MILITARY HERITAGE • SPRING 2021 Volume 23, No. 1

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SARCO, INC.

VIKINGS OF DANELAND HELMET

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$95.00 #HLM052

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$49.95 #HLM061

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Original type rope wrapping

- Beautiful polished steel hollow ground spear point tip.
- Integral mountings for battle pennant.
- Ribbed hand grip with brass accents.
- Over 10 feet in length.
- Some pitting but still presentable

$249.00 #LNC009

M24 German (Inert) Stick Grenade

Standard Potato Masher grenade as used by German troops in WW2. Wood and metal construcion with individual components.

$24.95 #MISC464

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Rugged Olive Drab short sleeve shirt for combat duty with breast pocket and two large Map pockets inset under the chest. Officers and NCOs loved these shirts and they fade wonderfully and take abuse of the rugged outdoors. Newly manufactured and made with USMC embossed buttons like the original shirts. Rare as 'hens teeth' these days, this might be your one chance to obtain one. Very limited!

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LAST OF THE INCREDIBLE SHOEI REPLICA WWII GERMAN GUNS - END OF AN ERA

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Not sold to NY, CT, WI, MN, KS, MA, CA, PR & Canada

M39-B German WW2 Smoke Grenade

Full size and can break down into components. Made from wood and metal. Rarely offered with tapered finger handle, used for identifying it in the dark by touch.

(Inert) $29.95 #MISC678

BRITISH UNION JACK FLAG

3 x 5 feet. Cotton. $18.00 #FLAG15

$59.95 #MISC786

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Your Choice $29.95 each

Brass Neck Ring #MISC847

Copper Neck Ring #MISC846

Silver Neck Ring #MISC86

1888 British / Boer War .303 Bandolier

Soft Pliable Cow Leather like the Originals! Fits 50 rounds of .303 officially, but all sorts of other similar sized ammo like .30 and 7.62 Nato too. Fits well for people of Medium to 2XL build! New. Limited quantity.

This item has a $90 shipping fee

DUKE OF BURGUNDY SUIT OF ARMOR

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This Duke even comes with a SWORD !!

$750.00 #MISC137

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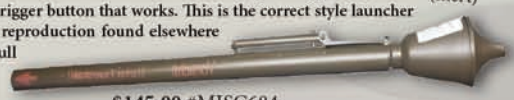
PANZERFAUST KLEIN WW2 ROCKET LAUNCHER

The first model German WW2 Rocket Launcher! Our steel Panzerfaust has a full size inert rocket with fins that can be removed from the tube. Also a sight / trigger assy., with movable cocking piece and trigger button that works. This is the correct style launcher - not the 'cobbled together' reproduction found elsewhere and sold as 'original style'. Full size and totally inert. New.

(inert)



$145.00 #MISC684

Medievel 11th-15th Century Great Helm

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GERMAN HELMET 1889 PRUSSIAN KURASSIER, PICKELHAUBE

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Remeber The Movies ZULU & ZULU DAWN? Here Is The REGIMENTAL FLAG OF THE BRITISH 24TH WARWICKSHIRE REGIMENT

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CLAYMORE MINE AND CARRY BAG WITH INSTRUCTIONS

(inert)

Inert reproduction Claymore Mine with carrying bag with water proof instructions makes a great display or reenactor item! Comes with folding legs and screw on fuze holders. In use since Vietnam & still a favorite defensive measure! Limited availability. **$69.95 #MISC589**

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Small 15 inches **$22.95 #MISC371**

Large 27 inches **$50.00 #MISC372**

GERMAN STICK GRENADE KEYCHAIN

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German M35 Helmet WWII, Afrika Korps Tan

Model 1935 German helmet with rolled edge, metal banded liner with 8 tongue leather liner and leather chinstrap assembly mounted by 3 rivets on the 1.7-1.9mm thick steel shell in German 'Feldgrau' Afrika Korps Tan color. Helmet fits 7-1/4" to 7-5/8" head size (large). New, well made and great for static displays or reenactments. We have purchased the remaining stores of these from 'Kamabee Keep' along with various German helmet decals which we are using to provide one set of helmet decals with each helmet at no charge as long as supplies last. M35 helmet with decal - Sorry, no choice on decals as they are quite limited. **$34.95 #HLM058**

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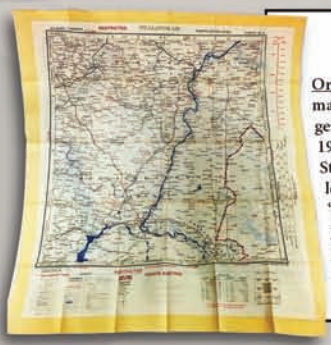
SOURCE CODE: MHSPR21

U.S. PINEAPPLE GRENADE (inert)

Inert cast iron body with inert US GI fuse lends authenticity to this iconic staple of the American serviceman in the last century. Introduced in WW1, the original designed grenade progressed through evolutions to serve in WW2, Korea, and beyond to retirement @1969. A very deadly grenade due to its girth and castellated body which reminded GIs of a Pineapple. Comes with WW2 era, (1943) 'overpaint Yellow' band and O.D. green body.

$16.50 ea, 3 for $39.99 #AM026

(Some States may have restrictions on ownership of INERT grenades. Check your local & State laws)



STALINGRAD REGIONAL AIRCREW ESCAPE MAP

Original Rayon fabric escape & evasion type map issued to aircrews and 'Cloak & Dagger' operators behind the iron curtain in the 1950s. One side covers the region including Stalingrad from the 48th to 52nd parallels and the other directly south of that to 'Stepnoy' region between the 44th and 48th parallels . Easily foldable and resistant to water damage. Very scarce today and very limited. Size @ 22"x23.5"

$45.00 #MISC952

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Manufactured with heavy duty cotton layered with 13 embroidered Stars applied in a manner Betsy Ross would be proud of. Perfect for flying every day on your flag pole. A beautiful touch of traditional colonial Americana. (High quality, heavy duty cotton.... Not cheap nylon or poly!) **Size 3 x 5 feet**

$34.95 #FLAG56

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$18.00 #FLAG12

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$210.00 #REP02

French General Officer's Kepi

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$89.95 #MISC722

GERMAN WW2 M39 EGG GRENADE (Inert)

Accurate inert steel reproduction with detachable Fuse assy. Full Size. **$22.95 #MISC680**

Napoleonic Flag

Represented the personal guard of Napoleon. Size: 3x5 feet **$34.95** FLAG03

BRITISH GRENADIER GUARDS REGIMENTAL FLAG

Whether storming fortress Tangiers, repelling Napoleons Imperial Guard at Waterloo, Crimea, or the Gothic Line, this Regiment has famously made great 'in roads' in the history of warfare. 3 x 5 feet flag with fringe is a beauty for wall display and perfect for any 'Anglophile'! **$25.00 #FLAG30**

Well-made wood and metal replica and has a cocking mechanism that moves back and forth and trigger that allows the bolt forward. Magazine catch also works. Comes with steel 50rd. display drum. **$249.95 #REP01**

M16A1 Display Gun

Venerable work horse of the U.S. Military, this full size M16A1 rifle made from metal and synthetic 'furniture', is about as close as you can get to the original in non-firing form! Comes with steel non-functional 15rd magazine. 7.5 lbs. Very hard to tell from the real thing!

$148.50 #REP31 (non-firing)

U.S. M1 CARBINE DISPLAY GUN (non-firing)

WWII ushered in a variety of great firearms, but the M1 Carbine may be the "King" of light shoulder fired weapons! Officers and NCOs, Arty. & Vehicle crews, Mortar teams, Radiomen all loved it because it had better accuracy than the Model 1911 pistol and less weight than the Thompson or Garand. This over shadowed the lack of ballistic punch. Our display gun has cocking action, trigger pull, sling, detachable 15rd mag, and U.S. marking on the wood stock. This version is how it appeared during WWII. **$175.50 #REP07**

GERMAN IMPERIAL WWI FLAG

Classic German Imperial Flag that adorned Battleships, Army, and Headquarters installations from the late 1800s through 1918. Befitting that we can offer this classic war flag in 3 x 5 feet cotton 100 years after it flew during the War to End all Wars!

$18.95 #FLAG27

MILITARY HERITAGE

Spring 2021

FEATURES

COLUMNS

Cover: A Navy SEAL, photographed during a training exercise in California, carries a FN SCAR-H (Mk 17) rifle. See story, page 14. Photo: U.S. Navy.

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EDITORIAL

Meade's Impressive Performance at Fredericksburg Earned Him Army Command

George Gordon Meade did not want command of the Army of the Potomac when it was thrust upon him on the eve of the Battle of Gettysburg seven months after the Union defeat at Fredericksburg, but he had the distinction of being the division commander who had led the successful Union assault during the bloody battle in December 1862 on the south side of the Rappahannock River.

Unlike major generals George McClellan and Joseph Hooker, Meade was not a glory seeker. Meade was satisfied when Hooker appointed him to command the V Corps during the Chancellorsville Campaign. He marched his V Corps into Pennsylvania in summer 1863 without dreaming he would be the one squaring off against General Robert E. Lee at the crossroads town of Gettysburg.

Just before sunrise on June 28, 1863, Secretary of War Edwin Stanton's chief of staff James Hardie awoke 47-year-old Meade at the V Corps encampment at Prospect Hall in Frederick, Md., to present him with command of the Army of the Potomac. Meade declined the promotion, but Hardie informed him that Lincoln was not asking him to take it, but ordering him to do so.

In the days preceding this event, Meade had written a letter to his wife informing her that he was quite unlikely to be offered the army command. "I do not … stand any chance, because I have no friends, political or others, who press my claims or pretensions," he wrote.

As for the officers in the army, many of them had expected President Abraham Lincoln would appoint McClellan for a third time to lead the Army of the Potomac at such a crucial time. But they were dead wrong.

When the Philadelphia family in which he was growing up fell on hard times, Meade secured a free college education at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. When war erupted in 1861, he received command of a brigade of Pennsylvania Reserves in time to lead it during the Seven Days Battle in early 1862.

Promoted to division command for the Antietam campaign, he showed great promise in the hard fighting at South Mountain and during the I Corps attack against the Confederate left wing at Antietam. While watching Meade's attack against the Confederate left at Turner's Gap, Hooker expressed his admiration. "Look at Meade! Why, with troops like those, led in that way, I can whip anything."

Lincoln needed a cool-headed, fearless, and honest commander. Meade embodied those attributes. But no commander was perfect. Meade's gruff, irascible nature was often on full display while campaigning.

Lincoln planned to replace Hooker after he was defeated at Chancellorsville. Officials from Washington interviewed a number of corps commanders in the Army of the Potomac to see if they were interested in commanding the army. Maj. Gen. John Reynolds (I Corps), Maj. Gen. Darius Couch (II Corps), and Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick (VI Corps), each of whom had seniority over Meade, all recommended him. "Meade is the proper one to command this army," Sedgwick said.

After reviewing the information presented to him by his advisors, Lincoln decided on Meade. Lincoln concluded that Meade would fight well to protect the soil of his home state. "[I believe] he will fight well on his own dunghill," Lincoln said.

In the dangerous situations that unfolded on the second and third days of the bloody clash at Gettysburg, Meade was in the thick of the action. He made sure that reinforcements arrived where they should in time to prevent the kinds of disasters suffered by his predecessors at First and Second Manassas, Richmond, Fredericksburg, and Chancellorsville. To Lincoln's credit, he had finally found a competent general.

—William E. Welsh

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CARL A. GNAM, JR.
Editorial Director, Founder

WILLIAM E. WELSH
Editor
editor@militaryheritagemagazine.com

MICHAEL FOWLER
Managing Editor

SAMANTHA DeTULLEO
Art Director

Contributors:
Robert L. Durham, Frank Jastrzembski, Joe Luster, Christopher Miskimon, Eric Niderost, David A. Norris, Mike Phifer, Joshua Shepherd, Don Troiani, William E. Welsh

ADVERTISING OFFICE:

BEN BOYLES
Advertising Manager
benjaminb@sovhomestead.com
(570) 322-7848, ext. 130

LINDA GALLIHER
Ad Coordinator
lgalliher@sovmedia.com
570-322-7848, ext. 160

MARK HINTZ
Chief Executive Officer

STEPHFANIE RUPP
Subscription Customer Services
sovereign@publishersserviceassociates.com

ROBIN LEE
Accountant

COMAG MARKETING GROUP
Worldwide Distribution

SOVEREIGN MEDIA COMPANY, INC.
6731 Whittier Ave., Suite C-100
McLean, VA 22101-4554

SUBSCRIPTION, CUSTOMER SERVICE, AND BUSINESS OFFICE
2406 Reach Road
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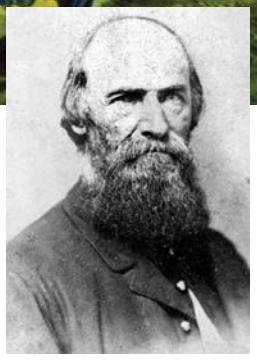
German-born Union general August Willich deployed a bold tactical maneuver known as "advance firing" during the American Civil War.

By Frank Jastrzembski

All: Library of Congress



August Willich was one of the premier brigadier generals in the Union Army of the Cumberland. His performance leading the 32nd Indiana at Shiloh merited a promotion to brigade command. INSET: Prussian-born August Willich fled to America to escape persecution for his radical beliefs.

"A soldier in every phrase of the term, able and skillful, on many a bloody field he demonstrated his ability and courage," Brig. Gen. Richard W. Johnson wrote in glowing praise of Brig. Gen. August Willich in January 1866. Johnson could vouch for this, having served as Willich's superior during the American Civil War.

"[He] is a theoretical and practical soldier," wrote Johnson. "He has made the science of war his study and there are few men his equal in military matters. He is thoroughly conversant with the military and political campaigns of Europe. He looks well to the interests of his men."

This German exile-turned-American general placed his life on the line for his adopted country. To Willich, winning the Civil War was not just about keeping the Union together, but more importantly it was a war for social equality: crushing the institution of slavery, proving that his fellow Germans deserve a rightful place in American society, and improving the lives of the working class. Red communism flowed through Willich's veins, but he donned federal blue in his crusade for the downtrodden. "I fought for liberty in the old country," he declared in May 1863. "I fight for liberty in this country."

Johann August Ernst von Willich was born on November 19, 1810, in Braunsberg, East Prussia. His father, Johann George, a captain in the 10th Hussars died in 1814, leaving Lisette, Willich's mother—a Polish stage actress—a widow to care for two young boys. There were rumors that the younger boy, August, was the illegitimate son of a Prussian royal prince, and in his adolescence, he would declare, "Look into my eyes and you will see the Kaiser," insinuating he was of royal blood.

August entered the cadet school at Potsdam at

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Willich introduced his tactic of advance firing at Liberty Gap in southeastern Tennesee during the Tullahoma Campaign where his troops helped dislodge entrenched Confederates.

the age of 12 in 1823. Three years later he was accepted into the Germany Military Academy in Berlin. At the age of 18, Willich was commissioned a second lieutenant. By 1844 he had risen to the rank of captain. His superiors transferred him to a remote outpost due to his radical political views. Suffused with discontent, he resigned his commission in November 1847.

The year 1848 saw the rise of liberal and nationalist uprisings throughout Europe, ranging from Berlin to Naples, the direct result of the revolutionaries having forced France's King Louis Philippe to abdicate in February. Rebellion broke out two months later in the Grand Duchy of Baden after the government rejected several liberal reforms. Willich joined with the revolutionary forces and served as a senior officer. Ultimately, the revolutionaries were defeated by the government forces as a result of their lack of coordination and poor leadership decisions. Willich and his beaten soldiers fled to the Republic of France and waited in exile for an opportunity to return to their homeland.

In 1849, Willich participated in the Palatine uprising with Franz Sigel, Carl Schurz, and other so-called "Forty-Eighters" who would rise to the rank of general during the American Civil War. This uprising failed just as the revolt in the Grand Duchy of Baden had. Willich fled and ultimately settled in Great Britain.

While in England, a confrontation with Karl Marx led German proletarian revolutionary Conrad Schramm to challenge Willich to a duel, which the two fought in Belgium. Willich's bullet grazed Schramm's head but fortunately did not kill him. Willich, with his future uncertain, left for New York City by steamer in January 1853.

When civil war broke out in America eight years later, Willich enlisted as a private in the all-German 9th Ohio Infantry but was later appointed as the regiment's adjutant. His military background allowed him to whip the green volunteers into disciplined soldiers and he was soon commissioned a major.

Governor Oliver P. Morton specifically selected Willich to be colonel of the 32nd Indiana Infantry in August 1861. At the Battle of Rowlett's Station in mid-December, the regiment stubbornly fought off a superior Confederate force under the command of Brig. Gen. Thomas C. Hindman, earning acclaim for both the Indianans and its colonel.

At the close of the first day of fighting at Shiloh on April 6, 1862, Willich's regiment arrived as part of Maj. Gen. Don Carlos Buell's Army of Ohio to aid Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's beleaguered Army of the Tennessee. Before leading his Hoosiers into battle the next day, Willich gave them a rousing speech. "Little children, today decides the fate of America," he said. "If we are beaten today everything is lost; let us do our duty as a free man does."

His single regiment met Brig. Gen. Sterling A.M. Wood's brigade, which had been ordered into action as part of Pierre Gustave Toutant-Beauregard's effort to punch through the Union line. Maj. Gen. Lew Wallace watched in awe as Willich, mounted on horseback, coolly steadied his regiment as shot and shell tore left and right around him.

"What he said I could not hear, but from the motions of the men he was putting them through the manual of arms, notwithstanding some of them were dropping in the ranks," recalled Wallace. "Taken all in all, that I think it was the most audacious thing that came under my observation during the war." A spent ball struck Willich in the chest, but his wallet stopped the bullet, leaving him with only a few broken ribs.

Willich was promoted to brigadier general and given command of the brigade his regiment was part of that summer. At the Battle of Stones River, fought on December 31, 1862, the newly minted general fell into enemy hands after his horse was shot from under him. Willich spent several miserable months at Richmond's Libby Prison before being exchanged in May 1863.

While imprisoned, Willich devised a tactic to increase the rate of fire in his brigade, which he termed "advance firing." The maneuver, which Willich implemented with his troops, called for the first rank to fire and then stop to reload while the other ranks advanced a few paces, fired their rounds, and allowed the next rank to advance.

Adopting this maneuver gave Willich's regiments unprecedented continuous firepower. Willich first implemented this maneuver in June 1863 at Liberty Gap, which was a corps-sized battle in which the Union prevailed as part of the Tullahoma Campaign. One captured Confederate soldier who experienced the steady fire was shocked by the heavy fusillade. "Lord Almighty, who can stand against that?" he exclaimed. "Four lines of battle and every one of them firing?"

But it was at the Battle of Chickamauga on September 19, 1863, where Willich's First Brigade of Johnson's Second Division of Maj. Gen. Alexander McCook's XX Corps really shined. Johnson's Second Division, which included Willich's brigade, came to the support of Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas' XIV Corps.

Willich, anchoring Thomas' right flank, ordered a bayonet charge into Brig. Gen. John K. Jackson's brigade of Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Cheatham, driving back the exhausted Mississippians and Georgians. Brig. Gen. George Maney's regiments came to Johnson's aid, but Willich formed the 49th Ohio Infantry and 32nd Indiana Infantry into four lines and gave the order to "advance fire" to meet the threat. The Confederate defenders were driven back by the combined forces of Willich's First Brigade and Colonel Joseph Dodge's Second Brigade.

Willich's brigade advanced so rapidly that it outpaced Colonel Philemon P. Baldwin Third Brigade on its left, whose advance was hindered by dense foliage. The Confederates counterattacked, outflanking Baldwin's command. Willich, in an attempt to inspire Baldwin's men, had his

When the Confederates broke through Union lines on the second day of the Battle of Chickamauga, Willich's crack troops covered the withdrawal of several thousand Federal troops. This earned his unit the nickname "Iron Brigade of the Cumberland Army."

horse killed. But ultimately, Baldwin's Indianans, Kentuckians, and Ohioans held their ground.

At 8:00 PM more than 5,000 men of Maj. Gen. Patrick R. Cleburne command launched a violent assault on Johnson's Second Division. Colonel Baldwin fell dead while trying to rally the 1st Ohio Infantry. His brigade retreated, which in turn caused the retreat of Willich's regiments. Willich rallied his soldiers 300 yards from their original position, where it continued to take fire from three different directions. Nonetheless, the stubborn brigade stayed put that night.

The collapse came when Maj. Gen. William S. Rosecrans ordered Brig. Gen. Thomas J. Wood's First Division to move and close a gap on the left and link up with Maj. Gen. J. Joseph Reynolds' Fourth Division. Rosecrans had no idea that he was trying to close an imaginary gap.

Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's crack troops happened to be striking at the perfect point to take advantage of the absence of Wood's division, leading to the collapse of the Army of the Cumberland. Willich covered the retreat of Maj. Gen. John M. Palmer's Second Division of the XXI Corps and Reynolds' Fourth Division of the XIV Corps at Kelly Field.

His five regiments helped to stave off total annihilation, fighting off numerous enemy assaults from four different directions. For this act, Willich's soldiers earned the sobriquet "Iron Brigade of the Cumberland Army." Yet they paid dearly for it: Willich's brigade suffered 539 casualties, the equivalent of one-third of its number. After the battle, Thomas praised Willich's performance, who he said, "most notably sustained his reputation as a soldier."

After the Army of the Cumberland settled into the city of Chattanooga and Rosecrans was relieved, Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant assumed command of the Military Department of the Mississippi and began to shore things up in the Western Theater.

Willich was shot in the upper right arm on May 15, 1864, in the Battle of Resaca in north Georgia while making observations from a parapet. He could hardly grasp anything with his right hand and never regained the full strength of his arm. It would be the general's last engagement of the war.

On October 21, 1865, Willich was brevetted major general for his service during the war. He was mustered out in January 1866. Several individuals recommended that Willich be commissioned a colonel in the regular army. "His military experiences and capacities are too valuable to be lost to the country by his retirement to civil life," wrote Governor Morton. "His retention in the service besides being due to his high character, eminent abilities, and distinguished services, would be a compliment to our German citizens and would be received as a high mark of appreciation." However, Willich's post-war army career never came to fruition.

Willich was elected auditor of Hamilton County in 1867, but shortly after his term ended in 1869, he returned to Germany. He offered his service to the Prussians during Franco-Prussian War, but Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke turned him down.

Willich returned to the United States, humbly living out his days in St. Marys, Ohio. August Willich died of natural causes on January 22, 1878. As many as 2,500 citizens came see him laid to rest. Among those in attendance were veterans of the 9th Ohio Infantry, 32nd Indiana Infantry, and other units. They all sought to show their deep respect and appreciation for the hero of two nations, and they accompanied him one last time as he was laid to rest in Elmwood Cemetery. ■

UNIFORM

By Don Troiani & William E. Welsh

PRIVATE IN THE 4TH NEW YORK REGIMENT

HEADGEAR: Since leather caps were unavailable, the regiment was outfitted with felt hats trimmed with hair crests.

UNIFORM: The soldier wears a distinctive white wool coat with scarlet facings and brass buttons, unique to the regiment. His uniform includes a waistcoat, gaitered trousers, and a black neckstock over his shirt collar.

CARTRIDGE BOX: The soldier carries an American-made, leather cartridge box with a large flap, hung from a black strap. Inside was a wood block, with holes drilled to secure 29 paper-wrapped cartridges. An iron swivel closure secured the black-powder cartridges.

WHISK & PICK: A small, stiff brush and an iron wire pick, visible below his elbow, hang from his cartridge box strap. These tools were used to clear black powder fouling from the musket lock.

MUSKET: The entire regiment received the reliable French Model 1766 Charleville musket in June 1777. The barrel was secured to the stock with iron bands and steel springs, allowing it to be easily removed for cleaning. The musket with its iron ramrod fired a .65-caliber ball.

BAYONET: Muskets supplied by France included a socket bayonet with triangle-shaped blade. The bayonet hangs from a black leather strap on the soldier's left side.

CANTEEN: Soldiers carried either tin or wooden-staved canteens.

The Continental Congress authorized the creation of the 4th New York Regiment in November 1776. That winter it was posted in the Albany-Lake George region to protect American supply lines.

The regiment fought as part of Brig. Gen. Enoch Poor's New Hampshire brigade at Saratoga, coming to the aid of Colonel Daniel Morgan's riflemen at Freeman's Farm on September 19 during the Battle of Saratoga.

Afterwards, the regiment continued to serve in Poor's brigade, which was absorbed into the main Continental Army under General George Washington. It again fought with distinction in the main line of defense at the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778. The regiment remained in service until January 1781, when it was disbanded. ■

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Navy SEAL sniper Christopher S. Kyle relied on a variety of precision rifles to protect Marines during his four tours of duty in Iraq.

By Christopher Miskimon

U.S. Navy

A U.S. Navy SEAL trains on a MK-12 special purpose rifle, one of the four sniper rifles that Kyle used, which is similar to an M-16 but with a shorter barrel. Kyle often carried an MK-12 while clearing buildings in Iraq's most dangerous cities.

From the sniper's perch, the city of Fallujah, Iraq, on November 7, 2004, looked dusty and brown. Most of the buildings were squat, two-story affairs, with the occasional minaret or domed mosque sitting above them. Navy SEAL (Sea-Air-Land) team member Christopher S. Kyle looked through the optic on his bolt-action .300 Winchester Magnum rifle at the cityscape before him. A railroad track and a berm lay between him and the city center; the enemy moved beyond the berm. Insurgent fighters crept closer to the U.S. Marines entering the city; the enemy guerillas were 800 meters away. They probably thought they were safe from detection.

Kyle placed an insurgent in the crosshairs of his rifle and squeezed the trigger, killing the man before he could engage the marines. As the insurgent fell dead to the ground, Kyle went back to searching for targets. He killed two more enemies that day, and his sniping partner shot two more. When the marines advanced deeper into the city, the two SEALs could no longer cover them from their position. They shouldered their rifles and equipment and began the long trek into Fallujah.

Kyle is one of America's most famous snipers. Born April 8, 1974, in Odessa, Texas, he grew up raising cattle but eventually heard the call to military service. He joined the Navy and completed his initial SEAL training in March 2001, only six months before the September, 11, 2001, attacks against the United States by Osama bin Laden's Al Qaeda militant Islamist organization. Kyle received training as a sniper during his navy service and put his new skills to use during operations in Iraq over the course of his four tours in that war-torn country.

Special-operations personnel have a wider variety of equipment and weapons to choose from than regular troops, who are generally issued standardized weapons. Snipers in special-operations organizations are no exception and often have several rifles, each best suited to a different situation. Kyle could choose which rifle to carry based on the location and tactical requirements of an upcoming mission, and sometimes he took more than one. Different rifles were effective out to different ranges and fired different caliber cartridges, each with unique ballistic qualities. These weapons were equipped with various accessories, such as optical sights (scopes), suppressors, bipods, and DOPE cards ("Data on Previous

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ABOVE: U.S. Marine Corps; BELOW: U.S. Navy

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TOP: A Marine fires an MK-11. Kyle found the MK-11 to be a highly versatile weapon since it could be outfitted with a variety of different optics and suppressors. MIDDLE: A Navy SEAL sniper uses a MK.13 Mod 5 sniper rifle while on an operation in Zabul province, Afghanistan. ABOVE: The heaviest weapon that Kyle used on missions in Iraq was the bolt-action .338 Lapua. The cartridge's power and range approached that of a .50-caliber Browning Machine Gun round.

Engagement")—small cards with ballistics data to aid the sniper in shooting over various distances.

Perhaps the most basic weapon Kyle carried was the MK12 Special Purpose Rifle. Essentially it is the same rifle as the standard U.S. military M16, except it has an 18-inch barrel instead of the standard 20 inches. The MK12 fires the same 5.56mm round, also known as the .223, and uses the same magazines; the standard magazine has a capacity of thirty rounds. It can fit several different types of optical sights as well as suppressors.

Kyle made one modification to his MK12: He took the lower receiver from his M-4 carbine and mated it to the upper receiver of his MK12. The M4 has a more compact, adjustable, collapsible stock, making it easier to carry and use in cramped conditions, such as clearing a building. Later, some MK12s came fitted with collapsible stocks. The lower receiver also contains the weapon's trigger group, making Kyle's rifle capable of fully automatic fire. Though he preferred not to use his weapon on fully automatic, Kyle wanted to have the capability in case he needed it to lay down suppressive fire.

Kyle was not entirely pleased with the MK12's 5.56mm cartridge. He found that it often took several shots to bring down an enemy fighter unless he were hit squarely in the head. This was especially true in Iraq, where many insurgents used drugs in the hopes of making themselves braver and more resilient.

Kyle carried his MK12 on patrol in Ramadi in 2006, a particularly dangerous city in Anbar Province in western Iraq. His SEAL platoon of 16 men supported an Army National Guard unit tasked with retaking the area around a hospital near the Euphrates River.

The day began with house-to-house searches as the Americans took back the area street by street. Kyle was on point, leading his group as they cleared houses. He held his MK12 at the ready as he entered each building, the first man in.

The group secured each house, ensuring no enemy fighters hid inside. Afterward, Kyle would go the roof and cover the troops on the ground with his rifle. Soon the enemy attacked, using a mosque to launch their assaults. The fighting quickly spread, the insurgents firing their AK-47s and the Americans replying with rifles, machine guns, and grenades. Kyle covered the army troops as they maneuvered to the mosque, giving covering fire as they approached. When the soldiers reached the mosque, the SEALs raised their fire to allow their fellow Americans to get into the building under it. The attack succeeded, though Kyle received a small wound: A piece of hot brass from a nearby machine gun fell between his boot and his leg during the fight. When he removed it later, a piece of skin came away with the brass casing.

Though able to make effective use of the MK-12, Kyle more often used a similar weapon, the MK11 Special Purpose Rifle. Also known as the SR-25, the MK11 is a scaled-up version of the M16, chambered for the larger 7.62 x 51mm cartridge, known to civilian hunters as the .308. The fixed-stock MK11 uses a 20-round box magazine and can also be fitted with a variety of optics and suppressors for its 20-inch barrel.

Kyle considered the MK11 a versatile weapon, one he could carry on patrols and still be useful in a sniping role. He generally removed the suppressor at the start of a mission, only putting it back on to make a sniper shot. The 7.62mm cartridge had more power than the smaller 5.56mm; Kyle found it generally able to put down the enemy with one shot. He did recall it was less reliable in the field—it jammed more frequently, something he thought was due to the dust cover, which covered the weapon's chamber and bolt area. This feature is common to M16-pattern weapons, but in the MK11 it seemed to induce a malfunction known as a double feed, where two cartridges try to load into the chamber at the same time. Leaving the dust cover open seemed to prevent the problem most of the time.

For even longer-ranged shooting, Kyle and other SEAL snipers used the more powerful .300 Winchester Magnum round fired from a bolt-action rifle designated the MK13. The version issued to SEALs used custom barrels mated to the action from a Remington 700 rifle, fitted to a stock made by either MacMillan Firearms or Accuracy International, both companies active in precision-rifle manufacture. The powerful cartridge is accurate to over a thousand yards and is a "flat shooter," requiring little adjustment to fire over ranges from 100 to 700 yards. Kyle used this weapon for most of his sniping and stated he made most of his kills with it.

He used the .300 Winchester Magnum during a mission near the Euphrates River. As he watched from the roof of a building, a group of sixteen insurgents emerged near the shoreline. They were heavily armed and wore body armor; Kyle found out later they were a group of Tunisian militants. Strangely, they also carried four large, colored beach balls. As Kyle watched, they split into groups of four and started swimming across the river using the beach balls for flotation. He quickly realized the most effective way to engage; shoot the balls. The first shot popped a ball, causing the heavily laden insurgents to flail in the water. Kyle shot each ball in turn and watched as the Tunisians fought each other in the water to get a grasp of the remaining balls. Soon all the beach balls were gone, and most of the enemy drowned. Some nearby Marines shot the rest. Shortly after this incident the SEAL sniper made a shot at 1,600 yards, slightly less than a mile.

Kyle learned to use guile as well as his .300 Winchester Magnum. Once he set out an American flag as a lure; when the enemy fighters came out to shoot at it, he opened fire, killing half of them. On another occasion, he saw two men on a moped drop an improvised explosive device as they drove past an American position. Kyle took careful aim and fired at the fleeing enemy at 150 yards. The bullet hit the moped's passenger and continued through the driver. Both were killed by the lethal shot.

The fourth rifle Kyle used in Iraq was the heaviest. The .338 Lapua is another bolt-action weapon, with different models used from MacMillan and Accuracy International. It lacked a suppressor, but the cartridge's power and range approached that of the M2 .50-caliber Browning Machine Gun round. Like the .50, the Lapua could be used against vehicles, though Kyle remarked the best way stop a vehicle was to shoot the driver. Shooting the vehicle's engine compartment would cause leaks and stop the vehicle eventually, but never right away. The .338 Lapua also made a lot of noise and concussion, which made it painful to shoot indoors. Kyle did not specify what type of .338 Lapua he used, but it was likely the Macmillan TAC-338.

Kyle achieved his longest reported sniper kill with the .338 Lapua. His group had taken over a house at the edge of small village and he'd brought that rifle, thinking there would be more long-range shooting. The immediate area grew quiet, so Kyle started scanning the next village, over a mile away. Soon he spotted a man on the roof of a one-story building, 2,100 yards distant. Even with the 25-power scope on his rifle, Kyle could make out little more than an outline. Shortly after, a U.S. Army convoy appeared on the road outside the village. The man on the roof hoisted an RPG to his shoulder, something Kyle could make out through his scope.

There was no direct radio contact with the convoy, which continued ahead toward the threat. Kyle decided to shoot. He did not expect to hit him at such an extreme range but hoped it might frighten the insurgent and dissuade him from firing. Kyle fired, and watched through his scope as the shot hit the man, sending him tumbling over the low wall around the roof to the ground below. It was the longest shot he made in Iraq. Later in the day his unit withdrew after a heavy enemy attack, for there was no longer any reason to stay.

Kyle served four tours in Iraq, with a record of more than 150 verified kills. He received multiple commendations for heroism over the course of his tours of duty, being awarded the Silver Star, four Bronze Stars with "V" devices, and a Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

After his service he returned to his native Texas, where he started Craft International, a consulting and training company for military and law-enforcement snipers. On February 2, 2013, Kyle and a friend took a former Marine suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder to a shooting range. That man, Eddie Routh, shot both Kyle and his friend, tragically ending the life one of the U.S. military's most successful snipers. ■

German Fighter Ace Gordon Gollob downed 150 aircraft during World War II, for which he received Nazi Germany's highest decoration.

By William E. Welsh

Tim Oliver / Alamy

Hauptmann Gordon Gollob poses with his Messerschmitt Bf110 fighter. He made recommendations for technical improvements to the heavy fighter and traveled to a Luftwaffe test facility to consult with aircraft engineers on his ideas.

German Luftwaffe pilot First Lieutenant Gordon Gollob moved in for the kill at midafternoon on December 18, 1939, with his Messerschmitt Bf 110 against a formation of seven British Vickers Wellington medium bombers heading home from their bomb run against German battle cruisers in Wilhelmshaven harbor. He engaged the bombers over the East Frisian Islands on the southern fringe of the North Sea.

The air crews of 24 British twin-engined, medium bombers had flown together in a diamond pattern on their way to their objective. The British airmen had orders to bomb the *Gneisenau* and *Scharnhorst*, both known to be in the harbor. Gollob piloted one of 44 German fighter aircraft from several German air wings around the Helgoland Bight that had scrambled when radar detected the inbound enemy bombers. Gollob was attached to a heavy fighter air wing consisting of Bf 110s that was based at Jever airfield west of Wilhelmshaven.

The Wellingtons broke up into smaller formations as they struggled to make it back to Suffolk. Gollob approached one formation from astern, firing on the rear left Wellington in the formation and knocking it out of the sky. "After the attack, I climbed to port and saw the Wellington, pouring out smoke from its stern, curve off the left and disappear downwards," Gollob said afterwards. "An aircraft on fire over the sea is bound to crash into it." Of the 22 Wellingtons that reached Wilhelmshaven, 12 were shot down and three others were so badly damaged that they crash-landed in England. Afterwards, the British restricted their bombing raids to the nighttime.

By the end of World War II, Gollob would be one of the most decorated fighter aces in the annals of the Luftwaffe. He would be one of the select few that held Nazi Germany's highest military decoration, the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords, and Diamonds. Of the 10 million German soldiers, sailors, and airmen, only 862 received the illustrious Oak Leaves cluster to the Knight's Cross, and just 27 obtained the Oak Leaves, Swords, and Diamonds.

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The twin-engine Bf 110 served with noteworthy success in the Luftwaffe's early campaigns in Poland, Norway, and France. RIGHT: After accruing 150 aerial victories midway through 1942, Gordon Gollob received Nazi Germany's highest honor, the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords, and Diamonds.

Gollob dreamed of being an aircraft pilot as a young boy. His innate talents as a mechanical engineer led him to build a glider at the age of 18 that he flew from a civilian airfield in Innsbruck. It was natural for him to enroll in a mechanical-engineering program at the University of Graz. Yet he only completed four semesters before joining the Austrian armed forces in 1933.

Three years later he received a promotion to second lieutenant and became an instructor in an Austrian flight-training squadron. When Nazi Germany absorbed Austria through the Anschluss in March 1938, Gollob transferred to the Luftwaffe, obtaining in just a few months the rank of first lieutenant with the third squadron of Zerstorergeschwader 76 (destroyer wing 76). He qualified to fly both the single-engine Messerschmitt Bf 109 and the twin-engined Messerschmitt Bf 110 heavy fighter. While the Bf 109 was a single-seater, Bf-110s were two-seaters crewed by a pilot and radio operator as well as a rear gunner.

Gollob's first kill, a Polish biplane, came on the fifth day of the German invasion of Poland, which began on September 1, 1939. In the days that followed, he participated in ground-attack operations during which he succeeded in destroying a number of Polish aircraft on the ground. For these achievements, he received the Iron Cross 2nd Class on September 21.

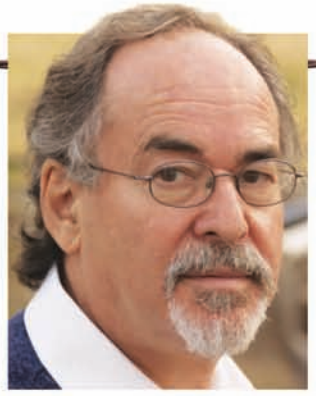
Gollob was appointed squadron leader of the 3rd Squadron of ZG 76 on the day before the German invasion of Denmark and Norway. ZG 76 was part of Fliegerkorps X, which comprised four bomber wings and one fighter wing. During the invasion, which began on April 9, 1940, only two Bf 110 aircraft from Gollob's squadron reached their objective, which was Stavanger-Sola airfield in Norway. Gollob piloted one of the two aircraft. The squadron's remaining aircraft were either missing or had been forced to turn back because of the inclement weather.

Gollob had orders to use his aircraft to support the 100 *Fallschirmjaeger* (paratroopers) whose mission was to seize control of the airfield so that Ju-52 transports could land with additional troops and equipment. When the two aircraft arrived, the Fallschirmjaeger were pinned down by fire from two gun emplacements manned by determined Norwegians on the perimeter of the airfield. Gollob and the other aircraft flew low over the airfield with their cannon and machine guns roaring. The crucial ground support enabled the Fallschirmjaeger to mop up resistance.

Gollob's squadron was eventually based at Trondheim in central Norway, where it patrolled the North Sea. Fifteen Blackburn Skua dive bombers took off from the British aircraft carrier *Ark Royal* on June 13 to attack the *Scharnhorst*, which was anchored in Trondheim Fjord. Gollob and other Bf 109 pilots scrambled to intercept the dive bombers. In the ensuing air battle, the German fighters downed eight of the British aircraft. Gollob, who scored the first kill in the air battle, received the Iron Cross 1st Class the following day.

The German Wehrmacht subsequently achieved a surprisingly rapid and thorough victory over France owing in large part to its superb blitzkrieg tactics. While the ground troops were mopping up in France in June 1940, Luftwaffe Reichsmarschall Herman Goering issued an operational directive for his aerial branch to redeploy its units to wage war on Great Britain's Royal Air Force.

The weighty task before the Luftwaffe was to destroy the RAF in preparation for an amphibious invasion of southeastern England. Such an invasion was impractical, however, because the *Kriegsmarine* (German navy) had suffered devastating losses in the Norwegian campaign and lacked the assets necessary for ferrying troops across the English Channel. In addition, the Luftwaffe would be hard-pressed to achieve air supe-



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Horowitz argues that Judeo-Christian values are at the very root of America's democracy and success. Kill off such values and all of our freedoms could perish. Everybody could be in danger.

He warns that Obama's anti-Christian and anti-religious agenda will be resurrected by a Biden-Harris administration.

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- The shocking way Congress scrubbed every mention of God from The U.S. Capitol Visitor Center. (*Chapter 4, Page 37*)
- **Why Hollywood stars like Bill Maher, who belligerently states "religion must die in order for mankind to live," are finding a huge following among the Democratic left and Millennials.** (***Chapter 1, Page 6***)
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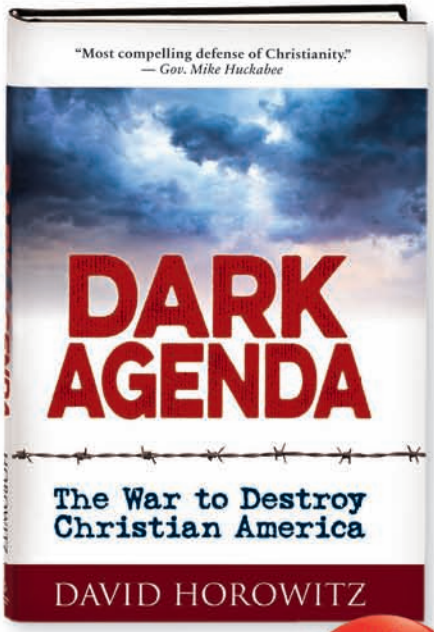

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Herbert Ringlstetter

TOP: Gollob inspects a bullet hole in the fuselage of his Messerschmitt Bf 109 during his service as a fighter pilot on the Eastern Front. Assigned to the 4th Air Fleet for Operation Barbarossa, Gollob flew fighters in support of Army Group South. ABOVE: The Luftwaffe made frequent improvements to the Messerschmitt Bf 109 throughout World War II to ensure it could compete with Allied fighter aircraft.

riority given the limited range of the Bf 109s. German Bf 109 pilots could only remain over southeastern England for about 20 minutes before having to turn back to their bases on the Continent.

As the Germans began their air campaign against the RAF using bases in France and the Low Countries in July 1940, Gollob remained stationed in Norway. During this time, he made recommendations for technical improvements of the Bf 109, which he had access to on the base where he was stationed, and subsequently traveled for a brief period to the Luftwaffe test facility in Pomerania to consult with the facility's engineers.

After returning to Norway, he was patrolling the North Sea when he shot down a Short Sunderland patrol-bomber seaplane at midafternoon on July 9, 1940, about 90 miles southwest of the Shetland Islands. Continuing his patrol in a Bf 110 with two other crewmen, he then shot down a Lockheed Hudson coastal-reconnaissance aircraft two hours later.

Gollob did not receive orders transferring him to the new theater of war until September 7, 1940. His transfer coincided with the point when the Luftwaffe switched its strategy from attacking RAF facilities to bombing London. The first lieutenant joined the headquarters unit of the 3rd Fighter Wing, based at Arques in the Pas-de-Calais region.

When the commander of the 3rd Fighter Wing was shot down over England on October 8, Gollob was appointed to replace him. The airmen in the fighter wing were sent to Germany in February 1941 for a rest. The wing began redeploying in late April to Monchy-Breton in Pas-de-Calais, and upon their return to service they received new Bf 109F-2 aircraft. During his time on the Western Front, Gollob accrued additional six aerial victories.

Gollob subsequently downed a Supermarine Spitfire fighter aircraft on May 7 while engaging British aircraft operating along the French coastline. His superiors promoted him to captain on June 1. Gruppe II of Generaloberst Alexander Lohr's Luftflotte 4 (4th Air Fleet), to which Gollob belonged, transferred that month to Breslau-Gandau in Poland in preparation for Operation Barbarossa. Luftflotte 4 had orders to support Army Group South in its capture of the Ukraine.

On the first day of Operation Barbarosa, June 22, 1941, Gollob shot down a Polikarpov I-16 fighter aircraft. In the months that followed, Gollob encountered and shot down a wide variety of Soviet fighters and bombers on the Eastern Front. These included Soviet-made fighters such as the Yakovlev Yak-1, Polikarpov I-153 biplane, and Lavochkin-Gorbunov-Gudkov LaGG-3, as well as bombers such as the Ilyushin DB-3 torpedo bomber, Petlyakov Pe-2 dive bomber, Tupolev SB-2 fast bomber, and Ilyushin Il-2 fighter bomber.

In addition to the ongoing battle for air supremacy, Gollob and other fighter crews carried out missions such as protecting armored spearheads, escorting Stuka dive bombers to target, and strafing Soviet airfields.

Gollob received his first so-called ace-in-a-day achievement on August 21, 1941, when he downed five aircraft in one day. It would be the first of half a dozen of these achievements that he would amass during his career as a fighter pilot. In August 1941 he received the Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross for his steadily rising count of aerial victories.

In October, Gollob had three dozen victories, of which nine occurred as Fedor von Bock's Army Group Center pressed its attack on Moscow during Operation Typhoon. By month's end he had a total of 85 aerial victories, for which he received Oak Leaves for his Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross. Hitler summoned Gollob to his Wolf Lair's headquarters at Rustenburg on the Eastern Front to personally present the decoration to him.

After a short stint supporting Army Group Center's drive on Moscow, Luftflotte 4 returned to support Army Group South in mid-October as it pushed into the Crimean Peninsula. During the Crimean campaign, a fellow pilot in the 77th Fighter Wing reported on the kind of aerial tac-

tics Gollob used: "Gollob flew from Kerch together with his wingman," the pilot said. "They positioned themselves at a low altitude beneath a Soviet formation. Then they started climbing in spirals, carefully maintaining their position beneath the enemy formation. Before the peacefully flying Soviets had even suspected any mischief, the two planes at the bottom of their formation had been shot down and the two Germans were gone."

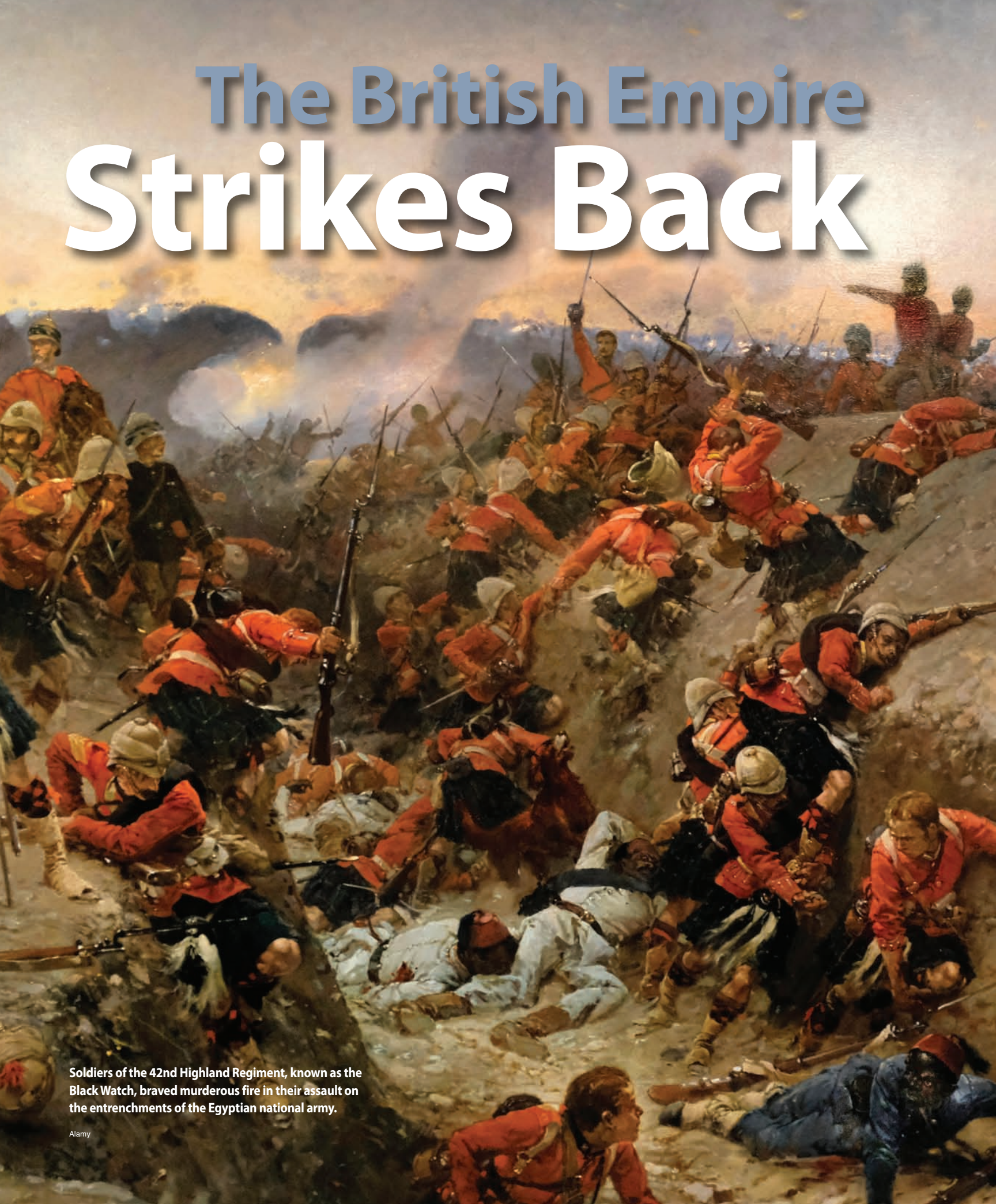
By that point, the Luftwaffe high command had groomed Gollob for command of an air group. After undergoing additional training, he was appointed commander of Jagdgeschwader 77 (the 77th Fighter Wing) on May 16, 1942. That same month he achieved his 100th aerial victory, for which he received the Swords decoration for his Knight's Cross. By late summer 1942, he had achieved an unprecedented 150 aerial victories, for which he received the exalted honor of Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords, and Diamonds.

Because he was being groomed for a post in the high command of the Luftwaffe, German leader Adolf Hitler forbade Gollob from flying any further combat missions. In October 1942, he was appointed Jagdflieger Fuhrer 3 in northwestern France, where he oversaw fighters defending the Atlantic Wall. A year later he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and given command of Jagd Division 5 (5th Fighter Division), also on the Western front. Two months before D-Day, though, he joined the staff of the Inspector of Fighters and eventually became Inspector of Fighters with the rank of Generalleutnant (major general).

Frustrated with the inferiority of German fighters to the increasingly sophisticated Allied fighters and ground-attack aircraft, Gollob openly clashed with Hitler over the best use of the jet-powered Messerschmitt Me 262 aircraft, introduced in April 1944. Although originally envisioned as an interceptor, Hitler wanted it used as a multipurpose fighter-bomber. Gollob vehemently disagreed with this use of the Me 262. Hitler had entrusted Gollob with the operational deployment of the sophisticated jet aircraft but was angered by what he perceived as Gollob's uncooperative behavior. Despite Hitler's ill will, Gollob returned to the battlefront in November 1944 when he was given command of the special fighter command on the eve of the Ardennes Offensive.

Gollob was taken into captivity in April 1945 in the Alpine Fortress by elements of the U.S. 36th Infantry Division. After extensive interrogation, he was released the following year. He survived the war and died in Lower Saxony in September 1987 with the distinction of having been the first Luftwaffe fighter ace to reach 150 aerial victories in World War II. ■

The British Empire Strikes Back



Soldiers of the 42nd Highland Regiment, known as the Black Watch, braved murderous fire in their assault on the entrenchments of the Egyptian national army.

Alamy

Garnet Wolseley faced a daunting task defending the Suez Canal in 1882 as a bloody clash unfolded at Tell El Kebir during the Anglo-Egyptian War of 1882.

MIKE PHIFER

Wikimedia

The crew of the HMS *Alexandria* waited anxiously for battle in the minutes before 7:00 AM on July 11, 1882. The ship's sailors, who were stripped down to their flannel jerseys, waited for the order to fire the ironclad's heavy guns. The sailors on the seven other ironclads and five gunboats of the flotilla also stood ready at their respective vessels' guns for the signal shot to begin bombarding the forts and earthworks protecting the harbor of the Egyptian city of Alexandria. The British had sent an ultimatum to the Egyptians instructing them to remove their menacing guns covering their fleet anchored nearby. The Egyptians had flatly refused.

At 7:00 AM a lone gun bellowed from the *Alexandria*—the signal for the attack to begin. The guns of the Royal Navy vessels now began to fire. Smoke filled the air as the guns continued to thunder away. Sweating sailors quickly reloaded the ships' muzzle-loading guns. Multi-barreled guns, the Nordenfelts and Gatlings, added their firepower, rattling away from the vessels' decks and masts.

Egyptian gunners quickly returned fire. Captain Arthur Wilson, commanding the torpedo depot vessel HMS *Hecla*, watched the bombardment. He noted that the Egyptians "showed a great deal of pluck" manning their guns until they were disabled. Meanwhile, the British sailors continued to hammer away, the gunners cheering or jeering depending on whether targets were hit or missed. At that point in the hostilities "it was all good fun and the men rather looked upon it as a fine lark," recalled Lieutenant George Field aboard the HMS *Sultan*. When the gunners began taking casualties from counter-fire, their attitudes changed. "Now it was thorough earnest determination throughout," said Field.

Both sides continued to hammer away at each other, but the Egyptians were getting the worse of it. In the early afternoon, one of the forts exploded as its magazine was hit, sending a bright burst of flame skyward followed by black smoke and flying debris. The British sailors continued to keep their guns blazing while Egyptian artillery fire began to slacken throughout the afternoon. By mid-afternoon, white flags began to be hoisted over many of the battered Egyptian earthworks

Egyptian Khedive Turned to American Civil War Veterans

In an attempt to modernize his army, Khedive Ismail Pasha turned to veteran officers of the American Civil War. Thaddeus Mott, a former colonel in the Union cavalry who met Ismail in Constantinople in 1868, advised him to do so. Once the idea was approved, Mott recruited ex-officers. He even consulted General-in-Chief William Sherman, who recommended for duty past foes, such as former Confederate generals Henry Hopkins Sibley and William Loring.

With the promise of a generous monthly pay in gold, as well as a substantial allowance for travel, lodging, and hard service, 50 Civil War veterans took up the Khedive's offer. Most signed a five-year contract and agreed to fight the enemies of Egypt, with the exception of the United States. When some of the veterans arrived, they were shocked to discover their pay and ranks were a grade less than promised by Mott. Some were under the impression they were to have combat commands in a war of independence from the Ottoman Empire. They became angry when they learned that they were going to be military instructors. A disastrous campaign against the Ethiopians did not improve the Americans' views of the Egyptian army.

All of the veterans had quit Egyptian service by 1879, except for Charles Pomeroy Stone. A West Point graduate and veteran of the Mexican War, Stone's military career in the Union army during the Civil War was greatly tarnished by his defeat at Ball's Bluff in 1861.

The Massachusetts native resigned from the U.S. Army three years later to work as an engineer and superintendent of a mining company in Virginia. With his family in tow, Stone sailed to Egypt. He entered Egyptian service on March 30, 1870.

Despite his tarnished combat reputation, Stone received a glowing recommendation to the Egyptian Khedivate from U.S. President Grant. "[There is] no one better informed in

and forts. At 5:30 PM the British ordered a cease-fire. Black columns of smoke billowed from Alexandria. The city's defenses were smashed. Trouble had been brewing with Egypt for some time, and war now seemed unavoidable.

Three years earlier, Prince Mohammed Ali Tewfik had become the new khedive of Egypt. As part of the Ottoman Empire, the khedive of Egypt was a vassal of the Ottoman sultan in Constantinople. Sultan Abdul Hamid had put Tewfik into power when he ordered him to replace his father, Ismail Pasha, who had ruled Egypt since 1863.

Ex-Khedive Ismail had grand designs for Egypt when he took power, setting on a program of large public works. He built hundreds of miles of railroad, scores of bridges, and thousands of miles of irrigation canals. Most importantly, he made key improvements to the bustling harbor at Alexandria. These projects, as well as military expeditions into Abyssinia, Somalia and Sudan, had nearly bankrupted the country. Egypt, which had financed the projects primarily with assistance from France and Great Britain, was heavily in debt to them.

Despite selling its interest in the Suez Canal to the British, Egypt remained mired in debt. In an attempt to get the earlier loans repaid to European creditors and restore Egypt's credit, the khedive allowed Great Britain and France to establish dual control over Egypt's revenues in 1877. The khedive did not fully cooperate with France and Britain, however, fearing the loss of his own authority. Thus, Egypt's financial crisis remained a festering international problem.

Great Britain and France both had wanted Ismail Pasha to abdicate in favor of his son, and they were pleased when the sultan dismissed him. Ismail left Egypt for Naples aboard his yacht with as much treasure as he could take.

Wikimedia

ABOVE: Disabled guns of a smashed shore battery and Egyptian casualties show the devastation wrought by the British fleet's guns. OPPOSITE: Fifteen ironclads in the British fleet shattered Egyptian shore defenses at the port of Alexandria.

Once in power, Tewfik sought to bring stability and reform to Egypt. But he ran into difficulty trying to address the grievances of his senior military officers, who were displeased with cuts to the army. There were also hard feelings between the Turko-Circassian officers, who had controlled upper ranks of the military for many years, and the Egyptians, who held the lower ranks. Colonel Ahmed Arabi, a charismatic Egyptian nationalist, strived to address this imbalance.

Arabi led the army in a revolt in September 1881. The rebellious troops confronted Tewfik at his palace in Cairo, demanding that Tewfik appoint Arabi as minister of war. The British and French watched the upheaval with great concern. "[The] programme of Arabi is now pretty clear, and consists in the liberation of Egypt from European control," British Consul-General Edward Malet warned Lord Granville, the British foreign secretary, in October 1881.

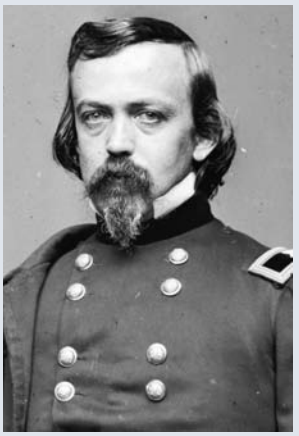
In an effort to maintain an alliance with France on the Egyptian's problem, British Prime Minister William Gladstone agreed to send a so-called joint note to Egypt. This correspondence assured Tewfik that he had the sympathy of both England and France, and it encouraged him to maintain his authority. The two governments hoped the note also would curtail Arabi and the Egypt-

every department relating to military affairs," wrote Grant.

Stone was soon appointed chief of staff to the khedive and would eventually reach the rank of lieutenant general. He became the khedive's senior advisor in 1872 upon Mott's resignation.

Despite the praise Stone's attempt to reform the army met with, strong resistance from the Turko-Circassian officer class, which disliked his interference, remained. Nevertheless, Stone did manage to establish battalion schools for the troops, where he stressed that soldiers had to become literate before they could be qualified to be non-commissioned officers. The former Union general was also one of the founders of the Khedive Geographical Society. The society launched numerous expeditions up the Nile River, primarily for military purposes.

Both: Library of Congress



Khedive Ismail Pasha (left) and Lt. Gen. Charles P. Stone.

Stone remained in the Egyptian army even after Ismail's son, Tewfik, became the new Khedive in 1879. With the British conquest of Egypt in late summers 1882, Stone's days were numbered in the Egyptian service. He returned to the United States in early 1883, where he found new work. The American Committee of the Statue of Liberty appointed him chief engineer for the project.

—Mike Phifer

Both: Library of Congress

TOP: British troops arrive at Port Said at the mouth of the Suez Canal. When Wolseley's direct advance on Cairo from Alexandria failed, he shifted his troops by sea to the Suez Canal. BOTTOM: Soldiers of the King's Royal Rifle Corps who served in the Anglo-Egyptian War.

ian nationalists, but it had the opposite effect: Tewfik was considered a puppet of Great Britain and France, and the joint note only served to embolden Egypt's militant nationalists.

Tewfik's authority gradually diminished as the months passed. Arabi became a pasha in March 1882. He acted like a dictator, and the nationalist movement grew stronger and more popular.

A combined British/French flotilla sailed into Alexandria's harbor on May 20 seeking to bring the wayward Egyptians to their senses. Vice-Admiral Sir Frederick Seymour, in command of the British squadron, was under orders from London to work with the British Consul-General, support Tewfik, and cooperate with the French. He had orders to protect British subjects and Europeans. If he believed it was necessary, he had the authority to put troops ashore.

Meanwhile, Egyptian soldiers and laborers began constructing earthworks with which to defend the harbor against the Europeans. Seymour cabled the Admiralty warning that the city was apparently under the control of the military party. "I think an increase of force desirable," he wrote. "There is much panic at Cairo and some here."

The panic increased substantially on June 11 in Alexandria. Rioting broke out as mobs attacked any European they could find. British Vice-Consul Charles Cookson did not escape the rage of the mob. Bloodied and badly wounded, Cookson stumbled to the police station, which was guarded by soldiers. The soldiers "did not move a step to protect me," said Cookson.

The soldiers and police joined the inflamed mob. They traded fire with armed Europeans fighting for their lives. Dawn found many Europeans sheltering in various consulates throughout the city. The rampage had ended, but only after the mob had slain 50 Europeans. Over the course of the following days, thousands of Europeans fled to the coast and sought safety not only on commercial ships in the harbor, but also on the British and French warships.

The situation worsened in the days that followed. The British became deeply concerned over the security of the Suez Canal. By the end of June, the British hoped the Turks would intervene. "It was quite in the cards that the sultan will send troops after all," noted Granville. Khedive Tewfik had at one point hoped for the same thing.

But the sultan had no interest in sending troops. British forces found themselves alone on July 5 when they were informed that the French fleet would not be aiding them. French Prime Minister Charles de Freycinet believed that it would be a violation of the French constitution to act in a hostile manner against Egypt without the consent of the Chamber of Deputies.

Seymour watched with growing concern as the Egyptians continue to construct earthworks and build new batteries in the port of Alexandria. On the morning of July 10, Seymour issued an ultimatum to the Egyptians that they were to temporarily surrender their forts and disarm. If they did not do so, he said, he would bombard their defenses.

The Egyptians held a war council. Both Tewfik and Arabi attended the council. They agreed to send a small delegation to Seymour informing him that no new guns had been mounted in the forts. The British Admiral was not interested; his demand to have the forts dismantled remained in place. The Egyptian War Cabinet decided that they would dismount three guns in three different positions in an attempt to appease Seymour. If this did not work, they sent orders for their guns to return the fire of the British after the fifth shot.

Seymour was not interested in having a small number of guns dismantled, and the deadline for the ultimatum continued to tick slowly down. On July 11, the flotilla that constituted the fighting element of Seymour's squadron prepared to bombard the Egyptian forts and defences, which boasted 250 guns. Shortly after sunrise the ironclads opened fire. When the smoke cleared after a day of bombardment, the British had suffered five killed and 28 wounded. The Egyptians had suffered more than 100 killed and several hundred wounded.

Fires began to break out in the city, and the next day mobs again targeted foreigners. To everyone's surprise, it was not the British who first landed troops in Alexandria to restore order. U.S.

Marines from the USS *Quinnebaug*, anchored nearby, were sent into the tumultuous city to secure the American consulate and to extinguish fires in nearby buildings. Shortly afterwards, Royal Marines and sailors landed. They spiked the guns in three battered Egyptian forts and also tried to curtail looting and arson.

Tewfik, who had grown increasingly anxious about the situation, dispatched a message on July 13 to Seymour asking if he would guarantee his safety. Seymour agreed he would. As for Arabi, he began to reassemble part of the city's bloodied garrison. He withdrew his troops to a strongly fortified position about eight miles east of Alexandria at Kafr-Dawar and took steps to increase the size of his force to 15,000 troops.

In his belief that the army should rule in Egypt, Arabi issued a proclamation four days later stating the British were to blame for the escalating violence. "[They] shot our soldiers and police who had been left in charge of the city," he said. He then turned his scorn against Tewfik. "At night with his women amongst the English, and by day returns to the shore to order the unnecessary slaughter of Mahommedans in the streets of Alexandria."

Meanwhile, British troop transports began disembarking soldiers. The British had 3,686 men ashore on July 18 under the command of General Sir Archibald Alison. The House of Commons voted to fund 2.3 million pounds sterling for an expedition to secure British interests in Egypt.

Lt. Gen. Sir Garnet Wolseley, the British Empire's principal trouble-shooter, received command of the expeditionary force. The War Office had warned Wolseley in January that it might dispatch an expeditionary force to Egypt. Given this advance notice, Wolseley began making meticulous plans for the expedition.

Beginning in late July, infantry regiments and troops of cavalry embarked onto transport ships and sailed from England to Egypt. The British military authorities directed troops to pack artillery, siege trains, and supplies into the ships for the expedition. Other British forces embarked from outposts in Malta, Gibraltar, Cyprus, and even India to join the expedition. The expeditionary force ultimately numbered 40,500 troops.

Alison dispatched patrols in Alexandria toward Arabi's entrenched position at Kafr-Dawar to determine his strength. Royal engineers deployed an armored train, which was manned by naval personal, to give the British direct fire support. Alison's troops succeeded in capturing Ramleh on July 24, putting them in striking distance of Arabi's position.

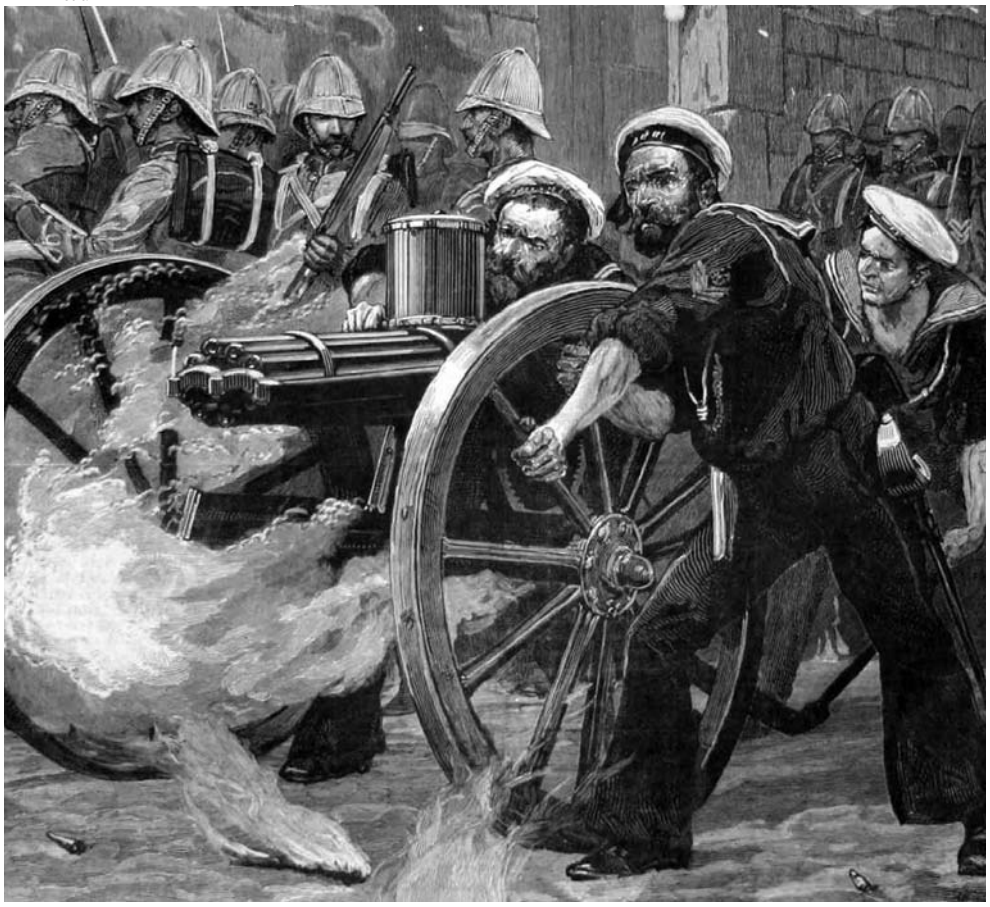
British expeditionary forces began disembarking at Alexandria in early August. Wolseley declared his intention to dispatch a large force to nearby Aboukir Bay to get behind Arabi's position. He also intended to order a frontal assault from Ramleh. The Egyptians observed British troops re-boarding their ships, leading them to believe that perhaps the British were departing, but this was part of a grand ruse that Wolseley had instituted to deceive them.

Wolseley intended to send the re-embarked troops down the Suez Canal to Port Said and Ismailia. From there, they could strike out for Cairo. To speed his movement, the troops could use either a rail line or an inland waterway such as the Sweetwater Canal or Ismailia Canal.

British troops crowded aboard 17 transports just before nightfall on August 18. Escorted by eight ironclads, the transports steamed eastward. Upon reaching Aboukir Bay, which bristled with Egyptian guns, Seymour's ironclads prepared for action. But the fleet succeeded in quietly slipping past Egyptian guns under the cover of darkness.

As Seymour's fleet arrived at Port Said, sailors and marines from two Royal Naval vessels arrived first. A small detachment slipped into the port, where it surprised the sleeping garrison and took

All: Wikimedia



TOP: British sailors fire a gatling gun at Egyptian reservists during street fighting in Alexandria. BOTTOM: Pictured left to right are Egyptian Colonel Ahmed Arabi, Lt. Gen. Sir Garnet Wolseley, and Prince Mohammed Ali Tewfik.

British cavalrymen with drawn sabers thunder into Egyptian infantry. Their successful counterattack reversed the tide of battle at Kassassin Lock on the Suez Canal.

control of the northern end of the Suez Canal. Meanwhile, a larger naval detachment from four ships took control of Ismailia, which was situated midway on the canal.

The Seaforth Highlanders, an advance element of the Indian contingent, traveled in small boats down the Suez Canal on August 18. They received fire from 600 Egyptian reservists. The British returned fire with their Gatling guns, killing or wounding nearly one-third of the Egyptian force.

Most of Wolseley's force had arrived at Ismailia by August 23. It was quickly discovered that the water level of the Sweetwater Canal, which ran west from Ismailia, was dropping fast. The Egyptians controlled the water level in the canal by a dam at Magfar. The canal originally had been constructed to bring freshwater to laborers working on the Suez Canal. Wolseley intended to use it as a supply line and dispatched Maj. Gen. Gerald Graham and his 2nd Infantry Brigade to seize the dam.

By this time, Graham was at the vital railway station of Nefiche, which he'd captured the day before. Reinforced by three squadrons of the Household Cavalry, a detachment of the 19th Hussars, mounted infantry, and a section of horse artillery, Graham moved out in the early morning of August 24. The force was accompanied by Wolseley, 1st Division commander Lt. Gen. George Willis, and staff officers.

After a gruelling march and dispersing enemy pickets, the British took control of the 70-foot dam at Magfar. They soon discovered the Egyptians were positioned on high ground at Tel-el-Mahuta, where they were reported to be guarding a second dam. Under an unrelenting sun that caused some of the troops to suffer from heat

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

exhaustion, the British entrenched. Wolseley sent orders back for more troops to be rushed up from Nefiche. In the meantime, the Egyptians began shelling British position. In expectation of the coming ground action, they were reinforced by troops arriving by train from Tel-el-Kebir. A force of 8,000 Egyptian cavalry, infantry, and artillery prepared to advance against the British.

Redcoats from part of the 2nd Battalion of the York and Lancaster blazed away with their Martini-Henry rifles, checking the Egyptians' advance. The Egyptians attempted to extend their line to the left but came under fire from British cavalry and mounted infantry. As the heat intensified, Egyptian gunners continued to shell the British with their six guns, with one shell barely missing Wolseley. The Royal Artillery section defiantly returned fire.

The Egyptians received six more guns, which joined in on the pounding of the British position. Around noon, sailors from the HMS *Orion* arrived with two Gatling guns, which were quickly placed on both British flanks. The Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry arrived shortly afterward to strengthen Wolseley's position.

Egyptian commander Rashid Pasha was reluctant to order an all-out assault; instead, he let his 12 guns pound the sweltering redcoats. The firing ceased at nightfall. The British advanced to the foot of the Tel-el-Mahuta, where they bivouacked for the night. During the night they received more infantry and artillery. After thanking his men for their actions, Wolseley returned to Ismailia to plan the next day's attack.

On the morning of August 25, Graham advanced toward the Egyptian positions only to discover they had abandoned them and withdrew during the night. Wolseley ordered cavalry commander Maj. Gen. Drury Lowe to take his mounted troops and "work well round the enemy's left and cut off his retreat, if possible."

The heavy sand wore out Lowe's cavalry horses and slowed their pursuit, except for the mounted infantry riding small Egyptian horses. Nearing enemy camp at Mahsama, the British horse soldiers soon found themselves facing a large force of Egyptian infantry and cavalry as well as seven guns. The British gunners quickly unlimbered and opened up on the Egyptians, while the mounted infantry dismounted and blazed away at close range with their Martini-Henry Rifles. With British infantry beginning to arrive and the cavalry threatening their line of retreat, the Egyptians retreated, abandoning seven guns in the process.

As one of the locomotives was gathering steam to pull away, Sergeant Patrick O'Riordan of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry sprang from his horse and dashed toward the train's second car. He had noticed the car's coupling was slack and undid it. As the engine pulled away, it left behind 20 cars, which were laden with ammunition and provisions. O'Riordan was later awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for his actions.

Wolseley rested his exhausted troops at Mahsama for the rest of the day. That same day British cavalry reconnoitring the village of Kassassin captured Mahmud Fehmy, the chief engineer of the Egyptian Army, who had been left behind by his train. Fehmy had designed the entrenchments at Tel-el-Kebir, the main Egyptian defense protecting Cairo from an enemy advancing from the Suez Canal.

On the morning of August 26, the 4th Dragoons found the Kassassin Lock abandoned and quickly occupied it. The British hold here was strengthened with the arrival of Graham's Brigade later in the day. Kassassin Lock was vital to Wolseley's supply line as it allowed for the passage of boats. In the interim, troops near Mahsama continued to dismantle the two dams blocking the Sweetwater Canal.

Egyptian cavalry was spotted in the hills near Graham's position by the canal lock on August 28. Graham had under his command the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, York and Lancaster Regiment, and elements of the 4th and 7th Dragoons. He also had 70 mounted infantry and guns from the Royal Marine Artillery and Royal Horse Artillery. The forces totaled 1,895 men.

The British fired on the enemy cavalry, and the Egyptians opened up with their guns. Nothing serious developed until the late afternoon, when white-uniformed Egyptian troops began advancing on the British position. Reinforced by two more guns, the British artillerymen pounded away at the Egyptians until their guns ran out of ammunition.

A captured Egyptian Krupp gun, which the British had mounted on a railway car, blazed away at the enemy. The Egyptian artillery attempted unsuccessfully to silence the gun. The Royal Marines manning the gun moved the railway car on which it was mounted back and forth along the railroad track to make it hard to hit.

When the Egyptians came to within 900 yards of Graham's position, the British troops opened up a heavy fire. The Egyptians returned fire. They attempted to exploit a gap between the Royal Marine and the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, but the British infantry drove them back. The situation grew serious for the British as Egyptian reinforcements continued to arrive by train. The Egyptians attempted a flank attack shortly before nightfall against Graham's left, but British rifle fire stopped them cold.

Graham received much-needed reinforcements when a battalion of Royal Marines arrived along with six more guns. He then ordered his sweat-soaked redcoats forward in the gloaming. Drury-Lowe arrived two miles northwest of Kassassin during the night with his worn-out cavalry. The British horse soldiers could see the night lit up by the flash of rifle fire at Kassassin and hear the roar of artillery fire. Their commander led them toward the flashing guns.

Enduring enemy fire, Drury-Lowe ordered his Household Cavalry to charge. He directed the 7th Dragoons to support them. British horse soldiers thundered with drawn sabers into the ranks of the Egyptian soldiers. They cut many down, and the survivors scattered. "The enemy's loss was heavy, the ground being strewn thickly with their killed,"

Wikimedia

said Drury-Lowe. By nightfall, the Egyptians were in full retreat, leaving hundreds of dead and wounded behind them. The British suffered 10 killed and 80 wounded.

In the days that followed, the British received badly needed reinforcements. At Alexandria on August 29, Alison received orders to move his 1st Highland Brigade to Ismailia. Three days later the kilted soldiers arrived at their destination by ship, but it be would over a week before they started heading inland. In the interim, the British offloaded supplies and shipped them forward to the front lines by rail or canal.

Colonel Sir Redvers Buller, fresh from his honeymoon, arrived at Kassassin to take command of the army's intelligence. He was soon scouting the enemy entrenchments, sketching a map, and observing the Egyptian activities at daybreak.

While scouting in the early hours of September 9, Buller suddenly encountered a large Egyptian force on the move. Led by Ali Fehmy Pasha, the force consisted of 17 infantry battalions, various Bedouin units, and 30 guns. Arabi, who had been present during the attack on Kassassin on August 28, accompanied the force.

Buller spurred his horse back to camp with news of the enemy's advance. A detachment of the 13th Bengal Lancers next met the Egyptian cavalry. Two riders were dispatched back to Kassassin with a warning, while the remaining 50 Lancers dismounted and took up position behind a ridge. They opened up with their carbines on the Egyptians, who soon surrounded the plucky band of Lancers. The Lancers quickly mounted up and, putting their lances to bloody use, charged through the enemy before galloping back toward camp.

Egyptian trains packed with troops arrived from the interior. Shells were soon exploding in the British camp. "Got them within reach at last," Graham said to an aide as he watched the enemy troops arrive. Graham deployed his troops and prepared for action. The 1st Cavalry Brigade and the Indian Cavalry Brigade threatened the Egyptian left flank.

Graham ordered the Royal Marines, Royal Rifle Corps, and the York and Lancaster Regiment to advance in the early morning. The two sides traded volleys. The British infantry engaged was soon reinforced by three more regiments. Although outnumbered, the crack British troops gained the upper hand. By late morning, the Egyptians were in full retreat back toward their lines at Tel-el-Kebir. When Wolseley arrived on the field, he ordered a halt to the pursuit, not wanting to attack the enemy's main position with only part of his overall force.

Wolseley intended to keep the pressure on the Egyptians. At dawn on September 12 the British commander led a group of senior officers and staff on a reconnaissance of the main Egyptian line. The enemy's line of entrenchments stretched for four miles from the canal north into the desert. The Egyptians had buttressed their defensive line with nine batteries. In front of the entrenchment was a deep ditch. Connected to these entrenchments were trenches leading to gun redoubts, many of which supported the center and right of the main line. Egyptian engineers had built redoubts on either side of the canal to guard a dam and a rail line.

In addition, the Egyptian left flank was dotted with hilltop batteries to guard against enemy attempts to outflank the position. On the opposite side of the canal, the Egyptian right flank was protected to some extent by the soft soil of cultivated ground that prevented the passage of batteries. The village of Tel-el-Kebir was situated on this side of the canal.

Arabi had 28,000 troops, among which were Bedouins, and upwards of 75 guns to hold these lines. But the majority of the Egyptian troops were raw recruits. Arabi's most professional troops were the Sudanese regulars.

As for the British, Wolseley had on hand 17,000 troops and 61 guns with which to assault the Egyptian entrenchments. He intended to launch a surprise attack at dawn. He and his officers conferred over their plans as they observed the enemy. They took careful note of the enemy's picket positions and made final plans for an attack the next day.

Wolseley intended to make a night march to

get into position to strike the center and left of the Egyptian line. The old soldier correctly surmised that the Egyptians would concentrate most of their guns on their right near the canal.

"Go straight in on them, and then kill them all," Wolseley told his subordinate commanders. The officers subsequently issued orders to their respective units that afternoon to prepare to advance at 6:30 p.m. As a precaution to deceive the enemy, they left their campfires burning. After piling their baggage for safekeeping by the rail line, the soldiers proceeded to prearranged points in preparation for a six-mile night march. As they headed out into the darkness, each man carried 100 rounds of ammunition, two days' worth of rations, and water bottles filled with cold tea.

Lt. Gen. Sir Edward Hamley's 2nd Division anchored Wolseley's left north of the rail line. Alison's 1st Highland Brigade led the way and was followed closely by Colonel C. Ashburnham's 4th Brigade. Willis'1st Division, spearheaded by Graham's 2nd Brigade, took up a position 1,200 yards to their right. Marching behind them was the 1st or Guards Brigade under the command of Maj. Gen. Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, who was Queen Victoria's third son.

Between the Guards Brigade and the 4th Brigade were seven batteries. Two Royal Horse Artillery batteries deployed to the right of the Guards Brigade. Drury-Lowe's cavalry division advanced on the far right of Wolseley's force. The railway gun situated on tracks in the left rear of these forces added additional firepower.

The Indian contingent under Maj. Gen. Sir Hebert Macpherson deployed on the south side of the Sweetwater Canal. Sailors manning six Gatling guns took up a position on the north side of the canal. Macpherson had orders to advance an hour after the rest of the force. Wolseley had deliberately delayed their advance, for there were villages nearby and he did not want the Egyptians to have any advance warning of the main attack.

Wolseley's force advanced steadily through the night. "Considering the intense darkness and the excessive strain on everybody, that the army kept together as well as they did," wrote Robert Tutt of the Royal Marines Light Infantry. As the troops closed in on the Egyptian entrenchment halts were made to realign and reform the men, especially in Alison's Brigade.

The British troops' attention suddenly turned to a comet streaking across the eastern sky at 4:50 AM. Not long after this cosmic event occurred, rifle fire broke the morning silence as an Egyptian cavalry patrol bumped into part of Graham's Brigade. As light began to appear on the eastern horizon, Alison's Highland Brigade quickly discovered that they were just 350 yards from the enemy's line. As bullets began to zip through the

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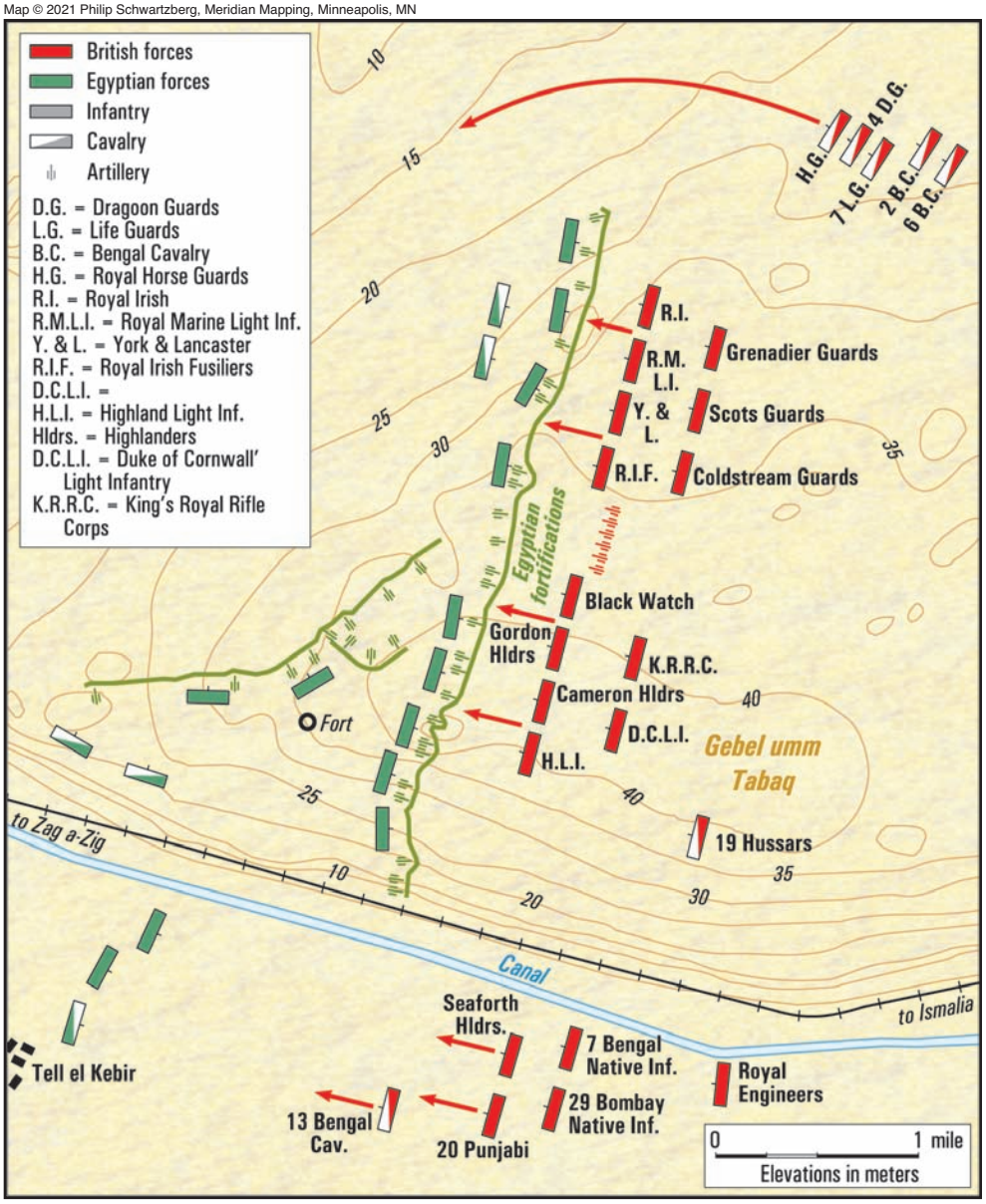

ABOVE: Wolseley advanced his infantry against the enemy positions at Tell El Kebir under cover of darkness. The Egyptians awoke to find the British within a few hundred yards of their lines. OPPOSITE: Mounted on a grey horse, Maj. Gen. Prince Arthur, the Duke of Connaught and the third son of Queen Victoria, directs the Guards Brigade in the final attack.

air, Alison ordered his Highlanders to fix bayonets. A bugle blast signalled the attack, and the Highlanders let out a rousing cheer and charged.

The Highlanders endured a wall of fire as they struggled forward in two waves. The Highland Light Infantry on the left ran into a deep ditch and straight into the galling fire from enemy troops from behind a protected position. The Black Watch on the right also ran into trouble when it encountered earthworks and murderous fire. But it was the Cameron and Gordon highlanders in the center that had the distinction of reaching the enemy line first.

The British units furthest in front soon found themselves taking fire from three sides. Some of the men were on the verge of withdrawing when Alison appeared revolver in hand to help rally the men. Hamley arrived with much-needed support to strengthen the Highlanders and enable them to hold captured ground. At that point, the Highland Light Infantry and Black Watch stormed the enemy's earthworks and redoubts. "The bayonet was the only thing we used, and we used it right well," said Lachlan McLean of the Black Watch.

To Alison's right, Graham's Brigade attacked shortly after the Highlanders. The infantry raced across 900 yards of ground. The air was hissing with lead as the Royal Irish Fusiliers, the York and Lancaster Regiment, and the Royal Marines fought their way into the enemy trenches. Some

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

Soldiers of the Black Watch with fixed bayonets storm the enemy trenches in the final attack. The British victory ultimately led to Egypt becoming a British protectorate.

of the Egyptians fled. The British infantry bayoneted or shot those who attempted to hold their ground. The confusion stalled the advance. "It took me a long time to get the men in hand again," said Lt. Col. Jones, who commanded the Royal Marines.

The cavalry on the far right went into action at 4:40 AM. Fifteen minutes later they were 2,000 yards away from the Egyptian line. They took fire from a fortified position on the Egyptian left, which was soon silenced by a battery of the Royal Horse Artillery.

The cavalry continued their advance, swinging around the enemy's flank in order to get behind the Egyptians. The Egyptians found themselves in a desperate position. The combined force of Graham's Brigade, the Highland Brigade, and the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry forced back the Egyptians. After overcoming fierce resistance in the main entrenchments, the Highlanders had a tough time dislodging the Egyptian troops who fought furiously to hold a second line of trenches. The Highlanders captured the second line of trenches at 6:00 AM.

Meanwhile, the British guns had moved into the captured enemy lines and were sending shells into the beleaguered Egyptians. With the red-coated British infantry proving unstoppable, the Egyptian's left flank gave way. A group of white-clad Egyptian troops fled. British cavalry and horse artillery gave chase.

The situation was little better on the south of the canal, where the Indian Contingent launched its assault. Enduring screaming shells and whizzing bullets, the Seaforth Highlanders took an enemy battery and captured a dozen guns. At the same time, the 20th Punjab Native Infantry took a nearby village supported by another Indian regiment, which maintained a steady fire against a large force of Bedouins.

North of the canal, the Highland Brigade pushed on with lead elements climbing over hilly ground to spot the enemy's camp. They could see thousands of enemy troops scurrying about and trains preparing to steam out of the railway station. Moving toward the camp they were met by the Egyptian commissary-general with a white flag asking to be taken to the British headquarters. The British had the Egyptians in full retreat shortly after dawn.

When the smoke of battle cleared the British had suffered 58 killed, 401 wounded and 15 missing. The Egyptians, on the other hand, suffered about 2,000 killed, an unknown number wounded, and 3,000 captured.

Wolseley drove his forces onward in a bid to prevent Arabi, who had fled the front for Cairo, from gathering more troops. The Indian Contingent hurried onto the village of Zagazig, where it cut the rail line to Cairo and severed Arabi's communications with his forces in the field. Wolseley directed his cavalry to advance to Cairo.

By mid-afternoon the cavalry and mounted infantry reached Belbeis after a 30-mile ride. Upon reaching the town, they took a much-needed rest before swinging back in the saddle on September 14 to continue their advance. That afternoon they reached the outskirts of Cairo. Drury-Lowe dispatched 50 troopers under Lt. Col. Herbert Stewart to capture Abbassiyeh Barracks on the edge of the city. The troops from the barracks promptly surrendered.

A small force of the 4th Dragoons and mounted infantry under Royal Engineer Captain Charles Watson continued into Cairo, where they accepted the surrender of the 10,000 troops garrisoning the city. Arabi surrendered unconditionally that night to Drury-Lowe. This brought the short but bloody Anglo-Egyptian War to an end.

Wolseley had shown great professionalism in the way that he brought the campaign to a speedy conclusion. On September 25, Tewfik was back in Cairo. As for Arabi, he was tried on December 3 and sentenced to death, but his sentence was commuted, and he was exiled to Ceylon.

The British restored power to the Khedivate, and most of the troops in the expeditionary force departed in November. But an occupation force remained to protect Great Britain's interests and prevent another war. The British celebrated their triumph over the Egyptians on November 18 when the victorious troops returning from the battlefront marched past Queen Victoria in London. ■

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British glider-borne troops assaulted strategic canal and river bridges on D-Day to protect the Allied flank. A desperate battle erupted when crack German troops tried to retake the bridges.

By Joshua Shepherd

At midnight of June 6, 1944, a trio of Halifax bombers, each towing a Horsa glider, roared above the black waters of the English Channel. Aboard each of the gliders, 15 heavily armed British infantrymen quieted their nerves by singing lively drinking songs. Despite the lighthearted diversion, the tension aboard the gliders was palpable. Private Harry Clark recalled that this flight was far different from his many training exercises. "I think people began to realize what we were heading for," recalled Clark, "We were now faced with a situation, there was no going back."

Wikimedia

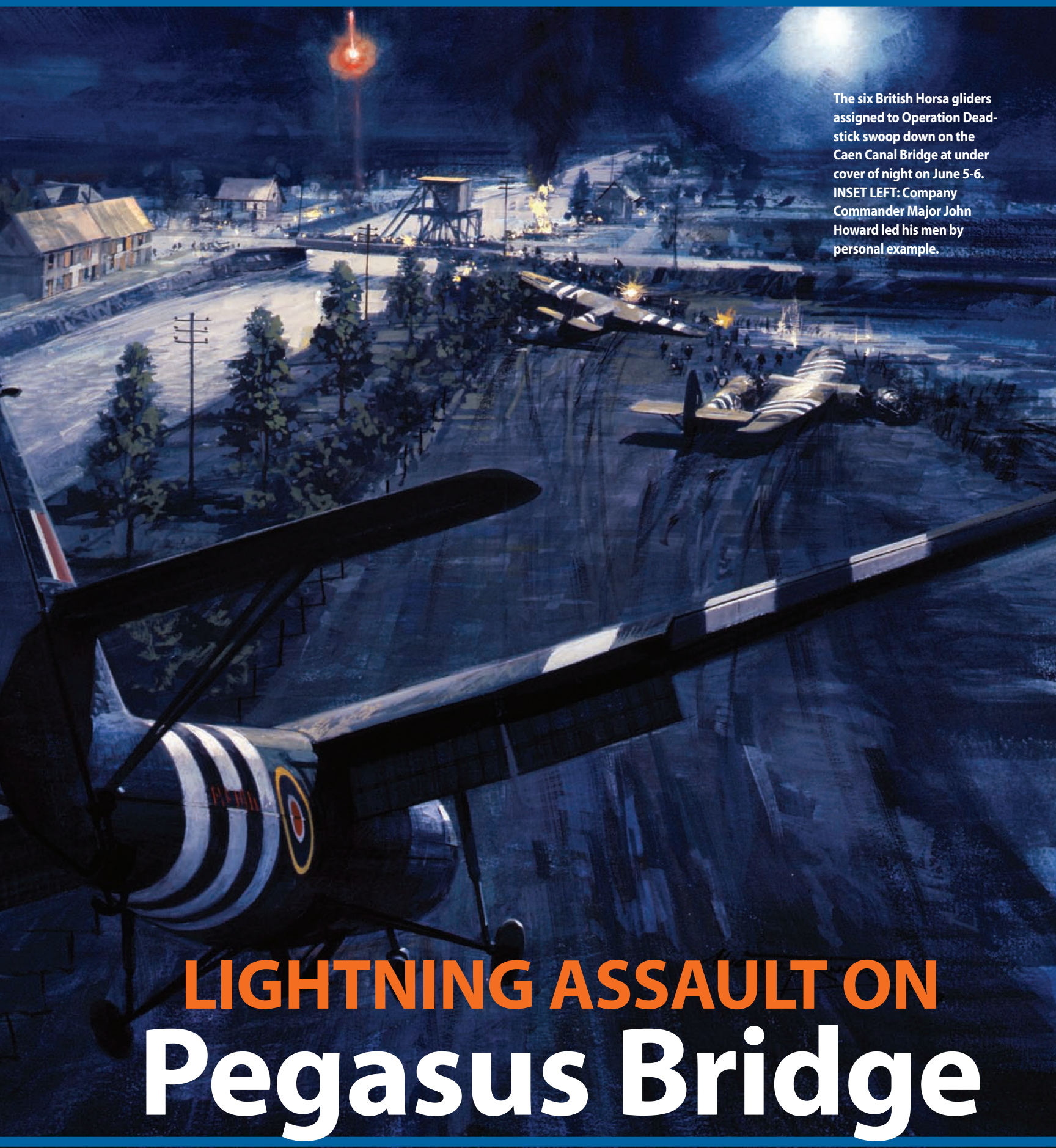
When the aircraft reached the French coast, the glider pilots released their tow cables from the Halifax bombers and began an irreversible descent into Nazi-occupied Normandy. At the controls of glider Chalk 92, Staff Sergeant Oliver Boland directed the glider toward his target, a strategically vital bridge spanning the Caen Canal. In the opening minutes of the D-Day invasion, Boland would be among the first British troops to land on the European continent. The cocksure young glider pilot suddenly found himself overwhelmed by the magnitude of the assignment. "I found it difficult to believe because I felt so insignificant [to be] the spearhead of the most colossal army ever assembled," he said.

Boland and his comrades were an integral part of the massive Allied invasion known as Operation Overlord, which aimed at nothing short of the liberation of Nazi-occupied Western Europe. Plans for the operation began almost immediately after the stunning German victories during the spring 1940 but proceeded in earnest after America joined the Allied war effort by the end of 1941. Until America's industrial strength could be brought to bear, vastly outnumbered Commonwealth troops waged a bold fight against Axis forces in wide-ranging campaigns around the globe.

After five years of dogged fighting, Great Britain was more than ready to strike back. Final plans for Operation Overlord, which was entrusted to American General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the commander of Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force, involved a massive amphibious operation that would initially land six infantry divisions on the Normandy coast. In all, the assault troops would assault five beaches. On the right, the Americans would assault Utah and Omaha beaches. In the center, British and Canadian troops would land on Gold and Juno beaches. On the left, near the mouth of the Orne River, the troops of the British 3rd Division would secure Sword beach before moving inland to seize the strategic road and rail hub of Caen.

In order to blunt German counterattacks and help take pressure off the troops of the amphibious landings, Allied planners opted to deploy a robust airborne component behind the enemy's front lines. Eventually it was decided to use three divisions: the American 82nd and 101st Airborne, and the British 6th Airborne. All three divisions contained a mix of conventional paratroopers paired with glider-borne infantry. While the Americans played havoc on German formations on the Allied right, the British troops of the 6th Airborne were assigned to protect the Allied left.

The use of airborne troops on a such a massive scale was nonetheless considered an inherently risky gamble. For his part, British Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory was less than sanguine regarding the prospects of the massive airborne operation. Regarded as something of an abrasive pessimist, Leigh-Mallory, who ranked as the top air commander for the Overlord operation, cautioned Eisenhower at the end of May that the paratroop and glider insertions into Normandy were a disaster in the making. By his reck-



The six British Horsa gliders assigned to Operation Dead-stick swoop down on the Caen Canal Bridge at under cover of night on June 5-6. INSET LEFT: Company Commander Major John Howard led his men by personal example.

LIGHTNING ASSAULT ON Pegasus Bridge

National Archives

This post-war photograph shows the village of Benouville at left, Cafe Gondree next to the canal, and the drawbridge over the Caen Canal. After they captured the bridge, the British transformed the cafe into an aid station.

oning, half the paratroopers and a third of the gliders were sure to be lost.

For the British troops of the 6th Airborne Division, under the command of Maj. Gen. Richard "Windy" Gale, the constraints of geography would dictate the battle plan. Once in its intended drop zone, the division would have its back pinned against two parallel barriers, the Caen Canal and the Orne River. Running east from the village of Benouville was a road which crossed both watercourses. Directly adjacent to Benouville was a swing bridge, complete with a two-story counterweight, that crossed the 150-foot-wide Caen Canal. Just a half mile east of the canal, a pivoting bridge crossed the tidal Orne River. The brainchild of the legendary French engineer Gustave Eiffel, the structure was an ingeniously designed affair which could pivot on a single pier in the middle of the river.

If the Germans could maintain control of the crossings, they could effectively cut off the 6th Airborne from British forces landing at Sword Beach, and then destroy the isolated paratroopers in detail. To Allied planners, it was apparent that seizing the two bridges was crucial to securing the eastern flank of the Allied landings, and consequently to the success of the entire D-Day operation. The vital need to control the crossings of the twin waterways was the genesis of Operation Deadstick, among the most daring airborne operations of World War II.

Because paratroopers dropped at night were almost certain to be scattered wide of their intended drop zone and face inevitable delays in organizing for an attack, taking the bridges before the Germans could destroy them was considered unlikely. The solution, to Gale's thinking, was to assault and capture the bridges with specially trained glider-borne infantry.

The glider was an innovation of World War II, which already had proved its worth to both to both Allied and Axis forces. Towed by bombers, the lightweight, powerless glider would be released over its target and was capable of quietly inserting assault troops into a confined landing zone. With a picked force and a dose of good luck, Gale hoped to land elite glider troops close to the bridges and then take control of the crossings before the Germans had time to react.

Once he had settled on a general course of action, Gale approached Brig. Gen. Hugh Kindersley, the commander of his Air Landing Brigade, and asked him to suggest a company capable of such an operation. Without hesitation, Kindersley recommended what he considered the best outfit under his command, D Company of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

D Company's reputation as a crack unit was due in no small part to its hard-driving commander, Major John Howard. Howard had learned the virtues of hard work and determination during his formative years in London's West End. He served a stint in the army in the 1930s, and then found work as a policeman on the gritty streets of Oxford. When war broke out in 1939, Howard was back in uniform, quickly winning promotion and then an officer's commission.

By 1944 Howard was a company commander in the "Ox and Bucks," which had been attached to the glider-borne Air Landing Brigade of the 6th Airborne Division. A natural-born commander who led by personal example, he was immensely respected by his men and highly valued by his superiors. During training, Howard drove his men hard, and himself harder.

To ensure that Howard and his men were cut out for the operation, Gale scheduled a special three-day exercise and attended the event with brigadiers Kindersley and Nigel Poett, commander of the 5th Parachute Brigade. Howard and his men staged a mock landing and assault of three bridges guarded by British paratroopers who filled in as Germans. After witnessing the maneuvers, all three of the general officers in attendance were convinced that D Company was the right outfit for the job.

Soon after the exercises concluded, Howard met privately with his immediate superior, Colonel Michael Roberts, who informed him of D Company's historic and top-secret assignment. When the Allied invasion of France materialized, Howard and his men would have the very important task of seizing two bridges that were strategically vital, Roberts said. More details on the operation were forthcoming, but Roberts made clear the magni-

tude of the assignment. "You will be the spearhead of the invasion, certainly the first British fighting force to land on the Continent," he said.

D Company's vital mission ensured that the men received the rigorous training of crack troops. Howard worked hard to create realistic training exercises, staging mock assaults on bridges that were conducted at night in order to ensure that the men were accustomed to operating in the dark. Howard was allowed to bolster his company by selecting two additional platoons, and he chose two outfits from B Company of the Ox and Bucks, giving him a total if six platoons. Each platoon was also assigned an organic contingent of Royal Engineers, who were assigned the vital task of disarming any German demolitions on the bridges.

The troops would be using Horsa gliders, a powerless 67-foot-long plywood behemoth that could deliver at least 15 men into combat. Howard repeatedly had his fully loaded and armed men practice exiting the craft. In Normandy, capturing the bridges quickly would be of the utmost importance, and a momentary delay could mean the difference between life and death.

For good reason, the young glider pilots assigned to Operation Deadstick received perhaps the most rigorous training of all. The pilots would be flying at night by means of dead reckoning, with little more than a map and a stopwatch to navigate to the landing zones. The pilots initially trained during the daytime, but ultimately resorted to flying at night or with blindfolds. Theirs was an immensely stressful job on which the entire operation, as well as the lives of their occupants, would hang in the balance.

Howard's mission was likewise given top priority for reconnaissance flights, which provided aerial photographs of the target area. But despite the immense worth of the reconnaissance flights, aerial photographs were limited in their ability to capture the vagaries of terrain or the shifting German defenses. Ultimately, the German garrison of 50 men constructed a warren of trenches and bunkers, bolstered by a half dozen machine-gun positions and an antitank gun.

Fortunately for Allied planners, a pair of unassuming French civilians provided a wealth of priceless intelligence. Situated in Benouville directly west of the bridge over the Caen Canal, Georges and Theresa Gondree operated the Cafe Gondree, a modest watering hole frequented by German troops. Although the couple kept up appearances as inconspicuous middle-aged restaurant owners, they were key members of the French Resistance in the village of Benouville.

Madame Gondree, who understood German, was uniquely equipped to covertly gather intelligence on occupying troops. Unsuspecting German officers who frequented the cafe consequently passed along a wealth of information which made it directly into English hands. Thanks to the best aerial photographs of the target, as well as highly reliable intelligence from the couple, Howard and his men were well familiarized with the bridges, their defenses, the surrounding terrain, and specific enemy dispositions.

On June 5, 1944, Eisenhower issued orders for Operation Overlord to go forward. Howard's men were given the day off in order to rest, but few could sleep. That evening the men, heavily armed and loaded with ammunition and supplies, boarded six Horsa gliders at the Tarrant Rushton airfield. At 11:00 PM the Halifax tow planes lifted off the runway. The troops braced themselves as best they could for the ultimate test; some were lost deep in

Both: Imperial War Museum

TOP: British glider troops inside a Horsa glider during training. BOTTOM: The gliders scraped to a halt in close proximity to their objectives without alerting the German defenders.

Imperial War Museum

The wreckage of Horsa gliders litter a field near the Caen Canal Bridge. The impact of the landing ripped some of the men from their safety harnesses and hurled them through the cockpit window of the glider.

thought, most burst into song in order to relieve the tension. "The atmosphere in the glider was somewhat like a London tube train in the rush hour," said Clark. "We were in good heart."

It was a short flight, and at seven minutes past midnight, the festive atmosphere ended abruptly. Staff Sergeant Jim Wallwork, at the controls of the lead glider, released from the tow line as soon as he was over the French coastline. As soon as the men realized that they were no longer tethered to the Halifax tow planes, the singing stopped. The ominous silence aboard the Horsas seemed to emphasize the stark reality of the mission; if the pilots could land successfully, the British troops would be on the ground in a matter of minutes and facing a baptism of fire.

Wallwork bore an unenviable weight of responsibility for the success of the entire operation. He and his co-pilot, John Ainsworth, were virtually flying blind and forced to rely on their instruments and stopwatch. Precisely three minutes and 42 seconds after casting off from the tow plane, Ainsworth gave the signal to Wallwork to turn the glider to starboard, steering for the Caen Canal.

Near-panic set in as visibility remained nearly nonexistent. Wallwork cast fitful glances out the window as he desperately searched for sign of the Bois de Bavent, an immense forest the pilot had hoped to use as a landmark to fix his position. "For God's sake, it is the biggest place in Normandy," said Ainsworth. "Pay attention!"

Giving up hope of sighting the forest, Wallwork made one more starboard turn, bringing his Horsa to a northward course parallel with the Caen Canal. As he did so, he slowed the glider to 110 miles per hour and executed a rapid descent, falling from 7,000 feet to a mere 500 feet as he rapidly approached the target area. Forced to rely on his instruments, and with no possibility of a second chance, Wallwork faced the real possibility of wrecking his glider and killing every man aboard.

And then something miraculous happened. Wallwork abruptly caught sight of the landing zone and discovered that he was precisely on course. Ainsworth's navigation had put them right on target. Shouting for Howard and the men to get ready, Wallwork began the final descent to the landing zone. As the troops shouted, linked arms, and raised their feet from the floor of the Horsa, Howard could see that the young pilot was straining under the greatest responsibility of his life. "I could see old Jim holding that great bloody machine, and driving it in at the last minute," recalled Howard. "The look on his face was one that one could never forget. I could see those great damn footballs of sweat all over his face."

Coming in over the treetops at nearly 100 miles per hour, the Horsa slammed into the ground at the northern edge of the landing zone with a deafening crash that knocked every man on board momentarily unconscious. Wallwork and Ainsworth, ripped from their safety belts, were thrown through the front windows of the glider. The impact of the landing had caused Howard's helmet to fall down over his eyes, and as he slowly regained his senses, he thought perhaps that he was either blind or dead.

As glider landings go, it had been a near perfect one. Wallwork had succeeded in bringing the nose of his glider to rest against a barbed-wire entanglement on the northern edge of the landing zone, and the Horsa was a mere 150 feet away from the canal bridge. Amazingly, German defenses at the bridge were quiet. In mere seconds, the troops were on their feet and gathering equipment. Lieutenant Herbert Denham "Den" Brotheridge, flinging open the exit door, motioned to a Bren gunner to get on the move. "Gun out!" shouted the lieutenant.

Howard's men piled out of the Horsa and made a mad dash for the bridge. In the opening moments of the fight, little mercy would be shown as the glider troops struggled to overwhelm the Germans before they could mount an adequate defense. When Private Billy Gray ran up the road bank, he noticed a startled German and quickly cut him down with a burst from his Bren Gun. Private Wally Parr, shouting at the top of his lungs, ran for a bunker on the northern side of the road. When he reached it, he opened the door and threw in a grenade. Still hearing a muffled voice from inside, he flung the door open and unleashed a burst of fire into the structure.

The British had caught the Germans by complete surprise. Private Helmut Romer, who was stationed that night as a bridge sentry, noticed some sort of aircraft crash east of the bridge, but assumed it was a portion of an Allied bomber that had been downed by anti-aircraft fire. When screaming British troops came running in his direction, he realized his mistake and quickly turned heel. Peering out the window of his cafe, Georges Gondree could see a panicked German soldier running pell-mell for the western end of the bridge. "Parachutists!" screamed the terrified

soldier. Another German, hoping to rouse the garrison, succeeded in firing a single alarm flare, which arced high in the sky above the canal.

By then, though, it was too late. Brotheridge was at the head of his platoon, racing across the bridge ward Benouville. Gunfire erupted along both sides of the bridge, but Brotheridge's men reached the west bank in seconds, where they fanned out to secure the surrounding buildings. As some of the men regrouped in front of the shuttered Cafe Gondree, they suddenly realized that Brotheridge was missing. Wally Parr then noticed someone sprawled in the road and knelt down beside him. It was Den Brotheridge.

He had been shot through the neck and lay motionless on his back. "His eyes were open, and his lips were moving," said Parr. "I put my hand behind his head to lift him up; his eyes rolled back, he just choked and lay back." Brotheridge would be the first Allied soldier killed by enemy fire on D Day, and Parr was struck by seemingly pointless tragedy. Brotheridge had been in action only about 30 seconds and he was dead. "What a waste," Parr said.

While the tremendous crash of gunfire grew louder around the bridge, the rest of the Horsa gliders continued to arrive at the landing zone east of the canal. The second glider to arrive at the battlefield, carrying Lieutenant David Wood's platoon, approached the landing zone just one minute behind Wallwork.

Its pilot, Oliver Boland, was worried he would crash into the tail of the lead glider, and desperately deployed a parachute brake. Wood was thrown out of the craft on impact, but quickly formed up his men and ran for the road embank-

The iconic Sten gun gave British paratroops heavy firepower.

An iconic weapon borne of desperation and resolve, the legendary British Sten gun was a humble implement of war that would nonetheless help shape the course of history. If necessity is the mother of invention, the dire need for an effective submachine gun gave birth to the crude but effective Sten.

In order to supply submachine guns to their foot soldiers at the outbreak of World War II, Commonwealth nations scrambled to purchase the American-made Thompson submachine gun. But acquiring the weapon proved little more than a costly stop gap. The robust American Thompson was heavier than most submachine guns, somewhat cumbersome to wield, and chambered in .45 Automatic, an uncommon cartridge in Europe. Worst of all, it was notoriously expensive.

In order to fill the need for a cheap, reliable, and locally produced alternative, British arms designers at Enfield's Royal Small Arms factory quickly developed an incredibly simple submachine gun that could be assembled using stamped metal parts and simple welding. The gunsmiths eventually simplified it with little more than a skeleton metal stock.

The Sten was incredibly makeshift in appearance but lethal at close range. The gun used a 32-round box magazine, which uniquely fed from the left of the breech, and was chambered in 9mm Parabellum; ironically, the German-developed cartridge already saw wide use across Europe. The gun's straightforward design ensured that much of the parts production for the Sten could be farmed out to small British factories and machine shops. All told, more than four million Stens were produced during World War II.

The crude but effective submachine gun would put mobile firepower into the hands of British troops across the globe. Earlier variants of the Sten gained unenviable reputations for malfunctions, including unintended discharge, but came to be particularly favored by British officers, paratroopers, and commandos, who valued the speed and firepower of the Sten for close-quarters fighting.

Captain Brian Priday, shown with his Sten gun, and two other glider men from Company D of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

Ultimately, the Sten would undergo repeated changes during the course of the war, resulting in a number of iterations, or "Marks," which attained progressive improvements over the original Mark I. The Mark V, introduced in 1944 and carried by a number of Howard's troops during the assault on Pegasus Bridge, was the best of them all. Well suited for urban combat, the Mark V functioned reliably and sported a wooden stock and pistol grip.

Tens of thousands of Sten guns were dropped to Resistance fighters behind German lines, and by the end of the war, a cash-strapped Third Reich resorted to manufacturing its own copy of the Sten. The gun would remain in British service into the 1960s, and in the postwar years was readily adopted by dozens of nations seeking a submachine gun for their militaries. The crude, cheap, but effective Sten would remain in use across the globe nearly a half century after it was first developed at the Enfield factory.

—Joshua Shepherd

National Archives

Commandos of the 1st Special Service Brigade, who had just come ashore on Sword Beach, march through Colleville-sur-Orne on their way to relieve the exhausted airborne troops at the two bridges.

ment, where he found Howard. The major was taking cover from German fire just feet away. He immediately ordered Wood to assault the trenches on the north side of the road. After months of training, the men were anxious to get into the fight. Wood and his men charged up the embankment and across the road "like a pack of unleashed hounds," said Howard.

Howard's men gained control of the bridge before the Germans had an opportunity to destroy it. As they scrambled around the girders of the bridge, the engineers discovered that the structure had been wired for demolition, but the explosive charges had never been installed.

While the fighting intensified, the third glider reached the landing zone. Sergeant Geoffrey Barkway, at the controls of the glider, found it difficult to find open ground on the landing zone already littered with two other gliders. He likewise employed his parachute brake, bounced his craft on landing, and then came down hard with a tremendous crash that broke the glider in half.

The impact sent Lieutenant Sandy Smith, the platoon commander, crashing through the front window of the Horsa. The lieutenant landed dazed and confused in the mud. Another unfortunate trooper, weighed down with an immense load of gear and ammunition, ended up bogged down in the marshy pond and drowned. Smith staggered to his feet, just as one of his men said something to motivate the platoon. "Well, what are we waiting for?" the soldier said.

The operation to seize the bridges would benefit from such aggressive initiative. Smith, limping on an injured knee, led his platoon across his bridge to the western bank of the canal but immediately ran into trouble. A retreating German tossed a grenade at Smith, and then leaped up over a wall to escape. Smith caught him before he could get over the wall and fired a lengthy burst from his Sten gun into the German at point blank range. When the firing was over, one of Smith's men ran to his side and asked if he was alright. During the chaos of the fight, Smith had failed to notice that his forearm had been badly mangled by the grenade blast. "I saw that the whole of my wrist was bare," said Smith.

Despite the success at the canal, it still remained for the men of the Ox and Bucks to seize the bridge over the Orne River. The glider landings there, though, did not go according to plan. The Horsa carrying Captain Brian Priday's platoon veered badly off course and landed beside a bridge at Varaville, a good eight miles from their target. Another glider, carrying Lieutenant Todd Sweeney's platoon, met with unexpected turbulence as it approached the landing zone and ended up touching down 1,300 yards from the bridge. Although Sweeney quickly had his men on the move, they would be behind schedule for the initial attack.

Lieutenant Dennis Fox and his platoon would face an equally harrowing ordeal. As he brought their Horsa in for a landing, Staff Sergeant Roy Howard had to fight to keep the nose of his glider up and finally ordered two men toward the rear of the craft in order to distribute the weight. Thanks to his quick thinking, the landing went perfectly; the Horsa's wheel's broke off on impact and then the craft slowly skidded to a stop. Howard's piloting had put Fox's platoon down within sight of the river bridge. "To hell with it, let's get cracking," Fox said. He led his men in a sprint for the bridge.

As they neared the river, a German machine-gun crew on the far bank spotted them and opened fire. Sergeant Charles "Wagger" Thornton quickly set up a 2-inch mortar and lobbed two shells over the river. As the British troops ran across the bridge, shouting as they charged, the rattled Germans scattered. In minutes, the bridge over the Orne River had been seized nearly without a fight. In less than 30 minutes, Howard's elite troops had succeeded in seizing both of their objectives. Radio operators began transmitting the code, which was "ham and jam," for the successful capture of the bridges.

Despite the success, holding the bridges from an inevitable German counterattack would result in a far bloodier ordeal. Since British paratroopers would take over responsibility for the river bridge, Howard left just a single platoon there and consolidated the rest of his command at the canal, which was almost certain to face a fierce German counterattack. For the coming fight, Howard kept one platoon east of the canal as a tactical reserve, with three platoons west of the canal to stop any German push.

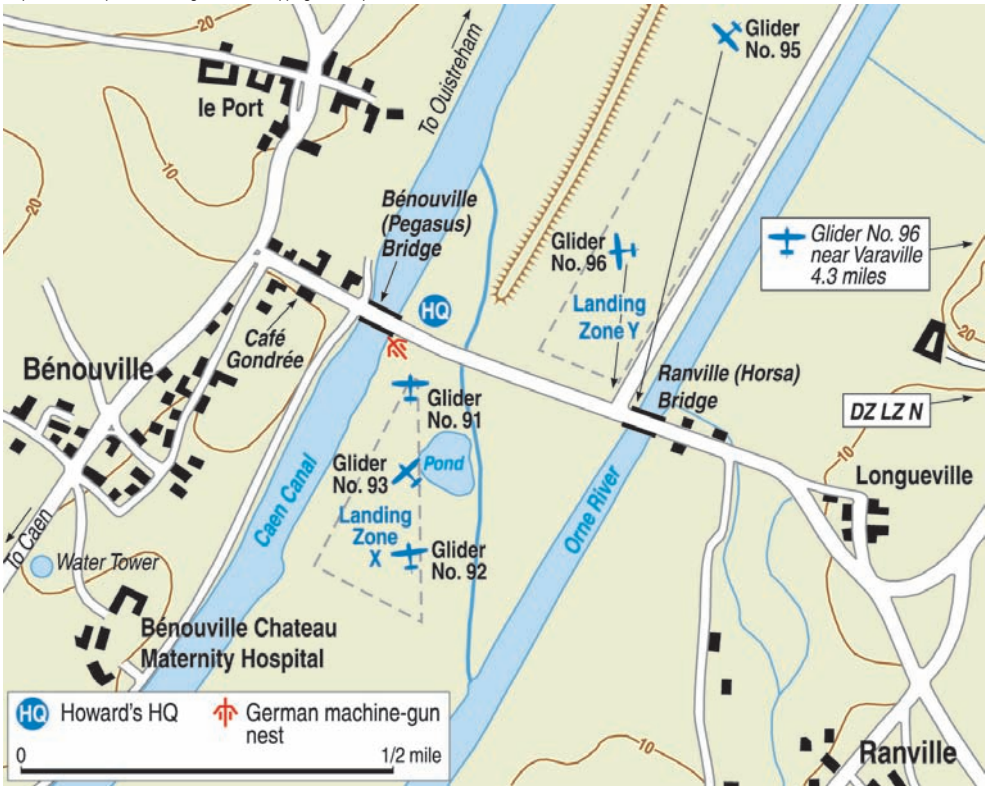
It did not take long for the Germans to begin probing Howard's defenses. Fresh from the assault on the river bridge, Lieutenant Fox led his platoon forward to the crossroads west of the canal bridge. Out in front was Fox's most experienced non-commissioned officer, Sergeant Thornton. When the platoon reached the road junction, Fox set up his command post at the village church while his men took up defensive positions.

Scattered small-arms fire persisted, but at 2:00 AM Fox was alarmed by the ominous rattle of tracked vehicles. He could see very little, but it was obvious that the anticipated counterthrust of enemy armor was headed straight for his lightly armed platoon. Behind Fox, Lieutenant Sandy Smith felt the same helpless sensation. "My God, what the hell am I going to do with these tanks coming down the road," he said. The troops only had a single Piat 83mm anti-tank weapon and assumed that they were about to be overrun.

Just 30 yards away from the crossroads, Sergeant Thornton had other ideas. He had little faith in his inaccurate Piat but moved dangerously close to the road junction for a good shot at the enemy. In the darkness, no one could quite make

Imperial War Museum

Map © 2021 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN



TOP: Airborne troops armed with automatic weapons maintain a vigilant posture next to their captured objective. BOTTOM: The superb skills exhibited by the glider pilots resulted in three precision landings on the strip of ground between the two strategic crossings.

out what was coming at them. Thornton could eventually make out three vehicles; some witnesses thought that they were Mark IV Panzers, others thought they were captured French tanks. Regardless of exactly what the vehicles were, the British were badly outmatched. Thornton confessed to "shaking like a leaf" as he waited for the enemy to come within range.

Clearly unsure if they should head for the canal bridge, the Germans halted the vehicles to assess the situation. It was the opportunity Thornton was waiting for. Still trembling, he took aim at the lead vehicle and fired the Piat. It was a perfect shot and hit the lead vehicle square in the side, penetrated the armor, and exploded. Several Germans scrambled from the hulk, and Private Woods opened fire on them as they dashed for safety. At that point "all hell broke loose," said Thornton.

The Piat round began setting off ammunition inside the German vehicle, which exploded into a veritable inferno. The tremendous crash of the explosion, as well as the glow of the fire, could be seen for miles, helping British paratroopers farther east to find their bearings in the dark. Closer to the bridge, Howard's glider troops, including an astonished Thornton, crouched for cover as the ordnance continued to explode. Between explosions, the terrified soldiers could hear the screams of a wounded German who struggled to escape the wreckage.

In the midst of the horrific scene, humanity overcame terror. Private Tommy Clare broke from cover and ran straight for the burning wreck, where he found a wounded German, writhing in the middle of the road and missing both of his feet. Clare threw the stricken man over his shoulders and ran back toward a British aid station. Despite the carnage, Thornton's remarkable shot with the Piat had blocked the road junction and bought precious time for the defenders of the canal bridge. German officers, convinced that the British were in possession of anti-tank guns, pulled back to regroup.

The single platoon at the river bridge, commanded by Lieutenant "Todd" Sweeney, anxiously awaited relief from the British paratroopers of the 6th Airborne. Sweeney's men had ambushed a German infantry patrol that had approached along the riverbank, but they dreaded the prospect of a counterattack by German armor. In the darkness, Sweeney heard the approach of a tracked vehicle. "Well, here we go," he thought to himself. "This is the first tank attack."

Fortunately, he was mistaken. Just two vehicles were making for the bridge: a single halftrack followed by a motorcycle. Sweeney's men jumped up from the side ditches and opened fire. The motorcyclist was hit and careened out of control, while the halftrack, swerving violently, sped across the bridge. When it neared the far side, a quick-acting British soldier leapt to his feet and tossed a hand grenade into the open back of the halftrack. The explosion sent the vehicle into the ditch.

When the British troops rushed for the wreck, they discovered an unexpected prize. Inside the smashed halftrack was Major Hans Schmidt, commander of the German bridge defenses, who was suffering from a badly injured leg. The wound

National Archives

British Royal Marine commandos improve their fighting positions after relieving the airborne troops that captured the Caen Canal Bridge.

to his ego was worse. At the British aid station, an apoplectic Schmidt harangued Doctor John Vaughan on the folly of the Allied invasion. "Your troops are going to be thrown back," Schmidt thundered. "My Fuhrer will see to that: you're going to be thrown back into the sea!" The hysterical Nazi begged to be put out of his misery, pleading "Shoot me, doctor!" An amused Vaughan brushed him off and gave him a shot of morphine.

Far from being thrown back into the sea, the British were beginning to consolidate their gains in Normandy. As expected, the airborne drop had been messy. The 7th Parachute Battalion, consisting of 640 men, could only concentrate 210 men on the ground in Normandy. Howard was nonetheless more than a little relieved when they arrived, and immediately ordered them to the western end of the canal bridge.

When they reached the road junction, the paratroopers fanned out, taking up defensive positions in Benouville and Le Port. Despite an incredibly close call, British possession of the bridges was secure for the moment. Reinforced by the paratroopers, Howard pulled his advanced troops out of the front lines and consolidated east of the canal.

By dawn, the fight for the bridges was largely confined to small-arms fire, but greater chaos erupted to the north. In the hope of softening up German coastal defenses, Allied warships in the English Channel opened up a deafening bombardment as the amphibious landings got underway. While they anxiously listened to the greatest bombardment in history, the troops at the bridges felt the ground tremble under their feet. For his part, Howard was thankful to have joined the invasion by glider rather than with what he said were "those poor buggers coming by sea."

As soon as the sun slowly began to crest the horizon, the greatest danger to the British troops was the persistent threat of German snipers, who used the daylight hours to grim advantage. Howard's men, who continued to take casualties, grew increasingly frustrated in not being able to strike back at the well-concealed German snipers, who had an excellent view of the exposed ground around the canal bridge.

No one was safe. Lieutenant Smith, while receiving treatment in a roadside ditch, watched in horror as his medical orderly stood up and was struck in the chest by a single rifle shot. The man sprawled across the road screaming, while a terrified Smith felt certain that he was in the sniper's sights. The orderly fortunately survived, but others would not be so fortunate.

When Private Harry Clark escorted two German prisoners to the holding pen at Ranville, he came across a wounded paratrooper by the roadside. The man, who had been hit by a sniper, had been shot through the spine and was clearly dying. The stricken man begged Clark to put him out of his misery, but a rattled Clark pressed on with his prisoners. For the rest of the morning, any British soldier that lingered in the open was courting death, and German snipers sent a steady stream of wounded men to the aid stations.

While the sniper fire continued, the troops at the bridges were rewarded with a much-needed dose of encouragement. At 9:00 AM a trio of senior officers coolly walked onto the field from the direction of Ranville. It was Gale, flanked by Generals Poett and Kindersley. As he passed Howard's battle-weary soldiers, the unflappable Gale, as if on a morning stroll, greeted them as if it were any normal day. "Good morning, chaps," he said. With the arrival of the highest-ranking officers of the 6th Airborne, it seemed increasingly likely that the British would successfully hold the bridges and secure the left flank of the Allied invasion.

But before substantial reinforcements arrived, the airborne troops would be subjected to incessant German probes and harassing fire. When an enemy gunboat, armed with a 20 mm gun, came

upstream toward the canal bridge, the British had just a single Piat with which to confront it. Remarkably, Corporal Claude Godbold, firing from concealment, scored a direct hit on the gunboat, which drifted out of control into the bank, where its startled crew was taken prisoner.

Not long afterwards, Howard's outgunned command improvised more robust firepower. Private Wally Parr, manning the captured German antitank gun, opened up on yet another enemy gunboat which approached the canal bridge. Parr scored two hits before the gunboat headed back toward Caen. Not quite satisfied, Parr then commenced firing at any high point that might offer cover to enemy snipers. After drilling a pair of holes through the village water tower, he turned his attention to the Chateau de Benouville. After landing three hits on the structure, a furious Howard ordered him to cease fire. Unbeknownst to Parr, the chateau was being used as a maternity hospital.

Fortunately for the airborne troops holding on at the bridges, help was on the way. The initial British landings at Sword Beach had gone off surprisingly well, and the crack troops of the 1st Special Service Brigade, under the command of Brigadier Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat, began pressing south from the coast, flanking the Caen Canal and moving fast to the support of the 6th Airborne. Fortunately, German resistance was relatively light, and Lord Lovat's commandos made good progress.

As they neared the scene of the overnight gun battle it became readily apparent that they were entering a killing zone. While they trudged south, the commandos were greeted with the sight of dead Germans, as well as their own slain countrymen, strewed by the sides of the road.

But in a characteristically British display of audacity, Lovat had a jaunty surprise for the airborne troops. Out in front of the relief column marched a pair of men. One was Lovat, who was leading by personal example, and the other was piper Bill Millin, who was loudly playing a lively tune on the bagpipes. As the first notes of the bagpipes drifted to the bridge, Howard's men couldn't believe their ears. When Lieutenant Sweeney mentioned that he thought he heard bagpipes, Sergeant Thornton made a terse remark. "Bagpipes?" he said. "What are you talking about? You must be bloody nuts."

Within moments Lovat and Millin came into view, and the bleary-eyed airborne troops were incredulous at the surreal spectacle that greeted them. But the sight of the commandos stretched out behind Lovat meant that success was at hand: a link up with the troops from Sword Beach heralded a secure foothold in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Despite the heady nature of the commandos' arrival, they had walked into a hornet's nest. Steady small-arms and mortar fire continued to blanket the area, and German snipers immediately began targeting the newcomers. As Lovat's exhausted troops crossed over the canal at a slow walk, they made easy targets, and the surface of the bridge was quickly dotted with slain commandos.

Once on the east bank of the canal, Lovat was greeted by Howard, who could only think to apologize for the mortar fire coming from the direction of the maternity hospital. With an outstretched hand, Lovat paid the ultimate compliment to the heroic efforts of Howard's men. "John, today history is being made," Lovat said.

National Archives

A British Universal Carrier crammed with infantrymen heads east across the Caen Canal Bridge following its capture. The canal crossing was renamed Pegasus Bridge as a tribute to the Pegasus insignia worn by British airborne troops who played a vital role in the D-Day invasion.

Lovat's offhanded comment wasn't an exaggeration. Although the British troops controlling the bridges would continue to accrue casualties, both crossings would remain firmly in Allied hands. Thanks to an ungainly German command structure, nearby Panzer columns would remain motionless, ensuring that the 6th Airborne's grip on the bridges would be steadily reinforced. Using the precious window of time, the Allies secured their toehold in Normandy with a rapid influx of armor and artillery.

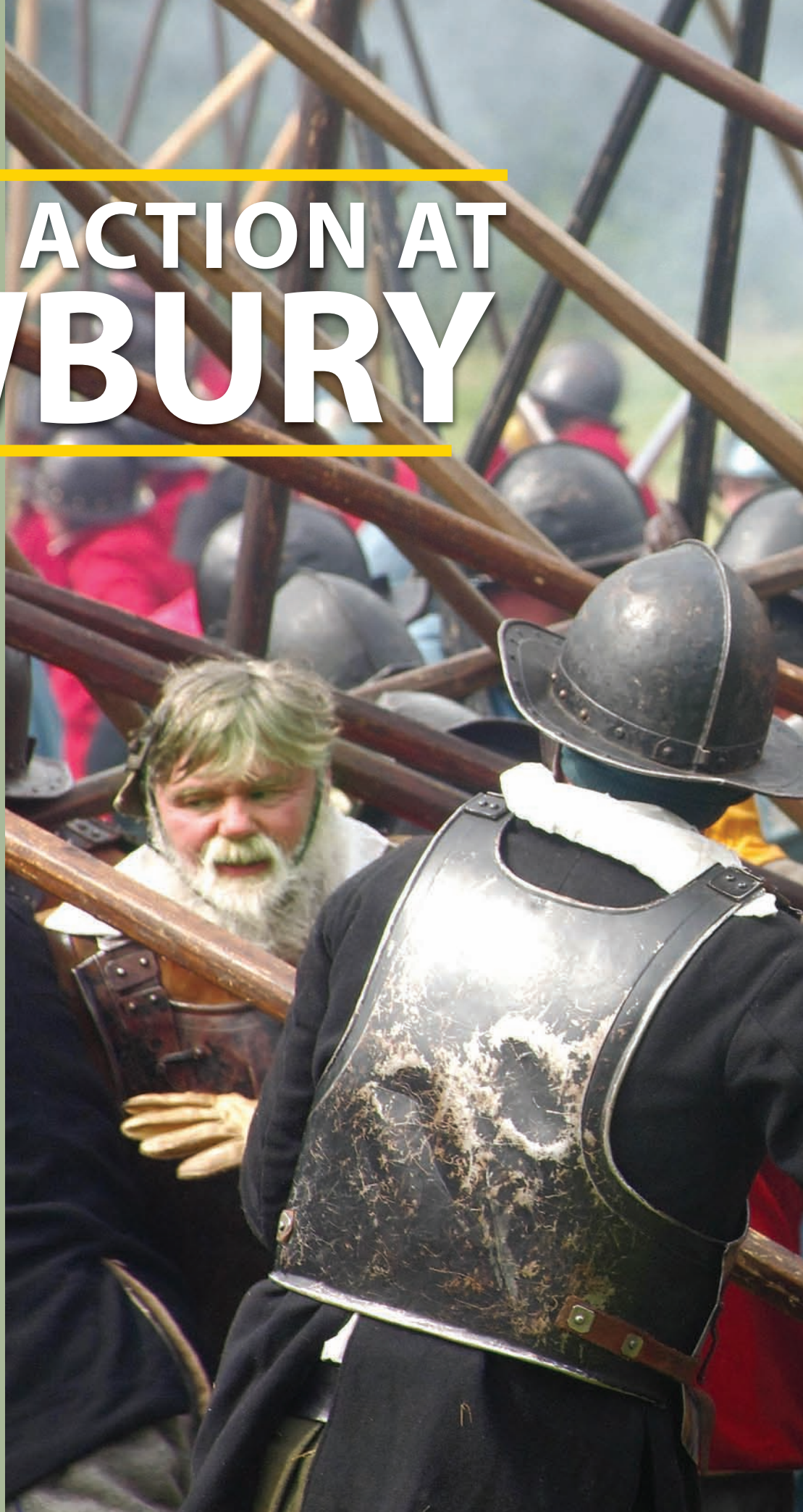
Late on the evening of D-Day, elements of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment relieved Howard and his men, who then rejoined the rest of the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry. They had trained for the operation for months and had succeeded beyond any expectation. But in the immediate aftermath of the fight for the canal bridge, the crossing quickly garnered a new name that paid homage to their sacrifice. The Benouville Canal Bridge was quickly renamed Pegasus Bridge in honor of the mythical winged stallion that emblazoned the shoulder patch of the 6th Airborne.

The historic achievements of John Howard's hand-picked glider troops at Pegasus Bridge could not be overstated. By seizing the crossings of the Orne River and Caen Canal intact, the glider troops of the Ox and Bucks had secured the vital lines of communication to the British 6th Airborne Division, which anchored the left flank of the Allied landings in Normandy. Air Chief Marshal Leigh-Mallory, who had always maintained a pessimistic view of the Allied airborne operation, was nonetheless effusive in his praise for the warriors who had taken Pegasus Bridge. The entire operation had succeeded due to the remarkable coolness of the young glider pilots, who had pulled off "the greatest feat of flying" of World War II, said Leigh-Mallory. ■

Robert L. Durham

SAVAGE ACTION AT NEWBURY

The Parliamentarians found their path to London blocked at Newbury in September 1643. Furious charges by the Royalists captured key ground, but a crucial mistake cost them their tactical advantage.



Alamy

Prince Rupert eyed the Parliamentarian position atop the low ridge south of the village of Newbury on the morning of September 20, 1643, with deep concern. Through the heavy mist that resulted from the unending late summer rains in England he watched closely as artillery crews prepared to fire two drakes, small cannon that hurled five-pound projectiles. The two drakes did not form a major threat to the king's army, which was arrayed a short distance to the northeast astride the road to London, but he realized that it was an oversight on his behalf that he had not dispatched a force the previous day to hold the ridge.

He was sure Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex and Parliament's Lord General, intended to move more of the guns in his artillery train onto the ridge, at which point they would pose a threat to the left flank of King Charles' field army. Rupert,

Pikemen participate in a re-enactment of the pitched battle. Parliamentary forces fought with great professionalism in a slugfest marked by heavy casualties on both sides.

Walker Art Gallery / Wikimedia

ABOVE: King Charles I, Prince Rupert of the Rhine, and senior lords hold a council of war. The war had been going on for just over a year, and the king was hoping for a decisive victory at Newbury. OPPOSITE: Although the Parliamentary Army had succeeded in forcing the Royalists to quit their siege of Gloucester on September 5, the Royalists got ahead of the Parliamentarians and blocked the road to London at Newbury.

who commanded thousands of horsemen that day, could send them to seize the northern end of the ridge, but they would have to advance into the teeth of the menacing drakes.

He had to act quickly. The presence of the Roundheads in force on the ridge did not bode well for the Royalists given they held the only high ground a short distance south of the village. Rupert had come to know Essex's talents well in a year of hard campaigning, and the Lord General was not one to be underestimated. Rupert knew Essex to be intelligent, resourceful, and clever.

Rupert was not about to be outsmarted by Essex on the field of battle, so he called forth some of his bravest horsemen, and sent them to scatter the Parliamentarians and hold the hilltop for the king's infantry. What would unfold that day would be a contest that would require professional and volunteer soldiers on both sides to fight with the utmost grit and determination for their respective causes.

In "this war without an enemy," as Sir William Waller described the English Civil War, England suffered more casualties than it did in either World War I or World War II. During the campaigning from 1643 to 1645, it is estimated one in 10 men between the ages of 16 and 65 enlisted in either the Royalist or Parliamentarian armies. As many as 150 towns and cities suffered the ravages of the war. Although it seemed senseless to many, thousands of Parliamentarians and Royalists joined one side or the other.

The English Civil War began with neither party wishing to engage in a war. It is believed the war stemmed from King Charles I's personal and religious approach to government. His reign began on March 27, 1625. The second monarch of the House of Stuart, Charles was a man who was largely oblivious to the rights of his people. He insensitively attempted to impose greater religious conformity regarding the Catholic religion. No one on the Parliamentarian side, which consisted mainly of Protestants, believed that Charles was not the rightful king of England. Their grievances stemmed from the policies he pursued.

With London's militia and the Tower of London armory firmly in Parliament's hands in 1642, Charles abandoned Parliamentarian-controlled London and reestablished his court at York. After that, he made Oxford his principal base of operations against the Parliamentarians.

The English Civil War entered its second year in 1643. The Royalists and Parliamentarians fought several battles that year, some involving the forces which would come together at the Battle of Newbury. In April of that year, Essex captured Reading. Prince Rupert, who commanded the Royalist cavalry, defeated a force of Parliamentarian cavalry on June 18. Also, at that time, Essex's campaign in Thames Valley stalled because of sickness among the troops. The upshot was that Prince Rupert of the Royalist Army on July 26 stormed and captured Bristol, England's second largest port, and a major manufacturing and trading center. Attacking the town led to a heavy loss, a loss which would affect the Royalists in the coming campaign.

The Royalists then besieged Gloucester. They captured the city on August 10. Nine days later, Parliament requested the City of London provide troops from the London Trained Bands to reinforce Essex. The London Trained Bands were companies of militia raised from householders fulfilling their obligation to protect their city. During the conflict, the Parliamentarians mustered these companies for the good of their cause. They were well trained and among the best of the Roundhead infantry.

The Trained Bands departed London on August 23. The following day, Essex began his offensive to relieve Gloucester. On September 3,

after several skirmishes, Essex reached Stow-on-the-Wold. Rupert attempted to stop Essex the following day but failed in his mission. Rupert could not conduct a major attack at that time owing to heavy losses at Bristol and the flagging morale of his troops. For these reasons, Rupert could not order a major charge on Essex's forces. The Royalists lifted the siege of Gloucester two days later. Essex took possession of entered the city on September 8.

Rupert's failure to capture Gloucester led to recriminations among those in the Royalist camps. "The siege of Gloucester was not believed to have been well conducted," wrote the Earl of Clarendon, placing the blame on King Charles' senior commanders. A great deal of blame landed on Rupert, whose failure to engage Essex on his march to Gloucester "was thought inexcusable," according to Clarendon.

When Essex entered Gloucester, he did so at the sound of church bells. Once there, he found it necessary to halt for several days to allow the defenders of the city to build up their supply of provisions. He also needed time to rest his exhausted army. During that time, several sharp skirmishes occurred between troops quartered around the city and the Cavalier cavalry.

The Parliamentarians remained in Gloucester until September 15 when Essex began his march for London. King Charles I and Prince Rupert started their march the next day, beginning a race to Newbury, a strategic crossroads town in Berkshire midway between London and Gloucester. Possession of the town by the Royalists would effectively block the road to London, the Parliamentarian headquarters. Both sides suffered greatly from the effects of forced marches and bad weather. "It proved to be a most miserable tempestuous, rainy weather," recalled Captain John Gwynne of the King's Regiment of Guards.

Charles had to slow the Parliamentarians down or they would reach Newbury before the Royalists. Prince Rupert sent a body of cavalry under Sir John Urrey to harass the rearguard of the Roundhead army. The main force of cavalry hurried to head off Essex's army. Urrey reported to Rupert that the enemy infantry had become spread out in their line of march, crossing the open ground of Aldbourne Chase, with most of the Roundhead horse more than a mile behind.

Rupert hoped to ride down the Parliamentarian infantry before their horse could support them, but the Roundhead infantry drew up into battle formation. Each regiment formed into a block of pikemen, with musketeers on each side. The Roundhead dragoons exchanged fire with some detached musketeers, resulting in approximately 100 casualties on each side.

A controversial casualty for the Royalists, the Marquis Charles de la Vieuville, had come from France to volunteer for the Cavalier cause. Just how he died is disputed. One account holds that after being captured, "his head almost cloven asunder with a pole-axe," according to a Roundhead account. The Cavaliers believed the Roundheads killed him after capturing him. The account is substantiated to some degree by the Roundhead Sergeant Henry Foster, who saw the body and said he received three shots, one in the chest, one in the shoulder, and another in the face. Regardless of how he died, the Parliamentarians offered to return La Vieuville's body for 300 gold pieces which enraged the Cavaliers.

"The Prince was well nigh tempted from his temper and was once resolved to have charged with three thousand horse alone" against the whole Parliamentarian army, stated an anonymous Royalist historian.

Essex did not want a battle and feared that if he delayed much longer, the Royalist infantry would reinforce their cavalry. After discharging

ABOVE: Seasoned veteran Robert Deveraux, Earl of Essex, and the young and aggressive Royalist cavalry commander, Prince Rupert of the Rhine.
LEFT: Parliamentary musketeers armed with matchlock muskets blunted repeated charges by Royalist cavalry at Newbury.

two small cannons to hold off the Cavalier cavalry, the Roundheads withdrew from the fight. When Rupert discovered the enemy retreating, he wanted to attack their cavalry, try to drive it off, and then capture their wagon train. But upon further thought, he allowed the Parliamentarians to depart.

The delaying action had its effect since it forced the Roundheads to take a longer route to Newbury. Instead of marching to London on the left bank of the Kennet River, they would have to cross to the right bank. This would require crossing the river again at Newbury, where a bridge spanned the Kennet.

Essex marched hurriedly, trying to reach Newbury before Charles. The Parliamentarians' march slowed considerably from fear that Rupert's cavalry would fall on them. "We were much distressed, for want of sleep as also for other sustenance," wrote Sergeant Foster. They eventually reached Hungerford, about eight miles west of Newbury, but Rupert had slowed down the Lord General's army to such an extent that King Charles' field army managed to reach Newbury first.

The Royalists reached Newbury on September 19, ahead of Essex and checking the Parliamentarian army from crossing the Kennet on the only bridge. The Roundheads could not reach London without crossing the bridge. Essex had no option open to him, he had to fight. Both armies suffered from severe fatigue at the end of the campaign season when they squared off at Newbury.

The armies were nearly matched in numbers, but not in types of troops. Essex had 4,000 cavalry, significantly less than the Royalists, and 9,000 infantry. The Cavaliers had 7,000 foot and 7,000 horse. Most of the soldiers on both sides had some military training since they had served in militia companies. Many of the officers also had military experience from serving in the Thirty Years War in Holland, Germany, and the adjoining territories. Most of these veterans subsequently served in the Parliamentary army. Approximately 60 Roundhead officers and 20 Royalist officers who fought at Edgehill in 1642 were professionals in both training and experience.

Cavalry was regarded as the queen of the battlefield in the mid-17th century. Most recommended a horse to foot ratio of 1:2, but this would not be achieved at Newbury.

All told, there were three different types of horse soldiers at Newbury: cuirassiers, harquebusiers, and dragoons. The cuirassiers, or heavy cavalry, wore suits of plate armor that reached from the head to the knee. This gave them a distinctive advantage in hand-to-hand fighting yet restricted their mobility. Essex bodyguard constituted the only cuirassiers that fought at Newbury.

The main type of cavalry on both sides was the harquebusiers. These standard cavalrymen normally fought as light cavalry and were armed with a sword and a pair of pistols. They had a helmet, back and breast plates, and buff coat for protection. But Prince Rupert used his harquebusiers as heavy cavalry. They would attack the enemy at a trot, rather than the headlong charge described in popular legends. They formed up for attack three ranks deep. When they reached the enemy's line of infantry, they discharged their pistols at close range. In so doing, they sought to weaken and disorganize the enemy's pike troops. Once this was achieved, the harquebusiers would then engage the enemy in hand-to-hand combat, trying to force their way past the pikemen. If they managed to break the formation of pikemen, which would be extremely difficult, the casualties among the infantry would mount rapidly as the cavalry rode them down.

As for the Parliamentarian harquebusiers, they formed four ranks deep and normally stood on the defensive. If they did charge the enemy infantry, they relied on firepower to break the enemy formations. They would fire into them, wheel away, reload their pistols, and attack again. Military men of the time considered Cavalier cavalry to be superior to the Roundhead cavalry, but by the time of Newbury the Royalists found the Roundheads gaining on them in effectiveness.

The dragoons formed the third type of cavalry at Newbury. They were armed similarly to the harquebusier, but also carried a carbine or short flintlock musket. They fought dismounted, using their horses to get to the scene of action, and then dismounting to fight on foot.

Pikemen and musketeers made up the infantry regiments. The optimum pike to musket ratio at the time was 1:2, but this ratio varied within regiments. Although they fought side by side with the pikes, musketeers also might deploy separately from the pikemen in order to skirmish or protect the cavalry. Groups of detached musketeers, referred to as commanded bodies, performed invaluable service at Newbury. One body of Royalist musketeers under Lt. Col. George Lisle operated as an independent foot formation.

The musketeer's standard weapon during the English Civil War was the matchlock musket; however, musketeers in independent units were

Opposing cavalry clash with pistols and broadswords. Cavalier horsemen made repeated charges in an attempt to gain control of Round Hill, a dominant feature in the Berkshire farmland.

often armed with flintlock muskets. If deployed with pikemen, they would take up positions on each flank of the pikemen usually six ranks deep.

The front rank would fire, then move to the rear where the men would reload while the next rank fired. A proficient musketeer could get off two shots a minute. In addition to their musket, they also carried a sword. Yet when hand-to-hand fighting occurred, many musketeers opted to use their musket as a club rather than fight with their sword.

The pike, widely regarded as the most honorable weapon on the battlefield, traced its lineage back to the Macedonian phalanx. The pike was 12-feet to 16-feet long with a razor-sharp steel head. In experienced hands, the pike offered a formidable obstacle. The pikemen typically arrayed themselves in a hedgehog formation up to 10 files deep. If attacked by cavalry, musketeers sheltered under the pikes, while the pikemen took position with their pikes angled to receive horse. If attacked by infantry, the pikemen of each side came together in the so-called push of pike. One side eventually won the struggle and disrupted the other side.

Since the Royalist army was drawn up on the Green—an expanse of flat, open ground west of the town through which the road passed towards the bridge over the Kennet—the Lord General decided to swing his army to the south of the town where it might gain the Wash Common, a stretch of chalk down land. Either way, the armies would have to navigate enclosed terrain consisting of lanes, hedges, and enclosed fields in which it was difficult to maneuver troops. The banked hedges and ditches that lined fields and sunken lanes not only made for good defensive ground for infantry, but also hampered the movement of cavalry.

When the Royalists arrived at Newbury, they took position west of the town. Their battleline stretched from the Kennet on the north to En Brook on the south. These watercourses securely anchored the Royalist flanks.

The Lord General issued orders on September 19 in preparation for marching around Newbury to the south. He ordered the vanguard, consisting of several infantry brigades and half of the cavalry, to secure Wash Common for the passage of the well-guarded artillery train in the middle of the army. The 22-gun artillery train consisted of 20 light artillery pieces and drakes, as well as two demi-culverins.

Several infantry brigades would move onto the western edge of Wash Common. Once this was done, Sir Philip Stapleton's cavalry brigade, deployed as part of the right wing, was to pass through them and form up on the Wash where it would serve as a flank guard.

The artillery train, which would be guarded by infantry, would move along Skinners Green Lane onto Wash Common. Last but not least, the rearguard, which consisted of Colonel John Middleton's cavalry brigade and two brigades of infantry, would initially make as much noise as possible in the Kennet Valley to deceive the Royalists into believing the main thrust was going to be made against the Kennet River bridge, before moving to join the rest of the army. Essex believed that his best infantry could stand up against the Royalist cavalry.

In order for the Roundheads to win the battle, they would have to fight their way through the Royalist army to reach the bridge spanning the Kennet. Once that was accomplished, the Roundheads could continue their march to the safety of Parliament-controlled Reading, and then on to London.

As they began their move south of Newbury, the Parliamentarians seized control of Round Hill on September 19, a long ridge south of Newbury from which artillery could control Wash Common. The vanguard posted two drakes on the northern end of the ridge. With their artillery on the hill, the

TOP Viscount Falkland reels in his saddle after being shot in the stomach. BOTTOM Falkland had told friends just before the battle that he was weary of the strife, and he may have deliberately sought death by riding alone through a hedge.

Roundheads effectively controlled the ground that would become the battlefield the following day.

For reason unknown, the Royalist commanders had neglected to occupy the hill. During the night of September 19-20, a small force of Cavaliers picketing the eastern end of Wash Common reported that the Roundheads had occuped Round Hill. The Royalist commanders resolved to seize the hill at first light. Since the hill was bordered by hedges, it could not be seized by cavalry alone and would require a mixed force to successfully complete the task.

King Charles was the commander-in-chief of the Royalist field army. Lt. Gen. Patrick Ruthven, Earl of Forth, and Sir Jacob Astley, Sgt. Maj. Gen. of Foot, commanded the infantry. Prince Rupert, the General of the Horse, commanded the cavalry.

Rupert initially misinterpreted the purpose of the drakes posted atop Round Hill, believing that they were positioned to bombard the Green in preparation for an assault up the main road towards the bridge. Regardless of the Roundhead intentions for the artillery, the high ground had to be taken. Rupert dispatched a scratch force of infantry and cavalry at 5:00 AM to seize the hill. When they failed to achieve their objective, a larger force was sent to make a fresh attack.

Specifically, Rupert ordered Sir John Byron to support the commanded musketeers of Lord Wentworth and two regiments of horse commanded by Colonel George Lisle. The infantry was to seize the hill, and Lisle's horsemen were to stand ready to intervene should the Parliamentarians commit their cavalry to defend the hill. Byron's force started off at 6:30 AM and found its advance challenged by a portion of Sgt. Maj. Gen. Philip Skippon's Brigade. The stout-hearted Londoners sharply repulsed Byron's musketeers.

The Royalist musketeers called for Lisle's horse to assist them. A small body of cavalry came slowly forward, in single file due to the narrowness of the passage. When their commander thought he had men enough for the task at hand, he charged the Roundheads, who reformed with the drakes supporting them. The Roundheads succeeded in driving the Royalist horse beyond the hedge, where they received orders to remain.

When the battle became wide-ranging, the Royalists advanced to support their leading troops, leaving their artillery on the Common. As planned, Essex's right wing of cavalry advanced to Wash Common with orders to assist the infantry in holding Round Hill. Byron, under the deadly fire of the two drakes on Round Hill, charged the guns from both the front and the flank with great determination.

As the fighting grew in intensity, the Royalist commanded muskets became fiercely engaged among the hedgerows with Skippon's three regiments. The Royalist musketeers found themselves in a protracted fight in which they used the hedges and the high banks on the sides of the lanes for cover.

The Trained Bands moved to the top of the hill where Royalist cavalry subjected them to several attacks. Rupert continued to feed cavalry into the fight. The Cavalier horse repeatedly charged the men of the Trained Bands, but the horse alone could not break their ranks. Casualties steadily mounted on both sides.

It was not long after Byron's force was sent to assault the northern end of the Round Hill that Rupert discerned what he believed to be Essex's real intentions. To thwart the Lord General's plan, Rupert began shifting cavalry brigades and light artillery along the Andover Road to Wash Common.

Meanwhile, Byron continued to struggle with his objective, which became all the more difficult when Essex sent Lord John Robartes Brigade, consisting of three regiments of foot, forward to reinforce the position.

After great effort, the Royalists succeeded in driving off the Parliamentarians. They pitched their colors triumphantly for a time atop Round Hill, but Essex brought forward more infantry and so began another bloody hand-to-hand contest for control of the hill. The Royalists managed to retain control of the hill, forcing the Parliamentarian cavalry to pull back. When some of the Royalists advanced into a lane, though, the Roundhead horse cut them to pieces.

The Cavalier horsemen then began a series of charges in which they sought to break the foot soldiers of the London Trained Bands. But the musketeers of the Blue Regiment of the London Trained Bands poured a hot fire into the Cavalier horse, sending them reeling back. The cavalrymen rallied and charged anew, only to be met again by sheets of musket fire from the stout-hearted men of the Blue Regiment, which pushed them back yet again. They rallied and charged a third time, trying to break the infantry ranks, with the same result as before.

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

Parliamentary pikemen angle their weapons to counter a charge by Royalist troopers. The militia of the London Trained Bands distinguished themselves in the sanguinary battle.

Sir Nicholas Byron, who was the uncle of Sir John Byron, then brought forward two regiments of the infantry of his Oxford Army. The fight grew so fierce that 11 of the 12 ensigns fighting in one of the regiments were wounded. The Royalist infantry called again for help from the cavalry, and Prince Rupert ordered Sir John Byron and Lord Colepepper's cavalry regiments to relieve their companions in the infantry. Sir John commanded his troopers to halt while he moved forward to reconnoiter the ground where the enemy infantry stood. He found it to be enclosed by a high hedge with no passage into it except a narrow gap. Only one horse at a time could, with difficulty, go through the opening.

Sir John gave orders to make the gap wider but, before it could be done, Lucius Cary, 2nd Viscount Falkland, spurred his horse through the gap. Both rider and horse were cut down by enemy fire. Falkland's death became the most memorable incident of the battle.

When the Royalists had widened the opening, Byron ordered his troop to enter and charge the Roundheads. The Roundheads, in turn, fired "a great salvo of musket shot, and discharged their two [small cannon] upon us," Byron wrote afterwards. He rallied his men but before they could attack again, the Roundheads got their artillery away to keep it from being captured. The rest of Byron's regiment now being up, Sir Thomas Aston reinforced him with another cavalry regiment.

Mounted Cavaliers attacked a second time and beat the Parliamentarians back, but the Roundheads turned and faced them again, with the hedge at their backs. The Roundhead musketeers poured a thundering volley of shot into them. One of the effects of the volley was that it killed Aston's horse. Despite the determined efforts of Rupert's stalwart horsemen, the Parliamentarian infantry simply could not be broken.

Each time the troopers advanced, the highly disciplined Roundhead musketeers held their fire until the horsemen were within point-blank range, and then fired straight into them. The Royalist horse became disorganized and men and horses both writhed in an agony of death and dying on the heath. Having suffered heavy losses, the Cavaliers broke off the charge and wheeled off. The Parliamentarians withdrew in order to reform in Skinner's Green Lane. But before they could do so, Byron charged a third time. This time he caught the musketeers unprepared and routed those that could not reach safety in a hedge.

A body of the Roundhead foot advanced to relieve them and the Royalist infantry came forward to defend the ground the cavalry had taken. Byron lost approximately 100 horses and men out of his regiment and 26 from his troop. The Parliamentarians unsuccessfully attempted to regain the ground they had lost. The Cavaliers then posted their own artillery on the hill and deployed musketeers to protect them from being captured.

The Roundheads and Cavaliers continued the fight with unwavering valor for hours. The narrow lane leading to Skinner's Green became so choked with the dead and dying that a passage had to be cleared before Roundhead cavalry could again

Because the Royalists had run out of gunpowder by nightfall, they could not continue the battle the following day. Their claim of victory rang hollow given that they quit the field.

move along it. Once this was done, Parliamentarian cavalry squadrons charged up the hill where opposing horsemen clashed with swords; however, they could make no headway against the superior numbers of Royalist cavalry.

Charles still determined to stand on the defensive on the flanks, awaiting Essex' attack, but the impulsiveness of some of the Cavalier commanders frustrated his intentions. When the Royalists sighted a party of the Parliamentarian forces on Enborne Heath, part of the Royal cavalry charged down on them.

The king advanced his right wing to cover the advance of his left wing towards the heath. Rupert brought his cavalry from the right wing to the left to support this movement. Due to the hedgerows and bluffs on the right, the cavalry could not effectively be used there.

The struggle on Round Hill caused more casualties than any other action of the battle. At the same time this action happened, more took place on both flanks. The troops of the Royalist left wing did not attempt their chief attack until late afternoon when Prince Rupert could spare some cavalry from the Round Hill sector. The Cavalier foot did not perform well, "Our foot having found a hillock in the heath that sheltered them from the enemy's cannon, would not be drawn a foot from thence," according to an official Royalist account of the battle.

The Cavaliers finally got their men forward to launch a major assault. The Parliamentarians could not withstand the shock of this cavalry charge and were forced to give ground. They quickly formed a square, with their front ranks kneeling, and faced the cavalry. The musketeers waited until the Royalist horse came right up to them before the rear ranks poured in a volley. The storm of lead compelled Rupert's horsemen to take flight.

Skippon redeployed an infantry regiment from the slopes of Round Hill to assist the endangered position. A combined force of Royalist cavalry and infantry attacked, which obliged the Roundheads to retreat. Colonel James Holbourne ordered the Roundhead artillery to deliver a salvo after which the Roundheads attacked the Royalists with two infantry brigades, regaining the ground they lost.

The Royalists had managed to force a gap between Skippon's wing and Essex's wing and in order to close it some of the Parliamentarians were diverted from a counterattack being mounted against Round Hill. The Roundheads drew 500 musketeers from their pikemen, as well as a small number of dragoons, to hit the right flank of the Royalists among the hedges. Essex also dispatched 200 musketeers of the Forlorn Hope and the Red Auxiliary Regiment to aid the Parliamentarian

troops. The Red and Blue Regiments of the Trained Bands took a position on the right wing of the Parliamentarian army.

The Royalists had eight artillery pieces and a large body of cavalry and infantry facing the Parliamentarian flank. The Cavaliers began shelling the Roundheads before they could get their own guns up. Two regiments of the King's Horse attacked the Blue Regiment, but their musketeers drove them off. The troops of Essex' army all wore green boughs in their hats to distinguish them from the enemy. One regiment of the Royalist cavalry put green boughs in their hats and rode forward shouting, "Friends!" but the Roundhead musketeers fired on them despite the ruse, causing them to withdraw.

The Royalist artillery rained devastation on the Trained Bands. "The enemy's cannon did play most against the Red Regiment of Trained Bands, and it was somewhat dreadful when men's bowels and brains flew in our faces," recalled Sergeant Foster.

The Red and Blue Regiments gained the advantage of a little hill and fought against two regiments of the Royalist infantry for half an hour, holding the hill. Then two regiments of enemy cavalry attacked and surrounded them. They formed a defensive square, with pikes in front and rear and on both flanks. "We made a great slaughter among them, and forced them to retreat," Foster wrote. Meanwhile, the enemy infantry gained the hill which they had been fighting for, obliging the Roundheads to retreat a way to rally their men.

The Parliamentarians considered the action on their right as a watershed point in the battle. The Royalist cavalry came close to breaking the right flank of the Roundhead infantry and almost broke through into the Roundhead rear and their baggage train. The fighting by the Trained Band infantry, with the support of a few cavalry, frustrated the Cavaliers.

Newbury was a soldiers' battle, meaning that there was very little planning or interference from the high command on either side. The casualties among the foot soldiers were exceptionally high, being fought among the hedgerows and lanes. The fighting died down at nightfall and the sky threatened rain. Although small skirmishes flared up throughout the night, the first battle at Newbury was effectively over.

The battle ended in a tactical draw given that the Royalists remained on the field. The Roundheads suffered for lack of water. "We were in great distress for water, or any accommodation to refresh our poor soldiers," Foster wrote. To Essex, it looked like he would need to renew the battle for he had to punch his way through the Royalist army to London. He was not sure how he would achieve that, and it caused him great anxiety that night.

Their losses had been many, and they were in no shape to attack the Royalist positions, which very nearly approximated those of the previous morning. What is more, the Royalists had taken possession of Round Hill and planted their guns atop it. The men of both sides spent the night in the rain, listening to the cries and groans of the wounded. It was a miserable night and few soldiers on both sides got any sleep.

The Royalists held a war council to review the battle and discuss their next steps. King Charles had expected to fight a defensive battle, and he was not pleased to have been forced to fight an offensive one. Throughout the day-long battle, Rupert's cavalry, along with Sir John Byron's horse, had supported the infantry well. Sir Nicholas Byron's foot did extremely well against the enemy foot. Although compelled to attack Essex on Round Hill, Charles' men took the hill and held their original positions on both flanks.

Lord Henry Percy, General of the Ordnance, informed the senior commanders that the supply of powder for musketeers was nearly exhausted. They also had a grave lack of round shot for the artillery. Rupert favored holding their positions at Newbury until such time as supplies reached them. Sir John Byron concurred. But the rest of the senior commanders favored abandoning their positions.

When dawn arrived, Essex prepared to renew the assault. But the Royalists were in the process of withdrawing, and therefore the Roundheads resumed their march to London in the late morning. Rupert stayed behind with some of his troops hoping to inflict some additional losses on the Roundheads.

Rupert ordered Lord Wilmot and the Earl of Northampton with a large cavalry force and 800 commanded musketeers to attack the Roundheads as they marched through a narrow lane. The attack scattered the Parliamentarian horsemen, who made a disorderly and confused retreat. The routed Roundhead cavalry ran into the rear of some of their own infantry, disrupting them as well. Sergeant Foster found himself caught up in the chaos. When the cavalry fled down the narrow path, they "routed our own foot, trampling many of them under their horses' feet," he wrote.

The Royalist musketeers fired on the Parliamentarians from the hedges on the side of the lane, increasing the confusion. The Cavaliers captured or destroyed much of the Roundhead wagon train. The Roundheads deployed artillery, which halted the Royalist horse, and counterattacked with their infantry. These steps forced the Cavaliers to withdraw. When some of the Royalists tried to surrender, the Roundheads "were so enraged at them, that they knocked out their brains with the butt-end of their muskets," Foster wrote. No more clashes occurred during the Parliamentarians march to London.

The Royalists failed at an opportunity to destroy the Parliamentarian field army of Essex, which could have won the war. The Cavaliers claimed Newbury as a Royalist victory but the officers and the men in the ranks knew better. "Upon the King's return to Oxford, there appeared nothing but dejection of mind, discontent, and secret mutiny," wrote Clarendon.

King Charles awarded honors to some of the men who had been prominent in the summer campaign. Sir John Byron received a baronetcy and Prince Rupert a dukedom, and honors for others, too. But nothing could take away the sting of the campaign's results. The war would continue unabated. Having failed to destroy the Roundheads at Edgehill or Newbury, King Charles would institute a fresh strategy in the third year of the war. ■

Georgians of Lawton's Brigade drive off the Pennsylvania Reserves during the Union assault on the Confederate right wing.

REBEL BLUNDER at Fredericksburg

DAVID A. NORRIS

Brig. Gen. George Meade's Pennsylvania Reserves drove deep into the Confederate line at Fredericksburg in December 1862. It fell to Stonewall Jackson to drive them out.

Brig. Gen. George Gordon Meade's division spent three hours bombarded by Confederate guns on December 13, 1862. A mile to the north, Union troops began their doomed assaults against Lt. Gen. James Longstreet's unbreakable Confederate line on Marye's Heights at Fredericksburg, Virginia. Chafing under fire, Meade's troops arose and rushed toward the Rebel lines when the commander allowed them to charge. Enemy fire took down all three of Meade's brigade commanders. But as the Federals neared their objective, instead of a hail of musketry, they faced a silent and deserted band of trees stretching along the Richmond, Fredericksburg & Potomac Railroad. It began to look like Meade's charge had the potential of turning the Battle of Fredericksburg into a Union victory.

The Confederate Army of Northern Virginia's first invasion of the North ended with the September 17, 1862, Battle of Antietam. Although blocked by the Union's Army of the Potomac under Gen. George B. McClellan along the banks of Antietam Creek, General Robert E. Lee extracted his army from Maryland and safely crossed the Potomac River into Virginia.

U.S. President Abraham Lincoln urged McClellan to pursue Lee's retreating army with vigor, but Little Mac, as some called him, refused to do so. For six weeks Lincoln hounded McClellan to no avail. McClellan eventually began moving his troops across the Potomac River in late October.

Long dissatisfied with McClellan for his inability to whip Lee's army, Lincoln removed him as commander of the Army of the Potomac on November 7. Lincoln wanted a victory before the end of 1862 to keep his political opponents at bay and ease the economic pressure on the North. The president replaced McClellan with Maj. Gen. Ambrose Burnside. Burnside made a name for himself with a successful campaign that took much of coastal North Carolina in early 1862. His performance at Antietam was less impressive, but Lincoln believed he

would run the army better than McClellan. Burnside accepted command, albeit reluctantly.

Burnside reorganized the Army of the Potomac into three so-called Grand Divisions under major generals Edwin Sumner, Joseph Hooker, and William Franklin. Designed to operate independently if necessary, each Grand Division was composed of two infantry corps, as well as supporting artillery and cavalry. After the reorganization, Burnside set his mind to how he would conduct his campaign against Lee.

Unlike the Union Army of the Potomac, the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia retained its existing structure of two corps. Lt. Gen. James Longstreet commanded the I Corps, and Lt. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson commanded the II corps. In early November, Longstreet was at Culpeper Courthouse, and Jackson's corps was in the Shenandoah Valley.

Rather than try to destroy one of the isolated wings of Lee's army, Burnside proposed a shift in strategy. He would assemble his army at Warrenton, 50 miles southwest of Washington, and make the Confederates believe he was going to advance on Culpeper Courthouse, 20 miles to the southwest. With Lee looking for an attack on the upper Rappahannock, Burnside would shift southeastward to Fredericksburg. Ten miles from the lower Potomac River, Fredericksburg would be at the end of a much shorter supply line for the Union. And from there, the RF&P railway led to Richmond, nearly 60 miles to the south.

Lincoln was wary of Burnside's plans, but gave permission for them while stressing that speed was of the utmost importance. After General-in-Chief Henry Halleck wired the president's approval to him on November 14, Burnside began his campaign. Lincoln wanted Burnside to move quickly, lest Lee interfere with his plans. Sumner and the lead elements of his Right Grand Division arrived at Falmouth, on the north bank of the Rappahannock River opposite Fredericksburg, on November 17.

Colonel William Ball of the 15th Virginia Cavalry had just 1,000 Confederate troops at Fredericksburg. In compliance with Lee's orders, Ball's men destroyed the railroad north of Fredericksburg and burned all of the bridges across the Rappahannock to slow the Union advance. Lee was reluctant to commit his forces to the defense of Fredericksburg because Burnside had not yet established a supply base to support operations in that sector. To determine the Union army's whereabouts, he instructed Maj. Gen. James Ewell Brown (J.E.B.) Stuart to send his cavalry across the upper Rappahannock to track the movements of Burnside's army. Stuart reported on November 15 that the Federals had abandoned Loudoun and Fauquier counties, and also torched their supply depots at Manassas and Warrenton. The logical conclusion was that they were marching on Fredericksburg.

Burnside wanted to use pontoon bridges to cross the flood-prone Rappahannock River. Because of a series of administrative blunders, the prefabricated pontoon bridge kits were still far to the rear when Sumner reached Falmouth. Examination of the river indicated that crossing near Fredericksburg without pontoons would be impossible. For that reason, the Army of the Potomac settled down to wait. Burnside decided against crossing at the fords in the region. He reasoned that it would be too risky to place Sumner on the other side of the river given that autumn rains might flood the Rappahannock before the other two Grand Divisions could get across to join Sumner's Right Grand Division. If that were to happen, Sumner's Grand Division might be cut off and destroyed. What is more, Burnside believed a Union crossing at the town of Fredericksburg would come as a bigger surprise to Lee.

Once Stuart had discerned that the Army of the Potomac was on the move, Lee dispatched a foot regiment and a battery to bolster the garrison at Fredericksburg. Two days later, intelligence indicated that Sumner's corps was approaching Falmouth, and Lee dispatched two of Longstreet's divisions to Fredericksburg. A short time later, he ordered the rest of Longstreet's troops, as well as Jackson's corps, to assemble at Fredericksburg.

By early December, the Army of the Potomac was assembled at Falmouth, but the pontoons were still miles away. Lee's army was entrenched across the river at Fredericksburg. The new Rebel defenses looked so secure that Lee gave up an earlier notion of withdrawing from the Rappahannock line to make a stand on the North Anna River.

On the Confederate left, Longstreet was dug behind the town itself, along a rise called Marye's Heights. Jackson's men settled on Longstreet's right south of town, holding a line of higher ground extending south to Hamilton's Crossing. Named for a local landowner, Hamilton's Crossing marked the place where the Old Mine Road, which was named for colonial-era iron mines nearby, crossed the tracks of the RF&P. The delayed Union offensive allowed the Confederates ample time to prepare artillery emplacements and dig a formidable assortment of entrenchments and rifle pits.

With a population of 5,000 in 1860, Fredericksburg stretched about three blocks deep and one

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ABOVE: Brig. Gen. William Barksdale's Mississippians contested the crossing of the Union right grand division. Some of the soldiers forfeited their lives in order to delay the crossing. OPPOSITE: Union engineers work feverishly under fire from Confederates to complete two of the six pontoon bridges that allowed the Union troops to cross the Rappahannock River to engage Lee's army.

Library of Congress

mile broad along the Rappahannock. The town was named for Frederick, Prince of Wales, a member of the British royalty who had died suddenly in 1751. The prince's eldest son had reigned as King George III. Now an independent city, Fredericksburg was then part of Spotsylvania County.

By the time Burnside had the pontoons available and had committed his army to attack, it was December 10. Upwards of 72,000 Confederates awaited his 100,000-strong Union army. For Sumner's Grand Division, he placed a pair of pontoon bridges near the northern edge of town, and another one a short distance downstream near the charred ruins of the railroad bridge. Three more bridges eventually were thrown across the river about one mile downstream from the southern edge of town for Franklin's Grand Division. Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker's Reserve Grand Division was in the center, able to reinforce either flank if needed.

Sumner faced stubborn opposition. Confederate guns began shelling Union lines on December 11. Additionally, Rebel infantry peppered the Union engineers as they assembled the pontoon bridges. To stop the harassing fire, Burnside sent a force of Yankees in small boats to gain a foothold on the Rebel side of the river. Fighting block by block, growing numbers of bluecoats pushed deeper into the town.

The I and VI corps of Franklin's Left Grand Division had a much easier time crossing on the Federal left flank. Engineers set to work on their pontoon bridges before dawn on December 11. The Confederates fired on them after the sun rose, but there were only two companies of the 18th Mississippi on hand. After they'd hit half a dozen of the engineers, Union artillery went into action. The gunners succeeded in scattering the Mississippians. Yankee guns interrupted two more harassing attacks that interfered with the construction of Franklin's pontoon bridges.

Once the first bridge was complete, Franklin cautiously refrained from crossing until he received Burnside's permission to do so. Burnside wanted Franklin to wait for Sumner's troops to secure the upper crossings before allowing Franklin to cross. The army commander finally granted permission for Franklin to cross at 4 PM.

Brig. Gen. Charles Devens brigade of Maj. Gen. William Smith's VI Corps was the first of Franklin's units to cross the river. Devens' five regiments had the responsibility of holding the bridgehead through the night until the rest of the rest of Franklin's force crossed to the south bank on the morning of December 12.

Franklin's men stayed close to the river. Smith's VI Corps went into position on the left Grand Division's right, while Maj. Gen. John F. Reynolds' I Corps secured the left. Both corps held vulnerable positions, given that enemy troops looked down on them from higher ground. A sluggish stream known as Deep Run, which was opposite a deep curve in the Confederate defenses, would hinder Franklin's troops from making any movement to their right. For that reason, the only path of retreat open to them was by way of their three pontoon bridges.

Meanwhile, Lee pondered the enemy's moves. He was still concerned that Burnside might endanger his right with a crossing of the Rappahannock at fords several miles downstream. Lee spread his forces thin, watching the downstream crossings as well as the town and Franklin's troops. Lee and Jackson, accompanied by staff officer Major Heros von Borcke, rode to a height overlooking Franklin's troops. Lee made a careful study through his field glasses of Franklin's deployment. He concluded that Franklin's two Union corps constituted Burnside's only move against the Rebel right. With that knowledge in hand, Lee knew he could safely recall forces posted downstream to join to Jackson's force. These forces included Maj. Gen. Jubal Early's division at Skinker's Neck and Maj. Gen. Daniel Harvey Hill's division, which had stood guard at Port Royal. They marched to bolster the right wing under Jackson.

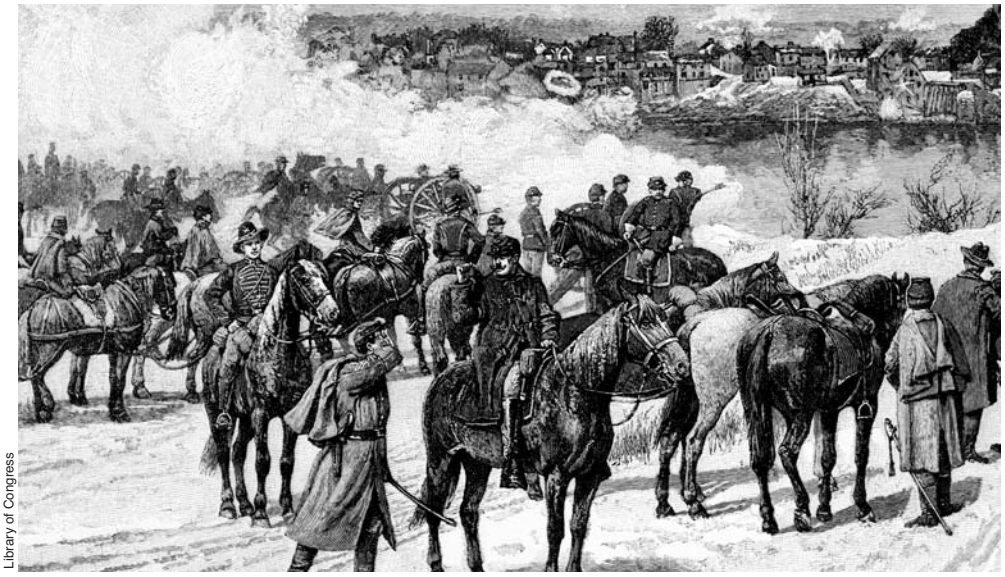
Unsure of his next move, Franklin stayed put on December 12. He asked Burnside for permission that afternoon to attack the next day, but the army commander gave no definite orders at their meeting. Burnside did not dispatch his orders for Franklin until almost 6:00 AM the morning of December 13. But it took nearly two hours for the staff officer bearing the orders to find Franklin.

Burnside decided to make a two-pronged attack on December 13. Franklin would move against the enemy holding high ground beyond the

RF&P, which paralleled the river, before bending sharply south near Hamilton's Crossing. Meanwhile, Sumner's II and IX corps would push toward Marye's Heights.

Burnside did not make clear that he intended Franklin to move first and that he expected him to break through or at least tie up Jackson's corps before Sumner would move. What is more, the Union headquarters neglected to keep close tabs on the Confederates. "Old Jack" had been heavily reinforced by Confederate troops recalled from blocking positions further downstream. By the time the Federals attacked, the Confederate II Corps had 35,000 men in place behind good cover on high ground.

Jackson's line stretched for several thousand yards along a forested ridge that sloped down to the railroad tracks. Lee had put his troops to work before the battle constructing a road along which men and supplies could be moved quickly as needed. The new thoroughfare, called the Military Road, was cut through the woods behind the line to ease movement of men and supplies.



Library of Congress

Union rifled artillery on Stafford Heights pummels Confederate positions. Maj. Gen. Burnside deployed 150 guns on a three-mile front.

Burnside's orders did not convey a clear sense of urgency. In part, the orders compelled Franklin to "keep your whole command in position for a rapid movement down the old Richmond road, and you will send out at once a division at least to pass below Smithfield, to seize, if possible, the height near Captain Hamilton's, on this side of the Massaponax [Creek], taking care to keep it well supported and its line of retreat open."

Franklin believed the orders emphasized the need to seize the Richmond Road, and that the phrase, "send out at once a division at least," did not mandate that his main priority was to drive Jackson's corps out of its position on the ridge.

Franklin thought it impractical to take the time to shift Smith's corps from its position closer to the river to join the attack, so he chose Maj. John F. Reynolds' VI Corps. Reynolds chose Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade's 4,500-man division to lead the assault, supported on its right by Brig. Gen. John Gibbon's division. Maj. Gen. Abner Doubleday, commanding the reserve, shielded the rear and left of Meade's troops.

Graduating in the Class of 1835 at West Point, Meade had spent most of his army career as an engineer and had served in the War with Mexico. Although his antebellum years as an engineer gave him little experience commanding combat troops, he rose steadily in command in the first half of the war.

Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtain insisted a few months into the conflict that Meade be given command of one of the three Pennsylvania Reserve brigades. Meade arrived on the Virginia Peninsula in June 1852 and saw heavy fighting in the Seven Days Battle at Mechanicsville, Gaines' Mill, and Frayser's Farm. Despite receiving several wounds at Frayser's Farm, he quickly returned to brigade command. When Lincoln transferred Brig. Gen. John Reynolds, the commander of the Pennsylvania Reserves division, to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to recruit fresh troops to defend the state in case of invasion, Meade ascended to command of the division during the battles of South Mountain and Antietam.

Meade was an intelligent and competent commander, yet he was more cautious than Reynolds. Not always calm and analytical as one might expect of an engineer officer, he possessed an explosive temper that could flare in the heat of battle.

Meade's division was made up almost entirely of Pennsylvanians. All three of his foot brigades hailed from the Keystone State. His infantry included Colonel Thomas L. Kane's 13th Pennsylvania Reserves, the famed Bucktails. Skilled riflemen, the regiment's soldiers carried breech-loading Sharps rifles and adorned their hats with deer tails to symbolize their marksmanship.

Meade also had three batteries of the 1st Pennsylvania Artillery, as well as Battery C of the 5th U.S. Artillery. His cavalry brigade, commanded by Brig. Gen. George D. Bayard, included the 1st Pennsylvania Cavalry, 2nd and 10th New York Cavalry, and 1st New Jersey Cavalry. The cavalry was supported by Battery C of the 3rd U.S. Artillery.

Daylight on December 13 revealed dense fog shrouding the Union positions on the plain by the river. Lee might have pushed forward, given that the advance of his troops would have been cloaked by the early morning mist. Yet the Rebel commander was satisfied with his defensive lines, and so he opted to sit tight and wait for Burnside to make the first move.

Meade, Doubleday, and Gibbon shuffled their troops in the mist. The 121st Pennsylvania of Colonel William Sinclair's brigade settled down after the hooting and hollering sparked by the lively chase of a rabbit that bolted through its ranks. The regiment, which belonged to Colonel William Sinclair's First Brigade of Meade's division, was ordered to "unsling knapsacks and tear away the hedge in front." Up and down the Richmond Road, other regiments demolished the hedges lining the roadway. To ease the passage of their artillery, Union troops bridged the ditches on either side of the road.

With Sinclair's brigade in the lead, Meade's bluecoats moved out into the thinning mist at 8:30 AM. They advanced 300 yards, which took them well past the Richmond Road, and received orders to lie down in an open field. This put the infantry into a position to support Captain Dunbar Ransom's Battery B, 1st U.S. Artillery.

Major John Pelham, who commanded the five batteries that constituted Stuart's Horse Artillery, asked permission for a bold move. He wanted to place two guns along the Richmond Road near its junction with Mine Road, from where he could enfilade the enemy line. Stuart consented, and Pelham set off at a gallop with two guns. For the task at hand, he chose a M1857 12-pounder Napoleon smoothbore captured at Seven Pines in June and a British-made Blakely rifle. Pelham took up a position well in front of the Confederate line and opened fire with solid shot.

That morning marked the first time that the new 121st Pennsylvania came under fire. Pelham's

All: Library of Congress

ABOVE: Stonewall Jackson's Rebels await the Union onslaught at Hamilton's Crossing on the RF&P Railroad. Jackson established a defense in depth to ensure that his opponent would not be able to dislodge his troops. RIGHT: Maj. Gen. William B. Franklin (left) was slow to get his 55,000 Union soldiers into action against Lt. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's corps. Hard-fighting South Carolinian Maxcy Gregg lost his life in the initial Union assault into the woods along the RF&P Railroad.

shot was "making deep furrows in the ground and bounding like rubber balls," wrote regimental historian William Strong. The first man of the 121st to die in battle was cut in half by a cannon ball. Another of Pelham's shots "struck down seven men, and another killed a horse standing just in front of the colors," according to Strong.

"The annoying and appalling noise of the flying shells was altogether new and unexpected," continued Strong. "One gun sent shells whose noise resembled the sudden flight of a great flock of pigeons. A solid shot would land with a thud and rebound to the rear, or come right through the line with the sound of a huge circular saw ripping a log, or pass shrieking through the air in quest of a victim."

Five Union batteries turned their fire on Pelham. They succeeded in silencing the Blakely rifle. One gunner after another fell, and Pelham himself pitched in to work the Napoleon. When enemy shells landed too close, showing the Yankee gunners had found the proper range, Pelham shifted the gun to a new position and resumed firing. Some of the gunners from one of the batteries in the Stuart Horse Artillery were French-speaking Creoles from Talladega County, Alabama. They were heard singing "The Marseillaise" as they sponged, loaded, and fired.

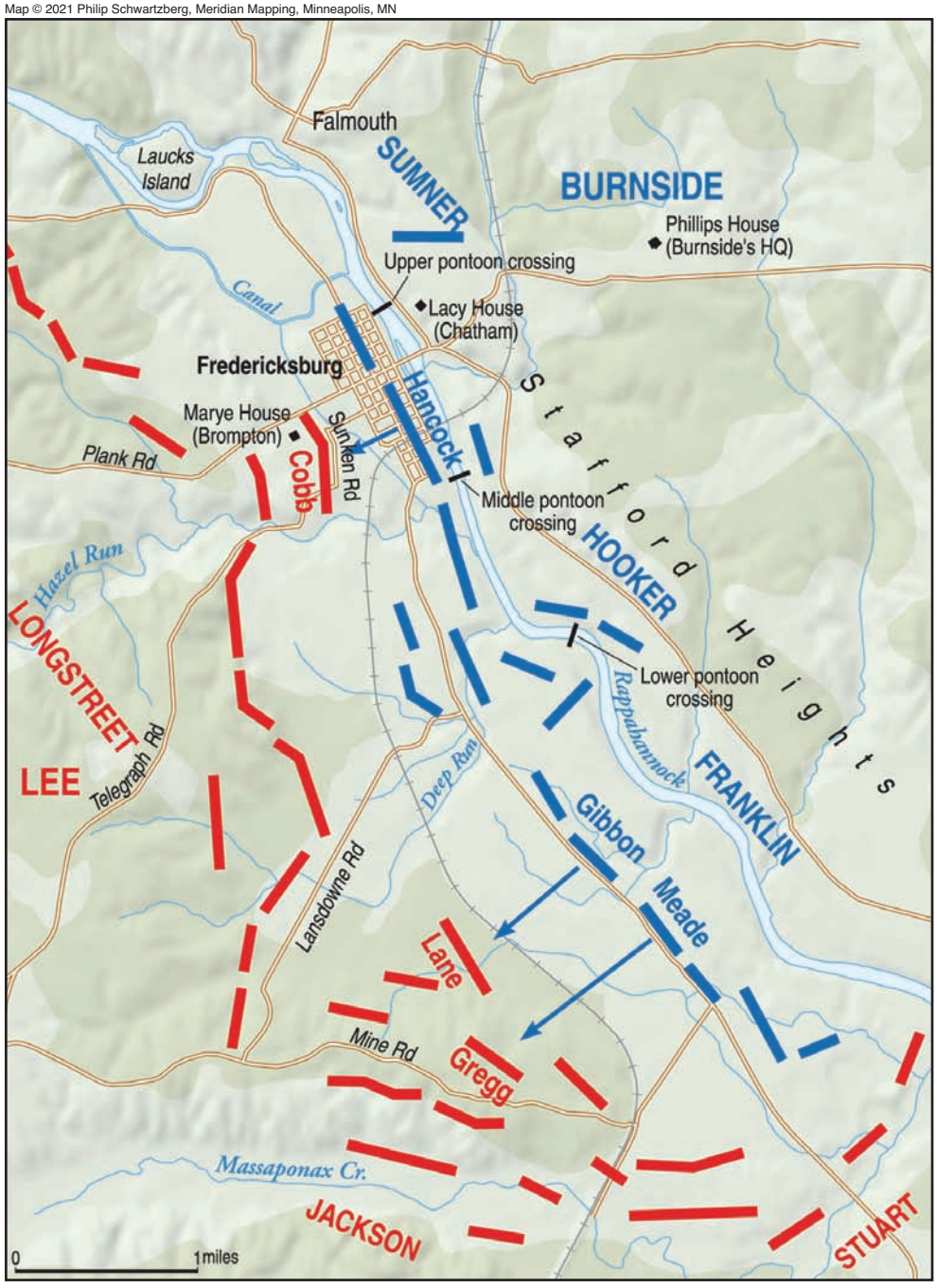
Stuart sent a courier to suggest that the young major leave his exposed position. "Tell the general I can hold my ground," replied Pelham. But soon suggestions to withdraw became orders. Pelham brushed off commands to pull back three times. He left his position only when his ammunition had nearly run out. At the cost of a handful of casualties and some dead horses, Pelham had delayed Franklin's assault on the Jackson's line by more than an hour.

By midmorning the mist lingering over the riverside plain had begun to dissipate. The scene looked as dramatic as "the drawing up of a drop-scene at the opera," wrote von Borcke. Stuart sent the German aide-de-camp to inform Jackson that the enemy was making their move.

Von Borcke rode to join Jackson on a hill from which the general was scanning the Federal dispositions with a field glass. The lead elements of the Left Grand Division presented "a military panorama, the grandeur of which I had never seen excelled," wrote von Borcke. "On they came, in beautiful order, as if on parade, a moving forest of steel, their bayonets glistening in the bright sunlight … waving their hundreds of regimental flags, which relieved with warm bits of coloring the dull blue of the columns and the russet tinge of the wintery landscape, while their artillery beyond the river continued the cannonade with unabated fury over their heads."

Lt. Col. Reuben Lindsay Walker, who commanded the artillery battalion that supported Maj. Gen. Ambrose Powell Hill's Light Division, had assembled atop a rise called Prospect Hill 14 guns from the seven batteries in his battalion. They went into action to the right of Brig. James Archer's brigade of Hill's division. Yankee shot and shell crashed amid the Confederate guns. So many battery horses were killed by the artillery bombardment that the Rebels later named the position Dead Horse Hill.

Walker's guns did not reply to the bluecoat barrage. Their ammunition was limited, and they had orders to hold their fire for the enemy infantry. Only when Sinclair's brigade approached the railroad embankment and were within 500 yards of their muzzles did the Rebel guns on the ridge opened fire. The Yankees laid down for some time



Although hard-hitting Maj. Gen. George Gordon Meade's attack initially showed promise, it was doomed to failure because too few troops were committed to the attack.

to take cover as the shells from the artillery of both armies flew over them.

A Confederate caisson exploded at 1:00 PM. A plume of smoke rose from the wreckage. Meade chose that moment to order his men to rise up and charge. At last freed from the restraint of waiting under fire, the Pennsylvanians rushed forward.

"A fence crossing the line diagonally of the regiment as it advanced, proved for a few moments quite a serious impediment," wrote Strong. "Instead of immediately crossing, they allowed themselves to be crowded toward to the left, the fence acting as a wedge to force the men in that direction." The fence was only a temporary block, and the bluecoats climbed over the fence and "regained their alignment and proceeded on toward the wood," he wrote.

The path before Meade's Division was for the most part a stretch of flat fields, cut by occasional ditches and small streams that led up to the three-foot-high railroad embankment. Beyond the tracks rose the forested ground offering cover to the Rebels. The Yankees aimed for a small landmark, a patch of trees that jutted out beyond the railroad. The cluster of trees marked a little ravine that passed under the tracks. At that location, just behind the tracks, was a broad and rugged area of marshy ground in a wooded tract.

On the day before the battle, A.P. Hill had examined this area. Believing the swampy stretch as impassible, he assigned no troops to hold it. His decision left a gap of 600 yards between the brigades of Brig. Gen. James H. Lane and Archer. No troops faced that breach in the line other than Brig. Gen. Maxcy Gregg's brigade, which was posted 400 yards to the rear along the Military Road that ran along the crest of a low ridge.

The advancing Yankees were unknowingly headed for the only weak link in the Southern line. Even better, the terrain was shaped in a way to create a blind spot for the 53 Confederate guns of Jackson's corps. Batteries posted on the left of Brig. Gen. William Dorsey Pender's brigade, near Deep Run, and those clustered on the right around Hamilton's Crossing could not reach the Yankees as they neared the tracks.

Earlier in their advance, Meade's Division lost all three of its brigade commanders. When Brig. Gen. C. Feger Jackson was shot dead, command of his brigade devolved to Colonel Joseph Fisher. Sinclair was hit in the left foot and carried off the field. Colonel William McCanless of the 2nd Pennsylvania Reserves did not find out for some time that he was then in command of Sinclair's brigade. Colonel Albert L. Magilton, the commander of the Second Brigade in Meade's division, was trapped under this horse, which had collapsed when shot dead during the advance.

After climbing over the three-foot-high railroad embankment, Sinclair's regiments plunged into the woods, followed by the rest of the division. Expecting deadly enemy fire, the bluecoats were surprised to find the silent woods were empty of enemy defenders. The Pennsylvanians of Sinclair's Brigade, at that point led by McCanless, wheeled about to surprise Lane's brigade. Concentrating on their front and expecting no trouble from the swampy woods, the regiments on Lane's right buckled and fell back.

C. Feger Jackson's former brigade turned to attack Archer, whose troops were shocked when enemy soldiers appeared out of the impassible woods. More of Meade's men pushed forward through the woods until they hit Gregg's line. Some of them had taken cover from the Union artillery. Under Gregg's orders, they had stacked their muskets lest they shoot any fellow Confederates moving through the woods around their position. Their firearms were out of reach when the Yankees suddenly rushed out and opened fire on Colonel James Orr's 1st South Carolina Rifles, better known as Orr's Rifles, which was one of Gregg's five regiments.

Gregg was hard of hearing. The battle smoke hovering in the brush and saplings around his brigade obscured the cause of the commotion. The general seems to have had the impression that there had been a line of friendly troops posted in his front, and that the men running toward them were retreating Confederates. He ordered Orr's men and his other troops to hold their fire and rode in front of them to enforce his orders. Then, his spine shot through by a bullet, Gregg fell from his horse mortally wounded. Orr's Rifles and the Colonel Daniel Hamilton's 1st South Carolina (Provisional Army) regiment took the brunt of the attack. The two regiments suffered a total of 250 casualties. The 37th North Carolina of Lane's Brigade turned to meet the attack and held off the Pennsylvanians. Across the gap, Archer's brigade was harder hit. The regiment anchoring his right flank, the 19th Georgia, collapsed from the blow. Its flag was the only Confederate regimental flag taken at Fredericksburg. As neighboring regiments also began to break, Archer shifted the 5th Alabama from his right to shore up his left. The remaining regiments held in place and Archer's situation steadied. He sent for help from Gregg, not knowing of the general's fatal wound and his brigade's even worse disaster.

Meade's troops struggled to follow up on their achievements and push through the Confederate line; Gibbon's forward elements crashed into the front of Lane's Brigade. A few hours before in midmorning, Gibbon's men had advanced toward the Richmond Road until coming under Rebel artillery fire. They lay down to avoid the fire as best they could for three hours.

At 1:30 PM Gibbon ordered the brigades of Brig. Gen. Nelson Taylor and Colonel Peter Lyle to charge the Confederate line. Rather than turn to follow Meade's men, they went straight ahead for Lane's brigade. Prepared for a frontal assault, Lane's men held off the two enemy brigades and threw them back.

Gibbon sent forward Colonel Adrian Root's brigade 15 minutes later. "Having unslung knapsacks and fixed bayonets, the brigade advance under a severe fire, moving steadily across the plowed field," wrote Root in his battle report. "[Their advance was] "rendered extremely difficult by several parallel ditches, or rifle-pits, and its rear protected by thick wood, sheltering infantry supports."

"A veritable laugh passed through the ranks when a piece of shell struck one of the boys' knapsacks, tore it open and lifted a pack of cards high in the air, intact, when they suddenly spread out and came down like a shower of autumn leaves," recalled a veteran of the 16th Maine, one of the five regiments in Root's mixed brigade.

Three other men of the regiment had similar luck. One lieutenant's life was saved when a tintype in his pocket deflected a musket ball, and another man survived because a Rebel musket ball struck his pocketknife. Corporal Luther Bradford was the first man of his regiment to take a bullet at Fredericksburg. The bullet, which lodged in his hand and remained for two days, was removed to become what he described as a "pleasant' souvenir" of the battle.

Library of Congress

Confederate General Robert E. Lee surveys the battle from his command post in the center of the Confederate line, which allowed him to monitor the progress of the battle on both wings.

Confederate fire stalled Root's advance. The front line of his brigade slowed its pace and, without orders, returned the fire. Taylor arrived and with the help of this general and the regimental officers, the brigade moved forward again. "With a shout and a run, the brigade leaped the ditches, charged across the railway, and occupied the wood beyond, driving the enemy from their position," wrote Root.

When one of the 16th Maine's soldiers stepped onto the earthworks, a Confederate soldier "sprang up and thrusting the muzzle of his gun full in his face fired it. His face was burned and blackened by the discharge, but otherwise he was uninjured," wrote Root. He bayoneted the Confederate, who in the chaos of battle had evidently charged his musket but forgot to add the ball.

The charge of Root's bluecoats struck the center of Lane's Brigade. This time they broke through and captured 200 prisoners, including the lieutenant colonel and several other officers of the 33rd North Carolina.

Progress soon halted when the Confederates rallied. Nearby brigades lent much-needed support. Brig. Gen. Edward Thomas came to the aid of Lane's men, while Brig. Gen. Charles Field's troops came to the assistance of Archer's brigade. Early,

General Robert E. Lee set his troops to work in the days before the battle improving fighting positions and clearing fields of fire for rifled and smoothbore artillery.

who kept his division in reserve behind Prospect Hill, received an urgent plea from Powell Hill's staff officer Lieutenant Ham Chamberlain. Chamberlain warned of what he termed an "awful gap" opened by the enemy between Lane and Archer, which threatened to cut off part of the army. Early, commanding one of the divisions in Jackson's I Corps, sent three brigades to plug the breach.

Meade had achieved the beginning of a breakthrough. In light of the disastrous results of the assaults yet to come against Marye's Heights a mile or so to the north, the troops of Meade and Gibbon had attained the greatest success of the Union Army at Fredericksburg.

With all three of Meade's brigadiers out of the action, casualties mounted with their units separated from each other and moving blindly. The famed Pennsylvania Bucktails suffered 161 casualties in the battle. Among the mortally wounded Bucktails was Private Henry Jackson. He was taken to a field hospital after a shell cut one leg off at the knee and smashed the other leg so it required amputation. Jackson was calm, sitting up in bed while the surgeon prepared his instruments. But a shell crashed into the hospital and exploded, wounding the surgeon and killing Jackson and a soldier detailed as a nurse.

On the dearly won wooded slopes of the ridge, Root and Taylor felt their grip on the enemy line sliding away. "The wood was so dense that the connection between Meade's and his [Gibbon's] line could not be kept up," wrote Franklin. "In consequence of this fact, Meade's line, which was vigorously attacked … could not hold its ground, and was repulsed, leaving the wood at a walk, but not in order." Quick support was needed. Pouring in additional brigades might have broken the Confederate line and endangered the right flank of Longstreet's corps and the left flank of Jackson's corps.

Root rode to ask Gibbon for reinforcements. Gibbon agreed to dispatch reinforcements, but Lyle refused a separate request from Root. Shortly afterwards, Root learned that Gibbon had been wounded and taken from the field. Taylor, who stepped in for Gibbon, told Root to withdraw when circumstances dictated for the safety of his command. Pressed by a resurgent Confederate defense, and with no commanders willing to send support, Root pulled back as far as the Richmond Road. He formed a battle line and threw forward skirmishers, but the Rebels did not pursue his troops.

As the divisions of Meade and Gibbon were pushed back across the railroad, losing the ground they had taken, 20,000 of Franklin's men stood idle. Meade sent two messages for aid from the division of Brig. Gen. David Birney, of Hooker's Grand Division. He eventually confronted Birney in person, firing a withering fusillade of profanity at him. Birney was not in Franklin's division and still balked at sending in his troops without orders from higher up.

When Early's men cleared the Yankees from the gap between Lane and Archer, they had orders to halt at the railroad tracks. Carried away by their success, Brig. Gen. Robert F. Hoke's brigade of Maj. Gen. Richard Ewell's division rushed over the tracks and pursued the scattered Yankee regiments. Franklin finally ordered reserves under Birney and Maj. Gen. Daniel Sickles to the front. They were too late to help the survivors of Meade's and Gibbon's battered divisions, who streamed back to the Richmond Road. Meade and Reynolds tried to stop them. Meade's anger pushed him to break his sword when striking a soldier with it. When Birney and Sickles appeared, their belated reinforcements could not restore the earlier Union gains, but they repulsed the Confederate counterattack.

Meade's assault was over by 2:15 PM. His division was back where they started, with the loss of 4,815 casualties. Jackson's losses were 3,415 men. This was more than one-tenth of his corps, but he still held his original position and was prepared to resume battle if necessary. Franklin, shocked at his losses, refused Burnside's orders to send more troops against the Rebel lines.

On the Union right, affairs were even worse. Sumner's men charged with bayonets against the Confederates at Marye's Heights. Longstreet's men had a near-perfect defensive position. Dug deep by years of wagon traffic, the famous Sunken Road was lined with a sturdy stone wall facing the Union advance. Aided by artillery on Marye's Heights, Confederate infantry standing two ranks deep mowed down the surging waves of bluecoats. To no avail, Hooker threw in his troops after Sumner. Instead of a well-timed mass effort, the troops were thrown piecemeal against Longstreet. None of their charges reached the stone wall. Darkness fell to put an end to the battle.

After confronting Birney and Franklin, Meade reached Reynolds' headquarters and vented his frustration at the lack of support given his men. "My God, General Reynolds, did they think my division could whip Lee's whole army?" Meade asked. Meade's division suffered 1,853 casualties, which was more than one-third of his command. Gibbon, who was himself wounded, had 1,267 killed, wounded, or missing. Doubleday, his division kept in reserve and taking no significant part in the battle, lost only 214.

Lee anticipated a renewal of the battle on December 14, but the battlefield remained mostly quiet. Meade had a close call, though,

when a Confederate sharpshooter "took deliberate aim at me, his ball passing through the neck of my horse," wrote Meade. There was some consolation for the general in that he was riding a substitute horse, and that his favorite mounts named Baldy and Blacky were safe. Both of these horses had recovered from bullet wounds in preceding campaigns.

Overwhelmed by his staggering casualties, Burnside returned his army to the north side of the river on December 15 and encamped at Falmouth. Recriminations flew from Northern newspapers and politicians when the scale of the Union defeat became clear. Approximately 13,000 Union soldiers fell in vain in what was a clear Confederate victory, compared to the roughly 5,000 men lost by Lee.

Little movement occurred around Fredericksburg until January 1863, when torrential rains turned an attempted attack by Burnside into the futile, and quickly cancelled, Mud March. Lincoln replaced Burnside with Hooker, who in turn would last no longer than the next Union debacle, which unfolded 10 miles to the west at Chancellorsville the first week in May 1863.

At Chancellorsville, Meade had been promoted to command of the V Corps. Remembered for achieving the Union's greatest success at Fredericksburg, he burnished his credentials at Chancellorsville. When Lincoln fired Hooker, he ordered Meade to take command of the Army of the Potomac. Just two days after Meade accepted command of the Army of the Potomac, the Battle of Gettysburg began on July 1, 1863. Meade would forever be remembered afterwards for defeating Lee's second invasion of the North. ■

Both: Library of Congress

Seven Union divisions made 14 separate assaults on the Confederates defending the Sunken Road at the base of Marye's Heights. Despite their great valor, they could not capture the position.

Rebels in Sunken Road repulsed heavy attack

"Get ready boys, here they come," shouted Brig. Gen. Thomas Reade Roots Cobb, as the Union troops surged towards the stone wall along the Sunken Road at the base of Marye's Heights several columns deep at midday on December 13, 1862.

Cobb told his Georgians to wait "until you can count the Yankee [coat] buttons" before firing on the advancing tide of blue-coated infantry headed towards the stone wall. Regimental leaders advised their troops to aim low. From right to left crouching behind the stone wall were the men of the 16th Georgia, 18th Georgia, 24th Georgia, and the Philip's Legion. The 24th North Carolina of Brig. Gen. Robert Ransom's division extended the Rebel line to the north, where it held a sheltered trench its troops had dug for protection. Ransom's other North Carolina regiments deployed behind the Georgians. When given permission before the Union assault to fall back if it became necessary, Cobb had boasted, "If they wait for me to fall back, they will wait a long time."

Maj. Gen. William French's division, which was designated to lead the Federal attack on the entrenched Confederates, began forming up at 10:00 AM. They came under converging fire from Confederate artillery on Marye's Heights, Telegraph Hill, and Stansbury's Hill. The Rebel artillery raked the Union formations, opening up large gaps long before the two sides were within musket range of each other.

At noon French's division began its advance. Having exited the narrow streets of the city, the bluecoats advanced across an open plain that offered little cover other than a swale in front of the stone wall.

When the first wave of Federals prepared to assail the Sunken Road, Cobb gave the order to fire. Long lines of gray-uniformed men rose to their feet, rested their barrels on the top of the stone wall, and opened fire with crashing volleys. Sheets of flame erupted from the Enfield rifle-muskets atop the wall. They poured volley after volley into the Union ranks with "a most devastating effect," recalled William Montgomery, of the Phillips (Georgia) Legion. Cobb's presence "was felt at every point of the line," said brigade chaplain Rufus Porter.

Veteran Confederate infantrymen who had seen the carnage at previous bloodbaths at Malvern Hill and Sharpsburg were shocked by the carpet of Union dead before the wall. Nine guns of the Washington Artillery of New Orleans commanded the brow of Marye's Heights. As the Federals drew close, they fired double-shotted canister into their ranks. The rounds ripped into the Union columns "destroying a company at a time," observed Colonel Nathan Kimball of the 14th Indiana. "Shattered, torn, and bleeding, our column still pushed—gained the open ground—drew up in line of battle and with bayonets fixed, rushed forward to the charge," wrote William Landon, a soldier in the 14th Indiana.

As the fighting wore on, a Federal artillery round burst near Cobb. It sent a piece of shrapnel into his left thigh, which severed his femoral artery. He soon fell into a state of consciousness and died shortly after 2:00 PM.

Eight Union divisions tried, and ultimately failed, to gain the Confederate position at the base of Marye's Heights. Burnside paid a heavy cost in lives for his ill-conceived attack on the Confederate I Corps.

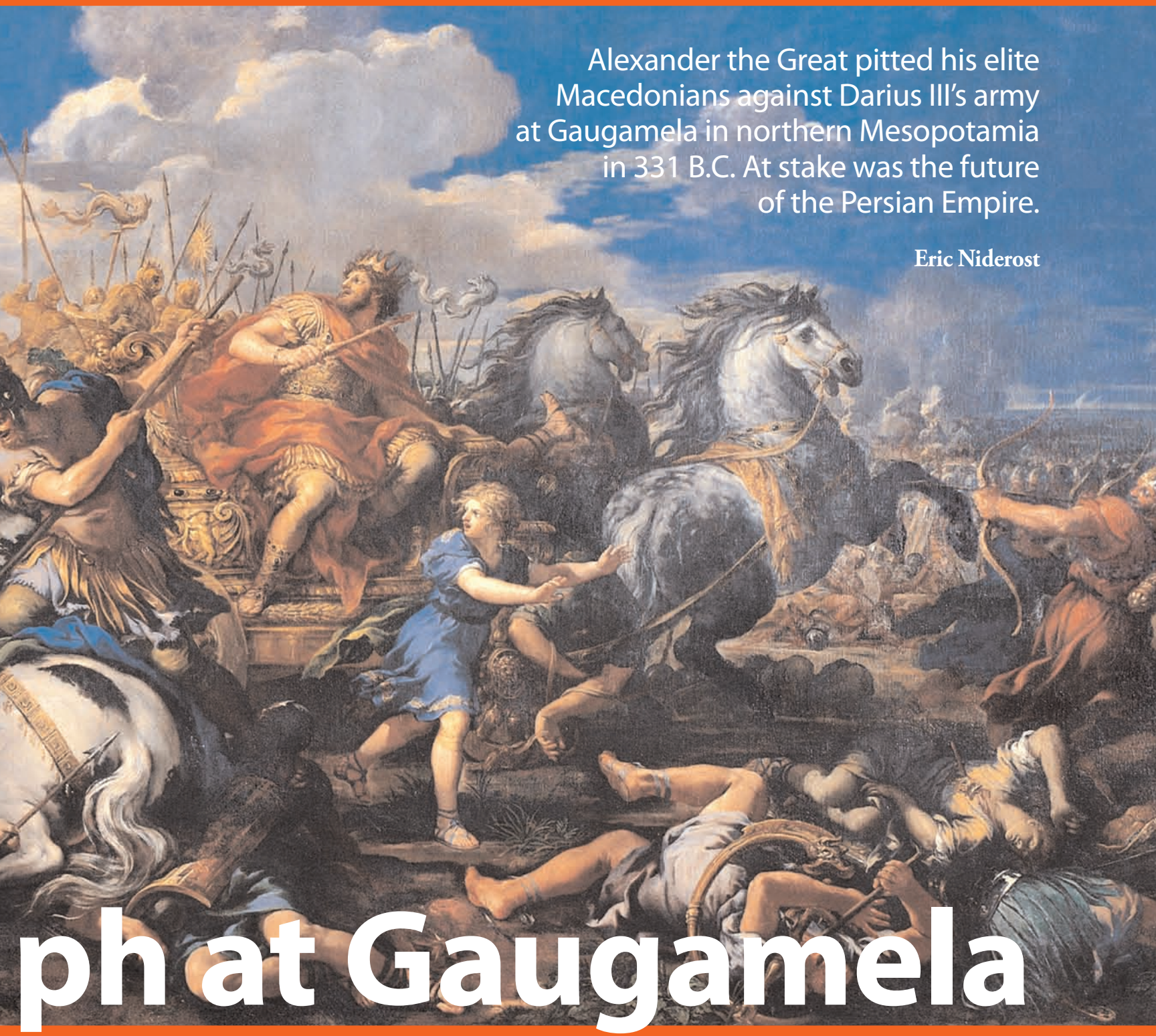
—William E. Welsh

Macedonian King Alexander's counterattack pierces the left-center of the Persian line and puts Darius to flight on the plain of Gaugamela.

Alexander's Trium

It was nighttime, and a great battle was soon to be fought at Gaugamela, in the dusty plains and rolling hills of modern-day northern Iraq. The fight would begin the next day, October 1, 331 B.C., and would pit the Macedonian army of King Alexander III, who is better known to history as Alexander the Great, against a mighty host assembled by Great King Darius III of the Persian Achaemenid Empire. The night before a battle, soldiers are often alone in their own thoughts, wondering if this is the last evening of their lives. The Macedonians, who themselves were seasoned soldiers, knew they were facing an enemy that heavily outnumbered them. The odds were enough to give the most experienced veteran pause.

The Macedonians were bivouacked on a series of low hills, about four miles from the main Persian camp, and some of these hills shielded Alexander's troops from enemy sight. Possessing the high ground, the Macedonians could easily see the Persian camp, a sight that could chill the blood from the sheer spectacle. Thousands upon thousands of campfires spread over the plain: tiny pinpricks of light that seemed to match the twin-



ph at Gaugamela

Alexander the Great pitted his elite Macedonians against Darius III's army at Gaugamela in northern Mesopotamia in 331 B.C. At stake was the future of the Persian Empire.

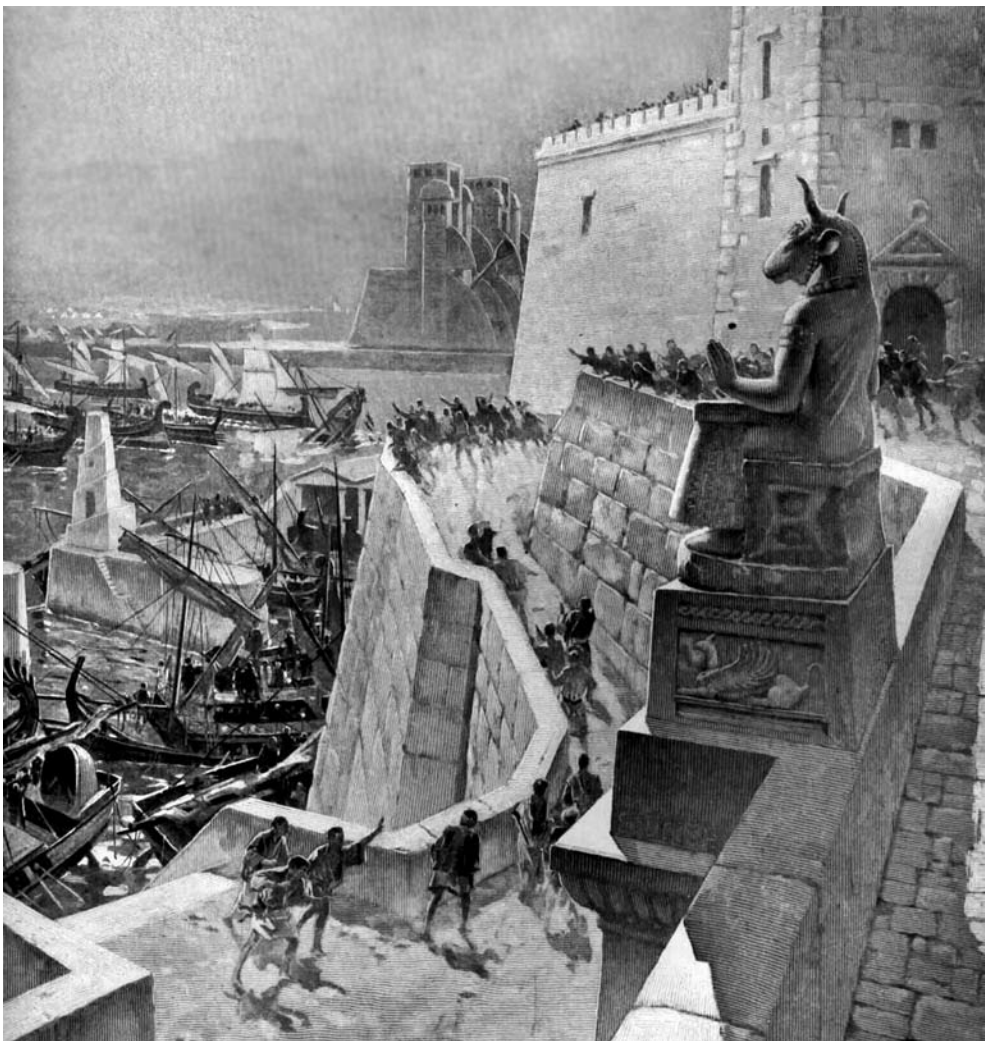
Eric Niderost

kling canopy of stars that dotted the sky above.

That sight was awesome enough, but the Macedonians heard a "tumultuous sound of voices arose from [the Persian] camp as if from a vast ocean," wrote the Greek historian Plutarch. And a vast ocean it was, a sea of humanity that seemed impossible to defeat. Parmenio, one of Alexander's senior commanders, was impressed enough to go directly to Alexander's pavilion for an interview.

Parmenio strongly suggested that the Macedonians attack at night; a nocturnal advance might catch the Persians off guard, and lead to certain victory. "No, I will not steal my victory," Alexander said. He wanted a clear-cut decision, one that Darius, or his Macedonian critics, could not refute. He wanted everything out in the open, an unalloyed triumph, in broad daylight, not something obtained literally like a thief in the night.

Parmenio left Alexander, who retired to bed soon after, seeking a good night's rest to prepare for the challenges he would face tomorrow. In Egypt he had been hailed as the son of Ammon-Zeus, and the idea was starting to take root in his mind. Yet, confronted with the realities that



Combining the strength of his elite army with newly acquired naval assets, Alexander overpowered the Tyrians after six months in 332 B.C.

would face him the next morning, this young demigod had an all-too-human bout of insomnia. Some sources claim he was awake much of the night, mulling over the various plans and strategies he might pursue to gain a victory.

The coming battle was in a sense the climax of a war between east and west that had been intermittently waged for more than a century and a half. The Achaemenid Empire was one of the greatest of the ancient world, a vast domain that stretched from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean to the borders of India, from Egypt and modern-day Turkey through Iran and Iraq and as far east as Samarkand. Upwards of 35 million people lived under Persian rule.

Persian kings Darius I and Xerxes had launched invasions of Europe, respectively, in 492 B.C. and 480 B.C. Their goal was to bring the city-states of Greece under their control. They failed, but the memory of their invasions created hatred in Greece of the Persian empire that would last for generations. Greeks also resented the frequent Persian interventions in Greek regional politics as the years wore on. The Persians would help one side or another, liberally supplying money or materiel, to maintain a balance of power that would keep them in control of events.

Without an external enemy to unite them, the Greek city-states fell into squabbling that often led to war between them. The most famous of these bloody and fratricidal conflicts was the Peloponnesian War from 431B.C. to 404 B.C., which pitted Athens against Sparta. Sparta triumphed, but its hegemony was short-lived. Athens recovered and regained much of its former power and prestige.

Greece finally found a measure of peace and unity, though it was imposed at the point of a sword. King Philip II of Macedon brought all Greece under his control by 336 B.C. Philip was ambitious and wanted to solidify his authority over the Greek city states by uniting them in a war of conquest against Persia. It was a dazzling and—to many Greeks—irresistible proposition. The Persians, whom theGreeks regarded as barbarians, would be vanquished; their meddling and threats would be forever abolished in the Hellenic world. Athens, which had been badly damaged in 480 B.C., and all the other Greek states that had suffered, would finally be avenged.

Philip was assassinated in 336 B.C., and his 20-year-old son Alexander came to the Macedonian throne. Alexander soon proved himself to be a commander of exceptional ability. He had to put down a few brushfire revolts, culminating in the sack of Thebes, but he got the point across to the fractious Greek states. When he was in Asia, Greece remained quiet; on the whole, the Greek city-states supported his war against the Persians.

Alexander left Pella, his Macedonian capital, in the spring of 334 B.C. with 30,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry. He marched the 300 miles from Pella to the Dardanelles, the narrow waterway that separates Europe from Asia, in just 20 days. His army crossed over to Asia without incident, but the first battle in the war would not be long in coming. Local Persian satraps gathered an army at the Granicus River, about two days march inland. The Persian troops were bolstered by Greek mercenaries. The Persians sought to put a swift end to the Greek invasion by killing Alexander.

The clash at the Granicus River resulted in a Macedonian victory, but in the process the impetuous young king was nearly killed. Alexander lost part of his helmet to a well-aimed Persian battle-axe, and a sword thrust was parried in the nick of time by an officer named Cleitus the Black, who cut the assailant's arm off. The victory at Granicus gave the Macedonians a foothold in Asia, and the Great King's main forces were still being marshaled 1,000 miles away.

Alexander could have tried to strike inland, gambling all on one throw of the dice. But the young Macedonian had a clear strategic vision of what he must do. Alexander would follow the west coast of Asia Minor, which had many Greek cities eager to cast off the Persian yoke. In Miletus and Halicarnassus, local Persian garrisons resisted, but for the most part the Greeks welcomed Alexander as a liberator.

Alexander then met Darius in battle at Issus in southern Anatolia. Darius had a polyglot host that was both large and unwieldy. The Persian army possessed little cohesion. What is more, many of the troops in the Persian ranks were not even loyal to the Great King. The Macedonians quickly put the Persians to rout, and Darius fled ignominiously to avoid capture. He was forced to leave behind much treasure, his splendid pavilion, and his family and harem. The loss of his family and harem was a most humiliating outcome. "This, it seems, is royalty!" Alexander dryly remarked upon dining in Darius's pavilion.

Alexander continued to go down the coast,

avoiding the temptation of pursuing Darius or setting out immediately for the Persian interior. He knew the Persian fleet was still formidable but would be neutralized if they were denied a home port. Moreover, it was easier to supply his own army by sea.

His plan was sound, but it hit a snag when the people of Tyre, a proud island seaport of Phoenician origins, refused to submit to Alexander's rule. The Macedonians were forced to lay siege to Tyre, an affair that lasted seven months. Both sides exhibited courage, resourcefulness, and daring, but in the end Tyre fell to the Macedonians. Upwards of 8,000 Tyrians were killed in the final assault, and the survivors, around 30,000, were sold into slavery.

Other cities welcomed Alexander as he proceeded down the Mediterranean coast, his ultimate goal the rich and fertile province of Egypt. The Jews happily opened the gates of Jerusalem to the Macedonians; and Egypt, long chafing under the Persian yoke, accepted Alexander as a liberator. He enjoyed this Egyptian interlude, and famously founded the city in the Nile Delta that bears his name, Alexandria.

While he was still in Tyre, Alexander received some peace overtures from Darius. The Great King tried to sweeten the deal by offering 30,000 talents of silver and the hand of one of his daughters. It was all so neat and tidy, and Darius probably thought Alexander would readily accept. If Alexander accepted the deal, as Darius' son-in-law he would rule all the territories west of the Euphrates in a dual monarchy.

It was an offer that could not be rejected out of hand; that is, at least not without some serious consideration. Alexander summoned his so-called companions, who were his top aides and associates, and asked their opinion of the proposed deal. Most of them held their tongues, perhaps fearing to say the wrong thing. Only Parmenion spoke his mind. "If I were Alexander, I should accept what was offered and make a treaty," he declared. "So, should I, if I were Parmenion," replied Alexander.

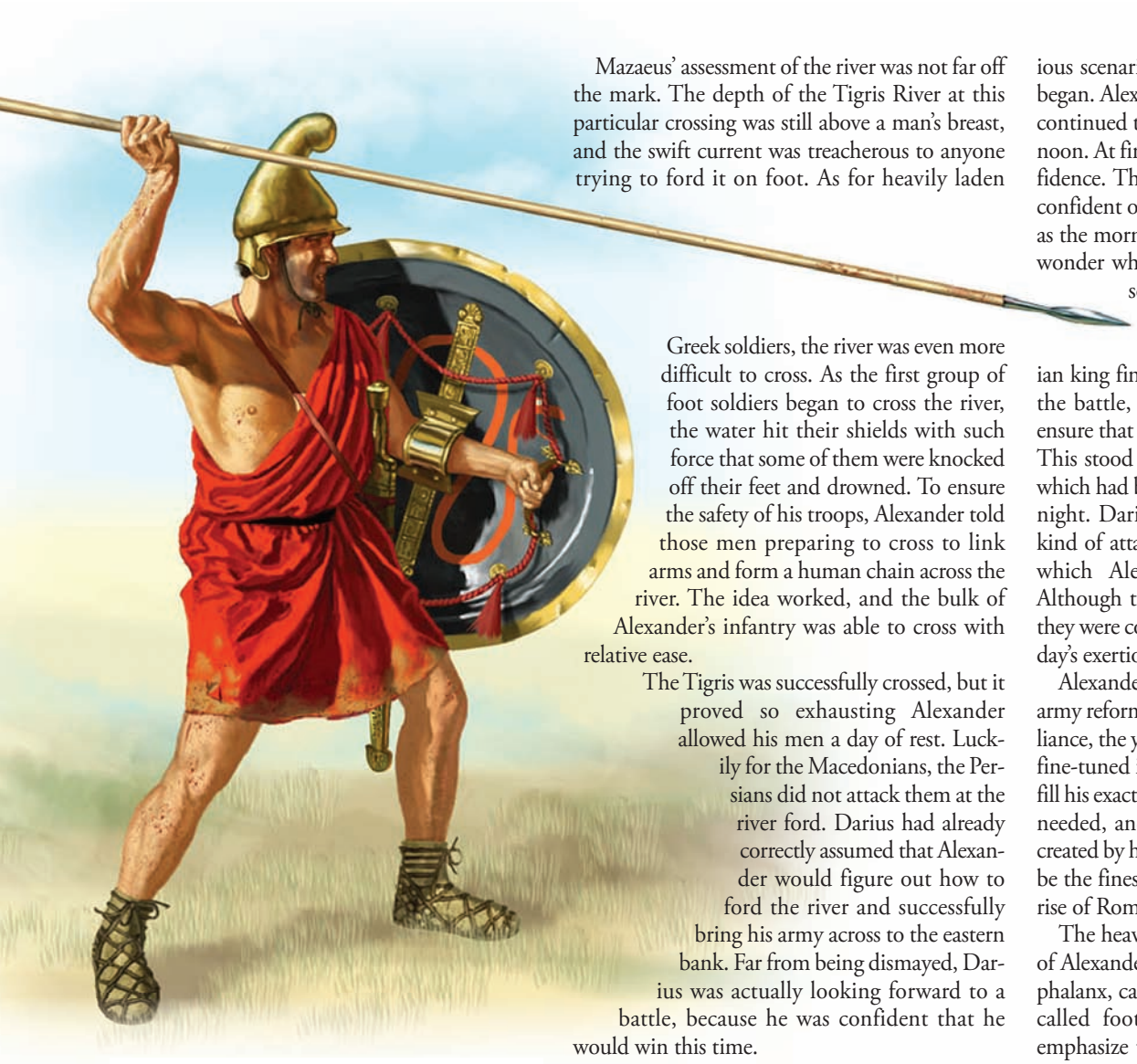
As far as Alexander was concerned, this was no time for half measures. He aimed to take the entire Achaemenid Empire and would not stop until he had accomplished this goal. In rejecting the offer, he wrote to Darius that it was impossible for two suns to exist in the same sky. The war for the empire would continue.

One of Alexander's main goals was to capture Babylon, the crown jewel of the Persian realm. After crossing the Euphrates River, the most direct route to the great city lay in a southwesterly direction. But Alexander decided to go north instead, with the Euphrates River and the mountains of Armenia to his left.

TOP: Alexander's victory over the Persians at Issus enabled him to conquer Syria and Egypt without interference from Darius III. BOTTOM: Darius abandoned his queen, family, and much of his royal treasure to Alexander in his flight from Issus.

His decision was based on sound reasoning. The harvest was already in, and all over the Euphrates region the precious grain was stored in well-fortified cities. Darius had ordered his subordinate, Mazaeus, to adopt a scorched-earth policy for the region. That meant that the Macedonian army, underfed and near-starving, would have to besiege each grain-producing city if they would have any chance of obtaining food. It would be a time-consuming process, and also costly in lives. The southern region was also semi-arid and hot at this time of year.

Alexander's choice of a northerly route took the Persians by surprise, but Darius quickly adapted



The flanks of the Macedonian phalanx were defended by light troops known as hypaspists, who were armed with large shields and short spears.

to the new realities. The Great King might not have been a military genius, but he seems to have grasped at least the rudiments of military strategy and tactics. He rigorously trained his men and tried to adapt their weapons in such a way that they could better deal with the Macedonians and their Greek allies. Since the Macedonian phalanx was standard in the Hellenic world, Darius lengthened the spears his own troops would wield in the coming battle.

Darius dispatched Mazaeus to the main ford of the Tigris River, correctly reasoning that Alexander's army would soon attempt a crossing, but as soon as he arrived at the ford, Mazaeus judged the current too swift and treacherous for any army to cross. Satisfied with his analysis, he left the area and focused instead on conducting more scorched-earth operations.

Mazaeus' assessment of the river was not far off the mark. The depth of the Tigris River at this particular crossing was still above a man's breast, and the swift current was treacherous to anyone trying to ford it on foot. As for heavily laden Greek soldiers, the river was even more difficult to cross. As the first group of foot soldiers began to cross the river, the water hit their shields with such force that some of them were knocked off their feet and drowned. To ensure the safety of his troops, Alexander told those men preparing to cross to link arms and form a human chain across the river. The idea worked, and the bulk of Alexander's infantry was able to cross with relative ease.

The Tigris was successfully crossed, but it proved so exhausting Alexander allowed his men a day of rest. Luckily for the Macedonians, the Persians did not attack them at the river ford. Darius had already correctly assumed that Alexander would figure out how to ford the river and successfully bring his army across to the eastern bank. Far from being dismayed, Darius was actually looking forward to a battle, because he was confident that he would win this time.

Just before Alexander reached the Tigris River, Darius was in Babylon gathering his forces. The Great King decided to offer battle in the northwest, in what formerly was the kingdom of Assyria. The region consisted of a wide plain not far from a hill that looked like a dromedary camel's hump. The camel hump hill gave the area its name, because in the Semitic tongue camel is gammalu. History knows the place as Gaugamela.

Darius took great pains to ensure Gaugamela gave the Persians all the advantages. Natural undulations in the ground were flattened, and brush cleared away. The Great King set great store in his 200 chariots, swift vehicles that had sharp and long-bladed scythes attached to their wheels. Under the right conditions they were an excellent anti-infantry weapon, mowing down foot soldiers. Yet to perform effectively, the chariots required flat ground and lots of room to maneuver.

When the day of battle finally dawned, Alexander's generals were surprised to see that he was in his tent still fast asleep. They did not know he had been awake most of the night, reviewing the various scenarios that might occur when the battle began. Alexander fell asleep just before dawn and continued to slumber peacefully until just before noon. At first the generals interpreted this as confidence. They believed their commander was so confident of victory he was able to oversleep. But as the morning hours dragged by, they started to wonder what was occurring. Was there perhaps something amiss?

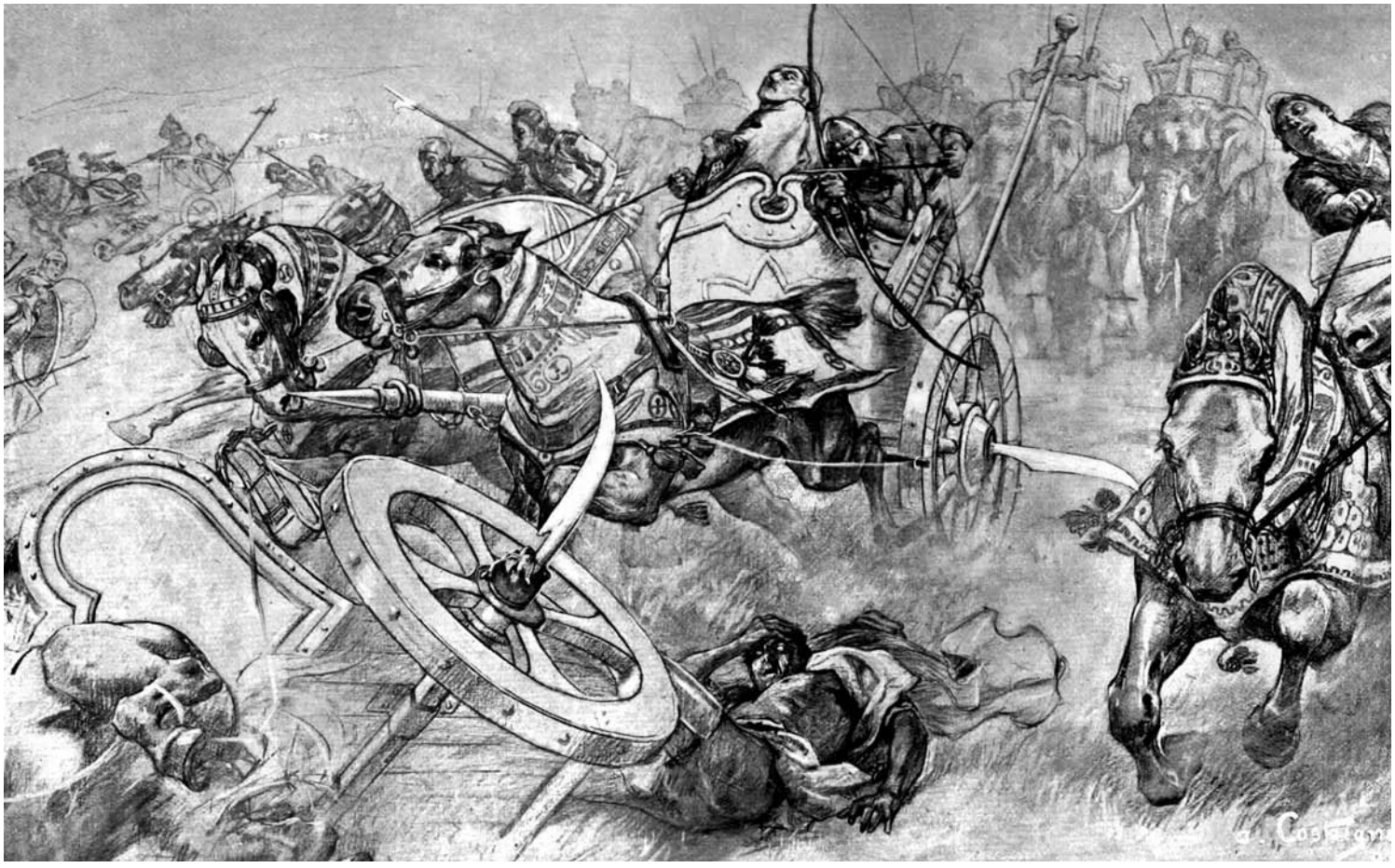
Any lingering fears were dispelled when the young Macedonian king finally awoke. In the days leading up to the battle, Alexander had taken great pains to ensure that his men were well fed and well rested. This stood in stark contrast to the Persian host, which had been awake and under arms the whole night. Darius feared a night attack, exactly the kind of attack that Parmenio had proposed, but which Alexander had refused to consider. Although the Greeks were numerically inferior, they were confident, well rested, and ready for the day's exertions.

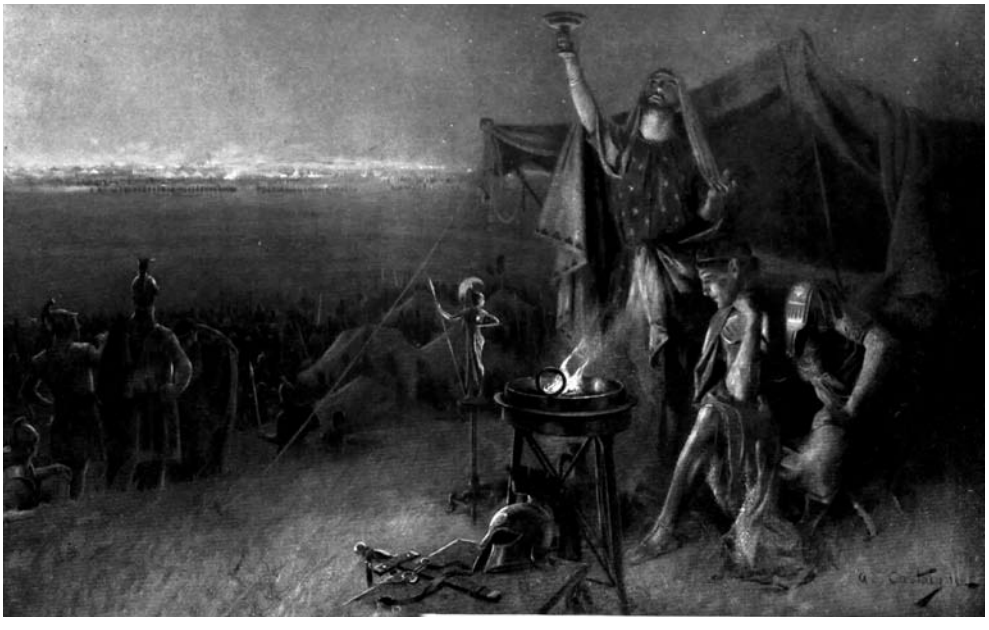
Alexander owed much to his father Philip II's army reforms. For all his strategic and tactical brilliance, the young Macedonian monarch needed a fine-tuned instrument to serve his needs and fulfill his exacting requirements. He found all that he needed, and more, with the Macedonian army created by his late father. The Macedonians would be the finest army in the ancient world until the rise of Rome roughly a century later.

The heavy infantry phalanx was the backbone of Alexander's army. The men who made up the phalanx, called phalangites, were also sometimes called foot companions, the pezhetairoi, to emphasize their special status in royal eyes. The other type of infantry in Alexander's ranks was the hypaspists, light troops who generally guarded the flanks of the phalanx and had larger shields and short spears. The Macedonian army also had highly skilled skirmishers known as peltastai. Among the ranks of the peltastai were javelin throwers, slingers, and archers.

Instead of the heavy, metal-faced hoplon shield of the Greek hoplites, the phalangite had a much smaller shield strapped to his left arm. It was strapped to his arm because he needed both hands to wield his formidable pike. The pike was another feature that stood out from the traditional armament of the hoplite. The 18-foot pike, the sarissa, was three times as long as the hoplite's six-foot spear.

The phalangite wore a kind of corselet, but his helmet was generally of a more open-faced Thracian or Phrygian variety, the latter ending with a kind of bulbous top. This contrasted with the Greek hoplite's typical Corinthian helmet, which incased most of the head and restricted vision and hearing. By abandoning the Corinthian helmet, a





ABOVE: Alexander had drilled his men in countermeasures to disrupt the charge of Darius' 200 scythed chariots, and as a result only a small number harmed the Macedonian infantry. RIGHT: Alexander declined a suggestion to attack the Persian camp at night for he wanted to vanquish the Persian host in the light of day for all to see.

phalangite could see, hear, and even breathe better, always important when dealing with a compact body of men fighting in close proximity to one another.

The basic tactical unit of the Macedonian phalanx was the syntagma, a block of men 16 rows deep and 16 across. When a phalanx moved forward, the first four or five rows pointed their pikes toward the enemy, a prickly hedgehog that would be difficult to breech. The other ranks would hold their pikes upright, though bent slightly in the enemy's direction. This would afford them at least minimal protection against arrows and other missiles.

It is harder to accurately describe the Persian host. As at Issus, it was essentially a polyglot force that included troops from the many diverse nations that populated the far-flung Achaemenid Empire. There were Bactrians, Scythians, and Indians included in the Persian formations. Various tribal peoples also filled the ranks, warriors who had their own distinctive weapons, costume, and ways of fighting. The Persians and the Medes, the peoples that were the historic foundations of the empire, also were represented in substantial numbers.

Ancient sources do not reveal much about the Persian infantry, leading to one of the great mysteries of Alexander's campaigns: why were the Persian elite guards nicknamed the Immortals? During the earlier Persian invasion under Xerxes, this elite force of 10,000 men were famed throughout the Greek world as formidable fighters, as famous as Napoleon's Old Guard would be centuries later.

Alexander led his cavalry in a daring charge that broke through the Persian line and precipitated a panic that resulted in the collapse of Persian resistance.

They seem to have disappeared by Alexander's time, but the Great King did have a 1,000-man bodyguard called the apple bearers, so called from the globular gold and silver pommels on their spear butts.

Although it is hard to discern the plan that the Great King of Persia had for the battle, he apparently saw the coming fight as more of a cavalry battle in which his chariot corps and regular horsemen would win the day. Darius knew that his infantry could probably make little headway against the Macedonian phalanx. While the Great King did give them a literal fighting chance by giving his infantry longer spears, they could not match Macedonian training and discipline.

Darius hoped that the Persian cavalry, or perhaps even the chariot corps, might make substantial headway and perhaps achieve a breakthrough that would lead to victory. Since Darius had four or five times as many men as Alexander, the Persian cavalry might lap around the Macedonian phalanx formation and take them from the flank and rear. Of course, they also would have to neutralize Alexander and his Companion cavalry, which was no easy task. But Darius was hopeful that sheer weight of numbers would turn the tide in his favor.

Once Alexander was fully awake, he reassured his generals that all was well. One of the Macedonian king's strengths as a commander was his recognition of morale. He did his best to make sure his men were well fed, clothed, armed, and confident of ultimate victory. Mounting his horse, he went all along the Macedonian line, often calling out the names of individual soldiers with warm personal greetings.

He also spoke to the troops in general, reminding them of their bravery in the past, and their performances in battles like Issus. He appealed to them as their king and their general, a man who was about to take the same risks as they were, and he urged them to fight for Macedonia with their customary skill and courage.

Alexander's appeals struck a responsive chord, and ancient chroniclers insist that at that very moment, an eagle could be seen flying over the Macedonian army. The eagle circled lazily, probably drifting on the thermal currents that arose from the sun baked plains; but it changed direction and flew over the Persians. Alexander pointed to the eagle, and said the majestic bird was an omen of Macedonian victory. The troops responded favorably, because every man knew that eagles were the favorite bird of all-powerful Zeus, king of the Greek gods.

Alexander's battle arrangements were much like the deployments used at Issus. The Macedonian center featured the heavy infantry phalanx under the leadership of Craterus. By contrast, the right wing had light troops known as hypaspists under the command of Parmenion's son Nicantor. Alexander and his Companion cavalry also took positions on the right. The left was led by Parmenion and was mainly Thessalian and Thracian horsemen.

The Macedonian king made some key adjustments to deal with possibility of a Persian flank envelopment. Because Darius' host Persians outnumbered the Macedonians, their overall frontage was much greater. Envelopment, or perhaps even a double envelopment, was not out of the question. To guard against this possibility, he placed infantry at angles on the ends of both right and left flanks. Alexander also had a second line of Greek hoplites standing right behind the massive Macedonian phalanx formations. More maneuverable than their Macedonian phalanx colleagues, they could quickly turn around and deal with any attacks from the rear, if a Persian envelopment should succeed.

The battle began with a clever stratagem by the Macedonians. Alexander took his Companion cavalry and immediately moved to the right in an oblique angle. To the Persians it appeared as though the Macedonians were trying their own flank arrack, so to counter this movement Darius ordered Bessus to move left. As the Persians moved further and further to the left, they began to go beyond the ground they had previously cleared for better troop movement.

But as they moved left to block Alexander's thrust, they inadvertently opened a gap in their battle line, separating the Persian left from the Persian center. Alexander moved to quickly exploit the situation. Alexander's original oblique movement to the right with his Companion cavalry might even have been a deliberate feint on the Macedonian king's part to create just such a situation.

In any case Alexander and his galloping horsemen quickly changed direction and started towards the widening gap in the Persian line. Darius, who was watching these movements with growing alarm, responded by having his elite household cavalry rush forward to meet the theat. Some accounts refer to these them as the so-called kinsmen cavalry because some of the men were blood relatives of the Great King.

While the Macedonian right wing went through its paces with the Persian left, it was time for the centers of the two armies to see action. Darius launched an attack by his scythed chariot corps, an advance supported by clouds of Persian cavalry on the flanks and rear. Alexander had anticipated just such an attack, so the men were drilled in countermeasures. The Macedonian phalanx locked shields and began beating those shields with their pikes. The result was an ear-splitting din that scared many of the chariot horses, causing them to veer off and gallop wildly across the open plain. In at least a few cases the panicked chariot horses, completely out of control, slammed into Persian ranks and did terrible damage to their own side. The terrified animals, eyes rolling white with fear, had to be killed before the rampage would stop.

But some chariot horses were not afraid, and the Macedonians had other methods to deal with them. In some cases, the dense phalanx parted, opening a clear path for the chariots while at the same time avoiding their deadly wheel blades. Light troops then killed the horses with javelins with relative ease. Once a chariot was immobile, its scythed blades forever stilled, arrows and javelins could kill the crew, which usually consisted of a driver and one soldier.

Ancient sources do record that at least in a few isolated cases the scythed chariots were effective. By sheer momentum, some chariots slammed into Macedonian ranks with full force. They cut through shields like they were thin parchment, at the same time severing arms and other body parts with horrifying ease. As soldiers tried to avoid the rotating blades, they stumbled and fell, leaving themselves open to further mutilation.

The scythed chariots instantly severed heads. The heads, which rolled in the dust, had the "eyes still open and the expression of the countenance unchanged," wrote Greek historian Diodorus. In other cases, the blades "sliced through ribs with mortal gashes and inflicted a quick death," he wrote. But from the Persian point of view, only a handful of chariots succeeded in their mission. The chariot, once the queen of the battlefield in ancient Egypt, was shown to be outmoded and ultimately obsolete.

Once the chariot corps was disposed of, the Macedonian phalanx had to deal with Persian infantry and cavalry. Clouds of Persian arrows filled the air, and the phalanx took some casualties, but the Persian infantry could make little headway against those long pikes. Nevertheless, by sheer weight of enemy numbers the phalanx was hard pressed, and the fighting at this stage was intense.

It was much the same for the Macedonian left flank, which was commanded by Parmenio. The Persian numbers were overwhelming in this sector of the battlefield and boasted some of the Persian army's finest troops, including elite cavalry units. The Persian right now pressing their attack was under Mazaeus, a tough and resourceful commander, but once again it was the sheer weight of Persian numbers that seemed to swing victory in favor of the Persians.

Darius fled the field at Gaugamela as he had at Issus. He met an undignified death when he was murdered the following year in Bactria.

Seeing that Parmenio was hard pressed, Mazaeus sent 2,000 Cardusii cavalry—a hard-fighting mountain people from northern Persia—together with 1,000 picked Scythian horsemen to ride around the Macedonian flank. The Scythians were well known as hard-riding, hard fighting, and supremely mobile warriors.

If the Cardusii and Scythian cavalry had seriously attacked the Macedonia flank and rear, they might have had a decisive impact on the course of the battle. Yet the lure of loot proved too great a temptation to resist. The horsemen went directly towards the baggage train, which was located far in the rear. The baggage train also held some Persian captives, including Darius's own mother Sisyngambris, who had been captured with the rest of the Persian king's family, wives, and concubines after Issus.

When the Scythian and Cardusii cavalry suddenly appeared in the baggage it seemed as if all hell had broken loose. The baggage camp dissolved into sheer chaos, with shouts, screams and running about in all directions. The horsemen quickly killed the camp guards, a task that was completed when some of the male Persian captives seized weapons and joined the fight.

While the Scythians and Cardusii plundered,

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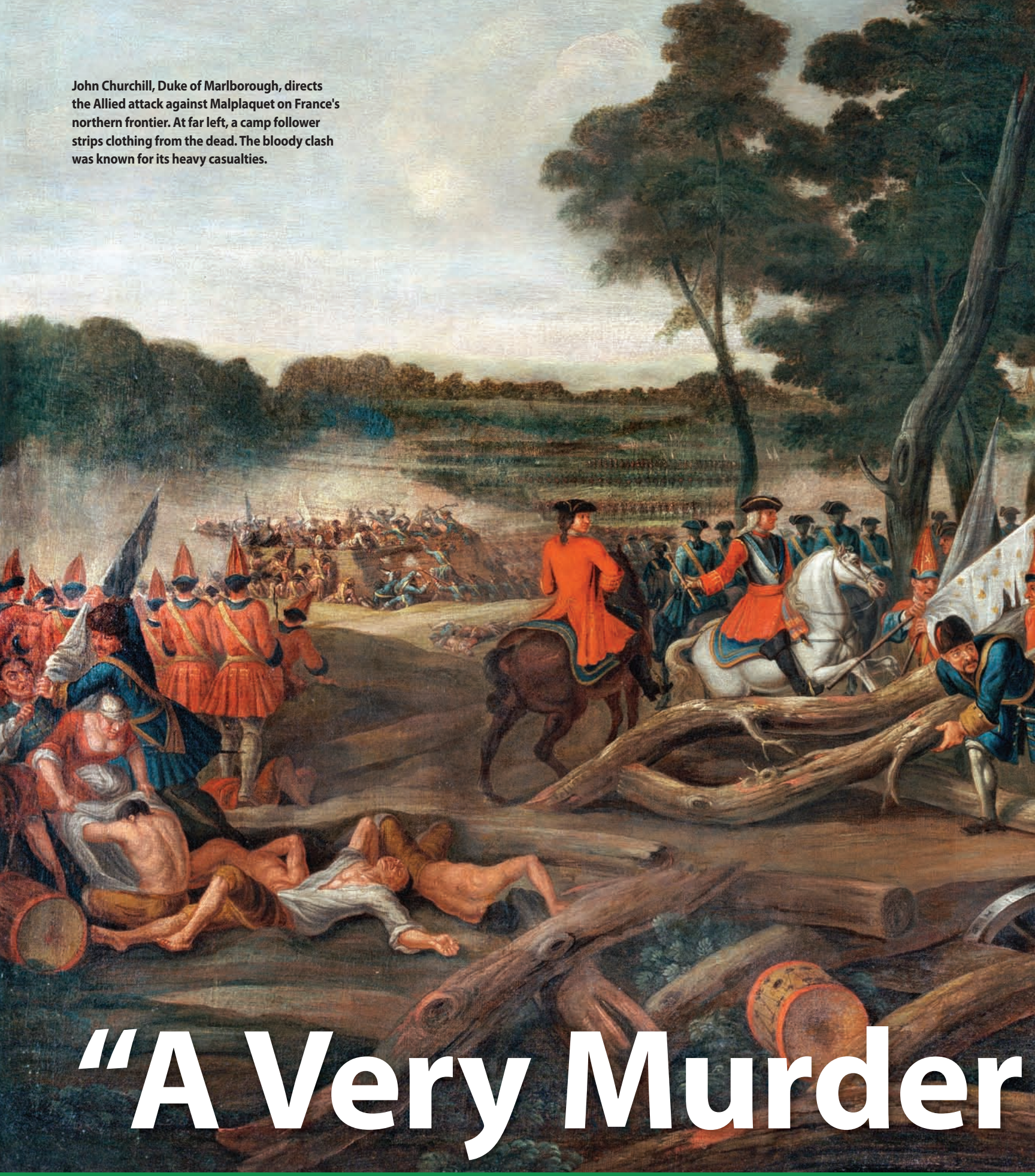


John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, directs the Allied attack against Malplaquet on France's northern frontier. At far left, a camp follower strips clothing from the dead. The bloody clash was known for its heavy casualties.

"A Very Murder

ing Battle”

The bloody clash at Malplaquet in 1709 during the War of the Spanish Succession pitted the Duke of Marlborough against his ablest opponent, France’s Duke of Villars.

Eric Niderost

Peter Drake was a cavalryman, but at the moment he was standing near his horse’s head, holding his mount’s bridle and calming the beast when the animal grew restless after a night of inactivity. It was the predawn hours of September 11, 1709, and Drake was a trooper in the Gendarmes, a cavalry unit in the army of King Louis XIV of France. The cavalryman was Irish by birth, English in ancestry, and a soldier of fortune by trade. He changed sides as easily as changing clothes, but in the 18th century, men like him commonly filled the ranks of every nation’s army.

The orders were to be on the alert all night, and into the next day. Troopers like Drake were ordered to stand by their mounts, and thus be ready to swing into the saddle at a moment’s notice. It had been a long night, and when the sky lightened the area was shrouded by a dense, clammy fog, the thickest fog Drake had ever seen in his life. It was tedious to be standing there for hours, but his mood brightened considerably when he and the other troops on the front lines received their bread rations. Many of them had not eaten for two days.

Drake was in the Spanish Netherlands near an obscure village named Malplaquet, which was situated about 60 miles southwest of Brussels. Before the day was over, the hamlet was to be famous as the site of a major battle, a fame that was written in blood as the costliest battle of the 18th century. But that was still in the future. Drake and 80,000 French troops were waiting to

Bridgman Art Library/ National Army Museum, London

be attacked by the Grand Alliance's multinational army led by John Churchill, First Duke of Marlborough, and Prince Eugene of Savoy. The two men were acknowledged as the greatest generals of their age. Would it be possible for the French to defeat an army led by such gifted and proven commanders? Only time would tell.

Malplaquet was a battle in the long and drawn-out conflict known to history as the War of the Spanish Succession. It had its roots in a succession crisis brought on by the death of the last Spanish Hapsburg, Charles II. The Spanish king was the product of generations of inbreeding, and even his mother was his father's niece. As a result of his unfortunate heritage, Charles had a host of physical, and, some say, mental disabilities.

Charles amazed all Europe by continuing to live, but at last he succumbed in November 1700 at the age of only 38. In a sense, Charles's multiple disabilities and ailments were a metaphor for Spain itself, which was in sharp decline as a major power. The country may have been in decay-- its government corrupt and bureaucratic, its economy in ruins--yet it was still the seat of a mighty empire; its far-flung territories were still rich enough for other European powers to covet them, eager to snatch them away from Spain's feeble grasp. Spain had territories in the Spanish Netherlands, Italy, and, above all, its still vast territories in the New World.

Charles left a will that bequeathed the Spanish throne to the Phillip of Anjou, the 16-year-old grandson of an aging but still powerful Louis XIV of France, who was known as the Sun King for having chosen the sun as his personal symbol. In the coming months there were fevered negotiations, but when the dust settled Leopold of Austria, who was also the Holy Roman Emperor, put forward his own claimant in the person of his son Charles. Initially England was indifferent to these squabbles, but things changed when the exiled Stuart king James II died and Louis XIV recognized his son as legitimate king of England.

The result was that a Grand Alliance of England (Great Britain after 1707), the Holy Roman Empire (hereditary Habsburg lands and large sections of modern-day Germany), and the United Provinces (The Netherlands) declared war against France. France had fewer allies in the conflict, including Bavaria and the Elector of Cologne.

It was during the course of this war that the Duke of Marlborough emerged as the greatest commander Britain had ever produced. The only other possible candidate is Arthur Wellesley, First Duke of Wellington, who showed brilliance in the Napoleonic wars. Both were superb tacticians and master strategists, but Marlborough had a clear edge on Wellington when it came to politics and diplomacy.

TOP: French commanders Marshal Claude Louis Hector de Villars, Duc de Villars; Pierre de Montesquiou d'Artagnan; and the Marshal Louis Francis, Duc d'Boufflers. BOTTOM: Allied commanders John William Friso, Prince Orange; General John Mathias, Reichsgrafen von der Schulenburg, and George Hamilton, Earl of Orkney. OPPOSITE: Marlborough at the Allied siege of Tournai that preceded Malplaquet. The siege was characterized by savage hand-to-hand fighting above ground, as well as in subterranean galleries.

Marlborough's wife Sarah was a close confidant of Britain's ruling Queen Anne. Sarah possessed a strong will and a violent and sometimes-implacable temper. They had a genuine love match, and only the duke was able to weather her tantrums with good humor and equanimity. These domestic qualities carried over to the world of politics and diplomacy. Marlborough had to deal with allies who had nothing in common, save a mutual antipathy towards Louis XIV.

The Dutch naturally wanted the main theater of operations to be in Flanders near their own border. As for the various German princes of the Holy Roman Empire, their main concern was the Rhine region, where Louis might try to further extend his influence. The Austrian Habsburgs had dynastic concerns; they wanted their candidate on the Spanish throne. As far as immediate threats, the Austrians feared French control of Northern Italy, which they considered their own sphere of influence.

Faced with these matters, and with foreign dignitaries who had monumental egos and sometimes quarrelsome natures, Marlborough's patience and tact kept the fragile coalition from breaking apart. The duke also displayed military genius in a series of victories that established him as one of the great captains of history. He had vanquished the French at Blenheim in 1704. Of all his battles, Blenheim is considered his greatest victory and signature triumph. He subsequently defeated the French again at both Ramillies in 1706 and Oudenaarde in 1708.

By 1708 France's star seemed on the ebb. By that time, the Sun King's light of glory was dimmed, even eclipsed, by successive defeats. Europe experienced the coldest winter in centuries in 1708-1709. Rabbits froze in their burrows, and squirrels and birds dropped frozen from the trees. The canals of Venice sheeted over in ice, and even bays and inlets along the Atlantic coast were covered in ice. All Europe suffered, but France, already reeling from defeat, was particularly hard hit.

The frigid temperatures froze the windmill sails of gristmills in their lower sockets, so that no grain could be ground. As a result, the French people

starved. Farm and domestic animals perished, and in Versailles Palace the king's wine froze in the cellar. Louis was subdued, and when spring came, he ordered his peace negotiators to yield to every Allied demand. But the Allies, who had grown arrogant and were determined to further humiliate France, overplayed their hand. They demanded that the French monarch provide troops to overthrow his grandson, who ironically was largely supported by the Spanish people. The king rejected these terms, and his people by and large agreed.

The main theater of war became northern France and the lands that constitute modern-day Belgium. The Duke of Marlborough had every intention of marching on Paris, but first a number of fortress towns along the French-Belgian border had to be captured. Most of these fortresses had been designed by the great French engineer Sebastien Le Prestre de Vauban and were sure to prove hard nuts to crack. Marlborough accepted siege warfare as part of the game, but he also was modern in his strategic thinking. The duke often sought to achieve his objectives by decisive victories over the enemy's main army in the field. But the many fortresses in the region blocked main avenues of advance. They were often located on major waterways, which served as important avenues for the movement of ammunition, guns, and food stories in an age where roads were miserable at best; in short, these fortress towns could not be ignored.

Marlborough and Eugene decided on a sweep eastward, their first objective the fortress of Tournai. The fighting at Tournai was a protracted and bloody affair, with both sides performing prodigies of valor deep within the bowels of the earth. The defenders mined; the besiegers countermined. When the besiegers broke into the French defenders' subterranean galleries, savage battles ensued with a continual artillery fire that eventually gave way to desperate hand-to-hand fighting with sword and pistol.

The siege of Tournai began in June and ended in early September. The garrison was given the honors of war. This entailed a proud march out of the city with drums beating and flags flying. The defeated garrison was free to rejoin the main French army. Tournai had been a costly affair, with 5,400 Allied casualties against 3,800 French casualties. The Allied army advanced to Mons, another important fortress town.

By that time, the French army had a new commander in the person of Claude Louis Hector de Villars, Marshal of France and Duc de Villars. Villars was boastful, and covetous of high honors, but an honorable man who possessed both moral and physical courage. He was also a highly skilled soldier, and a solid, if not brilliant, general. Villars knew Marlborough was a man of exceptional abilities, but there was a certain pattern to the tactics he used in his celebrated victories. The French marshal was determined to counter these moves and perhaps turn the tables on his opponent.

In his orders to Villars, the Sun King expressed his wishes in no uncertain terms. "Should Mons suffer the same fate as Tournai, our case is undone; you are by every means in your power to relieve the garrison; the cost is not to be considered; the salvation of France is at stake," the king wrote. Villars knew the task before him was enormous, but he did not shrink from the responsibilities. Upon his arrival, he had noted that the "troops were in a deplorable condition—without clothes, arms or bread." He managed to turn things around, and soon supplies were flowing into the French camp.

But what the French army needed most of all was a boost in morale. Villars's self-confidence soon spread throughout the ranks. Little gestures, like the way he ate the same meager rations as common soldiers, also was appreciated. With foreign armies poised to invade France, aristocratic officers and peasant soldiers could find a common cause in love of country. It was the first stirrings of nationalism, a force that would prove so potent almost a century later in the French Revolution.

National Army Museum

Villars also assembled the troops and gave a stirring speech, asking the officers and men if they would not wish to avenge the honor of the king which his enemies were insulting. A moment later, he asked for cheers, and they responded with a mighty roar of approval, at the same time throwing their hats into the air. "Vive le Roi" and "Vive Villars!" erupted from thousands of throats. Gratified by the rousing cheers, Villars threw his own hat into the air in response.

Marlborough and Eugene wanted to tempt Villars into the open plan of Mons, but the French marshal was too much the Gallic fox to take that particular bait; instead, he opted to choose his own ground for a defensive battle that he felt he had a chance of winning. About nine miles from Mons there were some patches of forest that seemed made to order. The Bois de Sars, sometimes called Bois de Taisnieres, was a thickly wooded area that was separated by the Bois de Lainieres by an open space called the Aulnois gap roughly two miles wide. Villars placed his army in the Aulnois gap, with the Sars Woods guarding the left flank and Lainieres Woods guarding the right.

The trick now was to create a formidable defensive position from such promising raw material. The open Aulnois gap that comprised the French center was filled with field works and entrenchments. Sources are conflicted as to how many redoubts there were. There were at least five, and some accounts state there were a total of nine. The breastworks and earthworks continued into the two flanking woods, and in some places this arrangement would produce superb enfilading fire. This was particularly true in the Sars Woods segment, where a section of trees jutted out to form a salient. The French constructed earthworks that followed the edge of these woods and their natural contours. The result was a tongue-shaped salient that soon acquired the name The Triangle.

Villars literally had his men working day and night, and the woods rang with the sound of biting axes and the crash of felled trees. As added protection abattis were placed in front of the earthworks. These were dense clumps of brush, augmented by felled logs chained together and sharpened on one side, the points facing the enemy. In addition, the French concealed a 20-gun battery in a small depression in the ground near the village of Aulnois. This was yet another trick up Villar's sleeve that would serve to provide excellent enfilade fire when an opportunity presented itself.

It is here that controversy enters the narrative. The two opposing armies were drawn up facing each other on Monday, September 9, well before Villars began to fortify his position. According to some accounts, Marlborough, ever the aggressor, wanted to attack immediately, but was dissuaded or perhaps even forced, to delay. Other accounts insist it was the Dutch were insisted to err on the side of caution. Unless new documents surface, we may never know. There was a council of war that ended up deciding it was best to delay, allowing additional troops to come up from Tournai.

Whatever the case, the Allies did not attack Monday and also let all of Tuesday slip by without incident. It was a heaven-sent opportunity for Villars, who kept his men feverishly working in relays without a stop. Marlborough and Eugene reconnoitered the French positions on Tuesday, September 10, and did not like what they saw. The French fortifications were getting stronger by the hour, but the celebrated partners were still supremely confident.

Marlborough planned his attack in detail. It would commence in the early morning hours of Wednesday, September 11, 1709. There would be heavy attacks on the French left and right flanks, forcing the French send troops from their center to counter the twin threats. When the French center—in this case, the line of fortifications that spanned the Alnois Gap—was sufficiently weakened, it would be time to administer the coup de grace with George Hamilton, First Earl of Orkney's troops. Orkney commanded the Allied center. His force consisted of 15 battalions of infantry supported by 179 squadrons of cavalry.

No fewer than 11 of Orkney's battalions were British, a red-coated skein that connected the Allied right and left flanks. The British troops were some of the nation's finest, elite forces who in some cases were still in the very beginning of their illustrious careers. There were six companies of Coldstream Guards, and also several companies of the First Foot Guards. In years to come the latter unit would become renowned as the Grenadier Guards.

The battle began when the Allied right wing attacked French positions in the Sars Woods. Man-made defenses were supported by thick underbrush and a verdant tangle of trees and overhanging branches. Such growth formed natural obstacles that were particularly formidable in an era when troops fought in well ordered, serried ranks. Forest trees would act as natural sieves, breaking up formations and in some circumstances forcing soldiers who were trained to fight in a collective manner to fight individually.

General John Mathias, Reichsgrafen von der Schulenburg had tactical command of the Allied right, though Prince Eugene was on horseback nearby overseeing the operation. Schulenberg had 40 battalions under his immediate control, and his Sars Woods assault included the northern, left side of The Triangle. Initially there were no British troops taking part in the Schulenburg effort, whose command was largely Imperials; that is,

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

troops from the small German states of the Holy Roman Empire, as well as Prussians.

The southernmost right side of the Sars Woods and The Triangle would be attacked by the Graf Philip Carl von Wylick und Lottum and his 22 battalions of Prussians, Danes, Saxons, and Hessians. Lottum's infantry would be supported by a 40-gun battery and 39 cavalry squadrons under the Prince of Auvergne. The Allied right was led by 22-year-old John William Friso, Prince of Orange. The young prince was a competent soldier, brave as a lion, but appeared to have been assigned battlefield responsibilities that were beyond his limited experience.

French morale was significantly boosted when Marshal Louis Francis, Duc d'Boufflers, showed up in camp with his cuirass. It was a signal the old campaigner was ready for action, and in a generous gesture he offered to place himself under Villar's command. Villars, no doubt touched by this gesture of confidence and solidarity, gave Boufflers the command of the French right wing.

The final French defensive arrangements were everything that Villars had hoped for and more. The French right was anchored in the Laniere

Marlborough faced a major challenge reducing French fortresses designed by the brilliant engineer Sebastien de Vauban. Strategically situated, they could not be ignored.

Woods and went as far and the fields in front of Malplaquet village. Immediate control of the defense was given to Pierre de Montesquiou d'Artagnan. If the name is familiar, it is because his cousin Count d'Artagnan was used as a heavily fictionalized role model for Alexandre Dumas' 19th-century adventure novel *The Three Musketeers*.

The French right was manned by some of the most celebrated units in the royal French army, including the Picardy, Bourbonnais, Navarre, and Piedmont regiments, as well as the French Royal Marines. A few red-coated Swiss mercenaries rounded out d'Artagnan's command, together with the blue-coated French Guards.

The French center, which consisted of the two-mile-long string of entrenchments and redoubts, was garrisoned by a polyglot force almost as diverse and the Allied army that was about to attack them. The force was composed of the two Irish Brigades of Lee and O'Brien, German mercenaries from Bavaria and Cologne, Alsatian troops, and a brigade from the northern French city of Laon. The center's massed musketry would be supplemented by 30 cannon that were placed in possessions along the line.

The Gallic left, anchored by the Sars Woods, also boasted entrenchments and a significant number of French regular regiments, like the Champagne Regiment, the Picardy Regiment, and the French Marines, among others. Champagne and Picardy were part of the Vieux Corps, also known as the Old Corps, first raised in 1569 and considered the senior regiments of the royal army. They had long and distinguished histories and were determined not to yield a foot of ground without a stubborn fight.

The entrenched infantry units of the French front line were backed up by large bodies of cavalry. The Maison du Roy (Household Cavalry) deployed on the right near the Laniere Woods, the Gendarmes (Peter Drake's regiment) in the center, and the Carabiniers on the left. There were gaps in the center redoubts to allow cavalry to take the offensive. The ever-optimistic Villars hoped that, if the tide of battle turned against the Allies, the French cavalry could complete the victory. The French were still outnumbered, with 80,000 men opposite the Allied host of 110,000, but Villars hoped his entrenchments and well-placed batteries would redress the imbalance.

The morning fog allowed the Allies get into position, and from the French point of view the flanking woods were both a hindrance as well as a help, since they could not see enemy movements. The sun finally started to pierce through the fog, and about 8:30 AM on Wednesday, September 11, 1709, the cannon from Marlborough's great center battery roared to life. It was a signal that the battle of Malplaquet was about to begin.

Marlborough and Eugene agreed the first major assault would be with Schulenburg's advance into the Sars woods. At first the trees still obscured Schulenburg's soldiers from French view, but the defenders could plainly hear the Allied drummers beating martial airs, throbbing tattoos that echoed through the trees and grew louder as the infantry approached. Lord Orkney, watching from the Allied center, was thrilled at the unfolding spectacle. He exulted at what he deemed the "noble

Royal Collection

ABOVE: The Duc de Villars matched Marlborough blow-by-blow at Malplaquet, hurling back some of his best troops. OPPOSITE: When the Earl of Orkney observed the French weakening their center to reinforce their right, he immediately charged their center.

sight [of] so many different bodies marching over the plain to attack a thick wood where you could see no men."

The woods thinned enough that you could see the advancing ranks, and in their formation, they made splendid targets as they drew near. The French emplacements, ominously silent, suddenly erupted in an ear-splitting wave of smoke and flame as the white-garbed soldiers simultaneously discharged their muskets. This first volley annihilated Schulenburg's first rank instantly felled by the unnatural storm of lead. The crumpled bodies—some dead, others wounded and writhing in pain—formed a barrier that the second and third ranks found hard if not impossible to step over.

As the second rank tried to stumble over their dead and wounded comrades, they were hit by a second, and equally deadly, French volley. The attacking allied soldiers, chiefly Germans, were known for their discipline, but flesh and blood could only stand so much. The soldiers lost cohesion and began to fall back as more French musket balls peppered their floundering ranks. Schulenburg's attack was a bloody and dismal failure. The general, undeterred, formed his men up and attempted a second attack. This too was bloodily repulsed.

On the other side of the Sars Woods salient, Lottum began his advance. His Prussians in their dark blue uniforms stood out against the verdant plains and fields. At first, they marched towards the French center, and then veered to the right to plunge into the edge of The Triangle. The change of direction proved their undoing. Watching their movements, French artillery commander Saint-Hilaire rushed forward a 14-gun battery to hit them in the flank. The enfilade fire plowed cannonballs through whole ranks as if the men were bowling pins in a macabre game of life and death.

Lottum's men were further impeded by boggy, viscous ground made swampy by a rivulet that meandered on the edge of the Sars Woods. Villars was present, encouraging and inspiring the defense, so with great effort the allied troops were once again forced to retire. Marlborough took Lottum's men in hand, personally leading them forward in a hurricane of cannonballs and musket lead. A number got as far as the abattis that formed a protective barrier in front of the entrenchments. They scrambled among the chained logs and pulled away the brush and branches with their bare hands, all under a heavy fire.

After bitter fighting, Lottum's soldiers managed to reach the entrenchments, and even get a toehold in the French fortifications. Caught between two fires, the Schulenburg attack on one side of the salient and the Lottum attack on the other, the French had no choice but to focus more resources on the Prussian threat.

The events on the Allied left are still hotly debated to this day, a controversy that has not abated in 300 years. The main controversy centers on the actions and orders of the Prince of Orange. Marlborough apologists maintain that the prince's orders were to stage a feint, to distract the French from the main effort on the Sars Forest. Other experts on the battle disagree, saying both right and left attacks were to be carried out with equal vigor, the better to weaken the French center and achieve the desired breakthrough to victory.

The Prince of Orange had arrived on the field of battle with 49 battalions and 32 squadrons, but just before the fighting began 19 battalions under British General Henry Withers had been diverted to the extreme allied right wing to be used in a flanking attack against the left and rear of the French line. Nevertheless, the French outnumbered him in this sector, and he was not going against raw recruits, but rather the flower of Louis XIV's royal army.

Earlier than morning, the prince halted his command just out of range of French grapeshot. He was supposed to launch his assault a half an hour after Schulenburg and Lottum made their efforts on the Allied right. It was mid-morning when the Prince ordered his battalions forward, and from the start it was obvious the young general conceived this as an all-out effort, not a mere containment or feint. He had some senior generals with him, notably Claude Frederick T'Serclaes, Count Tilly. These older and wiser heads were supposed to curb his youthful enthusiasm, but the prince did not bother to consult them.

The Prince had Dutch, Swiss, and Scottish troops under his command; the latter were in Dutch service, not on loan from Marlborough and the British. Orange was leading some of the finest soldiers that Holland ever produced. The most notable of these was the Blue Guards, which once were elite bodyguards of the late King William III of England. Their nickname derived from their colorful uniforms, but there was real substance beneath the show.

The prince's main effort was the French entrenchments along the Lanieres Woods, defended by General D'Artagnan's proud regiments. As soon as the bluecoats came within range French cannon opened up with a deafening roar. Great gouts of flame spouted out of cannon muzzles, thunderous eruptions that also produced dense clouds of grayish white smoke. Grapeshot and cannonballs—their use determined by the range—did fearful execution, but the troops pressed on.

Orange himself was in the thick of it. No less than two-thirds of the staff fell dead and wounded, and finally his horse was pierced by several bullets, collapsing in a bloodied heap. The prince, no doubt shaken from the sudden fall, simply dusted himself off and continued on foot. Massed French volleys from more than 3,000 muskets added to the carnage, but perhaps it was the artillery that was the most feared. Cannonballs could take off arms and legs with horrifying ease, and some saw their companions decapitated before their eyes.

The earth in front of the French entrenchments, once covered with natural vegetation, was now carpeted by blue-clad bodies and stained with blood. The Allied attack simply melted away, and the survivors fell back. The prince, miraculously unhurt, reformed his men and led them in a second attempt, but it was no more successful than the first. The bodies in front of the entrenchments piled as high as three deep.

The French, greatly encouraged, advanced for a counteroffensive and moved well beyond their entrenchments. Bayonets gleaming, they advanced steadily, their progress impeded by the grim harvest of Allied dead and wounded that carpeted the field. Clad in the white uniforms so distinctive of the French army, the soldiers could be distinguished by the colorful regimental flags they carried proudly with them. There was Navarre, with a white cross on a brown field, and Picardy, with a similar white cross by on a bright red field.

The French infantry advanced with their usual elan, but they were checked by cavalry under the Prince of Hesse Castel. Nevertheless, there was a brief moment where the French could conceivably have achieved a victory. If the French right had launched an all-out assault, the shattered Allied regiments under Orange probably could not have stopped them. But the overall commander, Marshal Bouffliers, hesitated. And the moment passed.

Marlborough, still with Lottum's hard-fighting troops in the Sars Woods area on the Allied left, heard about the Dutch debacle on the right and was appalled. He rode over a mile across the battlefield to personally command the prince not to launch a third suicidal attack. It was just in the nick of time, because the brave and headstrong young royal was just about to do just that.

In the meantime, the Allied effort in the Sars Woods was finally coming to fruition. The French were being pushed out of the woods, though the Allies were taking very heavy casualties in the process. Villars, so prescient about Marlborough's tactics, could see what was unfolding but could no nothing to alter the situation. Although bloodier, it was Blenheim again, for the allied flank attacks were so powerful and threatening Villars had no choice but to weaken his center to deal with them.

By 1:00 PM it was time for Lord Orkney to lead his British troops to take a weakened French center. The French guards still held the center, but they soon gave way before Orkney's redcoats. The entrenchments were taken; to all intents and purposes, Villars' position was split in two. Villars had just received the bad news about his center when a musket ball passed through his top high boot, penetrated below his left kneecap, and shattered the bone. He tried to remain in command, but soon collapsed from loss of blood. Command of the French army devolved to Boufflers.

With the center in Allied hands, and the two flanks collapsing, it was time for the French army to withdraw. Orders were given to retreat, but they retreated in good order, and even the common soldiers in ranks remained in good spirits. Some even cheered as if it was a great success. Bloodied but unbowed, the French knew that Malplaquet was a marginal victory at best for the Allies.

But the battle, though winding down, was not

National Army Museum

Louis XIV's Most Resolute Commander

Even though he ultimately lost the battle of Malplaquet to the Duke of Marlborough, French Marshal Claude Louis Hector de Villars fought with great skill throughout the contest of arms. His ability to parry the blows of the army of the Grand Alliance came not only from his tactical aptitude, but also from his long years of military experience.

Born at Moulins in the Bourbonnais in central France in 1553, young Villars entered the corps of pages at the age of 17. The following year, he joined the ranks of the King's Musketeers. He saw combat with the light cavalry during the Franco-Dutch War (1672-1678) and the Nine Years' War (1688-1697). He was given command of a cavalry regiment just two years into the Franco-Dutch War.

Villars' positive attributes of courage, vigor, and resourcefulness were on full display during the Dutch Wars. During the Nine Years' War he was appointed commissary-general of cavalry in the Low Countries and rose to the rank of lieutenant-general. During these two conflicts he served at various times under the great captains of the age, including the Viscount of Turenne, the Great Conde, and the Duke of Luxembourg.

In the years that followed, Villars was promoted past some high-ranking nobles, and this naturally led to bitterness among those whose careers had stalled. These jealous men regarded Villars as a peacock and accused him of being boastful, selfish, and vain. There was a great deal of truth in these assessments, for Villars was indeed conceited and prone to bragging. Villars success, though, came in part through his popularity with the men he commanded. He paid special attention to feeding, equipping, and supplying them while campaigning.

Marshall Villars, a superb tactician and daring commander, leads an assault at Denain in 1712.

After serving in Italy during the first year of the War of the Spanish Succession, Villars was entrusted in 1702 with the independent command of the French army on the Upper Rhine. Having received orders to protect Alsace from attack, he crossed the Rhine and

yet finished. Boufflers led a series of massive cavalry attacks against the Allied horse, beginning with General Auvergne's Dutch cavalry. The tough, old marshal was leading the elite Maison du Roy cavalry, and at first the French horsemen would not be denied.

Boufflers's galloping troopers swept the field, routing the Dutch, but moments later came up against Orkney's British infantry. It proved a solid red wall that could not be breeched. One platoon volley after another from the redcoats soon sent the French cavalry packing. "I really believe, had not [the] foot had been there, they would have drove our horse from the field," wrote Orkney. But Marshal Boufflers was not about to give up. He gathered more cavalry, and the Allies responded in kind. As many as 15,000 French and 25,000 Allied horsemen were in the field. Drake was in the midst of this melee, and was wounded several times. Suddenly, he found himself all alone in the midst of the enemy; having lost a lot of blood, he resolved to surrender.

When he rode up to an enemy officer and asked for quarter, the officer insulted him in German and fired a pistol at point blank range. Determined to sell his life dearly, Drake fired his carbine almost simultaneously with the German. "I shot the upper part of his head, and saw his brains come down," wrote Drake. "His ball only grazed my shoulder."

The dead German officer's men began firing at Drake, but luckily the shots were wild, and they only dented his cuirass but did not penetrate it. He escaped and managed to ride over to a friendlier group of enemy cavalry, whose officer happily accepted his honorable surrender. Men like Drake often changed sides with little difficulty, and cared more for the adventure and money than any particular cause. It is indeed remarkable that in another year or two he would be fighting on the British side.

By the late afternoon, the French were fully withdrawn, but the victorious Allies too exhausted to render any effective pursuit. The fighting had been so intense it had been a kind of anesthesia. In the excitement and fear of battle, with adrenaline coursing through every participant's veins, soldiers gave little heed of consequences. But when both officers and men could take stock, what they beheld appalled them Lanieres Woods and its immediate environs was a place of real horror, thickly carpeted with the bloody and torn bodies of Dutch, Swiss, German, and Scottish soldiers. The worst were the eviscerated corpses, heads or limbs missing, and entrails exposed for all to see.

But at least these men were dead and beyond

thwarted Margrave Louis of Baden's attempt to march on Strasburg.

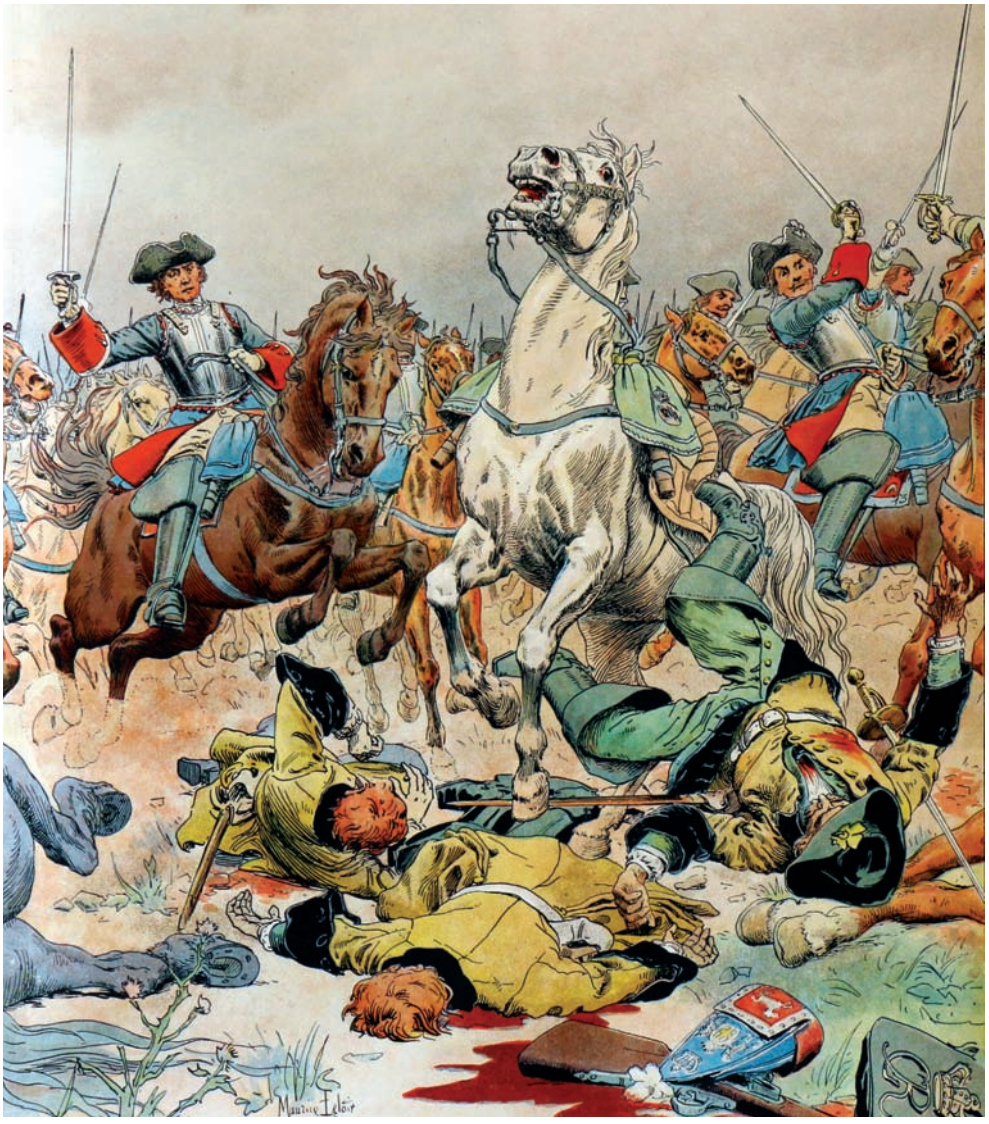
For defeating Louis of Baden at Friedlingen on October 14, 1702, Villars was awarded a marshal's baton. The following year Villars broke through the Allied line and united with the Bavarians to defeat General Herman Otto Styrum's Austrian army at Hochstadt. Disenchanted with the Bavarians' unwillingness to march on Vienna, Villars returned to France. Two years later he received a dukedom.

After several French commanders had failed to defeat Marlborough in the field, King Louis XIV gave Villars command of the main French army in 1709. The task before him was to defend France's northern frontier against a powerful allied army led by the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene. In the hard-fought battle that ensued Malplaquet, Villars was severely wounded. Afterwards, he fell back on the formidable Ne Plus Ultra fortifications and defended them successfully for two years. Following Marlborough's recall, Villars triumphed over Prince Eugene's Austro-Dutch forces on France's northern frontier at Denain in 1712.

Having achieved the illustrious position of Marshal General, a distinction bestowed upon only a half-dozen of France's great captains, Villars capped his military career with another string of victories at the outset of the Polish War of Succession in 1733 when he swept through northern Italy. He died in Turin the following year on his way home to France. During the long reign of Louis XIV, Villars stands out as the most competent, gifted, and resolute of the Sun King's commanders.

—William E. Welsh

The Duc d'Boufflers led the elite troops of the Maison du Roi in a series of massive cavalry attacks against the Allied horse. When Villars was wounded, Boufflers assumed command and ordered a retreat.



pain. Thousands of wounded lay on the ground, suffering tormenting pain and thirst. The primitive medical arrangements of the time could scarcely gather them, much less give them adequate treatment. Thousands of dead and wounded horses also lay scattered about the battlefield, adding to the sheer horror of the scene. Malplaquet had the distinction of being the bloodiest battle of the 18th century. The butcher's bill for the Allies was 25,000 casualties. The French, being on the defensive, suffered much fewer casulties, losing 12,000 men.

The great battle was a pyrrhic victory, and Villars was only speaking the truth when he informed the king of the battle's heavy cost to France. "If it pleases God to give your enemies another such victory, they are undone," wrote Villars. As for Marlborough, he put up a brave front, implying that his triumph would lead to final victory, but in the case the great duke was indulging in wishful thinking. And even the duke candidly admitted that Malplaquet was a "very murdering battle."

The Duke of Marlborough's fame and power rested on two great pillars. The first pillar was his military genius, and the second pillar was his political support at home. The political pillar was unstable, resting on the shifting sands of party politics and royal favor. Marlborough's wife Sarah had been a close friend of Britain's reigning monarch, Queen Anne, for thirty years. But Anne grew tired of Sarah's sharp tongue and constant nagging, a nagging that often crossed the line into bullying. Sarah was eventually dismissed from the queen's service, and Marlborough's power weakened.

The queen and most of the country was sick of the endless campaigns by 1709, and the terrible news of Malplaquet hastened Marlborough's fall and helped bring the anti-war Tory party to power. Marlborough was dismissed and Britain effectively withdrew from the conflict. Malplaquet was a French tactical defeat, but a strategic and political victory. It saved France from invasion, restored the honor of French arms, and stabilized Louis XIV's throne.

Malplaquet has a curious musical postscript. The battle was so horrifically bloody that rumors spread in France that Marlborough had been killed there. That gave rise to a popular French tune, a song that tells the story about how his wife awaits his return, not knowing that he is dead. The title is "Marlborough s'en va-t-en Guerre" (Marlborough goes to war). It is sung to the tune that's known to English speakers as "For he's a Jolly Good Fellow." It was said that French Emperor Napoleon would often be heard whistling this song to himself. ■

Duke William of Normandy invaded southeastern England in 1066 to press his claim to the throne. But first he had to vanquish King Harold's Anglo-Saxon shield wall at the Battle of Hastings.

William E. Welsh

Bright sunshine flooded the sedge-covered, damp ground in Sussex on the morning of October 14, 1066. Having attended mass at sunrise, Duke William of Normandy shouted commands to his senior officers outlining their positions for the coming battle with English King Harold II Godwinson's army.

A towering, swarthy figure with broad shoulders, William commanded respect. He wore a long hauberk and helmet. A necklace of religious relics hung around his neck. The duke's courage and confidence inspired those who fought for him. He had led them to repeated victories on the continent, and they had believed he could vanquish the English as well. William's knights fully expected that their duke would reward them for victory by granting to them English fiefs, and the foot soldiers envisioned plunder that would enrich them far beyond their normal means.

On the morning of the battle, the Norman army was situated seven miles north of its fortified base on Hastings Peninsula. Just offshore vessels of varying size in the Norman fleet rocked at anchor, their captains ready to respond promptly to the duke's orders should he need them to ferry his troops to another point on the coast. The armies were matched in strength, with each numbering about 5,000 men. Harold had 2,000 housecarls and 3,000 militia, all of which fought dismounted, while William had 2,000 cavalry and 3,000 foot.

Both commanders believed a pitched battle was a necessity. They had marched to meet each other in battle to resolve by force of arms the matter of who would henceforth rule England. Godwinson's army had countermarched to Hastings from its victory in northern England on September 25 against an invad-

Mail-clad Norman knights assault the English shield wall at Hastings in the climax of the battle.

Alamy

Hammer *of the* Normans

ABOVE: Norwegian King Harald Hardrada is mortally wounded by an English arrow at the Battle of Stamford Bridge. Shortly afterwards, King Harold Godwinson raced south to defend English soil against the Norman invaders. OPPOSITE: Duke William of Normandy's armada hove to at Pevensey, where his quick-footed, unarmored archers reconnoitered the area, followed by the heavy infantry and horsemen. The Normans went to work immediately to build a fortification with which to defend the landing site.

ing Viking army. He had hoped to surprise William as he had done the Vikings at Stamford Bridge, but when he reached Senlac Hill in the late afternoon of October 13, he found the Normans prepared for battle. Harold had hoped that William would be thunderstruck by the sudden appearance of his army, but it was the English king who had the unpleasant surprise. Both commanders waited for dawn to begin the battle.

King Harold's foot soldiers and dismounted cavalry formed up on October 14 in a tightly packed shield wall. The shield wall was designed to absorb heavy enemy assaults and gradually wear down the attacking army. Owing to the relatively compact front atop the ridge, the English troops stood 10 ranks deep. The core of the English host, consisting of 2,000 housecarls, occupied the center of the line. The housecarls, clad either in mail hauberks or sturdy jackets of leather hide, stood side-by-side. Their kite-shaped shields could be held high to deflect missile blows, but also could be planted in the ground to free up their arms to wield their long shafted, two-handed battle-axes.

The wings of Godwinson's army consisted of the well-trained militia that constituted the English fyrd. The freemen of the fyrd also presented their shields, but they would fight that day with spears and swords. Both the professional soldiers and the militiamen had drilled extensively to perfect their shield wall tactics.

Duke William's army formed up in three ranks along ethnic lines. The Bretons deployed on the left, the Normans in the center, and Franco-Flemish on the right. William placed his crossbowmen and self-bowmen in the first rank, mail-clad heavy infantry in the middle rank, and hauberk-wearing knights armed with lances in the rear rank. The Norman army had large numbers of archers, whereas the English host had very few. Whereas the English fought with axes and spears, the Norman foot in the second ranks fought with javelins and swords.

Duke William entrusted his cavalry with a principal role, and his foot soldiers with a secondary role. He told his high-ranking knights that they were to lead their mounted troops in repeated uphill charges in a quest to pierce the English shield wall. If repulsed, they were to regroup and charge again. He emphasized that they were not to quit until they broke the English line. William believed that if his horsemen could pierce the shield wall in one or more places, the English formation would dissolve. As for the Norman archers and spearmen, William tasked them with weakening the enemy to the point where the cavalry could get among them.

The stage was set at mid-morning for an earth-shattering battle that had the potential to alter the course of history should the Normans prevail. In many ways, Harold had the advantage given that he would be fighting a defensive battle in his homeland. The odds seemed heavily stacked against Duke William, although to his credit he already had succeeded in crossing the English Channel with a vast armada and gaining a toehold in southern England. But that alone was not enough. To win the crown, the Norman host would have to vanquish the English army on Senlac Hill. Should the English lose the battle, but retreat in good order, William would have to fight them again. The duke knew all too well that keeping his troops supplied in a foreign land posed a major challenge.

The succession crisis in 1066 followed the death on January 5 of that year of the weak English King Edward the Confessor. Having died without an heir, a power struggle was bound to occur. The English had great difficulty controlling the English crown in the early 11th century. King of Denmark and Norway Sven Forkbeard had succeeded in 1013, conquering England when he drove King Ethelred "The Unready" into exile in Normandy. In a bid to strengthen his alliance with Normandy, Ethelred wed Emma, the daughter of Duke Richard I of Normandy, in 1002.

Although Forkbeard died the following year, he

was succeeded by Canute. Ethelred returned to England and took the crown for a second time, but Canute, who was Forkbeard's son, soundly defeated the English at Ashingdon in Essex in 1016 to win the crown of England. With Canute's line having ended in 1035, Edward the Confessor, the son of Ethelred and Emma, ascended to the throne of England. He wed Edith, the daughter of Earl Godwin of Wessex. Edward's second son, Harold, who became Earl of Wessex in 1053, rose to prominence as the king's principal counselor. When Edward died on January 5, 1066, Harold Godwinson ascended to the throne.

Godwinson, whose father was Earl Godwin of Wessex and mother was Canute's sister Gytha, became Earl of Wessex in 1053. As Earl of Wessex, he gained the respect and admiration of the English population of England for his successful campaigns against King Gruffydd ap Llywelyn of Wales in a war that stretched from 1052 to 1063.

Godwinson dealt the final blow to Gruffydd in 1063 when he masterminded a two-pronged invasion in which he led a fleet against coastal targets in South Wales while his brother Earl Tostig of Northumbria invaded North Wales. Harold proved flexible over the course of the campaign by adopting some of the Welsh tactics. The campaign ended with the Welsh rejecting Gruffydd and submitting to Godwinson.

The Earl of Wessex campaigned with Duke William in 1064 during the Norman-Breton War against Duke Conan II of Brittany. Sources are conflicted as to the reason he was in France. He may either have been accidentally shipwrecked on the coast of France or may have journeyed to the continent to retrieve relatives that were still living in exile in northern France.

This gave each commander an opportunity to assess each other. William came away from the experience with considerable respect for Harold's capabilities. But Harold drew the wrong conclusions about William. Godwinson grossly underestimated William's capabilities, misinterpreting his caution and willingness to negotiate for a lack of courage.

Godwinson's successful campaign against the Welsh convinced the English people that he was the noble best suited for the English throne upon Edward the Confessor's death. Although he lacked royal blood, the Earl of Wessex was wealthy, popular, and well-regarded. By the time of Edward's death, Godwinson was seen as a mature commander with extensive military experience who had the necessary traits to successfully rule the kingdom and defend it against both internal and external threats.

Godwinson became the first English king to be crowned in Westminister Abbey in a ceremony held on January 6, 1066. The most immediate threat to King Harold's reign came from his brother Tostig, who had been a long history of running afoul of the English crown. Tostig reigned as Earl of Northumbria for a decade beginning in 1055. During his tenure, he studiously avoided the court of King Edward, and cultivated alliances with the Scots and Danes. In November 1065, Edward banished him from England with Harold's support.

Tostig wintered in Flanders. Count Baldwin of Flanders, who was an enemy of the English, gave Tostig 60 vessels with which to raid the English coast. Tostig sailed to the Isle of Wight in May 1065, where he recruited troops and then began raiding east along the coastline of Sussex and Kent. Unable to land in Northumbria because he was outnumbered by the local forces who remained loyal to King Harold, Tostig sailed north to Scotland, where he was granted safe haven. Tostig lacked the power to retake Northumbria, his old earldom, without greater support than Count Baldwin could provide. Tostig therefore requested military aid from Harald Hardrada, the King of Norway.

It was not worth Hardrada's time, though, to merely reinstall Tostig in Northumbria. Hardrada planned to conquer England. The Norwegian king had a loose claim to the throne both through

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The Hastings battlefield today, where William built an abbey in appreciation for the Church of Rome's having supported his claim to the English throne. INSET: Duke William of Normandy (left) and King Harold Godwinson of England. William the Conqueror ruled England from 1066 to 1087.

his nephew, King Magnus of Norway, who had died in 1047, and Canute's son Harthacnut, who had ruled England briefly following his father's death. The two kings, Magnus and Harthacnut, had entered into a pact whereby each had agreed to succeed the other if they died without heirs.

William was a seasoned commander by the time he invaded England. Born in Falaise in 1028, he was the illegitimate son of Duke Robert I of Normandy. Duke Robert made William his heir before embarking on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1035. Robert died in Nicea on the return leg of his journey.

Duke Robert's death touched off the so-called Norman Baronial Revolt, which dragged on for 12 years from 1035 to 1047. Rebellious lords nearly assassinated the young bastard on several occasions in the years immediately following his father's death.

William actively campaigned in Normandy throughout the 1040s in an effort to solidify his rule of the duchy. As duke of Normandy, he was a vassal of French King Henry I. During those years, William showed great promise as both a courageous warrior and an astute commander. By 1047 William had crushed internal resistance to his rule. Over the course of the next seven years he fought off external threats from his sovereign, King Henry, as well as Count Geoffrey II of Anjou, both of whom had designs on Norman lands.

William learned through these campaigns that the patient commander was often the victorious one. He generally avoided a pitched battle, biding his time with the hope of attacking a part of his enemy's army under favorable circumstances. He had compiled a string of victories that included Val-les-Dunes in 1047, Mortemer in 1054, and Varaville in 1057. The victories would give him the confidence in the following decade to dream of conquering England.

Both King Henry and Count Geoffrey died in 1060. Their deaths enabled William to go on the offensive to conquer territory in neighboring provinces. William had already expanded to the west by making the count of Ponthieu his vassal. William then annexed the County of Maine. The following year he invaded Brittany, which touched off a short Breton-Norman War. William was supported in his war against Duke Conan II not only by a powerful Breton lord, Rivallon I of Dol, but also by Count Geoffrey III of Anjou. Through these campaigns of conquest, William had shown that he had successfully mastered key aspects of military command, such as reconnaissance, rapid marches, siege warfare, and how to supply an army in the field.

Not long after Harold was crowned King of England, William sent envoys to the English court to set forth the grounds for his claim to the throne and to urge King Harold to renounce his kingship. William knew full well that King Harold would not step down. The diplomatic mission was a clever ploy on William's part because it allowed him to position himself as the injured party in the matter. He could then say he was left with no choice but to seize the throne by force.

In the interim, William loudly voiced his objection to Harold Godwinson's ascension to the throne. The Norman duke claimed that Edward the Confessor had named him earlier as his successor while living in exile in Normandy during the reign of Canute. Moreover, William asserted that Godwinson had earlier agreed to support William's claim during his time in Normandy in 1064.

William had to recruit a large army for the expedition. Since there were not enough troops in Normandy to defeat the English, he had to recruit additional troops outside the duchy. He cleverly obtained the support of Pope Alexander II for his claim. He did this in part by telling the Pope that he would maintain stronger ties to the Church of Rome than had King Harold. Pope Alexander believed William, and he went so far as to send him a Papal banner to carry into battle against the English.

Having the Papal blessing was a boon to William's cause because it marshaled the support of the nobility of northern France to his side. In the wake of the Papal endorsement, nobles,

knights, and mercenaries in northern France rallied to support him. William's vassals form Normandy, Maine, and Ponthieu either joined the expedition with their retainers or furnished troops for it. Bretons and Flemish also signed on. William even received support for his claim to the English crown from the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV and the Danish King Sweyn II Estridsson.

In the first week of September, King Harald of Norway set sail for England. He recruited additional Viking troops along the way. He stopped in the Shetland Islands and Orkney Islands, as well as mainland Scotland. He arrived at Tynemouth on September 8 with 300 ships containing 10,000 men. Before the month was out, Hardrada and Tostig had sailed up the Humber and defeated the Yorkshire militia led by Earl Edwin of Mercia and Earl Morcar of Northumbria in a hard-fought battle on September 20 at Gate Fulford outside York.

King Harold Godwinson had summoned the English fyrd in late spring following Tostig's raids. But the fyrd was summoned more to deal with the pending Norman invasion than to deal with future raids by Tostig. Harold likely called up the Wessex fyrd to serve in southern England, where he correctly expected Duke William to land his invasion force. Harold did not summon the fyrd from Northumbria or Mercia, for he wanted to allow the loyal earls in those regions to have troops with which to contest an invasion by Tostig and his allies. Most importantly, William also summoned the shipfyrd, which was England's fleet. The fleet was tasked with patrolling the English Channel to contest a crossing by the Norman fleet.

All freemen of fighting age had to perform military service for a specified number of days each year for the English king. Fifteen thousand men throughout all of England served in the fyrd in 1066. Earls could call up the fyrd in their region, and the king could summon all of the freemen in times of dire national crisis. As for the housecarls, who served as the household troops of kings and earls, they owned large tracts of land—much larger than the parcels owned by freemen—and were well schooled in the art of war. Unlike the freemen, the housecarls were permanent, professional soldiers who served year-round, rather than the two months' service typically required of the fyrd.

But when the Norman invasion failed to materialize by the first week in September, Harold had little choice but to dismiss both the fyrd and shipfyrd, which he did on September 8, because they had served for a longer period than usual.

The clash at Stamford Bridge on September 25 against Harald Hardrada's Viking army substantially weakened Godwinson's English army. Harold initially had 3,000 housecarls under arms, but 1,000 were killed or severely wounded at Stamford Bridge, which left him just 2,000 of these elite troops to form the backbone of the fyrd that would face the Norman army at Hastings. Unfortunately for Harold, not all of the troops who survived Stamford Bridge would fight at Hastings. Some of the troops that fought at Stamford Bridge—angered that Harold had not shared his Viking plunder with them—returned home instead of accompanying him south to battle the Normans.

Throughout the summer of 1066, William went about gathering the resources for the invasion. William called on his magnates to finance the construction of ships in Norman ports, and also purchased vessels from his allies. The Norman fleet, composed of 600 shallow-draft longships and deep-drawing cargo ships, assembled in July at Dives-Sur-Mer, but bad weather delayed the fleet from sailing. In late August the fleet sailed northeast to St. Valery sur Somme in Ponthieu in preparation for crossing the storm-tossed waters of the English Channel. William ordered the 2,000 horses taken by land to St. Valery sur Somme where they would be loaded at the last minute when the fleet was ready to sail for England.

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When the Bretons began to flee the battlefield after their first assault failed, William's half-brother, Bishop Odo of Bayeux, berated them loudly. His harsh words compelled many of them to return to the field.

William faced a daunting task, for he had to assemble a fleet from scratch, undertake a perilous crossing, and establish a foothold in hostile country. In addition, King Harold "both in wealth and number of soldiers in his kingdom was greatly superior to [the Normans]," wrote William of Poitiers.

William's armada hove to at Pevensey on September 29. Although the duke had intended to use the Isle of Wight as a staging area, strong westerly winds blew his ships off course, and the heavily laden vessels were forced to land further east than William and his naval officers had intended. The duke sent his archers ashore first to reconnoiter the ground. These men, who were unarmored, were quick-footed. They carried a self-bow that they drew to their jaw or chest to fire. They were "ready to attack, ready to flee, ready to turn about, and ready to skirmish," wrote Master Wace, a Norman chronicler. "They scoured the whole shore, but not an armed man could they find there."

Once William determined that there were no English troops to dispute the landing, he ordered his heavy infantry and horsemen ashore. William put a large number of his troops to work immediately building an earth-and-timber castle with which to defend the landing site. He also sent foraging parties to scour the surrounding countryside for crops and livestock.

When Henry learned on October 1 that the Normans had landed, he marched south with his housecarls to block their advance towards London. Since most of the militiamen from Mercia and Northumberland had returned home after Stamford Bridge, William sent mounted messengers to the southern shires summoning the freemen in that area to come to his aid against the Normans.

Rather than offer battle immediately to the Normans, Harold might have taken another course of action. He might have undertaken a

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Not long after the battle, English needle-workers embroidered dozens of scenes depicting the Norman invasion onto a 230-foot-long linen strip that became known as the Bayeux Tapestry. It is the only storytelling textile strip of its type preserved from medieval times.

scorched-earth approach in the shires south of London to deny the Normans forage. But Harold hoped he could surprise and rout the Normans in the same way he had the Vikings at Stamford Bridge. Based on his time in France in 1064, he had formed a negative opinion of William's method of waging war. For this reason, he resisted attempts by his kinfolk to convince him to stay in London and possibly let someone else lead the English troops into battle. When he arrived in London on October 6, his younger brother, Gyrth, pleaded with Harold to send him to lead the army in battle so Harold would not be risking his life. But the king would not hear of such a thing.

Harold waited five days for militia reinforcements to augment the professional core of his army in London. He departed London, with his brothers Gyrth and Leofwine, on October 11 at the head of his army. He led his army south through the forested Weald, an area that divided the chalk escarpments of the north with the South Downs, and on to Hastings.

Harold had hoped to attack the Normans immediately, but Norman scouts ranging north had learned on October 12 that the arrival of the English was imminent. When they informed William of the pending arrival of the English, he had his troops sleep on their arms that night. Harold had an unpleasant surprise when he arrived on Senlac Hill at dusk on October 13 to find the Normans expecting him. William's readiness spoiled Harold's plan for a surprise attack.

The battlefield was situated six miles north of Hastings along the London road. The flanks of both armies were anchored on marshland. The valley below Senlac Hill where the Normans would form up the following morning was damp and covered with sedge. The valley was "untilled because of its roughness," according to a contemporary source. The terrain also posed limitations for the English because the forest and wet ground behind Senlac Hill would make a withdrawal difficult should the English attempt to break off the fight.

Harold deployed his troops on Senlac Hill with his army facing south astride the London Road. His housecarls were stationed in the center with the men of the fyrd deployed on the wings. Harold believed that having his troops on a hill with steep slopes would nullify the strength of the Norman cavalry, for he hoped the knights would lose momentum charging uphill. Yet the only real way to nullify the attack of the mounted Norman knights would have been to construct ditches in front of the English position to block cavalry charges. But events moved quickly, and there was no time for that.

William deployed the Bretons on the left, Normans in the center, and Franco-Flemish on the right. The mounted Norman knights had the advantage of using the recently adopted stirrup, which aided them in staying astride their horses following the shock of the lance against the enemy. The English had only a few archers and no cavalry.

William had his Normans ready to advance at 9:00 AM. The Norman front rank moved to within 200 yards of the English, which put the crossbowmen and self-bowmen within range of the Anglo-Saxon shield wall.

"The harsh bray of trumpets gave the signal for battle on both sides," wrote chronicler William of Poitiers. "The Norman [archers] closed to attack the English, killing and maiming many with their missiles. The English resisted bravely, each one by any means he could devise. They threw javelins and missiles of various kinds, murderous axes and

stones tied to sticks."

Unfortunately for the Norman bowmen, the English troops' elevated position lessened the arc of their crossbow bolts and arrows. For this reason, their initial missile fire was largely ineffective. Many of their missiles struck the wooden shields of those in the front rank.

Next, William ordered his mail-clad heavy infantry to advance. Although they assailed the shield wall, they failed to make a dent in it. The English spearmen successfully jabbed at the Norman foot soldiers, and the housecarls wielded their two-handed axes with deadly efficiency. The Norman heavy infantry had no choice but to fall back.

William then ordered his cavalry in the third rank to charge the English position. Like the archers and foot soldiers that had preceded them, the cavalry also failed to breach the shield wall. The carnage among the Normans in three assaults was enough to shatter the morale of the Bretons. They began to flee from the battlefield, but William's half-brother, Bishop Odo of Bayeux, rode after the Breton commanders. He scolded them loudly for abandoning the field prematurely. His harsh words compelled many of the Bretons to return to the field.

Harold might have won the day if he had launched an all-out counterattack on the Normans and Flemish before the Bretons returned, but he intended at that point to fight a purely defensive battle. He likely believed that if he could hold his ground, William would face an embarrassing loss that might compel him to quit England.

Unexpectedly for Harold, a large group of spear-wielding militia on his right flank sallied forth. They charged downhill in hot pursuit of the Bretons. William directed his cavalry to cut down the militia, which they did in short order. It was an unexpected break for William in a battle that had not been going his way at the outset.

Some of the English spearmen who streamed downhill after the first series of Norman assaults also attacked the Normans in the center. During this melee, William had the first of several horses killed from underneath him. A rumor spread like wildfire through the ranks that William was slain. Sensing the concern of his troops, he quickly commandeered a new mount. He then removed his helmet and rode back and forth to show his troops he was still very much in command of the army. "Look at me, I am alive and with God's help I will conquer," shouted William. At that point, the Norman knights encircled and finished off the last of the Englishmen who had charged downhill in violation of Harold's orders that they were to remain on the defensive.

Although it was disheartening for the English on the hilltop to watch as the militia in the valley was gored by spears or hacked down by swords, they maintained their static position. As the battle progressed, it became evident that King Harold, who was stationed in the center of his army surrounded by his bodyguards, was having difficulty controlling the militiamen on the flanks. His housecarls, though, maintained good order and discipline.

The battle became one of attrition as each side sought to hold out until the other weakened enough to crumble under a heavy blow. A lull occurred in the battle while the Duke of Normandy considered his next steps. William surmised that if he could compel more of the English troops to come down off the hill, he would weaken the English shield wall to the point that it would crack. He therefore ordered the Franco-Flemish troops on his right wing to charge the shield wall and pretend to flee down the slope of Senlac Hill in panic after their charge. William had confidence that the Flemish knights could conduct feigned retreats because they were elite, professional warriors who possessed superb discipline. He hoped this feigned retreat would succeed in drawing off a like number of spearmen from the English left flank.

The Franco-Flemish feigned retreat worked exceedingly well. Large number of English spearmen took the bait. The French and Flemish knights fled just far enough to draw the spearmen onto the valley floor before wheeling about and counterattacking the hapless Anglo-Saxons that had fallen for the ruse. Caught on open ground in a loose formation, the English spearmen could mount no effective defense against the Normans.

"A combat of an unusual kind began, with one side attacking in different ways and the other side standing firmly as if fixed to the ground," wrote William of Poitiers. As the day wore on, the English grew noticeably weaker, particularly on the wings. The English housecarls on the hilltop tightened their formation; and as they did so, they made an easy target for the Norman archers.

Moving ever closer to the enemy formation, the crossbowmen fired their bolts at close range. This time, they aimed for the helmets of the English in a quest to inflict deadly facial or head wounds. William "instructed the archers not to shoot their arrows directly at the enemy, but rather into the air, so that the arrows might blind the enemy," wrote Henry of Huntingdon, an English churchman and chronicler.

The crossbow and arrow fire at this stage kept the housecarls pinned down. As the missile fire further winnowed King Harold's ranks, already depleted by the unauthorized piecemeal attacks of the English spearmen, the Norman knights began a series of fresh charges in which they succeeded in piercing the English line. Whether Harold's brothers, Gyrth and Leofwine, already were dead because they had participated in the

Continued on page 98

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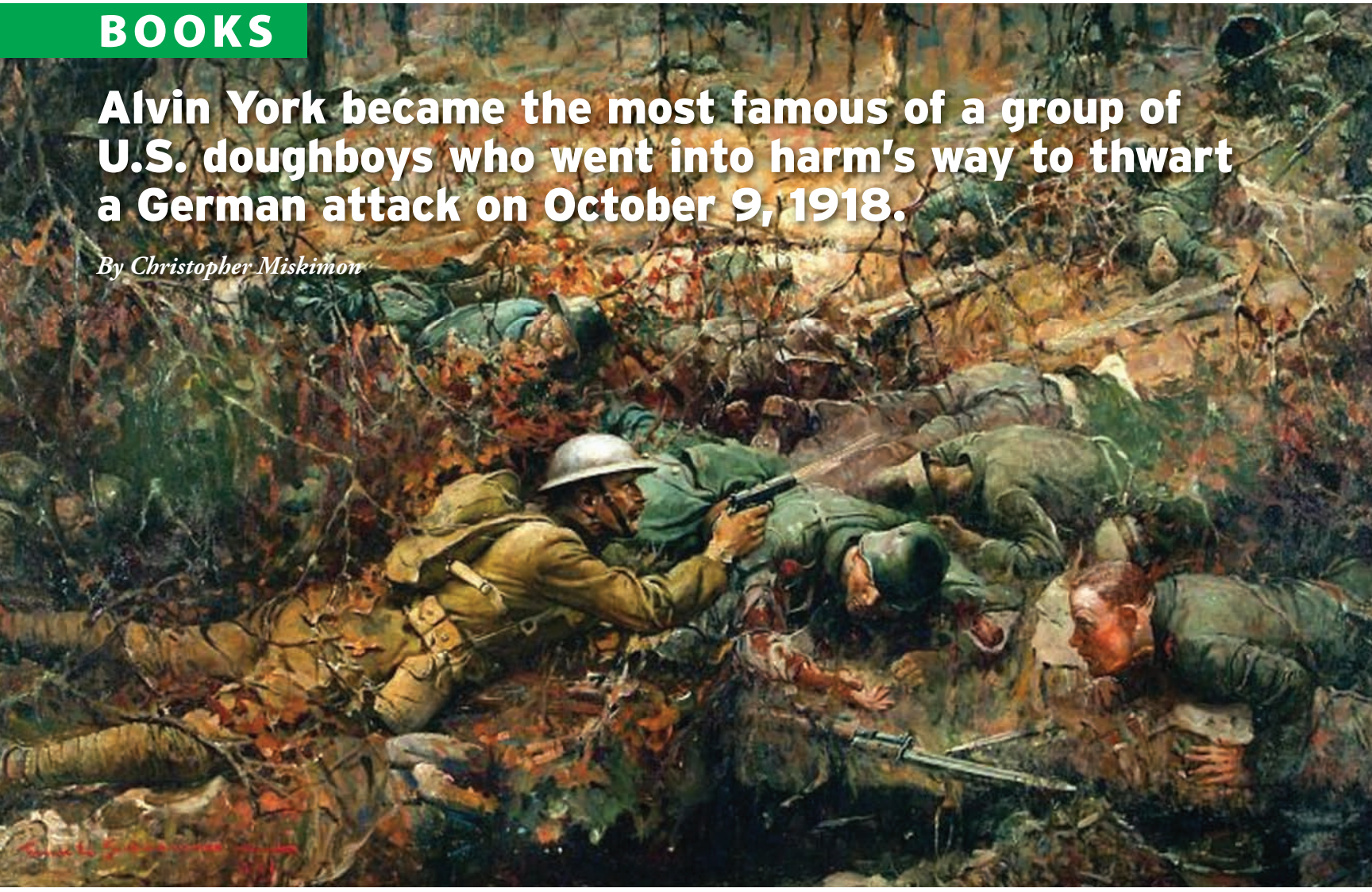
King Harold is struck in the eye by a Norman arrow. Upon the king's death, most of the remaining English troops fled, except for the king's bodyguards, who fought to the death.

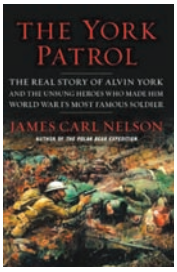
Alvin York became the most famous of a group of U.S. doughboys who went into harm's way to thwart a German attack on October 9, 1918.

By Christopher Miskimon



His Enfield rifle empty, Alvin York fires his M1911 pistol, stopping 6 Germans charging his position.

On October 8, 1918, soldiers of the U.S. Army's 328th Infantry Regiment arrived at Hill 223 and started dying. A strong German defense stopped the Americans cold and several officers were already casualties. Sergeant Harry Parsons took charge of the troops in his immediate vicinity, formed them into combat groups, and decided to send some of them around to the left flank against the Germans. He summoned Acting Sergeant Bernard Early and ordered him to take three squads to the east and then enter some woods to the south and take out several enemy machine guns. It was a risky mission, probably a suicidal one, but someone had to go.



Early gathered his three corporals and gave them the plan. Four noncommissioned officers and 13 privates set out in single file. One of them was Corporal Alvin C. York. He led the automatic rifle squad—five men with an unreliable French Chauchat light machine gun. The patrol entered the brush and made their way up a hill, finding a pair of German snipers firing at the Americans below. They killed one and wounded the other. As the morning sun burned the mist away, German machine gunners spotted the patrol and opened fire from 600 yards away. The Americans fell back into the brush without taking casualties and moved toward another hill to the southwest. By chance, an American artillery barrage provided cover.

At the top of the hill, the patrol followed an old ditch farther behind German lines. They formed a skirmish line, moving through the trees, hunting the enemy. The Yanks soon found their game. They chased a pair of medics before finding a large group of Germans gathered around a shack, receiving a lecture from an officer. The Americans opened fire, killing some, capturing others and scattering the rest. The patrol was momentarily elated. York and his comrades slapped each other on the back for helping the beleaguered Yanks below.

As they prepared to escort the prisoners back to American lines, a shout came from above. "Get Down!" someone shouted in German. As the prisoners hit the ground, machine-gun fire tore into the Americans. Squatting among the Germans, York and the surviving Americans started firing back at the enemy above. "I had no time nohow to do nothing but watch them … and give them the best I had, said York in his Tennesee drawl. "Every time I seed a German I jes' teched him off."

York slowly crawled forward, using some brush as concealment. He watched the enemy position above. Each time a German raised his head to find him, York shot him down. One of the German prisoners behind him was an officer; in the con-

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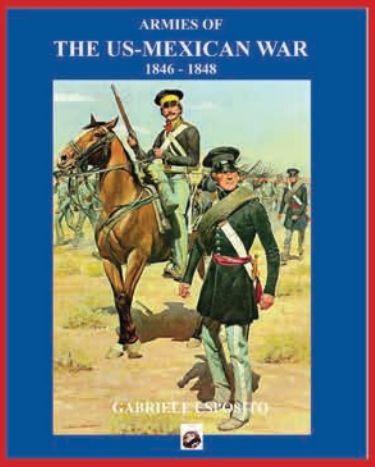

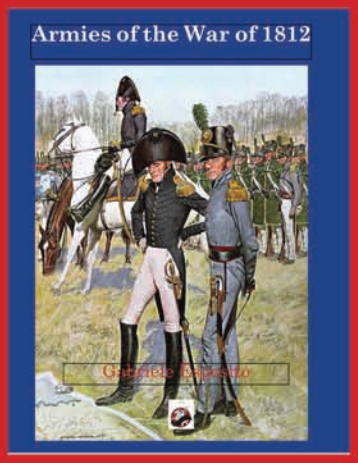

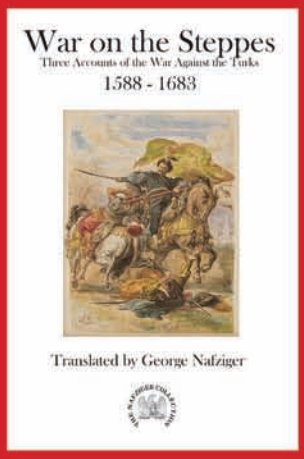

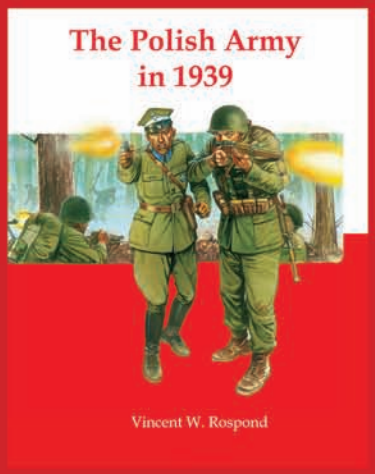

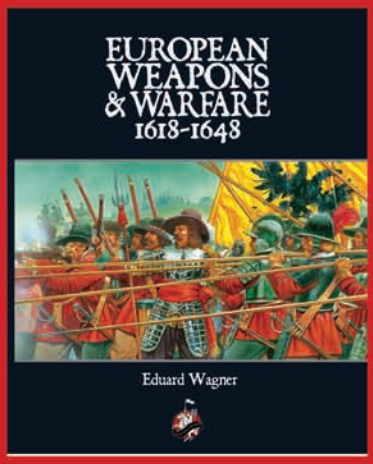

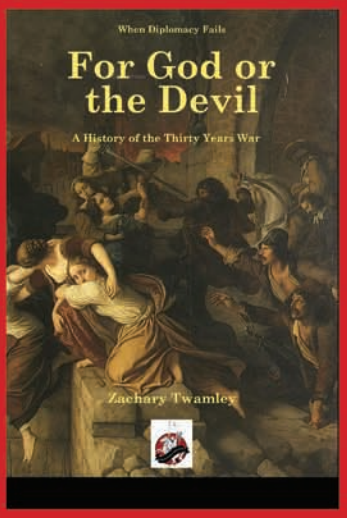

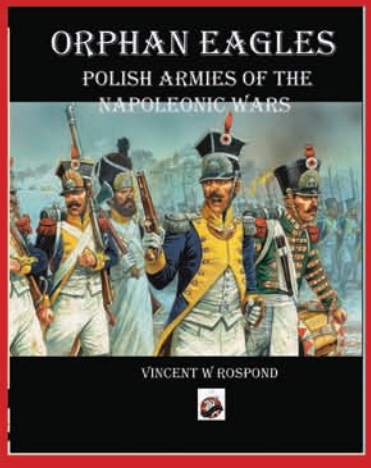

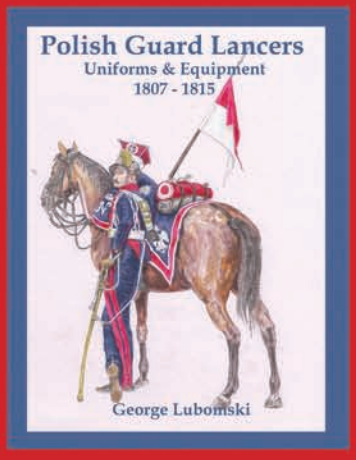

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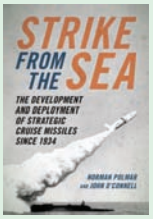
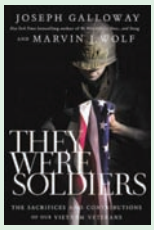
SHORT BURSTS

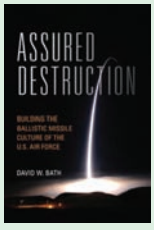


Strike from the Sea: The Development and Deployment of Strategic Cruise Missiles Since 1934 (Norman Polmar and John O'Connell, Naval institute Press, 2020, $49.95, hardcover) The cruise missile underwent a long development period, culminating in advanced weapons such as the Tomahawk. This book reveals the decades of history that created them.



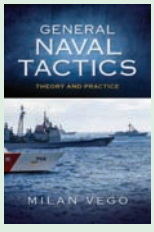
They Were Soldiers: The Sacrifices and Contributions of our Vietnam Veterans (Joseph Galloway and Marvin J. Wolf, Nelson Books, 2020, $29.99, hardcover) This work examines what Vietnam veterans did after they returned from the war. Despite poor treatment, many became major contributors to American society.

Phoenix Rising: From the Ashes of Desert One to the Rebirth of U.S. Special Operations (Col. Keith M. Cunningham (Ret.), Casemate Publishing, 2020, $34.95, hardcover) The Desert One operation was a nadir for U.S. Special Forces. This book chronicles how Special Forces was rebuilt into the premier organization it is today.



Assured Destruction: Building the Ballistic Missile Culture of the U.S. Air Force (David W. Bath, Naval Institute Press, 2020, $39.95, hardcover) The first American ballistic missiles became operational five years before the Cuban Missile Crisis. This required a strenuous effort that continued even after October 1962.

Korean War Allied Surge: Pyongyang Falls, UN Sweep to the Yalu, October 1950 (Gerry Van Tonder, Pen and Sword, 2020, $26.95, softcover) This is the fourth in the author's series on the operations of the Korean War. This volume covers the period of the United Nations Command's advances into North Korea, culminating in a Chinese response.

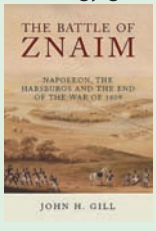


General Naval Tactics: Theory and Practice (Milan Vego, Naval Institute Press, 2020, $55.95, hardcover) The art of fighting at sea contains its own unique concepts and requirements. This book uses historical examples to bring these ideas to the reader.

The Macedonian Phalanx: Equipment, Organization and Tactics from Philip and Alexander to the Roman Conquest (Richard Taylor, Pen and Sword, 2020, $49.95, hardcover) The phalanx ruled Greek battlefields for more than two centuries. The author provides a thorough study of its formation and use.

Battle for Paris 1815: The Untold Story of the Fighting after Waterloo (Paul L. Dawson, Frontline Books, 2020, $42.95, hardcover) The French army continued to fight even after their defeat at Waterloo. This new work chronicles those doomed efforts and the men who led them.

The 10 Key Campaigns of the American Revolution (edited by Edward G. Lengel, Regnery History, 2020, $29.99, hardcover) This anthology gathers 10 leading experts' accounts of the 10 pivotal campaigns that determined the outcome of the conflict.



The Battle of Znaim: Napoleon, the Habsburg and the End of the War of 1809 (John H. Gill, Greenhill Books, 2020, $45.00, hardcover) The largely unknown Battle of Znaim in July 1809 brought the six-month long Franco-Austrian War to an end. This is the first book in English on the engagement.

fusion no one had relieved him of his pistol. He emptied his entire magazine at York but never hit him. A few other Yanks fired away at the Germans, using various weapons, including the crude Chauchat. As York crouched in the brush, he saw a squad of five or six Germans coming toward him single file. His rifle was empty; no time to reach a spare clip. York opened the flap of the holster on his belt and drew his .45 automatic pistol.

That day proved to be Alvin York's "day of days." He killed two-dozen Germans and captured over a hundred more. It led him to a Medal of Honor and fame at home in the United States. He soon became a legend, his tale retold in countless magazines, newspapers, and books and becoming a Howard Hawks-directed movie titled Sergeant York starring Gary Cooper in 1941, just before America entered another war.

As with most military legends, it was not always retold truthfully. For an accurate retelling of the tale, read ***The York Patrol: The Real Story of Alvin York and the Unsung Heroes Who made Him World War I's Most Famous Soldier*** (James Carl Nelson, William Morrow Publishers, New York NY, 2020, 288 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $28.99, hardcover).

While York's exploits are entirely praiseworthy, he was only one of the men who went on the patrol that day. This new work blends the story of York with those of his comrades and even a few surviving German accounts. The book is a masterful mix of these distinct narratives, giving a moment-by-moment description of what the York Patrol encountered. If one adds this work to the list, the author now has five well-regarded books about the United States in World War I.

***Civil War Commando: William Cushing and the Daring Raid to Sink the Ironclad CSS* Albemarle**

(Jerome Preisler, Regnery History, Washington DC, 2020, 319 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, $29.99, hardcover)

William Cushing was far from the perfect naval cadet; his behavior led to his dismissal from the U.S. Naval Academy in March 1861. That might have led him into a different calling in life, perhaps one of obscurity. Like several contemporary military officers, however, the Civil War gave him a chance at distinction. With the now-expanding navy desperate for officers, Cushing received another chance and made the most of it. He fought at the Battles of Hampton Roads in 1862 and First Battle of Fort Fisher in 1864, earning promotion along the way, but his greatest achievement came in a small boat with a handful of men. In October 1864 Cushing led a risky nighttime raid against the

Weird Herb Shocks Doctors With Relief of Leg and Feet Pain, Burning, Tingling, Numbness

6 clinical studies show it is effective. Lost but now re-discovered. Thousands of new users report amazing relief from leg and feet problems in just 30 to 90 days – with no side effects. Available in all 50 states without a prescription.

A re-discovery from the 1600s is causing a frenzy within the medical system. A weird herb has been shown in six clinical studies (and by thousands of users) to be very effective for leg and feet pain, burning and numbness – with no side effects – at low cost – and with no doctor visit or prescription needed.

This weird herb comes from a 12-foot tall tree that grows in Greece and other countries in Europe. In the old days, people noticed that when their horses who had leg and feet problems ate this herb – it was almost like magic how quickly their problems got much better. They called it the "horse herb". Then somehow with Europe's ongoing wars, this herbal secret got lost in time.

"It works for people who've tried many other treatments before with little or no success. Other doctors and I are shocked at how effective it is. It has created a lot of excitement" says Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D.

Its active ingredient has been put into pill form and improved. It is being offered in the United States under the brand name Neuroflo.

WHY ALL THIS EXCITEMENT?

Researchers have found an herb originally from Greece that has been shown in six placebo-controlled medical studies (543 participants) to be effective and safe. This natural compound strengthens blood vessel walls and reduces swelling to stop the pain and suffering.

Poor blood flow in the legs and feet is one of the common problems that develops as we age. Millions of Americans suffer from neuropathy and chronic venous insufficiency (CVI), edema, and other leg/feet problems – millions have these but are undiagnosed.

Today's treatments don't work for a high percentage of people – and they have side effects that make them hard to tolerate or that people do not want to risk. This includes prescription drugs, over the counter pain pills, surgery and compression.

Already popular in Europe, this natural herb is taking America by storm since it was announced last week.

HOW IT WORKS

Here's why you have pain now: Your arteries have weakened. Your arteries can't carry enough blood, nutrients and oxygen down to your legs and feet. This damages your nerves and causes your burning, tingling and numbness.

The herbs in the pill Neuroflo strengthen your arteries that carry blood, nutrients and oxygen to your feet and legs. It improves your circulation so oxygenated blood goes to the nerves and repairs them. This makes your nerves grow stronger so your pain fades away and your legs and feet feel much younger again.

Until now, scientists could not combine these herbs into one pill without losing their full potency, but finally, they have succeeded.

Katerina King from Murrieta, California says, "I had hands and feet tingling and snapping and burning feeling. It made my life very uncomfortable. I had a hard time walking, my legs felt like they each weighed 50 pounds. Once I got in my car and my feet felt so heavy I couldn't even drive the car. With Neuroflo I have no more tingling, cold or burning painful legs and feet. It went away."

WHAT DOCTORS ARE SAYING

"Now I finally have a natural solution I can recommend to my patients who suffer from leg and feet problems and pain. I'm delighted because previous treatments were not effective, but Neuroflo has worked for every one of my patients with no side effects" says Dr. Eric Wood, N.D.

Dr. Ryan Shelton, M.D. says "This is new and different. It works for people who've tried many other things before. It is natural with no side effects. Don't give up hope for your leg and feet pain, burning, tingling and numbing. This pill is working for countless people after other treatments have failed them. I highly recommend it."

"Neuroflo is a terrific choice for people with leg and feet issues. The clinical trials in support of this herb show it is very effective for safe and fast relief," said Dr. Wood, a Harvard trained doctor who has appeared on award winning TV shows.

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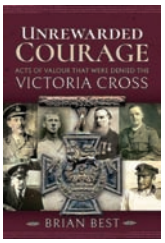
moored Confederate ironclad Albemarle. This ship's crew had terrorized the Union navy, sinking one ship and damaging several others before taking refuge up the Roanoke River. Its presence was a constant threat to Union operations in the area. Cushing took a tiny steamboat up the river and struck the Albemarle with a spar torpedo, sinking it before making his escape in the confusion. This success made him an instant hero.

Cushing's larger-than-life story is told in this fast-paced, detailed new work. The book reads almost like a novel due to the author's clear, compelling prose and smooth writing style. It is well-researched and contains numerous archival sources used to put together the narrative.

Unrewarded Courage: Acts of Valour That Were Denied the Victoria Cross (Brian Best, Frontline Books, South Yorkshire UK, 2020, 179 pp., glossary, photographs, bibliography, index, $39.95, hardcover)



During the Anglo-Persian War of 1856-57, Commander James Rennie took a raft under enemy guns to force the surrender of a Persian fortress, dispersing an army of 13,000. His Victoria Cross was rejected on the grounds he had merely done his duty.

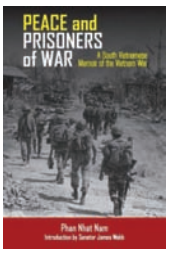
Cavalry trooper Clement Roberts rode into enemy fire during a battle to save the life of a young journalist after he was thrown from his horse. He could not know at the time he had saved the life of Winston Churchill, who would become Great Britain's prime minister in 1940.

Gurkha soldier Dipprasad Pun defended his solitary post in Afghanistan in 2010 against a large force of Taliban, killing 15 of them. Since no superior rank saw his actions, his recommendation for the Victoria Cross was downgraded to a Conspicuous Gallantry Cross.

All three soldiers arguably deserved Great Britain's highest award for gallantry, but none of them received it.

This compelling new work focuses on those recommended for the Victoria Cross but who were denied it. Such denials occurred sometimes for spurious reasons, often due to the confusion and chaos of war. Many brave acts go unrewarded because no one sees them or those who do fail to act or sufficiently describe what they saw. The author has written several books on Victoria Cross winners; in this volume, he looks at those who probably should have won it but did not. It is a fascinating look at some of history's most famous might-have-beens.

Peace and Prisoners of War: A South Vietnamese Memoir of the Vietnam War (Phan Nhat Nam, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis MD, 2020, 240 pp., maps, photographs, $24.95, softcover)



Phan Nhat Nam's father left his family to join the communist Viet Minh guerrillas when Phan was seven years old. His mother died just as he finished high school. Phan trained at South Vietnam's equivalent of West point and in 1961 joined the South Vietnamese Army's elite Red Beret airborne division. He stayed with the unit until 1970 and during that time wrote many stories of his war experiences, which were published throughout the south. He became known for his honesty and his insubordination toward many of his superiors, whom he found wanting as soldiers. After his service, Phan became one of his country's most respected war reporters, compelled to write down all he had seen and endured. As American involvement drew to a close in the early 1970s, thousands of South Vietnamese soldiers and civilians still died as Soviet and Chinese support for the north grew.

GAMES

A CONTROVERSIAL CANCELLED SHOOTER REARS ITS HEAD IN 2021

By Joseph Luster

Six Days in Fallujah

Genre: Shooter • **Platform:** PC, consoles• **Publisher:** Victura • **Available:** 2021

Based on true stories from the Second Battle for Fallujah in 2004, *Six Days in Fallujah* was originally announced back in 2009 but was eventually cancelled. That has since changed, and now publisher Victura has brought the first-person shooter back with plans to launch it on consoles and PC sometime in 2021. With a new publisher in place along with new developer Highwire Games, this one looks to show what went down by letting players experience a representation of it for themselves.

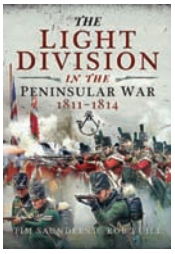
The notion of virtually living the reality of Fallujah comes out of a quote from former Marine Sergeant Eddie Garcia, who proposed the idea in 2005 after being wounded in the battle himself. "War is filled with uncertainty and tough choices that can't be understood by watching someone on a TV or movie screen make these choices for you," Garcia said. "Video games can help all of us understand real-world events in ways other media can't."

The cancellation of the first crack at *Fallujah* came after controversy surrounding the ability of video games to cover such challenging real-world events. New publisher Victura is embracing the challenge with the latest version of the game and hopes to bring both it and other games based on true stories to fruition. To do so, Victura and Highwire spent the past three years and some change building special technologies and mechanics to bring the uncertainties of war closer to players, while working in close partnership with frontline Marines and Soldiers who fought in the Battle for Fallujah.

The stories that inspired the developers came from over 100 Marines, Soldiers, and Iraqi civilians who were there at the time. They shared their personal truths along with photographs and video recordings to help the team better understand each unique perspective and add more authenticity to the proceedings. Will this add up to a quality game that accurately and thoughtfully reflects this thorough education? We'll have to wait until *Six Days in Fallujah* is finally in our hands to decide. ■

When South Vietnam fell to invasion from the north in 1975, Phan's new rulers sent him to prison for so-called re-education, where he spent 14 years, eight of them in solitary confinement. He was allowed to immigrate to the United States in 1993, where he continued to write. This book collects many of his writings into a chronicle of his awful experiences. Few memoirs by South Vietnamese are readily available to English-speaking readers today, giving this book significance in the body of work on the Vietnam War.

The Light Division in the Peninsular War 1811-1814 (Tim Saunders and Rob Yuill, Pen and Sword Books, South Yorkshire UK, 2020, 346 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $49.95, hardcover)



When the Duke of Wellington sought to go on the offensive in Portugal and Spain, the Light Division quickly became indispensable. They fought at the sieges of Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz, earning their reputation as capable soldiers. Afterward they marched and countermarched across the Peninsula until the French were brought to battle at Salamanca. When the British army was forced to retreat in the autumn of 1812, the Light Division went with it back to Ciudad Rodrigo. When French fortunes turned and Wellington received reinforcements from Great Britain, the Light Division resumed the advance, helping drive the French across the Pyrenees.

The Light Division was a vital component of England's army in Portugal and Spain. This book delves into the life of the light-infantry soldier, drawing on memoirs and diaries from officers and enlisted men alike. It also provides insight into the Peninsular Campaign and its various battles. The book is well illustrated with a number of good maps, and attention is paid to the unit's uniforms and equipment. The volume is a good overall study of the Light Division during the Napoleonic Wars.

A Question of Time (James Stejskal, Casemate Publishing, Havertown PA, 2020, 304 pp., $24.95, hardcover)

When the CIA's most valuable spy in East Berlin is compromised in 1979, the agency cannot get him out safely. East Germany's effective and dreaded secret police, the Stazi, ruthlessly hunt the American agent. Master Sergeant Kim Becker, a Vietnam veteran of the elite Studies and Observations Group, is part of the small U.S. Army Special Forces unit stationed in West Berlin. Becker and his team are tasked to get the vulnerable agent out any way they can. The mission is full of risk for the team as they race against time to rescue the CIA's man, wondering if he is worth the danger. Meanwhile, the spy hides within the very organization that is seeking him.

The real-life activities of American Special Forces units in Berlin have only recently come to light. This new novel presents a fictional account of how those units carried out their roles in a city surrounded by the enemy during the Cold War. The author is a veteran Green Beret who joined the CIA after his military service. He uses his vast subject-matter expertise to fill his story with rich and accurate details not only about the techniques and tactics of the characters but also the backdrop of the Cold War and how it affected those involved.

Armies of Ancient Greece Circa 500-338 BC: History, Organization and Equipment (Gabrielle Esposito, Pen and Sword Books, 2020, 194 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, $34.95, hardcover)

Some of the most famous battles and conflicts in history occurred during the era of Classical Greece. The victory over the Persians at Marathon, the stand of Spartans at Thermopylae, the Peloponnesian War and the March of the Ten Thousand all occurred within the few centuries of Grecian dominance in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Greek hoplite, an infantryman armed with a long spear and carrying a heavy shield to complement his helmet and armor, played a key role in Greek warfare. Formed into phalanx formations, they ruled the battlefield against many foes. However, the hoplites received support from skirmishers and cavalry, using their own dedicated weapons and equipment. These specialists guarded the flanks of the cumbersome phalanx and could make attacks of their own.

This newest volume in the "Armies of the Past" series focuses on the Greek armies at the height of their power and ability. The author is an established historian with expertise in this era, with several other books to his credit in the same series. This newest work is professionally written and beautifully illustrated. All of the photographs are in color. Many of the images depict period weapons, armor and equipment worn by reenactors dedicated to accuracy, giving the reader a clear view of what ancient Greek warriors looked like on the battlefield. ■

GAUGAMELA

Continued from page 73

most the Persian captives ran to them joyfully, looking upon them as liberators, but Darius's mother was not one of them. She stayed where she was, even though liberation was at hand. Alexander had always shown her the greatest courtesy and respect, and out of gratitude she remained where she was. Other female captives, perhaps not so grateful, ran to join the horsemen.

Accounts slightly differ, but the baggage train raiders were eventually chased off, and the danger to the Macedonian rear; if such a danger ever existed, was neutralized. Alexander's prescient tactic of having a Greek phalanx right behind the main Macedonian one had paid off.

In the meantime, Alexander saw that it was time to finish off the Persians. So, he sought desperately to locate Darius among his Persian host and engage him in one-on-one combat. If Darius were killed, wounded, or compelled to surrender, the entire Persian army would collapse. Darius was not just a general, but the heart and soul of the Persian battle effort. Leaderless, and without a sense of direction, the troops would probably take to their heels, or hooves as the case may be.

Darius was no physical coward when it came to combat. He hurled javelins from his chariot and generally gave a good account of himself during the battle. But he did seem to fear capture more than even death and tended to try and flee when he believed the enemy had surrounded him. According to some accounts, Alexander and his Companion cavalry drew close to Darius's chariot and the Macedonian king hurled a javelin, but it missed by inches and struck and killed the driver instead.

Other accounts state that the Great King tumbled to the ground as the javelin flew by; perhaps he lost his footing while trying to dodge the incoming missile. Probably nothing was hurt but his pride, but while he momentarily rolled in the dust a great shout arose from some nearby Persian horsemen who had been observing the action. The shout was one of despair and alarm, because in the excitement of battle and the rolling clouds of dust they believed that Darius had been killed.

The Persians who first witnessed Darius's fall began to run away, sparking a panic that spread through the ranks like a deadly contagion. It did not really matter that Darius got up and was shown to be healthy and intact; the stampede gained momentum and assumed a life of its own. Cavalry that had been fighting bravely moments before now vied with each other to be the first to escape. Infantry that had been facing the bristling Macedonian pikes with courage and elan suddenly ran from the field as fast as their legs could carry them.

Even Darius's own bodyguards, the apple bearers, were not immune, and their ranks thinned as man after man decided to abandon their positions. With his bodyguard melting away, and Alexander drawing ever closer, the Great King decided it was high time to leave. Darius jumped from his chariot, mounted a nearby horse, and galloped away. By this time, much of the battlefield was obscured by thick, yellowish clouds of dust, loose soil that been kicked up by the thousands of feet and hooves.

Oddly enough, Darius had 15 war elephants with him, a type of warfare that was new to the Macedonians at the time and might have even panicked them if the conditions were right and they were employed in an efficient manner. If they were indeed present that day, they were not used. When Alexander invaded northwest India five years later, his army would have to face these gigantic pachyderms in battle.

Alexander wanted to pursue his beaten foe, but Darius's escape was aided by those thick clouds of dust. The Macedonians could not determine what route the Great King had taken in his flight. Alexander was sorely disappointed he did not capture Darius, because his conquest of the Achaemenid Empire would not be complete until he had successfully dispatched his royal rival.

Darius indeed had no intention of surrendering or stepping down from the throne. The empire was vast, and he hoped the eastern provinces would still remain loyal. Darius managed to scrape together the detritus of his defeated army and create a new force, a nucleus that he hoped to build upon in the weeks and months to come. The remnants included Bessus' Bactrian cavalry, survivors of his golden-apple bodyguard, and 2,000 Greek mercenaries.

Unfortunately, Darius never got a third chance to save his empire. Bessus and several other satraps arrested the king, and it was said in token of his high status they clapped him in golden chains. This captivity was short lived because Bessus, who harbored royal ambitions himself, had Darius murdered.

Gaugamela marked the end of the Achaemenid Empire for all intents and purposes. Even if he had lived, it is unlikely that Darius would have turned the tables on Alexander and emerged triumphant. Ancient sources are notoriously unreliable when it comes to casualty figures. The Persians suffered 40,000 casualties, while the Macedonians 1,000 cavalry and 300 infantry, according to modern estimates.

Alexander's decisive victory over the Persians at Gaugamela was another milestone in his legend as one of the world's greatest conquerors. ■

HASTINGS

Continued from page 91

downhill assaults or whether they were slain in the final phase of the battle is unclear.

Having pierced the shield wall, a group of 20 picked knights on their warhorses began fighting their way toward Harold. His position was clear for all to see, for he not only fought under the dragon standard of Wessex, but also under his bejeweled personal banner of the Fighting Man. But it would not be the knights that slew the English king at dusk that day.

As the knights were attempting to seize his standard and kill or capture him, a shower of arrows "fell around King Harold, and he himself fell to the ground, struck in the eye," wrote Huntingdon. At that point, most of the remaining troops fled, save for a small number of the king's bodyguards who fought to the death. The victorious Norman troops swept up the standards of Harold and his earls to present to Duke William.

The Norman pursuit lasted one hour before darkness put an end to it. Some French sources describe how the English fought a rearguard action at an old Anglo-Saxon earthwork on the London Road protected by a series of ditches beyond Senlac Hill. Some of the Norman horsemen involved in the pursuit were either killed or wounded when their horses tumbled into the deep ditch in front of an earthen rampart in the dark. The French sources refer to the wide trench in their account as Malfosse, which means evil ditch.

William's victory at Hastings did not mean he had conquered England. When no word came of the submission of the nobility and senior clerics to William's authority, he began a circuitous march on London that lasted 10 weeks. He first marched to Kent, where he received reinforcements from Normandy in Dover and other ports. He then counter-marched west to Hampshire and then north to Oxfordshire. William arrived north of London in Herefordshire in early December, having marched 350 miles. During his long march his army had fought a series of minor actions with pockets of resistance.

The remaining earls and senior clerics submitted to William on December 10 acknowledging him as their king. William was crowned the new king of England in Westminster on Christmas Day. It was not without incident, though, for the Norman knights inside the church believed mistakenly that there was a riot outside and began torching nearby houses. William, it was said, was visibly shaken by the disturbance. The war in England was far from over. It would take William the Conqueror four long years to subdue the Midlands and Northumbria. ■

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