Curtis 02313

MILITARY HERITAGE

Tank Attack at Cambrai

Prussian Onslaught at Koniggratz

THIRTY YEARS' WAR

Mercenary Heroes of 1622

WELLINGTON IN SPAIN

Streets Strewn with Bodies at Fuentes de Onoro

+

WAR HAMMERS, POLISH CODE BREAKERS, UNION NAVAL HERO, PROPAGANDA PRINTS, BOOK & GAME REVIEWS AND MORE!

SPRING 2010

$5.99 US $6.99 Canada

24

0 74470 02313 5

RETAILER: DISPLAY UNTIL MAY 11

MILITARY HERITAGE • SPRING 2010 Volume 11, No. 6

SEE THE WAR FROM ITS MOST DANGEROUS VANTAGE POINT

Battle with up to eight friends online in both scripted and generated multiplayer missions.

For the first time ever, manage your crew inside the U-boat with an all-new first-person view.

Command and control stunningly authentic recreations of classic type VII German submarines.

THE CAPTAIN'S CHAIR

TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Alcohol Reference
Comic Mischief
Mild Language
Violence

PC
DVD-ROM
SOFTWARE

Available March 2010

UBISOFT®

MILITARY HERITAGE

June 2010

features

columns

COVER: Edouard Detaille's painting of a Napoleonic era French General and his staff. Image: Private Collection / The Bridgeman Art Library

Military Heritage (ISSN 1524-8666) is published bimonthly by Sovereign Media, 453-B Carlisle Drive, Herndon, VA 20170. (703) 964-0361. Periodical postage PAID at Herndon, VA, and additional mailing offices. Military Heritage, Volume 11, Number 6 ***Subscription Services, back issues, and Information:*** **1(800) 219-1187** *or* write to Military Heritage **Circulation, Military Heritage, P.O. Box 1644, Williamsport, PA 17703.** Single copies: $5.99, plus $3 for postage. Yearly subscription in U.S.A.: $16.95; Canada and Overseas: $21.95 (U.S.). Editorial Office: Send editorial mail to Military Heritage, 453-B Carlisle Drive, Herndon, VA 20170. Military Heritage welcomes editorial submissions but assumes no responsibility for the loss or damage of unsolicited material. Material to be returned should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We suggest that you send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a copy of our author's guidelines.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Military Heritage, P.O. Box 1644, Williamsport, PA 17703.

W. Britain

ZULU WAR

Rorke's Drift... continued

The stunning W. Britain Zulu war Rorke's Drift collection continues into 2010 with the addition of Surgeon Reynolds, more personalities, 24th Foot and of course Zulus. The compound will also be finished off this year with the addition of the storehouse, mealie bag redoubt, biscuit box walls and even the ovens and bakehouse that one member of the 24th managed to hide in until he could make good his escape! Recreate the gallant stand of 150 British troops against an assault of over 3,000 determined Zulu warriors with our Rorke's Drift collection.

The all METAL figures in this series are 54mm (about 2.25" tall) hand-painted in a hyper-realistic matte finish with shading and highlighting. The accessories are made of cold cast resin and are also finished to the same high degree of painting as the figures. Look for our new series "Isandlwana" in 2010.

The diorama above includes the following:

#20017 British 24th Foot at Barricade #1 - *1 Piece Set*

#20042 British Surgeon Reynolds Operating on Corporal Allen - *5 Piece Set - Ltd. Edition 1000 Pieces*

#20043 Natal Native Contingent Lt. Adendorff Standing Firing - *1 Piece Set in Clamshell Pack*

#20045 British 24th Foot Butting with Rifle #1 - *1 Piece Set in Clamshell Pack*

#20046 British 24th Foot Casualty #1 - *1 Piece Set in Clamshell Pack*

#20047 Rorke's Drift Storehouse - *1 Piece Set - 500 Piece Limited Edition*

#20048 Zulu Induna - Prince Dabulamanzi Mounted (Zulu Commander at Rorke's Drift) - *2 Piece Set - 800 Piece Limited Edition*

#20034 Zulu Warrior Charging with Assegai #1 - *1 Piece Set in Clamshell Pack*

#20035 Zulu iNdlondlo Regiment Charging with Assegai #1 - *1 Piece in Clamshell Pack*

#20037 British Commissary Dalton Loading Rifle - *1 Piece Set in Clamshell Pack*

#20041 British 24th Foot Kneeling Loading #1 - *1 Piece Set in Clamshell Pack*

#20071 British 24th Foot Standing Firing #2 - *1 Piece Set in Clamshell*

The Zulu War Series and the entire W. Britain range can be purchased from these W. Britain retailers:

Sierra Toy Soldier
Tel: 408-395-3000
Fax: 408-358-3966
www.sierratoysoldier.com
29 N. Santa Cruz Ave.
Los Gatos, California 95030

Tedtoy Miniatures
Tel: 270-929-2876
www.tedtoy.com
101 W. Third Street
Owensboro, Kentucky 42301

The History Store
Tel: 405-424-5313
101 North Paint St.
Chillicothe, Ohio 45601

Green's Collectables
Tel: 973-627-4961
e-mail: ma52557@aol.com
46 Warren Trail
Denville, New Jersey 07834

Toy Soldier Shoppe
Tel: 414-302-1850
Fax: 414-302-1851
www.toysoldiershoppe.net
3775 S. 108th St.
Greenfield, Wisconsin 53228

Dutkins' Collectables
Tel: 800-LIL-ARMY (800-545-2769)
Fax: 856-428-9640
www.dutkins.com
1019 West Route 70
Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08002

Treefrog Treasures
Tel: 866-394-2418
Outside U.S.: 1-507-545-2500
Fax: 507-545-2502
www.treefrogtreasures.com
248 Sandstone Drive NW
Eyota, Minnesota 55934

Michigan Toy Soldier
Tel: 248-586-1022
Fax: 248-586-9934
www.michtoy.com
1400 East 11 Mile Rd.
Royal Oak, Michigan 48067

Hobby Bunker
Tel: 781-321-8855
Fax: 781-321-8866
www.hobbybunker.com
33 Exchange Street
Malden, Massachusetts, 02148

Old Toy Soldier Home
Tel: 760-758-5481
Fax: 760-758-7004
www.oldtoysoldierhome.com
977 South Santa Fe, Suite #11
Vista, California 92083

Why not join the largest toy soldier club in the World?
Visit *www.wbritaincollectorsclub.com* for more information.

WBA0410

W. Britain - Putting History in Your Hands

1st® FIRST GEAR®

editorial

The old Rough Rider, Theodore Roosevelt, was an unlikely candidate to win the Nobel Prize. The Russo-Japanese War changed all that.

WHEN MOST AMERICANS THINK OF THEODORE Roosevelt, they conjure the image of the hard-charging Rough Rider at San Juan Hill, the western cowboy in six guns and chaps, the big game hunter in Africa, or the pulpit-pounding orator promising voters to "speak softly, but carry a big stick."

Only devoted history buffs know that Roosevelt was also the first American to win the Nobel Peace Prize—or any other Nobel Prize, for that matter. It was perhaps the most surprising and unlikely achievement of his crowded, tumultuous life. And unlike most of his triumphs—and tragedies, too—it was played out entirely behind the scenes, away from the glare of spotlights and the huzzahs of adoring crowds.

Roosevelt's inauguration as president in 1905 had scarcely concluded when he found himself embroiled in subtle and sensitive diplomacy on the international stage. The remarkably brutal war between Russia and Japan for hegemony in China had begun 13 months earlier with a Japanese sneak attack—shades of Pearl Harbor—on the Russian fleet at Port Arthur. Subsequent Japanese victories on land and sea, most prominently at the Battles of Mukden and Tsushima Strait, had severely crippled the much larger European nation, but had stretched Japanese resources to the breaking point as well.

Both nations were looking for a face-saving way to end the war. Enter Roosevelt. Japanese envoys in Washington gingerly approached the president in the summer of 1905 and asked him to arbitrate a peace settlement. Like many western leaders, Roosevelt had secretly enjoyed seeing the Russian Bear humbled and humiliated by tiny Japan. "I was thoroughly well pleased with the Japanese victory," Roosevelt wrote confidentially to his son Kermit. "Japan is playing our game." But he was beginning to worry that Japan was playing the game a little too well. It was not in American national interests for Japan to swarm over the entire Chinese mainland or extend her sphere of interest across Asia as far as the Philippines. Enough was enough.

Roosevelt began an intricate pas de trois with the warring countries, preserving at least the semblance of neutrality by convincing red-faced Russian diplomats that the peace conference was entirely his own idea. He invited both countries to send representatives to Portsmouth Naval Station in New Hampshire (Washington, D.C., was too hellishly hot in pre-air conditioned times). That August, the two sides sat down on specially imported mahogany furniture to bring an end to the mutually devastating war.

After hosting a welcoming lunch for negotiators aboard the presidential yacht *Mayflower,* Roosevelt stayed carefully out of the picture, summering with his family at Oyster Bay, New York, but monitoring by telegraph each painful and contentious step in the peace process. As usual, the Russians were the main stumbling block. "No human beings, black, yellow or white could be quite as untruthful, as insincere, as arrogant—in short, as untrustworthy in every way—as the Russians," the president fumed. The Japanese, meanwhile, were "a wonderful and civilized people entitled to stand on absolute equality with all the other peoples of the civilized world."

When negotiations stalled over the question of Russian reparations to Japan, Roosevelt approached Czar Nicholas II of Russia and the Czar's cousin, Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, urging them that it was in Russia's best interests to end the war—at any cost. At the same time, he went through back channels to Japan's mutual ally, Great Britain, to warn the Japanese that "the opinion of the civilized world will not support it continuing the war merely for the purpose of extorting money from Russia."

In the end, the Japanese blinked, dropping their demands for reparations and agreeing to share control of strategic Sakhalin Island with the Russians. "This is splendid! This is magnificent!" Roosevelt exclaimed upon hearing the news. "It's a mighty good thing for Russia, and a mighty good thing for Japan. And a mighty good thing for me, too." The Nobel Prize committee agreed, making Roosevelt the first of four American presidents (and the only Republican) to be awarded the prestigious Peace Prize.

Roy Morris Jr.

MILITARY HERITAGE

VOLUME 11, NUMBER 6

CARL A. GNAM, JR.
Editorial Director, Founder

ROY MORRIS JR.
Editor
editor@militaryheritagemagazine.com

LAURA CLEVELAND
Managing Editor

SAMANTHA DeTULLEO
Art Director

Contributors:
Arnold Blumberg, Louis Ciotola, Al Hemingway, Joseph Luster, William McPeak, Eric Niderost, Matthew Peszek, Mike Phifer, James M. Powles, William E. Welsh

ADVERTISING OFFICE:

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

MARK HINTZ
Chief Executive Officer

DAWN LEFEVER
Accounting Manager

KATHY PAULHAMUS
MARY NOLAN, SANDRA HILLYARD
Subscription Customer Services

KEN FORNWALT
Data Processing Director

CURTIS CIRCULATION COMPANY
Worldwide Distribution

SOVEREIGN MEDIA COMPANY, INC.
453-B Carlisle Drive
Herndon, VA 20170

SUBSCRIPTION, CUSTOMER SERVICE, AND BUSINESS OFFICE
1000 Commerce Park Drive, Suite 300
Williamsport, PA 17701

(800) 219-1187

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

By James M. Powles

Massachusetts-born naval officer Thomas O. Selfridge was in the thick of several celebrated naval battles for the North during the Civil War.

Backed by Union warships, a mixed force of soldiers and sailors assaults the Confederate bastion of Fort Fisher, at Wilmington, North Carolina, December 1864.

MARCH 8, 1862, DAWNED SUNNY AND MILD AT HAMPTON Roads, Virginia. To the men of the Union blockading squadron, the day seemed like any other. At Gosport Navy Yard, near Norfolk, the Confederates had constructed an ironclad vessel on the hull of the partially destroyed USS *Merrimack*. Renamed CSS *Virginia*, the ironclad was reportedly ready to challenge the Union blockaders. Standing watch off Newport News for this supposedly indestructible ironclad were the 24-gun sloop of war *Cumberland* and the 50-gun frigate *Congress*. At 12:45 PM, lookouts sighted *Virginia*, accompanied by two smaller Confederate vessels, heading into Hampton Roads from the Elizabeth River. Both Union warships immediately cleared for action.

On board *Cumberland* was Lieutenant Thomas O. Selfridge, an aggressive and fearless 26-year-old United States Naval Academy graduate. In charge of the forward battery of six guns, he would soon face the brunt of *Virginia*'s raking fire. Around 2:30 PM, *Virginia* bypassed *Congress* and headed straight toward *Cumberland*, her captain having decided to ram the more heavily armed sloop of war. *Cumberland* opened fire as soon as her guns could be brought to bear, but she took a terrible pounding as *Virginia* moved across the warship's bow to get into position to ram.

Selfridge ran from gun to gun, firing as fast as he could, but to no avail. *Cumberland*'s shells bounced harmlessly off the ironclad's sloping sides. Meanwhile, *Virginia*'s deadly

Library of Congress

fire tore through the Union vessel's wooden hull, sending lethal pieces of wood whizzing about and decimating the warship's crew. Selfridge later recalled: "The dead were thrown to the disengaged side of the deck; the wounded carried below. The carnage was frightful."

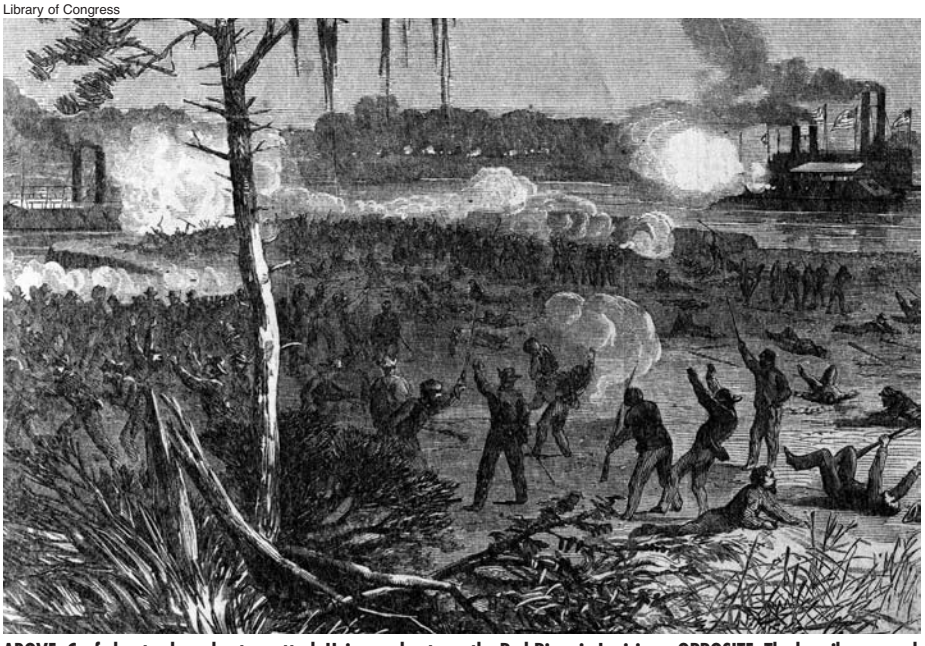
After crossing *Cumberland*'s bow, *Virginia* turned and struck *Cumberland* on the starboard bow, penetrating the side under the berth deck. For a few minutes the two vessels were locked together, with the now-sinking *Cumberland* pulling the ironclad down with her. *Virginia* was saved when her ram broke away, allowing her to slowly pull away. *Cumberland*'s crew continued to fire for half an hour, until ordered to abandon ship.

Selfridge, one of the last to leave, later recalled his narrow escape. "Throwing off coat and sword, I squeezed through gun port," he wrote. "In doing so, however, the heel of my boot became jammed against the port sill by the gun. I finally succeeded in wrenching off the boot-heel and thus freeing myself. Then jumping into the icy water, encumbered by boots and clothing, I swam to the launch astern and was picked up exhausted." Looking back, Selfridge saw his proud ship go under "bow first and her stern high in the air." It was the first of several close calls he would have during the war.

Selfridge was born on February 6, 1836, to Navy Captain Thomas Oliver Selfridge and Louisa Cary Soley in Charlestown, Massachusetts. In 1851 he was appointed to the United States Naval Academy, where he graduated in 1854 at the head of his class. His first assignment was on USS *Independence,* the flagship of the Pacific Squadron. Sailing from New York on a two-year cruise, *Independence* traveled to California, Hawaii, Samoa, Chile, and Panama. Upon his return, Selfridge was promoted to midshipman and served as acting master aboard the Coast Survey schooner *Nautilus*. At the outbreak of the war, he joined *Cumberland* at Gosport Navy Yard for blockade duty on the James River.

Selfridge was a dedicated, intelligent, and gifted officer who excelled in seamanship and gunnery. He was also a demanding, "by the book" officer, which did not endear him to his subordinates. Personally brave, he sometimes let his courage overcome his better judgment. After *Cumberland*'s sinking, he was ordered to take temporary command of the ironclad *Monitor*. A few days later, he was replaced as captain by Lieutenant William Jeffers. After a month's leave in Boston, Selfridge was recalled to Hampton Roads and given command of *Illinois,* a large

Library of Congress



ABOVE: Confederate sharpshooters attack Union gunboats on the Red River in Louisiana. OPPOSITE: The heavily armored USS *Osage* was almost unmanageable on western waters.

coastal steamer chartered by the government. When the charter was revoked a few days later, he became flag lieutenant on the staff of Flag Officer Louis M. Goldsborough, commander of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron.

When Goldsborough resigned in July, Selfridge went to Washington to seek a new ship. He was offered command of the experimental submarine USS *Alligator.* At first, he turned it down, believing the submarine could not be successfully developed for practicable use, but he soon reversed his decision. *Alligator* was a 47-foot-long submersible designed by French engineer Brutus De Villeroi to counter the Confederate ironclad *Virginia*. Seeing his new command for the first time at the Washington Navy Yard, a less-than-elated Selfridge described her as being "little more than a cigar-shaped hull with crude man-power propulsion machinery inside."

On August 4, Selfridge decided to take the submarine on a short cruise down the river. *Alligator* had not gone far when her bow suddenly began to sink. Selfridge, standing on deck, looked into the conning tower hatch and discovered "a rush being made by the men to get out." The sub's air purification system had failed. The men made it safely to the deck, and the helpless submarine drifted downriver until Selfridge managed to hail a nearby schooner and have the submarine towed back to the Navy Yard.

Disgusted by the sub's performance, Selfridge immediately requested a transfer to the Mississippi Squadron. Upon reaching Cairo, Illinois, he found that he had been promoted to lieutenant commander and given command of USS *Cairo,* one of the city-class river ironclads built by James Eads. Selfridge took over at Helena, Arkansas, on September 12. *Cairo* patrolled the river above Memphis for several weeks until Acting Rear Admiral David D. Porter ordered Self-

ridge to bring his vessel back to Helena. Porter was preparing to assist the Army in a new campaign against Vicksburg, Mississippi. On December 8, Selfridge joined the Union flotilla anchored off the mouth of the Yazoo River.

On the morning of the 11th, the tinclads *Marmora* and *Signal* ventured up the Yazoo on a reconnaissance. As they neared the Confederate earthworks at Drumgould's Bluff, lookouts sighted torpedoes in the water. Upon returning, the captains of the tinclads said they could remove the torpedoes if given protection by one or two gunboats. Selfridge, always willing to go in harm's way, requested permission to lead the mission to clear the torpedoes. The next morning, the two tinclads, escorted by *Cairo* and *Pittsburg,* along with the ram *Queen of the West,* entered the Yazoo. Later that morning, disaster struck. *Marmora* was 100 yards ahead and hidden from *Cairo*'s sight by a bend in the river when her crew opened fire with muskets on a suspected torpedo. Fearing that the tinclad was being fired on from shore, Selfridge moved to support her. As he neared *Marmora,* Selfridge ordered the firing stopped. He had a boat lowered from each vessel to determine what the tinclad had been shooting at.

Selfridge described what happened next. "The head of the *Cairo* having got in toward

U.S. Naval Historical Center

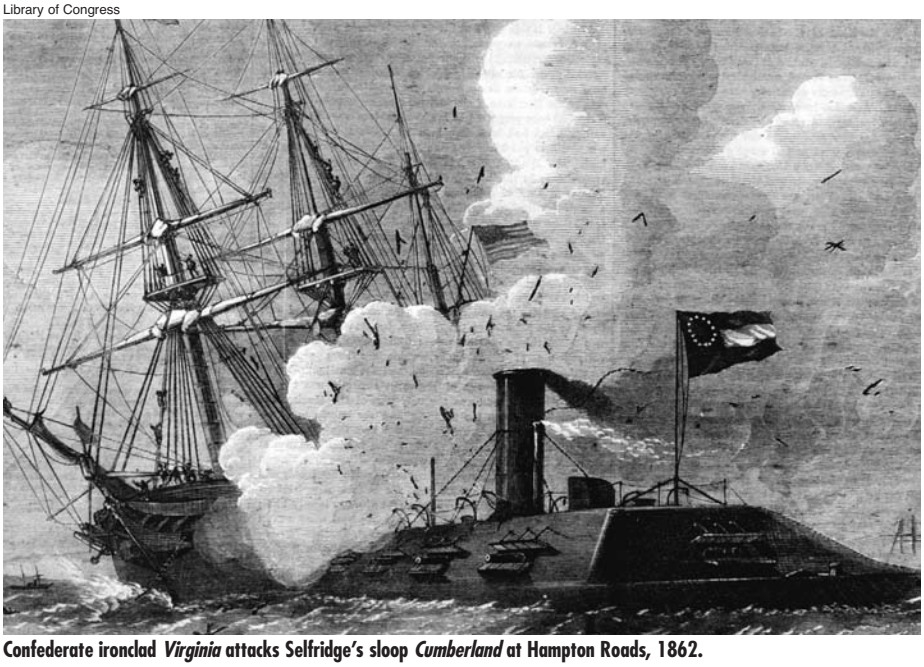
shore, I backed out to straighten upstream, and ordered the *Marmora* to go ahead slow," he wrote. "I had made but a half a dozen revolutions of the [paddle] wheel and gone ahead perhaps half a length, the *Marmora* a little ahead, leading, when two sudden explosions in quick succession occurred, one close to my port quarter, the other apparently under my port bow—the latter so severe as to rise the guns under it some distance from the deck. The *Cairo* sunk in about twelve minutes after the explosion."

After losing *Cairo,* Selfridge was given command of *Conestoga,* a river steamer that had been converted into a gunboat, and assigned to patrol the Mississippi between the White and Arkansas rivers. For the next several months, he protected Army supply steamers and military transports and fought frequent skirmishes with Confederate guerrillas and hidden shore batteries.

In May, Selfridge and his crew were transferred to the gunboat *Manitou* while *Conestoga* was undergoing repairs. Early the next month, he was sent with two 8-inch guns from *Manitou* to assist in the siege of Vicksburg. He was relieved of this duty a few days before Vicksburg surrendered and returned to *Conestoga.* Shortly after resuming command of the gunboat, Selfridge led an expedition up the Red River to capture cotton and disperse Confederate forces along the river.

After that expedition, he assumed command of the naval station at Vicksburg and continued patrolling the Mississippi. In March 1864, *Conestoga* was carrying a cargo of ammunition down river from Vicksburg to Porter's fleet, when it was accidentally sunk by the USS *General Price* 10 miles below Grand Gulf on March 8. *General Price* was found at fault for the accident. When Selfridge returned to the fleet and reported the loss, Porter remarked, "Well, Selfridge, you do not seem to have much luck with the top of the alphabet, I think that for your next ship I will try the bottom." Porter gave him the command of the ironclad river monitor USS *Osage,* mounting two 11-inch guns in a single turret, just in time to take part in the Red River expedition.

Library of Congress



Confederate ironclad *Virginia* attacks Selfridge's sloop *Cumberland* at Hampton Roads, 1862.

The expedition was a joint Army-Navy venture consisting of a land force commanded by Maj. Gen. Nathaniel Banks and a squadron of ironclads and gunboats under Porter escorting the troops of Brig. Gen. A.J. Smith. Early on March 12, the gunboats and transports started upriver. The water in the river was exceptionally low for that time of the year.

The first obstacle Porter encountered after entering the river was Fort DeRussy, a Confederate earthen fortification build to protect the river against Union incursions. While several of Porter's vessels were clearing the obstructions planted below the fort, Smith disembarked his men and captured the fort on the evening of March 14. The next day Porter and Smith reached Alexandria, where they waited for Banks. In the meantime, Selfridge was directed to pick up some cotton. Selfridge took command of one of the smaller gunboats and an empty transport and went downriver in search of cotton. Several days later he returned to Alexandria with some 800 bales.

While he was gone, the river had risen high enough for the gunboats and transports to pass over the falls. By March 25, Banks and his army had joined Porter at Alexandria. Within a few days, Banks began moving his army out of Alexandria toward Shreveport, which he intended to capture. Banks requested naval assistance, and despite the low water, Porter agreed. On March 31, the advance guard of the fleet, comprising eight gunboats, including *Osage,* proceeded upriver to Grand Ecore to cover the Army when it reached that point after a march overland.

On April 3, Banks and Porter met up at Grand Ecore, where most of Smith's troops disembarked from the transports to reinforce Banks. Three days later, Banks continued his journey to Shreveport. The next day, Porter transported Kilby Smith's 1,700-man division to Loggy Bayou. Porter arrived at Loggy Bayou in the afternoon of the 10th, only to find that Banks had been defeated by the Confederates at Sabine Crossroads and was retreating. Porter had no alternative but to head back downriver. Selfridge brought up the rear.

Because the river was low and the current swift in the bends, Selfridge found *Osage* almost unmanageable while descending. On the morning of the 12th, he lashed the transport *Blackhawk* to *Osage* to assist the lumbering ironclad. The descent went well until late afternoon, when *Osage* went aground opposite Blair's Landing. Close by were two other transports and the gunboat *Lexington.* As Selfridge was trying to free *Osage, Blackhawk* spotted a large of body of Confederates closing in on the stalled vessels. The force, under Brig. Gen. Thomas Green, consisted of a large number of dismounted cavalrymen and several pieces of artillery. The Confederates opened a murderous fire of muskets and artillery on the Union vessels. The two gunboats replied in kind.

Selfridge reported to Porter: "I waited till they got into shelling range, and opened upon them a heavy fire of shrapnel and canister. The rebels fought with unusual pertinacity for over an hour, delivering the heaviest and most concentrated fire of musketry that I have ever witnessed." With his artillery knocked out and the Union vessels starting to get under way, Green decided to charge the boats, hoping to board one. As he was rallying his men, Green was killed by a Union shell that exploded nearby. With their leader killed and night falling, the Confederates withdrew.

Back at Grand Ecore, Selfridge was detailed to take *Osage* and *Lexington* and convoy the transports to Alexandria ahead of the gunboats, which he did without further incident. By April 27, the Union vessels were back at Alexandria, where they joined Banks's Army. Now that the Union forces were united, they no longer were in danger of Confederate attack. However, Porter's vessels now faced a bigger obstacle. Because the river had fallen again, there was only enough water rushing through the falls above Alexandria to allow the transports and smaller vessels to pass. Unless the water level of the falls could be raised, the heavier gunboats would be trapped.

Fortunately for them, Lt. Col. Joseph Bailey, an engineer officer with Banks's Army, came to the rescue. Bailey, a former lumberman, proposed that Porter raise the water through the falls by building a dam at the lower falls. Porter agreed, and construction of the dam was finished on May 8. The following day, as the swift current tore away part of the dam, *Osage* and three other gunboats rushed through the damaged section. With all his vessels below the falls, Porter was able to continue his withdrawal. Several days later, the fleet reached the mouth of the Red River. Selfridge later called the Red River expedition "one of the most humiliating and disastrous that had to be recorded during the war."

While returning to Vicksburg, *Osage* ran onto a shoal and could not be freed. Leaving his vessel, Selfridge went on to Vicksburg and took over command of the new ram *Vindicator* and the entire Fifth District of the Mississippi River. With *Vindicator* and a small squadron of ironclads and gunboats, Selfridge was supposed to protect river traffic and prevent any crossing by enemy troops from Vicksburg to the mouth of the Red River. As the summer wore on, Confederate activity along the Mississippi diminished to a point of inactivity. In the fall, Porter was ordered to take command of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron. Before leaving, he urged Selfridge to go with him. Selfridge agreed. At Hampton Roads he took command of the gunboat *Huron,* a screw steamer mounting an 11-inch pivot gun, a 30-pounder Parrott rifle, and several howitzers.

Near the end of November, *Huron* joined the Union blockading squadron off Wilmington, North Carolina. On December 24 and 25, she took part in the unsuccessful attack by Union land and sea forces on Fort Fisher. A second assault on the fort got under way the following

month. Naval bombardment began on the morning of January 13, when the Union ironclads closed in on the fort and opened fire. After landing troops and stores, *Huron* joined in the bombardment. At nightfall, all the gunboats except the ironclads ceased firing and pulled back from the fort. The next morning, *Huron* joined the attack to dismount the guns on the landward side of the fort. *Huron* had her mainmast shot away and was hit in the hull by an 8-inch shell, which fortunately did not explode. Selfridge's ship received two more hits before the bombardment ended.

The next morning, the whole fleet opened fire on Fort Fisher in preparation for a simultaneous assault by soldiers and sailors. Around noon, numerous small boats set out from the fleet carrying the naval party, which consisted of 1,600 sailors and 400 marines. As usual, Selfridge volunteered to go, and he took command of the third column. He described the subsequent advance: "We were opened upon in the front by the great mound battery, and in flank by the artillery of the half-moon battery, and by the fire of a thousand rifles. Though many dropped rapidly under this fire, the column never faltered, and when the angle where the two faces of the fort unite was reached the head halted to allow the rear to come up. This halt was fatal, for as

Library of Congress

Admiral Thomas O. Selfridge in later years.

the others came up they followed suit and lay down till the space between the parapet and the edge of the water was filled."

Moving up to the front, close to the palisade of the fort, Selfridge found a grave situation. The sailors, he said, "were packed like sheep in a pen, while the enemy was crowding the ramparts not forty yards away, and shooting into them as fast as they could. Flesh and blood could not long endure being killed in this slaughter-pen, and the rear of the sailors broke, followed by the whole body, in spite of all the efforts to rally them." Selfridge, along with some 60 other officers and men, huddled at the foot palisades until nightfall, when they withdrew. The Union captured Fort Fisher that night. "I will not go so far to say the army could not have stormed Fort Fisher without the diversion afforded by the naval assault," wrote Selfridge, "but I do say our attack enabled them to get into the fort with far less loss than they would have otherwise have suffered."

When the war ended a few months later, Selfridge was assigned to the Naval Academy as an instructor. In 1869, he was promoted to commander and oversaw three surveys of Panama for a canal and explored deep into Colombia. For the next 24 years, he held a variety of positions both on land and at sea. As the commander of the European Squadron, he attended the coronation of the Russian czar, Nicholas II. On February 6, 1898, Selfridge retired as a rear admiral after 47 years of service. On February 4, 1924, two days shy of his 88th birthday, Selfridge died, one of the true naval heroes of the Civil War. □

By William McPeak

Concussion weapons such as war hammers rose in popularity after the development of plate armor and form-fitting mail.

NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH MJOLLNIR, THE MYTHICAL NORSE god Thor's fabled hammer, the real-life war hammer was a brutal and effective weapon. The development of the war hammer began around the middle of the 14th century and mirrored the advance in combat protection—specifically, plate armor. Advances in mesh and chain mail already had prompted the greater popularity of hafted weapons such as the battle-ax and the mace. But when armor started being formed into riveted plates in the mid-14th century, followed by contoured sections that presented a curved, glancing surface against sword strikes, concussion weapons were given a long second look.

The advances in armor showed in the improvement of weapons to counter them. Longer shafts provided greater torquing force and a more powerful hit for two-handed weapons. Simple metal-ball and faceted-head maces changed to massive iron-flanged heads with projecting lugs that became progressively more pointed. These advances were meant to inflict crushing blows to helmets and armor. But armorers reciprocated by forging surface-hardened steel for armor. The result was significant. Surface-hardened steel was essentially as hard as a sword or ax edge, meaning that a single blow—perhaps the only chance one would get in the heat of battle—was more likely to skip off the surface than to puncture it. Armor wearers had acquired greater survivability.

The hammer, as a basic tool for manual labor, was of ancient origin, but like the axe it quickly became an early peasant weapon as well. A large-headed mallet, war mallet, or maul—the latter made of wood or lead—came to be used on the medieval battlefield. The true war hammer first appeared in the late 14th century, as evidenced by manuscript illustrations and battle histories of the time. Massed graves excavated from the Battle of Wisby in 1361 revealed many skulls with small square punctures that could only have been made by early war hammers. Similarly, at the Battle of

Knights armed with polearms adopted from war hammers fight a tournament in this 15th-century manuscript illustration.

Library of Congress

A 15th-century mounted knight wields a war hammer to deadly effect.

Roosebeke in 1382, Flemish peasants with good basinets were significantly outnumbered by French royal troops and paid a heavy price, as noted by the great French chronicler Jean Froissart: "So loud was the clashing of swords, axes, maces and iron hammers on those Flemish basinets that naught else could be discerned above the din."

By the beginning of the 15th century, the iron hammer-like head was two inches square and secured to a shaft 25 inches long, similar to that of a battle-ax or mace. It was primarily a horseman's second weapon, with a leather thong tied to the base of the shaft so that it could be carried at the saddle. (The war hammer had better odds of delivering a full- force blow when traveling downward.) Its smaller surface area made for a concentrated point of impact. It could not puncture the better armors or helmets, but it could put a dent into them that would render the occupant temporarily stunned, vibrating inside the helmet upon impact. A few more speedy blows might be in order, but a forceful first blow sometimes was all that was needed to do the trick.

Puncturing was a logical follow-up. Most war hammers from the later 14th century had an extension to the opposite end of the hammerhead as a counterbalance in the form of a short, thick blade. By the early 15th century, this was further developed into a slightly downturned pick, initially about six inches long. The pick also began appearing at the rear of the battle-ax, giving users the option of a second blow

TOP: A 15th-century war hammer. ABOVE: An Italian late 16th-century war hammer with a rounded head. RIGHT: This skull shows the fatal damage inflicted by two war hammer blows and three arrow strikes.

for penetration, a fast turnaround hit to softer armor parts such as the neck or underarms, or even a strike at the light-armored breastplate. With a smaller point of impact, a forceful blow could pierce the armor. The pick could also be used as a hook to grapple at armor, reins, or shield.

About 1450, the hammerhead was given a short, vertical spike that could be turned toward armor weaknesses. Like the battle-ax, the hammerhead's wooden shaft was often reinforced with riveted metal bands, called langets, to prevent an opponent from cutting the weapon in half with a sword. War hammers were similarly equipped. Soon, all-metal shafts became standard for knightly axes, maces, and war hammers.

A dismounted Polish hussar with multiple weapons and famous attached eagle wings.

Originally, the war hammer was a knight's weapon used against other mounted knights. But for the infantryman, already availing himself of various long polearms, the lighter war hammer was increasingly a weapon of choice in the struggle with mounted men-at-arms. Additions to the war hammer kept coming. A longer shaft made for an even more effective blow to the helmet. The pick was also more effective as a hooking instrument with the longer shaft. The addition of a top spike added spearlike functions: grappling armor, reins, shields, or turned point-blank as a heavy blow to pierce even heavy armor. Against mounted opponents, the weapon could be directed at toppling the armored foe to the ground, where he could be more easily vanquished.

With the various one- and two-hand war hammer styles, their characteristics took on special names. The Lucerne hammer was an adaptation by the ever-inventive Swiss, who had proved their mastery of the halberd at the Battle of Sempach against Austrian Imperial forces in 1386. The Lucerne hammerhead was split into a three- to four-pronged head and mounted atop a seven-foot shaft. It bore a longer pick and an even longer and thinner spike coming out of the top of the head. The hammer provided for several smaller points of impact with a more forceful bite. And the longer form made it a very effective "man catcher" for dismounting riders.

Then there was the *bec de corbin,* old French for "crow's beak." Unlike the Lucerne hammer, the *bec de corbin* was used primarily with the pick, or beak, for attack. The hammer was usually the typical blunt face instead of the multi-pronged Lucerne. The beak tended to be stouter, longer, and better designed for tearing at armor, while the spike was shorter so as not to interfere with the beak's purpose. The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York has a basinet thought to have belonged to Joan of Arc, with a deep dent—near penetration—on the left cheek, the work of a *bec de corbin.*

The *bec de corbin* became a catchall name for other types of war hammer, such as the *bec de faucon,* or "falcon's beak." Another was called the horseman's pick, a type of cavalry war hammer with a long pick curved downward similar to a miner's pickax, but thinner. It was used as a means to penetrate thick armor or chain mail, but it was relatively heavy, making it unwieldy and easily avoided. An interesting weapon parallel to the *bec de corbin* was the Persian and Indian war pick, or "crow's bill," that featured an elaborate thick and sharp pick (beak) and was developed independently as the use of chain mail and armor became widespread in the 17th and 18th centuries in those eastern regions.

In western Europe, the war hammer continued to be a modestly popular secondary weapon into the 16th century, mainly for cavalry. In the same period, the pike had become the prime polearm weapon, whereas the various forms of poleax—including the larger war hammer variety—were relegated to use by special guards. The increasing use of accurate and potentially armor-piercing longarms from the late 15th and 16th centuries spelled the doom for armor technology.

By the early 17th century, the trade-off of cavalry speed and agility over heavy frontal armor was considered far more practical. An important factor in the relinquishing of armor was that the chance of being hit by musket fire was low—even for the first rank of attacking cavalry. The vast majority of standard longarms were smoothbores, rendering shot accuracy more or less random. The war hammer, long since displaced in its initial purpose against

armor, enjoyed a resurgence of interest as a concussion weapon against the trend in lighter armor in western Europe.

The case of the war hammer in eastern Europe was very different. There, lighter armor was more the norm, and the war hammer became a favorite secondary weapon of the light cavalry known as hussars, a name initially referring to mounted bandits but later meaning light cavalry mercenary lancers who migrated into southern Hungary when the Turks invaded Serbia at the end of the 14th century. The hussars proved their effectiveness on the battlefield against the Turks and were incorporated into Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus's so-called Black Army in the mid-15th century. After the king's death in 1490, many hussars moved on to Poland to fight against the Tatars. There they found a permanent home in the Polish light cavalry. By the middle of the 16th century, the integrated Polish hussars made up twice the contingent of traditional fully armored knights—many of whom became hussars themselves. Indeed, the nobility forged the backbone of hussar companies.

By the end of the 16th century, the hussars had adopted enough armor to become a new, more agile heavy cavalry, using their trademark 18-foot light-long lance as their initial shock weapon. They sported breastplate, a mail shirt, forearm guards, thigh armor (cuirass), and an open-faced burgonet-like helmet called a *zischaage*. Total weight of a hussar's armor was no more than 30 pounds. An animal-skin mantle, particularly leopard, was a showy form of identity and esprit de corps. Perhaps the most notable element of the latter array was the famous "wings" the hussars would sometimes wear—eagle wings attached to arching frames and a special support on their back armor or saddle. The rush of these wings during a charge was psychologically unnerving, and the extra height they gave riders was intimidating.

A 16th-century Polish hussar armed with a *czekan* war hammer, which had an opposing axe head.

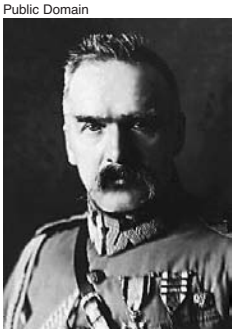
The war hammer was the hussars' most common secondary weapon. Slung from the saddlebow, the early Polish hussar war hammer was of German and Italian design,

Continued on page 66

By Arnold Blumberg

Locked in a life-or-death struggle with Bolshevik Russia, Poland used its intelligence-gathering and code-breaking abilities to preserve the nation.

Public Domain



ABOVE: Polish patriot Jozef Pilsudski. BELOW: The 16,000-man 1st Red Cavalry Army prepares to leave for the Polish front in 1920.

THE RUSSO-POLISH WAR OF 1919-1920 WAS THE MOST PORTENTOUS event facing post-Versailles Europe. It was not just the continuation of a centuries-long contest between Russia and Poland to determine which would dominate eastern Europe, but a struggle involving a new ideology—communism—which the Bolshevik regime in Moscow had to spread throughout the Continent to survive.

Key to the communists' success was installing Marxist regimes in the nations of the industrial West, most notably Germany. To accomplish this, they first had to dominate the revived Polish state and its armed forces to eliminate the bridge between Germany and the rest of Europe. According to Vladimir Lenin, head of the Soviet state, "In destroying the Polish army we [Russia] were really destroying the Versailles Treaty, upon which the entire structure of present international relations rests." Transforming Poland into a Soviet vassal would radically alter post-World War I Europe and threaten the very existence of Western civilization.

Taking advantage of the power vacuum created by the defeat of Germany and the earlier withdrawal of Russia from the war in December 1917, Poles declared an independent nation in November 1918. To secure the nascent country's future, a national army was created. The new army was built upon the foundations of two previously established Polish military forces—the Polish Military Organization, and the Polish Legions. Both were nominally under the authority of the Austro-Hungarian Empire but in reality were controlled by Polish officers such as Jozef Pilsudski.

akg-images

The Polish Military Organization, founded in 1914, consisted of a number of paramilitary units whose prime purposes were intelligence gathering and sabotage activities targeting Czarist Russia and later Germany. By 1918, the PMO had grown from a few hundred members at its inception to more than 30,000 members. Many PMO stalwarts were also soldiers in the Polish Legions. The Polish Legions were regular army units recruited by the Austro-Hungarian government during the first two years of World War I. In November 1916, the Legions, renamed the Polish Auxiliary Corps and numbering over 25,000 soldiers, were attached to the German Army. Both the PMO and the Legions, although fighting for the Central Powers, were committed to an independent Poland at the conclusion of the war, regardless of who the victor turned out to be.

To oversee the nation's military, the




Preserve the Legacy Forever

Introducing *WWII QUARTERLY*, The Journal of World War II

Available in Exclusive Hardcover Volumes

Now, for the first time, an exciting new magazine devoted to the study of World War II is available in exclusive hardbound editions. Subscription copies to *WWII QUARTERLY* are meticulously hardbound for your family library, and will be delivered to your home in pristine condition.

Exquisitely Crafted

From The Battle of The Bulge to Iwo Jima, the history experts at Sovereign Media, publisher of *WWII History* magazine, will document the battles like never before, in a beautiful new hardbound magazine suitable for your coffee table or family library.

An Exceptional Value

Only those who reserve mail subscriptions will receive the exclusive hardbound volumes of *WWII QUARTERLY*. A softcover version will be available in the bookstores and on newsstands, but no hardbound volumes will be available for sale at any store nationwide. You can only receive them by subscribing here, today. Yet, ***your four-issue, hardbound subscription costs the same as the softbound newsstand copies...*** an exceptional value for subscribers!

Order Now

Don't delay. Sign up for your hardbound subscription now.

WWII QUARTERLY

Hardbound Edition

SUBSCRIPTION RESERVATION CARD

☐ *Two Years, 8 Hardbound issues, Only $79.95.*
☐ *One Year, 4 Hardbound issues, Only $39.95.*

☐ Credit Card (below) ☐ Payment Enclosed. ☐ Bill Me

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

CREDIT CARD: ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ American Express

Card Number: _____

Name on Card: _____ Exp. Date: _____ / _____

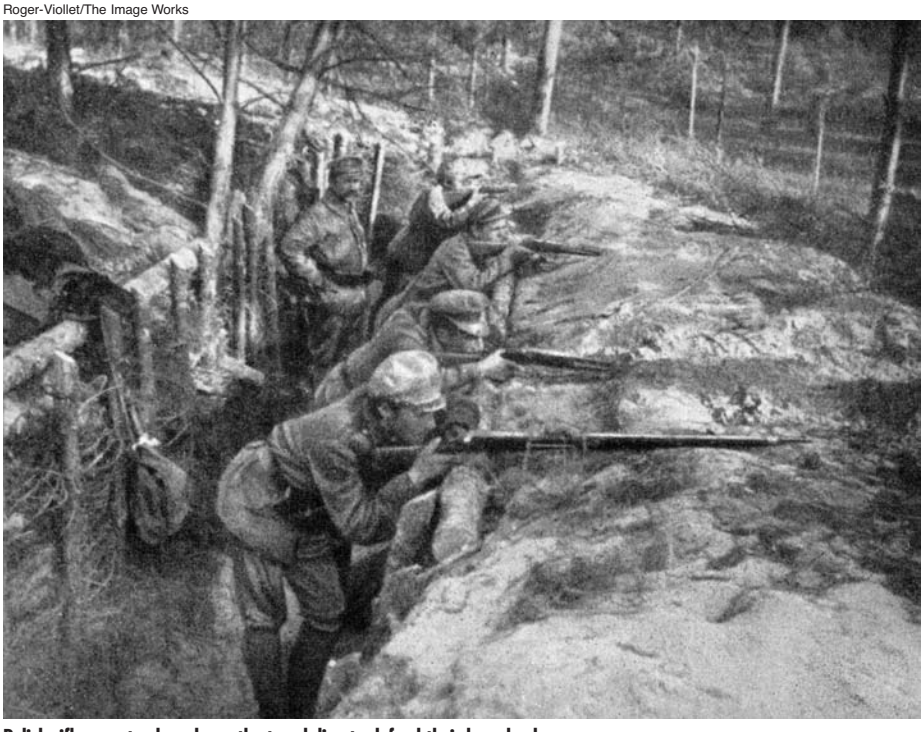
CVVC Code: _____ *(on back of MC & Visa; on front of AMEX)*

Canada and Overseas, please add $20 per year for additional postage. Payment in U.S. funds must accompany foreign orders.

Mail to: Sovereign Media, 1000 Commerce Park Dr., Suite 300, Williamsport, PA 17701

BD1003

Roger-Viollet/The Image Works



Polish riflemen stand ready on the trench line to defend their homeland.

General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces was formed in early 1919. It reflected the influence of the French Military Mission (including Captain Charles de Gaulle, future president of France), which had been sent to Poland in late 1918 to aid the Poles against the rising menace of revolutionary Russia and any new threat by postwar Germany. Following the French model, the Polish General Staff was organized into four sections: Organization and Mobilization, Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence, Training and Operations, and Quartermaster. Members of the French Military Mission were assigned to each section as instructors and advisers.

The struggle between Red Russia and White Poland became inevitable in January 1919 after the Red Army seized Byelorussia and Lithuania, areas granted to Poland after World War I. Russia considered Poland merely a province in a state of counterrevolution, to be brought back to the fold as soon as possible. For its part, Poland, in the person of Marshal Pilsudski, intended to form a confederation with the Ukraine and the Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, a design that Russia would never allow. The Poles launched a military operation in February that gave them control of Lithuania; by summer's end, they had retaken Byelorussia. For the rest of the year, the warring parties participated in futile peace negotiations. Both knew that 1920 would be decisive.

As the fighting flared and abated during 1919, the Cipher Section of the Polish Army was put together by Lieutenant Jozef S. Stanslicki. The section set up shop in a small room in the Saxon Palace that also served as the headquarters for the General Staff. Soon the unit was renamed the Cipher Office and placed under the supervision of the General Staff. The Cipher Office was tasked with the responsibility of securing Polish military and government communications and breaking the ciphers and codes in Russian and German messages. The second part of the Cipher Office mandate was soon accomplished by Lieutenant Jan Kowalewski whose expertise in the Russian language allowed him to decrypt the codes employed by the Soviets. As a follow-up to his success, Kowalewski set up a radio intercept and deciphering unit within the Cipher Office in August 1919.

The lieutenant, himself a gifted technology institute graduate, made sure that only the most capable people filled the ranks of the cryptology department. Brilliant mathematicians such as Stefan Mazurkiewicz, Waclaw Sierpinski, and Stanislaw Lesniewski were among those brought on board. Mazurkiewicz worked in mathematical analysis, topology, and probability. He was instrumental in breaking the most commonly employed Russian military codes. Sierpinski, a former mentor of Mazurkiewicz at the University of Warsaw, began the study of analytic sets. Lesniewski, another University of Warsaw faculty member, whose field of study was formal logic, also contributed to the cracking of Red Army codes during the Russo-Polish War.

The Cipher Office spent much of its time supporting Polish field tactical signals and intelligence units that monitored enemy wireless telegraphy traffic and located opposing transmitters by direction-finding methods. Beginning in July 1919, the Cipher Office set up nine monitor stations to listen to Russian radio messages. Within a short time, they were able to identify enemy call signs, vector in on different frequencies, and even identify the Russian senders. Reports were forwarded to Warsaw every two weeks. A spectacular result of this system occurred in November 1919 when the diligent efforts of Kowalewski and his team broke the Red Army "Agitator" code used to communicate with all army units on active duty.

Cipher Office workers were able to decrypt low-level Russian intercepted signals in the surprisingly short time of two to three hours. Those of strategic value were sent to the General Staff at Warsaw immediately for analysis and dissemination. Material of lesser import was forwarded to the Polish military commands most affected. There were problems with the distribution of intelligence since the volume of intercepts was enormous. The Poles never were able to create a secure and reliable means of sending them to frontline units in a timely manner.

Cipher Office personnel were able to perform their job as well as they did for a number of reasons. To begin with, many of them previously served in the late Russian Imperial Army, were fluent in the languages of the states in which they once served, and knew of the procedures followed by Russian radio operators. This knowledge was combined with the fact that, during the Russo-Polish War, Soviet Army staffs employed the same signals and security procedures the Czarist military had used during World War I.

Another contributing factor, according to Polish Colonel Mieczyslaw Sciezynski, was that the Russians "had not the slightest hesitation about sending any and all messages of an operational nature by means of radiotelegraphy." The Russians usually used only one or two code books per wireless station, comprising both the principal "combat" (for high-grade communications) and secondary "official" (low-grade communications) code systems. As a result, the Poles were able to break the codes in short order. Security discipline among Russian radio operators was "disastrously lax," Sciezynski noted. As a result, even enciphering their messages twice failed to frustrate Polish code breaking.

The success of the Cipher Office in intercepting and decoding Russian wireless traffic during the war did not mean that the enemy

was unaware of Polish activities regarding message intercepts. Soviet military intelligence insisted that certain procedures be used to prevent Polish attempts to retrieve and interpret their communications. Among the methods used to confuse the Polish intercept program was super-encipherment. Another was to send out duplicate messages on different frequencies at the same time. The Russians would also send out large numbers of false or outdated commands through the airways simultaneously. Furthermore, they used the Hughes Apparatus, thought at the time to be an uninterceptable landline communications system. But, unlike their Polish radio operator counterparts, Russian expertise in sending and receiving messages by this system fell far short of what was needed to secure their communications from Polish eavesdropping.

The Polish Cipher Office did not rely solely on intercepts of Bolshevik wireless traffic. The Polish General Staff, led by Colonel Tadeusz Shaetzel, lent great support to the Cipher Office and, in return, demanded that all intercepted information be verified through a network of foreign and domestic informants. Almost a century and a half of foreign occupation had created hundreds of thousands of Polish émigrés, many of whom offered their aid to the intelligence services of the new Poland. Many had served in the old czarist armed forces and were able to paint a clear picture of the Red Army's order of battle, logistics, weapons, tactics, and troop morale as well as the ability of its chief commanders.

akg-images

Dispirited Soviet cavalrymen retreat from Soldau, late summer 1920.

The year 1920 began with Polish troops taking Latvia by force in January. On April 24, the Poles launched a major assault into the Ukraine. First contacts with the Red Army resulted in smashing victories over a thinly spread and badly surprised enemy. Using information obtained from both conventional bat-

Continued on page 65

By Matthew Peszek

Even after his death, the Duke of Alva was an inviting target for anti-Spanish propaganda in the occupied Dutch colonies.

THE EIGHTY YEARS' WAR BETWEEN SPAIN AND THE NETHERLANDS, which lasted from 1568 to 1648, developed not only from economic difficulties but also from religious tensions that eventually resulted in several Dutch riots in 1566. The riots caused the Spanish monarch to send Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, the Duke of Alva, to regain control of the situation, but his harsh tactics and personal cruelty caused many Dutch to see him as an oppressive tyrant. As a result, people who considered themselves loyal subjects of the Spanish Empire revolted. The revolt would turn quickly into a full-fledged rebellion.

After the duke's arrival and his subsequent cruelty to the populace, the Dutch instigated a low-level guerrilla war against the symbols of a hated government, as personified by Alva. Through the use of inflammatory prints and engravings, Dutch opponents transformed the duke into an icon of all-encompassing evil. These prints continued to be published into the early 17th century, well after the duke's death in 1588. Memories of his reign were conjured in prowar prints and pamphlets in order to create anti-Spanish sentiment and perpetuate the war.

Violence against the Catholic Church began in the southern Netherlands town of Steenvorde on August 10, 1566, when a mob stormed the church, broke stained-glass windows, and smashed religious statuary and altar pieces. From Steenvorde, the rioting spread quickly to the surrounding towns of Belle, Ieper, Poperinge, Dirksmuide, and South Winoksbergen. The outbreak then moved east to Oudenaarde on August 18 and Antwerp on August 20. From Antwerp, the riots spread throughout the towns in the province of Brabant, and within a few days the fervor had made its way into the northern Netherlands as well, where it spread throughout the province of Holland and into the neighboring provinces of Friesland and Groningen.

The ongoing violence against the Catholic Church forced King Philip II of Spain to act. Accordingly, he dispatched the Duke of Alva to the Netherlands to provide a Spanish military presence, punish those responsible for the riots, and restore religious unity among the population

BELOW: *Throne of the Duke of Alva* (Figure 1) suggests the duke's rule was ordained by Satan. RIGHT: The Duke of Alva's tyrannical rule caused formerly loyal subjects of Spain to revolt.

All photos: Author's Collection unless attributed otherwise

Public Domain

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

by wiping out heretical sects. The regent of the Low Countries, Margaret of Parma, wrote to Philip II begging him to reconsider. Margaret argued that Alva's presence in the Netherlands would create an even more volatile situation between Spain and the general populace, since the duke was known for his heavy-handed measures. Philip rejected her petition, and the Duke of Alva and his army arrived in the Low Countries, establishing themselves in Brussels and building a citadel in Antwerp, where anti-Spanish sentiment remained strong.

The duke was not long in providing ammunition for his critics. The arrest and execution of Lamoral, Count of Egmond, and Philippe de Montmercy, Count of Hoorn, occurred almost immediately after the duke's arrival in Brussels. Convicted of treason, the counts were condemned to death on June 4, 1568, and beheaded the next day in Brussels. The creation of a so-called Council of Blood also emphasized Alva's tyranny of the populace. While the council was originally meant to find and punish only those directly responsible for the 1566 riots, over time it evolved into the indiscriminate persecution of Calvinist preachers, their congregations, and anyone suspected of supporting rebellion against Spain. Alva's imposition of various tax systems, most notably the "tenth penny," a 10 percent tax on all transactions, was also highly unpopular. While the tenth penny was never collected, the mere idea of such a cumbersome tax created the perception of Alva as a greedy Spaniard.

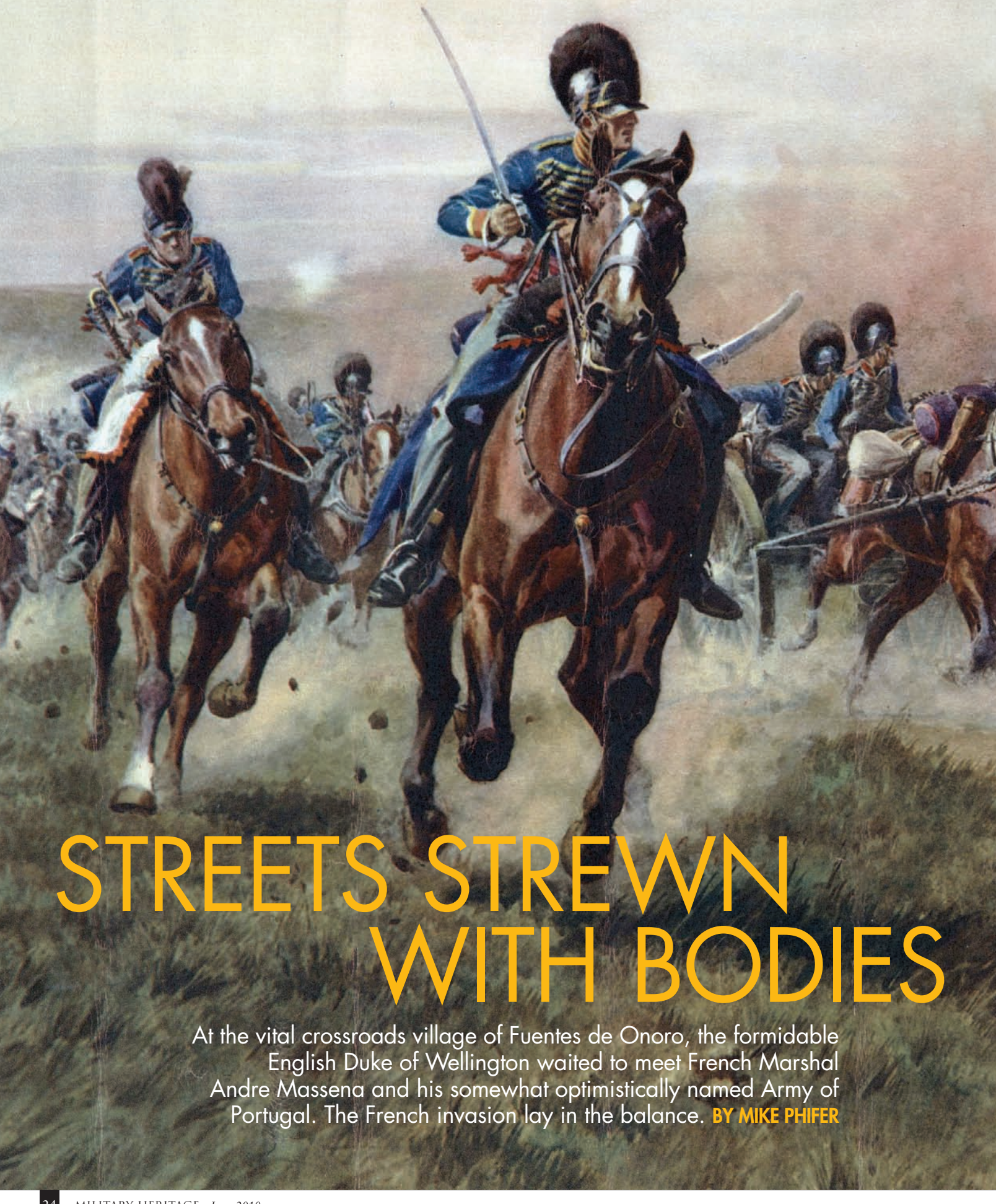
Such moves ultimately helped to create a "black legend" of Alva and the Spanish reign in the Netherlands. When Philip II gave him the mission of regaining control of the seemingly uncontrollable Low Countries, Alva made it clear that he intended to act ruthlessly since he believed that it was "better that a kingdom be laid waste and ruined through war for God and for the king, than maintained intact for the devil." As far as Alva was concerned, he would rather see the nation totally destroyed than fail in his mission. His disdain for the Low Countries and its inhabitants helped solidify his image as a heartless tyrant and would ultimately lead people to throw their support behind the exiled Dutch champion, William of Orange.

Thanks to Alva's draconian actions, opposition printers and engravers had much at their disposal to create a negative image of the duke. Not only did his harsh actions negatively impact his perception in the public mind, but his personal appearance also played into the image of cruelty. Contemporary sources described the duke as "tall, thin, erect, with a small head, a long visage, lean yellow cheek, dark twinkling eyes, a dust complexion, black bristling hair, and a long sable-silvered beard, descending in two waving streams upon his breast." His gaunt and devilish appearance provided additional fodder for propagandistic prints depicting the duke as the devil incarnate and perpetuating the idea of an oppressed Dutch people living under a "reign of Satan."

The print *Throne of the Duke of Alva* (Figure 1) from 1569 shows the duke sitting on a throne while Cardinal Granvelle blows a bellows in his ear symbolizing the bellows of hell. Above the two men is a winged demon placing the papal tiara on the cardinal's head. The act of being crowned by a demon is a direct attack on the idea of a monarch's divine right to rule and emphasizes that the duke's rule was not ordained by God but by Satan. To the side are various members of the Council of Blood, including two labeled "Vargas," and "Del Rio." They represent Juan de Vargas and Lodewijk del Rio, who were members of the council and well known Alva yes-men. Kneeling in front of the duke are personifications of the Seventeen Provinces of the Netherlands, bound together in chains, symbolizing their enslavement to the Spanish Empire. Standing behind the provinces are members of the States General, who have pedestals instead of legs, connoting their ineffectiveness during Alva's reign. Behind the duke's throne are two scenes of torture. In one, a man is getting scourged at a pillar, while the other depicts a victim being strung up with weights on his feet.

The background shows various execution methods such as burning at the stake, impalement, hanging, and beheading. The figure about to be executed is identified as Jehan de Casembroot, a writer, secretary, and counselor to Count Egmond. The figure already beheaded is identified as Antoon van Straelen, a friend of William of Orange and the mayor of Antwerp. Both Casembroot and van Straelen were

Continued on page 66



STREETS STREWN WITH BODIES

At the vital crossroads village of Fuentes de Onoro, the formidable English Duke of Wellington waited to meet French Marshal Andre Massena and his somewhat optimistically named Army of Portugal. The French invasion lay in the balance. **BY MIKE PHIFER**

British Captain Norman Ramsay and his Royal Horse Artillery troopers dash to safety through the French cavalry at Fuentes de Onoro.

IT HAD BEEN a brutal winter for the French Army of Portugal. War and hunger had haunted the occupiers, causing their number to dwindle by the thousands. The army, under Marshal Andre Massena, had boasted 65,000 men when it set out during the previous summer of 1810 with orders from Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte to invade Portugal and drive the Duke of Wellington's English army into the sea. This was the third French attempt to capture Portugal, and things had started well enough for the reluctant Massena, who had been called out of retirement by Napoleon to lead the Portuguese offensive. The formidable Spanish fortress of Ciudad Rodrigo, located near the border, fell in early July 1810. Almeida came under siege next and held out until a chance French shell blew up the ammunition magazine, forcing the fort to surrender on August 28. With these two key fortifications in French hands, the drive for Lisbon could begin in earnest.

After gathering 15 days' worth of rations, Massena got his army moving on September 15. It was a difficult advance. Plagued by peasants who had bitter memories of the last time the French were in their country and by the *ordenança*, local levies who constantly harassed them on the march, the French soldiers pushed on over rough roads that took a heavy toll on horses and gun carriages. On September 27, Massena attacked Wellington, whose roughly 50,000 British and Portuguese troops were positioned along the 10-mile-long Busaco Ridge, 100 miles due north of Lisbon. Massena mistakenly believed that he was facing Wellington's rear guard. The ensuing attack against entrenched defenders cost the French a staggering 4,500 casualties, including five generals. Wellington lost 1,200 men but held the high ground until the following night, when he withdrew after learning that Massena had

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

found a path that would allow him to flank the ridge.

Massena continued his march on Lisbon, stopping for three days to sack the city of Coimbra. As the French pushed on through the fall rain, they were in for an unpleasant surprise. On the morning of October 11, French cavalry patrols spotted the impressive Lines of Torres Vedras. The three defensive lines consisted of 152 mutually supporting fortifications and redoubts. The first two lines stretched from the Atlantic Ocean to the Tagus River, blocking the approach to Lisbon, while the third protected the port of St. Julian, located at the end of the Lisbon Peninsula.

Wellington had more surprises in store for the French. He had instituted a scorched-earth policy in Portugal, destroying all food and livestock that could not be carried back to his lines. Mills, ovens, and bridges that could be used by the French were destroyed as well. The orders were not entirely implemented, as Portuguese peasants hid some of their food in caves or walled it up inside buildings while driving some of their livestock into the hills.

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

Realizing that he could not break through Wellington's defenses, Massena stubbornly waited outside the Lines, hoping something favorable would happen. There was a chance that political uncertainty in England might aid the French. King George III had relapsed into madness, and his son, the Prince of Wales, had taken over with limited powers. The prince was known to favor the Whig opposition to continued British presence on the Iberian Peninsula, and it was thought that he might dismiss Tory Prime Minister Spencer Perceval's government and replace it with Whigs who would pull the army out of Portugal. For the time being, at least, the crown prince declined.

ABOVE: French Marshal Andre Massena. TOP RIGHT: Major General Thomas Picton. BOTTOM RIGHT: The Duke of Wellington.

For a month Massena kept his army outside the Lines, while his men swept the countryside for any provisions they could find. The army then retreated 25 miles to a strong position and continued to forage for food. Portuguese militia and *ordenança* unmercifully harassed French foraging parties, killing stragglers and cutting Massena's communications with Spain. Massena managed to get a pessimistic report to Paris in November, but orders came back from Napoleon for him to hold on. Meanwhile, Massena's men battled hunger by rooting out hidden provisions stored by the peasants, using torture and murder if necessary to get them to reveal their meager caches.

By January 1, 1811, Massena had almost 20,000 fewer men than when he invaded Portugal, giving him a mere 46,600 functional soldiers. He was losing an additional 500 men a week to hunger, sickness, and Portuguese guerrillas. With no help coming from Marshal Nicolas Soult's army in southern Spain, which was besieging the Spanish fortress of Badajoz, Massena ordered preparations for a retreat in late February. The army was issued 15 days' worth of biscuits, with orders not to eat them until the retreat began. Some units near starvation could not wait. On March 4, Massena's army began its retreat.

A trail of horror and death was left by the French in their retreat. "Nothing can exceed the devastation and cruelties committed by the enemy during his retreat: he has set fire to all the villages and murdered all the peasantry for leagues on each flank of his march," commented Maj. Gen. Thomas Picton, commander of the British 3rd Division. On March 11, Wellington's crack Light Division, made up of the 43rd and 52nd Light Infantry, the green-coated soldiers of the 95th Rifles, and the 1st and 3rd Caçadores (Portugese light infantry), came into contact with the French VI Corps under Marshal Michel Ney, who was directing Massena's rear guard defense

Library of Congress

Library of Congress

at Pombal. For the next five days, the two contingents battled each other sporadically while the French retreat continued.

Originally, Massena had planned to cross the Mondego River and forage for supplies north of Coimbra while waiting for reinforcements. This plan was dashed by Colonel Nicholas Trant and six battalions of English militia, which blocked the French from using the fords across the river. A French attempt to get across the bridge at Coimbra failed as well. When the French rear guard was maneuvered out of Condeixa, 10 miles away, Massena abandoned plans to cross the Mondego. Instead, he reluctantly resumed his retreat.

On March 15, the Light Division battled Ney's rear guard at Foz do Arouce, where Ney had left three brigades on the British side of the 100-yard bridge spanning the Ceira River.

While the 3rd Division moved on the French left, the Light Division attacked the right, managing to get riflemen between the French 39th Regiment and the bridge. The French soldiers, seeing their danger, panicked. Hundreds attempted to retreat by swimming the river. Ney quickly restored the situation and drove off the British riflemen who were threatening the bridge, but not before the French suffered 250 casualties, many of whom drowned in the swiftly flowing river. Adding insult to injury was the loss of the 39th's eagle standard, which had been given to the regiment by Napoleon himself. It was later fished out of the river by the gleeful British.

The French retreat continued. To speed it up, Massena abandoned many of his wagons and hamstrung a large number of draft and pack animals. By March 22, Massena's army was at Celorica, less than 20 miles from the Spanish border. By then, Wellington's pursuit had slowed down as well; he was having supply problems of his own.

Massena was not willing to retreat completely from Portugal just yet. He ordered his ragged soldiers, many of whom had no footwear other than cowhide moccasins, to swing southeast toward the Tagus, an area with no supplies and few roads. Ney fiercely opposed the order, insisting that the army should continue the retreat into Spain to rest and resupply. He not only refused to obey Massena's order, he informed the apoplectic commander that he intended to march his own men to Almeida. Massena immediately relieved Ney of command and ordered him to the rear to await further orders from Napoleon.

Proving Ney's judgment correct, the French march toward the Tagus lasted less than a week before lack of food ended the operation. On March 29, the Army of Portugal resumed its retreat eastward. At the start of the new month, Massena's hold on Portugal consisted only of Almeida and the area between the Coa River and the Spanish border.

On April 3, Wellington struck General Jean Reynier's isolated II Corps at Sabugal, which was holding the French left. The nearest help was seven miles away. Wellington's plan called for the Light Division to ford the Coa and hit Reynier's flank and rear. A frontal attack across the river was to be carried out by the 3rd and 5th Divisions, backed by the 1st and 7th Divisions when the French seemed on the verge of retreating.

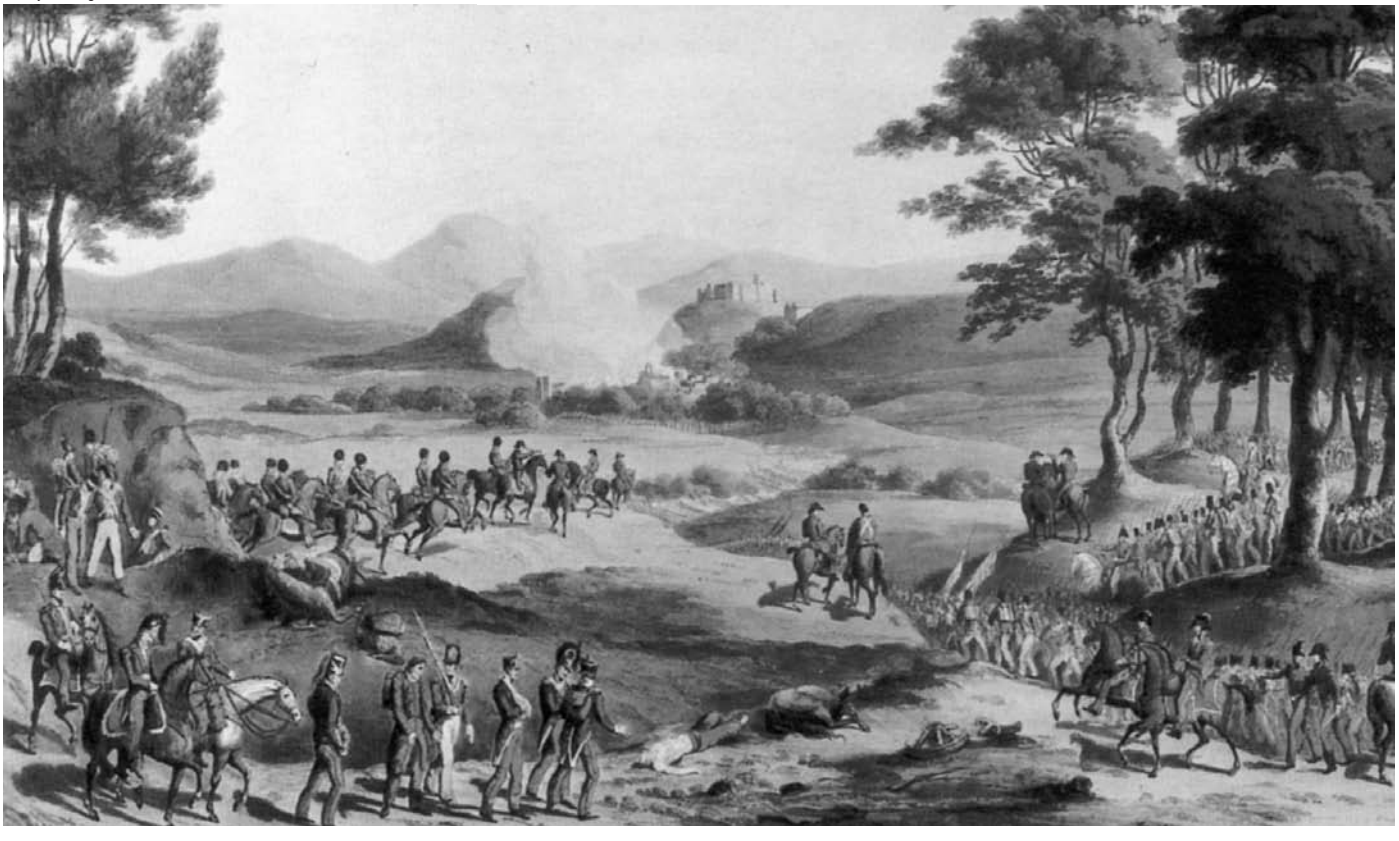
A thick fog in the Coa valley hampered visibility and troop movement. Lt. Col. Sydney Beckwith took his brigade of the Light Division across the river but, due to the heavy fog, crossed too far to the left. Instead of striking the French rear, he collided with the enemy flank. The 43rd Regiment and some guns moved across the river to support Beckwith. The Light Division's temporary commander, Maj. Gen. Sir William Erskine, became overly cautious after sending Beckwith across the river and prevented a second brigade from crossing as planned. Erskine then rode off with the cavalry, his negative part in the battle done. Beckwith with 1,500 troops now faced two full enemy divisions on his own.

A veteran officer, Beckwith handled the situation commendably. His men beat back a French counterattack, but it soon became obvious to Beckwith that he would have to give ground to the French, who heavily outnumbered him. He ordered his men to pull back, telling them not to hurry. Instead, he said casually, "We'll just walk quietly back, and you can give them a shot as you go along." Despite a wound to the head, Beckwith stayed with his men, encouraging them with the words: "Fight on, my brave lads; we shall beat them."

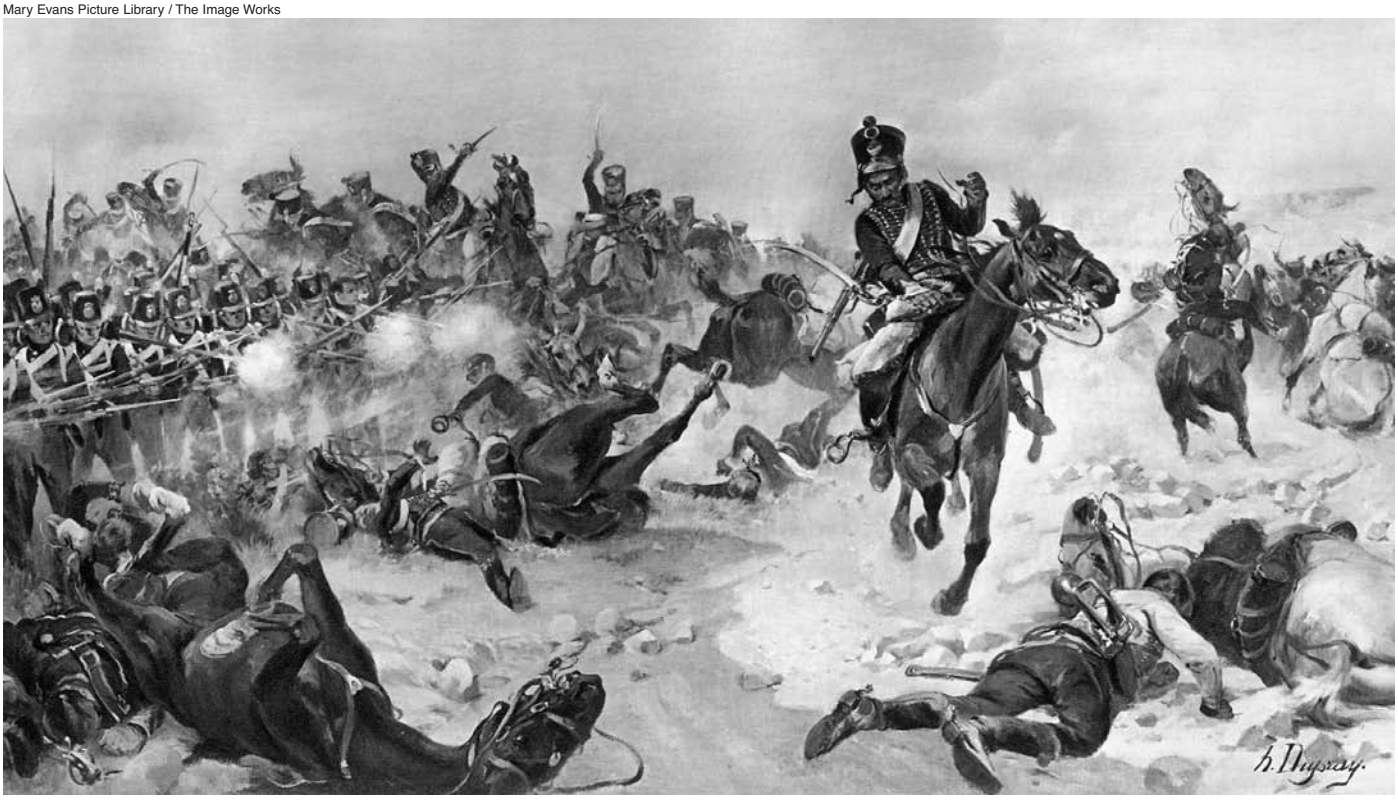
He was right, but more help was needed. Four British divisions crossed the Coa and attacked the French front, which was held by 3,000 determined troops. After the loss of 760 men, Reynier

Wellington instituted a scorched-earth policy in Portugal to deny much-needed supplies to the beleaguered French Army.

Library of Congress



Mary Evans Picture Library / The Image Works



ABOVE: French cavalry attack the British infantry, which has formed into its well-known battle squares to deliver massed rifle volleys. RIGHT: The British held a formidable eight-mile line behind the Dos Casas River at Fuentes de Onoro. The French had no choice but to attack head-on.

was forced to retreat. The British suffered 161 casualties. Except for Almeida, Portugal now was virtually liberated from the French.

Wellington was convinced that Massena was retreating to Ciudad Rodrigo and maybe even farther east to Salamanca. The duke, however, did not intend to strike too far into Spain, since his own supply convoys were slow and plagued by delays. His first concern was to take Almeida and, if possible, Ciudad Rodrigo. Wellington hoped the French would abandon their last holdout in Portugal, but when they didn't, he had no choice but to set up a siege at Almeida and starve the garrison into submission, which in the duke's estimation would take four weeks.

Wellington attempted to blockade Ciudad Rodrigo as well. He directed Julian Sanchez, a Spanish guerrilla leader, to take his band beyond the stronghold and watch the road to Salamanca, warning the Light Division if any large French convoys headed toward the fort. Erskine received just such a warning on April 13, but his characteristic tardiness allowed a French division and convoy to reach Ciudad Rodrigo unmolested. With the fort reprovisioned, Wellington abandoned his efforts against the French stronghold.

Wellington's forces were spread thinly over 100 miles of rough country. In all, he had only about 35,000 soldiers to blockade Almeida and watch Massena. The French Army, too, was in rough shape as it limped into Salamanca. The time in Portugal had cost the French 25,000 men. Of these, 8,000 were prisoners and another 2,000 had been killed in combat, while the rest had perished of famine, disease, and the vengeance of the *ordenança.*

Two weeks of rest did the men a world of good, but Massena's army was still weak in cavalry and artillery horses—about a third of the troopers lacked proper mounts. The artillery had even worse problems, with only enough horses to pull 20 guns and their complement of vehicles. Massena petitioned Marshal Jean Bessieres, commander of the district, for assistance. Bessieres came grudgingly to Massena's aid, personally bringing him two small brigades of cavalry, a horse artillery battery, and 30 teams of horses for Massena's guns. "He would have done better to have sent me a few thousand men more, and more food and ammunition, and to have stopped at his own headquarters, instead of coming here to examine and criticize all my movements," grumbled Massena to his staff.

By April 26, Massena was back at Ciudad Rodrigo with his reorganized army of four corps. Massena's army now consisted of 42,000 infantrymen, 4,500 cavalry, and 38 guns, making a less-than-grand total of 48,000 men. Although the soldiers had been resupplied, rearmed, and reshod, morale remained low. The men lacked confidence in Massena and were still unhappy over the popular Ney's abrupt dismissal. Nevertheless, on May 2 the Army of Portugal crossed the bridge over the Agueda at Ciudad Rodrigo and divided into two columns, once more heading west. The cavalry led the way, while II Corps took the Marialva Road and VIII and IX Corps advanced on the Carpio Road. VI Corps acted as reserve.

Wellington, who had been absent from his army since April 16, returned on the 28th and immediately began preparing to face Massena. With his Light Division and cavalry skirmishing before the French advance, Wellington moved to block the French relief force. The duke positioned his force along an eight-mile line behind the Dos Casas River from the village of Fuentes de Onoro to the ruined Fort Conception. The ravine of the Dos Casas was deep and wide, while upriver it became shallower toward Fuentes de Onoro, which was located on the west bank of the river. The village was ideal for defense—Wellington's forte—as the houses and gardens were surrounded by stone walls.

On May 3, the Light Division and cavalry were driven back onto Wellington's position by the advancing French. On the left flank of the

allied army, just south of Fort Conception, was the 5th Division. Guarding the division's flank were some 300 Portuguese cavalry. The 6th Division moved into place in front of San Pedro. Both divisions had a deep ravine to their front, making their position even more formidable. To the south were the 1st, 3rd, and 7th Divisions, occupying the heights above Fuentes de Onoro. The Light Division was stationed in reserve, while four British cavalry regiments, numbering about 1,500 troopers, were posted south and to the rear of Fuentes de Onoro. In all, Wellington had 34,000 soldiers, 1,800 cavalry, and 48 guns with which to stop Massena.

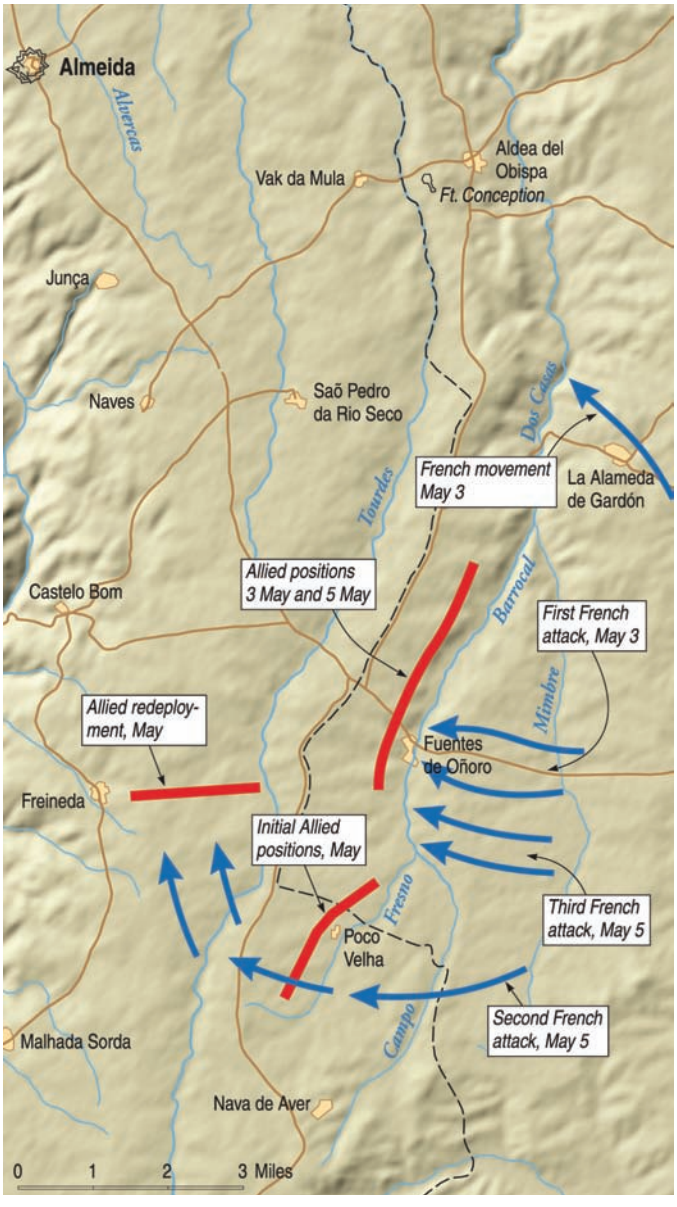
By the afternoon, most of Massena's army was visible to the allies. The French were in three columns, with Reynier's II Corps opposing Wellington's left at Fort Conception and San Pedro. General Andoche Junot's VIII Corps, reduced to one division as the other was guarding communications elsewhere, made up the center column. The bulk of the French forces made up the left column facing Fuentes de Onoro. It consisted of General Louis Loison's VI Corps with General Jean Baptiste Drouet's IX Corps in the rear, out of view of the British. The French cavalry, meanwhile, moved to the left to face the British cavalry.

After measuring Wellington's position in the early afternoon, Massena determined that the enemy's right was too strong to attack due to the formidable terrain. Fuentes de Onoro was the key to the enemy position, but the French marshal was not sure of the disposition of Wellington's troops, situated behind the crest of the hill. All that were visible were skirmishers on the high ground and the red- and green-coated soldiers holding the village itself.

Around 2 PM, Massena ordered the 10 battalions of General Claude Ferey's division to storm Fuentes de Onoro. Reynier, to the north, was ordered to make a feint against the British 5th Division around Fort Conception. Wellington ordered his Light Division toward Fort Conception to counter Reynier's II Corps, but it soon became clear there was no serious threat in this area. The main fight was at Fuentes de Onoro.

The first brigade of Ferey's divison splashed across the knee-deep stream and managed to capture some buildings despite taking heavy fire. Wellington, who was close by, sent in Colonel Henry Cadogan's 71st, supported by the 79th and 24th Regiments. Cadogan's force hit the French hard, and in bitter street fighting drove them out of the village across the Dos Casas to their side of the river. The Scottish troops captured a small chapel and a few gardens on the east side of the stream, but they were unable to hold them when Massena ordered his defeated troops back along with four fresh battalions from General Jean Marchand's divisions of the VI Corps in support. They retook the small chapel and drove Cadogan back across the Dos Casas, but could go no farther. Nightfall brought an end to the fighting, which had cost the French 652 casualties. The allies had suffered 259 killed and wounded.

Map © 2010 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN



Massena, after being repulsed in a frontal assault, looked for a way to flank Wellington. He ordered General Louis-Pierre Montbrun to head south and reconnoiter Wellington's right, checking the terrain and position of enemy troops. By afternoon, Montbrun reported that Wellington had only cavalry pickets south of Fuentes de Onoro. Wellington's right ended at Nava de Aver, which was held by Sanchez's guerrillas.

Massena intended to turn Wellington's right. To do so, he would use Marchand's and Julien Mermet's divisions from VI Corps and General Jean Solignac's division from VIII Corps—17,500 troops in all. Most of his cavalry, 3,500 troopers under Montbrun, would also take part in the flanking attack. Massena's plan called for Reynier to make a feint against Wellington's left. The attack was to be pressed if the enemy seemed weak in this area. Fuentes de Onoro was to be attacked by Ferey's division again, along with the two divisions from Drouet's IX Corps when the turning movement was observed to the south. The village was to be taken at all cost.

Across the Dos Casas, Wellington had his troops under arms by early morning. Although shooting broke out across the Dos Casas at Fuentes de Onoro, it died out around 10 AM. An informal truce allowed the wounded and dead to be removed. No fighting resumed for the rest of the day. Wellington, meanwhile, suspected that the French might attempt something on his right. He moved his four cavalry regiments, under Maj. Gen. Stapleton Cotton, in that direction and sent the 7th Division to cover the right, with two battalions positioned at Poco Velha and the woods nearby. The remaining seven battalions were situated west of Poco Velha on a slope. The entire division, 4,000 men, was about two miles from Wellington's main position.

Wellington withdrew the light companies from Fuentes de Onoro and left the two Scottish battalions, the 71st and 79th, to hold the town, while the 24th acted in support on the hill. The Light Division was moved back to its original position behind the village. Back in command of the Light Division was Maj. Gen. Robert Craufurd, who had just returned from

leave. With the coming of dusk on the 4th, the French were ready to strike hard at Wellington.

A thick mist on the morning of May 5 was gradually dispelled by the sun, but not before Sanchez's guerrillas at Nava de Aver were caught off guard by French cavalry and quickly retreated. Two squadrons of the British 14th Light Dragoons, which had moved up to support them the night before, did not join the Spaniards. Instead, they put up a running fight for two miles against heavy odds. They were finally driven back to Poco Velha, where two battalions of the 7th Division were posted. A volley from troops posted in the woods stopped the French in their tracks.

The main French cavalry advance was farther to the north of Nava de Aver. Facing them was a squadron of 16th Light Dragoons and one from the 1st Hussars of the King's German Legion, acting as a line of observation. In a brave but rash move, the 16th Light Dragoons charged into the mass of French cavalry and suffered heavy casualties. The Germans charged next and were also forced back. The two broken squadrons galloped to Poco Velha and reformed on the flank of the village. The French cavalry soon appeared in overwhelming numbers and showed every intention of turning the British right, despite the fact that 12 squadrons of Wellington's cavalry were forming in the woods near Poco Velha.

It was now about an hour after daybreak when the French infantry joined in. Formed in double columns, Marchand's division appeared from behind a hill of Nave de Haver and moved

IT WAS NOW AROUND NOON, AND DROUET MEANT TO FINISH THE BLOODY BUSINESS IN FUENTES DE ONORO. HE ORDERED IN TWO FRESH DIVISIONS THAT MADE THEIR WAY UP THE BODY-STREWN STREETS.

toward Poco Velha. They pushed into the woods and drove out the British and Portuguese skirmishers. Then they stormed Poco Velha itself and forced out the British 85th Battalion and the Portuguese 2nd Caçadores, which fell back in disorder and were charged by French light cavalry. Casualties were heavy for the British and Portuguese, who suffered 85 killed or wounded and another 70 men captured. It might have been worse had not two squadrons of the German Hussars charged in to cover them. The two battered units formed up and moved toward the main body of their division a mile away.

The situation was beginning to look grim for Wellington. French infantry divisions emerging from Poco Velha were now threatening to drive a wedge between Fuentes de Onoro and the rest of Wellington's army. Montbrun's cavalry was already in pursuit of the lone allied division. Help was soon on the way in the form of Craufurd's Light Division, which Wellington personally chose to go to their rescue.

While the Light Division headed south, Wellington realigned his troops. The 5th and 6th Divisions remained where they were positioned and the two Scottish battalions continued to hold Fuentes de Onoro. At the same time, the 1st and 3rd Divisions, along with some Portuguese troops, formed a new line behind the village running west instead of north-south. Fuentes de Onoro, or more accurately the hill where the church sat, was the pivot of the allied army which now formed an L shape. Wellington's line of communication was lost due to this move, but the duke as always meant to fight.

The British cavalry on Wellington's right, meanwhile, continued to fight an outnumbered running battle against Montbrun's four French cavalry brigades, while the 7th Division took up new ground on a slope that was mostly bare except for some rocks and stone walls. The British cavalry was forced back to the 7th Division and relocated on the left rear of the infantry. The foot soldiers faced the French cavalry on their own.

Montbrun attempted to break the English infantry. While skirmishers harassed Maj. Gen. John Houston's front and light artillery shelled his center, dragoons attempted to roll up his right. The Chasseurs Britanniques, a unit originally made up of French Royalists and later reinforced with French prisoners of war, fired a volley from the cover of a stone wall, driving back the French horsemen. Another cavalry charge was beaten back by the 51st. The French cavalry could do nothing against the 7th without infantry help. Unfortunately for Montbrun, Marchand's and Mermet's divisions were not marching to his aid, but rather heading directly for Wellington's new line west of Fuentes de Onoro.

About this time, Craufurd's Light Division arrived, buying time for Houston to march his division to a new position on Wellington's right, extending the English line across the Turon River toward the village of Freneda. With the 7th Division gone, Craufurd had the difficult task of getting his men across open ground back to the main line under the noses of French cavalry and artillery. He formed his battalions into close columns and put a few companies of riflemen and Caçadores in the scrub on the flanks. He then headed across the plain slowly and in perfect order.

During the two-mile withdrawal, French cavalry swarmed about but kept a respectable distance from Crauford's squares. Whenever the French guns moved in to fire at Craufurd's men, the British cavalry would force them to retire. Craufurd and his men made it back safely back behind the 1st Division, but not before the French cavalry managed to cut off some skirmishers, killing or wounding 80 men and capturing another 20. Two squadrons of the 14th and Royals managed to drive off the French and rescue the rest of the skirmishers.

The French cavalry finally drew back, and long-range artillery opened up on Wellingon's right, with the British guns quickly replying. Marchand's and Mermet's divisions were soon within artillery range of the British opposite the 3rd and 1st Divisions. Fuentes de Onoro, now the anchor of Wellington's left, remained in English hands.

While things were going well on the southern flank for the French, Ferey's division launched against Fuentes de Onoro two hours after dawn. The French stormed the village, driving back the two Scottish regiments holding it. At the upper

FURTHER READING

John R. Elting, *Swords Around a Throne: Napoleon's Grand Armee.* New York: The Free Press, 1988.

Michael Glover, *The Peninsular War 1807-1814: A Concise Military History.* London: Penguin Books, 2001.

Elizabeth Longford, *Wellington: the Years of the Sword.* New York: Harper & Row, 1969.

Mark Urban, *Rifles: Six Years with Wellington's Legendary Sharpshooters.* London: Faber and Faber, 2003.

Jac Weller, *Wellington in the Peninsula.* London: Nicholas Vane, 1967.

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

Wellington, mounted at left, calmly directs the British right flank at Fuentes de Onoro. The right was comprised of the 1st, 3rd, and 7th Divisions.

end of the town, the Scottish troops rallied and with the help of the 24th pushed the French back to the lower houses of the village, where the fighting came to a temporary standstill.

Drouet ordered three battalions made up of grenadiers of his two divisions into the foray. In hard fighting they rooted out the defenders from behind stone walls and barricaded houses and drove them back up the hill near the church. The grenadiers' attack stalled when Wellington fed light companies from the 1st and 3rd Divisions and the 6th Caçadores into the grim battle, halting the French advance.

It was now around noon, and Drouet meant to finish the bloody business in Fuentes de Onoro. He ordered in two fresh divisions that made their way up the body-strewn streets. The situation was becoming more and more serious for Wellington. Fierce fighting raged in the churchyard among the tombstones, and the 9th French Light Infantry managed to push to the church itself.

The nearest troops were Maj. Gen. Henry Mackinnon's brigade, forming part of the second line of the British 3rd Division, which was facing Marchand. Mackinnon sent Sir Edward Pakenham off to find Wellington to get permission to retake the village. Pakenham, who located Wellington not far away, galloped back, waving his hat with word from the commander to attack. Leaving the 45th to hold the line, Mackinnon led the 74th and the 88th Regiments, known also as the Connaught Rangers, into battle. The Connaught Rangers, led by Colonel Alexander Wallace, slammed into the 9th French Light Infantry, putting their bayonets to good use. After a brief stand, the French broke, hotly pursued by the Rangers.

The 74th quickly charged into battle behind them. The beleaguered remnants of the two Scottish regiments and the light companies joined in the attack. Savage fighting swept through the narrow bloody streets of the village. More than 100 French grenadiers were wiped out by the Rangers, who caught them in a cul-de-sac. The French were swept from the village and driven across the Dos Casas. Some of the Allied troops splashed across the stream after the French and were killed on the far side. Fresh French reserves came forward to cover the rout, but made no attempt to recapture the village although French guns continued to pound away at long distance.

It soon became clear that the lower houses of Fuentes de Onoro along the Dos Casas could not be held due to French artillery fire. A new defensive position was set up in the upper part of the village. It was about 2 PM, and the decisive fighting for Fuentes de Onoro was over.

In all, the fighting on May 5 cost Massena 2,192 casualties. Wellington suffered 1,545 killed, wounded, or captured. It had been a hard-fought battle for both sides. Wellington would later admit that, had Napoleon been there, "We should have been beat." But the emperor was back in France, and Massena, his "favored child of victory," was the Iron Duke's opponent. Still, it was a close-run thing for the allies.

That night Wellington began to entrench his position. Massena made no further move against the formidable English position. Instead, he sent his cavalry north and west to attempt to find a way through the duke's defenses. They found none. Wellington could not be maneuvered from his position, and Almeida could not be relieved. Massena ordered the supplies intended for the besieged garrison to be distributed among his soldiers instead.

With that, Massena retreated safely to Ciudad Rodrigo. There, on May 10, word arrived from Napoleon that Massena had been relieved of command. Massena was not sorry to hear it; he would claim later that fighting Wellington had turned him "gray all over." The new commander, Auguste Marmont, would have no better luck against Wellington. More bloody fighting lay ahead before Spain, too, would be liberated from the French invaders. □

PROTESTANT HEROES OF 1622

As Protestant Europe reeled before a combined Catholic onslaught, three unlikely heroes arose to take up the banner of "Winter King" Frederick V. It seemed—and was—too good to be true.

BY LOUIS CIOTOLA

AS THE YEAR 1622 dawned over Germany, things appeared bleak for the refugee "Winter King" of Bohemia, Elector Palatine Frederick V. The entire Protestant cause, in fact, was in its most dire crisis to date in the ongoing struggle against Catholic powers. Just over a year before, the combined might of the Hapsburg-led Imperialists and the Catholic League had smashed the short-lived Protestant rebellion in Bohemia, sending Frederick fleeing into exile. Simultaneously, a Spanish army stormed into Frederick's native Palatinate and, with the aid of the League, nearly completed the conquest of the entire region, thus making the elector—temporarily at least—homeless. At the start of the new year, the Catholics faced little or no organized opposition.

But as winter melted into spring, Frederick's prayers for a miracle seemingly were answered when salvation came literally from out of nowhere. Three men, sharing a thirst for war and little else, stepped forward to raise armies and fight in Frederick's name. The first of these, Count Ernst von Mansfeld, had been a participant in the war since its conception, yet by this time his numerous follies and frequent double-dealing had made him a virtual nonentity. The other two, Christian of Brunswick and George Frederick of Baden-Durlach, were newcomers ready to test their mettle against the seemingly invincible Catholic armies.

With their arrival, Frederick could breathe a sigh of relief, or so it seemed. How long his respite would last was anyone's guess, for the loyalty, talent, and integrity of the newly arrived Protestant "heroes" were far from unquestionable. Their tale, and the year that it consumed, would prove to be one of wanton brutality and recklessness that stamped an exclamation point on the end of a dying breed of mercenaries.

The Art Archive/Museo del Prado Madrid/Gianni Dagli Orti

Spanish General Don Gonzalo of Cordoba directs the defense of Fleurus in August 1622. Protestant forces claimed victory, but at the loss of more than 5,000 men.

In November 1619, only one month after Frederick's coronation as king of the rebellious Bohemians, his new kingdom's ongoing struggle against the Imperialist Hapsburgs reached its apogee outside the walls of Vienna. A siege of Emperor Ferdinand II's capital, however, proved impossible after the departure of their Transylvanian allies, and the Bohemian surge slowly began to roll back. During the course of the following spring, the rebel army was able to hold its own, but in July 1620 the Catholic League, led by Bavarian Duke Maximilian II, entered the war by attacking Bohemia's allies in Austria. Within two months, most of Frederick's allies were overrun by the Catholic armies, which then invaded Bohemia itself. Frederick had but one remaining army from which to seek help.

That army, commanded by Mansfeld, had been sitting idly in the town of Pilsen since the start of the war. There was little reason for Frederick to expect the lethargic Mansfeld to come to his rescue now, and the king's apprehensions were quickly justified. Upon the arrival of the Catholic army, Mansfeld offered neutrality to the enemy in exchange for personal indemnity and permission to remain in Pilsen peacefully. The Catholics accepted Manfeld's offer and turned their might toward Prague, encountering the Bohemian army outside the capital on November 8. The battle,

BRUNSWICK WAS THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATOR OF HALBERSTADT AND A VERY POOR ONE AT THAT—HIS TRUE PASSION WAS WAR. AS HE WROTE HIS MOTHER, "I MUST CONFESS THAT I HAVE A TASTE FOR WAR, THAT I HAVE IT BECAUSE I WAS BORN SO, AND SHALL HAVE IT INDEED UNTIL MY END."

which lasted barely an hour, was a complete disaster for the Bohemians, thanks largely to the skills of a League general, Count Johann Tserclaes von Tilly. Frederick fled Prague just before its capture, earning himself the unflattering nickname "Winter King" for the brevity of his reign.

Making matters worse, Frederick learned that his homeland, the Palatinate, was being overrun by Catholic invaders. Seeking to take advantage of Central Europe's crisis for its own gain, Hapsburg Spain had allied itself with its Austrian Imperialist cousins during the height of the Bohemian rebellion. Following months of preparation, a Spanish army of 25,000 men under the command of Ambrosio, Marquis de Spinola, crossed the Palatine border from the Spanish Netherlands in August 1620. Spinola moved quickly, driving back the feeble army of the Protestant Union, the coalition of German states created to counter the power of the Catholic League. Within a few days, the Spanish Army completely isolated the Upper Palatinate and blocked reinforcements from the Dutch United Provinces, a traditional enemy of Spain. For the time being, at least, Frederick had no possibility of returning to his electorate.

There was, however, a bright spot just over the horizon for Frederick and the Protestant cause. The United Provinces, which had already been subsidizing the Bohemian rebels and had flirted with the idea of doing the same for the Protestant Union, was nearing the end of its 12-year truce with Spain. It seemed likely that the Dutch would go to war against Spain at the expiration of the truce. In April 1621 they did just that, declaring war when Spain refused Dutch demands for maintaining the peace.

Frederick's hopes for a massive influx of reinforcements were dashed when the United Provinces decided not to march to the Union's relief, opting instead for a defensive strategy. But the wealthy Dutch were willing to continue as paymasters, creating a distraction and keeping Spinola comfortably away from their own homeland. The only problem was that the Union was on its last legs and was not a plausible military diversion. Another force would have to be found. To the great detriment of the Protestant cause, the only candidate for such a diversion was the barbaric and undependable Mansfeld.

Mansfeld was a mercenary in every sense of the term. He initially served the Hapsburgs, both Austrian and Spanish, in Hungary and the Netherlands. His service came to a bitter conclusion when Emperor Rudolf II refused to grant the general what he considered his rightful inheritance upon the death of his father. Snubbed, Mansfeld turned to the Duke of Savoy and also took a simultaneous position in the army of the Protestant Union, thus serving two masters at once. In 1618, Savoy allowed him to march to Bohemia in support of the rebels. Sickly, short, and slightly deformed, Mansfeld was nevertheless a fearless fighter, with an amazing ability to raise armies with great speed. He was also a talented negotiator, a skill that often aided him in his opportunistic tendencies. Still, hiring Mansfeld was always a risk—not only was his utter ruthlessness toward civilians well known, but he had a penchant for abandoning his benefactors at the slightest whim, making him entirely untrustworthy.

Frederick and the Dutch had little choice but to hire Mansfeld. The Protestant Union stood no chance against Spinola, and by spring the Spanish commander had finished off the Protestant army, effectively dissolving the Union. Following this victory, Emperor Ferdinand officially divided the Palatinate between his allies, granting the Lower Palatinate to Spain and the Upper Palatinate to Bavaria.

Although he now possessed the Upper Palatinate in theory, Maximilian of Bavaria could not dispatch his army into the territory due to a pre-existing treaty with the Protestant Union. Mansfeld would obligingly end Maxmilian's dilemma. Fueled with Dutch money and back in the service of Frederick, Mansfeld left Pilsen with 15,000 men and crossed into the Upper Palatinate. Maximilian now had an excuse to secure with arms his newest acquisition.

The duke wasted no time sending Tilly and the League army after Mansfeld. Tilly halted an attempt by Mansfeld to re-enter Bohemia and drove the mercenary north into the Lower Palatinate, leaving the Upper Palatinate completely under Maximilian's control. Despite the check, Mansfeld continued to operate freely in the new theater, marching toward the Spanish army under the command of Spinola's replacement, Don Gonsalvo Fernandez de Cordoba, and interrupting Cordoba's siege of Frankenthal.

Wherever Mansfeld went, Tilly followed. The League general raced into the Lower Palatinate and effected a union with Cordoba, but rather than pursue the troublesome mercenary, the Catholic generals chose instead to besiege the electorate's capital, Heidelberg. By that time, Mansfeld had already settled in Hapsburg Alsace for the winter, beginning an infamous occupation that brought the Alsatians a steady diet of typhus, murder, destruction, and thievery, his soldiers reputedly stealing even Christ figures off local crosses.

As 1621 drew to a close, it was painfully obvious to Protestant leaders that the war was lost. Tilly and Cordoba ran free throughout the Palatinate, and the following spring would surely complete their conquest. Mansfeld's relatively small army stood no chance—assuming the mercenary would even continue to fight. Meanwhile, the Winter King had taken refuge in The Hague, protected by the only state willing to offer him sanctuary. But the Dutch, unwilling to dispatch an army to rescue his beloved electorate, would do little else for him.

Barely two years since being crowned king in Prague, Frederick's cause was all but lost. Only a miracle could save it.

Enter not one miracle, but two. The Catholic surge in Germany and Frederick's vain yet valiant stand finally pulled on the heartstrings of a pair of Protestant generals with the means to turn the tide. The first to step forward and declare for Frederick was the youthful Christian of Brunswick. Brunswick, who possessed an infatuation for Frederick's wife, Elizabeth, had been a longtime sympathizer of the king, and he now swore an oath to restore the Palatinate to its refugee elector. Brunswick was the current administrator of Halberstadt and a very poor one at that—his true passion was war. As he wrote his mother, "I must confess that I have a taste for war, that I have it because I was born so, and shall have it indeed until my end."

The second of Frederick's new heroes was George Frederick, Margrave of Baden-Durlach. A devout 60-year-old Calvinist who was already highly distrusted by the Hapsburgs because of his previous service with the Protestant Union, Baden had decided to assemble his own army shortly after the Union's dissolution. Brunswick's declaration made this the best time to do so. Many observers, chief among them Hapsburg Archduke Leopold, suspected Baden's true intentions, but they were unsuccessful in persuading him to reconsider. On April 25, 1622, the aging Margrave proclaimed his entry into the war and vowed to liberate the Palatinate.

Public Domain

Now Mansfeld had help and Frederick had hope. The combined strength of Mansfeld, Brunswick, and Baden, roughly 40,000 men, was enough to challenge Catholic supremacy in the Palatinate. Should the trio prove successful, others waited in the wings to join the Protestant cause with armies of their own. Frederick was so enthusiastic that he decided to venture from The Hague and personally campaign with one of the three men preparing to fight for his restoration. His first choice was Brunswick, but since Brunswick's army was the farthest away, Frederick reluctantly chose to accompany Mansfeld, who was still ravaging Alsace.

akg-images

ABOVE: A Protestant pikeman spears a Spanish horseman during the Battle of Wimpfen on May 6, 1622. A chance magazine explosion behind the lines panicked the Protestants. LEFT: Frederick V, the "Winter King" of Bohemia. Panting by Gerrit van Honthorst.

The three Protestant forces remained separated, with Mansfeld and Baden sitting along the Upper Rhine while Brunswick was far off in Westphalia. Despite this, Mansfeld was determined to act offensively, and within days he drew up before the 15,000-strong League army at Mingolsheim, alongside the Kleinbach River. Tilly, who was waiting to unite with his ally Cordoba, kept a wary eye on the enemy. When Mansfeld attempted to cross the bridge at Mingolsheim amid a torrential rainstorm in the face of the Catholic army, a golden opportunity presented itself.

Tilly moved quickly on the morning of April 27, hitting the Protestant rear guard waiting to cross the bridge. Mansfeld could save the rest of his trapped soldiers only by unleashing a brutal covering fire with his cannons from the opposite bank and burning Mingolsheim in order to create a smokescreen. Unfortunately, those same cannons were stuck in a thick mud and could not readily be evacuated. To salvage his artillery, Mansfeld decided to take a stand.

Interpreting the Protestant moves as a full-scale retreat, Tilly ordered 5,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry to storm the bridge and pursue the defeated enemy. It was a cruel surprise to discover Mansfeld's army, still protected by the smoke, waiting for them. A single cannon shot signaled the start of the counterattack, and within moments a living hell came crashing down upon the Catholics. Only the valiant stand of the Schmidt Infantry Regiment allowed the Catholic survivors to scamper back across the bridge. Tilly attempted to rally them but was wounded for his troubles and compelled to withdraw, leaving behind four cannons and 2,000 men.

Although victorious, Mansfeld was in no mood to pursue the ever-dangerous enemy. He opted to wait for Baden, who joined him three days later. With 30,000 men combined, the Protestants had a tremendous local superiority over the League, but disputes over command erupted at once. Tilly, well aware of his predicament, took the precaution of digging into an excellent position at the Wimpfen bridgehead on the Neckar River. Having only recently been bloodied, Mansfeld refused to assault Tilly directly and chose instead to splinter off from Baden and drive a wedge between Tilly and the fast-approaching Cordoba. Glad to see a hated rival go, Baden stayed put, determined to confront Tilly alone and match Mansfeld's earlier feat at Mingolsheim.

Both: Public Domain

Marching toward the Spanish outpost of Ladenburg, Mansfeld hoped to lure the Spanish into pursuit, but the ploy failed miserably. It was apparent that Baden was going to give battle, and Tilly sent word to Cordoba, imploring him to race to Wimpfen as fast as possible, adding dramatically, "The salvation of the Empire is at stake." Early on May 5, Cordoba arrived, boosting the Catholic force to 18,000. Baden, however, was not dissuaded by the shift in power and drew up his forces that same day. Desperate for glory, he had no intention of backing down.

The Protestant army at Wimpfen was experienced, but the conglomeration of officers and men had never trained together, disrupting its coordination. It was also hampered by a lack of provisions. Making up for these shortcomings was an intense Protestant zeal flowing through Baden's ranks that guaranteed a hard fight. The stage was set for the next major battle in the year-long cavalcade of war.

The Protestants drew up on a low hill in a semicircle formation. Their left extended to some woods just north of the village of Biberach, while their right sat 600 yards from the Neckar. To the rear was a small stream known as the Rollinger Bach. In front of their formations was a line of 70 battle wagons adorned with spears and armed by guns loaded with grapeshot. Protestants dubbed the line "the Wagonburg." Immediately behind it were musketeers, strewn out to add greater defensive protection. Artillery was also placed among the wagons. Five infantry battalions arranged in linear style made up the center, with a sixth guarding the right. The mass of the cavalry remained behind the infantry.

The Catholics lined up on the high ground north of the Protestants. The Spanish formed one line of infantry on the right, while the League infantry arranged itself on the left into the traditional square formations known as *tercios,* four in the front and two in reserve. Cavalry was posted on the flanks and rear. All the Catholic guns were positioned safely behind the army.

May 5 was already quite hot when the opposing armies became fully visible to each other at sunrise. The two sides had been pounding away with cannon fire for the last couple of hours, hoping to draw the others from their position. Tilly and Cordoba remained patient, waiting for an opportunity. At 11 AM, Tilly decided the time was right and sent the first four *tercios* advancing directly on the Wagonburg. Cordoba ordered his front line forward as well. They met an unexpectedly stout defense. Protestant musketeers responded with a hail of fire into the dense Catholic lines from behind their bristling fortifications.

The shaken attackers halted, then retired. By noon, the Catholic forces were back where they had started. The battlefield fell silent as both sides rested their soldiers for the next phase of combat. Then Baden made a terrible mistake. During the temporary respite, he withdrew his troops from the Biberach Woods. Cordoba, eyeing the withdrawal, quickly occupied the advantageous position. When Baden realized his error, he dispatched musketeers to recapture the woods and shield the Protestant assault, which commenced around 2 PM, after he unleashed a second bombardment of the Catholic line.

The Catholics were preparing another attack of their own when Baden unleashed a simultaneous charge of 2,700 Protestant horsemen into the League left, throwing back the Catholic cavalry and threatening to outflank the *tercios*. In an attempt to relieve the pressure on Tilly, Cordoba continued his share of the offensive, pounding his men against the Wagonburg in another effort to break through. Once again, the Catholics were stopped dead in their tracks.

The Spanish, led by Cordoba personally, prepared to charge Baden's extended cavalry in an attempt to hit the Protestants while they were exposed. Incredibly, upon its execution, Cordoba was the sole participant in the phantom counterattack. His Walloons timidly refused to follow his lead, and the Spanish commander unknowingly raced through the Protestant horse entirely on his own. Miraculously, he was unharmed. The Spanish had better luck in the Biberach Woods, beating back two assaults by enemy musketeers.

Soon, Baden's charge ran out of steam. What remained of his cavalry was scattered and disorganized, but the Catholics were in an even more precarious position. Most of their infantry was in utter disarray before the Wagonburg, making them extremely vulnerable to an attack by the Protestant center. Baden, however, declined to press home his advantage. Probably influenced by the remarkable success of his fortifications, he kept his infantry in place, allowing the Catholics time to reorganize and drive off his once-triumphant cavalry, leaving it up to the strength of his defenses to ultimately decide the battle.

Around 5 PM, the determined Catholics attacked again, marching straight toward the battle wagons. As before, a deluge of murderous musket fire met the attackers and the advance ground to a halt. Despite the carnage, the Spaniards stood firm, claiming later that a white-robed woman had appeared in the smoke and given them inspiration. But a religious

Public Domain

ABOVE: Imperial and Catholic League forces led by Count Johann Tersclaes von Tilly defeat the Protestant Union led by the Margrave of Baden-Durlach at Wimpfen. OPPOSITE TOP: Christian of Brunswick. OPPOSITE BOTTOM: Count Ernst von Mansfeld.

vision was no match for modern weaponry, and it was only a matter of time before the Catholic effort began to collapse.

Then, just as the Spanish seemed ready to crack, a magazine suddenly exploded behind the Protestant lines. Although it did little physical damage, the unexpected blast sent waves of panic through Baden's ranks, causing the shocked defenders to falter. Smelling blood, the Catholic infantry smashed into the Protestant lines during those crucial few moments of paralysis, driving straight through the Wagonburg and overrunning the cannons. Baden's infantry attempted to stand, but when their own cannons were turned against them, the exhausted men fled. Only a handful continued to resist, holding out until 9 PM.

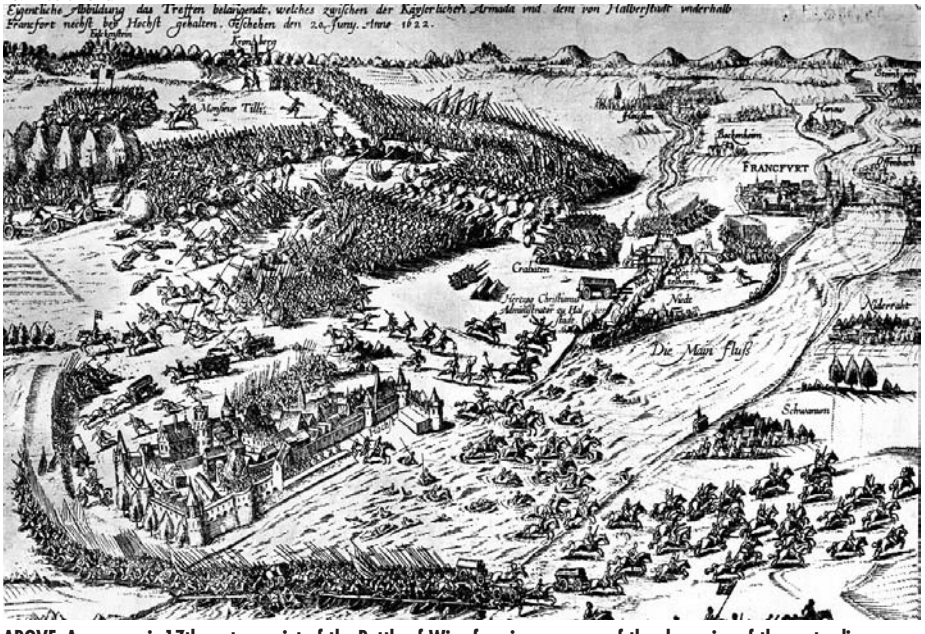
The day-long fight cost Baden 2,000 dead, 1,100 captured, and the loss of 10 guns, 70 battle wagons, and 100,000 talers. The Catholics fared much better, suffering only 1,800 casualties, mostly at the Wagonburg. So disparate were the losses that the humiliated Baden hung up his sword. Arriving in Heilbronn, the old Margrave fled to Stuttgart and quit the war. Two-thirds of his remaining force had reformed after the battle, but when their commander announced his retirement, the army disintegrated. A mere 3,000 of them joined Mansfeld, who was fortunate that the victorious Catholics needed a temporary respite after the brutal engagement. He got away with only a minor defeat at the hands of Tilly on June 10, before retreating safely to Mannheim. Barely a month into the campaign, one of Frederick's three saviors was already eliminated.

Despite the setback, Mansfeld was soon back on his feet, while Tilly's focus turned to Christian of Brunswick. Baden's destruction at Wimpfen and Mansfeld's momentary check left Brunswick isolated. Mansfeld realized that his last remaining ally was the next Catholic target. If he could reach Brunswick before the enemy, their united force could still turn the tide. As usual, Tilly was one step ahead of his opponents. On June 17, the Catholics won the short race to Brunswick, intercepting him near Hochst, a small town west of Frankfurt-on-the-Main. There they trapped Brunswick, forcing him to fight in order to escape annihilation and initiating the second major confrontation in less than two months.

Brunswick's army of 15,000 was in no condition to give battle, being outnumbered by 11,000 men and lacking the necessary arms. Fewer than half in his infantry were musketeers, and quality pikemen were in short supply. Furthermore, only one of the three Protestant cannons was operational, while, on the other side, the 26,000-strong Catholic army possessed 19 cannons and recently had been reinforced by a fresh Imperialist division. Given the inadequacies of his army, Brunswick's only hope was to unite with either Mansfeld or Baden, but the failure of his two allies left him completely alone and hung out to dry.

Brunswick was well aware of his deficiencies. As the Catholics approached, he expected to be attacked and began preparing a position south of the Sulzbach Stream, where he hoped to hold out long enough to allow his baggage to escape. The stream would be his first line of defense. The key point in the line was the village of Sossenheim, specifically its bridge, where Tilly was bound

Both: Public Domain



ABOVE: A panoramic 17th-century print of the Battle of Wimpfen gives a sense of the sheer size of the contending forces. OPPOSITE: Don Gonsalvo de Cordoba.

to try to cross the Sulzbach. Brunswick ordered fortifications constructed within Sossenheim and deployed 1,000 men inside the town. To the south, additional redoubts were built and manned by 1,000 infantry. The remaining bulk of the Protestant army ran east to west, with the infantry in front and the cavalry to the rear.

The Catholic army formed to the northeast of the Protestants, just beyond the Sulzbach. The Spanish constituted the right wing, with Cordoba's infantry massed into two immense *tercios* and his cavalry on the far right. Three small units of musketeers were posted in the front. Tilly's infantry consisted of three *tercios,* one of which was left in reserve. His cavalry manned the extreme left flank and was supported by 500 musketeers.

The opposing armies sat patiently, watching each other closely for nearly three days until, finally, at noon on June 20 the League cannons opened fire. The cannonade had great effect, chiefly because Brunswick was unable to respond in kind. Before long the entire Catholic force was moving forward. The three vanguard Spanish musketeer divisions forded the Sulzbach west of Sossenheim, while League cavalry shot past the town into the Nidda Marsh, and the infantry headed straight for the bridge. The battle for Sossenheim was over within minutes. Brunswick's men fled without much resistance, ceding the bridge to the enemy. A counterattack succeeded in retaking the town, but the triumph was only temporary. Catholic pressure was irresistible, and the Protestants retired into their redoubts to the south.

As Tilly moved to capture the redoubts, the main Protestant force attempted to cross the Main before the Catholics could complete their encirclement. Upon the reduction of the redoubts, the Leaguers pursued with intense fury. Most of the Protestants managed to make it across the river, but those who did not were slaughtered as the nearing Catholics caused the fear-crazed Protestants to jam the bridge. An untold number of men and horses plunged over the side and drowned in the river.

Following their victory, the Catholics stayed put rather than continuing the pursuit. The consequences of the battle soon became clear to the Protestants. Brunswick had lost roughly 5,000 men, the majority perishing in the Main River, and for a brief time Brunswick was rumored dead. He also lost his precious few cannons. But Brunswick and 8,000 of his men managed to escape to join Mansfeld. Although the Catholics had won the day, they had failed to destroy a relatively weak enemy, allowing it to unite with another Protestant army. It was a mistake they would soon regret.

When Brunswick reached his fellow mercenary's army, he immediately sought out Frederick to complain about Mansfeld's lack of support, placing the two commanders at odds from the start. Mansfeld was particularly annoyed, knowing that Frederick favored Brunswick. Neither warlord wished to stay together, but under such dangerous circumstances they had no choice. They retreated to Alsace, blaming each other for the year's disasters and increasing Frederick's frustration and acute distrust of both men. What upset their patron most was the ghastly way in which they conducted the retreat. Protestant soldiers set fire to nearly every village in their path. Brunswick became known throughout the countryside as the "Mad Halberstadter," and his cruelty rivaled that of the already infamous Mansfeld. Said an incensed Frederick: "There ought to be some difference made between friend and enemy, but these people ruin both alike. I think these men are possessed of the devil and take pleasure in setting fire to everything. I should be very glad to leave them."

When he could tolerate no more, the miserable Winter King did leave his disgraceful allies, returning to exile in The Hague. Mansfeld and Brunswick, for their part, thought nothing of abandoning Frederick once he had abandoned them. On July 13, they officially declared their neutrality, but because they refused to disband their armies they were still considered very much the enemy by the Catholics. With safety in numbers, the erstwhile Protestant heroes opted to momentarily set aside their differences and remain united. They had to find a new benefactor to sustain their armies, and since they were close to the French border, they first offered their services to King Louis XIII. The offer, however, was unenthusiastic and the currently neutral French were uninterested anyway, so the pair turned to their old paymaster, the United Provinces.

Here they were in luck. With the Spanish enjoying repeated successes in the Netherlands and Spinola currently besieging and close to capturing Bergen-op-Zoom, the Dutch were more than willing to re-employ the two notorious mercenaries, at least until the situation was back under control. The United Provinces promised Mansfeld and Brunswick the necessary subsidies and the Protestant army turned north, excited about the rich lands and plentiful "contributions" it could loot along the way.

Cordoba was unwilling to let his opponents sneak out of Germany that easily, especially since they threatened to impede the progress of his fellow Spaniard, Spinola. Separating from Tilly, Cordoba raced to block their path. On August 26, he caught up with the Protestants at Fleurus and created a blockade with 6,000 infantry and 2,000 cavalry. Mansfeld and Brunswick, with almost 8,000 infantry and 6,000 cavalry, along with 10 guns, were determined to break through regardless of the cost. There was no display of tactical brilliance, only the use of brute force. Brunswick led the cavalry forward four times against the Spanish line. All four assaults failed. Finally, five hours into the battle, a fifth charge broke the Spanish line and the remainder of the Protestant army stampeded wildly through the gap.

Mansfeld and Brunswick survived the battle, but Protestant losses were horrendous. More than 5,000 were killed, compared to a minuscule number of Spaniards. Among the casualties was Brunswick, wounded in the arm during one of his bloody charges. When he learned that his arm had to be amputated in excruciatingly painful and primitive surgery, he proudly replied, "Then order the drums to be beaten and trumpets blown, for I advocate doing everything in life in as pleasant a way as possible." In all, the entire 47-day campaign had cost the Protestants 11,000 men. Mansfeld and Brunswick led a mere 6,000 miserable troops into Bergen-op-Zoom on October 4, but it was enough to compel Spinola to lift the siege.

Thus ended Frederick's year of hope. In one brief campaigning season, all three of his supposed saviors had been vanquished. On numerous occasions, their own inflated egos had caused disaster as they dangerously chose to go it alone rather than serve in close conjunction with one another. Only when all other options had run out did Mansfeld and Brunswick cooperate fully, but by that time it was already too late. Costly military blunders played their part as well, most notably Baden's failure to clinch his near victory at Wimpfen. The end had come for Frederick's last possession.

The League, left unopposed in the Palatinate, took full advantage of the opportunity. After quickly reestablishing control over Alsace, Tilly moved on Frederick's capital, Heidelberg, taking it on September 19 after an 11-week siege. The Catholic soldiers ravaged the city, which Tilly sanctioned as punishment for the obstinacy of the citizens. On November 2, the garrison of Mannheim surrendered. The victorious Catholics shut down Protestant churches and closed Heidelberg University. Since his crowning in Prague three years earlier, Frederick had lost everything. That January, Emperor Ferdinand publicly transferred the Palatine electorate to Maximilian of Bavaria.

As for the three mercenaries, the war was not quite through with them. The following spring, amid a sudden mood for peace, the exasperated Dutch encouraged Mansfeld and Brunswick to exit their territory to seek other lands to plunder. Needing to supply their army with promised loot, the two generals obliged. Mansfeld halted after a short while to pillage the Protestant town of Emden. Brunswick used the occasion to part from his reluctant ally and head for the Lower Saxon Circle, where he hoped to find more legitimate allies and supplies. When Tilly menacingly approached the border, the states of the Circle repudiated their ties with Brunswick and pressured him to depart. Tilly gave chase, catching Brunswick outside the town of Stadtlohn. There, the Catholic champion inflicted a horrific thrashing upon his Protestant victims, killing more than 7,000 men.

By now Mansfeld was in the area, but nothing more than light skirmishing took place. Most of his efforts went toward pillaging East Friesland. As usual, the behavior of his army was nothing short of barbaric. In the meantime, his back against a wall, Mansfeld tried to open negotiations with Tilly, but the Catholics prudently refused to bargain with the unscrupulous mercenary. Mansfeld again offered his services to the French, but again Paris turned him down. With no more moves left to make, Mansfeld handed Emden over to the Dutch and abandoned his army. On April 24, 1624, amid totally unwarranted celebration, he arrived in London, hoping to raise another army with English money.

The following year, Protestant hopes underwent another revival, this time due to the intervention of King Christian IV of Denmark, and the three mercenaries again found themselves employed against the Catholics. Just as in 1622, however, each soon met with disaster. Brunswick, a favorite of King Christian, took up arms for the Danish cause in early 1626. Charged with invading Hesse in support of a peasant rebellion, Brunswick failed to incite the state to join him in the war. Instead, the League army pushed into Hesse, crushed the revolt, and forced Brunswick to withdraw to Wolfenbuttel. Depressed, ill, and aged far beyond his 28 years by the torments of war, the "Mad Halberstadter" died on June 16.

Mansfeld, fresh from England, also reappeared in early 1626. Unlike Brunswick, Mansfeld was no friend of King Christian and campaigned independently of the Danes. On April 25, he met his match at Dessau Bridge in the form of Albrecht von Wallenstein, commander of the Imperialist army. In the battle that followed, Wallenstein crushed the mercenary and sent him fleeing. Unperturbed, Mansfeld led his 20,000 men south in a vain attempt to link up with the army of Transylvania, which was threatening to join the Protestant side. When the Transylvanians opted for neutrality, Mansfeld sat alone in Hungary, dead in the water. He resolved to head for the sanctuary of Venice, a march that would take his army deep into the dangerous and disease-ridden Balkans.

The mercenary had survived many battles and countless risks, but this time his luck ran out. While moving through Bosnia, Mansfeld fell ill and died on November 30 in the town of Zara, near the Dalmatian border. Maintaining his martial dignity to the bitter end, the erstwhile scourge of Europe held himself upright between the shoulders of two of his men, determined to die on his feet.

The last of the three great mercenary commanders made his encore appearance a year later when Wallenstein's army stormed into Holstein. Baden could not resist rejoining the anti-Catholic crusade, but Wallenstein left little doubt that the old man should have chosen to remain on the sidelines. The Danish navy ferried Baden and his men to Holstein to bolster its defenses, only to have to return soon afterward to retrieve the defeated remnants after the Imperialists easily trounced the expeditionary force at Heilgenhafen on September 26. Baden escaped with his life, but his military career was at an end.

The passing of Mansfeld, Brunswick, and Baden from the scene saw the twilight of the great mercenary tradition. Europe no longer had any place for war-mongering men who raised their own armies and fought for any patron so long as their dues were paid. In the end, the three leaders played a large role in the change. Frederick had put his faith in them during a time of extreme peril, and that faith had been sorely abused. Not only were the three mercenaries sorely lacking in talent and loyalty, but their unchecked brutality proved an unending embarrassment. Frederick's "heroes," with their constant blunders and barbaric tendencies, turned out to be more of a liability than a help. In the end, some heroes are just too good to be true. □

THE ART OF VICTORY: KONIGGRATZ 1866

Helmuth von Moltke's complex strategy to defeat the Austrian Army in Bohemia required two Prussian princes to adhere strictly to its strategic principles to ensure its success.

BY WILLIAM E. WELSH

Flush with victory, Prussian King Wilhelm I exhorts his troops onward at the climax of the Battle of Koniggratz. Painting by Christian Sell.

THE PRUSSIAN SOLDIERS had been awake long before sunup on the morning of July 3, 1866, and were marching downhill to the Bystrice River in the rolling countryside of Bohemia, 65 miles east of Prague. A heavy rain fell from low-hanging clouds, turning farm fields and dirt roads into seas of ankle-grabbing mud. The soldiers' mood reflected the morning gloom. Hunger and lack of sleep were their unwelcome companions.

Forming on high ground across the Bystrice was the 240,000-strong Austrian North Army, commanded by Field Marshal Ludwig von Benedek. The 62-year-old Hungarian-born commander, nicknamed "Lion of Solferino," had been entrusted by Emperor Franz Joseph with vanquishing the Prussian invaders. The day before, Prussian scouts had located Benedek's massive army encamped behind the Bystrice, where it blocked the main road to the Koniggratz fortress on the Elbe River. When the scouts reported their findings to the Prussian First Army commander, Prince Friedrich Karl, orders were issued for a general advance to begin at sunrise. On hand for the battle were Chief of Staff Helmuth von Moltke, mastermind of the modernized Prussian war machine, and King Wilhelm I. Not to be outdone, Minister President Otto von Bismarck also was in attendance, taking advantage of his position as a major in the Landswehr.

Moltke's plan was relatively simple. The First Army's 140,000 troops would pin the Austrians in place, while the 105,000-strong Second Army, encamped a half day's march to the north, would sweep down on the Austrian right flank. The Prussians were clad in dark-blue uniforms, and most had left behind their spiked Picklehaube helmets for flat, nondescript field caps. They carried breech-loading Dreyse needle guns (named for their needle-shaped firing pins), wore bedrolls slung over their shoulders, and marched in hobnail boots.

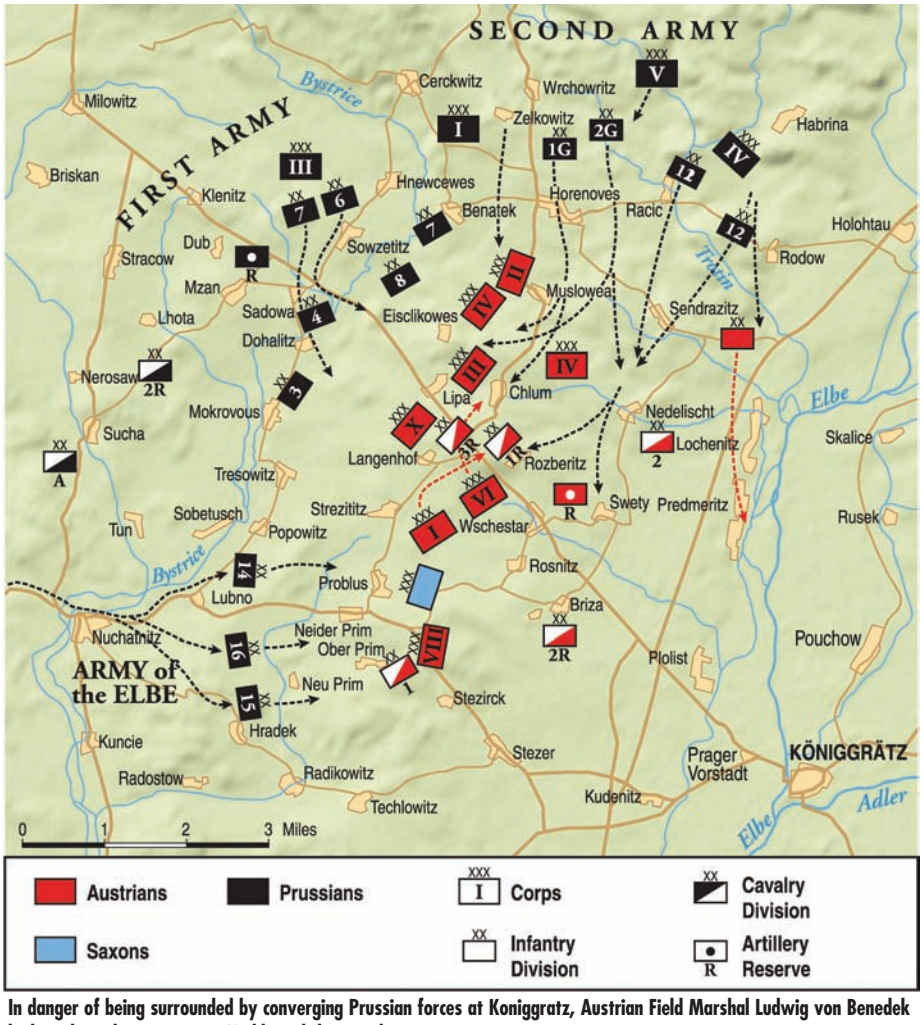
In contrast, the Austrians "blazed all the splendor and variety of the old empire," wrote *London Times* correspondent W.H. Russell. Austrian infantry were dressed in white coats and blue pants, sharpshooters wore forest-green greatcoats and sported broad-rimmed hats topped with feathers, hussars were clad in yellow-trimmed jackets, and black-booted cuirassiers wore crested helmets.

bpk/Jochen Remmer

The mood of the Austrian rank and file also contrasted sharply with that of the Prussians. Russell captured the spectacle that unfolded when Benedek rode forth from Koniggratz amid martial music from regimental bands to the cheers of his troops: "Despite the rawness of the day and the cold rain that fell on already sodden fields, Benedek's progress toward the front brought color, music and a momentary gaiety to the army as if a festival were anticipated rather than a battle."

It was a festival that had been in the works for quite some time. When Wilhelm I ascended the Prussian throne in 1861, he surrounded himself with ministers who shared with him a desire to elevate Prussia to the position of a great power, one that could successfully contest Austria for domination of the other German states. The king lacked the military acumen of his ancestor Frederick the Great. Aware of his shortcomings, Wilhelm relied heavily on Bismarck to orchestrate Prussian foreign policy and on Moltke to strengthen his kingdom's military power to a point that would put it on par with the continent's great powers: Austria, France, and Russia.

At the time of Wilhelm's ascension, Germany remained subdivided into 35 small states and four free cities. One of the strongest of these was Prussia, which had gained the key territory of



In danger of being surrounded by converging Prussian forces at Koniggratz, Austrian Field Marshal Ludwig von Benedek had no choice but to retreat. He blamed the weather.

Silesia under Frederick the Great and other lands in central and western Germany in the wake of Napoleon's defeat. The German Confederation, established at the Congress of Vienna, was meant by the great powers to replace the Holy Roman Empire, which had been dissolved in 1806.

The Prussians deeply resented the continuing domination of the German Confederation by Austria, and Wilhelm set about to unseat the Austrians as the first among equals of the German states. Misfortune befell the Austrian Empire when it was defeated by a French-Sardinian alliance in the Second War of Italian Independence in 1859. Moltke studied in great detail the lessons of that war and set about implementing a series of reforms intended to put Prussia ahead of its rivals in the areas of armaments, tactics, logistics, and military organization. During the period between Wilhelm's coronation and the outbreak of hostilities with Austria, Prussia tripled the size of its army from 100,000 to 300,000 men. The logistics involved in supplying, transporting, and leading an army of this size into battle required a professional general staff.

Prussia and Austria, as defenders of German interests, went to war together in 1864 to expel the Danes, who were attempting to annex the duchy of Schleswig. This duchy and Holstein, to the south, were caught in the middle of the nationalist desires of both the Danish kingdom and the German Confederation. The Second Schleswig War provided the Prussians a chance to test their new weapons and tactics. After four months of fighting, the combined Prussian-Austrian Army drove the Danes out of the Elbe duchies. The subsequent treaty signed August 14, 1865, known as the Gastein Convention, called for Prussia to govern Schleswig and Austria to administer Holstein.

Bismarck felt that possession of both Elbe duchies would substantially augment Prussia's holdings in central Germany, and he proceeded to meddle in Austria's affairs regarding Holstein. By early 1865, relations between the two powers had deteriorated to the point that both sides were on the verge of mobilizing their armies. In a deft diplomatic move, Bismarck signed a mutual support treaty with the Italians in April 1865 to counteract the support Austria enjoyed with the German middle states. If war broke out, the Austrians would find themselves in the difficult position of fighting a two-front war.

As early as February 1866, the Austrians had shifted troops from far-flung eastern garrisons to Bohemia in preparation for war with Prussia. Aware that the Italians were moving troops to the Austrian border, Franz Joseph ordered a full mobilization of Austrian forces on April 27. Despite the urging of Bismarck and Moltke that he respond immediately by mobilizing Prussian troops, Wilhelm I was reluctant to order a countermobilization, for fear of appearing the aggressor in the eyes of Europe. As the days went by, his resolve waned under pressure from his ministers, and on May 12 he authorized the army to call up and equip its reserves. Moltke ordered the Prussian Army to make use of multiple railroad lines to move troops to the Saxon and Bohemian borders.

The Schleswig-Holstein crisis came to a boil the following month. Exasperated by Prussian interference in its administration of Holstein, the Austrians put the matter before the German Diet on June 1. By putting the matter before the German princes, the Austrians violated the

Gastein Convention, which instructed that all matters regarding Schleswig-Holstein were to be settled between Prussia and Austria without the involvement of the other German states. A week later, the Prussians invaded Holstein with a sizable force. The small Austrian garrison at Kiel withdrew by rail to Bohemia without firing a shot. In a meeting of the German Diet at Frankfurt on June 14, the German middle states threw their support behind Austria.

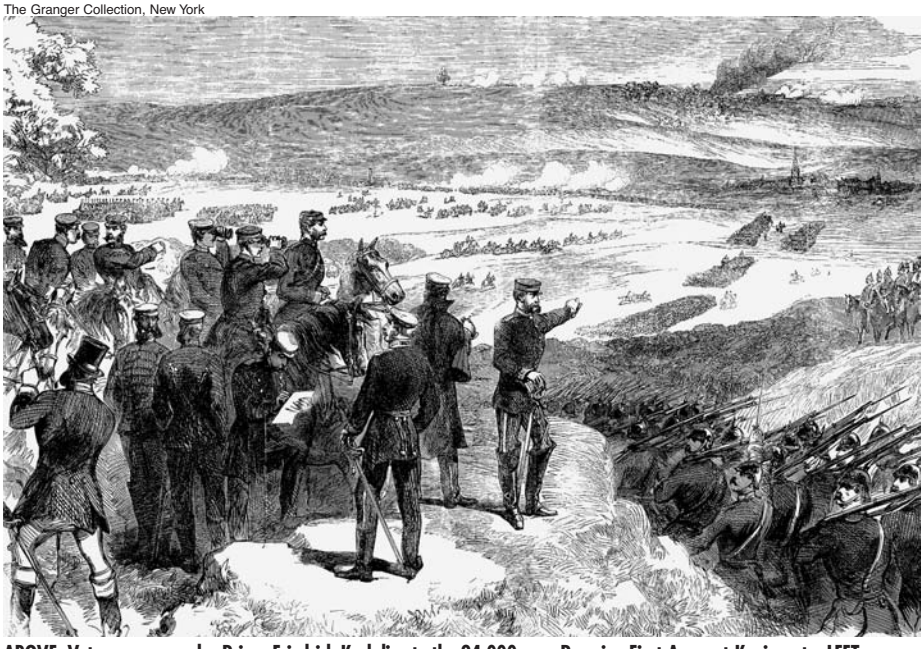
Although Prussia's population of 18 million was about half of the population of the Austrian Empire, Prussia's mandatory service

Library of Congress

requirement ensured that the two powers had roughly the same number of men under arms. The coming conflict would give Prussia its first chance to employ new transportation and communication technologies in a large-scale campaign. Moltke intended to use the railroad to speed Prussian mobilization and employ the telegraph to connect war planners in Berlin with Prussian armies in the field. Once the armies had crossed the border, they would converge on the Austrian main army from different directions and surround it in what Moltke called a Kesselschlact, or pocket battle. He arranged for the military to use five different railway lines to move troops to the Austrian border at the outbreak of hostilities. For their part, the Austrians had only one line running north from Vienna.

New advances in rifled artillery and the development of the breech-loading rifle, with which the Prussian infantry would be armed, also would play an important role in the conflict. Prussian infantry entered the conflict armed with the Dreyse needle gun. Loaded at the breech rather than the barrel, the rifle could be loaded more rapidly and fired from a stand-

The Granger Collection, New York



ABOVE: Veteran commander Prince Friedrich Karl directs the 94,000-man Prussian First Army at Koniggratz. LEFT: General Helmuth von Moltke.

ing, kneeling, or prone position, unlike muskets, which were best loaded while standing. The ability to load and fire kneeling or lying down meant that soldiers could conceal themselves in the terrain and present a smaller target to the enemy. The Prussians had experimented in the Schleswig War of 1864 with new rifle tactics in which infantry battalions broke into smaller companies and platoon formations that allowed them to make maximum use of the tremendous firepower of the needle gun. In contrast, the Austrians clung to more traditional shock tactics in which tightly packed masses of men stormed enemy positions with fixed bayonets, seeking to overwhelm them with the sheer shock of their charge.

Bismarck saw the Austrian violation of the Gastein Convention as an excuse to expel Austria from German politics once and for all. He immediately dispatched a letter disbanding the German Diet. While this formality was ignored by Austria and its allies, it reflected Prussia's desire to establish a new German political body in which it would be the prime authority. To carry out the political aims, Moltke set in motion a well-crafted plan. Three Prussian armies would converge on Saxony and Bohemia, trapping Austria's North Army in a pocket where it would be forced to surrender or face destruction.

Prussia's Army of the Elbe, led by General Karl Erhard Herwarth von Bittenfeld, numbering 46,000 men in three infantry divisions, was instructed to invade Saxony and occupy Dresden. Once Herwarth's army had neutralized Saxony, Moltke's plan called for the Army of the Elbe to join the 94,000-strong Prussian First Army under Prince Friedrich Karl. Together, the two armies would invade Bohemia from Lusatia. Friedrich Karl, a veteran commander who had led the Prussians in the Second Schleswig War, commanded three infantry corps and two cavalry divisions. Meanwhile, the 115,000-strong Prussian Second Army, led by untested Crown Prince Friedrich Wilhelm, would march into Bohemia from Silesia. Moltke's plan called for First Army to capture the Iser River crossings in Bohemia and advance toward the Elbe, where it would make contact with the Second Army. Once contact was made, the two armies would plot the final moves designed to squeeze the Austrians as in a vice.

The Austrians had no comparable plan in effect at the beginning of hostilities, and Field Marshal Benedek was less than brimming with confidence. Benedek had fought with distinction seven years earlier during the humiliating Austrian defeat at Solferino. During that decisive battle, he had disobeyed orders to withdraw the forces under his command in order to enable the remainder of the army to escape to safety across the Mincio River. His performance was hailed throughout the Austrian empire and earned him his dubious leonine sobriquet. But while Benedek exhibited bravery during battle, he lacked both strategic ability and arrogant confidence. Nevertheless, Franz Joseph promoted him to supreme commander of Austrian forces and charged him with defending the crown.

The conflict began with the Austrians benefiting from a strong defensive position behind a cur-

akg-images

tain of high mountains that separated Bohemia from Saxony and Prussia. Should the Austrians need to fall back to a second line of defense, the three 18th-century Elbe fortresses at Josephstadt, Konnigratz, and Theresienstadt, known collectively as the Northern Quadrilateral, offered the most logical place for a strong defensive line from which the Austrians could contest Prussian attempts to cross the river. Benedek began concentrating Austrian forces in Olmutz, east of Bohemia in Moravia, in late May.

Herwarth's Army of the Elbe crossed into Saxony on June 16, forcing Crown Prince Albert's smaller 32,000-strong Saxon army to retreat into Bohemia. As he made final preparations to lead his massive North Army west into Bohemia, Benedek sent a 28,000-man vanguard consisting of the Austrian I Corps and 1st Light Cavalry Division, under the command of General Eduard Clam-Gallas, ahead of the main army to join forces with the Saxons. Clam-Gallas's orders were to take up a strong defensive position behind the Iser River and delay the Prussian advance as long as possible.

On the same day, Franz Joseph ordered Benedek to shift his base of operations from Moravia to Bohemia. Benedek drew up plans for a westward march that he estimated would take his large army two weeks to accomplish. The elaborate plans for the North Army's march into Bohemia called for its six infantry corps, four cavalry divisions, and their supply trains to fan out over five roads.

After the fall of Saxony, Moltke ordered the Prussian First and Second Armies to march from their staging areas to the Bohemian border on June 19. Two days later, the two armies arrived on the Prussian border and awaited final orders to cross into Bohemia. On that same day, Benedek received at his field headquarters an official declaration of war signed by King Wilhelm I. Moltke's plan called for the two armies to advance into Bohemia from two different directions and establish contact with each other at the village of Jicin, a key crossroads on a plateau between the Iser and Elbe Rivers.

The Prussian First Army crossed unopposed into Bohemia on June 23 after Clam-Gallas chose not to block the mountain passes. The First Army occupied Reichenberg the following day. Despite Moltke's clear orders to march as quickly as possible toward the town of Jicin to await the arrival of the Prussian Second Army, Prince Friedrich Karl camped for two days at Reichenberg to replenish his supplies.

Meanwhile, the Prussian Second Army, climbing through the mountains into Bohemia on June 26, found its way blocked by large detachments from Benedek's North Army marching west from Olmutz. Moltke sent orders by telegraph on June 23 to Friedrich Karl urging him to press on to Jicin in order to draw off Austrian forces that might block the passage of the Prussian Second Army through the high mountains to the east.

Spurred into action by Moltke's orders, First Army's 7th and 8th Divisions reached the Iser crossings the evening of June 26. Clam-Gallas, by then united with the Saxons for a combined force of 60,000 men, received orders from Benedek imploring him to hold the Iser line at any price. The two sides clashed at Podol on June 26, and again on June 28 at Munchengratz. At Munchengratz, the Austrians slipped east through a foiled Prussian trap, but the following day were driven from Jicin by the Prussian 5th Division under General Ludwig Tumpling. When Friedrich Karl advanced beyond Reichenberg on June 26, Moltke lost contact with the Prussian First Army for 72 hours. Because of mounting frustration over communications between Berlin and the two Prussian armies in the field, Moltke, Bismarck, and King Wilhelm left Berlin on June 29 to join the First Army at Jicin.

When he learned that a large Prussian force was advancing on the right flank of his route of march toward Jicin, Benedek dispatched the VI Corps and X Corps to slow the Prussians' progress. While the two corps delayed the Prussian army to his north, Benedek would continue west with the bulk of North Army to Jicin. The Austrian VI and X Corps attacked the Prussian Second Army's left and right flanks, respectively. Prussian V Corps commander General Karl Steinmetz soundly defeated Wilhelm Ramming's VI Corps on June 27 at the village of Vysokov, forcing Ramming to fall back to the village of Skalice, where his corps was relieved by Archduke Leopold's VIII Corps.

The clash between Austrian General Ludwig Gablenz's X Corps and Alfred Bonin's Prussian I Corps at Trautenau Pass that same day brought strikingly different results. Despite

heavy losses, Gablenz managed to drive the Prussians back into the mountains. Gablenz subsequently withdrew when the Prussian Guard, which had emerged unopposed from Eipel Pass, outflanked his position.

The last significant action in the sector occurred on July 28, when Steinmetz drove off the Austrian VIII Corps at Skalice. Following that action, Benedek issued new orders for the North Army to move upstream of Josephstadt and concentrate at Koniginhof on the Elbe, a short distance from Skalice. He held no council of war and gave no reason for his change of orders, leaving his corps commanders wondering which Prussian army he intended to fight first.

June 30 dawned with the Austrian North Army concentrated in the Dubenec Plateau between the upper reaches of the Bystrice and Elbe Rivers. Over a four-day period, the Austrians had lost more than 30,000 men as the two armies maneuvered for a set-piece battle. The losses weighed heavily on Benedek, who believed that his army stood little chance of defeating the Prussians in a large-scale encounter. Accordingly, Benedek decided to pull back behind the Elbe in the vicinity of the Koniggratz fortress. "Debacle of Iser Army forces me to retreat in the direction of Koniggratz," Benedek telegraphed the emperor, laying the blame unfairly on Clam-Gallas, whom he replaced at the head of the Austrian I Corps with his second in command, General Leopold Gondrecourt. That evening, the Austrian North Army began marching south toward the Jicin-Koniggratz road, which passed through the small village of Sadowa on the Bystrice River.

Rather than push his corps commanders to get their troops to the east bank of the Elbe as quickly as possible, Benedek allowed his army to encamp on July 1 on a string of hills overlooking the Bystrice, a shallow tributary of the Elbe. While the stream itself posed no obstacle to foot soldiers, artillery had to be driven through fords or bridges. Benedek then sent a second telegraph to Franz Joseph from Koniggratz, urging him to sign an armistice with the Prussians. "Pray conclude peace at any price," wrote Benedek, "a catastrophe is inevitable."

On June 30, Bismarck, Moltke, and King Wilhelm arrived at I Corps headquarters east of Jicin. Moltke immediately ordered scouts to comb the countryside along both banks of the Elbe to locate the North Army's exact position. Moltke assumed that Benedek would withdraw east and set up a defensive line behind the Elbe with his right flank anchored on Josephstadt and his left flank anchored on Koniggratz.

Rather than order the Prussian Second Army to shift west to link up with the Prussian First Army, Moltke ordered it to remain in place. At Koniginhof, the Second Army controlled the upper Elbe crossings and was in a position to march south on either bank, depending on the strategic situation. By keeping a day's march between the two Prussian armies, Moltke was confident that he would be able to outflank Benedek, regardless of where the Austrian chose to make a stand.

Unsure whether the main Prussian attack would come from the west or north, North Army operations chief, General Gideon Krismanic, had drafted orders for the Austrian infantry to deploy on a wide arc that stretched for four miles from the Bystrice to the Elbe. The Austrian center was situated directly opposite the village of Sadowa on the west bank of the Bystrice, straddling the Koniggratz road. Located on the east bank of the Bystrice were about a half dozen hamlets. Adjacent to the road on the south side was the Hola Forest and on the north side the much larger Svib Forest. Austrian engineers set to work clearing trees in front of the Austrian center to provide clear fields of fire and constructing abatis from the logs. They also sited their guns and marked the ranges to ensure effective artillery fire.

On the left flank, atop the hills of Prim and Problus near the village of Nechanice, Krismanic placed the Saxons, the Austrian VIII Corps, and the 1st Austrian Light Cavalry Division. In the center, on the hills of Lipa and Chlum, he positioned the Austrian III and X Corps. On the right flank, anchored on Nedelist, were the Austrian II and IV Corps and the 2nd Light Cavalry Division. The Austrian reserve, placed in the center of what became known as the Bystrice pocket, consisted of I and VI Corps, three heavy cavalry divisions, and 16 batteries.

The plan had several key disadvantages. The flanks were not well anchored, and the entire position was in the form of a salient that made it difficult for the wings to support each other and would make withdrawal difficult if the battle went against the Austrians. Krismanic received orders recalling him to Vienna to explain North Army's questionable state of affairs to the emperor, and he relinquished his authority on the eve of the battle to his replacement, General Alois Baumgarten.

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

ABOVE: An Austrian artillery emplacement trains fire on a distant town during the Battle of Koniggratz. The Austrians had 16 batteries in reserve. OPPOSITE: Armed with their new Dreyse needle guns, quick-firing Prussians in the 1st Guard Regiment take Chlum. They materialized out of thin air, said Austrian General Alois Baumgarten.

Following the capture of Jicin, the Prussian First and Elbe Armies had camped at Horice, a short distance east of Jicin. Moltke instructed Karl Friedrich to wait there until Prussian scouts were able to report the exact location of the Austrian North Army. When the scouts located the enemy's position on the evening of July 2, Karl Friedrich immediately issued orders for his troops to begin a general advance to the Bystrice at 2:30 AM. His orders included no instructions for the Second Army, as he hoped to defeat the Austrians on his own and hoard the glory. When a staff officer showed Moltke a copy of the orders, the chief of staff promptly issued revised orders that included instructions for the Second Army to make a forced march south and deliver a sledgehammer blow to the Austrian right flank.

By 4 AM, Friedrich Karl's six divisions were ready for battle. Four divisions formed the main battle line above and below the village of Sadowa, ready to advance across the Bystrice, with two

more in reserve. An hour later, Crown Prince Wilhelm received orders from Moltke to march swiftly south. Meanwhile, Herwarth's three divisions marched south to Nechanice, where they would attempt to turn the Austrian left flank.

The first shots of the battle were fired at 6:30 AM by fusiliers from General Philipp von Canstein's 15th Division of the Army of the Elbe. The Prussian riflemen drove off Saxon pickets attempting to dismantle the plank bridge over the Bystrice at Nechanice. Hearing the firing, Austrian and Saxon troops nearby formed for battle.

King Wilhelm I, accompanied by Bismarck, arrived on horseback at 7:45 AM at the Prussian command post established by Prince Friedrich Karl atop Dub Hill overlooking the Bystrice. There they joined the prince and Moltke, who were doing their best to survey the enemy position through a thick blanket of mist that clung to the valley. An artillery duel between the two sides had begun just 15 minutes before. As if on cue, an Austrian shell exploded 20 yards from the king, causing brief alarm but failing to harm the Prussian monarch.

Spurring his horse, the king rode to Moltke's side. "How long is this towel whose corner we've grabbed here?" the king demanded, wanting to know whether they faced the entire Austrian army or simply a determined rear guard. "We don't know exactly; it's at least three corps, perhaps the whole Austrian Army," replied Moltke calmly.

At 9 AM, Friedrich Karl ordered a general advance across the Bystrice. The Prussian Pomeranian II Corps, comprising the 3rd and 4th Divisions, forded the stream with relative ease and drove the Austrian jaegers from the X Corps back to Langenhof Hill. Austrian shells crashed among the advancing Prussians with devastating results. Efforts to unlimber Prussian guns were unsuccessful as the Austrians zeroed in on the gun crews, smashing them before they could bring their guns into action. The shelling was so intense that the troops from the 4th Division sought shelter in the Hola Forest.

"The bombshells crashed though the walls as if through cardboard. Finally, raging fire set the village ablaze," wrote one Prussian soldier. "We withdrew to the left, into the woods, but it was no better there. Jagged hunks of wood and big tree splinters flew around our heads."

To the north, the lead battalions of hard-fighting Eduard Fransecky's 7th Division crossed the Bystrice and cleared the village of Benatek of enemy pickets. Following closely behind 7th Division was General Heinrich Horn's 8th Division. To the north of the sprawling Svib Forest was Benatek, and to its immediate south was the village of Cistoves. Before the Prussians could put troops on unoccupied Masloved Hill, they would need control of the Svib Forest to protect their lines of communication. At 8:30 AM, Fransecky personally led his battalions into the wooded tract.

Fearing that his troops might be left out of the fighting, Austrian IV Corps commander, General Tassilo Festitics, rode west to Masloved at 7:30 AM to reconnoiter enemy troop positions. He believed that if his troops occupied Masloved, they would be in a position to counterattack Prussian infantry and possibly drive them back across the Bystrice. Festitics dispatched messengers to both his second in com-

mand, General Anton von Mollinary, and II Corps commander General Karl Thun, directing them to march west and occupy Masloved and Horenoves. While Festitics rightly assumed that enemy possession of the two hills would endanger the right flank, he failed to consider that the Prussian Second Army, whose location was still unknown to the Austrians, might be able to slip around the right flank.

Benedek broke off a meeting with Krismanic and Baumgarten at the Koniggratz fortress when informed that the Prussians were attacking in force. Passing through cheering ranks of soldiers, Benedek rode west on the high road toward the sounds of battle. Arriving at Lipa around 9 AM, he assessed the situation with Archduke Ernst, commander of the Austrian III Corps. Benedek learned that the archduke had sent two brigades forward to engage the Prussians in violation of Krismanic's orders, which called for the units to hold the high ground and await Prussian attacks. Benedek immediately called them back. It was not the last time that the field marshal would have to countermand subordinates' faulty orders.

Prussian infantry in the 27th and 67th Regiments defend the Svib Forest near Cistoves from a fierce Austrian counterattack.

akg-images

For close to three hours the fighting raged in the dark confines of Svib Forest. Shells from 50 guns atop Lipa Hill roared into the forest. When the Prussians emerged from the woods, General Karl Appiano's brigade from III Corps at Cistoves counterattacked, forcing the Prussians to fall back to the protection of the forest. This assault was followed by a flank attack from the east by General Emerich Fleischacker's brigade of the IV Corps.

The Austrian columns made easy targets for the Prussians, who had divided into smaller, platoon-sized formations more suitable to the forested terrain. "We attempted a bayonet attack first on the northeastern edge of the wood, and then several times inside," an Austrian officer wrote. "Each time the enemy refused to stand his ground. Instead he kept up a steady fire until we had closed to within 80 paces, then dropped back using the terrain for cover."

While the battle raged in Svib Forest, shrapnel from a Prussian shell sheared off Festitics's foot, and Mollinary immediately assumed command of IV Corps. By 10 AM, Mollinary was feeding fresh troops into the fight in an effort to cut off Fransecky. General Carl Pockh's brigade from IV Corps charged into the south end of the woods, while two more brigades from Thun's II Corps attacked the north end of the woods. At 10:30, Fransecky ordered a general withdrawal toward Benatek. Exiting the woods to the south, Fransecky's men were pursued by Pockh's columns, but fresh Prussian battalions provided covering fire for their fellow soldiers. Altogether, Fransecky's men had withstood 13 charges by the Austrians with a loss of more than 2,000 men.

In a desire to try to retake Svib Forest, Fransecky sent a messenger to Dub Hill requesting reinforcements. Friedrich Karl prepared to commit his two remaining divisions, but Moltke was adamant that they be kept in reserve. The king listened to arguments on each side. "I must seriously advise your majesty not to send General Fransecky a single man of infantry support," Moltke warned, adding that Fransecky's situation could only be improved by the arrival of Second Army's vanguard. Wilhelm overruled his nephew.

After Mollinary's request for heavy cavalry from the reserve to help drive the Prussians back across the Bystrice was denied by Benedek, he rode to Lipa at noon to consult in person with the field marshal. Mollinary proposed an assault by three Austrian corps across the Bystrice that would drive a wedge between the Prussian First and Second Armies. Minutes before Mollinary's arrival, Benedek had received a message informing him that the Prussian Second Army was marching south to the battle. Fearing that storming the Prussian positions would result in mass casualties, Benedek refused to take the offensive. He ordered Mollinary and Thun to break off their attack and fall back to their original positions. To further bolster the Austrian right, Benedek ordered Ramming's VI Corps in the reserve to shift north to bolster the right flank.

To the south, Herwarth had two of his three divisions across the Bystrice by midday. Prussians armed with the deadly needle gun shattered Saxon battalions that put up token resistance before falling back to the relative safety of Prim Hill. The Saxon retreat left Hradek Hill, to the south of Prim and Problus, open for the Prussians to occupy. Canstein's men swarmed over the key position, and the Prussians dragged guns up Hradek to enfilade enemy positions. General Joseph Weber, who had replaced Archduke Leopold as VIII Corps commander, sent two of his brigades to stabilize the Saxons and attempt to take Hradek back from the Prussians. The Prussians shattered the Austrian counterattack through a combination of artillery and rifle fire.

By noon the mist had cleared from the valley floor, and the Prussian leaders atop Dub Hill had their first unobstructed view of the battlefield. The Prussian center was a scene of complete carnage, the landscape strewn with dead and mangled bodies that had absorbed the full fury of well-served Austrian batteries. In the distance, Ramming's VI Corps was seen moving toward the front. Fearing the worst, King Wilhelm inquired whether Moltke had contingency plans for a retreat. "Here there will be no retreat," Moltke said coolly. "We are fighting for the very existence of Prussia." Observing the timely arrival of the Second Army's vanguard, Moltke reassured the nervous monarch, "Success is complete; Vienna lies at your feet."

Riding with the vanguard, Crown Prince Wilhelm and his staff reconnoitered enemy positions atop Masloved and Horenoves from a safe distance while Prussian guns unlimbered and began shelling the Austrian forces on the heights to the south. When sufficient numbers arrived to warrant an advance, a single Prussian fusilier battalion captured Horenoves from a small party from the Austrian II Corps, which surrendered without a fight. A short time later, the lead battalions of General Louis Mutius's VI Corps crossed the Trotinka River east of Horenoves and brushed aside enemy pickets, occupying the villages of Racic and Trotina.

By 1 PM, Austrian troops of the II and IV Corps abandoned their forward positions and began

retreating to their original positions. Prussian troops from the 1st Guard Brigade, supported by a portion of Fransecky's 7th Division which had reoccupied the Svib Forest, advanced south at 2 PM through Cistoves. Dividing into smaller companies and platoons, the 1st Guard Brigade hurried south along a sunken road that offered a strong measure of cover toward the village and heights of Chlum. By then, Herwarth had all three of his divisions in action to the south. Shortly after seizing the twin hills, Herwarth's guns began shelling Gablenz's X Corps atop Langenhof Hill. Moltke's envelopment strategy was going precisely according to plan.

When the 1st Guards units arrived at Chlum, the village was in flames from Prussian artillery fire. Shaken by the continuous shelling of Prussian guns, several hundred Hungarians of Appiano's Brigade promptly surrendered. Other battalions of Appiano's brigade were mowed down by Prussian rifles as they attempted to retake the village. "The Prussians materialized in Chlum as if from thin air," Baumgarten wrote.

Benedek realized by mid-afternoon that his army was in imminent danger of being surrounded and cut off. Even so, he had not realized the depth to which the Prussian Second Army had breached his right flank. From his position on the southwest slope of Lipa, he had just issued orders for Ludwig Piret's I Corps brigade to march south and retake Problus when his adjutant, August Neuber, informed him at 2:45 PM that the Prussians had taken Chlum and were in the Austrian rear. Hoping to retake Chlum, Benedek issued orders through his staff for Ramming and Gondrecourt to take their reserve corps and assault Chlum. Benedek and his staff then rode south to assess firsthand the severity of the situation. After trying unsuccessfully to rally Austrian troops retreating from Chlum, Benedek and his staff turned south toward Langenhof.

Benedek never made it that far. Rather than setting up a new headquarters from which he might establish a rearguard to cover the retreat, the Austrian field marshal rode wildly about the field, vainly attempting to rally individual units. When the Prussians atop Problus and Chlum began shelling the position of the Austrian reserve units, a substantial number of soldiers dropped their muskets and packs and fled across the countryside to escape the surging enemy.

The sea of panicked Austrian troops fleeing from the front lines swept Benedek and his small entourage along with it toward the Elbe. Troops from seven corps and five cavalry divisions were squeezed into a pocket no more than a half mile wide, trying to reach the Elbe. Although Benedek had ordered four pontoon bridges constructed earlier in the day in case retreat became necessary, neither the troops nor their officers had been told how to reach them.

In the chaos unfolding in the Bystrice pocket, it was impossible for the two Austrian infantry corps commanders charged with counterattacking Chlum to coordinate their actions. Nevertheless, Ramming and Gondrecourt ordered their troops to change direction and attack. Ramming's counterattack began around 3:15 PM, with General Ferdinand Rosenzweig's brigade on the left sweeping aside a few companies of Prussian fusiliers stationed around the village of Rozberic. Among the Prussian officers who received a taste of combat at Rozberic was Lieutenant Paul von Hindenburg, who would obtain worldwide fame in the next century.

THAT NIGHT BENEDEK TELEGRAPHED FRANZ JOSEPH: "THE CATASTROPHE I WARNED YOU OF TWO DAYS AGO HAPPENED TODAY." REFUSING TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE DISASTER, BENEDEK BLAMED FOUL WEATHER AND DISLOYAL SUBORDINATES FOR THE DEBACLE.

The Prussians retreated north on a sunken road from Rozberic toward Chlum, with Rosenzweig's infantry in hot pursuit. Without realizing it, the pursuing Austrians ran into a trap. Prussian infantry hiding in the fields to the west sprang up and fired at point-blank range into the stunned Austrians. In an effort to support Rosenzweig, Ramming ordered General Georg Waldstatten's brigade into action, but retreating Austrian cavalry rode through their own lines, severely disrupting the formations. Before they could realign, Prussian rifles and cannons ripped into their ranks. Realizing the futility of his situation, Ramming called off the attack. In a short time he had lost nearly 6,000 men.

bpk

Gondrecourt's attack followed on the heels of Ramming's attack. As he repositioned his three brigades to face north, the Prussians poured continuous rifle fire into the Austrian I Corps. Gondrecourt personally led a Slovenian regiment up the slopes of Chlum into a hail of enemy fire. After taking heavy losses, he broke off the attack, having miraculously survived the experience. Gondrecourt's attack sputtered out before 5 PM, and the survivors fled east.

Two Austrian heavy cavalry divisions from the reserve formed up facing west just before 4 PM to relieve pressure on the Austrian center. Prince Wilhelm of Schleswig-Holstein's 1st Cavalry Division and General Carl Coudenhove's 3rd Division lined up on the north and south sides of the Koniggratz road. Prince Wilhelm intended to attack Langenhof, while Coudenhove aimed for Problus. Holstein's troopers never reached their objective. Heavy fire from Prussian fusiliers on the valley floor forced the prince's division to retire, while a wall of shrapnel and rifle fire shattered Coudenhove's attack before his troops could reach their objective. In a half hour's time, the Austrians lost more than

Prussian soldiers fire their needle guns from prone positions point-blank into the disintegrating Austrian cavalry ranks.

700 troopers in the suicidal charge.

Demoralized Austrian infantry milled around the west bank of the Elbe before the palisade guarding the causeway leading to Koniggratz. Shortly before 5 PM, a large body of Austrian and Saxon soldiers smashed through the gates and swarmed over the causeway. The garrison inside mistook the Saxons for Prussians and fired on the mob. Ramming arrived and attempted to restore order. Meanwhile, Benedek and his small escort gave up trying to rally individual units. With tears of sorrow and rage streaming down his face, the defeated field marshal rode away from the field.

When he reached the fortress, Benedek ordered the pontoon bridges destroyed for fear the Prussians would capture them intact. His decision left large numbers of Austrian and Saxon infantry and cavalry stranded on the west bank. Many refugees unwilling to wait for the bottleneck at the causeway to subside plunged into the river and drowned. That night Benedek telegraphed Franz Joseph: "The catastrophe I warned you of two days ago happened today."

Refusing to accept responsibility for the disaster, Benedek blamed foul weather and disloyal subordinates for the debacle.

The Prussian cavalry, which had ridden into battle behind the infantry, was not in a position to pursue the retreating Austrians. A large portion of the Prussian Second Army was still en route to the battlefield and would not arrive until after nightfall. For these reasons, Moltke decided against a night pursuit.

Austrian casualties from Koniggratz totaled 24,000 killed and wounded and 20,000 captured, while the Prussians lost 9,000 killed and wounded. Moltke's decision not to push Prussian units across the Elbe the next day gave Benedek and his generals time to reorganize and begin the long retreat to Olmutz. When the Prussians finally crossed the Elbe on July 5, Moltke sent the Second Army east to pin the North Army at Olmutz while First Army occupied Prague and marched on Vienna.

The Austrian situation in the Seven Weeks' War continued to deteriorate. The Italians launched a fresh offensive against the Austrians in the south, and the Prussian First Army pillaged Austrian crown lands in Bohemia and Upper Austria. The remaining German states surrendered to Prussia, and France showed no interest in assisting the Austrians. With no help in the offing, Franz Joseph surrendered to King Wilhelm on July 22.

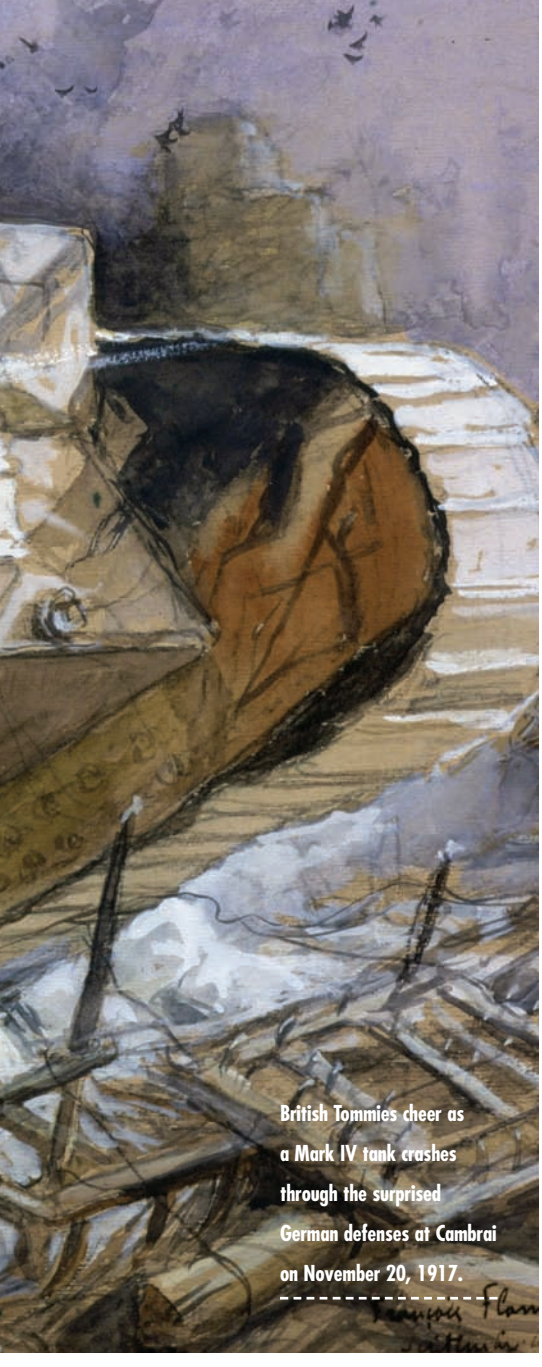
The Peace of Prague signed on August 23 called for Austria to cede Holstein and withdraw from German politics altogether. In addition, Franz Joseph had to pay 30 million silver florins in compensation for Prussia's wartime expenses. As a result of its triumph over the German middle states, Prussia greatly expanded its territory through the annexation of Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover, Hesse-Kassel, Nassau, and Frankfurt. The creation of the German empire substantially altered the balance of power on the European continent and set the stage for two catastrophic world wars in the coming century. □

TANK ATTACK AT

BADLY NEEDING A VICTORY ON THE STALEMATED WESTERN FRONT, BRITISH COMMANDER DOUGLAS HAIG TURNED TO THE FLEDGLING TANK CORPS FOR A BREAKTHROUGH. CAMBRAI WAS THE PLACE HE CHOSE TO TRY.

BRITISH BRIG. GEN. HUGH ELLES walked past the Mark IV tanks of H Company, a solitary figure amid metal monsters that looked, according to one jaundiced observer, like giant toads. He stopped abruptly at tank H1, nicknamed "Hilda," and banged its metal side with his ash walking stick, alerting the crew that he had arrived. Elles then climbed aboard, gingerly squeezing into Hilda's open hatch. Within

The Art Archive/Musee de L'Armee Paris/Gianni Dagli Orti



British Tommies cheer as a Mark IV tank crashes through the surprised German defenses at Cambrai on November 20, 1917.

CAMBRAI

BY ERIC NIDEROST

moments he had all but disappeared; only his head and shoulders remained in view.

It was the morning of November 20, 1917, and the British Third Army was about to attack the Germans at Cambrai. But this was no ordinary battle. Its outcome would determine the fate of Elles's newly minted Tank Corps and change the face of warfare on the Western Front and beyond. The tank was a new weapon of war, and its debut the year before was anything but auspicious. Elles knew that this was a make-or-break event, requiring a maximum effort from every officer and man in each tank.

Elles glanced at his watch, then looked straight ahead into the predawn gloom. The chalky ground was gentling rolling, culminating in a series of ridges. Here and there thick clusters of trees formed woods, their dark shapes forming opaque smears on the horizon. Pockets of mist shrouded the earth, the thin clammy tendrils adding a spectral quality to the scene. Somewhere in the distance was the Hindenburg Line, a formidable series of German trenches fronted by belts of barbed wire and defended by machine guns and artillery.

The British attack was scheduled to start at "Z hour," 6:20 AM, with the tanks slated to move out 10 minutes earlier. At 6:10, more than 400 tank engines coughed and sputtered to life. Hilda lurched forward, proudly flying the Tank Corps flag. The multicolored banner featured brown, red, and green horizontal stripes. Each color had a meaning, signifying the corps slogan: "Though the mud and blood to the green fields beyond." A new chapter in mobile warfare was about to begin.

The tank attack at Cambrai was an attempt to break the bloody stalemate that had evolved since the beginning of the war in 1914. In the autumn of 1917, General Sir Douglas Haig was a man in search of a victory—a search that was becoming increasingly quixotic. Initially, the British commander possessed enormous reserves of self-confidence, believing that God Himself had placed him in command. With such a divine appointment, who could doubt Great Britain's ultimate triumph?

By late 1917, even Haig's boundless enthusiasm was beginning to flag. The year before, the British Army had been grievously mauled at the Somme, and in the summer of 1917 Haig launched another major offensive at Passchendaele, a drive designed to advance through Flanders to a major German submarine base at Bruges. But Passchendaele, like the Somme, was an unmitigated disaster for the Allies. British, New Zealand, Australian, and Canadian forces literally bogged down in muddy shell holes filled with water from torrential rains. After months of savage fighting, the British had advanced a mere five miles, at a cost of another 400,000 casualties. Prime Minister David Lloyd George and the British cabinet were appalled. The British Army was being bled white, and Haig was doing nothing to stop the hemorrhaging.

In the meantime, the fledgling Tank Corps was in limbo, metal dinosaurs that seemed on the verge of quick extinction. Tanks were originally conceived as "landships," able to cross barbed wire and heavy machine-gun fire with impunity. But the technology was still in its infancy and needed near-perfect conditions to succeed. Tanks were first used at the Battle of the Somme in 1916, but their debut was inauspicious. Proper tank-infantry coordination had yet to be worked out, and the heavy metal monsters had difficulty plowing through waterlogged soil that was pockmarked by shell holes. Conservative officers, wedded to the past, dismissed the tanks as abject failures. Outlined one member of the British general staff: "One, tanks are unable to negotiate bad ground; two, the ground on a battlefield will always be bad; three, therefore tanks are no good on a battlefield."

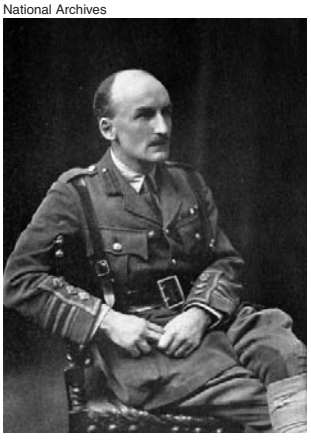
The 37-year-old Elles was a fierce defender of the tank concept, and he was not about to give up without a fair trial. In this, he was seconded by his chief of staff, Lt. Col. J.F.C. Fuller, who had prepared a plan for the future employment of tanks in a blitzkrieg-like raid in the vicinity of Cambrai, 45 miles south of Passchendaele in northern France. The ground there was firm and comparatively unscarred by war, making it perfect for a "go in, go out" style of raid that would finally demonstrate the tank's potential.

Elles found an unexpected ally in General Sir Julian Byng, commander of the British Third Army. Byng was an early convert to the plan and enthusiastically pushed to Haig the idea of using tanks. In the aftermath of Passchendaele, Haig knew all too well that his job and reputation were

on the line, and he gave the green light for the project. But the seeds of the Cambrai plan, watered by Haig's desperation and nurtured by Byng's enthusiasm, soon grew into something entirely different from Fuller's more modest original conception. It was now going to be a full-scale attack instead of a raid, an attack that Haig and Byng fully expected would lead to the long-dreamed-of breakthrough that had eluded the Allies since 1914.

Cambrai was an important transportation center, the hub of a railway network, but its physical capture was only part of the plan. The principal battlefield lay between the Canal du Nord and Canal de San Quentin, inland waterways that ran roughly parallel to one another, some five to six miles apart. They would secure the flanks of the operation. The first objective was to punch a hole five miles wide into the vaunted Hindenburg Line. Once that was achieved, the next goal was to secure breakthrough points on both the right and the left. On the right, several bridges that spanned the San Quentin Canal had to be captured intact. On the left, the high ground at Bourlon Wood was another key to victory.

National Archives



ABOVE: Tank Corps Colonel John F.C. Fuller, photographed in1941, planned the attack. OPPOSITE TOP: A British Mark I tank C19, nicknamed "Clan Leslie," in Chimpanzee Valley on September 15, 1916, the day the tanks first went into operation.

After the infantry and tanks achieved their objectives, British cavalry would cross the canal and sweep down Bourlon Ridge, plunging deep behind enemy lines. They would then sweep northward and take the bridges over the Sensee River, cutting off German forces south of the river. The cavalry would also create havoc behind enemy lines, allowing the Third Army to exploit the situation and advance quickly toward Valenciennes. The trickle of British cavalry would become a flood of infantry, artillery, and tanks, ever widening until the breach in the Hindenburg Line was beyond repair. The more Byng though about it, the more convinced he was of the plan's success.

The German forces manning the Cambrai sector of the Hindenburg Line were part of General Oskar von Watter's Battle Group Caudry. There were three divisions in the line, but they were generally understrength. The German High Command was not unduly alarmed—Cambrai was considered a quiet sector, and above all they had confidence in the strength of the Hindenburg Line and the efficient killing ability of their machine gunners. The Cambrai portion consisted of three trench lines, each two to three miles apart. There were deep dugouts, resistance centers laid out in checkerboard fashion, and belts of barbed wire 50 yards thick.

There were serious flaws in the British plan. The six corps assigned to the Cambrai offensive, codenamed Operation GY, were fresh from the Passchendaele fiasco. They had been mauled, and they were exhausted. Worse still, few reserves were available. The Tank Corps was going to throw every man and machine into the fight. There would be 378 fighting tanks going forward, crushing barbed wire, crossing trenches, and hopefully silencing German resistance. After the tanks had flattened the barbed wire, the resulting tangled "mat" was considered suitable for infantry to cross, but not horses. To solve that problem, 32 support tanks were fitted with towing gear and grapnels. The grapnels would hook the flattened wire, pull it aside, and gather it into prickly balls, making a clear path for cavalry horses' hooves. Other support tanks were fitted to carry supplies, bridging materials, telephone cables, and wireless apparatus. Altogether, 476 tanks were going to take part in the battle.

As Z hour approached, both tank crews and the infantry behind them felt a growing excitement, a heady mixture of elation, adrenaline, and understandable fear. "Like all the rest I was excited at the prospect of going into battle behind these new-fangled, Wellsian monsters," Corporal George Coppard recalled. "I felt they were really going to exact retribution, on behalf of all of us, for the countless miseries and privations that we poor blighters had suffered at Jerry's hands. This was to be the reckoning."

The Germans, for their part, had nothing but contempt for tanks, but as an insurance policy they had widened many trenches to 13 or 14 feet across. In theory, it would make the trenches too wide for a tank to cross. But the British had foreseen the problem and come up with a brilliant "medieval" solution—fascines. These were bundles of brushwood bound together with chains, making one huge mass 11 feet in diameter, 10 feet wide, and weighing around a ton. The 51st Chinese Labor Company worked day and night to make enough fascines in time for the big attack. Each fascine would be mounted on the tank's nose. When a tank approached the edge of a trench, the fascine would be jettisoned into the gap, allowing the machine to cross with relative ease.

Surprise was going to be the key to the operation, which meant that there could be no ranging shots for the artillery. By the same token, there would be no artillery barrages to warn the enemy where the attack was going to take place. British gunners had learned to fire accurately "straight from the map," precalibrating their guns for action. If artillery was brought up at night and hidden from observation, surprise could still be achieved.

The British assault forces, right to left, were the 12th (Eastern), 20th (Light), 6th, 51st (Highland), 82nd (West Riding), and 36th (Ulster). The 29th Division was held for support. Fuller had worked out precise plans for infantry-tank cooperation, plans that would be put to the test in the coming fight. The tanks would lead the way, crushing the wire and clearing the German trenches. Khaki-clad Tommies would follow close behind in "worms," or columns, not long lines as was customary.

The Cambrai attack would also get crucial air support from no fewer than 14 British squadrons. Some 275 Sopwith Camels, Scouts, Bristol Fighters, DH4s, and DH5s would lend a hand by bombing and strafing German positions. Ironically, the German air force was

THE MARK IV TANK

The Mark IV tank used at Cambrai was rhomboidal in shape and came in two basic versions: male and female. The male version featured four machine guns and two 6-pounder (57mm) guns that were mounted on side extensions called sponsons. By contrast, the female version had only machine guns. Each vehicle was given a name corresponding to the letter designation of the battalion. For example, D Battalion tanks were named Deborah, Dominie, Devil May Care, Demon, and so on.

The tanks had a crew of eight, including a driver, commander, two gearsmen, two gunners, and two loaders. The crews were protected by armor that was up to 12mm thick—about a half an inch. Steel plates used for armor were cut and drilled before being hardened. They were then riveted to an iron frame. Crews developed real affection for their metal beasts, insisting that each machine had its own unique ways and personality. If a tank was badly damaged, a crew would be reluctant to

grounded due to heavy ground fog and poor visibility. The Royal Flying Corps compensated by hugging the ground, flying so low that they were able to shout encouragement to the British infantry as they buzzed past.

At precisely 6:20 AM, more than 1,000 British guns opened fire, the thunderous reports shattering the morning calm. Hundreds of shells rained down on the German trench lines, gouging great craters into the earth, tearing, dismembering, and pulverizing human flesh with horrifying ease. Tank crews in the front line had front-row seats to the mesmerizing spectacle. "The whole of the enemy's lines were lit up," one tanker remembered, "in a tossing, bubbling torrent of multi-colored flames. And, best of all, nothing came back in reply. It seemed almost too good to be true, this steady rumbling forward over marvelous going. No craters in the ground, no shelling from the enemy, and our infantry following steadily behind."

The tanks started to advance, great rhomboidal tortoises clanking through the grassy chalk soil at about two to three miles an hour. Their advance was slow but seemingly inexorable. The belts of barbed wire were easily crushed beneath the lumbering 28-ton bellies of the Mark IV tanks. Meanwhile, dazed German soldiers, their senses reeling from the preliminary bombardment, hoped for a respite when the barrage lifted. Half-deafened from

Imperial War Museum

shell bursts, they peered into the early-morning gloom and beheld an awesome spectacle: Hundreds of dark shapes probed through the tendrils of mist, an iron tide that refused to ebb.

For many German veterans, it was too much to bear. Soldiers either fled in terror or surrendered in droves. Ventilation was poor in the tanks, and even in the early going the crews already were sweating in temperatures that reached 120 degrees. But these perspiring warriors were filled with a growing elation. Tank commander Captain D.G. Browne reported: "The German outposts, dazed or annihilated by the sudden deluge of shells, were overrun in an instant. Down the whole

transfer to another machine.

At Cambrai, tanks worked in sections of threes. The leading tank crushed through the wire, then turned left abruptly without crossing the first German trench, called the fire trench. It blazed away, providing cover for its two partners. The second tank followed, dropping its fascine into the fire trench and crossing over; then it turned left and worked its way down the back of the fire trench. The third tank then came forward, crossing the fire trench via the fascine already there and making for the second, or support, trench. Once there, it dropped its own fascine, crossed over the support trench, and turned left to provide covering fire. Meanwhile, the first tank came around, crossed the fire and support trenches via the fascines in place, and made for the third and final trench.

By 1917 standards, the Mark IV was a marvel of modern technology. It proved to be a very effective weapon when the ground was good, surprise was achieved, and infantry support was available.

Public Domain

But armored warfare was still in its infancy, and the Mark IV was not without serious flaws. It was found that the male's 6-pounder guns could only be used effectively if the tank was not moving. The vibration from the tracks—among other things—prevented accurate use of the gun's sighting telescope.

The 12mm armor was proof against most ordinary bullets, although sometimes the Germans had deadly armor-piercing rounds. The real danger was artillery shells, which could turn a tank into a flaming coffin within seconds. At 28 tons, the Mark IV's great weight was too much for its engine, transmission, and suspension.

In action, a tank was its own self-contained hell. The noise was so great that commanders had to scream at the top of their lungs, and temperatures often reached over 100 degrees, regardless of the outside weather. The Germans learned to fire machine guns at a tank's vision slits. Ricochets and molten pieces of bullet fragments—including white-hot pieces of the copper jackets—would spray particles into the tank, an effect crews mordantly called a "splash."

Crews sat beside the engine and transmission. There were no firewalls or any kind of protection. In practice, that meant inhaling a nauseating cloud of vapors, a stench that included gasoline, carbon monoxide, oil smoke, and cordite from shells. Crews had to endure such conditions for as long as seven or eight hours at a time during a major battle. Sometimes crew members would pass out or become violently ill. □

Imperial War Museum

ABOVE: Members of the 4th Battalion, Gordon Highlanders (51st Division) leapfrog an enemy trench at Ribecourt. OPPOSITE: Aerial view of British tanks during the Battle of Cambrai, as photographed from a German plane.

line tanks were dipping and rearing up and clawing their way across into the almost unravaged country beyond. The defenders of the line were running panic-stricken, casting away arms and equipment."

Elles had led his men forward in Hilda, but after crossing the main German trenches and sharing the risks with his frontline tank crews, he was needed back at the command center in the rear. He got out of Hilda, casually lit his pipe, and walked back to Tank Corps headquarters to direct operations. Ironically, Hilda later ditched. Elles sent a congratulatory telegram to Colonel Ernest Swinton, creator of the Tank Corps, back in London: "All ranks thank you. Your show. Elles."

On the right, the 12th Division was making good progress, taking La Vacquerie and pushing on to Masnieres. There was a road bridge over the San Quentin Canal at Masnieres, and it had to be captured intact if the British were going to establish a bridgehead on the far side. Precise plans were jettisoned as different units began a mad scramble to secure the various canal bridges. Major Philip Hammond, commander of an F Battalion scratch force, set out on foot to make sure the Masnieres canal bridge was not destroyed. British infantry reached Masnieres about noon. Most of the Germans had fled, but gray-clad snipers infested the buildings, making life difficult for the tanks and supporting infantry as they swarmed through the town.

The Masnieres bridge had been partly damaged by German engineers, but the temptation to cross was just too great. A tank named "Flying Fox II" decided to try its luck. The weakened steel buckled under the tank's 28-ton weight, unceremoniously dumping the sluggish leviathan into the canal water with a great gout of steam. The eight-man crew escaped successfully, but in the process the commander lost his toupee. He later applied for—and received—compensation for the lost hairpiece.

The British had more luck at Marcoing, a mile away from Masnieres. Some 20 tanks from A and B Battalions, accompanied by 29th Division infantry, captured the railway bridge intact. About half a mile east of the failed Masnieres bridge, the 2nd Battalion of Hampshire Regiment found a lock bridge that was undamaged, along with a wooden footbridge to the west. The Hampshires joined other regiments to form a toehold on the canal's opposite side, but the situation was still precarious.

The next step was for the cavalry to gallop across and spearhead a breakthrough. This never happened, for a variety of reasons. The 5th Cavalry Division was ensconced at Finis, far behind the British lines. There was a breakdown in communications, and it took hours for word of the day's success to reach the horse soldiers. Finally, the cavalry moved forward, but it wasn't until 3 PM that they started to arrive at the front in large numbers. By then, the daylight was fast fading, few bridges were in British hands, and the horsemen could not go across en masse.

B Squadron, Fort Garry Horse, managed to cross the lock bridge, but it took half an hour to funnel 150 mounts through the narrow span. When the squadron commander was killed, leadership fell to Lieutenant Marcus Strachen. For a few hours, members of B Squadron could indulge themselves, riding about in a traditional manner that harkened back to Balaclava and Waterloo. They attacked a German battery, Strachen personally sabering seven Germans. But finally the realities of modern war caught up with the dream of dashing cavaliers mounted on swift steeds. When Strachen finally made it back to British lines, only 23 men were still with him—all of them without horses. The lieutenant received a Victoria Cross for his exploits.

The 51st Highland Division ran into trouble at Flesquieres, in the center-left area of the battlefield. The division's commander, Maj. Gen. George M. Harper, didn't like tanks, feeling that they attracted too much enemy fire. He

had his Highlanders advance by section in extended order, not in platoons by file, as called for in Fuller's detailed plan for tank-infantry support. The Black Watch, Seaforth, Gordon, and Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were strung out 200 yards or more behind the leading tanks. When tanks from D and E Battalions reached the crest of Flesquieres Ridge, they were surprised by German batteries ensconced on the reverse slope.

The Mark IV tanks had armor that was proof against ordinary bullets, but vulnerable to artillery. One after another, tanks exploded as shells ripped into their iron skins. Crews not able to escape were burned alive, immolated when their machines became great funeral pyres. German musketeer Walter Neumann of the 27th Reserve Regiment took part in one attack on the tanks. "While we quickly packed up our belongings," he reported, "we could hear rifle bullets whistling in the streets. As we emerged from the house a tank drove by us. With five men I sneaked behind the machine and pushed a few grenades through the tank's apertures. An inferno erupted inside, finishing off the crew."

Some tanks had lucky escapes. At one point a German shell punched through a tank, decapitating the driver, whose head fell on the lap of the officer seated beside him. The same shell killed two gunners on the right sponson before exiting out the rear. Since the missile didn't explode, the rest of the crewmen survived.

The Highland infantry found Flesquieres rough going. Major Erich Krebs of the 27th Reserve Infantry Regiment and around 600 other Germans fought with great courage against the odds. The Highlanders had to fight for every house, building, and street of the tiny village. The Highland Division's advance was effectively stalled, creating a kind of domino effect on the neighboring 62nd Division. Its commander, Maj. Gen. W.P. Braithwaite, was making good progress but felt compelled to halt because he didn't want his right flank up in the air and exposed.

Night fell and the battle ended, at least for the moment. It was a time to take stock. In spite of the setback at Flesquieres, the British had succeeded beyond their wildest hopes. The Tank Corps had been vindicated, with gains that even the most stubborn conservative such as Harper was bound to acknowledge. A large section of the Hindenburg Line had been breached, a gaping hole some six miles wide and two miles deep. The Tank Corps and supporting infantry had made great gains in only one day, and at the cost of 4,000 casualties. (At Passchendaele, by contrast, a similar advance had taken three months and cost some 400,000 casualties.) In addition, the Cambrai operation had bagged more than 7,000 German prisoners and 100 guns.

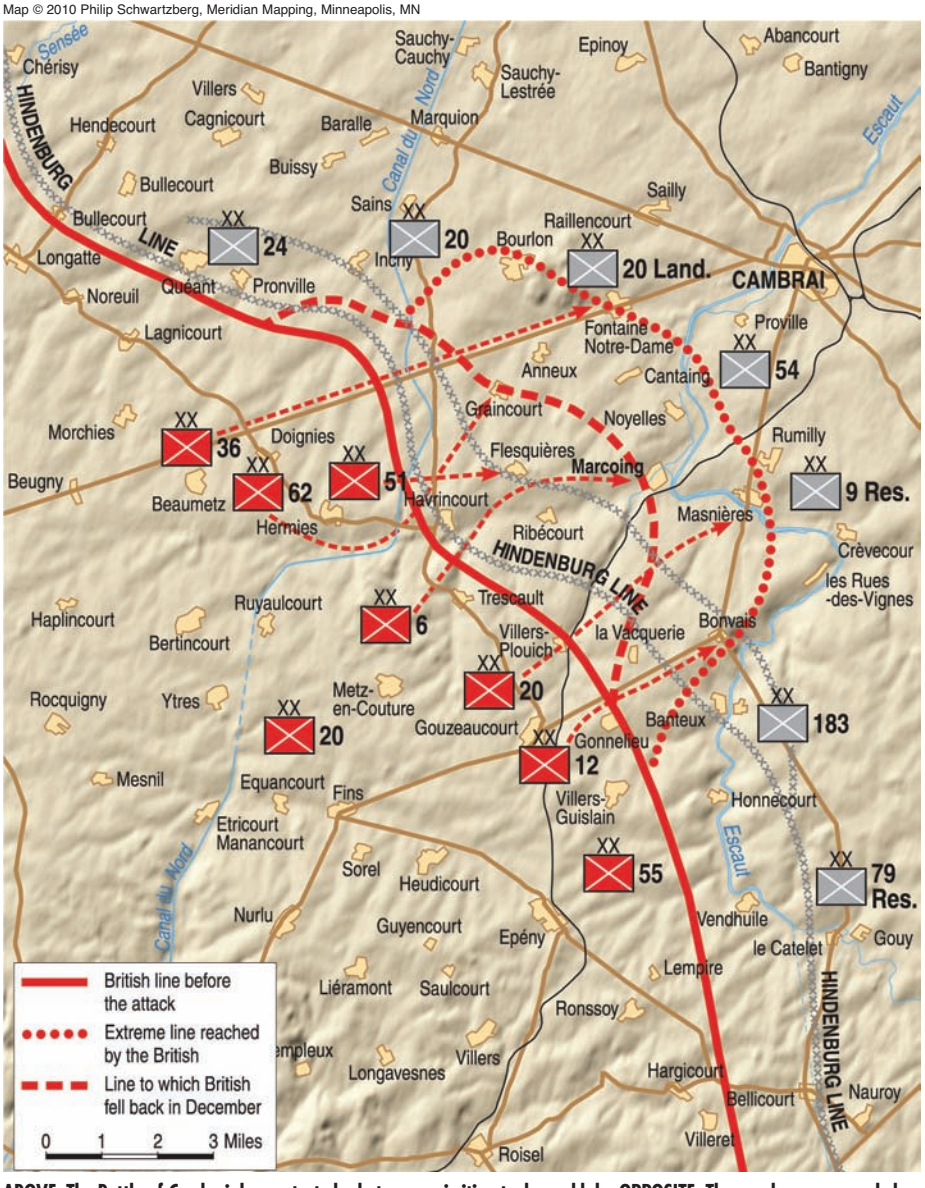
"SHELLS WERE BURSTING ALL AROUND US, AND FRAGMENTS WERE STRIKING THE SIDES OF MY TANK. WHILE THE FOUR GUNNERS BLAZED AWAY, THE REST OF MY PERSPIRING CREW KEPT THE TANK ZIG-ZAGING TO UPSET THE ENEMY'S AIM."

The news of the first day was received in London with a mixture of relief and joy. Bells pealed in celebration throughout Great Britain. Unfortunately, the rejoicing was premature.

November 21 dawned cloudy and cold, with a drenching rain that dampened both bodies and spirits. Major Krebs and his men had withdrawn from Flesquieres, and the village fell easily, but more heavy fighting was to come. The Highlanders set out for Cantaing and Fontaine-Notre

ullstein bild

Map © 2010 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN



ABOVE: The Battle of Cambrai demonstrated what even primitive tanks could do. OPPOSITE: The cavalry was crowded into a rear-area bottleneck, making it difficult to take advantage of the initial success.

Dame, three miles to the northeast, where fresh German units such as those of the 107th Division were waiting for them. Meanwhile, as one British tanker admitted, "We were all fagged out."

From this point on, the lack of reserves would influence the course of the battle. At the end of the first day, the Tank Corps had gone above and beyond the call of duty. Of the 378 fighting machines, 179 had been removed from further action—65 by direct hits, 71 by mechanical failure, and 43 ditched. Above all, the remaining tank crews were bone weary, and there were no reserves to replace them

Withering machine-gun fire tore through the kilted ranks at Cantaing, causing the stubbornly courageous Scots to waver. Then, at the last moment, the Highlanders cheered as they spotted 13 tanks of B Battalion rattling into view. The tanks help secure Cantaing, although the fighting was bloody and hand-to-hand—bayonets, rifle butts, fists, and teeth. German Corporal Karl Feldweg, taking a page from his comrade Walter Neumann's book, personally knocked out two British tanks. "I grabbed several hand grenades, tied them together and worked my way up to one of the tanks, shoving the bundle into a hole," Feldweg recalled. "A mighty explosion occurred inside and the stricken machine stopped, spewing thick, black smoke." He ran to a second tank, and threw a grenade bundle underneath it as well. "A moment or two after the detonation the tank's entire crew climbed out and was taken prisoner," said Feldweg. "I sent these Englishmen to the rear under a two-man guard, but soon more tanks arrived and we were forced to leave the village."

With Cantaing captured, the Highlanders and tanks moved on to Fontaine. Eight H Battalion tanks led the way through a gauntlet of German fire. Captain D.E Hickey, a 22-year-old tank commander, recalled: "Shells were bursting all around us, and fragments were striking the sides of my tank. While the four gunners blazed away, the rest of my perspiring crew kept the tank zig-zaging to upset the enemy's aim." The eight tanks made it into Fontaine, and to their great surprise the village was unoccupied by German forces. Cambrai was only two miles away. Elements of the 51st Highland Division arrived 30 minutes later. The tanks, running low on gas and ammunition, were ordered to withdraw, leaving a few hundred Seaforth Highlanders to hold the newly won prize.

Unsurprisingly, General Harper refused to send more reinforcements to Fontaine to secure the position. Instead, the hidebound officer ordered a halt to all further advances. Fontaine seemed to be of little importance to him. Harper declared that "what can be taken once, can be taken again." As if to prove him right, within 24 hours the Germans counterattacked Fontaine in force. Signals from the Seaforths asking for help were ignored. The Highlanders refused to yield, fighting to the death after ammunition was gone. But in the end, they were overwhelmed. Fontaine shifted into German hands.

In the meantime, Haig decided to continue operations at Cambrai, although he suspended efforts to cross the canals on the right in favor of a combined thrust toward Bourlon Wood. It took at least a day to prepare for the change, and, in the meantime, the Germans grew stronger by the minute. For the next five days, from November 23 to November 27, the British bludgeoned their way into the Bourlon Wood, a dense forest of some 600 acres. Artillery shells soon destroyed much of the forest, leaving only skeletal, shredded trunks that poked forlornly into the sodden sky. Bourlon became a soldiers' fight, with little cohesion or command. Machine guns chattered, wounded screamed, and tanks rumbled and clanked through the corpse-strewn wreckage.

While the British made slow but steady progress, the Germans were preparing a counteroffensive. General Erich von Ludendorff, Bavaria's Crown Prince Rupprecht (German Army Group North), and General Johannes von der Marwitz (Second Army) met in conference at Le Cateau, where Ludendorff proposed nipping off the growing British salient with attacks southward from Bourlon and

westward from Honnecourt. "Never before has there been such an opportunity" for a counterstroke, he exulted. He intended a short, devastating bombardment, followed by a two-corps infantry assault behind gas and heavy explosives.

The Germans began their counteroffensive on November 30. General Byng and other British officers later denied that they were surprised by the German thrust, but the evidence shows otherwise. The German left-wing advance was a great success, initially making gains as impressive as the British gains 10 days earlier. The German air force also had wrested control of the skies from the Royal Flying Corps and droned overhead, strafing and bombing the British lines. "The German aeroplanes were very active, flying over our lines in large numbers, very low," Captain George Dugdale of the 6th Somerset Light Infantry wrote. "They were shooting with machine guns at the troops on the ground, and I am quite sure this did more to demoralize our men than anything else."

By 10:30 AM, an eight-mile section of the British front had caved in. Thousands of British soldiers were captured, though most fought bravely until finally they were overwhelmed. The British were teetering on the edge of disaster, when the German southward advance was stopped cold. With this part of the German drive stalled and the line stabilized, Byng could focus attention on the far more serious assault coming from the west.

The 1st Guards Division, along with dismounted British cavalry and 36 battered tanks, managed to plug the gap at Gouzeaucourt, recapturing some British guns and ammunition that had been lost earlier. A number of German prisoners were taken as well. The clash at Gouzeaucourt didn't stop the German drive by itself, but it was a symptom of an overall trend. Their offensive, too, was sputtering out.

Fighting continued for three more days, but by December 7, it was all over. The weather was turning bad, and snow was beginning to fall. Losses and gains on both sides had more or less canceled each other out. The British had lost some 44,000 men, the Germans 50,000. Ludendorff, with typical German bravado, claimed "an offensive victory on the Western Front," although he was forced to admit that the counterattack had not accomplished all he intended. Crown Prince Rupprecht put it into proper perspective: "At any rate, we have given the British a hard blow," he said.

On the British side, recriminations and finger-pointing began at once. The November 30 surprise attack by the Germans was particularly galling. Byng, who normally expressed great confidence in his men, was highly critical of his junior officers and NCOs. Tank Corps creator Ernest Swinton was closer to the truth when he observed dryly: "I bet that GHQ are just as much surprised by our success as the Germans."

In the end, the lack of reserves was the most significant factor in the British failure at Cambrai. Encouraged by Elles's leadership, the Tank Corps had given its all on the first day. By the second day, tank crews were exhausted. Tanks were knocked out, broke down or ditched, but the battered survivors and their exhausted crews had to continue to fight. There was no other choice. The lack of infantry reserves was also a factor. To maintain the momentum of a major offensive, a steady supply of fresh troops is usually needed. They were simply not available, so exhausted infantry, like the tank crews, had to keep fighting. As Fuller noted, "The battle came to a halt because there was not a single tank or a single infantry unit in reserve."

While technically a disappointment, Cambrai nevertheless had demonstrated what the tank—even a primitive machine in its developmental infancy—could do. The Tank Corps had won its stripes and would go on making significant contributions for the remainder of the war. Today's Royal Tank Corps still celebrates November 20 with justifiable pride. □

National Archives

By Joseph Luster

Army of Two: The 40th Day

PMC fist-bumping returns.

In the not too distant past of 2008, *Army of Two* introduced us all to a world of private military contractors, putting the player behind the slightly horrific steel masks of Elliot Salem and Tyson Rios. Theirs was a time-spanning tale—starting in 1994 Somalia and ending roughly in the present day—of political conspiracy and the effects of war.

PUBLISHER
Electronic Arts

SYSTEM(S)
Xbox 360,
Playstation 3, PSP

AVAILABLE
Now

Don't think it to be a terribly deep experience in that regard, though. If you've never touched the series before, just know that one of its most humorously cited features involves pressing a button to bump fists with your teammate. You can also trigger friendly shoves, playful punches, or even brief bursts of air guitar thrashing, all of which is made more intentionally hilarious depending on the level of dead bodies surrounding your players.

Army of Two: The 40th Day finds Rios and Salem returning, though this time they're working for themselves, no doubt having learned many valuable and emotionally crippling lessons about trust in the first game. Through their own private company, Trans World Operations, the two are in the mix of a fairly nondescript mission in Shanghai that inevitably becomes a destructive case of wrong place, wrong time for them both. Perhaps that's putting it too lightly, because Shanghai basically gets blown the hell up. Glass flies as entire stories of buildings explode, sending them crashing down on neighboring offices like dominoes. A PMC group invades the city with extreme force, and from that point on it's as much a mission of survival as it is suppressing this brutal terrorist threat.

The game is in the name once again, as *The 40th Day* is all about cooperative action with a friend or, should your supply of those be running woefully dry at the time, an online stranger. While there's no real substitute for playing with an actual person, the computer AI for your partner actually isn't terrible. That sounds implausible after playing co-op-centric fare like *Resident Evil 5* and *Left for Dead 2*, the latter having some of the least resourceful AI partners out there, each taking cruel delight in using health packs as improperly as possible. Such is not the case with *The 40th Day*, and while it isn't the recommended course of action, it does leave the lone wolf in us all with some palatable options.

Whether going at it together or not, the stop-and-pop cover action is much more enjoyable than before. The enemies may be dressed like ridiculous sociopaths, but unlike the two leads they have an excuse ... they're sociopaths. As such, expect lots of end-to-end hallway standoffs, concrete barriers chipped away bullet by bullet as riot shield soldiers creep ever closer. Larger areas open the door for more refined strategies, which is what the combat is really all about. Players can flank big groups of enemy combatants, one drawing their fire—a tug of war between characters depicted via an on-screen Aggro meter—while the other uses the distraction to immediate and violent effect.

More imposing combatants occasionally interrupt the steady stream of standard automatic and shotgun-wielding foes. Though most can be taken out in similar fashion, the introduction of lumbering bruisers, like flamethrower or grenade-launcher soldiers, adds a nice twist to the typical long-distance firefights that might otherwise creep toward the edge of monotony.

However, the most interesting combat addition actually moves in a slightly calmer direction. As much fun as blazing into a room like

Rambo can be, it seems the developers realized that it's not always the smartest tactic, especially when civilians factor into the situation. Now, thanks to a handy visual overlay, you can scope out situations, noting enemy rank before taking care of business. This is key, because taking the higher ranked officer hostage will cause the others to surrender, allowing you to tie them up or, I suppose, introduce them to whatever sadistic ends you may have in mind.

Saving people is but one of the methods to earn, if you'll indulge a quick *Smash TV* impersonation, "Big money! Big prizes!" Loot picked up throughout can be put toward upgrading weapons in the shop, a carryover from the first game that proved to be one of the more interesting aspects. Sure, there may be weapons and add-ons that take a while to save up for, but it's worth it when you're rocking a solid gold (seriously) shotgun adorned with a mighty blast shield and enough firepower to knock back enemies like bowling pins.

In comparison to the first game, which was a much more repetitive experience overall, annoyances in *The 40th Day* are relatively minor. Bringing up the camera—which is somewhat awkwardly positioned either on the far left or far right of your shoulder, making constant switching a necessity—even seems kind of nitpicky, as it becomes more natural after a certain point. A few of the new additions to the series definitely don't seem as polished as the mainstays, though, and could have used some tweaking, which is something we'll no doubt see if a third game comes down the line.

With that in mind, I'm still not sure how I feel about the "morality moments" that pop up sporadically. When they occur, both players have to make a tough choice, and whoever makes that choice first essentially nulls the other's vote, raising some interesting contention between the two. But most of the choices are so black and white that it negates any resulting impact. Do you want to shoot the rare, endangered tiger or let it live and move on? Do you want to let this little kid help you snipe enemies, or keep him hidden from danger? Whatever the choice may be, the outcome is presented immediately after via some comic-style panels by renowned artists Jock (*Judge Dredd*) and Chris Bachalo (*Shade, The Changing Man*).

Nagging issues both new and old may be spread throughout, but it still succeeds as an experience designed with cooperative play in mind, and it does so with a level of visual polish that seats it among current top-tier titles. While they still have a long way to go with this series as far as telling an engaging story that won't be forgotten as soon as the console is turned off, and the "bro" action between teammates is still as absurd as ever, *Army of Two: The 40th Day* will please action fans in the face of its flaws. If the next is an improvement of the same caliber, we'll all be in for a fist-bumping treat. □

ON THE LOOKOUT: UPCOMING BATTLES

VICTORIA II

PUBLISHER
Paradox Interactive

SYSTEM(S)
PC

AVAILABLE
Q2 2010

If your taste for strategy gaming tends to skew further into the past, then Paradox Interactive's *Victoria II* might be a title worthy of consideration. A sequel to 2003's *Victoria: An Empire Under the Sun*, *Victoria II* once again tasks the player with the management of pretty much every aspect of their 19th-century nation, from the economy to, naturally, the military.

When combat does arise in the game, it's a much less interactive affair. The Big Decisions, like sending in reinforcements or withdrawing, are at play, but the only way to directly affect the outcome of the battle is to smartly organize military ranks and work on improving technology. If this sort of grand scale (spanning from 1835 to the beginning of World War II), truly contemplative strategy sounds appealing to you, look for *Victoria II* when it hits store shelves later this year.

By Al Hemingway

Fallujah was a hotbed of insurgency in Iraq until American forces fought two pitched battles to pacify the region in 2004.

ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 31, 2004, IN THE CITY OF FALLUJAH, Iraq, the unmistakable sound of automatic weapons fire could be heard. A Mitsubishi Pajero, carrying four Americans, was suddenly ambushed by insurgents. Driver Wes Batalona unsuccessfully tried to make a U-turn in the crowded streets, but was gunned down by AK-47 bullets that ripped through the vehicle.

Lance Corporal Kenneth E. Madden III

Two U.S. Marines of the 1st Marine Division patrol through a small village during a Civil Military operation in Fallujah, July 15, 2004.

The car spun out of control and rear ended another. It was over in a matter of seconds. The four men, all employees of Blackwater USA, a private military contractor, had been slain. That night on the evening news, the charred and mutilated bodies of two of the men were hung from an old bridge to be viewed by all.

The incident was the catalyst that sparked two separate battles of Fallujah, after which American soldiers and Marines would spend months clearing the city of known terrorists residing there. For the leathernecks, it would be some of the heaviest urban fighting since the Battle of Hue City in Vietnam in 1968. In ***Operation Phantom Fury: The Assault and Capture of Fallujah, Iraq*** (Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2009, 320 pp., index, photos, maps, $30.00, hardcover), retired Marine Colonel Dick Camp, a Vietnam veteran and Khe Sanh survivor, delivers an intriguing account of the two major campaigns to drive the terrorists out of the city.

Located approximately 40 miles west of Baghdad, Fallujah was a thriving metropolis prior to the war, with a population of more than half a million residents. Situated in the infamous Sunni Triangle, where the former dictator Saddam Hussein enjoyed his greatest support while in power, it is also called the "city of mosques" because of the 200 religious structures that dominate the city's landscape.

Initially, military leaders suggested that the Bush administration proceed with caution. Lt. Gen. James T. Conway, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force commander, did not want it to appear that the United States was attacking out of revenge and thus lose the support of the rest of the civilian population. "Once you commit you have to stay committed," he remarked.

Unfortunately, the pleas of Conway and other commanders fell on deaf ears as Ambassador L. Paul Bremer and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld pressed U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, in charge of all coalition forces in Iraq, to proceed immediately. President George W. Bush, they said, "wanted heads to roll."

Although they felt that the "timing was not right," military personnel obeyed their civilian leaders and initiated Operation Vigilant Resolve, the First Battle of Fallujah, in April 2004. The campaign was a dismal failure. Although coalition troops fought aggressively and bravely, they were withdrawn before the insurgents had been driven from the city. The remainder of the task fell to the newly

You deserve a factual look at . . .

Myths About Israel and the Middle East (1)

Do the media feed us fiction instead of fact?

We all know that, by dint of constant repetition, white can be made to appear black, good can get transformed into evil, and myth may take the place of reality. Israel, with roughly one-thousandth of the world's population and with a similar fraction of the territory of this planet, seems to engage a totally disproportionate attention of the print and broadcast media of the world. Unfortunately, much of what the media tell us — in reporting, editorializing in columns, and in analysis — are endlessly repeated myths.

What are the facts?

■ **Myth:** The "Palestinians" are a nation and therefore deserving of a homeland.

Reality: The concept of Palestinian nationhood is a new one and had not been heard of until after the Six-Day War (1967), when Israel, by its victory, came into the administration of the territories of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip. The so-called "Palestinians" are no more different from the Arabs living in the neighboring countries of Lebanon, Syria and Jordan, than Wisconsinites are from Iowans.

> "Peace will only come when the Arabs finally accept the reality of Israel. And that is not a myth — that is a fact!"

■ **Myth:** Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip are "occupied Arab territory."

Reality: All of "Palestine" — east and west of the Jordan River — was part of the League of Nations mandate. Under the Balfour Declaration, all of it was to be the "national home for the Jewish people." In violation of this mandate, Great Britain severed the entire area east of the Jordan River — about 75% of Palestine — and gave it to the Arabs, who created on it the kingdom of Transjordan. When Israel declared its independence in 1948, five Arab armies invaded the new country in order to destroy it at its very birth. They were defeated by the Israelis. The Transjordanians, however, remained in occupation of Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") and East Jerusalem. They proceeded to drive all Jews from those territories and to systematically destroy all Jewish houses of worship and other institutions. The Transjordanians (now renamed "Jordanians") were the occupiers for nineteen years. Israel regained these territories following its victory in the Six-Day War. Israel has returned the entire Gaza Strip to the Palestinians. The final status of the "West Bank" will be decided if and when the Palestinians will finally be able to sit down and seriously talk peace with Israel.

■ **Myth:** Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") are the "greatest obstacle to peace."

Reality: This is simply not correct, although it has been repeated so often that many have come to believe it. The greatest obstacle to peace is the intransigence and the irreconcilable hostility of the Arabs. Not more than 200,000 Jews are settled in these territories, living among about 1.4 million Arabs. How can Jews living there be an obstacle to peace? Why shouldn't they live there? About 1.2 million Arabs live in Israel proper. They are not an obstacle to peace. Neither the Israelis nor they themselves consider them as such.

■ **Myth:** Israel is unwilling to yield "land for peace."

Reality: The concept that to the loser, rather than to the victor, belong the spoils is a radically new one, never before thought of in world history. Israel has emerged victorious in the five wars imposed on it by the Arabs. In order to make peace, it has returned over 90% of the territory occupied by it, specifically the vast Sinai Peninsula, to Egypt. That territory contained some of the most advanced military installations in the world, prosperous cities and settlements, and oil fields developed entirely by Israel that made it independent of petroleum imports. In the Camp David Accords, Israel agreed to autonomy for Judea and Samaria (the "West Bank") with the permanent status to be determined after three years. But no responsible Palestinian representation has been available to negotiate with Israel about this.

All these myths (and others we shall talk about) have poisoned the atmosphere for decades. The root cause of the never-ending conflict is the unwillingness of the Arabs (and not just the Palestinians) to accept the reality of Israel. What a pity that those of the Palestinians who are not Israeli citizens have lived and continue to live in poverty, misery and ignorance. They could have chosen to accept the proposed partition of the country in 1947, would now have had their state alongside Israel for over sixty years and could have lived in peace and prosperity. They could have kept hundreds of thousands of refugees in their homes and could have saved tens of thousands of lives. Peace will only come when the Arabs finally accept the reality of Israel. And that is not a myth — that is a fact!

This message has been published and paid for by

FLAME

Facts and Logic About the Middle East
P.O. Box 590359 ■ San Francisco, CA 94159
Gerardo Joffe, President

FLAME is a tax-exempt, non-profit educational 501 (c)(3) organization. Its purpose is the research and publication of the facts regarding developments in the Middle East and exposing false propaganda that might harm the interests of the United States and its allies in that area of the world. Your tax-deductible contributions are welcome. They enable us to pursue these goals and to publish these messages in national newspapers and magazines. We have virtually no overhead. Almost all of our revenue pays for our educational work, for these clarifying messages, and for related direct mail.

formed Fallujah Brigade, which later disbanded and, in an unbelievable turn of events, surrendered all of its weapons to the terrorists. Twenty-seven Americans paid the supreme sacrifice, and another 90 were wounded in vain.

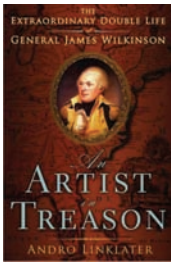
This prompted the Second Battle of Fallujah in November 2004, codenamed Operation Phantom Fury. Once again, American soldiers and Marines stormed the insurgents' stronghold and, as before, infantrymen had to endure their worst nightmare—going house to house to ferret out the enemy. For more than a month, the terrorist stronghold was the scene of bloody combat as American and Iraqi troops slowly cleared the city of Islamic extremists. To make matters worse, the enemy used numerous mosques within the town as observation points and storage facilities for weapons and supplies. Despite this, Allied forces were victorious, although at a cost of 63 killed and more than 500 wounded.

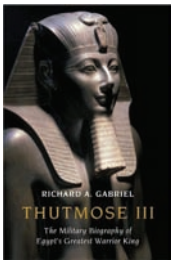
The author focuses on the friction between the civilian and military camps that produced the first Fallujah fiasco. Instead of listening to their advice, the Bush administration typically rushed in headlong before carefully examining all options and attacking at a time that would be more beneficial to the coalition forces. As in past conflicts, whenever civilian leaders insist upon a disastrous course of action, it is the American servicemen who have to pay for their gross errors in judgment.

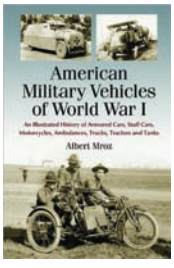
In the end, however, the fighting men managed to achieve victory, however costly. Although the coalition troops faced a determined foe bent on their destruction, the enemy was no match for the soldiers and Marines. As Camp concludes, the terrorists attempted to "turn the city into a fortress to defeat the Americans—and they lost."

An Artist in Treason: The Extraordinary Double Life of General James Wilkinson by Andro Linklater, Walker Publishing, New York, 2009, 392 pp., notes, index, illustrations, $27.00, hardcover.

Maryland-born James Wilkinson was described by his friends as congenial, friendly, and charming. These attributes catapulted him into the limelight during the Revolutionary War, where he soon caught the attention of most of the officers of the Continental Army, including Commander in Chief George Washington, and was appointed the youngest general at the age of 20. Wilkinson's charismatic







behavior and his penchant for delivering a convincing argument would prove beneficial to him in ensuing years, when the outwardly patriotic officer turned into an undercover agent for the Spanish government.

In his new biography, author Andro Linklater delivers an absorbing account of his double life and the reasons why Wilkinson chose such a deceitful path. Wilkinson learned at an early age about the class system. Being from the upper crust of society would always remain an important part of his life. He attended medical school and set up practice in Baltimore, but after he observed the local militia in a parade, he felt the "strongest inclination to military life."

Wilkinson was simply known as Agent 13 to the Spanish. After his proposal to have Kentucky become part of Spain's western empire failed, he still continued to receive a pension from the Spanish government. When he was appointed head of the U.S. Army after General "Mad Anthony" Wayne's untimely death, his clandestine relationship with Spain resumed. Wilkinson tried in vain to stop the Lewis and Clark expedition, informing Spanish authorities, who quickly dispatched a large patrol to scour the territory and arrest the explorers for trespassing on Spanish soil.

Wilkinson's biggest challenge occurred in 1805, when he was accused of collaborating with ex-Vice President Aaron Burr to provoke a war with Spain and create a new country in the territory of the Louisiana Purchase, with the shifty Burr as its ruler. Some believed that Wilkinson was the mastermind behind the scenario. When Burr's devious scheme was uncovered, by none other than Wilkinson himself, he was promptly arrested and brought to trial. In true Wilkinson fashion, his flowery testimony and uncanny ability to shift the blame onto others worked in his favor, and all charges against him were dismissed.

Wilkinson's dismal performance during the War of 1812 was enough for the administration to remove him from command. Retiring, he traveled to Mexico, where he died a few days after Christmas in 1825. In 1872, the American government tried to bring Wilkinson back to his native country and give him a proper burial, but it was discovered that he had been reburied in a common grave. There was no way of determining which remains were his. The wily Agent 13 remained elusive, nearly 50 years after his death.

Thutmose III: The Military Biography of Egypt's Greatest Warrior King by Richard A. Gabriel, Potomac Books, Dulles, VA, 2009, 241 pp., notes, index, maps, $29.95, hardcover.

Some historians have referred to Thutmose III, a pharaoh in the 18th Dynasty, as the "Napoleon of Egypt." Actually, he was considerably taller than his French counterpart. Historians simply did not take into account that grave robbers had desecrated his tomb and cut off his feet.

Height aside, Thutmose III left behind an incredible legacy. He reigned for 32 years and led 19 expeditions into Canaan and Syria. He was also the father of the Egyptian Navy, constructing a massive shipyard and overseeing the expansion of his fleet. His uncanny ability for military strategy enabled him to transform Egypt into a force to be reckoned with. Under his tutelage, the army underwent some of the most stringent training for its time. The armies he conquered were professionals, unlike Alexander the Great, whose victories were achieved against mostly second-rate armies and third-rate generals.

In spite of his royal upbringing, Thutmose III had two enduring qualities—humility and compassion—that made him popular with his troops. He split the spoils with his soldiers and awarded medals for bravery in battle. He even spared his enemies after they were captured and chose not to kill the civilian population after he had seized their towns or villages.

Although best known for his military ingenuity, Thutmose III was a lover of the arts and sciences. He had a keen interest in botany and ordered his men to retrieve unusual plants and shrubbery he encountered while in strange lands and return them to Egypt to be replanted. He was also fascinated by the curious animal life he saw, especially the elephant, which he studied at great length.

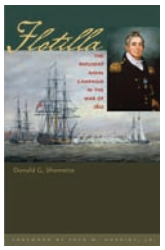
This burning curiosity, along with his other positive attributes, made him popular with the people during his tenure as pharaoh. He was indeed a multifaceted individual, probably one of the greatest rulers Egypt has ever known.

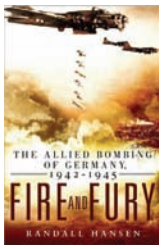
American Military Vehicles of World War I: An Illustrated History of Armored Cars, Staff Cars, Motorcycles, Ambulances, Trucks, Tractors and Tanks by Albert Mroz, McFarland & Company, Jefferson, NC, 2009, 316 pp., index, photos, illustrations, $45.00, softcover.

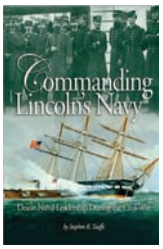
As the title implies, this is probably the definitive book on all types of military vehicles employed during World War I. It is full of wonderful photographs and drawings of every imag-

inable kind of motorized vehicle from that era. The front cover has an interesting picture of an Indian motorcycle with a sidecar equipped with a machine gun. Other fascinating photos depict armored cars of all shapes and sizes, ambulances, including a Harley-Davidson dubbed "The Flying Squadron," and even an electric-powered car that was used in munitions factories to transport artillery shells from one part of the plant to another, and was driven by a female worker.

As Mroz demonstrates, the gas-powered combustion engine, although not new when the war began, became invaluable to troops overseas, as well as on the home front. These rudimentary vehicles—tanks, armored cars, and ambulances—would undergo more changes when the United States found itself involved in World War II a quarter of a century later.







Flotilla: The Patuxent Naval Campaign in the War of 1812 by Donald G. Shomette, John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD, 2009, 500 pp., notes, index, maps, illustrations, $38.00, hardcover.

Maryland-born Joshua Barney had an illustrious naval career. In the Revolutionary War he served as a young lieutenant on several warships and was taken prisoner on several occasions, escaping from Old Mill Prison in Devon, England. After the United States obtained its independence from Great Britain, Barney received an officer's commission in the French Navy. He then commanded a schooner, but his days as a privateer on the high seas did not make him any money. In 1812, when hostilities broke out between Great Britain and America, Barney was made a captain in the fledgling U.S. Navy, and once again he ventured out to do battle with his old adversary.

Barney concocted a plan to defend Chesapeake Bay from the annoying and devastating raids being conducted by the British, who had blockaded the waterway at its narrow entrance at Virginia Capes. Their many incursions were not only lowering morale but also hurting the local economy. Barney envisioned a flotilla of gunboats with drafts so shallow that they could maneuver through the more than 8,000 miles of the bay and its tributary, the winding Patuxent River. With these small vessels he could attack the enemy's barges when they departed the umbrella of covering fire provided by the fleet positioned at the access to the bay.

Although it looked good on paper, Barney's plan did not succeed. He did harass the redcoats but he had to abandon his flotilla and destroy most of his fleet. He then linked up with the American Army and fought heroically at the Battle of Bladensburg, but once again had to retreat from the battlefield in the face of overwhelming British forces.

In 2006, a committee was created to erect a memorial to the members of the U.S. Chesapeake Flotilla. Their bravery and sacrifice against overwhelming odds should never be forgotten.

Uncommon Defense: Indian Allies in the Black Hawk War by John W. Hall, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass, 2009, 367 pp., notes, index, $29.95, hardcover.

Native Americans in the 1820s and 1830s described white American settlers as "a drop of Racoons Grease falling on a new blanket, at first [it] is scarcely perceptible, but in time covers almost the whole Blanket." During this era, the war chief Black Hawk led the Sauk, Fox, and Kickapoo tribes in a war against the American government in present-day Illinois and Michigan. The Indians were becoming increasingly agitated about the encroachment of more and more whites onto their land—land that had been promised to them.

Not all the tribes rushed to align themselves with Black Hawk. Many warriors of the Menominee, Dakota, Potawatomi, and Ho Chunk clans linked up with American troops to defeat him. Why did Black Hawk's fellow Native Americans do this? The reasons were varied, according to the author. Some supported the United States because they envisioned Black Hawk losing anyway. Others had longstanding grievances that they wanted to avenge, and some chiefs thought they could attain political and material gains if Black Hawk's revolt was crushed.

Although a short campaign, the fighting was bloody, with militia and regulars massacring women and children along with the warriors. The tribes that fought alongside U.S. forces fared no better in ensuing years, as a steady stream of white immigrants moved westward. "Unlike the Indian allies of the Black Hawk War," writes Hall, "today's Indian warriors must selectively draw upon a problematic past, but—like their forbears—they continue to serve the United States foremost as a means of serving their own people."

Fire and Fury: The Allied Bombing of Germany, 1942-1945 by Randall Hansen, New American Library, New York, 2009, 352 pp., notes, index, photos, $25.95, hardcover.

Ever since the advent of the airplane, bombing has been a source of controversy. Should indiscriminate carpet bombing or strategic bombing be used? In his new book, historian Randall Hansen examines the stark differences between the British and American approach to this problem during World War II. The English were determined to utilize carpet bombing to bring Germany to her knees. The Americans, on the other hand, were advocates of destroying important military installations to halt production and stop the Nazi war machine.

Then there was the touchy subject of civilian casualties. Does the indiscriminate bombing of a specified region justify the killing and maiming of noncombatants? Many Americans did not think so. To air crews, it was abhorrent to purposely bomb defenseless civilians. Although Great Britain and other countries under the dominance of the Nazi boot had suffered similar atrocities, American forces still felt uncomfortable doing it.

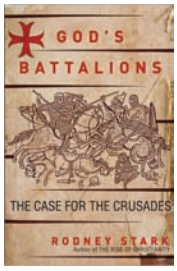
Which strategy prevailed? Captured Nazi architect Albert Speer summed it up best when he told British and American interrogators: "The American attacks which followed a definite system of assault on industrial targets, were by far the most dangerous. It was in fact these attacks which caused the breakdown of the German armaments industry."

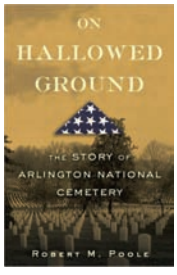
Commanding Lincoln's Navy: Union Naval Leadership During the Civil War by Stephen R. Taaffe, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2009, 324 pp., notes, index, maps, illustrations, $34.16, hardcover.

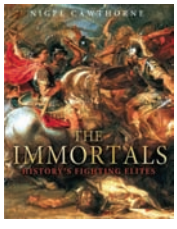
There is no doubt that the Union Navy helped enormously to defeat the Confederacy during the Civil War. "Uncle Sam's web feet," as President Abraham Lincoln referred to them, conducted a successful blockade to deprive the Rebels of supplies, sought out Confederate raiding ships that preyed on Northern merchant vessels, and navigated waterways deep into the heart of the South to support the advancing Union armies.

At the start of hostilities in 1861, the Union Navy had a skeleton force of just under 9,000 officers and men to operate a fleet of 42 steam-driven warships. By the end of the conflict in 1865, those numbers had risen dramatically to nearly 58,000 sailors and 650 ships of the line.

The man in charge of this near-miraculous conversion was Connecticut-born Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles. A friend and political supporter of Lincoln, Welles had a free hand in establishing an impressive seaborne fighting force. Welles made most of his decisions without interference from "Old Abe," and in most instances he was proven correct.







God's Battalions: The Case for the Crusades by Rodney Stark, Harper One, New York, 2009, 276 pp., index, bibliography, illustrations, $24.99, hardcover.

On the outskirts of the French village of Clermont in the year 1095, Pope Urban II delivered a message to the huge crowd assembled there. He spoke of a letter he had received from Emperor Alexius Comnenus of Byzantium telling him of the Islamic invasion that had swept the countryside. In their wake, Comnenus alleged, they had committed unspeakable atrocities upon Christians.

Although Comnenus was Greek, and his brand of Christianity was abhorred by the church, the Pope felt that his cry for assistance should be heeded. From that initial gathering, the first of the Crusades began to drive out the Muslim invaders and save the Holy Land.

Although numerous historians have labeled the Crusades as nothing more then a self-serving expedition to rob, plunder, and loot, author Rodney Stark, a professor at Baylor University, has a different opinion. He believes that the Crusades were in fact a noble venture and were "not unprovoked," nor were the Crusades the "first round of European colonialism." His careful research has convinced him that the knights who participated in the Crusades sincerely believed that they were performing God's duty and saving Christianity for the world.

On Hallowed Ground: The Story of Arlington National Cemetery by Robert M. Poole, Walker Publishing Company, New York, 2009, 369 pp., index, photos, $28.00, hardcover.

Historian Robert M. Poole has penned a moving narrative dealing with the origins, history, and daily operations of Arlington National Cemetery. Located on nearly 700 acres in Arlington, Virginia, the thousands of rows of white granite headstones are certainly awe-inspiring and poignant. For the majority of those buried there gave their lives in the defense of our country.

From the first person interred there, Union Army Private William Henry Christman of the 67th Pennsylvania Infantry, to the remains of those returning from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts, the national landmark never ceases to stir emotions in the four million people who visit it annually.

From its humble beginnings, the cemetery has become the final resting place of many American veterans. Individuals such as Audie Murphy, Ira Hayes, and actor Lee Marvin, seriously wounded while serving as a Marine in World War II during the invasion of Saipan, are among the honored dead. Arlington serves as a constant reminder that the price of freedom is often paid in blood.

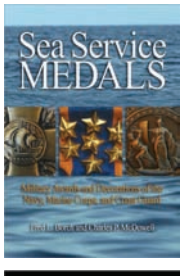
The Immortals: History's Fighting Elites by Nigel Cawthorne, Zenith Press, Minneapolis, MN, 2009, 224 pp., index, glossary, photos, $30.00, hardcover.

Military history is full of elite forces whose actions on the battlefield are legendary. From the 300 Spartans who sacrificed themselves at Thermopylae to the Special Forces units operating in Iraq and Afghanistan today, their incredible story continues to be written.

Cawthorne's coffee table book features a synopsis of each elite unit, accompanied by illustrative paintings and photographs. Each group is listed in chronological order, beginning with the Persian Immortals who defeated the small band of Spartans at Thermopylae. Of particular interest are the battles of the Prussian Guard created by Frederick the Great. Although outnumbered, they fought fiercely in every campaign, with several members earning the Blue Max, Prussia's highest military decoration.

The battles and campaigns of each specialized unit are an inspiration to future soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines. The modern servicemen who man such elite units are following a proud warrior tradition that their predecessors began many years ago. As the motto of the British-trained Gurkhas states, "Better to die than be a coward."

Sea Service Medals: Military Awards and Decorations of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard by Fred L. Borch and Charles P. McDowell, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2009, 180 pp., notes, index, photographs, $34.95, hardcover.



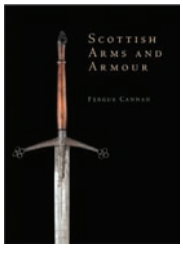
Here is a book for readers wanting to learn more about the awards and decorations presented to Naval and Marine Corps personnel since their inception. The authors are experts in this field, and it is certainly evident in their interesting account.

Surprisingly, the Silver Star, the third-highest award for bravery under fire, was "not a popular award," the authors note, because many felt that it was "insignificant in size and constitutes very little tangible evidence of gallantry, is not an article that can be handed down to posterity and, therefore, serve as an evidence of a grateful nation and people with attendant stimulation to patriotism." A fascinating fact about the award is that its first recipient was Douglas MacArthur in World War I.

Each award, beginning with the Medal of Honor, is meticulously detailed. The writers discuss each medal's historical background, who designed it and, in most cases, who was the first recipient. The criteria an individual must meet to be presented the decoration are discussed at length as well

---

Scottish Arms and Armour by Fergus Cannan, Shire Publications, Oxford, England, 2009, 120 pp., index, illustrations, photos, $19.95, softcover.



Historian Fergus Cannan is not only an expert on the subject of Scottish weapons and other military subjects, he is a descendant of Highland warriors who more than likely used many of the weapons described in his new book. His account traces Scottish arms from their humble beginnings in 2200 BC, with axe heads made from stone, to the early 20th century, when ceremonial swords and knives were still worn by Scottish regiments.

Perhaps the best-known of these weapons is the Highland two-handed sword. Popular during the medieval period, it was one of the few swords that could stop an armor-clad knight. Another popular item was the sgian dhu, a small dagger that is still tucked into the sock of every Scot when he is dressed in formal attire. Another item that every Scot carried in battle was the sturdy leather shield, called a targe, that helped ward off the arrows of deadly British longbowmen.

Often described by the Scots as the "tools of freedom," these weapons helped forge a nation. In battles such as Bannockburn, Flodden, and Stirling Bridge, heroic Scots fought for their freedom using the very weapons that Cannan describes in his book. □

Continued from page 21

tlefield reconnaissance and Cipher Office intercepts of Russian Army headquarters messages, the Poles were able to plan their advances and attacks with the utmost precision and thoroughness. During this period, Polish reconnaissance aircraft, supplied by the French, were able to confirm the accuracy of the Cipher Office's memos to the field commands prior to and during combat operations.

With advances of up to 50 miles per day, the Poles reached Kiev on May 7. Panicky Soviet radio traffic showed how disorganized the Russians were in the Ukraine, convincing Pilsudski to press his advantage and swing north to envelop the Russian Armies north of Kiev. But the Cipher Office had let him down by not accurately reporting the threat to his southern flank represented by the fast-approaching First Red Cavalry Army, 16,000 strong, led by General Semyon M. Budenny. The first clashes between the two forces occurred on May 24, and by June 5 the Poles were in headlong retreat, abandoning Kiev eight days later.

Due to roving Russian cavalry and armored car patrols behind Polish lines, the Cipher Office detachments attached to the various divisions and staffs were forced to move so many times that they became ineffective at intelligence gathering. During the retreat to the west, the unit was able to decipher only 40 of 171 intercepted messages. Reflecting on the development, the Polish chief of staff on the Polish Ukrainian front, Lt. Col. Marian Przewlocki, lamented that much of the intercepted material was outdated before it could be acted upon.

By mid-summer, the Poles were thrown back to the gates of Warsaw. But as the Red Army reached the outskirts of the city, combat losses and a long supply line diminished their power. As a result, the Poles were able to stabilize the front and prepare a counterattack to save their capital and preserve their existence. The Cipher Office, although never using more than five permanent workers at its headquarters, would play an essential role in the coming contest.

Urged on by the imminent threat of national destruction (and an incentive prize of 500 Polish marks to the person who deciphered the most enemy messages during the week) the Cipher Office redoubled its efforts. The acquisition of the key Russian "Peewit" cipher, captured by the Poles in June, helped the code breakers to pinpoint the enemy's most important messages and concentrate on them.

During the crucial month of August, the unit decrypted 410 enemy signals, including ones to and from Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky, commander of the Western Front; Leon Trotsky, Soviet commissar for war; and all the individual Russian Army commanders facing Poland. The decoded messages allowed the Polish Army to follow with exact precision the enemy forces arrayed against them. By August 20, they possessed the order of battle and the strengths of all the Russian armies on the Western Front, as well as operational orders and objectives laid down by Tukhachevsky.

On August 13, the Cipher Office decoded a message from the Russian Fifteenth Army commander, General Nicolai Solohub, ordering an attack on the Polish capital from the northern suburbs of the city. Armed with this information, the Polish General Staff concentrated its forces in the threatened area and halted the enemy assault, then counterattacked, defeating not only Solohub's army but also the Russian Third and Fourth Armies supporting him. With the Soviet right wing in retreat, Pilsudksi looked for a way to exploit his initiative. He found it with the expert help of the Cipher Office.

By August 16, Polish radio operators had learned from intercepts the exact positions and strengths of the Russian Mozry Group (57th Infantry Division and support units) south of Warsaw. They also discovered that between its nearest allies to the north was a gap of 25 miles; to its south an 80-mile-wide stretch of unoccupied territory separated it from the Russian 12th and 1st Cavalry Armies. The Poles did not hesitate; on the 16th they plunged into the gaps on both sides of the Mozry Group, and after 10 days of heavy fighting they managed to encircle large portions of the Mozry Group and the 12th and 1st Cavalry Armies, netting 66,000 Russian prisoners. With their line broken, 50,000 Soviets on the Vistula River fled to East Prussia. From there they continued to the east of Minsk, which fell to the Poles in September. A treaty was signed by the parties in Riga, Latvia, on October 25, 1920.

The "Miracle on the Vistula" kept the Polish nation free for the next 19 years. That outcome was due to the fighting spirit and quality of the Polish Army, but it was made possible in large part by the professionalism and tireless work of the Cipher Office. Such outstanding capability made possible the Poles' stunning success in discovering the workings of the German armed forces' top-secret Enigma machine in late 1932. Like its effects on the outcome of the Battle of Warsaw 12 years earlier, the breaking of the Enigma code would provide another miracle weapon to help the Allies destroy another totalitarian regime's quest for world domination a decade later. □

Continued from page 17

with a long shaft. Two styles had names derived from Turkish. The *czekan* was a combination of hammerhead on one side and an ax on the other. The *nadziak,* perhaps the most popular war hammer, had a hexagonal head balanced by a long, slightly drooping beak.

The Polish *obuch* was similar and became, in time, popular as a walking stick. Polish nobles carried war hammers like civilian swords—and evidently used them as such, for protection or dueling. As a consequence, private-use war hammers were banned as too dangerous in 1578, 1601, and 1620. Although heavy fines were charged for carrying them except in war, the fad of using them for civilian protection continued into the 18th century.

By 1600, Polish hussars had bested all other cavalries thrown against them. Each hussar unit charged in three or four ranks, depending on terrain, with the rear rank ready to deal with flank attacks. Hussars initially attacked in open order for ease of movement and maneuvering, but nearing impact with the enemy, they would squeeze together knee to knee, moving at full gallop. This difficult maneuver not only gave them powerful crushing strength, but also minimized losses from enemy firepower.

In comparison to the heavy cavalry of the West, which depended more on sheer weight than speed, the hussars could move quickly from standing to maximum speed. The deadly lance was practical only for the first few ranks, with the rest ready with their secondary weapon of preference, the war hammer, second only to the much-revered saber.

The hussars' finest hour came on September 12, 1683, during the Turks' second siege of Vienna. A combined army of Imperial Austro-German and Polish cavalry and infantry numbering 80,000 arrived—literally in the nick of time—led in person by the charismatic Jan Sobieski, the king of Poland. After an infantry battle lasting most of the day, Sobieski personally led 3,000 winged hussars in the largest cavalry charge in military history. Sobieski's cavalry force of 20,000 cleaved the Turks out of their saddles, sending the highly touted spahis (light cavalry) into full retreat. The future rode with the hussars as well. Among Sobieski's horsemen that day was a 19-year-old royal Savoyard, Prince Eugene. He survived, destined to become the greatest of Imperial generals and the man who stopped Turkish aggression against Europe once and for all in 1718. It is not known if Eugene carried a war hammer that day. □

Continued from page 23

Catholics who had sworn loyalty to Philip II but were executed by Alva nevertheless. This indicates Alva's irrationality, cruelty, and heavy-handed methods, even to those who considered themselves loyal subjects of the Spanish king.

A second print casts Alva as an image of tyranny and contrasts him with his Dutch rival, William of Orange. The engraving, possibly by Theodoor de Bry, *William of Orange and the Duke of Alva* (Figure 2) shows the two opponents facing each other with allegorical personifications representing the character of each leader. William is holding a morning star, which can also be seen as a commander's baton. He is about to be crowned with a laurel wreath, a symbol of victory, by the personification of Honor, while Wealth lies at his feet and offers bags of money from her pot of gold. Meanwhile, the elderly figure of Wise Counsel reclines slightly behind William. On the right, Alva holds shears and a commander's baton as well. He is about to be given the Spanish crown by personifications of Falsehood and Envy. At the Duke's feet lies Poverty, which symbolizes the Dutch people, and standing behind Poverty is a nude representation of Belgica, symbolizing the Netherlands. Belgica is nude, while Alva holds shears to strip away her wealth.

This form of propaganda follows a common motif in which one side is associated with a list of virtues and the other is associated with vices that are opposite of the virtues. William of Orange is associated with Wealth, while Alva is associated with Poverty. William is shown in other prints with personifications of Humility, Justice, Truth, Love, and Generosity, while the Duke of Alva is given the opposite vices of Pride, Injustice, Falsehood, Hatred, and Greed. This idea also applies to historical and biblical figures as well, with William portrayed as a leader of oppressed people such as Moses and King David, while Alva is shown as Pharaoh, Herod, Nero, and Attila the Hun.

The next type of print is more humorous in nature, yet still biting. It features personifications of animals representing the opposing nations. *Stop Rooting in My Garden, Spanish Pigs* (Figure 3) shows a large number of pigs roaming about eating the food of the land. While some pigs scour the land, others assault an enclosure bearing the coat of arms of various cities in the northern Netherlands, including Amsterdam, Gouda, Haarlem, and Dordrecht. In the center of the enclosure is the Netherlands lion, fighting off the approaching pigs with a two-handed mace. On the left of the print is a battle between geese and pigs. The geese refer to the Dutch and allude to the "Sea Beggars," who conducted hit-and-run guerrilla attacks against Spanish galleons and treasure ships. In the battle, flocks of geese chase the pigs off the boats and attack them in the water. One pig is carried off by a flock of geese, while a ship's rigging is strung with a row of hanged pigs.

After the Duke of Alva's death in 1588, his image was still being used in prints and books as a catchall symbol for Spanish tyranny. After Philip II's death in 1598, the Netherlands passed into the hands of his daughter, Isabella, and her husband, Archduke Albert of Austria, who became the new governor-general of the southern Netherlands. This created a split between the Seventeen Provinces. While some of the provinces wanted to make peace with Spain, others wanted to continue the revolt started by William of Orange.

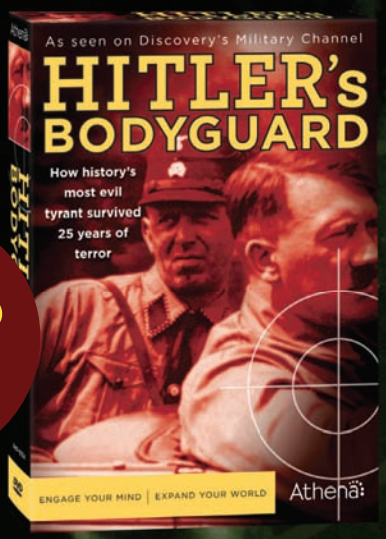
The *Slaughter of Zutphen* (Figure 4) was created after the death of Alva in 1588. The print appeared in 1620, almost 50 years after the actual event. Historically, the slaughter of Zutphen was carried out in November 1572, when townspeople were thrown into the icy river to freeze or drown. Zutphen was one of the cities in the province of Gelderland that had thrown support behind William of Orange. After Spanish forces managed to recapture Gelderland, the Duke of Alva's son, Don Fadrique, ordered the execution of the townspeople to send a message to other provincial cities to capitulate. After the massacre at Zutphen, the cities of Bolsward, Sneek, and Franeker hastily surrendered to Spanish forces.

The print shows soldiers in Spanish clothing and armor attacking a group of naked victims whose hands are bound and clasped in prayer. Several of the dead have been dumped into the icy waters, while others are about to be. In the background, six men hang from a tree while another man hangs upside down with his hands also clasped in prayer. This print was one of a series of 16 created in the *Spiegel de Spaansche Tiranny in Nederland* [A Mirror of the Spanish Tyranny in the Netherlands], which was meant to whip up anti-Spanish sentiment to continue the war against Spain by reminding people of the pain and suffering they had endured under the reign of Alva.

Despite the fact that the latter work was printed in the early 17th century, almost half a century after the actual event, it was meant to keep alive the memory of Alva for political purposes. Such efforts worked. The devilish duke is still remembered today for creating a system of terror under which all Netherlanders lived "in the shadow of the gallows and the stake." □

HISTORY'S MOST HATED

How the world's most evil tyrant survived 25 years of terror



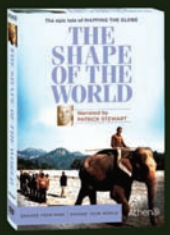
20% OFF
Details below

HITLER'S BODYGUARD

This Military Channel favorite brings fresh, fascinating context to the 20th century's most destructive tyrant. Using captured SS documents and eyewitness interviews, this 4-disc documentary series reveals the secrets of the elite bodyguards who swore loyalty oaths to the Führer himself. Includes 13 riveting episodes, SDH subtitles, and a 20-page companion booklet.

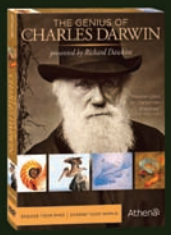
GET 20% OFF ALL ATHENA DVDS BY SHOPPING ONLINE!
Visit AcornOnline.com/military and use the promo code ACORMIL.

ALSO FROM ATHENA



THE SHAPE OF THE WORLD
Narrated by Patrick Stewart and seen on PBS, this six-part program tells the epic tale of mapping the globe.

THE CHRISTIANS
Filmed on location in more than 30 countries, this documentary series details the history of Christianity and its global impact.



THE GENIUS OF CHARLES DARWIN
Join Professor Richard Dawkins as he explains how Darwin developed his revolutionary theory of evolution and why it's still relevant today.

PLAYING SHAKESPEARE
Sit in on nine intensive acting workshops conducted by the legendary John Barton of the Royal Shakespeare Company and featuring some of Britain's finest actors.

Athena

Athena is distributed exclusively by Acorn Media.
Offer ends 7/30/2010.

NORWICH UNIVERSITY
1819

Earn Your Master of Arts in Military History - Online

Explore the framework through which important military events are understood.

Since 1819, Norwich University has played an important role in military history as the birthplace of Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), as an institution whose graduates have fought in every war since its founding, and as the leader among military schools in racial integration and the integration of women into its corps of cadets. What better place to study military history?

The unique online format offers students:

- a dynamic, interactive, educational environment
- a manageable pace for busy adults
- coursework that can be completed in as little as 18 months
- dedicated 24/7 support

For more information on this online degree,
visit www.norwichmmh.com/ww2 or call 1.800.460.5597 Ext. 3372