

# **The Mask of Command Study Guide**

## **The Mask of Command by John Keegan**

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# Plot Summary

Sir John Keegan is a British military historian, lecturer, and author of *The Mask of Command*. Keegan is best known for his comprehensive works on military history, with particular focus on military figures and battles from fourteenth through twenty-first centuries. *The Mask of Command* allows Keegan to effectively dissect the technical aspects of warfare, particularly as it relates to Alexander the Great, Arthur Wellesley Wellington, U.S. Grant, and Adolph Hitler. Keegan is also known for uncovering the psychology used in battle.

*The Mask of Command* is a work of non-fiction, separated into five parts. Although each part is separate unto itself, the parts are frequently referenced in other areas for the sake of comparison.

The first part, "Alexander the Great and Heroic Leadership", details the life and conquests of Alexander the Great, son of Philip II of Macedon. Alexander would become known worldwide for being the leader who did what no other could do before or since - conquer states and entities on several continents and create a kingdom greater than any other. Alexander is also credited as being the inspiration of many legends and created the basis for modern warfare.

The second part, "Wellington the Anti-Hero", reviews Wellington's illustrious military career in Britain, from an eight year exile in India to the defining moment in his career - the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo. Keegan also discusses Wellington's later achievements and numerous accolades as well as his stint as the beloved and revered Prime Minister of Britain.

The third part, "Grant and Unheroic Leadership," covers the history and military rise of Civil War General Ulysses S. Grant from his humble beginnings as a mediocre student and soldier to commander of the Armies of the United States. Grant went on to become an integral contributor to the government's military cabinet and was named as the eighteenth president of the United States.

The fourth part, "False Heroic, Hitler as Supreme Commander", focuses on Adolph Hitler, the Third Reich, and the quest for world domination during World War II. Keegan covers Hitler's military strategy, his demand for loyalty until death and the failure of his reign as fuhrer.

The fifth part, "Conclusion: Post-Heroic: Command in the Nuclear World", is a look at the military tactics and ideals that have worked over the centuries. Keegan asserts and explains why those tactics that had served the leaders well will no longer apply in a nuclear world and recognizes the call for a new strategy of war.

Although it would be easy for an expert such as Keegan to insert one's own opinion on any of the numerous topics, Keegan manages to stick to the facts, some of which are little known or have been lost in the history books, and presents the information as

objectively as possible even when there are hints of informed opinion available to the reader.



# Part 1, Chapters 1-11

## Part 1, Chapters 1-11 Summary and Analysis

Chapter one, "Alexander the Great and Heroic Leadership," begins with Keegan comparing Alexander to Napoleon, Attila the Hun, Genghis Khan, Prince Charles, Hitler and others. While all of those military leaders made great strides and accomplishments throughout their careers, none can match Alexander the Great. Even those that came close had the benefit of tools and information not available to the Macedonian that covered several continents beginning at age sixteen.

Chapter two, "Alexander: The Father of the Man", covers Alexander's birth in July 365 BC. Alexander was the eldest son of Philip II of Macedonia and Olympias. Although Philip had other children, they were illegitimate and Philip never married the mothers, rendering any claims to the throne.

Philip was a physically intense man. Philip had been married three times by the time he married Olympias and would marry another three times afterward, casting Olympias and the other wives aside as he tired of them. The author writes: "Though she and Philip were soon to fall out, the attraction between them was probably that of equivalent, rather than complimentary, spirits - wild, carnal, and contemptuous of convention" (p. 15).

There were many tales of Philip's offspring, although none have been verified to the satisfaction of historians.

Olympias and Philip were a good match - passionate, loving, and committed by choice, not by an arranged marriage, as was common in that day and age. The author states that the couple was the sort that would not put up with such nonsense and would act according to their own desires, despite tradition and family wishes.

Olympias was not demure or inexperienced, having been married once before. After the relationship began to fall apart due to Philip's preoccupation with politics and war, Olympias stayed on to raise Alexander. There is not much mention of Philip taking part in Alexander's life until the boy was about age twelve. Throughout Alexander's childhood, the boy was well educated in many areas suitable to a young royal. Alexander's education included learning to sing and play the lyre, hunt, ride, and to debate, and to appreciate epic poetry, mostly as it related to Homer.

Included in this section is a map of Alexander's conquests. The author also mentions Alexander's famous horse Bucephalas, a creature that would play a large part in Alexander's battles and would stay by his master's side for twenty years.

The author states that Alexander was deeply affected by two things during his childhood - his love of Homer's epic poetry and the extreme and eccentric beliefs of Olympias.



Alexander also developed a reverence for Hercules, the great Greek god of strength, while Olympias worshipped Dionysus.

Like many royals, Alexander had a tutor. Alexander's tutor of three years also happened to be a brilliant student of Plato's, a man named Aristotle. The boy attended a school erected for him by Philip at Mieza near Pella. Oddly enough, Aristotle did not have a long and irreversible impact on Alexander. The two geniuses met and worked together, but there was never the formation of a deep bond or kinship as one might have expected. Although Aristotle would become known as one of the world's most brilliant philosophers and the founding father of empiricism, at that time he was a writer of books on varying subjects from the constitutions of the 158 states of Greece. He also edited text regarding the victors at Delphi and focused on everything science based including zoology, optics, medicine, and astronomy.

The author also discusses the conquests of Philip and how they impressed Alexander in ways Aristotle's political views never could.

At age sixteen, Alexander went to war under Philip's command for the first time. At age eighteen, Alexander received a major victory at Chaeronea, where he would prove himself as a commander and worthy heir to the throne.

After Philip died, it was clear that it was Alexander's time to assume power at the tender age of twenty-one. Alexander began to show his skill as a politician and warrior and his mastery would only continue to grow.

Chapter three, "Achievement", begins with Alexander's record of marching for nearly ten years without a significant break from 335-325 BC, with at least one major battle per year. Alexander's preliminary goal was to invade Persia, the world's most powerful state. Alexander wanted that power but also wanted to prevent Persia from invading Greece for a third time.

There is a small vignette about Alexander's visit to the temple to worship the gods. The Greeks feared and hated the Persians, which gave Alexander another edge over Darius and his formidable army. The author details Alexander's plans to invade Asia Minor. The author also recounts Darius's march from Babylon.

Even with 140,000 soldiers, Darius was unable to outsmart Alexander, who perfectly executed a plan to attack Darius from the rear rather than wait to face the ruler head on at Cilicia. In addition to Alexander's cunning strategy, his use of brute force and recklessness forced Darius's men to retreat. Alexander wanted to go after and slay Darius but was called away just long enough for the defeated ruler to escape. Technically, the victory in battle meant that Alexander was now the ruler of Persia. However, Darius offered Alexander half of the kingdom as a compromise. Alexander refused, insisting that he should be the one to be known as the great king.

It was ten months later before Alexander and Darius met again. This time Alexander got his way and killed Darius, effectively taking over all of Persia, Alexander's lifelong dream.



At long last the battle to conquer Persia was over. It took three great battles and forty-two months to do so. Alexander and his troops traversed 3,500 miles on horseback and on foot. However, Alexander's biggest challenge was yet to come.

Chapter four, "The Kingdom of Macedon", returns to Alexander's homeland. Keegan focuses on the wealth of the Macedonian kingdom and how it compared to the other, richer nations. However, what Alexander lacked in funds, he made up for with strategy and fortitude. It should also be made clear that the Kingdom of Macedon was not poor, but simply not as rich as many of its neighbors and enemies.

The author points out that "Capital is the raw material of achievement; if not material capital itself, then the moral, intellectual or social resources on which the man of ambition may draw to set his enterprise in train. Alexander's material resources were few, certainly quite disproportionate to the achievement he was to win with them, but considerable nevertheless" (p. 32). Alexander could, however, claim an abundance of natural resources, livestock, grains, and fertile lands. The latter was due in part to the irrigation system installed by Philip.

Chapter five, "The Macedonian Army", begins with a discussion on Alexander's inheritance of his father's army. The Macedonian army was also different from that of the Greeks in that it was essentially a militia in which the citizens had the right to bear arms. This configuration was both a benefit and a hindrance for Alexander. The people were invested in the army as it meant protecting their land, homes and families. The hindrance came from less training and the overall size of the army. The size tended to be restricted, since most battles were intercity battles, which meant that the groups were unprepared to work together to conquer a larger enemy.

Keegan points out that readers should realize and remember that the structure of the military was not like the ones we are used to seeing in the past one to two hundred years. "The Macedonian army was, in the strictest sense, a dynastic one, in that it comprised an inner core of warriors whose relationship to its royal leader was personal, ultimately a bloody one; the outer tiers were made up of less elite though still formidable troops whose loyalty was determined by more mundane factors - political obligations, pay, custom and calculations of self-advantage" (p. 34), he points out.

Therefore, there was a sense of equality among the soldiers. Keegan also compares the army to the charioteers that invaded Troy and also to Homer in arms.

The inner core of the army was Cavalry Companions, comprised of about three thousand men, two thousand of which rode into Asia. The Foot Companions generally took the offensive, leaving the Cavalry Companions to strike elsewhere. Alexander also had a select infantry known as the Shield Bearers, whose main job it was to surround and protect Alexander much like a shield. There were also many other light and specialist troops that were often comprised of men from surrounding areas and allies.

Keegan also explains how the various factions were formed. Regarding weaponry, the tools used in battle were quite primitive. The swords were more like daggers, short and



blunt, relying on brute force in hand-to-hand combat. The spears were eighteen feet long and quite heavy; therefore, they were not used in battle per se, although they might be seen on the periphery. The main focus was on the cohesion of the troops an aspect that was imperative in phalanx warfare.

Chapter six, "Alexander's Staff", shows how Alexander's army was much different than the military structure we know today. Keegan compares Alexander to MacArthur. Alexander did not have the three bureau system, comprised of operations, logistics and intelligence. Alexander did have subordinate commanders and also used experts when needed. Many of the soldiers were considered to be friends by Alexander. Unlike many stories told throughout history, this circle of friends did not overindulge; rather, they were quite stalwart. There are no records of the types of things discussed by the inner circle, yet Keegan doubts if Alexander routinely used any of the men as a sounding board.

Chapter seven, "Alexander and His Soldiers", details more of the personal relationship between Alexander and his staff. What were the relationships like with the lesser members of the army? Keegan asks, "If so with his staff, how with his soldiers? They formed, as it is important to remember, neither a tribal war band nor a regular royal army, nor were they conscripts or mercenaries (though there were mercenaries among them)" (p. 44).

So how did this fact affect the relationship between Alexander and the soldiers? Keegan continues to detail the comradeship between the men, explaining that "They were, insofar as a body can be said to have existed before the rise of conscious nationalism, a sort of nation-in-arms, recruited from those classes deemed socially eligible for military service in Macedonia and, though undoubtedly paid, following their king as much out of comradeship as obligation" (p. 44).

The description makes even more sense when one learns how generous Alexander tended to be with his men, caring for their families and lands while at war and even in the event of death. Alexander was so intent on honoring the dead that he even saw to it that there was not a man left on the battlefield, regardless if it was friend or foe.

Chapter eight, "Ceremony and Theatre", reexamines the Macedonians love of drama and the theatre. Alexander was well known for his flair of the dramatic, often becoming highly melodramatic, which sometimes backfired on him. Many of Alexander's antics were put into play in order to gain or maintain the attention and devotion of his troops. In fact, the ruler often used guilt to the point of detriment. One of the best examples involved allowing the soldiers to believe he was dead and then waiting for several days to reappear on a boat to a cheering crowd.

Alexander took the opportunity to visit the temple of Ammon and also used the trip to celebrate other gods, such as the beloved Hercules. Alexander paid a visit to the Oracle and it was said that the Oracle referred to Alexander as the son of Zeus.

Chapter nine, "Alexander's Oratory", proves how important it was, and is, for a great leader to have exceptional oration skills. The author says, "If Alexander was a supreme





theatrical performer to the point achieved by the greatest of actors - not consciously calculating the impact of his performances but letting its force transcend both his own and the audience's emotions - he was at the same time the most calculating of dramatic orators" (p. 54). It should also be made clear that in Alexander's day, many men made their living by performing as orators, a vocation made even more important due to lack of the written word.

Alexander would also personalize his oratories to capture the hearts and minds of the people, asking the people to follow him and then relating previous experiences in which they worked together. Keegan also gives other examples of Alexander's speeches and infrequent failures as an orator.

Chapter ten, "Alexander on the Battlefield", goes into great detail about Alexander's daily routines while in battle, from bathing to dining and spending time with friends. Alexander's form of dress is also discussed. Unlike other great leaders such as Wellington, Alexander chose to be showy in his presentation. When the enemy saw Alexander, he wanted to be recognized immediately. This was even more ostentatious when Alexander appeared in battle astride the great and legendary Bucephalus.

Keegan details Alexander's wounds received in battle. There were eight wounds, one of which was nearly fatal.

Keegan also details the strategy used by Alexander in the following battles: Balkan Battles; the Sieges; and the Great Battles, each comprised of dates and strategies as well as the number of soldiers that perished on each side.

Chapter eleven, "Alexander and the Mask of Command", is a summary of Alexander's career, achievements and legacy. Although Alexander is lauded for his conquests, it is pointed out that as far as the world is concerned, Alexander was a great warrior, but he spent his life destroying rather than building civilizations.



## Part 2, Chapters 1-9

### Part 2, Chapters 1-9 Summary and Analysis

Chapter one, "Wellington: the Anti-Hero", begins with a quote from Sir Wellington: "I never," said Wellington after Waterloo, "took so much trouble about any battle". That quote not only summed up the difficulties faced by Wellington at Waterloo, but it also gives insight into the man's unflappable character. Wellington had first witnessed warfare in 1794 in Holland. Since that time there had been so many battles that they could hardly be counted. The closest tally reached included sixteen battles and eight sieges, not counting those Wellington participated in as a subordinate. Once Wellington took the reins, he had participated in an average of one battle per year, not counting the years taken off during peacetime or tending to other duties. One of the most notable of Wellington's battles was at Salamanca, at which he was the victor. However, the most important battle of Wellington's life would turn out to be the four day battle at Waterloo.

Wellington was a man of great persistence, resilience, and fortitude. The man rarely slept, ate little, and was so intently focused on the task at hand that he barely noticed any form of discomfort.

Keegan outlines Wellington's daily schedule, which included just a couple of hours of sleep and supreme focus. Like Alexander, Wellington gave a great deal of time and energy to his troops, often checking to make sure they were okay. Unlike Napoleon, Wellington rode alongside his men as they charged into battle. The author states that the only things that saved Wellington from sure death were his superior riding skills and the presence of Copenhagen, his prize steed.

Wellington's devotion to his men was such that he gave his own bed to a dying officer, and when one of the men died, Wellington wept openly with grief.

Keegan includes a map of Wellington's conquests in India, where the man spent eight years.

The first piece of news about Napoleon's attack on the Prussians reached Wellington while he was preparing to attend a ball hosted by the Duchess of Richmond. The date was June 15, 1815. Wellington slept very little that night or the next. On June 17, Wellington went to Waterloo village and prepared to fight the next day. By 3:00 on Sunday the 18th, the battle at Waterloo was in full swing.

Keegan outlines the placement of the soldiers and Wellington's plans to hold off the French army even though the news from the Prussians was bleak. Wellington's battle line stretched for two miles and was divided into three sections.

Comically, the first shots fired that day had been friendly fire from the Nassauers, who were not at all pleased to be disturbed during breakfast to join the formation. The act made even Wellington comment in amusement.



Keegan discussed Wellington's subdued manner of dress, particularly on the battlefield. Wellington did not wear a uniform. Rather, the commander chose to dress in civilian clothes: white buckskin breeches, a white neckerchief, short boots and a blue coat. The only sign of military allegiance was a knotted Spanish marshals' sash and a low cocked hat. A riding cloak lay across his saddlebow, which would come in handy due to the often-heavy rain showers during the day.

Despite the tumultuous battle between Wellington and Napoleon, Wellington seemed to maintain his posture at all times, never allowing anyone to see that he was less than supremely confident. In fact, Wellington was so focused that little seemed to filter through to him except for what needed to be done to force Napoleon's army back. When the French set fire to a chateau at Hougoumont, Wellington took time to pen a note of instruction to his subordinate commander. The note instructed the soldiers to stay near the burning chateau as long as they were out of danger. After the fire died down, the men could take up arms inside the burnt out chateau. It was also a maneuver that would keep the French from doing the same thing.

Wellington had begun to lose hope in the face of the formidable French army, but as the day wore on, it seemed as if the Prussians might arrive in time to save the troops. In order to hold off Napoleon, Wellington brought out his best brigade that had been held back. The brigade would position itself between the still inexperienced British soldiers and Hougoumont, a decision that would prove to be most wise, as later witnessed during the Crisis of Waterloo.

During the early morning hours, Wellington took time to write his dispatch, which would later appear in its entirety in the London Times. Wellington recounted the high number of losses and how the battle may not have done if he had been absent.

Chapter two, "Wellington the Man", begins with Keegan reiterating that Wellington routinely suffered much more danger than his subordinates in addition to the mental, emotional and physical strain of being a leader. Many of the other soldiers viewed Wellington with some jealousy, as he was the son of a marginal lord. However titled, Wellington's family had little money. As a younger son, Wellington would receive no inheritance of any kind. If Wellington did benefit from the family's position, it was due to the generosity of his elder brother Richard, the Governor-General of Bengal.

Once again Keegan compares Wellington to Alexander the Great regarding the upbringing of the two men. Whereas Alexander had all of the privileges of being born a royal, Wellington did not. Wellington did attend Eton, but the celebrated school was no match for Aristotle's tutelage. As a result, Wellington neither blossomed as a student at Eton, nor at the French schools he attended. Likewise, Wellington's early military career was quite forgettable. Wellington came alive after his military stint in India.

George Elers, a contemporary of Wellington's from Calcutta, described the man thus: "He was all life and spirits. In height he was about 5 feet 7 inches (in fact nearer 5 feet 10 inches) with a long pale face, a remarkably large aquiline nose, a clear blue eye and the blackest beard I ever saw" (p. 106).



Keegan uses the word "abstractedly" quite often in his descriptions of Wellington, often meaning that the man was one to look off into space and envision things that another soldier may not have the ability to conceive much less execute.

One of the main benefits of battle for Wellington, at least in this case, was the fact that the enemy factions were not united. This played into Wellington's plan against the French, who were determined to throw a web of alliances over the principalities as a sign of allegiance to the Moghuls; and during the coup in which Wellington overthrew Tippoo Sultan at Seringapatam.

Keegan goes on to detail the end of Wellington's stint in India and moves on to Wellington's return home in 1805. Wellington was given the rank of major-general and was also knighted. In 1806, Wellington realized his dream of being married. One of Wellington's aims upon his return home was to help save his brother, who had fallen into scandal. Wellington so impressed Castlereagh that the thirty-seven-year-old soldier was soon a trusted confidant and advisor on one military scheme after another. One of those schemes included keeping an eye on Napoleon's activities.

The first real chance Britain had to make a solid move against Napoleon came in 1808 when there was an uprising in Spain and Portugal against the French emperor. The event eventually became the Peninsular War. Wellington once again impressed Castlereagh with his ideas on protecting Portugal with naval power. The Peninsular War would last until 1814. Along the way, Wellington gained more fame and a number of prestigious titles, including a barony, viscountcy, and marquisate. In 1813 Wellington was awarded with the Order of the Garter as well as a field marshal's baton, and in 1814, Wellington received the title of duke. Awards and titles were also lavished on Wellington from the Spanish and Portuguese, including dukedom and marshal's ranks, the Order of the Golden Fleece, and he was also named Generalissimo of the Spanish Army. Wellington was eventually named the Commander-in-Chief of the British and Dutch-Belgian forces, which sent him to Flanders. Wellington continued to watch Napoleon for signs of aggression. On June 15, 1815, Wellington received the news that would lead him to the great battle of Waterloo.

Chapter three, "Wellington and Western Military History", details Wellington's impact on generalship and how the Brit outshone his contemporaries. Keegan compares the type of warfare to that practiced in Alexander's day. Keegan points out that the book is not about the evolution of warfare, but rather about technique and leadership. Keegan includes many details, including how each man positioned himself on the battlefield. Both men tended to be in the midst of the fighting not simply to be a direct part of the war effort; it was also imperative that the commanders position themselves to be able to see what was happening firsthand so that decisions could be made swiftly and with the utmost effectiveness. The author continues to compare all of the fine points of the battles fought by each man.

Chapter four, "Wellington's Army", details the common misconceptions of Wellington's opinion on his soldiers. Some believed that Wellington was in the trenches to offer support and did give the soldiers some credit. More widely believed, even if incorrectly,



is the legend that Wellington detested his soldiers. A common quote made by Wellington in reference to the soldiers: "The scum of the earth - the mere scum of the earth" (p. 126). It seems that Wellington's opinion for the reason these men enlisted - for the love of drink - may have been true. Many men also enlisted to avoid their bastard children or punishment for minor offenses.

Like other armies, Wellington had his own body of executioners. The offenses often included desertion, armed robbery or mutiny. Wellington had no sympathy for offenders, nor did he accept the drunken behavior of his recruits. Even the officers often vexed Wellington with idleness and frivolity. Those people put Wellington into a rage and often had him ranting about doing everything himself. Wellington is quoted as saying, "When I reflect upon the character or attainments of some of the General Officers of this army, and consider that these are the persons on whom I am to rely to lead my columns against the French Generals, and who are to carry my instructions into execution, I tremble" (p. 129).

With this opinion it is no wonder that Wellington was eager to allow certain soldiers to quit and return to England. Unfortunately, many of the worst soldiers chose to remain.

Chapter five, "Wellington's Staff", focuses on the comparison between the Duke's army and that of his enemies. The major difference between Wellington and Napoleon regarding battle was that Napoleon was known for not having a real plan for his campaigns, only that he wished to fight a great battle. Wellington, on the other hand, chose to make plans and do whatever he could to avoid fighting a great battle. The general plans of the two men were quite similar although neither would ever admit to it.

One of the biggest benefits of Wellington's scarce idle time is that the commander wrote a great deal. It was evident that Wellington was a talented writer and made good use of his talents, particularly through letters to friends and family.

Keegan discusses the difference of staff training in Wellington's day as opposed to today, meaning that there was little. The result of the lack of training and recruitment often left Wellington severely understaffed. Also included in this chapter are descriptions of the types of supplies used by the army.

Included in chapter five is a series of detailed drawings. They include a photo of a painting of Wellington as painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence in 1814; a map and rendering of Wellington at Assaye; two renderings of the Battle of Salamanca; drawings of Hougoumont and La Haye Sainte immediately after Waterloo; and two reproductions of Wellington's instructions as written during the battle at Waterloo.

Chapter six, "Wellington's Routine", discusses the routine utilized by Wellington on most every day of his life save those few days each year when he was in battle. Wellington was well known for having an unvarying routine, which is credited for much of his success in planning campaigns.

Keegan compares Wellington to Napoleon's personal interests. Neither man was formally educated at university, but both maintained many interests above their levels of



education. For example, Napoleon was known to have great analytical skills and an extraordinary grasp on mathematical concepts. Wellington was musical and was fascinated by astronomy and mechanics. It is surmised that both men, uniquely adept at grasping higher learning concepts, may have been exposed to a classical learning technique that involved the use of mnemonic devices.

Chapter seven, "Wellington and the Preservation of Self", details how Wellington presented himself to family, friends, colleagues and subordinates. It has been noted that Wellington was a fastidious man and always well dressed. Being slovenly was unacceptable.

In his manner of acting, Wellington was different than other commanders in many ways. While Alexander was overly dramatic and Napoleon was known to feign interest in his people, Wellington was straightforward and had great distaste for pageantry or falsehoods.

Chapter eight, "Wellington in Battle", details Wellington's typical and highly successful battle strategy. It was this strategy that made Wellington seem like a genius and won him many battles, including the Battle of Salamanca and the Battle of Waterloo. In essence, Wellington left nothing to chance. A great deal of preparation went into each campaign, taking certain factors into account, each of which could secure a victory or doom the troops to failure and fatality.

There are early and late Wellington methods as mentioned throughout the book; however, the crux remains the same. Wellington never left any detail that could affect the outcome of the battle to any subordinate, no matter how talented or trustworthy. Tactical moves and topography were married to present the best possible scenario for victory; troops were sheltered as much and as long as possible; and on the spot decision-making was often crucial to success.

Chapter nine, "Observation and Sensation", details Keegan and other historians' views on Wellington, from his personal demeanor to military and political achievements. It can best be summed up by the closing entry: "He was to risk his life on thirty battlefields in performance of that duty. Through its discharge he would eventually become Commander-in-Chief of the army, Chancellor of the University of Oxford, Prime Minister of England and idol of every last common man in the country" (p. 163).



## Part 3, Chapters 1-7

### Part 3, Chapters 1-7 Summary and Analysis

Chapter one, "Grant and Unheroic Leadership", begins with describing Grant as he rode toward the Battle of Shiloh. Grant was a small man, not immediately intimidating or worthy of a second glance. It was his position in rank that let people know he was a commander. The year was 1862 and Grant was serving as the Commander of the District of Western Tennessee.

The Battle of Shiloh was a first for many. The Battle was a surprise to the northerners, who were exhausted and poorly prepared. The men had little or no ammunition, perhaps enough for sixty rounds, a pittance against the southerners who had a full arsenal. The leaders were little better than the soldiers, save for Grant. Some had been wounded, killed or chose to get drunk instead of fight. Keegan states that during the first year, the Civil War was chaos.

By mid-afternoon on April 6, nearly one-fifth of Grant's army had deserted their posts and waited for a chance to escape the battlefield. The army was down to about five thousand men. Many of those who deserted had no ammunition or weapons and simply had lost the will to fight. There were many others who would have deserted if given the opportunity.

Unlike the northerners, the southerners were full of enthusiasm and vigor. At best, Grant's troops could evade and stall until help arrived from another Union battalion located nine miles away, a distance that would take half a day to cover. The terrain offered more hindrance than help. The area was wooded and full of scrub and rocky ground. There were no landmarks to point the way or to be used as points of reference.

The southerners closed in and attacked the flanks, leaving little if any hope that the battle could be saved. One soldier suggested to Grant that the Union Army surrender, but Grant would not hear of it. Support troops began to arrive. When Sherman, Grant's colleague and friend, approached with the same thoughts of surrender, Grant's demeanor immediately showed his determination. Together, the men vowed to take the Confederates in the morning. And so they did.

Chapter two, "Grant and the Progress of War", discusses munitions and compares Grant's army to those of Alexander and Wellington. While Grant believed in the progress of war, many, including Alexander, Wellington and Napoleon, did not. The author explains: "'War is progressive,' Grant was to write in his Memoirs. The idea would have been abhorrent to the Duke of Wellington, who feared progress in politics and stoutly denied its influence on the battlefield. 'Napoleon,' he said of Waterloo, 'just moved forward in the old style...and was driven off in the old style'" (p. 168).



Despite all arguments to the contrary, Grant had it right when he said that technology could not be denied. For example, rifles became an integral part of the American Revolution, the Peninsular War, and at Waterloo.

Chapter three, "The Professional Career of U.S. Grant", details Grant's beginnings at West Point. Grant would follow the traditions at West Point, much like many famous soldiers and great Americans. West Point would go on to graduate many notable people, including President Eisenhower, James McNeil Whistler, and Edgar Allan Poe. As an institution, West Point has proven itself to be worthy of its reputation as the finest military academy in the US and perhaps the world. Keegan compares West Point to the British Royal Military Academy located in Woolwich and France's École de Génie at Mezières.

Despite Grant's training, many did not think that the young man would rise up through the ranks as he did. The author says, "Grant's contemporaries might, however, have been forgiven for discounting the likelihood that he would rise to a high place in the army. Physically slight, personally self-effacing, academically undistinguished, Grant left little trace of his passage through West Point or on the army during his brief professional career" (p. 182).

Grant received a bit of notoriety after a stint near the Mexican border, supporting the movement to procure land adjacent to the Rio Grande. Grant did not approve of the tactics, however, seeing the American role as an entity trying to pick a fight. According to the author, "Grant strongly disapproved of the policy. A Democrat and populist to his fingertips, he was possessed by the reality of American civilization and the difference between it and that of the Old World" (p. 182).

Things changed for Grant after the initial attack on Fort Sumter. Grant, like many other commanders, was elected to head a recruiting committee for Galena. It is said that Grant's demeanor changed that very day. In three years Grant would be General in Chief of the Armies of the United States; within seven years Grant would be inaugurated as the eighteenth president.

Chapter four, "Grant's Army", details more about Grant's appointment. Grant was chosen mainly for his level of education received at West Point and his involvement in the Mexican War.

The United States only had sixteen thousand men compared to the two hundred thousand men in Britain's army. Additionally, the men who were enlisted were mainly stationed on and around the Mississippi River to protect trade and settlement routes. Keegan goes on to detail the positions of various soldiers.

Many soldiers had no idea what they were in for regarding war. The author includes stories and letters proclaiming hardship.

It was shown that Grant realized his error pre-war when making the distinction between the man who volunteered to enlist and the man who served as a soldier during peacetime. One set included men of some social standing, competent and often





independent in character. The other often enlisted because he would not do well in any other occupation. Grant may have made up for the deficiencies of some of the men. "No stronger Union man was to be found than Grant" (p. 193).

Chapter five, "Grant's Staff", covers the commander's philosophies regarding his staff as well as his philosophy of war. The author quotes Grant as saying, "Find out where your enemy is. Get at him as soon as you can. Strike at him as hard as you can and as soon as you can and keep moving on" (p. 195).

While Grant may have been surrounded by more than his share of ordinary men, there were at least two that stood out to the commander. They were Lieutenant Colonel Rawlins, Assistant Adjutant General, and Captain Boners, Aide de Camp.

Included in this chapter are several photos and renderings of Grant, including a portrait and Pemberton's surrender at Vicksburg.

Keegan states that if there is any one historical document that details the Civil War in its entirety, that document would be the Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant.

Chapter six, "Grant on Campaign", discusses Grant's personal habits while on campaign, from his dress to his choice of food, drink and recreation.

Chapter seven, "Grant the Fighter", recalls Grant's quiet approach to battle. One man referred to Grant as being undramatic, although Lincoln recognized the man's skill and proclaimed the need for his skills.

Keegan goes into detail about Grant's habits and methods as a fighter. Also included in the chapter are maps of Grant's conquests at Shiloh and Vicksburg.

Chapter eight, "Grant and American Democracy", details Grant's views on the Constitution and how the Civil War was best fought when it was to quell the growing political conflict throughout the country. The author makes it clear that no matter what Grant's beliefs and intentions, his devotion to the U.S. was complete and total.



## Part 4, Chapters 1-7

### Part 4, Chapters 1-7 Summary and Analysis

Chapter one, "False Heroic: Hitler as Supreme Commander", begins with Hitler's own thoughts on his part in World War II and as Commander of the Third Reich. The author says, "Few today think of Hitler as a soldier. But it was as a soldier, quite as much as a politician or an artist - the strangest of his delusions - that he thought of himself" (p. 235).

Hitler's final words echoed the same things he had said at the onset of WWII in 1939, that he would ask no more of the German man than he would give of himself. According to the text, Hitler finished his statement, put on his military coat, put his service revolver in his mouth and pulled the trigger.

Although Hitler would serve five and a half years as high commander, it was not the man's first foray into the military arena. Hitler had served as a frontkämpfer, a front fighter, in World War I, wherein he was wounded three times. Overall, Hitler was considered to be a good and dedicated soldier.

Keegan points out that there are some factors overlooked or glossed over by many historians and biographers regarding Hitler's early war experiences. The regiment in which Hitler served was filled with the type of people Hitler longed to be with but whose circle he had not once been admitted into. Hitler was by all accounts a lower middle class man who was frustrated, unfulfilled and resentful with his life and its circumstances.

Keegan details Hitler's early years in the Bavarian regiment where he would receive his military training.

Chapter two, "War and Hitler's World", explains how western civilization considered WWI as "the" war due to its impact on European culture and history as well as the mystery surrounding the war itself. Keegan details the progression of war and what is referred to as the military population explosion, noting the size of the armies of various countries.

Chapter two includes Hitler's experiences during WWI, including the only surviving letter in which Hitler recounts an attack involving the 16th Bavarian Reserve in an attack at Ypres in 1914.

Throughout those years, Hitler began to learn about war, its underpinnings, meaning, causes and effects. In a nutshell, Hitler saw it as survival of the fittest. WWII would become Hitler's re-creation of WWI; only in this war, Germany would arise victorious.



Chapter three, "The War Hitler Made", begins by reminding historians and amnesiacs that Germany came very close to victory in WWI. It was surely this fact that prompted Hitler to express his belief that Germany could rise if only given a second chance.

The Blitzkrieg was not of Hitler's invention, nor was the entire plan to destroy Poland before the English and French could intervene. Poland was simply ill-equipped and appeared to Hitler to be a kind of sitting duck. Russia failed to back up Poland, thereby sealing the country's fate.

The author includes background information regarding the conception and impetus of Hitler's war plan, to which the author compares the other leaders mentioned in the book. As with the other leaders, one must wonder how Hitler related to his soldiers.

Chapter four, "Hitler's Soldiers", begins with Keegan making a brief but brilliant summation of Hitler's relationship with his soldiers, saying, "The essence of Hitler's achievement of dominance over the German army may be briefly stated: finding it humbled and diminished, he gave it back its strength and pride, but he took from it in compensation, though in scarcely perceptible installments, its independence and autonomy and so eventually its dignity and conscience" (p. 269).

Chapter five, "Hitler's Headquarters", Keegan dispels the myth of Hitler's grand lodgings during the war. Although Hitler erected more than twelve wartime lodgings, he occupied none of the sometimes opulent spaces. In fact, Hitler spent much of his time in bleak surroundings and in mosquito-infested forests. It was a far cry from the wartime lodgings of Alexander the Great and others.

Chapter six, "Hitler in Command", may be the most important chapter in the text, considering the topic of the book. Hitler was one of the most commanding leaders of his or any other time. What was it about Hitler that drew in so many people and persuaded them to be loyal unto death?

Hitler was well known for adopting the axiom of Clausewitz, the military historian and author of the 1812 essay titled, "Principles of War". Unfortunately, Hitler, like many others, misunderstood the axiom. Hitler taunted his generals' ignorance of the Clausewitz work, paraphrasing that an army should first destroy his enemies in the field and then occupy their capital. The mistake was that Clausewitz focused on the battlefield and saw the taking of the capital as merely secondary. Hitler did not.

Keegan outlines Hitler's strategies and includes pertinent information from various sources, including notes from a conference in Rastenburg.

Chapter seven, "Hitler and the Theatre of Leadership", discusses Hitler's lack of belief that he would be able to command loyalty until death from the inner sanctum at the Forbidden City. By this time, assassination attempts had been made on Hitler's life, a fact that increased security but would also limit Hitler's effectiveness by staying hidden away. It was not terrible to Hitler, however, since he was fascinated by the machine that was the Catholic Church. As a replacement for his presence, Hitler engaged in

propaganda, another machine that could fascinate and hold the people loyal to their fuhrer.

The chapter and section ends by discussing Hitler's insomnia and love of food and wine. Hitler began to suffer some physical consequences by 1944, perhaps spurred by physical exhaustion and as one might expect, internalizing the hardships of his people and the expected loss of the war.

## Part 5

### Part 5 Summary and Analysis

Chapter 5, "Post Heroic: Command in the Nuclear World", is a summation of the book as well as a look into the future of warfare and its progression.

Keegan covers the post heroic standard by investigating the Imperatives of Kinship, Prescription, Sanction, Action, and Example as well as the Validation of Nuclear Authority.

Each leader's motives and tactics are re-examined as are their priorities. Keegan says, "For much of man's known past, the heroic ethic, in some guise or other has characterized the style of government by which he has conducted his affairs in most quarters of the globe" (p. 350).

Keegan continues to make comparisons between the leaders mentioned as well as other great world leaders and those to come.

Keegan's final point is brilliant. Unlike those leaders who took it upon themselves to be heroic, or unheroic as the case may be, the leader in the nuclear age should be anything but. No longer is it desirable or even acceptable for a leader to storm in and take command of a situation without the consideration and approval - or at least acceptance - of his people. After all, in a nuclear age, the consequences are much greater and in many cases, permanent.



# Characters

## Alexander the Great

Alexander the Great (356 BC - 323 BC) was the eldest son of King Philip II of Macedon and his wife, Olympias. Physically speaking, Alexander was handsome and supremely self-confident. He was known as being headstrong and impatiently boyish, yet exuded grace and intelligence as well as the ability to be a great warrior.

Philip II had a great effect on Alexander and his methods as a soldier and commander. Throughout Alexander's childhood, the boy was well educated in many areas suitable to a young royal. Alexander's education included learning to sing and play the lyre, hunt and ride and how to debate, and to appreciate epic poetry, mostly as it related to Homer.

The author states that Alexander was deeply affected by two things during his childhood - his love of Homer's epic poetry and the extreme and eccentric beliefs of Olympias. Alexander also developed a reverence for Hercules, the great Greek god of strength, while Olympias worshipped Dionysus.

At age sixteen, Alexander went to war under Philip's command for the first time. At age eighteen, Alexander received a major at Chaeronea where he would prove himself as a commander and worthy heir to the throne.

Over a period of fourteen years, Alexander would continue to impress his countrymen and subordinates with cunning military prowess and conquering more lands than any military leader before during or since his short lived career. While all of the military leaders mentioned in the book made great strides and accomplishments throughout their careers, none can match Alexander the Great.

Alexander may be best known for being ruthless and without fear in addition to his sense of the dramatic and ability to manipulate his army. Many aspects of modern warfare were created out of tactics and conquests from Alexander's arsenal.

## Adolph Hitler

Adolph Hitler (1889-1945) was a mad genius of Austrian heritage who promoted and executed the great holocaust that tore apart Europe and was responsible for the deaths of six million Jews during World War II.

Hitler had an interesting view of himself as being a renaissance man, able to conquer the world. The author states: "Few today think of Hitler as a soldier. But it was as a soldier, quite as much as a politician or an artist - the strangest of his delusions - that he thought of himself" (p. 235).



Many people do not pick up on the irony of Hitler's concept of the master race - the German blond haired and blue eyed male. Hitler may have lived in Germany, but he was not technically German, nor did he have blond hair or blue eyes.

Hitler's success is often attributed to a combination of stellar skills as an orator and fearmonger. Hitler spurred fanatical loyalty from people in all walks of life, despite their socioeconomic status or level of education.

Hitler will forever be linked to the horror of concentration camps and the SS. Some conspiracy theorists believe that Hitler escaped persecution for his crimes and lived out the balance of his life on an island, while others either mourned or celebrated Hitler's death in 1945.

## **Philip II of Macedon**

Philip II of Macedon was Alexander the Great's father and king of Macedonia. Known as a great warrior, Philip taught Alexander the ways of a master soldier and the tactics necessary to take over Persia, Alexander's greatest conquest.

## **Ulysses S. Grant**

Ulysses S. Grant served during the Civil War as the General in Chief of the Union Army before becoming the eighteenth president of the United States.

## **William Tecumseh Sherman**

William Tecumseh Sherman was a war hero during the Civil War, and a friend and colleague of U.S. Grant.

## **Abraham Lincoln**

Abraham Lincoln was the sixteenth president of the United States and a man who admired Grant's ability to fight.

## **Carl von Clausewitz**

Carl von Clausewitz was a German military historian and author of the 1812 essay titled, "Principles of War", the doctrine in which Hitler based his wartime principles.

## **Olympias of Macedon**

Olympias of Macedon was Alexander the Great's mother, a solid influence on the boy and his personality as a leader.



## **Arthur Wellesley Wellington**

Arthur Wellesley Wellington was the commander in chief of the army that defeated Napoleon at Waterloo. Wellington was bestowed with many high honors for his bravery and military achievements, and was eventually named Prime Minister of Britain.

## **John Pemberton**

John Pemberton was a Confederate general during the Civil War. Pemberton surrendered to Grant at Vicksburg.





# Objects/Places

## Europe

Hitler's campaign to take over Europe and essentially the world, began in Germany. The soldier planned to infiltrate certain European countries to build a super master race and an undefeatable army.

Hitler had many advantages in Europe in the 1930s and 1940s. News was relatively scarce, particularly by today's standards. What we know now in minutes may have taken weeks to learn during World War II. The media was also controlled more heavily than today. Hitler was also highly secretive with his plans, so much so that many of the towns and cities that housed Hitler's work and concentration camps were completely unaware of what was happening in their own back yards. When it was revealed to the regions what Hitler was doing, it was often too late to stop the fúhrer, and any attempts to stop the Nazis and their heinous plans failed miserably.

Although the crux of Hitler's activity took place in Germany and surrounding areas, many other countries were deeply affected by the man's actions, including Austria, Switzerland, Russia, and Poland.

The stories about various European countries and their involvement in WWI, on either side, were often exaggerated or just plain untrue.

Hitler's hold on Europe officially came to an end in 1945, although the effects of the fúhrer's reign are still felt throughout the world today.

## United States

The United States is the setting for the conquests and military experiences of Ulysses S. Grant. The year was 1862.

## Macedon

Macedon was the home to Philip II and Alexander the Great. Macedon would soon become the focus of the world as Alexander conquered Persia.

## Persia

Persia was the largest and most powerful kingdom in Alexander the Great's day. Alexander managed to defeat the Emperor Darius and overtake the great region for his own.



## **Berlin, Germany**

Berlin, Germany was the home base for Adolph Hitler and the Third Reich during World War II.

## **West Point**

West Point is a world renowned military academy attended by U.S. Grant and many other notable figures. It is located in New York.

## **Waterloo**

Waterloo is the site at which Wellington defeated Napoleon and the French Army during a four day period in June of 1815.

## **The Battle of Salamanca**

The Battle of Salamanca was a conflict between the British army, led by Wellington, and the French. It was part of the Peninsular war and occurred in July 1812.

## **The Battle of Issus**

The Battle of Issus took place in 333 BC. The battle was won when Alexander the Great defeated Darius of Persia in the second of three battles to rule Persia.

## **Fort Sumter**

Fort Sumter, located in South Carolina, was considered to be the first major target in the beginning of the Civil War.



# Themes

## Loyalty

As a commander, one of the most important things to have in an army is loyalty, that of officers and subordinates down to the last private, as well as the loyalty of the people one serves.

Keegan examines loyalty throughout history as it applies to military history. Alexander demanded and received loyalty through being benevolent and melodramatic enough to create a wave of guilt over his people. Wellington had some difficulty with loyalty, perhaps due to his perfectionism and lack of what he deemed to be qualified soldiers. Still, those who were most loyal to Wellington were surely part of the reason the British duke was able to be so successful in his conquests.

U.S. Grant had great problems with loyalty at Shiloh when nearly one-fifth of the army deserted him in the face of sure defeat. Eventually, Grant would succeed in having loyal followers, as the Union Army proved that it could face up to the Confederates.

One of the most amazing examples of loyalty regards Hitler and his quest to create a master race and bring Germany to the forefront of the civilized world. Hitler loyalists were fanatical in their commitment to their fuhrer. When it seemed that Hitler may begin to lose loyalty as a result of being hidden away in the Forbidden City, Hitler engaged in propaganda, a machine that could fascinate and hold the people loyal to their fuhrer.

Hitler's success is often attributed to a combination of stellar skills as an orator and fear monger. Hitler spurred fanatical loyalty from people in all walks of life, despite their socioeconomic status or level of education.

## Victory

By far the main reason to go into any battle is to achieve victory. Alexander got his first real taste of victory shortly after going into battle with Philip II at age sixteen. At age eighteen, Alexander received his first solo major victory at Chaeronea, where he would prove himself as a commander and worthy heir to the throne. Alexander's largest victory by far was over Darius III of Persia, wherein Alexander gained the right to the most powerful kingdom in the world at the time.

Keegan shares Wellington's strategy for victory. There are early and late Wellington methods as mentioned throughout the book, however, the crux remains the same. Wellington never left any detail that could affect the outcome of the battle to any subordinate, no matter how talented or trustworthy. Tactical moves and topography were married to present the best possible scenario for victory.



It was Grant's victory at Shiloh that may well have saved the union from sure defeat in the Civil War.

Germany's near victory in WWI spurred Hitler to believe that the country could rise again. That notion, along with the need to command and share his ideals with the world, prompted Hitler to seek victory over his foes in Europe and the world.

## **Military Training and Command**

Although the leaders covered in the book have as many differences as similarities, the one thing they all have in common was the duty of being a commander of one or more armies. Each may have had a different approach to the way troops and warfare should be treated and conquered, but it is clear that each man had a definite vision and the fortitude to carry it through.

It is made clear that one does not have to have formal military education to be a great leader. Alexander was trained by his father but lacked formal military training. Grant went to West Point for military training, but it seemed to leave little impact on his work as a soldier or commander. Neither Wellington nor Hitler had formal military training, although it is clear that the lack of higher education was a regret of Wellington's until the day he died. Rather, Wellington and Hitler both learned their skills firsthand when they entered the military. Wellington gained most of his skill while fighting in India. Hitler gained his knowledge of war while fighting with the 16th Bavarian Regiment in WWI.

One must also consider the vast time differences in the commands of these leaders, from 330 BC up to 1945. The tactics and technology certainly changed drastically, but each of these leaders proves that it is more of a mindset, a strategy, and a psychology that wins the wars.

# Style

## Perspective

Sir John Keegan (1934 - ) is a British military historian, lecturer, writer for the National Review Online, and Defence Correspondent and Defence Editor for the Daily Telegraph. Keegan is best known for his comprehensive works on worldwide military history, with particular focus on military figures and battles from fourteenth through twenty-first centuries. In addition to dissecting the technical aspects of warfare, Keegan is also known for uncovering the psychology used in battle. As irony would have it, Keegan was too young to serve in WWII and would have been deemed ineligible anyway due to a bout with tuberculosis as a child.

Keegan has published many books on military history including, *Mask of Command*, *Face of Battle*, *The Second World War*, *A History of Warfare*, *Fields of Battle: The Wars for North America*, *Winston Churchill*, *Intelligence in War: Knowledge of the Enemy from Napoleon to Al-Qaeda*, and most recently, *The American Civil War*. Keegan also co-wrote a BBC documentary titled *Soldiers: A History of Men in Battle*.

In addition to Keegan's great knowledge on the topic of war, the author also served as a lecturer of Military History at the Royal Military Academy, a training facility for British officers, a post Keegan held twenty-six years.

## Tone

The tone used in *Mask of Command* by John Keegan is objective in nature. Sir John Keegan (1934 - ) is a British military historian, lecturer, writer for the National Review Online, and Defence Correspondent and Defence Editor for the Daily Telegraph. Throughout the years, Keegan has devoted himself to writing about a wide variety of military heroes and battles from an academician's point of view. Keegan also manages to impart information that interests the non-academic reader.

*Mask of Command* features four of the most interesting military leaders, at least from a historical point of view. The time periods are extreme, beginning with Alexander the Great in 356 BC to the 1930s and 1940s during which Adolph Hitler attempted to take over the world.

In addition to dissecting the technical aspects of warfare, Keegan is also known for uncovering the psychology used in battle. Although it would be easy to insert one's own opinion on any of the numerous topics, Keegan manages to stick to the facts and present the information as objectively as possible, even when there are hints of informed opinion available to the reader.



## Structure

Mask of Command by John Keegan is a work of non-fiction. It is comprised of 351 pages, separated into five parts.

The first part, "Alexander the Great and Heroic Leadership", is comprised of seventy-eight pages and broken down into eleven chapters. The shortest chapter is one page in length; the longest chapter is twenty-seven pages in length; the average number of pages per chapter is eight.

The second part, "Wellington the Anti-Hero", is comprised of seventy-one pages and broken down into nine chapters. The shortest chapter is two pages in length; the longest chapter is thirteen pages in length; the average number of pages per chapter is eight.

The third part, "Grant and Unheroic Leadership", is comprised of seventy pages and broken down into eight chapters. The shortest chapter is four pages in length; the longest chapter is twenty-one pages in length; the average number of pages per chapter is nine.

The fourth part, "False Heroic, Hitler as Supreme Commander", is comprised of seventy-five pages and broken down into seven chapters. The shortest chapter is seven pages in length; the longest chapter is eighteen pages in length; the average number of pages per chapter is eleven.

The fifth part, "Conclusion: Post-Heroic: Command in the Nuclear World", is comprised of forty-one pages and broken down into seven chapters. The shortest chapter is three pages in length; the longest chapter is thirteen pages in length; the average number of pages per chapter is six.

Also included in the book are twenty-eight illustration plates and seven maps.



## Quotes

"It was unsurprising, therefore, that Philip should, as Alexander reached puberty, think it right to invest his upbringing with balance and rationality."

Part 1, Chap. 2, p. 18

"What part Alexander may have had in his father's assassination divides all who are fascinated by his character to this day."

Part 1, Chap. 3, p. 21

"This bloody settling of accounts is shocking to modern susceptibilities."

Part 1, Chap. 2, pp. 21-22

"While they crawled forward, the headlong onset of the French cavalry columns might throw his careful defence into ruins and give the battle to Napoleon."

Part 2, Chap. 1, p. 99

"What had prepared this extraordinary man for the mental, moral and physical ordeal of the four days of Waterloo - days at left those who had merely fought, without any of the strain of command, Wellington had borne and perhaps less of the danger, shocked into pallor and silence by the horrors of the slaughter, drugged by fatigue and physically deafened by the close range discharge of musketry?"

Part 2, Chap. 2, p. 103

"He rose to it as if his whole life had been a preparation for nothing else."

Part 2, Chap. 2, p. 105

"No wonder that Wellington, while despising them for shirking, was only too happy to accept from officers like these their excuse to quit for home comforts."

Part 2, Chap. 5, p. 129

"Wellington, besides suffering the attack of guilt connected with the responsibility for casualties, had been in the saddle for twelve hours continuously, had been in extreme danger of his life, had actually crossed swords with the enemy (perhaps the first of only two occasions he did so in his career), had eaten little or nothing, and had been deluged by gunfire noise at a range of 500 to 50 yards for long periods."

Part 2, Chap. 8, p. 147

"In the early light of a spring morning during the presidency of Abraham Lincoln, a small man on a large horse was galloping through the dense woodland beside the Tennessee River that went inland from the western shore."

Part 3, Chap. 1, p. 164



"The outcome, at any rate, is unarguable."  
Part 3, Chap. 2, p. 171

"A Democrat and populist to his fingertips, he was possessed by the reality of American civilization and the difference between it and that of the Old World."  
Part 3, Chap. 3, p. 182

"Drill, the fundamental of success in gunpowder battle, had so little permeated United States that Grant himself was uncertain of his recollection of the lessons taught at West Point."  
Part 3, Chap. 4, p. 188

"Few today think of Hitler as a soldier. But it was as a soldier, quite as much as a politician or an artist - the strangest of his delusions - that he thought of himself."  
Part 3, Chap. 1, p. 235





## Topics for Discussion

Compare and contrast the four main military figures: Alexander, Wellington, Grant, and Hitler. What are the main similarities? What could each man have learned from the others? Who was the most successful?

Out of all the campaigns mentioned, which do you think was the most successful? Why? What could have made the other campaigns equally if not more successful? What had more to do with the success of the battle, the leadership or extenuating circumstances?

Of the four men, which had the most controversial history? Which had the most effective military career? How would that particular figure fit into today's society? What kind of campaign might that person attempt to operate in a modern world? Would he be successful? Explain.

Hitler thought of himself as a soldier as well as an artistic genius. Why does the author refer to the artistic part as being one of Hitler's most interesting delusions? Do you think Hitler was artistically talented? How so? In what areas do you think that Hitler was the most delusional?

Do you think Alexander was involved in his father's death? If so, why would Alexander want to take his father's life? What was involved - politics, money, fame, family dissension? If it wasn't Alexander, who might have been involved in the murder? To what end?

Why do you think Wellington allowed himself to be in the middle of danger while many other leaders chose to "lead" from the back of the line on the battlefield? Did the action spur worry or admiration among the fellow soldiers?

What do you think caused Grant to be so sure of the victory at Shiloh when all seemed lost? What caused Sherman to immediately rethink his suggestions to surrender? How would you have felt in that situation?

Discuss Keegan's view on heroic leadership in the nuclear age. Do you agree that the tactics of the leaders of history would fail in today's world? Explain.