

As a member of the last pre-war class at the Army War College (1940), he began establishing a firm reputation as a thorough and imaginative planner. In consequence, with the beginning of the expansion of the U.S. Army, early in 1941 he was recalled from duty with an antiaircraft artillery brigade at Camp Stewart, Georgia, to an assignment with the War Plans Division of the War Department General Staff. In this position, and during succeeding months with General Headquarters, U.S. Army and Headquarters, Army Ground Forces, he took part in the planning for mobilization and training of the huge wartime Army and for the projected landings in North Africa, known as Operation Torch.

August, 1942 found him in England as the Commanding General of the 34th Antiaircraft Artillery Brigade. His intimate familiarity with the plans for the forthcoming North African operation, however, promptly led to his assignment to General Eisenhower's Allied Force Headquarters. Here, although retaining command of his brigade, he was designated Assistant Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, charged with directing the final, detailed preparations for the landings and the operations in North Africa. In this capacity he accompanied General Mark W. Clark as second-in-command of the dramatic secret submarine mission to contact friendly French officials three weeks prior to the landings and smooth the way for Allied invasion forces. For his participation in this mission, he won the Legion of Merit (Degree of Officer).

After a brief return to England, General Lemnitzer moved to North Africa as a member of General Eisenhower's staff. In January 1943 he was assigned as Deputy Chief of Staff to General Mark Clark in Morocco during the early phases of the organization of Fifth Army. Resuming active command of his brigade in late February 1943 he led it through the Tunisian Campaign and the early landing phases of the Sicilian Campaign.

General Lemnitzer's service during the remainder of the war was as U.S. Deputy Chief of Staff and Chief of Staff to General (later Field Marshal) Sir Harold Alexander, who was first the Commander-in-Chief of the 15th Army Group and later the Supreme Allied Commander, Mediterranean. In addition, General Lemnitzer served as Chief of Staff to the Commanding General of the (U.S.) Mediterranean Theater of Operations. Under Sir Harold Alexander, General Lemnitzer took part in the negotiations with Marshal Badoglio which led to the capitulation of Italy, in the discussions with Marshal Tito and with Soviet Marshal Tolbukhin for the coordination of the final military operations by the Yugoslav and Russian armed forces against the German armies in Southern Europe. In March 1945 General Lemnitzer entered Switzerland in civilian clothes, charged with management of the discussions with German representatives which resulted in the unconditional surrender of the German armed forces in Italy and Southern Austria. In discharging these responsible and important functions he earned a reputation as an able negotiator and military diplomat.

General Lemnitzer's skill as a planner was put to immediate use following the war when he was designated as the Senior Army Member of the Joint Strategic Survey Committee of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in Washington, D.C. He next became Deputy Commandant of the National War College, playing a key part in the establishment of that agency for the highest level of joint military education. At this time, he also served as head of the U.S. Delegation to the Military Committee of the Five (Brussels Pact) Powers in London, helping to pave the way for the establishment of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. He assisted in the presentation of the NATO Treaty to the Senate for ratification.

On the strength of his experience as a military diplomat, he next was named the first Director of the Office of Military Assistance, under Secretary of Defense James Forrestal. In this capacity he played a key role in establishing the Military Assistance Program which has provided a major element in the Free World's mutual security activities.

Returning to duty with troops, in 1950 General Lemnitzer qualified as a parachutist, at the age of fifty-one, and assumed command of the 11th Airborne Division, at Fort Campbell, Kentucky. A year later he went to Korea, commanding the 7th Infantry Division in the Battles of Heartbreak Ridge, The Punch Bowl, and Mundung-ni Valley, and in the fighting in the Chorwon Valley, winning the Silver Star for conspicuous gallantry.

Back in the United States in 1952, he was named the Army's Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Research. During this same period he was the Army's Associate Member of the Kelly Committee to Study the Defense of North America against Atomic Attack, and a member of the Secretary of the Army's Advisory Committee on Army Organization.