

Operations in world war two history essay

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Introduction/Historiography

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Chapter 1:

Introduction: Historiography and The Debate

‘ One must not judge everyone in the world by his qualities as a soldier: otherwise we should have no civilization’ a quote by Field Marshal Erwin Rommel[1]. Heading this, the dissertation intends to evaluate Field Marshal Erwin Rommel based on many criteria, though ironically his qualities as a soldier do come into this analysis, but are not by any means the end of the analysis, as his choices and actions as set out below will be scrutinised. This chapter will set out the historiography and changes concerning Erwin Rommel and the current controversies and debates that will impact upon this work. For many years during and after World War Two, German Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was celebrated as the prime example of an officer, whose conduct was admired by both sides of the conflict. More recently, however, another point of view has begun to emerge in some academic circles.

Historian and author David Irving has hypothesised that Rommel’s fame is simply a product of Nazi propaganda, which painted him as a popular hero of both the fatherland and the Third Reich, however Irving’s later fairly explicit anti-Semitism and holocaust denial do colour his earlier works, lessening his value as a historian and tainting his works. Historians hailing principally from America and England have suggested that Allied propaganda during World War Two exaggerated Rommel’s achievements in an attempt to conceal incompetence in their own military leadership during the opening stages in the war, but particularly in the North African theatre of war. One aim over

the course of this work, by arduously tracing Rommel's career, is to show that neither opinion, be it from a dedicated supporter or a fervent detractor is accurate. The truth appears to fall somewhere in between. To prove this, evidence will be found either to verify or disprove, that Rommel was a great officer who inspired and cared for his men in all kinds of situations. This study will also try to determine if Rommel was ever a great strategic planner and whether the principles by which he commanded were beneficial or detrimental to his war effort in North Africa. Exploring Rommel's career in its entirety, thought focusing mainly on his most famous campaigns in North Africa and comparing his actions to the German military standards and traditions of the time, which shall be used as the standard by which Rommel will be evaluated as an officer in this work. This approach does have some possible complications however. An example of this could be that Rommel joined the German army just before World War One, when Germany had a monarchy. He remained in the Army of the Weimar Republic as an officer and instructor. Finally finding himself in the army of the Third Reich, a strict authoritarian dictatorship, during which time he rose quickly to the rank of Field Marshal. Obviously changes will have taken place and it might prove difficult to compare an officer under the Kaiser and that of one under the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of Germany, Adolf Hitler during the Nazi regime. Many historians on both sides of the historiographical dispute were influential in creating and subsequently challenging the Rommel myth. The writings concerning Rommel that appeared in the decade after World War Two were generally written by men who were either officers who had fought alongside, or frontline reporters attached to, Rommel's army during the war. Rommel played a very minor role in the overall scheme of

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World War Two, but he kept extensive records of his activities in France and North Africa on which various authors could base their writings as is, somewhat, intended in this piece, from primary sources like those in the Rommel papers. From Rommel's records and their own memories, various authors wrote books after the war, which unsurprisingly did not contradict what they had written in the years of conflict. The same applies to Allied authors like B. H. Liddell-Hart, Ronald Lewin and Desmond Young who had been with the Allied forces during the conflict, and after the war were able to get access to Rommel's papers and conduct numerous interviews with people who had associated with Rommel. Thus, the Rommel myth continued to grow for some decades after the war. It was only when a new generation of authors during the latter part of the twentieth century began to write about Rommel that revisions began to emerge. There was controversy in Germany about Rommel's reputation. It became common belief that Rommel could no longer be considered a suitable role model. In 1993 another Rommel biography was written by David Fraser and is a shining acknowledgment and somewhat of a return to the war time thinking and revitalisation of the Rommel myth. According to Fraser, Rommel was one of the great masters of mobile warfare in history. Fraser claims that Rommel's fame had endured because of his ability to explain his intentions, to impose his will and to take the appropriate actions on the battlefield despite all the distractions and chaos. Fraser finds it amazing that the life of so practical and modern thinking a man as Rommel has become such an epic figure after death.[2]Fraser reasons that Rommel's image conjured up romantic notions of Teutonic war heroes. This image however was at least part orchestrated by Goebbels and his propaganda machine, a fact seemingly overlooked by <https://assignbuster.com/operations-in-world-war-two-history-essay/>

Fraser Nonetheless, popular opinion on warfare changes over time and depending on the prevailing winds, combatants are either glorified or vilified. An example of this is during the war Winston Churchill referred to Rommel in a speech in the House of Commons as ' A very brave and skilful opponent... and if I many say so, despite all the horrors of war, a great general.' [3] This is high praise indeed when taken into account the opposite sides these parties found themselves on in World War Two. During the 1950's and early 1960's nobody objected that the Rommel myth was still being perpetrated by the testimony of former soldiers of the Africa Corps, who continued to idolise him in a way similar to that the Nazi propaganda had done. British historians and authors, like Ronald Lewin, Desmond Young, Alan Moorehead and Chester Wilmot also pushed the Rommel myth, it is believed, to divert attention away from the controversial actions of the British High Command in North Africa and to glorify the victor of El Alamein, Field Marshal Montgomery, guaranteeing his fame and raising his profile through Rommel's. Thus the Rommel myth grew, as it served all sides and whatever didn't fit the mould was removed. Other factors that allowed the Rommel myth to grow after the war were, his martyrdom due to changing attitudes concerning Hitler and the Nazi regime and the favourable attitude the allies held of Rommel during the post war years. However, beginning in the late 1960's and 1970's, public opinion began to change. David Irving was the first to challenge the myth in his 1977 Rommel biography, Trail of the fox. Irving made the point that Rommel had nothing to do with the resistance opposing Hitler; on the contrary, Rommel had remained, he argues, relatively close with Hitler to the end. From then on it was only a question of time until the Rommel myth was further disputed. In 1996 Daniel Goldhagen's book, Hitler's Willing

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Executioners, about the collective guilt of all Germans in the atrocities committed during World War Two started a heated discussion. His opponents maintain that it was the initial successes of the Wehrmacht in World War Two that allowed the Nazis and their military arm, the SS, to perpetrate cruelties on millions of people throughout Europe. Goldhagen finds that the Wehrmacht and especially its leaders bear a responsibility for turning a blind eye. This study will examine Rommel's history against the background and problems of the Nazi regime and its effects on the military during the six years of war in order to arrive at a fair assessment, one that acknowledges the man's strengths as well as his flaws. Rommel's career was in the army. During peacetime he trained the next generation in the art of modern warfare and during war, he was a leader in battle. These battlefields were where the seeds for his change were sown and began to grow. This dissertation will trace this change, examining Rommel's inner turmoil, the doubts and setbacks that brought him to the conclusion that the ways in which Hitler and the German High Command conducted the war had to be changed. An example of this can be seen in Rommel interpreted Hitler's order to fight to the death at El Alamein, as the unnecessary destruction not only of the Wehrmacht, but also the German civilian population. A major criticism, that his transformation came 'too late,' are surly unfounded. It is easy to accuse Rommel years later of hesitating, but the reality was that the Allies had decided at Casablanca that they would only accept Germany's unconditional surrender. No country, let alone a soldier, could find it easy to capitulate unconditionally. Rommel's attitude mirrored the mental state of millions of Germans who also had to discard the ideology of their former world. Many biographers have used Rommel's story to show people the <https://assignbuster.com/operations-in-world-war-two-history-essay/>

necessity of discarding the principles of National Socialism and it will be one of the aims of this study to show how the conversion of Rommel took place. Lutz Koch, who accompanied Rommel in North Africa and France as a war correspondent compares in his book *Erwin Rommel, snapshots of Rommel* taken at two different times: spring 1942 and spring 1944. In 1942, Rommel's face is healthy and looks optimism and eager, two years later, his face is marked by the difficulties and inner turmoil that had prematurely aged him. Lutz states that people who knew Rommel in those years saw a tremendous change take place in him and they hoped that he might find the right way for himself and his people, but after 20 July 1944, Rommel realised that he was too late and that his hope that he might act against the dictator began to fade.[4] It will be possible to reconstruct Rommel's life and career fairly accurately since the records concerning him are more complete than those concerning any other high ranking officer of that time. Many witnesses from among Rommel's immediate associates, as well as diaries, letters, remembrances of those who served with him and a flood of memoirs and biographies, have given a fairly substantial picture about each phase of the life of one of the best known Generals of World War Two. The Rommel Myth was created from his actions in Europe and North Africa during World War Two and throughout the course of this work each shall be examined along with a re-examination of the various praises and criticisms as they apply to the evaluation of the man. Some are justified others are not, but they all need evaluating in the context of the circumstances in which Rommel found himself.

Chapter 2:

Project Outline

Methodology and HypothesisThe method of this study will be to analyse Erwin Rommel's campaigns and battles. This analysis should show what principles made up Rommel's command style. The battles and campaigns fought by Erwin Rommel will be reviewed in this study. The object of the review will be to identify the principles by which he commanded and why he chose certain courses of action. This information can hopefully be found when reviewing primary sources relevant to the topic, such as Erwin Rommel's *The Rommel Papers*, *Infantry attacks* and *Rommel and his art of war*. Examination of further primary sources and secondary sources should be able to provide evidence of Rommel's developing command style. Other factors must also be taken into account when considering what affected Rommel's command style. The fighting style, doctrine, tactical abilities and organisation of the forces Rommel commanded must also be analysed. It can be assumed that Rommel had the command of forces with different tactical strengths throughout his commands thus effecting the development of his command style. Therefore, if any repeating themes or styles reoccur throughout Rommel's campaigns, even given all of these differences, then an general command style relevant to Erwin Rommel is clearly apparent. Once collected and refined, finally, the collected principles that appear at least to make up the majority of Rommel's command style will be examined and evaluated. This will be done in the hope of deducing if it was Erwin Rommel's command style, or the effect of circumstances out of his control, that lead to the eventual defeat of Erwin Rommel, the Afrika Korps and the

Axis powers in the North African theatre of war. Having identified and defined the Command style particular to Erwin Rommel, the conclusion will also see if the way Erwin Rommel acted in command was in keeping with the suggested methods defined in the most recent German army doctrine of that time. The objective of the study, then, is to understand if Erwin Rommel was successful or unsuccessful due to his command principles. However there are some drawbacks to the dissertation topic in terms of scope. The selection of only one commander is a limitation to the study. To have been able to achieve a more accurate and whole picture, the campaigns and battles of other Wehrmacht commanders representing a variety of environments in which they fought and the enemies they faced could have been examined. As lacking this data and reference point there is little to no evidence that Rommel was not just a standard run-of-the-mill Wehrmacht general, as doomed to fail and be defeated as any other viable offer capable of taking command in the North African theatre of war. This work is set out in a relatively normal standard, progressing from introduction to the main body of the argument to the conclusion. The intent of this chapter, in addition to an introduction of the subject, is to describe the process to be used in this dissertation and the problems that hinder it and the possibilities to resolve the problems. In Chapter 4, the command style of Erwin Rommel and Rommel's campaigning in North Africa from 1941 to early 1942 are reviewed. In Chapter 3, a short review of both Rommel's early military life and the prevailing German military doctrine of the time are undertaken. This is carry out in the hope that Rommel's developing command style will be apparent from even such an early time and to allow an evaluation of whether this emerging and evolving command style is or was at any time in keeping

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with the standards set out in that relevant military doctrine. Only through taking into consideration the combination of Erwin Rommel's personality, the military doctrine and the battles and campaigns in which he took part and commanded will allow the most complete course for identifying his command style. The study concludes with a detailed look at how the command style of Erwin Rommel impacted on the African theatre of war. Finally, a variety of issues pertinent to whether Rommel finally lost his Campaign due to a fault in command principles or if extenuating circumstances out of Erwin Rommel's hands lead to the eventual victory of the allied powers in North Africa. When researching this topic a hypothesis was formed. These hypotheses are that the command principles of Erwin Rommel can be discovered through an analysis of the campaigns and battles conducted by Rommel. That a reasonably brief review of the German army doctrine of the time will highlight the dominant command styles used at that time and will assist the evaluation of Erwin Rommel's command principles. That Erwin Rommel was a competent commander in the African theatre of War and that the defeat there was not solely due to his command style.

Chapter 3:

Background/Biography

Introduction Erwin Rommel, better known as the Desert Fox has, as stated in the opening chapter on historiography and the on-going debate, an ingrained myth of military greatness and irreproachable valour.[5] The aim of this study is to try and move past the ebbs and flows of Rommel's popularity and the myth which surrounds him in order to try and identify the command style on which the myth first grew either rightly or wrongly. The man behind the myth

therefore must be considered to an extent to allow an examination of how Rommel's command style changed and developed. This examination becomes even more relevant when taking into account how much the individual and personality of any commander impacts on other aspects of command. An example of this can be seen in the decisions taken. Decision making clearly involves and is affected by a commander's personality and relevant experiences. Therefore Rommel's personality must be considered when trying to identify the command style which guided him in later military engagements. Thus, as stated previously this study includes below an investigation of Erwin Rommel's earlier military career, before that of fighting in North Africa in 1941. The dissertation's focus is on Erwin Rommel only during his first year in North Africa, finishing in early 1942. As a result of this decision, which shall be explained later, some operations of Rommel's fall outside this time period as do campaigns in France, Belgium and Italy for the most part. This focus on the first year of German involvement in North Africa theatre of war was chosen as it represents both the attacking and defensive capabilities of Rommel and allows an insight into decisions made in victory and defeat. This culmination of all possible battlefield experiences has a good chance of exhibiting all or at least most of his command style. This time period was also chosen above others like the Battle of France because very importantly to evaluating command style, Rommel at this time was in command of almost all the Axis forces in the theatre of war. This period was also chosen as it allows a manageable amount of information to be scrutinised inside the dissertation's word boundaries. Obviously Rommel's command style has foundations that had been developed prior to the Afrika Korps arrival in the African theatre of war. Rommel's experiences in World

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War One as an instructor during the inter-war years and his experiences as a panzer division commander in 1940 all helped to shape his command style in the North Africa theatre of war. Erwin Rommel's command in North Africa could be viewed as a failure, as he attacked across North Africa, retreated, tried again and eventually lost. However, whilst reviewing Rommel's time in North Africa, the campaign is too complex, with too many extenuating, circumstances to be written off so simply. In North Africa, Rommel was the commander of a strong, multi-national force. This clearly shows that Rommel's campaign was viewed as at least of some importance by the German High Command and that it had effect on overall Strategy. This theatre in North Africa also allows Rommel to be examined as a theatre commander, who planned and fought battles whilst trying to achieve his campaign objectives is another important reason this precise period was chosen. The reason for analysing Rommel's battles and campaigns in North Africa is simple, to determine why he lost in the North African theatre of war. In order to conduct a more complete analysis of Rommel's North African campaign, the chapter begins with a brief review of German military doctrine and Rommel's Military career before North Africa. This sets the stage and gives background so more can be deduced from Rommel's actions in North Africa. German Military Doctrine A review of the contemporary German military doctrine prior to World War Two is useful in identifying the command principles of Erwin Rommel and provides an idea of the restraints Rommel faced to his style of command. In 1933, the German Field Service Regulations were published, called *Truppenfuhrung*.^[6] While preceding Rommel's campaign in North Africa, *Truppenfuhrung* remained the prominent military doctrine in Germany past Rommel's campaign in North

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Africa. Due to the age of the text there are some omissions on which Rommel cannot later be compared. Like the employment of large armoured forces were missing as they were developed after publication. The *Truppenfuhrung* covers everything that makes up a command style, with suggestions on how a commander should lead to troop organisations. This text allows a comparison of Rommel's command style and the prevailing military guidelines at the Time. It can be seen that Erwin Rommel clearly applied many of these doctrinal notions to his planning and conduct of battles and campaigns, including those he fought during the North African Campaign. The doctrine must have influenced Erwin Rommel as in the *Truppenfuhrung*, the nature of war and the role of the leader are addressed, stating the example and personal conduct of officers have decisive influence on the troops, as the officer, when faced with the enemy should be cold blooded, decisive and courageous to inspire his troops onward, whilst also gaining the trust of his soldiers through never ceasing to care for their needs.[7]The *Truppenfuhrung* also deals with the personal qualities of the leader, like the proper location of the commander and his staff. Many of these recommendations Rommel can be seen to have adopted later in his military career. Like during advances the commander and his staff should be positioned well forward. That success requires boldness and daring, but must be secondary to good judgment. A commander rarely has the desired forces for decisive action and so a commander that doesn't focus his strength on his primary objective acts harmfully to the strategy. When Favourable situations arise they must be recognized and exploited so that every advantage over the enemy increases freedom of action. Surprise is a decisive factor in success, though only when the enemy is not permitted to

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take suitable counter measures. Attacks are launched to defeat the enemy and the attacker has the initiative. Superiority of leadership and troops are the best advantage, success is not guaranteed by superiority of numbers. Pursuit prevents the enemy from gaining time to rest and recuperate and saves the losses of another decisive engagement. Orders can be overridden when they no longer correspond to the developing situation and conditions. In the order the general intention is expressed, the main instructions are given but the conduct of the engagement is left to the field commanders.

[8]The doctrine also presents a description of how to organise and plan an attack with frontal, flanking, and enveloping attacks all being described. The notion of penetration to deeper objectives is introduced as is the importance of cooperation of arms, and directions to ensure cooperation are given and stressed. The major points of the doctrine, when not discussing specific instructions and directions, can be summarised as follows: identify the objective, decide how to attack, with flanking and enveloping attacks being considered most efficient, organising available forces ensuring cooperation of arms, change the main objective as conditions require and seek to destroy the enemy through offensive action.[9]It should be interesting therefore to see if Erwin Rommel's experiences and personal qualities are compatible with the doctrinal philosophy, presented in *Truppenführung*. In the sense that was he an inspiring leader, was he a militarily offensive commander and whether he used and took advantage of combined arms operations.

Therefore will it become clear that Rommel was a maverick general in the Wehrmacht or that he was not alone among the German generals of this period. However that is not the end of the investigation as how his personality and the doctrine influenced his operations in North Africa is the <https://assignbuster.com/operations-in-world-war-two-history-essay/>

main issue. Erwin Rommel's Military Background

Whilst researching Erwin Rommel it became clear that analyses of only battles and campaigns was not enough. The process of developing, selecting, and executing a course of action involves more than comparing allied and enemy forces and terrain and selecting any objective. The process of deciding and acting is affected by personality, psychology, and character, for that reason it is appropriate to present a brief biography of Erwin Rommel. The purpose of this is to identify experiences that may have coloured Rommel's later decisions. Therefore the aim of this section is to highlight the development of Rommel's command principles. There is not much evidence to be found in Rommel's early life that would seem to indicate success in his later life.[10]

Kenneth Macksey concludes in *Rommel: Battles and Campaigns* that being an intellectual underachiever, made a young Rommel hostile to authority. However, Rommel's amazing story seems to have been started when his father persuaded him to enter the army as a more disciplined alternative to a career in engineering.[11]

It is important to note that although Rommel had started on a career to distinguish him, he was very different from the aristocratic Prussian officer class that held prominence at that time. The impression given of Lieutenant Rommel just prior to World War One was as a good regimental officer; quiet, serious, and efficient with a developing common sense and a streak of stubbornness.[12]

World War One

The lessons Rommel learned during World War One did much to shape his approach to how to fight wars throughout the rest of his life. During the war he commanded units from small patrols to *abteilungen* the German equivalent of several companies.[13]

His experiences ranged from an initial war of movement and manoeuvre in Belgium and France early in the war to that of

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trench warfare in the following years. In his book *Infantry Attacks*[14], Rommel recounts the lessons learned in France and Belgium, lessons both personal and tactical. He portrayed several important principles. That action decides the issue, he wins who fires first and can deliver the heaviest fire. [15]That Momentum must be maintained to achieve the objective and overcome enemy resistance.[16]Firepower must be available to the forward units.[17]That Reconnaissance was paramount to winning battles.[18]That due to modern weaponry, actions must be taken to increase protection, meaning modern weapons like artillery could be less devastating if precautions like prepared positions and concealed routes were used. [19]Main forces could avoid points of resistance to maintain the advance and separate detachments can deal with the resistance.[20]That a commander's positive lead is required to command and control his forces successfully. [21]Finally that Deception helps to increase the chance of offensive success. [22]These lessons can easily become command principles that would one day make up his command style. Rommel was wounded twice during World War One. His accounts of these incidents provide some significant clues to his personality and developing sense of how he would fight later wars. One such account tells of Rommel charging the enemy from a concealed position, and even when outnumbered and out of ammunition, continued his attack because retreat was not a viable option and because he had complete confidence in his abilities.[23]Rommel was later reassigned as a company commander in 1916, action in France, Rumania, and Italy followed until his recalled to Germany 1917. During the manoeuvre style campaigning in Rumania and Italy, Rommel continued to develop his command skills and personality as a commander. The significant lessons he learned during this

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time went on to reinforce the lessons learnt previously. Those being that: Reconnaissance is essential particularly when the main body of troops are indisposed;[24]deception and diversion of the enemy increase the likelihood of victory,[25]The will of the commander helps to inspire the troops to greater feats,[26]surprise attacks and rapid pursuits lead to great victories at relatively low cost[27]and that the exploitation of unexpected success can lead to greater successes and should be seized even if the action disobeys orders.[28]Rommel's growing set of command principles, where clearly evolving and being reinforced during this period. Kenneth Macksey, who in *Rommel: Battles and Campaigns*, is generally critical of Rommel, states that Rommel's actions in Rumania and Italy show him as overly ambitious, excessive in expenditure of men and materiel, and obsessed with the desire to achieve his personal objectives. Whilst at the same time acknowledges the importance of the principles becoming intrinsic to Rommel: pursuit, surprise, protection through movement and speed of attack all of which Rommel stresses in his book *Infantry Attacks*. [29]Inter-War YearsThe inter-war years allowed Rommel to refine the lessons learned in World War One. As an army instructor, Rommel devoted himself to this study. During this period, however, Rommel was overlooked for selection to the General Staff and the War Academy.[30]Rommel was, however, a favourite with Hitler, maybe because he was not a member of the Prussian military aristocracy. Rommel was therefore given many opportunities, when Hitler came to power, of which he took full advantage, being assigned to positions of increasing responsibility within the Wehrmacht. During the actions in Czechoslovakia and Poland, whilst commanding Hitler escort battalion, his interests became focused on a new kind of warfare. That being the

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employment of massed fast-moving tank units, assault troops, and the use of dive bombers in close support. Rommel was clearly learning new techniques, whilst still applying the lessons he had learned himself.[31]The mutual admiration between Rommel and Hitler led to Rommel's assignment as commander of the 7th Panzer Division in February 1940. David Irving in his book *The Trail of the Fox* gives primary evidence and helps explain how Rommel applied the lessons he had learnt over the past decades to mobile, tank warfare. The clues that Rommel intended to continue a style of leadership similar to that he practised in World War can be found in two extracts of Irving's book. After being given command of his Panzer Division, Rommel went and collected ten copies of his book *Infantry Attacks*, for his subordinates to read. This clearly suggests that he proposed to use his tanks, boldly in battle, similar to how he had commanded as an infantry commander. Another piece of evidence came from one of Rommel's corps commanders named Schweppenburg. Schweppenburg who overheard, what appears to have been a somewhat staged conversation; Rommel asked Rudolf Schmidt what the best way to command a Panzer Division was. To which he received the answer 'You'll find there are always two possible decisions open to you. Take the bolder one it's always best.'[32]France 1940Rommel participated in the blitzkrieg campaign in France and Belgium in 1940, in which he achieved significant battlefield accomplishments. During this time the command principles which would guide his actions in the North African campaigns had developed and refined yet further. Rommel wrote again after 1940 concerning the importance of offensive action and that victory often goes to the side which acts first.[33]Rommel also mused on improved ideas of command and control principles during operations in <https://assignbuster.com/operations-in-world-war-two-history-essay/>

Belgium and France.[34]None however seemed as important to Rommel as the idea of momentum, the importance of which was noticed during World War One and undeniable in France 1940, with Rommel's personal triumph in the 'race to Cherbourg'. It is easy to understand why Rommel was so swayed by this collection of command principles. Rommel had helped achieve what would become referred to as the 'strange defeat' of France and this was in part achieved by Rommel's use of his principles. Due to a continuous thrust straight through to the objective, which allowed sustainment of both initiative and momentum. The tank lead spearhead, had Routes planned to bypass built-up areas once again sustaining the initiative and momentum. Rommel saw how attacking quickly, giving no time to the enemy to recover and being positioned well forward to allow good visibility to direct the artillery and dive bombers at the decisive moment and implementing new command and control methods like, simplifying wireless transmissions with the "thrust line", which allowed coordination with division headquarters and fire support. The apparent potential of these command principles that facilitated the rapid advance of the attack across France must have been clear to Rommel and influenced him greatly.[35]36In Summary after his actions in World War One and the opening campaigns of World War Two, Erwin Rommel appears to have been tactically sound to this point. He was experienced in rapid, manoeuvre warfare, had gained experience in commanding large combined arms force and had developed ideas on command and control, logistics, and combat techniques that had worked on many occasions. The importance he laid on achieving surprise, deception, and relentless pursuit were reaffirmed in France in 1940, though, Rommel had also demonstrated impatience, shown in how, as France and World War

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One, he outran and broke contact with his support. In conclusion, his actions, his psychology, and his character appear to have been mostly if not wholly compatible with the prevailing German tactics and doctrine when concerning command style and fighting wars.[37]