

The Big Red 'One': Power at the Ready

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IN CHINA about a generation ago there flourished a mustachioed general named Wu P'ei-fu. Wu P'ei-fu was noteworthy among the practitioners of his craft for his ability to demonstrate to bug-eyed civilians exactly what a division was.

To do this, General Wu would invite visitors to his parade ground in the outskirts of Loyang. There on the yellow plain they would be greeted by the division commander and his staff. The division commander would shout an order to a deputy, a piercing whistle would follow, and things would begin to happen. Far in the distance across the fields, thousands of antlike figures would come boiling from a long row of cubelike barracks. Like the froth of a thin wave, these tiny figures would tumble forward, stretched over a line several miles long.

Then, gradually, coagulation would begin. Within a few hundred yards the wave would clot in sections and squads; the squads would gather in platoons; the platoons in companies. Now the thin wave would be a thickening rank of men in oblongs. At this point the companies would suddenly click together in battalions, and the battalions, advancing a few hundred yards more, would go into a spasm out of which would emerge three bunched, compact regiments. The solid blocks of men would clomp steadily forward in the Chinese goose step, their thudding tread shaking the ground, until a final convulsion of maneuver in the dust threw them all together in one single, massive rectangle of manpower—a full division. Then, just as the huge rolling square of men seemed about to pound visitors and staff alike into the ground, the whistle would blow once more

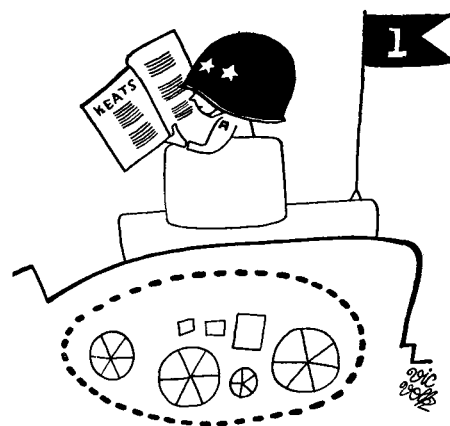
and the intolerable cadence of march would halt as several acres of men and rifles banded to a stop directly before the reviewers. "This," General Wu P'ei-fu would say, "is my First Division."

MANY an American general would envy General Wu P'ei-fu—not for the rabble in arms he commanded, but for the demonstration he could put on with them. For though no accounting of funds was ever demanded of General Wu by Congress or taxpayers, he could always show precisely what his Chinese dollars were buying in combat soldiery. Today, when the United States is paying some \$20 billion a year to maintain, at home and around the globe, twenty packaged units of fighting and devastation called divisions, many an American general wishes he could show as flashily as did Wu P'ei-fu what an American citizen gets when he buys these divisions.

But no American general can. By doctrine and strategy, America's divisions are organized not for parade-ground demonstration but for fighting anywhere in the world; America's divisions are built not to be seen but to be felt.

The 300-Mile Border

A few weeks ago, I visited an American division in Germany. Like Wu P'ei-fu's, it was called the First Infantry Division. But between the Big Red One of the United States Army, stationed on the Thuringian ridges, and the First Infantry Division of Wu P'ei-fu in Honan there was nothing more in common than the magic of the name. Just one of the nine battalions of the U.S. First Infantry packs more firepower than the entire



division of the Chinese commander.

In the flesh, the First Infantry, like any division in the United States Army, consists of no more than 18,000-odd American citizens in uniform. Along with the five other American divisions on the 300-mile border between East Germany and the U.S.-held sector of West Germany, it is expected to catch and hold any assault the Red Army might choose to mount. Considering that each division's frontage stretches fifty-odd miles, and that the seventy-five-mile stretch of the Ardennes through which the Germans attacked in December, 1944, was held by three divisions, that responsibility is heavy.

The basic principle with which any American division approaches its job of fighting is as old as the first assembly of Bronze Age warriors: Human flesh is soft and metal is hard. A division is, therefore, a gathering of men brought together to propel into enemy flesh a thousand different combinations—metal propelled from rifles or automatic weapons, metal exploded in jagged, shattered fragments from bursting shells, chemicals sprayed in burning jelly or clinging phosphorus. To make possible the weaving together of all these and an infinite number of other impacts in one seamless canopy of fire that can be lowered over any portion of its fifty miles of front, the United States Army has prepared for the First—as for every other division—a panel of instruments of death.

The First Division, then, is simply a device for the orchestration of no fewer than twenty-seven different instruments of combat. The tools run from the bayonet, which reaches the length of arm plus rifle, all the way up to the eighteen howitzers of

its medium artillery (155-mm.) battalion, each of which can throw 133 pounds of metal and high explosives with great accuracy for a distance up to eight miles. In between is an almost unbelievable array of other tools—thousands of rifles for the riflemen, carbines for almost everyone, pistols for the officers. There are several kinds of machine guns—light ones for the swift, crouching, racing advance and heavy ones for the continuous emplaced fire of defense. Three kinds of mortars can loop shells through the air to land with precision on isolated pockets of resistance. Two kinds of bazookas are available to hurl shaped charges at the armor plate of enemy tanks. Fifty-four fieldpieces of light 105-mm. artillery are at the division's disposal; there are mines, grenades, machine pistols, recoilless artillery, and two kinds of anti-aircraft gun. Finally, there are the tanks—130-odd of them, forty-seven-tonners that can rumble at thirty-five miles an hour to the point of contact where their 90-mm. automatic-sighting high-velocity rifles can be brought to bear.

Money and Firepower

The price tags on the hardware of the First Division run from \$20 for the light bazooka tube up to \$265,000 for the bright new M-47 General Pershing tanks. All together, the United States government estimates that it costs the taxpayer \$157 million just to stock the division with tools before any accounting is made of the costs for men, food, training, gasoline, housing, and ammunition.

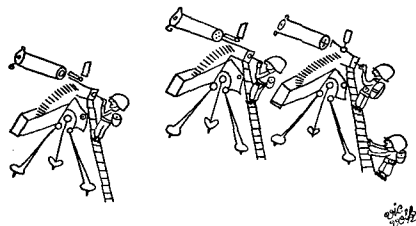
Not all of this \$157 million is invested in weapons, to be sure, for to make the weapons efficient all sorts of other equipment are needed too. To make the entire orchestration of combat instantly responsive to the will of its commander, the Big Red One's signal company needs \$6 million in communications equipment—hundreds of radios of twelve different kinds, 1,100 miles of telephone wire, a dozen mobile switchboards, teletype machines, four mobile command communications cars, and power generators. The engineer battalion demands \$1.3 million in clam shovels, bulldozers, pile drivers, cranes, bridging materials, and mines. The ordnance battalion needs \$20

million worth of machines and vehicles to keep the division mobile and be able to repair anything from featherweight watches and sighting devices to the turrets and guns of the tanks.

Nor can a division be created simply by buying the requisite amount of hardware. The investment in human beings—in their training, education, movement, housing, and feeding—is so much greater than the investment in hardware that no U.S. Army statistician has yet been able to come up with any adequate estimate of the value of the social, as opposed to the metallic, capital sunk in the division.

Yet all these men serve the weapons. On paper, their organization looks deceptively simple—a neat pyramid of triangles. Three squads of ten men each fit into a platoon, three platoons into a company, three companies into a battalion, three battalions into a regiment, three regiments into the division itself.

What makes this simple structure so complicated is that all the way up,



the pyramid bulges with pockets of special strength—each bulge being the repository of one of the many special devices of fire that support the individual rifleman at the front. Every commander in the structure has an increasingly heavy battery of these weapons at his personal disposal. The platoon commander at the very bottom has, in addition to three rifle squads, a special weapons squad carrying a light mortar, automatic rifle, and light machine gun. Above him, his company commander has, in addition to three such line platoons, his own weapons platoon, with heavier mortars and recoilless artillery. The battalion commander, in turn, controls three such companies plus a heavy-weapons company that adds heavier mortars, heavier machine guns, and heavier recoilless guns. His regimental commander, in turn, controls three such battalions.

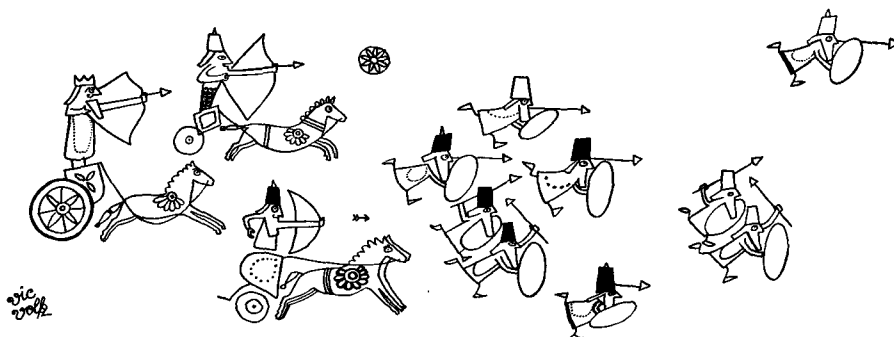
But at regimental level the pyramid gets even heavier backing—an entire company of heavy tanks, an entire company of very heavy mortars, and usually an entire battalion of eighteen artillery pieces. The division commander at the pinnacle controls not only three line regiments of this type but a headquarters battalion of sixty-odd tanks, eighteen pieces of medium 155-mm. artillery, and a reconnaissance company of light M-24 tanks. And to keep the entire fighting force fit, trim, and alert, the divisional commander also possesses thousands of noncombatant specialists—police and signal companies, hospital, engineer, and ordnance battalions, a replacement company through which all divisional replacements are funneled to their division units, and a nineteen-plane scouting air force.

Out front are the dogfaces—the individual riflemen of the rifle squads, no more than 2,500 of them—the fingertips pointing where resistance is, plucking out the burr, if it be small enough, with platoon tools. Behind come the knuckles, the special weapons that move forward with the riflemen. Still farther back are the biceps, the divisional artillery, mortars, and heavier weapons; and behind all are the divisional tanks, the shoulder to the wheel to give the final shove. If the division holds, Europe holds. If the division disintegrates, then all falls apart and it is no longer a division but simply 18,000 frightened men, material to fill prisoner-of-war cages.

... To Roll with a Punch

This is the constitution and structure of any U.S. infantry division, ordained as the Law of the Medes and the Persians by the Tables of Organization and Equipment of the United States Army. But each division is different. What makes each different are a few simple things—time, place, tradition, and leadership.

For the Big Red One the time is now and the place is Germany at the frontier. America, being a democracy, bound in alliance with other democracies, cannot strike over any frontier in attack. American divisions facing armies of dictatorship must be prepared to join battle on the defensive. And, since the enemy



will not strike unless he is sure of initial superiority, the American divisions that face him must be prepared to accept a first punch of overpowering strength, roll with it, fall back, and hold somewhere in their rear a line where reserve strength can be gathered for counterattack.

Thus the First must be ready to pack up what amounts to an entire town, put it on the road, and make it function at any hour of the day or night. It lives in dispersed units sprawled in position through many German villages and towns. Its men sleep on their cots with helmets beside them, combat boots by their beds, combat packs loaded and within arm's reach, rifles and weapons stacked in the arms rooms. Even in sleep their ears are cocked for the sound of the siren that tells them of an alert.

Division commander, corps commander, or army commander can call a practice alert at any time. At once, everything is on wheels. Headquarters, hospital, signals, guns, tanks, platoons, regiments move on the instant. Division ordnance operates its normal machine and repair shops out of huge army trucks that are always fueled, loaded, and pointed toward the open gate. When the siren sounds, thousands of vehicles are ready to pour over appointed roads to appointed places and there await the word of command that would co-ordinate their fire over the breaches the enemy might seek to make.

Modern Legionaries

The First shares this tension and mobility with its brother divisions on the German front. What gives it its own singular personality is tradition. Tradition is the only way of explaining why the First, made of the same kind of Americans as other units in

the frontier guard, should boast of so many other firsts—first in spit and polish, first in efficiency ratings, first in the Army's European football and baseball leagues, first in boxing, first in re-enlistments. Tradition, somehow, is what has preserved the pride in the skills of arms since the Big Red One was among the first to hit the beaches of Africa, Sicily, and Normandy (OMAHA), and to move up to the German border.

When General John J. Pershing was ordered to create the first modern American division and leave for France in 1917, he scoured the indolent American army of that day for component units that might match the battle-tested units of Europe they would have to meet. The infantry outfits he chose were the 16th, 18th, and 26th Regiments, whose battle records ran from the Mexican War through the Civil War and the Indian wars into the twentieth century. Into the division he made of them he packed the oldest artillery unit in American history, the 5th Field Artillery Battalion—including its famous Battery D, founded by Alexander Hamilton, the only link between the ragged Continentals of Washington and the U.S. Army of today. For their engineers, he chose the First Engineer Battalion, which had fought at Vera Cruz and Mexico City, at Cold Harbor and Spotsylvania.

The division made of these parts not only fought the First World War to its end but was the only such unit not disbanded in the interwar years.

The First, it is now obvious, won't go home soon. War scares and peace offensives may follow one upon the other in the cycle of politics. The First hasn't been home since 1941. Where it bivouacs—whether the name of the town be Schweinfurt,

Würzburg, Aschaffenburg, or Bamberg—there the American flag flies. Wives and children follow the division, supported by Army schools, post exchanges, bingo games, dentists, and obstetricians. The division's soldiers, like Roman legionaries, have brought with them the families they plan to defend. Like the Romans, they are dug in for the future as far ahead as the eye can see. Like the Romans, they are prepared to fight.

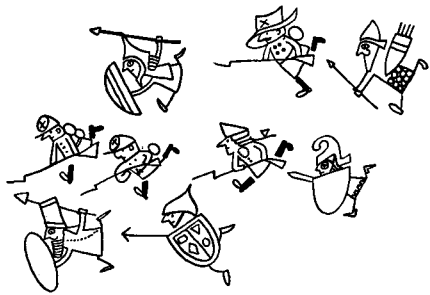
Pistol-Packing Poet

It is a commonplace in the United States Army that a good general can make a bad division good, but that a good division cannot do the same for a bad general. A bad general, indeed, can take a good division and, within a year, let its tensions go slack, its skills rust, its cohesion wither—all without stirring from his desk.

The portraits on the walls of the First Division Headquarters reveal commanders who were stern-faced, hard-lined, hard-drinking men, visages rocky and unbending, hewn out of American granite. It is perhaps symbolic of the changing traditions of the First and of the changing attitude of America to the world that the present commander of the First should be so abrupt a change of type. Major General C. T. Lanham, commander of the First Division today, is a lithe, tanned, slight-figured man who bears what the Army of yesterday would have considered the greatest handicap in the career of arms. This handicap consists of a literate eloquence that vents itself in occasional flights of poetry that have adorned some of America's most distinguished journals.

To balance this handicap, Lanham's record offers a number of major compensating items: one of the corniest of Army nicknames—"Buck"; a mastery of cussing which, even in the profane upper aristocracy of the Army, is proverbial; and finally a combat record of killing and violence bloody enough to impress even the most indifferent soldier.

THE PROBLEMS of the First Division in German garrisons span all the perplexities of America in an age of transition, an age in which the



citizen-in-arms rather than the lifetime soldier is the heart of the defense effort.

Every three or four years the entire division, like the cells of a body, is replaced with new man-material. The division commander must make sure that however disturbing and profound the rotation, the permanent skills, personality, and cohesion of the division are never lost. He must preside over the rhythm of the season which starts the draftee off in the fall with individual drill, followed in the winter by squad drill, in spring by problems of platoon and company, in summer by problems of battalion and regiment, so that by the next fall the entire division can exercise as a single unit in the great war games before it dissolves to begin training again with the fresh soldiers arriving from home.

The division commander must be able to take the complicated problem of men and organization and break it down into individual faces so that his regiments and battalions are not beheaded of experienced men at one fell swoop. He must see that his division changes faces slowly, evenly, so that the lump of the new and the leaven of the old constantly balance each other and the division is as fine an instrument of combat when he hands it over to his successor as it was when he took it from his predecessor.

On Being a General

The Table of Organization and Equipment can define the task and function of any human or metallic part of the great division—except that of its commander, which is generalship. Generalship is still a matter of trudging through the mud watching the soldiers with their rifles and making a mental note that some boys are jerking their triggers, not squeezing them. In Lanham's First

Division, it is important that dark-skinned and light-skinned Americans get along with each other as citizens because that's the way America is going these days. Lanham's First Division is going that way very successfully.

Generalship is still a man at a map, his finger slowly tracing a valley approach on his position and the finger stopping at the preselected ridge where he knows he can dig in and hold. But in Lanham's First Division it is also the whitewashed, sunny school building of Colonel Phil Mock's Sixteenth Regiment, where Puerto Rican Americans are learning English. "The Army can be a moral slum," says Lanham, "or it can be a place where you make citizens." American boys will be entering the U.S. Army and making a two-year home of it for many years to come. When Lanham launched the Information and Education Program of the United States Army from a staff desk in Washington six years ago, it was considered a very fancy idea. Now, as division commander, Lanham wants to make it work. The reason, he says, is simple: Better citizens make better soldiers.

Generalship is, finally, a lonesome man at night sitting by his radio, wondering. . . . Chinese launched another attack on Old Baldy in Korea today; that's one kind of war, the bitter, grinding, dug-in kind of war; here in Germany it would be another kind—a war of movement, of swift, quick, sure decisions. The Gen-

eral's mind runs over his dispositions, the men sleeping in German villages and towns. They may never have to fire their guns to kill. But they must be there. Difficult to explain why they must be there . . . tried to say it once in a poem . . . how does that poem go now?

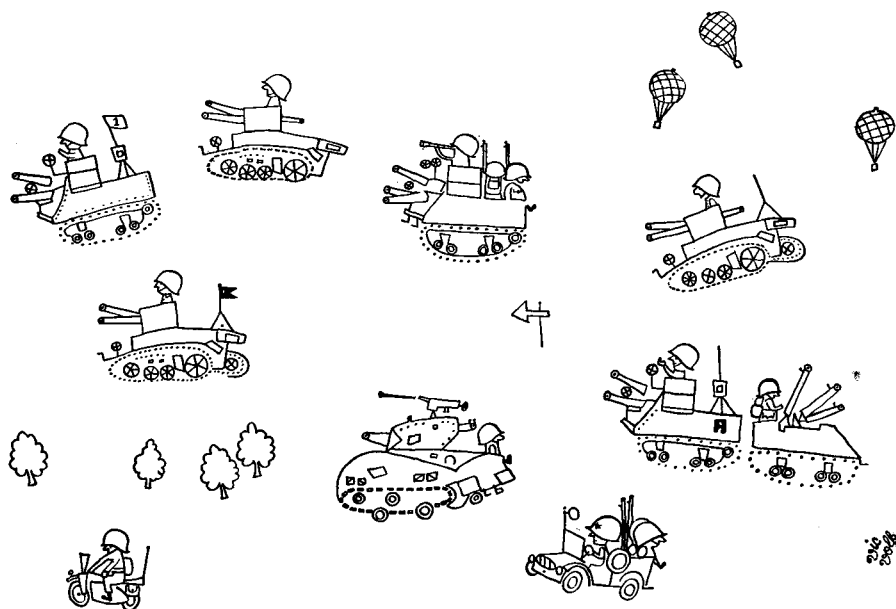
*The stars swing down the western steep,
And soon the East will burn with day
And we shall struggle up from sleep,
And sling our packs and march away.*

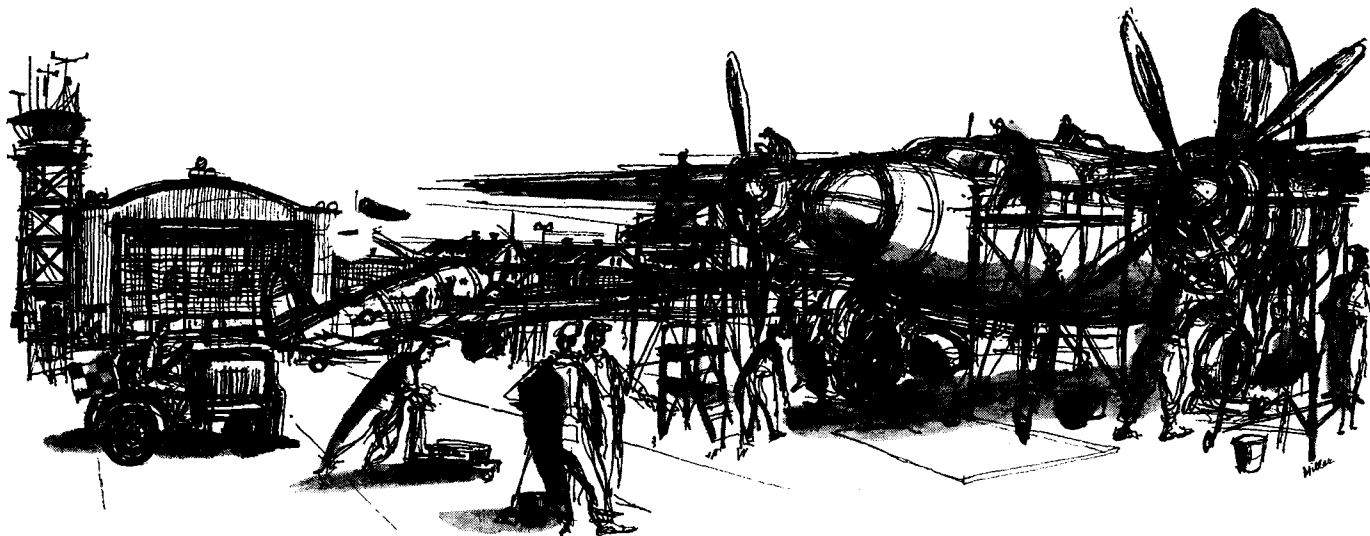
*In this brief hour before the dawn
Has struck our bivouac with flame,
I think of men whose brows have borne
The iron wreath of deadly fame.*

*I see the legion wheel through Gaul,
The sword and flame on hearth and home
And all the men who had to fall
That Caesar might be first in Rome.*

*I see the grizzled grenadier,
The dark dragoon, the gay hussar,
Whose shoulders bore for many a year
Their little Emperor's blazing star.*

*I see these things, still am I slave
When banners flaunt and bugles blow,
Content to fill a soldier's grave
For reasons I shall never know.*





Military Force: How Much and Where?

ARTHUR M. SCHLESINGER, Jr.

IT is wholly conceivable that there is nothing more vital to our survival than the decisions we take this year on the level and posture of our military power. Yet no decisions of public policy will be taken in more invincible ignorance. No one really "knows," for example, whether we shall need 120 or 143 or 265 air wings in the years ahead, or one or six or twenty-five aircraft carriers of the *Forrestal* class, or x or y or z hydrogen bombs. There are, as President Eisenhower likes to say, "no magic numbers."

Still the past may not be an entirely useless guide. The experience of recent years throws a good deal of light on the two issues that emerged most sharply from the swirl and crosscurrents of the recent defense debate. One issue is the question of the balance of our defense effort. The other is the question of the size of our defense effort.

The first issue has occasioned a fierce struggle behind locked doors in scientific laboratories and in the headquarters of the Air Force, and erupting latterly into newspaper

columns and magazine articles. It is a struggle between those who want to concentrate our defense efforts on atomic weapons and the Strategic Air Command and those who favor what they call a "balanced" defense. It has turned some of our ablest Air Force officers, beginning with General Hoyt Vandenberg, and some of our most notable scientists, beginning with Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer, into bitter antagonists; and it has raised basic questions about the best design for future American security. At the same time, the second question—that of size—has been the issue of the current defense debate. And it has become increasingly obvious that the issues of "size" and "balance" are so closely intertwined that they cannot be settled separately.

The much-bruited question of "waste," it should be added, is not an issue anywhere. No one has recently been detected advocating a policy of waste. Everyone is boldly and forthrightly against it. But the reductionists believe that money saved by the elimination of waste

should go to budget balancing or tax reduction, while the expansionists—whether they believe in defense through air power or through balanced forces—would devote the money saved to weapons development, to more air power, or to continental air defense.

Force and Freedom

Neither the question of size nor that of balance is precisely a new issue. But each involves problems that the American nation comfortably forgot during a century or so of its existence—and of which history has forcibly reminded it in the last dozen years. The Founding Fathers, who had to fight to achieve and to defend our national independence, knew from hard experience the close relationship between military strength and political freedom. But for a considerable stretch of our history—roughly from 1815 to 1915—Americans lost track of this relationship. A century of effortless security established the belief that American safety was guaranteed somehow by the broad oceans, our own republi-