacific Ocean brought renewed confidence to the United States and her allies; enough that by 1943, the American Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) developed a new plan to defeat Japan, predicated on the idea that the United States and its allies in the Pacific would be required to invade the Japanese home islands. Before any large-scale ground operations against Japan proper could begin, the JCS required a massive aerial bombardment campaign against Japanese industry, infrastructure, and military targets. This aerial campaign, co-coordinated with a naval blockade of Japan ultimately cut Japanese communications from their resources and armies in China, the Netherlands East Indies (NEI), and Southeast Asia. The most effective strategy to accomplish this goal included the seizure of airbases and deep-water ports within range of Japan.³ To this end, the JCS decided on a two-pronged drive to the west. Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, commander of the Pacific Ocean Areas (CINCPOA), directed the forces of the Central Pacific Area towards the Palau islands from the Marshalls, Gilberts, and Marianas while General Douglas MacArthur commanded the Allied forces in the Southwestern Pacific Area (SWPA) from New Guinea to the southern Philippine island of Mindanao.

³ The original concept envisioned bombing Japan from air bases in Guomintang-held air bases in China. Robert Ross Smith *The Approach to the Philippines United States Army in World War II The War in the Pacific*. (Washington, Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, 1963), 3.

In the words of historian William Manchester, MacArthur was an American Caesar, “a great thundering paradox of a man, noble and ignoble, inspiring and outrageous, arrogant and shy, the best of men and the worst of men, the most protean, most ridiculous, and most sublime. No more baffling, exasperating soldier ever wore a uniform.”⁴ While the passage of two millennia faded the names of Julius Caesar’s legionaries, two of MacArthur’s prominent generals remain important not only for their generalship and leadership abilities but also because MacArthur’s manipulation of the heated personal rivalry interfered with one of the most daring and dramatic campaigns of the Pacific War; the return to the Philippines.

MacArthur’s commanders, General Walter Krueger and General Robert Eichelberger, had two very different personalities and experiences that influenced their generalship. Krueger’s experiences as a young man in the Spanish-American War, the Philippine War, and his military scholarship and training before World War II molded his personal ambitions and his duty to the job into one cohesive philosophy. In contrast to Krueger, Eichelberger focused more on cultivating friendships with his fellow officers to advance in rank and station and was easily frustrated when his superiors ignored his need for praise and attention. As Krueger and Eichelberger’s personalities did not emerge in a vacuum, it is imperative for any full understanding of their conflict to inspect briefly their military careers and crucial experiences in turn.

Krueger, unlike nearly all of his fellow officers and his rival Robert Eichelberger, was not a native-born American nor did he graduate from high school or attend the United States Military Academy. Despite these handicaps, Krueger’s professionalism and

⁴ William Manchester. *American Caesar: Douglas MacArthur, 1880-1964*. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978), 3.

strong sense of duty carried him through the difficult years of his career, when his prospects for promotion seemed dim. As a man, Krueger was diligent in his work and studies, stern and sincere to the men under his command, and always focused on perfection in his duties.

Krueger was born into a military family on the crown estates of Flatow, West Prussia in 1881.⁵ His father, a German colonel named Julius O. H. Krüger, died in 1885, leaving young Walter's mother to immigrate with her children to the United States in order to live with relatives.⁶ Krueger's mother married a Lutheran minister named Emil Carl Schmidt and then in the early 1890s moved to Madison, Indiana, a small town along the Ohio River. Krueger's stepfather was a strict disciplinarian and taught Walter mathematics and languages while his mother taught him how to play the piano. Krueger attended Cincinnati Technical High School and studied to be a blacksmith since his mother refused to allow him to attend the U. S. Naval Academy. In 1897, young Walter was swept up in the waves of jingoist nationalism that washed over the United States as the strife with Spain over Cuba reached its zenith. Krueger did not wait for his instructor to accept his final project, an eight inch picture frame made from wrought iron, and enlisted as an infantryman in the 2d Volunteer Infantry Regiment in the U. S. Army with

⁵ Modern Zlotow, Poland.

⁶ A 29 January 1945 article in *Time* magazine speculated that "but for the early death of his father... [Krueger] might today be commanding an army under Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt." Historian William M. Leary agreed with this assessment, stating that were it not for the death of Krueger's father, Krueger "might well have become a senior *Wermacht* commander during World War II." William Leary, "Walter Krueger, MacArthur's Fighting General," in *We Shall Return! MacArthur's Commanders and the Defeat of Japan, 1942-1945* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 60.

some of his classmates on 17 June 1898. Krueger reached the Santiago de Cuba region with his regiment in August, where he ultimately earned sergeant's stripes.⁷

Krueger remained in Cuba until the Army mustered him out in February 1899. Unhappy with civilian life, he decided to forgo the life of a civil engineer or a blacksmith, and in June 1899, re-enlisted in the army as a private. He was quickly assigned to Company M of the 2d Battalion/12 Infantry Regiment of the 2d Infantry Division under Major General Arthur MacArthur on Luzon, where the United States Army fought Emilio Aguinaldo's Army of Liberation.⁸ Filipino resistance to American rule was only one of Krueger's worries during the Philippine War.

The land itself was a formidable obstacle to the American soldiers. On a typical day's march in the humid tropical heat where the thermometer hovered around ninety degrees by 6:00 am, the American infantryman in the Philippine War marched through bamboo and jungle, climbed over mountains, and waded through estuaries and rice paddies, to say nothing of facing the torrential rains from the seasonal monsoons. Such arduous campaigning weathered the 2d Division down to nubs. After one twenty-day campaign, 2,600 of 2d Division's compliment of 4,800 soldiers were on sick report with a number of ailments ranging from typhoid and cholera to jungle rot, parasites, fevers, and depression.⁹

While Krueger himself was one of the fortunate healthy few American soldiers during the Philippine War, these lamentable logistical conditions shaped his future

⁷ Kevin Holzimmer, *General Walter Krueger Unsung Hero of the Pacific War*. (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007), 12.

⁸ For more information on the military aspects of the Philippine War, see Brian McAllister Linn's *The Philippine War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2000).

⁹ Linn, *The Philippine War*, 90.

command outlook. Recalling his times as an enlisted man in the Philippines, Krueger wrote “I went without food and other supplies, and I know what it is to be like to be hungry; then and there I resolved that if I ever had the say-so my men would never be without enough to eat.”¹⁰ While Krueger’s usual duties included garrison duty and patrols through the jungle and mountains, he saw action at Angeles, Mabalacat, and Bamban and during the advance on Tarlac. He earned the rank of sergeant during his service in Luzon and at his company commander’s recommendation, took the examination for an officer’s commission. On 1 July 1901, Krueger passed the exam and became a Second Lieutenant in the 30th Infantry Regiment.

For the following fifteen years until American entry into the Great War, Krueger held a number of positions in the Army. In the Philippines, he filled menial jobs typical to a “butterbar” lieutenant, such as quartermaster, signalman, postmaster, exchange officer, and a guard of military prisoners before his unit was sent back to the United States in December 1903.¹¹ As a student, he excelled at the Infantry and Cavalry School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. After graduating from the Army Staff College with first lieutenant’s bars, Krueger served a second tour in Luzon, charting topographical maps in the field instead of subduing rebel guerillas. He returned to the United States again and taught Spanish and German at Fort Leavenworth and trained National Guardsmen at Camp Benjamin Harrison in Indiana and Pine Camp in New York. He also gained renown and respect in the army as a tactical thinker after he wrote an original essay on how the army could put a stop to desertions and translated German military articles,

¹⁰ Holzimmer, 14.

¹¹ It was at the prison at Laguna de Bay on Malahi Island that Krueger met another young second lieutenant, the future Chief of Staff George C. Marshall. Marshall later commented that Krueger “was of typical German stock... thorough, hard-working, ambitious, and devoid of humor.” *Ibid.*, 16.

including Colonel Wilhelm Balck's famous two-volume *Tactics*, a treatise which stressed the importance of open-ordered infantry and urged that unit commanders and the rank-and-file perform their duties with greater initiative than they had in the wars of the late nineteenth century.¹²

The energetic Krueger held a variety of staff positions in the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) during World War I. In June 1918, the War Department transferred the newly-brevetted Lieutenant Colonel Krueger to the 26th Infantry Division, where he served as the division's operations officer (G-3). On 17 October, Krueger became the chief of staff for the newly-formed Tank Corps but he did not see combat in this new arm of the military since the belligerent governments signed an armistice in November.¹³ He returned home after more reassignments at an Army teaching facility in France and as the G-3 for the U. S. VI Corps with the permanent rank of major and a Distinguished Service Medal.

Krueger advanced his military career further by graduating from the Army War College in 1922. His reputation as a military scholar and intellectual grew after he became an instructor at the college, where his lectures in his "Art of Command" course developed many theses which he employed during his fighting in World War II. One of his theories was that the Army from the top brass to the bottom echelons should be flexible and decentralized, similar to the German military system from World War I.

¹² Krueger argued that since the enlistment oaths were administered to the recruit "without ceremony, without due solemnity, and in a perfunctory manner," the enlisted man was not convinced of the oath's gravity with regard to his duty towards his unit and country. Holzimmer, 21.

¹³ Since the French distrusted the German-born Krueger, the War Department caved to French pressure and transferred Krueger back to Ohio to the 84th Infantry Division. A short time later, the Army quickly transferred Krueger back to France in August 1918 without the French government's knowledge. While the French accepted Americans of German heritage such as Dwight D. Eisenhower, the reasons behind this shuffling of Krueger or any other German-born Americans around during wartime are as of the time of this writing unknown and deserve further exploration.

Additionally, Krueger believed that the only course for an army in war was swift and decisive offensive action against the enemy. Krueger, an avid historian since his youth, recalled examples from Hannibal, the ancient Carthaginian general who in Krueger's words "thoroughly understood that the offensive alone leads to decisive success and that rapidity, activity and surprise are its vital elements."¹⁴ Krueger took another lesson from the Scourge of Rome that a commander must be flexible in his application of his plans and applications of the principles of war. Regarding the Battle of Cannae (216 BC), Krueger commented that Hannibal fought a

perfect, annihilating battle... chiefly because, contrary to all theory, it had been won by an inferior force over a superior force. 'A concentric maneuver is improper for the weaker force,' says Clausewitz; 'it must not attempt an envelopment on both flanks, simultaneously,'" says Napoleon. Hannibal, however, violated both maxims and won, because he was opposed by a Varro and was clever enough to take advantage of the opportunity that Fortune had placed in his hands.¹⁵

Krueger then worked as a staff officer and analyst for the War Department for three years. During this time, he worked on War Plan Orange (WPO) in 1924 and attended the Naval War College, where he wrote many papers on command issues and participated in several naval war games.¹⁶ Krueger's success as a military writer and educator did not bring with it swift promotions, and so Krueger transferred to the nascent Army Air Corps in 1927. While training at Brooks Field in San Antonio, Texas, Krueger

¹⁴ Holzimmer, 35.

¹⁵ Ibid., 36.

¹⁶ Some of these exercises involved a hypothetical war between the United States and Japan. In one particular situation, Krueger assumed the role an American commander who had to destroy a Japanese fleet so that friendly convoys could operate to and from Pearl Harbor, Guam, and Manila. Other scenarios made Krueger take on the role of the Japanese commander and destroy the American convoys. The exercises exposed Krueger to a deeper nature of joint Army-Navy operations. Ibid., 41.

could not meet the requirements of a demanding flying curriculum. Despite this considerable personal disappointment, Krueger did not mire in self-pity and found a personal fulfillment teaching history at the Naval War College. The year 1932 found him commanding of the Sixth Infantry Division at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, where despite some personal reservations about possibly retiring as a colonel, Krueger continued to pour his considerable energy into his regular command duties and his military scholarship.¹⁷

Krueger's promotion misgivings were unfounded. In late 1933, his teaching role at the Naval War College caught the attention of Brigadier General Charles E. Kilbourne at the War Plans Division (WPD) at the War Department, who cajoled Krueger with the position of executive officer. As the executive officer of the WPD, Krueger reviewed American war plans, particularly WPO, the military value of which Krueger questioned given the isolationist environment prevalent in America of 1935.¹⁸ Krueger's duty at the General Staff earned him not only more experience in strategy and high command, but also his promotion ambitions finally paid off. It earned his brigadier general's star in May 1936, along with a promotion to head of the WPD.

Krueger did not remain at the WPD for very long. The growing political uncertainty in the international arena in the late 1930s compelled the Army to modernize its equipment, doctrine, and organization. During the Army's period of reorganization,

¹⁷ Krueger tempered his concerns about a lack of advancement in the Army with his usual attention to duty. He wrote to his friend Fay W. Brabson in 1932, "...just thirty-four years ago I did not know a single solitary soul in the whole army, and now I am in command of one of the finest regiments and posts of that army-I love it all." Holzimmer, 51.

¹⁸ Krueger argued that 19th century concepts of imperialism shaped America's Pacific policy in 1935. In Krueger's view, the United States did not require the Philippines for either national defense or as a naval base to protect sea-lane commerce. Brian McAllister Linn. *Guardians of Empire The U. S Army and the Pacific, 1902-1940*. (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 179-180.

Krueger rose rapidly in rank and responsibility. He went from chief of the WPD to the command of the 16th Infantry Brigade at Fort George Meade, Maryland, in September 1938. Five months later, Krueger earned his major general's stars along with the command of the 2d Infantry Division at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

In January 1940, in conjunction with the War Department's plans for Third Army's spring maneuvers, Krueger took command of IX Corps (in addition to his duties as commander of 2nd Division) and ascertained his units' organization, mobility, tactical capabilities, and firepower in both training and in simulated combat under different types of terrain and climate. In April 1941, General George C. Marshall, then Chief of Staff of the Army, advanced Krueger to the rank of lieutenant general along with command of the Third Army in San Antonio, Texas. By September 1941, Krueger led Third Army against Lieutenant General Ben Lear's Second Army near Shreveport, Louisiana in the largest and most realistic peacetime military exercises that the Army ever conducted. These two-month long maneuvers tested the army's new armored warfare doctrines and provided valuable experience for both the soldiers and officers involved.

When the United States entered the war against the Axis powers in December 1941, the army needed fighting men to stem the seemingly unstoppable tide of the Axis offensives in Europe, North Africa, and the Pacific. While younger officers received combat commands overseas, Krueger continued molding green volunteers and inexperienced officers into lethal combat-ready fighting units. He did not complain about the lack of an overseas command, but instead focused on his training duties. In January 1943, Krueger was inspecting the 89th Infantry Division at Camp Carson, Colorado when he received orders transferring him to the Pacific Theater, where he would command the

new Sixth Army.¹⁹ There, he met his eventual rival in the theater, Robert Lawrence Eichelberger.

Like Walter Krueger, Robert Eichelberger had a military background and a difficult upbringing. Whereas Krueger's father was a veteran of the Franco-Prussian War (1877) and an officer in the German army by trade, Eichelberger's father, George Maley Eichelberger, was an enlistee in the Federal army during the American Civil War (1861-1865) in between semesters at Ohio Wesleyan University. George Eichelberger expected his three sons to excel in academics, sports, and their professions. While the eldest son, George Jr., graduated from Ohio Wesleyan and found his father's praise, young Robert was not as successful as his elder brother and consequently had a strained relationship with his father. Historian Paul Chwialkoski opined that Robert Eichelberger spent his youth in a competition with his younger brother Frank "for the unenviable position of the biggest family failure."²⁰

Eichelberger improved his relationship with his father through an interest in military history, particularly the American Civil War. Robert's mother, a Mississippian, taught Robert Confederate songs, told him stories of the Vicksburg campaign, and encouraged the boy's reading on the Civil War. For his part, Robert's father took Robert on tours of battlefields and had the boy sit down with Union veterans as they told him their tales of war. Robert found the prospects of a military career enticing and secured an appointment to West Point in June 1905 through his father's friend Judge William R.

¹⁹ Holzimmer, 97.

²⁰ Paul Chwialkoski, *In Caesar's Shadow The Life of General Robert Eichelberger* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1993), 3.

Warnock.²¹ Robert's friendship with people in high political or social positions paid off many times over the years for him.

Eichelberger passed the entrance exams to West Point but did not excel academically, graduated 68 out of 103 of the class of 1909. As Eichelberger served in different units across the United States, he allowed his personal insecurities dating from his childhood to hamper his self-confidence and professional growth. According to Chwialkoski, Eichelberger felt that he could not achieve success on his own, so he looked to his commanding officers as models on how to conduct himself. Additionally, Eichelberger believed that personal rivalries between officers were a natural aspect of his profession.²² In order to protect his own career from unscrupulous challengers, Eichelberger often blended his professional and personal relationships with his commanding officers. Unlike Krueger, Eichelberger did not focus on academic achievement and did not write significant works of military thought, despite gaining a transfer in February 1918 to the WPD as an office aide to the executive assistant to Chief of Staff, Brigadier General William S. Graves.

In July, Graves was ordered to France to command a division of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), and Eichelberger was to accompany him as either a unit commander of the 8th Division or as a staff officer. Any excitement that Eichelberger may

²¹ This opportunity almost did not come to pass for Robert Eichelberger. George Eichelberger had doubts of his son's ability to succeed and did not inform him of the appointment's availability. Robert never forgave his father's lack of confidence. When Robert became Superintendent of West Point, he allegedly whispered the following words at his father's grave: "You said I wouldn't be appointed to West Point, you said I wouldn't make the grade at West Point and now I'm running the place." Chwialkoski, 5.

²² From 1909 to 1915, Eichelberger was stationed with the 10th Infantry Regiment in the Panama Canal Zone. His regimental commander, Colonel Henry A. Greene did not get along well with the chief engineer for construction work, Colonel George Goethals. The two colonels bickered as to who was higher on the totem pole of the base's leadership hierarchy and engaged in petty feuding. Eichelberger got along well with Greene and sided with him during the feuding. Ibid., 8-9.

have had at the prospects of fighting in the War to End All Wars was premature as the Russian Revolution and Germany's Treaty of Brest-Litvosk with the Bolshevik government drew Japan's covetous eyes to Russia's vulnerable Far Eastern possessions. President Woodrow Wilson was committed to the defeat of Germany on the Western Front and initially resisted American intervention in the Russian Civil War.²³ He eventually acquiesced to British and French requests for American intervention in the Far East to allegedly protect America's "Open Door" policy in China against Japanese adventurism and to secure military supplies previously sent to the defunct Tsarist government from falling into German hands, the capture of which would prolong the war.²⁴ For Eichelberger, this convoluted political dance across the world meant that he was relegated to a secondary theater and did not see action in the Western Front or earn commendations and recognition in combat. However, this turn of events allowed Eichelberger to ingratiate himself with powerful friends in high places in the Army.

During America's Siberian Expedition (1918-1920), Captain Eichelberger earned a superb reputation in the Army as an organizer and staff worker. This success was partially due to his talents and partially due to the influence of friendly commanding officers. When Eichelberger arrived at the port of Vladivostok in 1918, he was already the Assistant Chief of Staff under Brigadier General Graves and became the chief intelligence officer for the American forces in Siberia in March 1919. Eichelberger gathered intelligence on the various military factions vying for political control in the former Tsarist Empire and observed Japanese military activities in Siberia. Eichelberger

²³ Roy W. Curry. *Woodrow Wilson and Far Eastern Policy, 1913-1921*. (New Haven, CN: United Printing Services, Inc., 1957), 215.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 224.

quickly noted that the Japanese superficially supported the White Russian forces under Admiral Aleksandr Kolchak in Vladivostok and Siberia, but in the young captain's view, the Japanese only:

entered the country on the pretext of preserving law and order-and had created disorder. They had agreed solemnly to send in 12,000 troops and had sent in 120,000. They intended to stay. Out of my Siberian experiences came a conviction that pursued me for the next twenty years: I knew that Japanese militarism had as its firm purpose the conquest of all Asia.²⁵

As a result of the military budget cuts of the post World War I era, the United States Army reduced its soldiers from 280,000 men to 125,000. This downsizing impaired Eichelberger's promotion prospects, but his personal and staff experiences in the Far East buoyed his career. He moved from one intelligence section to the next in the Far East before finally transferring to the Adjutant General's Corps in July 1924. There, the Adjutant General (AG) of the Army, General Robert C. Davis, a classmate of Eichelberger's former company commander James B. Gowen, was impressed with Eichelberger's work in Washington and promptly transferred him to the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where Eichelberger was one of 248 officers of the class of 1926. Eichelberger improved his study habits since his West Point days and graduated in the top 25 percent of his class (the top student was Dwight D. Eisenhower). After a short appointment as adjutant general of the Command and General Staff School, he attended the Army War College and gained the attention of Major General William D. Connor, the commandant of the War College. After Eichelberger graduated from the War College in June 1930, his relationship with Connor proved

²⁵ Robert Eichelberger and Milton MacKaye. *Our Jungle Road to Tokyo* (Nashville, TN: Battery Press, 1989), xiii-xiv.

beneficial when, upon Connor's recommendation, Eichelberger was promoted to lieutenant colonel.²⁶

In July 1935, Eichelberger began a new assignment as secretary to the General Staff, where he became acquainted with General Douglas MacArthur, then the Chief of Staff of the Army. During his first three months as a secretary, Eichelberger learned about MacArthur's personal jealousy towards other talented officers. MacArthur confided one such reservation to Eichelberger about George C. Marshall, then a colonel. "He'll never be a brigadier general as long as I am Chief of Staff, Eich," MacArthur said. "[Marshall] is the most over-rated man in the United States Army."²⁷ MacArthur's irregular hours at work made Eichelberger's task of presenting the studies and reports of the General Staff to MacArthur difficult. Eichelberger later complained that MacArthur's odd working hours "kept me on pins and needles" and that "it was something of a task to present papers to the Chief of Staff."²⁸

Eichelberger did not endure MacArthur's quirky behavior for long. MacArthur retired as Chief of Staff in 1935 and with President Franklin Roosevelt's blessing, went to the Philippines, where as the first (and only) Field Marshal of the Philippine Army he supervised the creation and development of the commonwealth's army. MacArthur's successor as chief of staff, General Malin Craig, developed a harmonious personal relationship with Eichelberger. Craig, unlike MacArthur, was interested in promoting younger officers to the rank of general. For his part, Eichelberger offered sympathetic ears to Craig when the general revealed his personal problems to his young secretary.

²⁶ Chwialkoski, 34.

²⁷ Ibid, 35.

²⁸ Ibid.

During these informal meetings, Eichelberger often conversed with Craig over lunch in the Chief of Staff's office. Through these conversations, Eichelberger developed a close friendship with Craig that lasted until the latter's death in 1945. While Eichelberger worked in the general staff office, he became reacquainted with his former classmate from Fort Leavenworth, Major Dwight D. Eisenhower, and met Craig's eventual successor as Chief of Staff, George C. Marshall (by then a major general, despite MacArthur's misgivings). Eichelberger got along well with both men.

Eichelberger's tour at the General Staff was a fortunate experience for him in two ways. First, he gained recognition from his superiors for his diligence at work. MacArthur wrote a letter to Eichelberger in 1935 in which the former Chief of Staff praised Eichelberger's "tact, loyalty, intelligence and initiative."²⁹ Secondly, Eichelberger cultivated an impressive number of friends among officers could advance his career, initially such as Craig and Connor, and later Marshall and Eisenhower. At Eichelberger's request for a transfer to the infantry, Generals Craig and Connor pushed through a transfer to the 30th Infantry Regiment at Presidio in California along with a promotion to full colonel in 1938.

Eichelberger's first assignment outside of a staff office brought new opportunities for him. The 30th Infantry Regiment was an outfit with collapsing morale. The regiment's commanding officer, Colonel Irving J. Phillipson and his wife tried to regulate the personal lives of the officers in his regiment. Spirits among the officers were so bad that the officers boycotted the Officers' Club in protest of Phillipson's policies. Eichelberger was aware that he had to whip the 30th into shape without any hitches; he knew that his friends had pulled many favors for his rapid rise in the ranks after seventeen years of staff

²⁹ Chwialkoski, 36.

duty and that his assignment aroused the jealous ire of many junior and senior officers. To his credit, Eichelberger succeeded in restoring the morale of the 30th Infantry Regiment, largely by acting the opposite of Phillipson. Eichelberger prevented his wife Emma (Miss Em) from interfering with the personal lives of his officers, allowed them to spend their off-duty time in the city rather than in camp, supported regimental sporting teams, and refurbished the Officer's Club and movie theater.³⁰

During Eichelberger's two year tour in the 30th Infantry Regiment, he participated in a number of successful maneuvers in 1939 and 1940 along the California coast. In one exercise in Winter 1940, Eichelberger led the coastal defenses near Fort Ord against the two "invading" National Guard Divisions and elements of the 3d Division. Eichelberger's success with the 30th Infantry Regiment, combined with General Craig's lobbying on his behalf to George C. Marshall, gained him a promotion to brigadier general in 1940.³¹

In winter 1940, Eichelberger received a transfer to a new assignment. General Edwin "Pa" Watson, secretary and military aide to President Roosevelt as well as a friend of Eichelberger from their days at the General Staff, chose Eichelberger to head the United States Military Academy at West Point.³² Eichelberger kept the Superintendent's job until the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, when General Lesley McNair and McNair's deputy Colonel Mark W. Clark arranged for his transfer to

³⁰ Chwialkowski, 44.

³¹ Ibid., 45.

³² Eichelberger's year-long tenure as Superintendent of West Point saw few changes in the school save for the addition of 400 hours required flight training by ever eligible cadet and the alteration of West Point's public image. However, Eichelberger was most proud of his reforms in the school's football program, such as hiring coach Earl "Red" Blaik (promising to retain Blaik's entire Dartmouth staff and building him a house near Fort Willis, New York) and waiving the old weight limits for players so that West Point could recruit more successfully than it had before. Eichelberger justified himself that a successful football team and the lessons of victory and defeat on the gridiron were important for high morale. Ibid., 47-48.

the 77th Infantry Division based in Fort Jackson, South Carolina. Eichelberger did not stay long with the 77th Infantry Division; while Eichelberger prepared for his new assignment in anticipation for the upcoming American landings in North Africa, Douglas MacArthur organized the small American and Australian land forces in the Pacific for a counteroffensive against Japan in New Guinea as a step in the “island hopping” strategy to defeat Japan. On 3 August 1942, General Marshall selected Eichelberger to command an American corps in the Pacific.³³ Perhaps recalling his experience in World War I when he was left out of the fighting in the Western Front to take an assignment in a secondary theater, Eichelberger winced at his transfer to Australia. He was left out of the first major American offensive in the war and only to serve under MacArthur, a man who Eichelberger later recalled “was going to be difficult to get along with.”³⁴

Eichelberger arrived in Brisbane, Australia late August 1942 to witness the Allies in a precarious position in the Southwestern Pacific Theater. The last American units in the Philippines surrendered to the Japanese in May 1942, and the British under General Sir Arthur Percival surrendered Singapore a few months later. The Japanese performed a logistically brilliant march across the Owen Stanley mountain range in New Guinea in an attempt to cut off the vital Australian base of Port Moresby from Allied communications and supply. The situation in Australia seemed grim to Eichelberger. There were only two American divisions (both National Guard units) on the entire continent and only the 41st

³³ Eichelberger was not Marshall’s first choice for the assignment. Major General Robert C. Richardson, Marshall’s first choice, loathed the possibility of serving with the strong-willed Australian General Thomas A. Blamey. Marshall considered replacing Richardson with Major General Oscar W. Griswold (who was later Krueger’s XIV Corps commander), but selected Eichelberger. Marshall’s reasons for doing so fall into the realm of military politics, since unlike Griswold, Eichelberger already knew MacArthur and Marshall expected the two officers to get along based on the strength of their relationship during MacArthur’s tenure as Chief of Staff in the mid 1930s. Chwialkowski, 52-53.

³⁴ Eichelberger, Robert L. Jay Luvaas, ed. *Dear Miss Em General Eichelberger’s War in the Pacific, 1942-1945*. (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1972), 15.

Infantry Division underwent any semblance of jungle combat training; the 32nd Infantry Division was stationed near Adelaide in southern Australia and the snowy terrain where the division trained was eminently unsuitable for preparation for combat in the tropics. Draftees comprised the bulk of the divisions' strength, and Australian officers commanded them. With many Americans under foreign command, Eichelberger noticed some tension between the two cultures in the ranks. He recalled that "many of the [Australian] commanders I met had already been in combat with the British in North Africa, and though they were usually too polite to say so, considered the Americans to be-at best-inexperienced theorists."³⁵

But it was not Eichelberger or even MacArthur who turned the tide of the Japanese investment of Port Moresby. Tenacious American resistance at Guadalcanal compelled the Japanese high command to reconsider the offensive against Port Moresby and on 18 September the Japanese began pulling back across the Owen Stanleys. MacArthur seized the initiative and deployed the 32nd Infantry Division under Major General Edwin Harding to expel the Japanese from their beachheads at Buna, one of the major Japanese beachheads in northern New Guinea. Harding contended with both poor intelligence and well entrenched Japanese, and his lack of progress infuriated MacArthur. Not only did the Japanese frustrate MacArthur's first offensive in the war, the Australian officers began to discount his leadership and suggested that Australian reinforcements be sent to Buna in lieu of Americans.

MacArthur, comfortably ensconced in his headquarters in Port Moresby, was seemingly unaware of the conditions that his troops contended with in the field, but he nevertheless demanded results. MacArthur offered the accommodating Eichelberger a

³⁵ Eichelberger MacKaye, 7.

carrot and a stick: MacArthur gave Eichelberger Harding's job and ordered him to relieve "all officers who won't fight... If necessary put sergeants in charge of battalions and corporals in charge of companies - anyone who will fight... I want you to take Buna, or not come back alive."³⁶ Eichelberger recalled that after breakfast, MacArthur put his hands on Eichelberger's shoulders, led him into his office, and promised him a Distinguished Service Cross, a recommendation for a "high British decoration," and "I'll release your name for newspaper publication."³⁷ Enthusiastically, Eichelberger promptly put all of the energy into his first combat assignment of his career.

Eichelberger relieved Harding on 30 November and immediately breathed new life into the division.³⁸ He halted all offensive action for two days while he visited the front, ensured the steady flow of supplies to his men, and waited for Australian reinforcements and armor to help him break through the Japanese trenches and pillboxes.³⁹ Unfortunately, Eichelberger could not wave a magic wand and repair all that ailed his men; the marshy terrain and tropical insects outside Buna slowly debilitated the American units and there was little room for the GIs to maneuver. Eichelberger went so far as to claim that "disease was a surer and more deadly peril to us than enemy

³⁶ Eichelberger and MacKaye, 21.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 22.

³⁸ On Harding's relief, see Samuel Milner, *Victory in Papua United States Army in World War II The War in the Pacific* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1957), 208-212.

³⁹ Eichelberger later recalled one rather cheeky incident where Brigadier General Clovis E. Byers, his commander of the forward elements of the 32nd Division, inquired to his enlistees what they required to hold the beachhead at Buna. One soldier whose trouser seat rotted away due to exposure to the elements and swamp water, exposed his bare backside to Eichelberger's chief of staff and replied "Pants! For God's sake, General, pants!" Eichelberger and MacKaye, 32.

marksmanship.”⁴⁰ Even the very weapons the Americans used seemed to work against Eichelberger. He reflected on the battle’s progress and recalled that the American flamethrowers did not burn through the jungle but only “accomplished the death of our chemical warfare officer and made casualties of his personnel.”⁴¹ Despite these deficiencies, Eichelberger succeeded in capturing Buna in part because of Australian aid. On 18 December, Australian veterans of the 18th Brigade in American-built M-3 tanks broke through the Japanese lines at Buna at severe cost to the Australian unit.⁴² Eichelberger declared victory at Buna on 2 January 1943 while mopping up operations took another two weeks. On 24 January 1943, Eichelberger turned command of all American forces in New Guinea to Major General Horace Fuller and flew back to Australia where the Australian high command and the Australian and American press greeted him as if he was a conquering hero.

Eichelberger believed that his distinguished service in the Buna campaign would earn him praise and admiration from MacArthur. After all, he salvaged MacArthur’s faltering campaign. MacArthur’s behavior towards Eichelberger after the Buna campaign was rather less than gracious, however. When MacArthur released Eichelberger’s name to the press on 9 January 1943, the victor of Buna quickly found himself on the cover of *Life* magazine and on headlines in newspapers both in the United States and in Australia. At long last, here was public praise for a job well done, and Eichelberger basked in his hour in the sun, but his fame did not sit well with the envious and vindictive MacArthur who decided to shelve his successful corps commander so that Eichelberger would have

⁴⁰ Eichelberger and MacKaye, 43.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴² The official estimate for the Australian casualties is unknown; Eichelberger assumed the Australian battalion “lost nearly half its fighting force in killed and wounded.” *Ibid.*, 45.

fewer opportunities to eclipse him in the newspapers. While MacArthur did award Eichelberger with the Distinguished Service Cross, he vetoed George C. Marshall's recommendation that Eichelberger be awarded the Medal of Honor. MacArthur never explained his decision. In February 1943, he summoned Eichelberger to his headquarters in Brisbane and admonished him: "Do you realize I could reduce you to the grade of colonel tomorrow and send you home?"⁴³ MacArthur never did demote Eichelberger in terms of rank, but MacArthur's orders of March 1943 reassigned Eichelberger from combat operations in New Guinea to training duty in Australia. Rather than winning fame from leading men in battle, Eichelberger became responsible for training the 32nd, 41st, and 24th Infantry Divisions in Australia.

In August 1943 Eichelberger's fears that his training assignment was an obstacle to his advancement were finally realized as MacArthur continued to undermine his career. In late 1943 the War Department finalized the planning of Overlord, the code-name for the campaign to liberate Europe from German occupation. Overlord required battle-tested commanders to lead the large American armies then forming in England and Eichelberger's victory at Buna and his old friendship with Generals George C. Marshall and Dwight D. Eisenhower placed him on the list of prospective officers to fight in the Overlord operation. Marshall requested that MacArthur release Eichelberger to Europe where he would command the U. S. First Army. MacArthur declined this request. Later, Marshall tried again to transfer Eichelberger to Europe as commander of the U. S. Ninth

⁴³ Chwialkoski, 71.

Army.⁴⁴ MacArthur assured Eichelberger in a 15 May 1943 that he “wouldn’t stand in your way” of a transfer to Europe, but by August MacArthur reneged on his promise, saying “I couldn’t spare your services, Bob.”⁴⁵ Eichelberger did not hear of MacArthur’s rejection of the War Department’s request from him; Eichelberger had to learn of MacArthur’s duplicity from his old friends in Washington. To further consign Eichelberger to controlled service under him, MacArthur assigned Eichelberger’s I Corps to the newly-created U. S. Sixth Army under Lieutenant General Walter Krueger, a highly competent commander and a man who did not seek publicity. Historian Jay Luvaas suggests that MacArthur’s re-shuffling of his commanders was not intended as an indignity towards Eichelberger, although future operations indeed limited Eichelberger’s opportunities for career advancement.⁴⁶

The prospects of a cordial working relationship between Krueger and Eichelberger appeared to be in the cards. Eichelberger never met Krueger before Walter’s transfer to the Pacific and wished to know more about him. Eichelberger’s old friend and former Chief of Staff of the Army General Malin Craig wrote to Eichelberger that “I believe that you will find Krueger a good man. He is fearless, tireless and reasonably human.”⁴⁷ On 9 February 1943, Krueger and his Chief of Staff Brigadier General George Honnen entertained Eichelberger at a dinner. Eichelberger enjoyed his meal with the

⁴⁴ The command for First Army eventually went to Lieutenant General Omar Bradley and the Ninth Army went to Lieutenant General William H. Simpson. Both armies served with great distinction in the European Theater.

⁴⁵ Luvaas, ed. 68-69.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 66.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Sixth Army commander and commented to Miss Em that Krueger “was most friendly in every way and quite amusing...his friendship is very real.”⁴⁸

Unfortunately, no reassurances from old friends or fancy dinners disguised the fact that the two generals had serious personality differences. Krueger rose through the ranks of two previous wars based on his own merits; Eichelberger relied largely on his friends for career advancement. Krueger was critical towards his officers and men as far as their day-to-day duties were concerned, while Eichelberger was more relaxed and easygoing. Krueger shunned publicity (which pleased MacArthur to no end) while Eichelberger craved it. Beyond these superficial differences, Eichelberger was plainly envious that Krueger got the command of Sixth Army less than a month after the victory at Buna. “How unfair,” Eichelberger bitterly lamented to his wife, “when one considers that he [MacArthur] brought General Krueger out to be an army commander and that I had been placed to a large extent out of the picture.”⁴⁹

MacArthur was clearly aware of Eichelberger’s dislike of Krueger and sought to play their personal foibles off of each other, assuming that both Krueger and Eichelberger would fight for his favor, as two feuding lords would vie for their king’s goodwill. While Krueger paid attention to planning and leading operations in New Guinea, Eichelberger quickly danced to MacArthur’s tune and began performing political favors for his chief and willingly forgoing the media limelight throughout his Australian exile. Eichelberger continued his training role until March 1944 when MacArthur informed him that he would participate in the capture of Hollandia, a major Japanese base in northwest New

⁴⁸ Luvaas, ed., 67.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 69.

Guinea. While Eichelberger's I Corps was the primary landing force in the operation, Eichelberger's nemesis Walter Krueger was in overall command of the operation.

The Hollandia operation was Eichelberger's first command under General Krueger. Krueger ordered Eichelberger to complete two simultaneous landings at Humboldt Bay and Tanahmerah Bay near Hollandia, capture the three Japanese airfields near the landing sites, destroy enemy forces in the area, and secure ground, air, and port facilities at Humboldt Bay. The Navy's Task Force 58 protected the convoy ships and the transports arrived at their target areas early in the morning of 22 March 1944. At 3:00 that morning, Eichelberger rose from his cot, breakfasted on four sandwiches and downed mugs of orange juice, water, and coffee before going ashore.⁵⁰ The 24th and 41st Infantry Divisions landed near Hollandia on 22 April 1944 and quickly scattered the few Japanese defenders, who were caught completely by surprise.⁵¹ Eichelberger was pleased with the progress of his men, for during time prior to the landing, MacArthur informed him that "if this goes over well, he will make another army and make [Eichelberger] an army commander."⁵² The Americans secured the airfields on 27 April despite torrential weather, bad local roads, and considerable logistical difficulty in getting supplies from the beaches to the front lines.⁵³ In compliance with his orders to expand the newly-captured installations, Eichelberger put his engineers to good use. For over two months of

⁵⁰ Eichelberger was so pleased with the quality of the Navy's coffee that he wrote to Miss Em that in his "next incarnation I want to join the Navy. Good coffee, no dirt and no bugs..." Luvaas, ed., 105.

⁵¹ A captured letter from the Japanese commanding general at Wewak indicated to General Krueger that the Japanese intended to withdraw their forward elements in New Guinea to reinforce the pitiable garrison at Hollandia, but the Japanese had not yet begun their withdrawal before the Americans captured the base. Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon*, 74.

⁵² Luvaas, ed. *Dear Miss Em*, 106.

⁵³ Major General Frederick Irving commanded the 24th Division. Major General Horace Fuller commanded the 41st Division.

tireless engineering work, Eichelberger's men expanded and strengthened the roads from the airfields to the base, and constructed docking facilities, living quarters, and supply depots for over 140,000 men.⁵⁴ Eichelberger's engineering feats were all completed on schedule to support the planned invasions at Biak and the Wakde-Sarmi region.

Eichelberger was proud of his hard work at Hollandia, but General Krueger did not share his sentiments. Krueger believed that Eichelberger's initial advance was badly organized, undisciplined, and failed to pay proper attention to the soldiers' supplies. In Krueger's view, Eichelberger's advance was not a proper example of combat leadership, as the tiny Japanese garrison scattered into the wilds rather than oppose Eichelberger's troops. Additionally, Krueger criticized Eichelberger's leadership during the initial landings, as soldiers and in certain cases whole platoons stopped their advance to search for souvenirs and to plunder native huts.⁵⁵

Krueger did not allow his criticisms of Eichelberger to interfere with another pressing mission. American forces landed over three hundred miles away at Biak on 27 May 1944 and encountered spirited Japanese resistance at the cliffs overlooking the nearby airfields. The Japanese repelled the 41st Division for several weeks and embarrassed General MacArthur and threatened the timetable for Admiral Chester W. Nimitz's Saipan operation, for which MacArthur promised Nimitz the use of land-based bombers from Biak. General Krueger ordered Eichelberger to relieve Major General Horace Fuller as commander of the stalled task force. Eichelberger took charge of the situation and as he did at Buna, he halted all offensive action until he could assess what the situation was like. Eichelberger ignored Krueger's repeated orders to assault the Biak

⁵⁴ Chwialkowski, 96.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 97.

airfields and instead rested his own troops and scouted the Japanese positions for two days. Eichelberger finally began his attack on 19 June, but instead of hitting the Japanese positions head-on as Fuller did, Eichelberger enveloped the Japanese lines.

On 20 June, Eichelberger cheered in a letter to Miss Em in regards to a “distinct victory” that destroyed Japanese morale. In the same letter to Miss Em, Eichelberger commented on Tokyo Rose, the infamous Japanese propagandist from Radio Tokyo who claimed that Eichelberger and his men were “about to be driven into the sea.” Tokyo Rose’s bombast was indeed less than accurate. Eichelberger’s men captured Japanese naval guns and artillery pieces and over-ran Japanese supply depots, one of which contained enough Japanese beer for every one of Eichelberger’s men. By 26 June, Eichelberger wrote that “except for isolated pockets, we have driven out [the Japanese from] this area now and in another week the mopping up will be completed. There are no indications of any counter-attacks in force.”⁵⁶ Eichelberger’s achievements pleased both Krueger and MacArthur. Krueger wrote to MacArthur that he was “very much pleased with Eichelberger’s performance at Biak.”⁵⁷ MacArthur rewarded Eichelberger’s victory with command of the new Eighth Army as he promised, but for less altruistic reasons than simply keeping his word. MacArthur had over a year’s experience at manipulating Eichelberger in order to achieve what he wanted and used Eichelberger’s promotion as a foil to Krueger so that the Sixth and Eighth army commanders would compete with each other for MacArthur’s favor.

Eichelberger played into MacArthur’s hands and viewed his new appointment as if Krueger had taken a mortal wound upon hearing of Eighth Army’s creation. In a 30

⁵⁶ Luvaas, ed. 137.

⁵⁷ Holzimmer, 167.

June 1944 letter to Miss Em, Eichelberger gloated about MacArthur's desire for an Eighth Army; "Walter acts as if he had been spanked."⁵⁸ On 4 July, Eichelberger wrote to his wife that

the general attitude of Walter toward me seems to be worse than the mere fact he heard I was to be given the Eighth Army would cause. It does not seem reasonable he would be so discourteous merely on that account because he knows somebody is going to get it and therefore perhaps he would prefer to have me... certainly I do not intend to let anybody get my goat.⁵⁹

Two days later, Krueger called Eichelberger and informed him that he wished to visit with the new Eighth Army commander. During their visit, Krueger was, in Eichelberger's own words, "as nice as pie. Butter wouldn't melt in his mouth."⁶⁰ While Eichelberger organized the Eighth Army and awaited the arrival of his new staff from the United States, the strained relationship between the two army commanders showed at least rays of sunshine. During one of Krueger's visits to Eichelberger's camp, the two generals joked about "how the war in Germany would soon be over so that Georgie Patton [then the commander of the U. S. Third Army fighting in Normandy] with his two pearl-

⁵⁸ Eichelberger's belief that the Eighth Army was the only source of irritation for Krueger is disingenuous. Krueger had recently and very reluctantly approved a transfer request for General Fuller, and this transfer was a major source of stress for Krueger. Fuller believed that Krueger was too critical in his criticisms of the Biak operation and requested a transfer out of the Southwest Pacific Area. Krueger was very reluctant to transfer Fuller out of his command because at the time of Eichelberger's arrival at Biak, Fuller's men already captured one of the airfields and began to put into American usage. Eichelberger himself admitted to Miss Em earlier in the same letter that Krueger was "very agitated about Fuller Luvaas, 140. On the Fuller controversy, see Robert Ross Smith, *The Approach to the Philippines. The Approach to the Philippines United States Army in World War II: The War in the Pacific* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1996), 344.

⁵⁹ Luvaas, ed. 141.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 142.

handled pistols could come over here and show Walter how to liquidate the Japanese.”⁶¹

This humorous encounter was the only incident in Eichelberger’s letters to Miss Em written shortly before the Philippine campaigns that showed any warmth between him and Krueger.

Eichelberger, despite his military successes in New Guinea and his new command, was deeply unsure of his relationship with Krueger. In a 3 August letter, Eichelberger revealed to Miss Em a strange interpretation of his relationship between MacArthur and Krueger. In Eichelberger’s mind, General MacArthur “likes me and I think in many ways he admires me. Except that he will never depart from his chosen pattern, I feel that wishes me well in all things. I wish I were as sure of your old friend [Krueger].”⁶²

The relationship continued to deteriorate in September and October, when both armies had to compete for Southwest Pacific Theater’s resources. In September, both generals constructed their headquarters on opposite sides of a lake near Hollandia. Krueger’s headquarters was completed with concrete buildings and lights for nighttime security. Not to be outdone, Eichelberger constructed a private office overlooking the lake, complete with a veranda and badminton court. Additionally, Eichelberger commandeered a variety of vehicles for his own personal use, including five boats, a new Packard automobile, and a B-17 bomber refurbished with an ice-box, upholstered cabin, and a curtained bed. For guests, Eichelberger imported large amounts of ice cream,

⁶¹ Luvaas, ed., 149.

⁶² Ibid., 150.

liquor, and various vegetables and meats from Australia.⁶³ Eichelberger later complained that Krueger hindered the construction of this grand headquarters. The Eighth Army commander complained that he “had to fight for every engineer we have been able to get to do any serious construction work.”⁶⁴ In light of Eichelberger’s rather opulent construction and requisition demands, Krueger’s alleged interference seems justified. When Krueger did not halt his obstruction, Eichelberger began making frequent remarks to MacArthur’s staff that exaggerated Krueger’s negative personal traits, alleged that Krueger’s age was going to be a detriment to future combat operations, and stated that the Eighth Army was fresher than the Sixth Army for the upcoming Leyte operation.⁶⁵

Krueger quickly learned of Eichelberger’s ploy and responded to his rival’s politicking on grounds of military necessity. Krueger stated that Eichelberger and his new staff lacked the amphibious experience that the invasion of Leyte required and the men and officers of the Sixth Army as a whole had over two years of planning and carrying out several successful amphibious operations under its belt. Krueger’s argument suited MacArthur’s desire to see as soon as possible a campaign to liberate the Philippines, and Krueger kept the command of Sixth Army and the front place for the invasion of the islands. Eichelberger sulked to his wife: “I was not made very happy over decisions because I see no place for myself in what one might call the big show.”⁶⁶ Krueger did not comment on Eichelberger’s absence from the invasion of the first Philippine island, Leyte.

⁶³ Chwialkoski, 110.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 110.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 111.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 112.

Lieutenant General Krueger was confident of the invasion's success. Both the Navy and the Air Forces assured him of strong support and he led some of the most experienced divisions in the Army. Immediately the Americans began to isolate Leyte from all avenues of Japanese reinforcements. The U. S. Third Fleet under Admiral William Halsey, already near the Philippines, bombed Japanese ships and wharves and attacked airfields in Okinawa, Formosa, and Luzon. On 11 October 1944 the U. S. Seventh Fleet under Vice Admiral Thomas C. Kinkaid sailed to Leyte from the Admiralty Islands and ports in New Guinea, escorting the invasion forces in the Third Amphibious Force along the way. After landing on the Leyte coast on 20 October 1944, Krueger's army made slow but steady progress to the western mountainous regions of the island. There, the Japanese defenders under General Tomoyuki Yamashita dug into the mountains and narrow passes, creating difficult bottlenecks which halted Sixth Army's forward progress for many days. To compound Krueger's difficulties on Leyte, Yamashita regularly reinforced the defenders on the island with his reserves on Luzon.

Any hopes that Eichelberger had of getting petty glory from Krueger's misfortune were premature as Krueger completed an amphibious landing at Ormoc Bay on 7 December and scattered the Japanese resistance before him. Krueger's capture of Ormoc made the Japanese positions on Leyte strategically untenable since Yamashita could no longer send reinforcements from Luzon. Krueger's troops overwhelmed the stubborn but few remaining Japanese defenders, giving the pleased MacArthur the opportunity to announce on that Krueger's campaign "has had few counterparts in the utter destruction of the enemy's forces with a maximum conservation of our own."⁶⁷ MacArthur quickly

⁶⁷ D. Clayton James. *The Years of MacArthur, 1941-1945* New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 602.

announced the termination of all organized fighting on Leyte save for minor mopping-up operations. On 26 December 1944, Eichelberger's Eighth Army relieved Krueger's Sixth Army on Leyte. MacArthur's classifying Eichelberger's mission as a mere "mopping up" operation angered the Eighth Army commander, since he would receive little if any credit in the newspapers for a campaign which was already declared ended. Embittered, Eichelberger vented to his wife: "...since [Leyte] has now been called the most wonderful victory in history, [Krueger] is more or less on top again."⁶⁸

Eichelberger remained with the Eighth Army on Leyte while Krueger's Sixth Army boarded ships north for the operation on Luzon. Despite a seemingly cooperative relationship between the two men in 1943, their personal differences created a chasm between them that a year's worth of petty squabbling only exacerbated. When MacArthur designated Krueger to command the forces that would liberate Luzon and the capital of Manila, Eichelberger refused to be left out of the "big show." Eichelberger's ambition to upstage Krueger, coupled with MacArthur's own burning desire to plant the Stars and Stripes over the Philippines, would have grave consequences for the American army during the Luzon campaign.

⁶⁸ Chwialkoski, 115.

CHAPTER III

THE VICTORS AND THE SPOILS, JANUARY-MARCH 1945

“The military machine-the army and everything related to it-is basically very simple and therefore seems easy to manage. But we should bear in mind that none of its components is of one piece; each part is composed of individuals, every one of whom retains his potential of friction... the dangers inseparable from war and the physical exertions war demands can aggravate the problem to such an extent that they must be ranked among its principal causes.”

-Carl von Clausewitz¹

The crushing American victory over the Japanese at Leyte was not the end of the enmity between Robert Eichelberger and Walter Krueger. The Luzon Campaign of 1945 was not the first time that Krueger and Eichelberger served together, but on Luzon the operational conditions differed from those in the New Guinea and Leyte campaigns. Whereas Eichelberger was a corps commander under General MacArthur at Buna, under Krueger at Hollandia and Biak, and did not arrive on Leyte until after Krueger's Sixth Army had already left the island, Luzon was the first campaign where both generals commanded their troops in the same campaign. During the Luzon Campaign, Krueger and Eichelberger were in direct contention for the same great prize of the campaign; the Philippine capital of Manila.

¹ Carl von Clausewitz. *On War* ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 119.

Manila was important for the campaign on both military and political grounds. The JCS required Manila's large deep-water port for logistical needs and also called for the city's nearby airfields from which B-29s and other heavy bombers could unleash their terrible payloads against targets in Japan. Equally as important in the eyes of the Southwest Pacific Area Commander General Douglas MacArthur was the emotional significance of Manila. In the first few months of the Pacific War, the Japanese invasion of the Philippines overwhelmed the undersupplied and beleaguered American defenders, whom MacArthur commanded. The swift Japanese conquest of the Philippines in 1942 humiliated MacArthur. His dream for redemption by quickly returning to the Philippines and destroying the Japanese army that rattled his considerable ego marked his constant demands to his field commanders in New Guinea for quick campaigns.

During the New Guinea campaigns, MacArthur often relieved commanders whose advances against the Japanese positions were not swift enough for his pleasure. At Buna, MacArthur directly ordered Lieutenant General Robert Eichelberger to relieve Major General Edwin Harding and take charge of the stalled campaign. Successful at Buna, Eichelberger relieved Major General Horace Fuller at Biak since Fuller's advance did not progress well enough for Lieutenant General Walter Krueger, whom MacArthur ordered to take Biak with all possible speed. While MacArthur often criticized Krueger's campaigns, Krueger was too skilled and experienced a commander for MacArthur to justify shelving him.

While Krueger was primarily focused on the campaign objectives, Eichelberger allowed his own petty jealousy towards Krueger to influence Eighth Army's operations. Eichelberger's rancor with Krueger presented MacArthur with a useful tool used by

commanders since at least the days Napoleon to prod the two uncooperative generals into getting what he wanted.² In the words of historian D. Clayton James, “a confirmed believer in *laissez faire* like MacArthur knew that the best results would come from open-wide competition.”³ MacArthur’s skillful manipulation of the Eichelberger’s disdain for Krueger marked the Luzon campaign and interfered with the military objectives of seizing deep-water ports and destroying the Japanese army under General Tomoyoki Yamashita.

Lieutenant General Krueger’s first objective in the Luzon Campaign was to seize a beachhead in the Lingayen-Damortis-San Fernando area of northwest Luzon. He was then to destroy Japanese forces on Luzon, direct Philippine forces on Luzon, occupy the island, and establish minor air and naval facilities in the Lingayen Gulf area to support other operations in the Philippines.⁴ After the United States destroyed the Japanese Navy at the battle of Leyte Gulf and seized the island of Leyte, Krueger began Sixth Army’s campaign to liberate Luzon while Eichelberger’s Eighth Army remained on Leyte.

For the campaign, Krueger initially had available to him 152,447 officers and men of the U. S. Sixth Army.⁵ Major General Charles A. Willoughby, MacArthur’s intelligence chief, estimated in late December 1944 that the total Japanese forces on

² Historian Jay Luvaas noted that MacArthur was not the only commander during the Second World War to use such a technique: Josef Stalin, the Premier of the Soviet Union, “invited” Marshals Ivan Konev and Georgy Zhukov to compete for Berlin, the great prize of the European campaign. Robert Eichelberger, Jay Luvaas, ed *Dear Miss Em General Eichelberger's War in the Pacific, 1942-1945* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1972), 203.

³ D. Clayton James, *The Years of MacArthur, 1941-1945* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 500.

⁴ Walter Krueger *From Down Under to Nippon The Story of Sixth Army in World War II*. (Washington, D.C.: Combat Forces Press, 1953), 211.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 213.

Luzon was 152,500 men and somewhere between 400 and 500 planes, so MacArthur deemed that Krueger's force was large enough to accomplish its strategic goals.⁶ However, Krueger's own intelligence services estimated over 235,000 Japanese military personnel on Luzon and asked MacArthur for reinforcements.⁷ MacArthur approved this request, but the reinforcements would not arrive until late January, almost four months after the operation began. Until then, Sixth Army had a job to do on its own.

The immediate problem was how to best land Sixth Army onto the island. The target area contained only two suitable beaches; Damortis-San Fernando and Lingayen-Dagupan-Mabilo. While the beaches of Damortis-San Fernando would be easier to land troops and materials, Krueger's intelligence reports informed him that the Japanese garrison there was strong and entrenched behind fixed positions on the ridges near the beach. Additionally, a landing at that beach would force Sixth Army to advance on a narrow corridor, the terrain constraints of which would severely hamper the maneuvers of Krueger's units. On the other hand, the Lingayen-Dagupan-Mabilo beach was weakly defended, provided immediate access to roads, and was near an existing harbor and airstrip.⁸ Unfortunately, that beach also held some serious natural obstacles near it, including small ponds and estuaries. Additionally, high winds buffeted the landing sites and kicked up surf on the coastal waters.

⁶ Robert Ross Smith. *Triumph in the Philippines*. (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, Dept. of the Army, 1963), 28.

⁷ Krueger's estimate was more accurate than Willoughby's: The Japanese had nearly 275,000 men on Luzon. Smith, 94. According to Eichelberger, MacArthur later "bawled out" Willoughby for constantly overestimating the number of Japanese encountered during the war, adding that "I don't see how I have gotten as far as I have with the staff I have been surrounded with" Luvaas, ed., 198

⁸ The Lingayen beach was coincidentally the same area that Lieutenant General Masaharu Homma chose for his landings during the Japanese invasion of the Philippines in December 1941.

However, Krueger believed that the very problems associated with Lingayen-Dagupan-Mabilo beach made it an ideal landing site. He wrote that the Japanese “would not put up a strong resistance there, and the landing would consequently have the advantage of surprise.”⁹ With Lingayen-Dagupan-Mabilo selected as the target beach, Krueger knew that he would need to keep the landing large enough to allow for friendly troop movements, supply facilities, and airfield construction while at the same time keeping the landings secure from a Japanese counterattack. As the landings at Lingayen Gulf were to be the only supply base on Luzon for Sixth Army until the securing of Manila, Krueger paid extremely careful attention to this base during the campaign. In his orders of 20 November 1944, Krueger designated 9 January 1945 as the target date for the date of the landings.

The Japanese defenders on Luzon, despite their horrific losses on Leyte and their dwindling supplies, remained a fierce and determined foe and awaited Krueger’s landings with grim anticipation. General Yamashita, Krueger’s doughty opponent from the Leyte campaign, commanded the 275,000 Japanese troops on Luzon.¹⁰ Believing that his forces were not strong enough to seek a decisive battle against the Americans in the relatively flat Manila Bay region (where the overwhelming American superiority in firepower and maneuver would easily tear holes in the Japanese formations), Yamashita planned to fight a delaying action in Luzon’s northern mountains and jungles for as long as possible in

⁹ Krueger, 215.

¹⁰ Smith, 94.

order to give the Japanese high command time to reinforce and entrench the defenders of the Japanese home islands against the eventual American invasion.¹¹

Regardless of the insurmountable difficulties which the Japanese on Luzon contended with, they rallied to Yamashita who divided his forces into three groups, each with control over a regional defense zone. Yamashita himself personally commanded the 152,000 men of Shobu Group in the mountains of northern Luzon and sought to delay the American advance to Manila for as long as possible by threatening Sixth Army's flanks. The smallest force was the 30,000 men of Kembu Group under the command of Major General Rikichi Tsukada. Situated in the central plains of Luzon, Kembu Group's mission was to deny the Americans the use of the all-weather airbase of Clark Field for as long as possible before conducting delaying and harassing operations on the flanks of Sixth Army's drive south to Manila. In the mountains southeast of Manila, Yamashita organized the 80,000 soldiers of Shimbu Group under Lieutenant General Shizuo Yokoyama. Yokoyama's mission was to defend Manila's reservoirs and delay any American advance to the city for as long as possible. The sailors and marines under Rear Admiral Sanji Iwabuchi defended the city of Manila itself.¹²

Admiral William Halsey's naval task force provided vital naval artillery and air support for the Sixth Army during the Lingayen Gulf operation by interfering with Japanese air support from Formosa while establishing air superiority over Luzon.¹³ The task force swept the coast for mines and obstacles and bombarded the landing sites for

¹¹ Smith, 90.

¹² Ibid., 95-97.

¹³ For more information on the role of Admiral Halsey and the United States Navy during the Lingayen operation, see Admiral Eliot Morison's *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II, Vol. XIII. The Liberation of the Philippines: Luzon, Mindanao, the Visayas, 1944-1945*. (Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 1959.)

two days. The naval guns of Halsey's subordinate Vice Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf's battleships and cruisers cratered the beaches of Lingayen Gulf into a moonscape and any unlucky Japanese defender caught outside his foxhole was instantly reduced to a pulpy and bloody mess.

As Sixth Army's GIs hit the beaches at H-hour (0930) on 9 January, they encountered light shelling from Japanese 75mm and 30cm artillery, but resistance as a whole was light on the ground as Yamashita already pulled back all but a token number of troops to more favorable terrain.¹⁴ Despite the negligible Japanese opposition, the natural troubles of the landing site immediately plagued the operation. Brigadier General C. R. Lehner of the Quartermaster Corps complained that the high surf interfered with Sixth Army's logistics and reported that "in many instances it was not possible to discharge rations and other essential supplies from troops [*sic*] ships until several days after the troops had landed."¹⁵ Additionally, high winds on 10 January destroyed the supply causeways at XIV Corps' beach at the Lingayen area and threw many a landing ship, tank (LST) aground. The logistical problems delayed the unloading of artillery, armor, and other heavy equipment, but Krueger personally inspected the situation and transferred XIV Corps' landing site to that of I Corps at the Mibilao-San Fabian area where the terrain conditions were not as severe. While the redeployment created extra traffic at I Corps' beaches, this was unavoidable given Sixth Army's area of control.

¹⁴ Krueger promptly recognized the nature of Yamashita's strategy. In his weekly reports, Krueger wrote that "The enemy has elected to oppose our forces only in the mountainous area west and southwest of ROSARIO. This terrain, eminently suited for defense, is honey-combed with trenches and other defensive installations." Walter Krueger. *The General Walter Krueger Papers*, Cushing Memorial Library, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX. Box 2, Weekly Reports 2-59, Weekly Reports 71, January 1945.

¹⁵ C. R. Lehner. "Sixth Army Quartermaster Operations in the Luzon Campaign." *Military Review*, Vol. XXVI, No. 3. (Jun, 1946), 44.

Despite the supply difficulties, by 16 January Sixth Army succeeded in establishing a beachhead and advanced over 20 miles inland.¹⁶ XIV Corps was like a sword that cut through the Japanese defenses approaching the central plains while I Corps was the shield, protecting Sixth Army's left flank by containing the Japanese in the western Zambales Mountains.

The speed of Krueger's advances created morale problems for the Japanese army. Krueger's own reports contain different stories on the morale of the Japanese army. One Prisoner of War (PW) report taken before the Lingayen landings revealed some absurd propaganda:

PW said it is rumored among soldiers and civilians alike that if AMERICA wins the war, all except 2000 Japs will be slaughtered. JAPAN will be turned into an international park, using the 2000 as guides. These guides will be 2000 of the prettiest Jap girls, around 17 years of age.¹⁷

In a report during the Lingayen landings, Krueger observed that the Japanese morale appeared to be crumbling on Luzon: "A far greater number of the prisoners captured on Luzon think that Japan will lose the war. Such realistic thinking may sooner or later engender low morale."¹⁸

Even without considering the morale reports from captured Japanese by 12 January, Krueger was certain that the Japanese did not seriously imperil Sixth Army's advance from the Lingayen Gulf beaches and MacArthur summoned him to a conference on the cruiser USS Boise. At the conference, MacArthur simultaneously congratulated

¹⁶ Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon*, 226.

¹⁷ Krueger, The General Walter Krueger Papers, Box 2, WP 2-58, Weekly Reports, 70, 27 December 1944.

¹⁸ Krueger, The General Walter Krueger Papers, Box 2, WP 2-0, Weekly Reports 73, 31, 4 January 1945.

Krueger on the low amount of casualties at the Lingayen operation and demanded a major advance on Manila, correctly guessing that Yamashita did not intend to defend the city. Krueger replied that Sixth Army had only two divisions of XIV Corps available for a general advance, as he had detailed the remainder of his forces to protect both his flanks and supply base at the beaches. Krueger added that if he ordered XIV Corps to advance without reinforcements, its supply lines would quickly become overextended and would consequently expose its flanks to Japanese counterattacks. Krueger recalled that “General MacArthur did not seem to be impressed by my arguments. He did not appear to take very seriously the danger that the enemy might well take advantage of any over-extension of our forces to attack them in the rear as we moved south.”¹⁹ MacArthur was very unhappy with Krueger’s analysis since that meant that MacArthur could not celebrate his birthday in the city on 26 January (complete with a Champs-Élysées-style triumphal march and massive media fanfare), but he did not alter Sixth Army’s deployment.²⁰

While XIV Corps continued its advance to the central plains and was twenty-seven miles from Clark Field by 17 January, tenacious Japanese resistance from caves and wrecked bridges slowed I Corps’ advance almost to a halt. Krueger immediately inspected the units in the area to get the advance moving again. While inspecting I Corps’ area, Krueger noticed that flamethrower units and small arms effectively neutralized the caves, so he ordered that all aerial bombing of bridges in the central plains area halted unless specifically requested. He returned to his headquarters a short while later to hear a

¹⁹ Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon*, 228.

²⁰ Historian Richard Connaughton added that “until [MacArthur] could hold a victory parade in the city and publicly hand over power to a Filipino Commonwealth government, his self-appointed task [of liberating the Philippines] was incomplete.” Richard Connaughton, John Pilmont, and Duncan Anderson. *The Battle for Manila*. (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, Inc., 1995), 180. For details on MacArthur’s planned parade and celebration, see Connaughton, et. al, 209-214.

radio message from MacArthur ordering Sixth Army to seize Clark Field as soon as possible. Krueger did not believe that his available forces were enough to advance southward towards Clark Field without both greatly overextending their flanks and endangering the supply base on the beaches. He wrote: “an enemy penetration from either area, though I did not regard this as likely, could not be ignored and might well have produced a very awkward situation, especially in view of the meager reserve I had available.”²¹ Despite the risks, MacArthur was adamant that the drive on Manila continue without delay. Krueger ordered XIV Corps to continue its advance on Clark Field while maintaining contact with I Corps. To facilitate swifter communications and improve logistics for the drive, Krueger ordered his engineers to repair the dilapidated roads and repair the bridges in the area. The engineers performed their duties well, and XIV Corps advanced on the outskirts of Clark Field on 23 January after brushing aside sporadic Japanese resistance. At the same time when XIV Corps neared its objectives, I Corps launched an assault on the Japanese positions near Rosario. The Japanese counterattacked elements of I Corps with armor and artillery but sustained heavy losses. By nightfall of 26 January, I Corps seized the heights around Rosario and forced the surviving Japanese to withdraw into the wilderness.

By 28 January, Krueger had achieved remarkable success in his campaign. With the aid of the Navy and the Air Forces, he secured a beachhead and a base at Lingayen, defended his supply base against Japanese incursions, and gained possession of Clark Field. While still at sea awaiting combat reports from Krueger’s impending capture of Clark Field, Eichelberger fumed in impotent jealousy at his rival’s success. In a letter to

²¹ Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon*, 229.

Miss Em, Eichelbeger sarcastically grouched that “of course in the end everything will be sweet and lovely and your palsy-walsy [Krueger] will have gained a great victory. These annoyances always come up...”²²

One of these “annoyances” involved a bold operation that freed many of the soldiers whom MacArthur left on Luzon in 1942. On 27 January, the 1st Cavalry Division and the 32nd Infantry Division arrived at Lingayen and reinforced XIV Corps. While Krueger concentrated these new available forces for the final advance on Manila, Filipino guerillas reported to him that the Japanese held a large number of American prisoners at a PW camp near the town of Cabanatuan, thirty-five miles behind Japanese lines. These prisoners were survivors of the infamous Bataan Death March of 1942 and lived under hellish conditions in Japanese captivity ever since their capture. Krueger immediately organized a raid to liberate these prisoners. After careful reconnaissance, elements of Colonel Henry A. Mucci’s Sixth Ranger Battalion in coordination with Captain Juan Pajota’s Filipino guerillas annihilated the Japanese guards in a daring night raid on the compound and liberated all 512 American prisoners. Eichelberger did not comment on the raid, while MacArthur praised the Rangers for their daring action.²³

Krueger’s other outstanding success in the field did not correlate with pleasing MacArthur, whose military objective of liberating Manila and the Philippines was also a personal obsession, one that added complication to the drive on the Philippine capital. Krueger’s drive south, however notable, did not satisfy MacArthur. In a blatant attempt to embarrass Krueger and to chastise him for a seemingly lack of speed in the advance,

²² Robert Eichelberger. *Dear Miss Em General Eichelberger’s War in the Pacific, 1942-1945*. Edited by Jay Luvaas. (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1972), 205.

²³ Krueger, The General Walter Krueger Papers, Box 2, 2-62, WR 72, February 7 1945, p. 24-27. The Raid on Cabanatuan is also dramatized in the 2005 Miramax film, *The Great Raid*.

MacArthur moved his headquarters on 25 January inland to Hacienda Luista, a town south of Krueger's own headquarters at Calasio. When Krueger did not respond to this insult, MacArthur admonished him on 30 January for the "noticeable lack of drive and aggressive initiative" of 37th Division's drive to the town of Calumpit, twenty five miles northwest of Manila, despite 37th Division's recent capture of the town of San Fernando.²⁴ MacArthur then began to interfere with Krueger's campaign management by personally visiting the 1st Cavalry on 30 January and directly ordering its commander Major General Vernon D. Mudge to "go to Manila. Go around the Nips, bounce off the Nips, but get to Manila."²⁵ Essentially, MacArthur ordered Mudge's cavalry to recklessly dash through over 100 miles of Japanese-occupied territory without any flank protection in order to arrive in Manila as quickly as possible.

Mudge was not the only officer whom MacArthur graced with a visit; the SWPA commander continued to play Eichelberger and Krueger against each other. On 23 January, MacArthur relayed to Eichelberger an ultimatum that Krueger needed to be in Manila by 5 February.²⁶ MacArthur then told Eichelberger that Krueger was "mentally incapable" of a rapid advance and even if Krueger had overwhelming force against the Japanese (which MacArthur believed, given Willoughby's faulty intelligence estimates of Yamashita's strength) he could only "advance ponderously and slowly to victory."²⁷ This

²⁴ Quoted in D. Clayton James. *The Years of MacArthur, 1941-1945* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1975,) 628.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 632.

²⁶ John Shortal. *Forged by Fire: General Robert L. Eichelberger and the Pacific War* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1987), 105.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 106.

meeting with MacArthur pleased Eichelberger so much that a letter his wife reflects his clear enthusiasm:

The Big Chief [MacArthur] up here was interested in having me take a few people and see what I could do in something of the nature of a fast dash... He apparently wanted me to be a Jeb Stuart.”²⁸

Impatient for Manila’s liberation, MacArthur ordered Eichelberger to immediately stage an amphibious landing south of Manila and another landing to the west of the city. In essence MacArthur ordered Eichelberger to conduct a reconnaissance in force, but Eichelberger interpreted MacArthur’s orders to advance beyond his ultimate target area of Tagaytay Ridge south of Manila if circumstances permitted him to do so. Eichelberger was clearly excited at the possibility of reaching Manila before Krueger. Taking MacArthur’s reference to Jeb Stuart to heart, Eichelberger mused to Miss Em that “all this started out with: ‘Take a regiment and capture Manila if you can, Bob.’ Now maybe I can do it... [but] I believe your old palsy-walsy [Krueger] will get there first and with the mostest [sic] men, as Jeb Stuart used to say.”²⁹

At 830 hours on 29 January, Eichelberger landed XI Corps under Major General Charles P. “Chink” Hall at Subic Bay west of Manila. XI Corps quickly sealed off the Bataan peninsula from the Japanese units retreating from Krueger’s XIV Corps, opened the bay to American shipping, and captured a Japanese airstrip all by sunset the next day. XI Corps’ success meant that Krueger’s XIV Corps and Eichelberger’s XI Corps caught the Japanese in the Zambales Mountains on Krueger’s western flank in a pincer, securing

²⁸ James Ewell Brown “Jeb” Stuart was a Major General in the Confederate Army during the American Civil War and was famous for his skillful use of cavalry in offensive operations. Luvaas, ed. 198.

²⁹ This saying is normally attributed to another famous and talented Confederate cavalry commander, Lieutenant General Nathan Bedford Forrest. Ibid., 199.

Krueger's flank.³⁰ The cooperation between XI and XIV Corps was not a unified effort between Eichelberger and Krueger since during the Subic Bay operation Eichelberger had very little supervision of XI Corps and allowed its officers to conduct their duties without interference from Eighth Army headquarters.

The drive to Manila was the incarnation of Eichelberger's burning desire to upstage Krueger. Eichelberger's second landing was at 815 hours on 31 January at Nasugbu Beach, thirty miles southwest of Cavite, a town south of Manila. Eichelberger's assault force, the 188th Regimental Combat Team (RCT), dispersed the light Japanese resistance and seized the nearby town and airport in roughly ninety minutes. When Major General Joseph Swing's 11th Airborne Division followed up the 188th RCT's success and began to advance north to Manila, Eichelberger decided to personally go ashore at 1030 hours to both ascertain the conditions of the field and to inform Swing to get to Manila with all possible speed, promising to "back him up if he gets his pants shot off."³¹ The 11th Airborne competed with two divisions from Major General Oscar Griswold's XIV Corps for the honor of being the first American combat soldiers in Manila since 1942. After a swift advance north along Highway 17, the 11th Airborne encountered minimal resistance and quickly seized the slopes of Tagaytay Ridge. Upon this victory, Eichelberger entered a joyous mood. His intelligence reports indicated that the Japanese were not guarding the approaches south of Manila and not only ordered the 11th Airborne to continue the advance onto the city, but he placed himself at their head, hoping to march right into Manila.

³⁰ After the Subic Bay operation, XI Corps came under Krueger's command.

³¹ Luvaas, ed. 205.

Contrary to Eichelberger's hopes, the Japanese did not tamely intend to allow the Eighth Army commander to walk casually into the Philippine capital. The Japanese in Manila were aware of Eichelberger's advances and consequently diverted some of their northern forces to face him. By 6 February, Eichelberger encountered fierce Japanese opposition thirty yards south of Nichols Field near the suburbs of Manila. The Japanese defenders there were dug-in behind the Genko Line, a system of concrete pillboxes on high ground with a depth of over 6,000 yards. The Japanese defenders in this fixed position opposed the 11th Airborne's small arms with five and six-inch naval guns and a variety of field pieces emplaced in the concrete bunkers for added protection. The Japanese artillery fire was so terrible that one of the 11th Airborne's company commanders radioed his division headquarters with the quip: "Tell Admiral Halsey to stop looking for the Jap Fleet. It's dug in here on Nichols Field."³²

Without heavy weaponry, the Airborne's spectacular advance up to that point ended along with Eichelberger's best chance that he would beat his rival to the city. By racing forward without sufficient numbers, armor, heavy weapons, and supplies to support his attack, Eichelberger simply had no chance to overcome the Genko Line, to say nothing of capturing Manila itself. Furthermore, the 11th Airborne could not remain in front of the Japanese defenses indefinitely, as Eichelberger's hasty movements to Manila did not give him adequate time to secure his lengthy supply lines. Heedless of these conditions, Eichelberger refused to concede to Krueger the race to Manila. Eichelberger ignored 11th Airborne's precarious position and remained at the front lines for two more days as the Japanese sent murderous fire against his troops, who could not hope to take

³² Connaughton, et al., 88.

the Genko Line through an assault.³³ Eichelberger later justified himself in a letter to his wife: “As long as I am here [in the suburbs of Manila], [Krueger] cannot claim exclusively that he captured Manila.”³⁴

North of the city, Major General Oscar Griswold raced his two divisions towards Manila. The 1st Cavalry was lighter, smaller, and more mechanized with trucks and jeeps than the 37th Infantry Division and resultantly could progress quicker to the city. The 1st Cavalry arrived at Cabanatuan on 1 February pausing only to brush aside the alert but miniscule Japanese garrison and secure the bridges there. The following morning the cavalry skirmished with the Japanese infantry near Plaridel, a town just north of Manila and the intersection of the two major highways along Krueger’s advance towards the city. The 37th Division marched down the adjacent highway and hoped to be the first Americans in Manila, but the 1st Cavalry’s jeeps, half-tracks, and trucks moved faster than any infantryman’s legs could. The 37th Infantry’s commanding officer, Major General Robert S. Beightler, growled: “we won’t let those – feather merchants beat us in.”³⁵ At 1835 hours on 3 February, the 1st Cavalry crossed the city line and became the first American unit of the Luzon campaign to arrive in Manila. Krueger won the race to Manila, a race he did not want to participate in.

The Japanese forces in Manila, roughly 20,000 combat troops in strength, faced a serious shortage of food and supplies. During 1942-1945, the period of the Japanese occupation, the city served as the main supply depot for Japan’s armies in Southeast Asia

³³ The 11th Airborne suffered over 700 casualties during the fruitless assaults on the Genko Line.

³⁴ Paul Chwialkowski. *In Caesar’s Shadow: The Life of General Robert Eichelberger* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1993), 121.

³⁵ “With Mac to Manila”, *Time*, 12 February 1945.

as well as the Fourteenth Area Army in the Philippines. Unfortunately for the Japanese (and the civilians and prisoners in the Japanese-occupied areas), several months of the American naval blockade in coordination with the relentless and continual American air strikes and effective Filipino guerilla attacks against Manila severely curtailed the transportation of food into the city. The official Army history noted that American interdiction efforts so effectively isolated Luzon from Japanese supplies and communication that by November the Japanese Fourteenth Area Army had to cut its daily meat ration from three pounds of meat per soldier to about nine-tenths of a pound. By December 1944 not a single shipload of food arrived on Luzon, obliging the Japanese to further reduce their meat rations.³⁶ Yamashita originally hoped to withdraw his army and supplies from the city but the swift arrival of American units obliged him to remain.

Regardless of the Japanese weakness, the battle of Manila was a grueling experience for Sixth Army. The Japanese prepared a most unwelcome reception for Sixth Army by mining the streets, placing artillery pieces and machine-gun nests on rooftops, and converted many prominent buildings such as the Elk's Club, the Post Office, and City Hall into miniature fortresses. These buildings were well-suited to their new role as their engineers built them to endure the inclement tropical climate, typhoons, and seismic activities that frequently ravage the Philippines. Even the sixteenth century Spanish fortress of Intramuros with its thick stone walls and formidable battlements became a Japanese citadel. The battle would clearly be a difficult struggle for the Americans.

No possible retreat existed for the Japanese from Manila and Sixth Army was forced to fight house to house to liberate the city from more than three years of Japanese

³⁶ Smith, 91.

military occupation. As the Americans advanced into the city, Japanese units under Rear Admiral Sanji Iwabuchi set fire to Manila's northern port in defiance of General Yamashita's orders to abandon the city. The blaze consumed Manila's port area but quickly grew out of control when a strong gust of wind fanned the flames at the port. The inferno engulfed much of northern Manila's lower-class residential districts in a terrible conflagration.³⁷ Furthermore, the Japanese sailors under Admiral Iwabuchi went on an orgy of loot and plunder rivaling the 1937 Rape of Nanking. The destruction to the city and loss of civilian lives aside, the fires did manage to delay 37th Infantry Division's advance into the city for two days. Eichelberger observed the city's inferno from his command post south of the city: "The view of Manila last night was a terrible thing as the whole part of one side of the city seemed to be on fire. Smoke and flames were going way up in the air..."³⁸

Manila's destruction was but one event occupying Eichelberger's mind. He truly believed that he would beat Krueger to what remained of Manila. In a letter to his wife, Eichelberger wrote:

I do not know where your palsy-walsy is. He sent me a message today that a patrol of the 1st Cavalry Division had reached Grace Park... in the northern part of Manila... about six o' clock last night... We have also received a report today that the 1st Cavalry Division and the 37th Infantry were running a race for Manila and were about thirteen miles out.³⁹

³⁷ After the conclusion of the war, General MacArthur charged General Yamashita with the war crime of ordering the inferno. Yamashita's subsequent quick execution after the trial immediately created a debate on whether MacArthur sought justice or revenge for Manila's destruction. See Ann Marie Prévost. "Race and War Crimes: The 1945 War Crimes Trial of General Tomoyuki Yamashita." *Human Rights Quarterly* 14, no. 3 (1992), 303-338.

³⁸ Luvaas, ed. 212.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 210.

In another letter written only two days later, Eichelberger contradicted his earlier letter regarding Krueger's position:

The steady refusal of Sixth Army to send me any information of our friendly troops indicated to me that they are not really in town... If your palsy-walsy were in town I am sure he would be glad to tell me, so maybe he is still further away than I am.⁴⁰

On 9 February, MacArthur informed Eichelberger that the 11th Airborne would be turned over to the Sixth Army and that Krueger would coordinate any further attacks from the 11th Airborne with the main offensive against the city's northern defenses. Dejected at his failure to take Manila from under Krueger's nose, Eichelberger left Luzon for Leyte at evening 9 February and spent the next few days bragging about his own success to his fellow officers and mailing a crop of sour grapes to Miss Em regarding Krueger:

If he [Krueger] is a great general or has any of the elements of greatness then I am no judge of my fellow man... Personally I think that barring the force the Big Chief [MacArthur] put behind him, he would have made a miserable failure of Leyte and perhaps Luzon... I do not tell you these things to make you bitter, but they are all true.⁴¹

Irrespective of Eichelberger's personal feelings towards Krueger was the fact Sixth Army was in Manila and Eighth Army was not. By the end of 10 February 1945, northern Manila was in Sixth Army's hands, giving MacArthur the opportunity to prematurely announce the fall of Manila regardless of the fact that the Japanese still controlled major strongpoints in the central part of the city. While the Americans

⁴⁰ Luvaas, ed. 212.

⁴¹ Ibid., 214.

captured these buildings through determined assaults and mortar support, the major strongpoint of Intramuros remained in Japanese hands. General Krueger asked MacArthur for permission to conduct tactical air strikes and heavy artillery bombardments on the old fortress, but MacArthur refused, replying:

the inaccuracy of this type of bombardment would result beyond question in the death of thousands of innocent civilians. It is not believed moreover that this would appreciably lower our own casualty rate although it would unquestionably hasten the conclusion of the operations.⁴²

MacArthur forbade air strikes but did not mention artillery. As soon as the 37th Division completed its preparations on 22 February, Krueger authorized a massive bombardment of Intramuros' walls and nearby approaches that lasted for over an hour. He called in every available gun from 240mm howitzer artillery to fire support from armor. This artillery bombardment greatly assisted 37th Division in finally capturing Intramuros by the end of 25 February. After the reduction of Intramuros, the 37th Infantry and 1st Cavalry cleaned out the Japanese from government buildings in central Manila after arduous fighting that was often room-to-room. Sixth Army took the final stronghold and ended all organized Japanese resistance in Manila on 4 March 1945, but the victory was a bitter pill for Krueger to swallow.

While over 16,665 Japanese were killed in the fighting in and around Manila, the entire city lay in smoldering ruins from the fires and combat damage. Krueger lamented the devastation of Manila and placed most of the blame on the Japanese, writing that "much of the destruction caused by our own artillery could have been avoided if the Japanese, when further resistance on their part was clearly futile, had heeded several

⁴² James, 643.

radio broadcasts urging them to surrender.”⁴³ Eichelberger left his new headquarters on Leyte at MacArthur’s suggestion and visited the city on 6 March 1945. Like Krueger, Eichelberger blamed the Japanese for the city’s destruction. “It is all just graveyard... Manila in effect has ceased to exist except for some places that the Japanese thought were not worth defending or where our American troops got in by surprise... I cannot tell you how sad this makes me feel.”⁴⁴ MacArthur, who lived in Manila before the war, wept at his beloved city’s destruction.⁴⁵ He accompanied a patrol to his old penthouse which before the war he extravagantly decorated with books, memorabilia from his father, and various comforts of home. The Japanese elected to use MacArthur’s penthouse in a rearguard action as the floor-to-floor fighting utterly destroyed MacArthur’s old home.

If Manila, or more accurately what remained of it, was to become a deep water port that the JCS required in the grand strategy to defeat Japan, the island of Corregidor would need to be seized from Japanese control. Krueger could not bypass this island as it commanded the entrance to Manila from the South China Sea. While the fighting in Manila was ending, Krueger devised a plan to seize the island. His plan was complex and yet it proved effective. Krueger called for the U.S. Navy to secure the surrounding waters while a combined airborne and amphibious operation landed troops on the island. The question was where best to land the troops. Krueger vetoed a proposal to land the veteran 11th Airborne Division at Kindley Field at the eastern end of Corregidor since the

⁴³ Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon*, 251.

⁴⁴ Luvaas, ed. 231.

⁴⁵ It is interesting to note that MacArthur’s emotional response and commentary on the total devastation of Manila occupies roughly a page in his memoirs. This space encompasses approximately the same amount of room that he allots in his memoirs for the number of congratulatory telegrams he received from various American and other Allied heads of state, politicians and generals. See Douglas MacArthur. *Reminiscences*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 247-249.

Americans would be exposed to heavy Japanese fire there, so he decided on Topside, a golf course and parade ground that was no larger than a few football fields. Not only was this landing site extremely small for a drop zone, but also the ground was littered with bomb craters and debris from naval shelling. These characteristics made Topside a perfect place to surprise the Japanese defenders.

On 16 February 1945, naval artillery fire from American destroyers and cruisers and air strikes from the Air Forces pounded the island, pock-marking the countryside and silencing the Japanese anti-aircraft guns and coastal batteries. The airborne operation surprised the Japanese and was a complete success; the paratroopers occupied and secured Topside by nightfall. While the capture of Topside cut the Japanese position on the island in two, the Japanese themselves remained entrenched in caves and underground tunnels. This desperate resistance obliged the Americans to seal the caves with explosives or to clean them out with flamethrowers and small arms. By 27 February, Americans secured the island and opened Manila Bay for Allied shipping. The operation killed 4,497 Japanese not including those buried alive in caves and tunnels. The American casualties amounted to 209 killed, 725 wounded, and 19 unaccounted for.⁴⁶

At the beginning of March 1945, Krueger achieved all of the Luzon Campaign's strategic objectives save for the destruction of the Japanese army on Luzon. Despite Yamashita's combat losses up to that point, the Shimbu Group of 50,000 combat effectives remained in the Sierra Madre Mountains near Manila and was a continued threat to the city and to XIV Corps' flank while the more powerful Shobu Group continued to fight a delaying action in the rugged jungles and hills of northern Luzon.

⁴⁶ Krueger, *From Down Under to Nippon*, 268-9.

Sixth Army had to destroy those two groups in order to secure the island. However, the destruction of the Japanese army on Luzon, one of the military objectives of the entire Luzon campaign, took a back seat in MacArthur's cunning and ambitious mind. He wished to be the liberator of all of the Philippines, not merely Leyte and Luzon.

On 9 February, well before the actual fall of Manila, MacArthur ordered Eichelberger off of Luzon. Eichelberger's destination was Leyte, where he re-established his headquarters to prepare for Operation Victor, the liberation of the central and southern Philippines. This was contrary to the wishes of the JCS and the War Department. At the Yalta conference on 1 February 1945, General George C. Marshall told the British Chiefs of Staff that the JCS had no intention of using American forces to mop up the isolated Japanese garrisons on the Philippines, assuming that the Filipino guerillas would handle them in due time.⁴⁷ But MacArthur ordered Eichelberger to seize the remaining Philippine islands instead of expediting Yamashita's defeat on Luzon. Additionally, MacArthur transferred the equivalent of three divisions from Krueger's Sixth Army to Eichelberger's Eighth Army for use in the central and southern Philippines. MacArthur's orders had a crippling effect on Krueger's Sixth Army as they compelled Krueger to go on the offensive with considerably reduced forces against a determined and entrenched foe.

While the military necessity for Eichelberger's missions was dubious, Eighth Army's performance during the Victor was outstandingly successful. Between 28 February and 3 May 1945, Eighth Army gained invaluable experience in amphibious operations in the central and southern Philippines. The Japanese garrisons on the islands

⁴⁷ Samuel Eliot Morison. *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II*, Vol. 13: *The Liberation of the Philippines: Luzon, Mindanao, the Visayas, 1944-1945*. (Edison, NJ: Castle Books, 1959,) 214.

were starving and cut off from all outside aid and presented Eichelberger's veterans with easy targets. Seen in the light of the planned American invasions of Okinawa and Iwo Jima and the final landings in Japan, the amphibious experience Eighth Army gained from MacArthur's pet project seemed useful.

Regardless of Eichelberger's success south of Luzon, MacArthur employed very bad judgment in ordering Eighth Army to conduct the Victor operations. The manpower and resource drain on Krueger's Sixth Army prolonged the fighting on Luzon for months as Yamashita's forces remained defiant in the mountains of northern Luzon until Japan's surrender on 2 September 1945. MacArthur used Eichelberger's rivalry with Krueger in a personal game of chess where Eichelberger acted the part of a competent pawn while Krueger, the professional soldier that he was, did all that he could to get the job done.

CONCLUSION

“Thousands of wrong turns running in all directions tempt [a general’s] perception; and if the range, confusion and complexity of the issues are not enough to overwhelm him, the dangers and responsibilities may.”

-Carl von Clausewitz¹

On 15 August 1945, Japan accepted the terms of the Potsdam Declaration and surrendered to the Allies. General Yamashita continued his desperate struggle against General Krueger’s forces in northern Luzon until Japan’s formal surrender on 2 September 1945. Douglas MacArthur was not present to receive Yamashita’s surrender on Luzon, as he was on the deck of the battleship USS Missouri as the American representative at Japan’s capitulation. Japan at the end of the war was a country in utter ruin. Its emperor had no empire, its people were starving and homeless, and its cities were bombed-out husks of ash and rubble. General Douglas MacArthur became the American viceroy of Japan and ran the occupation of the country, remodeling Japanese society by preserving the best of the old traditions and molding them with radical new reforms. Over 350,000 American soldiers garrisoned Japan as MacArthur pushed the development of a pacific constitution for Japan, reorganized land holdings, and expanded education. He also purged much of the wartime Japanese leadership in tribunals over the following years, but refrained from placing the emperor or the imperial family on trial.

¹ Carl von Clausewitz. *On War* ed. and trans. by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 573.

The surviving American veterans of the Pacific War gradually returned to their families and jobs back home, unknowing that another war in Asia would break out in 1950.

As in the Pacific War, Douglas MacArthur led American soldiers during the Korean War (1950-1953). Similarly to his relationship with the JCS in the Pacific War, MacArthur defied his superiors in Washington and forced President Harry Truman to fire him for insubordination. One of MacArthur's biographers, D. Clayton James, remarked on MacArthur's behavior during the Pacific War: "It is little wonder that the same commander less than six years later would act with insolence towards his superiors in Washington."²

Robert Eichelberger retired from the U.S. Army on 31 December 1948 and lived quietly as a civilian for the following thirteen years of his life, dying from complications related to pneumonia on 26 September 1961. Up until his dying day, Robert Eichelberger hated Krueger with a bitter passion and never wrote to or spoke with his old nemesis ever again. When Krueger's *From Down Under to Nippon* was published in 1953, Eichelberger decided not to refute Krueger's story, saying "there are not enough adjectives to cover him properly."³ Eichelberger persisted in his hatred towards Krueger even as the older general's health failed him and spitefully remarked: "I have no intention of speaking to him in heaven or hell."⁴ In the closing years of his life, Eichelberger sought a ghostwriter to compose a book on his experiences in the Pacific War with

² D. Clayton James *The Years of MacArthur, 1941-1945* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1975), 738.

³ Paul Chwialkowski. *In Caesar's Shadow The Life of General Robert Eichelberger* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1993), 187-188.

⁴ *Ibid* , 188.

Krueger and MacArthur. This book would not paint a rosy picture for MacArthur or Krueger. Eichelberger located a suitable writer, the historian Jay Luvaas who convinced Eichelberger to donate his papers to Duke University. Luvaas suggested that he could write two books for Eichelberger. Luvaas planned the first book to be based on Eichelberger's letter to Miss Em and the other would be Eichelberger's memoirs and his attacks against MacArthur. Luvaas prudently only completed the first book, *Dear Miss Em*.

Walter Krueger retired from the U.S. Army in January 1946 shortly after the deactivation of Sixth Army. Krueger retired quietly to San Antonio, Texas, lectured at military and civilian schools throughout the state, and tended to his family. He declined to write an autobiography of himself, electing only to compose an operational history of his Sixth Army during the Pacific War, *From Down Under to Nippon: The Story of Sixth Army During World War II*. Krueger, unlike Eichelberger, did not allow any feelings of ire and animosity to consume him in his old age and spoke no ill of either Eichelberger or MacArthur. Walter Krueger passed away from pneumonia on 20 August 1967 at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.

The conflict between Krueger and Eichelberger did not have lasting effects beyond the closure of the Pacific War, save that Manila required massive rebuilding and that many soldiers of the Eighth Army who might otherwise have lived perished at the gates of Manila following Eichelberger's foolish orders to break into the city. MacArthur indeed fulfilled his pledge to return to the Philippines, but had he followed his directives to destroy the Japanese Army on Luzon, the liberation of the central and southern Philippines would have followed Yamashita's defeat as a matter of consequence. Had

MacArthur directed the Eighth Army to assist Sixth Army in destroying Japanese resistance on Luzon, there is no question that the main body of the Japanese army in the Philippines would have been eliminated. The destruction or surrender of Yamashita's army in Luzon would have freed up both Krueger and Eichelberger's armies for the planned invasion of Japan much sooner than anticipated. Alternatively, had Eichelberger not raced for Manila in competition with Krueger, it is possible that Yamashita could have withdrawn from the city as he intended, thus sparing the citizens of the Pearl of the Orient the great inferno and months of the horrors of urban combat.

Regardless of the infinite what-ifs of history, MacArthur, as the overall commander in Luzon, ultimately shoulders the blame for what went wrong in the campaign, just as he deserves credit for what went right. MacArthur failed to keep Eichelberger's petty jealousy in check for the greater good of the service and of the campaign's objectives and did not order him back from Manila when it was clear that Eichelberger made a bid for the city. MacArthur did not make full use of Krueger's talents by draining Sixth Army of valuable resources and manpower just as Krueger pursued Yamashita's forces into the difficult jungle and mountainous terrain of northern Luzon. Ultimately, the Luzon Campaign of 1945 provides a clear case on the consequences of allowing ego and ambition to overshadow one's greater duty. Once MacArthur used the rivalry between Eichelberger and Krueger to cross the Rubicon of personal glory, there was unnecessary suffering and loss in a war that already claimed more lives than in any previous conflict in history.

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