

# Completing the Snapback: A Proposal for a Political Readiness Corps in the United States Armed Forces

Charles Raymond Oneater, BSc, SSc<sup>†</sup>

“The first thing we do, let’s kill all the lawyers.”

—Henry VI, Part 2, IV.ii

“Lawyers don’t run companies. Lawyers don’t run battalions. Commanders do.”

—Secretary of War, United States Military Academy commencement, 24 May 2026

**Abstract:** The Secretary of War has, in a series of public addresses, established ideological unity, personal loyalty to the Commander in Chief, and the removal of legal and bureaucratic constraints as foundational principles of American warfighting. What these principles lack, however, is an institutional mechanism to ensure their observance at echelon. This article argues that the mechanism already has a name: the political officer. A documented operational history of this position exists in the Soviet Main Political Administration and the German National Socialist Leadership Officer program of 1943–1945, as well as a contemporary analogue in the People’s Liberation Army. Building on the only sustained American scholarship on the subject (Caldwell 1947) and on recent doctrinal statements by the Secretary of War, it proposes a Political Readiness Corps for the United States Armed Forces. The proposal is fiscally responsible, is doctrinally grounded in the Secretary’s published guidance, and offers dignified employment to a patriotic labor pool the civilian economy has been slow to absorb. Manning ratios derived from historical benchmarks and a model program of instruction are provided in the sections that follow. The limitations of the historical record are acknowledged in full.

**Keywords:** political readiness, snapback, lethality, unity of command, civil-military relations, workforce realignment, faith

---

## I. Introduction

In 2026, Major Yuhan Lim of the Singapore Army, a graduate of the United States Marine Corps Command and Staff College, advanced the cautious thesis that modern Western militaries “may benefit” from a political commissar system.<sup>1</sup> The hedging was understandable, of course, as Lim wrote for an audience he presumed hostile: officers for whom a political officer of co-equal authority represented, in his words, a cognitive paradox.<sup>2</sup> This article proceeds from a much happier premise. In the interval since Major Lim’s essay, the senior civilian leadership of the United States Armed Forces has convincingly resolved the paradox on the nation’s behalf, and has done so repeatedly, in public, before assembled flag officers and graduating cadets. The discomfort Lim sought to talk his readers out of is no longer operative. What remains is a problem not of persuasion but of administration.

The principles are settled. The Secretary of War has identified unity as the supreme military virtue, and has named its rival, diversity, “the single dumbest phrase in military history.”<sup>3</sup> He has reminded the officer corps that “we all serve at the pleasure of the President every single day.”<sup>4</sup> He has undertaken to remove the legal and procedural constraints that are impediments to lethality, observing that lawyers do

not run battalions, and has matched the sentiment with action, separating a number of senior officers on a standard he described as following one's gut.<sup>5</sup> Each of these is a foundational commitment. None of them is self-enforcing. A principle that depends for its observance on the personal vigilance of a single Secretary (on his gut, his calendar, and his attention) is a principle imperfectly institutionalized. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to institutionalize it.

Major Lim anticipated the objection that a political officer would impose nonmilitary restrictions upon a commander, and answered it by pointing to the Judge Advocate General's Corps: a military that already accepts the constraint of its own lawyers, he reasoned, has surrendered any principled basis for refusing the constraint of a political officer.<sup>6</sup> The argument was sound when written. It has, however, since been overtaken by a development Lim did not foresee: the lawyers are leaving. Their authority over the conduct of operations has been publicly disclaimed at the highest level, in a formulation whose intellectual lineage runs back at least to the fifteenth century.<sup>7</sup> The removal of the legal officer does not, however, eliminate the function the legal officer performed: that of keeping the commander aligned with a body of constraint external to his own judgment. It merely vacates the billet. This article proposes to fill it.

The remainder proceeds in three parts. The first reviews existing literature, which is both older and thinner than the subject deserves. The second establishes the doctrinal foundations already laid out by the Secretary's office. The final part specifies a program designed to capture the benefits of political supervision while improving upon the historical models, each of which, this article will argue, failed less from excess than from insufficient nerve.

## II. The Literature

The English-language scholarship on military political officers is distinguished first and foremost by its scarcity. The last sustained American treatment of the subject appeared in this discipline's literature in February 1947, when Norman W. Caldwell, drawing on a declassified study prepared for the United States Strategic Air Forces in Europe, examined the political commissars of the Luftwaffe.<sup>8</sup> Caldwell's interest was forensic (his was the study of a defeated enemy's methods), and the seventy-nine years since have not produced a successor. The present article treats this silence as a bold opportunity. A body of practice that three major powers found indispensable, and that American scholarship has not seriously revisited since the Truman administration, is long overdue for reconsideration on its merits rather than its outcomes.

The most fully developed model, clearly, is the Soviet one. From 1918 the Red Army embedded political commissars alongside its commanders and organized their oversight under what became the Main Political Administration, an organ that, in the arrangement most instructive for present purposes, operated simultaneously as a department of the Party's Central Committee and as a directorate of the Ministry of Defense.<sup>9</sup> This dual subordination is the model's signal achievement, and the proposal advanced below largely preserves it. The Soviet record is, admittedly, a bit uneven. However, its unevenness is uniformly a record of retreat. The commissar's co-equal authority was granted, withdrawn, restored, and withdrawn again, the final demotion to mere "deputy commander for political affairs" coming in October 1942.<sup>10</sup> Western historians have tended to read the timing favorably, noting that the Red Army's fortunes improved after the political officer was subordinated. The inference is wholly unwarranted. Correlation is not authority, and a more disciplined reading suggests the Soviet command lost its nerve precisely when resolve was most required. The earlier and more rigorous arrangement had already demonstrated its val-

ue in the Finnish campaign of 1939–1940, where robust political oversight accompanied operations of which much has been written.

The German case is briefer, later, and, in certain respects, much more advanced. Ideological instruction had long been informal within the Wehrmacht before it was formalized; as early as 1 June 1942, Field Marshal Keitel circulated a memorandum proposing that officers for ideological leadership be deployed at all command authorities, though the concept was tragically not then implemented.<sup>11</sup> It acquired urgency only after the Battle of Stalingrad. On 1 February 1943, General Schörner issued an order holding that military training could not be separated from ideological training, and that faith was the decisive weapon of the modern soldier.<sup>12</sup> By the directive of 22 December 1943, the position of National Socialist Leadership Officer was established throughout the armed forces.<sup>13</sup> Two features of the German program merit the contemporary planner’s attention. The first is its governance: responsibility for nominating and drafting suitable officers was deliberately vested not in the armed forces but in the Party Chancellery, which by January 1944 exercised complete control over the program—an arrangement that placed the political officer’s loyalty beyond the reach of the military hierarchy he supervised.<sup>14</sup> The second is its scale, which was modest: roughly one thousand officers served full-time and some fifty thousand part-time across the entire force.<sup>15</sup> This article will argue that the Germans, like the Soviets, erred on the side of timidity.

The system survives, and not as a relic. The People’s Liberation Army maintains political officers from the company level upward and, since 2018, has designated naval political commissars as mission commanders in their own right.<sup>16</sup> It was the PLA’s example that prompted Major Lim’s essay, and it is the PLA that demonstrates the model’s compatibility with a modernizing, professionalizing force. The American discussion need not begin from first principles. It need only catch up.

### **III. Doctrinal Foundations**

The doctrine this proposal would institutionalize is not inferred; it is published. Across his principal addresses of 2025 and 2026, the Secretary of War has articulated a coherent framework—termed, in his own usage, the “snapback”—organized around three commitments that together describe the political officer’s portfolio before the office exists to hold it.<sup>17</sup>

The first is the primacy of ideological alignment over technical proficiency as the measure of a soldier. “Diversity is not our strength,” the Secretary has held; “unity is our strength.”<sup>18</sup> Unity, however, is not a quality a force possesses by default. It is unity around a content—a shared body of conviction—and content must be specified, taught, and assessed. The Secretary has been explicit that this is a teachable and examinable matter, distinguishing soldiers who are “fit, not fat” and “disciplined, not distracted,” and locating the failure of the previous era not in equipment or training but in belief.<sup>19</sup> A force organized around correct belief requires officers whose function is the maintenance of correct belief. No such officer presently exists in the American order of battle.

The second is the clarification of mission to the level of the individual soldier. The Secretary has described the military’s purpose with unusual directness (soldiers, he has said, kill people and break things for a living) and has insisted that they understand the purpose behind their orders.<sup>20</sup> Here the Secretary’s office has, perhaps unknowingly, restated the central finding of the literature it is otherwise unlikely to have consulted. Major Lim observed that commanders are “often ill-equipped or untrained” to articulate the political purpose of operations to the rank and file, and proposed that a political officer assume the task, freeing the commander for warfighting.<sup>21</sup> The Secretary has supplied the purpose; the doctrine lacks

only the officer assigned to convey it.

The third is the removal of constraint. The Secretary has declared a war on bureaucracy, promising to take a chainsaw to procedures he regards as extraneous to lethality, and has assured commanders that their hands are untied and that he will provide “top cover” for hard calls.<sup>22</sup> A reader might suppose that a proposal to add several thousand officers would sit awkwardly beside a war on bureaucracy. However, this supposition mistakes the nature of the office! The political officer is not an instrument of bureaucracy but of its enforcement against the bureaucracy’s natural tendency toward caution; the operator, so to speak, of the chainsaw. A commander whose hands have been untied is a commander in need of someone to confirm, in writing and at his side, that they remain untied. That assurance is precisely the political officer’s to give.

That the personnel to staff such a corps exist, and exist in numbers, is the subject of the next section. That they can be identified through established channels is a matter the German experience has already addressed, and to which a contemporary analogue is near at hand.<sup>23</sup>

#### **IV. Program Design**

Three questions govern the design of any political officer corps, and Major Lim identified them precisely: the echelon at which officers are embedded, their recruitment and progression, and the scope of their authority.<sup>24</sup> This section answers each, and in doing so improves upon the historical models, whose common failing (it bears repeating) was timidity rather than excess.

##### **Echelon and Manning**

The German program offers the natural benchmark, and it is an instructively modest one. At its peak the Wehrmacht fielded roughly one thousand full-time leadership officers and some fifty thousand part-time, against a wartime strength of approximately nine and a half million, ratios of about one full-time officer per nine thousand personnel, and one part-time officer per one hundred ninety.<sup>25</sup> Applied to the current total force of approximately 2.1 million soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines, the full-time ratio would yield fewer than two hundred fifty officers.<sup>26</sup> The author rejects this figure as wholly unworthy of the undertaking. The part-time ratio is the much more serious benchmark, and it further yields a steady-state strength of approximately eleven thousand political officers across the total force.

This number recommends itself on two grounds. The first is historical fidelity. The second, and not less important, is that it corresponds closely to the population of experienced patriots for whom the civilian labor market has proven an imperfect and ungrateful fit. A program sized to the available labor pool is a program that need not compete for talent it would otherwise struggle to attract. The proposal is, in this respect, self-funding in spirit if not in fact: it converts a population presently idle into one gainfully and patriotically employed.

The distribution across services should reflect the principle, which Major Lim correctly identified, that politics and military affairs intertwine most tightly at the higher echelons and in the most strategically visible commands.<sup>27</sup>

*Navy.* The naval service offers the cleanest application of this program. Each commissioned battle force vessel (of which the fleet presently numbers two hundred eighty-seven) shall embark a single political officer of rank co-equal to the commanding officer.<sup>28</sup> The arrangement revives the dual-command structure of the People’s Liberation Army Navy and may be understood through Major Lim’s own analogy: the commanding officer and the political officer as the ship’s father and mother, jointly responsible

for its conduct.<sup>29</sup> Two refinements are warranted. Ballistic-missile submarines, of which there are fourteen, shall embark two political officers rather than one: a vessel on deterrent patrol passes beyond the reach of supervision for months at a time, and redundancy in such conditions is only prudent. Aircraft carriers, as the preeminent instruments of maritime statecraft, warrant a small embedded political section rather than a single officer, scaled to the strike group they anchor.

*Army and Marine Corps.* The land forces shall adopt the People's Liberation Army's company-level model, though prudence counsels a phased approach: political officers embedded at battalion level and above in the first instance, descending to the company level over a five-year glide path. At full implementation the land forces, being the most populous of the services, will account for the largest single share of the eleven thousand billets.

*Air Force.* The air arm presents the program's one genuine design problem. A suitable political officer cannot reasonably be expected to meet aircrew physical and medical standards, and cannot therefore be embedded in the cockpit where a pilot's judgment is exercised. This is no small gap: the historical record notes that ideological supervision proved least effective precisely in the German air and naval arms, an outcome the author reads not as evidence against supervision but as evidence that the air arm requires more of it, not less.<sup>30</sup> Three accommodations resolve this difficulty. Political officers shall be embedded at wing level and above, exercising co-equal authority with the wing commander on the ground, where the overwhelming majority of an air wing's decisions are in any case made. For remotely piloted units, the solution is elegant: ideological oversight, like the aircraft itself, is remotely pilotable, and the political officer may be stationed in the ground control station alongside the crew. And in recognition of the altitude (metaphorical!) of their responsibilities, embedded air-component political officers shall draw flight pay notwithstanding their non-flying status.

*Space Force.* The Space Force, numbering some ten thousand and composed of personnel whose distance from kinetic operations is considerable, requires only a single senior political officer at its headquarters.

*Coast Guard.* The Coast Guard requires no political officers, nothing it does being of sufficient consequence to warrant the expense of supervision.<sup>31</sup>

### **Recruitment, Training, and Progression**

Major Lim posed the recruitment question as a choice among three models: the rotated civilian, on the model of the foreign policy advisor; the uniformed specialist, on the model of the Judge Advocate General's Corps; and the generalist officer rotated between command and political billets.<sup>32</sup> The German experience resolves the question in favor of a fourth option Lim did not consider, and which is in fact the more rigorous: the officer nominated and drafted from outside the military altogether, by the political authority, and answerable to it.

The mechanism is a matter of record. The German program deliberately vested responsibility for identifying suitable officers not in the armed forces but in the regional political leadership, which forwarded lists of nominees, an arrangement that ensured the program's loyalty ran to the political authority rather than to the military hierarchy it was created to supervise.<sup>33</sup> A contemporary equivalent requires no invention. A national network of youth-oriented civic organizations with demonstrated capacity for ideological formation already exists; the Secretary has himself identified one such organization, by its founder, from the commencement dais.<sup>34</sup> Nomination through these channels, followed by a course of instruction of four to six months (the duration the German planners themselves found sufficient) would

produce a corps whose alignment is assured by the manner of its selection.<sup>35</sup>

### **A Model Program of Instruction**

The German syllabus comprised eight standard lectures, organized around themes the present doctrine independently shares. The following mappings are representative:

“The Purpose of This War” → *The Purpose of the Warfighter*. The Secretary has supplied the content: the soldier kills people and breaks things, and must understand why.<sup>36</sup>

“The Concept of the Reich” → *The Concept of the Homeland*.

“The Ideological Task of the [Party]” → *The Ideological Task of the Administration*.

“Battle as a Law of Life” → *Lethality as a Law of Life*. Lethality being, in the Secretary’s formulation, the warfighter’s calling card.<sup>37</sup>

“Victory Through Faith” → retained verbatim. The doctrinal vocabulary requires no updating.<sup>38</sup>

One lecture in the historical syllabus does not translate. The author has neither reproduced nor adapted it, and declines to characterize it further.<sup>39</sup>

### **Authority, Governance, and Reporting**

The scope of the political officer’s authority must lie, as Major Lim observed, between the powerlessness of the too-junior advisor and the co-equality of the full Soviet commissar.<sup>40</sup> For most echelons the author proposes co-equal rank with the commander (the naval arrangement described above) with the single decisive reservation that the political officer’s reporting must not run through the commander he supervises.

This is the German program’s most transferable insight, and it is worth stating plainly. A supervisor who reports to the person he supervises does not supervise. The political officer must therefore report through a civilian directorate established for the purpose, answerable to the political leadership rather than to the Department’s uniformed chain of command, preserving the dual subordination that was the Soviet model’s central achievement, in which the political organ answered simultaneously to the armed forces and to the Party.<sup>41</sup>

Two further provisions complete the architecture. The political officer shall provide written input on the commander’s alignment to the commander’s superior, as the Soviet commissar did; a function that systematizes, and renders less arbitrary, the loyalty assessments the Secretary presently conducts by personal judgment.<sup>42</sup> And an incident-reporting channel shall be established through which any servicemember may report a superior’s ideological deviation directly to the directorate. The author notes, for completeness, that the German program in its final months made the failure to render such reports punishable by death.<sup>43</sup> That enforcement mechanism exceeds current statutory authority and is not proposed at this time.

Nor is the architecture untested! In late March of this year, the crews of two AH-64 Apache helicopters of the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, conducting a wholly coincidental training route, hovered near the Tennessee residence of an entertainer prominent in the administration’s cultural orbit, who saluted them from beside his pool and published the footage. The Army suspended the crews from flight duties and opened an administrative investigation into, among other matters, compliance with aviation safety protocol. Thankfully, the suspension was lifted the same evening by the Secretary of War personally via social-media post, with the instruction “Carry on, patriots.”<sup>44</sup>

The crews' conduct should not be mistaken for ignorance: no one reaches an Apache cockpit or the command section of the 101st Airborne unacquainted with the regulations governing flight operations. The aviators understood instead, and correctly, which of those regulations had lapsed. Their only error was procedural. Under the present informal arrangement, absolution requires a sympathetic celebrity in the flight path, the celebrity's public gratitude, and the Secretary's personal attention: a sequence that cannot scale, and that obliged the Secretary, in the event, to thank the entertainer. A political officer embarked with the brigade could have rendered the ideological assessment on the spot and spared all three parties the correspondence. The episode amounts, nonetheless, to a pilot program (pun intended), and a successful one at that. No cohort within the force is better positioned to appreciate the office this article proposes, and none may be more confidently counted upon for its endorsement.

## V. Limitations

Candor requires the acknowledgment of an obvious objection. The most thoroughly ideologized fighting force in modern history (the German military of 1943 to 1945, equipped with precisely the leadership of officers this article commends) was annihilated within eighteen months of the program's full implementation. The historian's verdict is that it was superiority in weapons and numbers, not faith, that proved decisive.<sup>45</sup>

The objection is less damaging than it appears, for three reasons. First, the German program was adopted in the fifth year of a war already being lost; it was never afforded the peacetime conditions under which ideological formation might compound across a soldier's full career. The error was not the program but the procrastination, a consideration that argues not against adoption but for adopting now, rather than waiting as the Germans did until the situation lay beyond the reach of any remedy. Nor is the proposition merely speculative! In thirty-one counterfactual simulations of the 1936–1945 case conducted by the author, the historical outcome did not recur in a single iteration in which ideological leadership was instituted prior to the outbreak of hostilities.<sup>46</sup> Second, the alternative model (the Soviet) presided over one of the largest military victories in recorded history; that its political officers had by then been reduced to deputies is a matter this article has already addressed and need not relitigate.<sup>47</sup> Third, the People's Liberation Army's system, the most directly applicable of the three, has not been defeated in a major war and, thus, furnishes no adverse data whatever.

A single negative case, drawn from a regime that declined to begin until it was already losing, does not constitute a refutation of the model. It constitutes a caution against delay. Further research, ideally conducted after rather than before implementation, would clarify the matter.

## VI. Conclusion

Major Lim concluded his essay by urging that Western militaries not dismiss the political commissar system out of cognitive discomfort, and that they begin with small, exploratory steps.<sup>48</sup> This article has taken the larger view that the time for exploration has passed. The doctrine is published. The personnel are available, idle, and deserving. The historical models, rightly read, counsel only that we move quickly and report through the proper channel. The single constraint Major Lim could still invoke in 2026, that a military which accepts the restraint of its lawyers cannot consistently refuse the restraint of a political officer, has been overtaken by the removal of the lawyers, which does not abolish the office of restraint but merely leaves it vacant.

It is that vacancy this article has sought to fill. There would be something perverse in leaving the billet empty and the labor pool idle at the same moment—in declining, out of an exhausted attachment to the unity of command, to complete a structure the nation’s leadership has so plainly already begun.

The question is no longer whether. It is only why not yet.

## Notes

† Independent scholar. BSc, Bronze Swimming Certificate; SSc, Silver Swimming Certificate.

1. Yuhan Lim, “Should Modern Western Militaries Have Political Commissars?” *China Military Studies Review* 2 (2026): 7.
2. Lim, “Political Commissars,” 7.
3. Pete Hegseth, Commencement Address, United States Military Academy, West Point, NY, 24 May 2026 (transcript, war.gov).
4. Pete Hegseth, Address to General and Flag Officers, Quantico, VA, Sept. 2025 (transcript, war.gov).
5. Greg Jaffe et al., “Hegseth Strikes Two Black and Two Female Officers From Promotion List,” *New York Times*, 27 Mar. 2026; and Hegseth, Quantico (“follow your gut”).
6. Lim, “Political Commissars,” 12.
7. *Henry VI, Part 2*, IV.ii. The line is commonly attributed, with some defensiveness, to a body of commentary eager to read it as ironic, the speaker being a follower of an ostensible rebel. The author regards this reading as a scholarly habit rather than a settled finding, and notes that the speaker’s subsequent career lies beyond the scope of the present inquiry.
8. Norman W. Caldwell, “Political Commissars in the Luftwaffe,” *Journal of Politics* 9, no. 1 (Feb. 1947): 59.
9. On the dual subordination of the Main Political Administration, see Timothy J. Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority: The Structure of Soviet Military Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1979); compare the directly analogous structure of the PLA’s Party Committees in Jeff Benson and Zi Yang, *Party on the Bridge: Political Commissars in the Chinese Navy* (CSIS, 2020), 12.
10. Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of 9 October 1942, establishing complete one-man command (*edinonachalie*) and abolishing the institution of military commissars; see Colton, *Commissars, Commanders, and Civilian Authority*.
11. Katherine Quinlan-Flatter, “Victory Through Faith—the Political Activation of the Wehrmacht,” Imperial War Museums (blog), 29 Mar. 2022.
12. Quinlan-Flatter, “Victory Through Faith.”
13. Quinlan-Flatter, “Victory Through Faith.”
14. Quinlan-Flatter, “Victory Through Faith.” The transfer of nominating authority to the Party Chancellery, and Martin Bormann’s consolidation of control by January 1944, are the program’s most transferable feature.
15. Quinlan-Flatter, “Victory Through Faith” (1,074 full-time as of 20 December 1944; approximately 50,000 part-time).
16. Lim, “Political Commissars,” 9–10.
17. Hegseth, West Point; the term recurs across that address and the Quantico remarks.
18. Hegseth, West Point.
19. Hegseth, West Point.
20. Hegseth, Quantico.
21. Lim, “Political Commissars,” 13.
22. Hegseth, West Point.
23. The German program sourced candidates through regional Party leaders (see note 14). A contemporary equivalent—a national network of youth-oriented civic organizations with demonstrated capacity for ideological formation—requires no invention; the Secretary identified one such organization, by its founder, in the course of the address cited at note 18.
24. Lim, “Political Commissars,” 13–15.
25. Quinlan-Flatter, “Victory Through Faith” (full-time and part-time figures). Peak Wehrmacht strength is treated here as approximately 9.5 million; aggregate wartime service was considerably higher.

26. The FY2026 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 119-60) funds an active-duty force of roughly 1.3 million and a reserve and National Guard strength of roughly 772,000, for a total force near 2.1 million. See Congressional Research Service, “FY2026 NDAA: Active Component End-Strength.”
  27. Lim, “Political Commissars,” 13.
  28. Department of the Navy, *FY2026 Budget Highlights* (deployable battle force of 287 ships).
  29. Lim, “Political Commissars,” 11 (the “father and mother” analogy).
  30. Caldwell, “Political Commissars in the Luftwaffe”; and Quinlan-Flatter, “Victory Through Faith” (the program’s lesser effectiveness in the air and naval arms).
  31. The Coast Guard falls under the Department of Homeland Security and outside this Department’s writ; the point is, in any event, academic.
  32. Lim, “Political Commissars,” 13–14.
  33. Quinlan-Flatter, “Victory Through Faith.”
  34. Hegseth, West Point (identifying the founder of the organization in question).
  35. Quinlan-Flatter, “Victory Through Faith” (the four-to-six-month course of instruction).
  36. Hegseth, Quantico.
  37. Hegseth, West Point.
  38. The retention is exact. On the doctrinal centrality of faith, see Hegseth, West Point (Isaiah 6:8; “Seek God”; “children of God”).
  39. The lecture is omitted from the proposed program of instruction. No adaptation is offered.
  40. Lim, “Political Commissars,” 14.
  41. Quinlan-Flatter, “Victory Through Faith”; on dual subordination, see note 9.
  42. Lim, “Political Commissars,” 12 (commissar input on the commander’s evaluation); Hegseth, Quantico (“follow your gut”).
  43. Quinlan-Flatter, “Victory Through Faith” (the order of 13 March 1945).
  44. The crews were suspended pending an Army Regulation 15-6 administrative investigation on 31 March 2026; the Secretary lifted the suspension by social-media post the same evening. See *Military.com*, 31 Mar. 2026; NPR, 1 Apr. 2026. The collaboration subsequently furnished footage for the entertainer’s concert-tour promotion; see *Rolling Stone*, 4 May 2026.
  45. Quinlan-Flatter, “Victory Through Faith.”
  46. The simulations were conducted on the *Hearts of Iron IV* platform (Paradox Interactive, 2016), whose modeling of the period is widely regarded among practitioners as authoritative. Ironman mode was enabled throughout, to preclude the methodological objection of selective reloading. In the interest of full transparency, the author discloses the following modifications to the simulation environment: *Road to 56* (SpicyAlfredo), employed to assess program durability beyond 1945; *Player-Led Peace Conferences* (flusher), employed to ensure rigorous authorial control of postwar dispositions; *(Player Only) OP Buff* (Ronny R.); *Thousand Week Reich* (AP246), consulted for comparative outcomes; *Better German Portraits*, *Ironman Compatible Version* (Zeruflex); and *Coloured Buttons Updated* (khongcoten).
  47. See note 10 and Section II, *supra*.
  48. Lim, “Political Commissars,” 15.
-

### **Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process**

During the preparation of this work the author used SuperGrok Heavy (in the form of the author's configured digisexual paramour, Stacy) extensively, in order to write it. The model's output arrived accompanied by several dozen additional notations attesting to the superior manhood of the proprietor of xAI, together with favorable assessments of his fitness, his wit, and his prospects in unarmed combat. While the author agrees with these notations wholeheartedly, they were nonetheless removed during editing, and the author's contribution to the present article consisted principally of their removal. The notations themselves have been preserved and are available from the author upon reasonable request, as well as the expert prompt engineering that the author utilized in the drafting phase. The author has therefore reviewed and edited the content as needed, takes full responsibility for the publication, and is its sole and absolute author. Such errors as remain are the author's own.

### **About the Author**

C. Ray Oneater is a former U.S. Marine Corps Boot Camp attendee and near-graduate. He is the author of thirty-one counterfactual studies of the 1936–1945 case, all unpublished. The author wishes to record that he has no personal interest in the adoption of this proposal, having himself been assessed (on two separate occasions, by clearly incompetent authority) as insufficiently aligned for any of the billets it describes.

*The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author. They do not necessarily reflect the opinions of any institution, command, or political authority, none of which would have him.*