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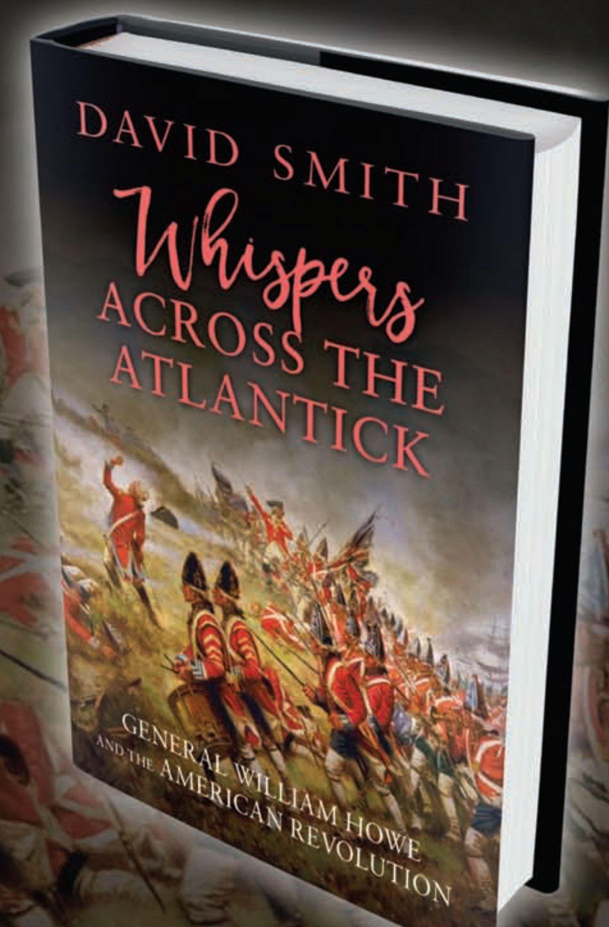

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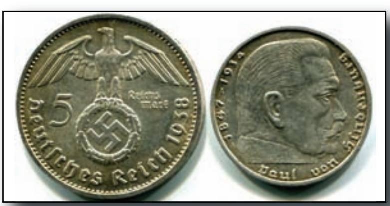

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editorial

Stirring Accounts of the Albigensian Crusade

THE THREE CONTEMPORARY NARRATIVE ACCOUNTS of the 13th-century Albigensian Crusade are gripping, chilling, and enlightening. They offer rich insight into the period when the Languedoc region of modern-day southwestern France was tied more closely to the Kingdom of Aragon than the fledgling Kingdom of France.

The principal primary sources for the unusual crusade are Peter of Vaux de Cernay's *History of the Albigensian Crusade,* William of Tudela's *Song of the Albigensian Crusade,* and William of Puylaurens' *Chronicle.*

The epic poem *Song of the Albigensian Crusade* is a unique work given that the first part written by Tudela covering 1209 to 1213 gives the crusader viewpoint, whereas the second part by the continuator offers the opposing perspective of the local nobility.

Although heavily biased in favor of the crusaders, Cistercian monk Peter of Vaux de Cernay's account benefits from his participation in the actual events. He not only was an eyewitness to some of the events he describes, but he was acquainted with leading legates and crusaders.

While not as detailed in its coverage of the key events in the first stage of the crusade, William of Puylaurens' *Chronicle* covers the later stages of the Albigensian Crusade in greater detail than the other two chronicles.

Given that the chronicles can be checked against each other, as well as other sources, they are remarkably reliable. They are not completely accurate, though. For example, the authors of the *Song of the Albigensian Crusade* use poetic license when attributing remarks to the barons who played leading roles in the events. In addition, the authors frequently attribute the outcome of events to miracles from heaven.

Warfare is central to these chronicles. They catalog ambushes, chevauchees, skirmishes, sieges, and pitched battles. The Albigensian Crusade was especially brutal. The chronicles unapologetically cover the burning of heretics, mutilation of captives, and pillaging of cities. A passage written by the continuator in *The Song of the Albigensian Crusade* captures the brutality in graphic detail in the account of the Battle of Baziege in 1219: "Now altogether sergeants entered the battle to kill the fallen. Steel flashed on steel, on overthrown and beaten men, knights and sergeants struggled, and they slashed, slew and finished them.… Red was the battlefield, and red the riverbank, heaped with dead Frenchmen."

Siegecraft was no casual affair. The leaders of the crusade employed professionals who could harvest local trees and build mangonels and trebuchets to prosecute sieges.

As for the armed clashes, whether small or large in scale, they primarily involved mounted knights and sergeants. More often than not, foot soldiers appear in the local armies rather than among the ranks of the crusaders. The foot soldiers were poorly led levies who had no means to defend themselves against heavy cavalry in the open.

The invading crusader forces were not to be underestimated. The chronicles offer many examples, such as the siege of Castelnaudaray in 1211, in which the so-called resistance forces led by southern nobles were reluctant to take on the crusaders even when they substantially outnumbered them.

For the flavor of 13th-century warfare, the chronicles of the Albigensian Crusade bring into sharp perspective the famous small sieges against the remote mountain strongholds of Lastours, Minerve, Termes, Lavaur, and Montsegur, as well as the grand clashes that occurred at the towns of Carcassonne, Toulouse, and Muret.

—*William E. Welsh*

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By Arnold Blumberg

The Vicomte de Turenne served France admirably, leading its armies to victory in many of the great wars of the 17th century.

THE FRENCH CONQUEST OF LORRAINE WAS NEARLY COMPLETE BY March 1634 during the Thirty Years War. The only place of importance still in the hands of Duke Charles of Lorraine, a Hapsburg commander, was the fortress of La Motte, which was encircled by a French army under Marechal La Force. To finally overcome it, La Force tasked a young colonel to lead his infantry regiment in storming a breach in the strongpoint's defenses.

The Vicomte de Turenne's victory over the Spanish and their allies at the Dunes in 1658 is ample evidence of his prowess as a battlefield commander. Turenne has not received the recognition he deserves as one of history's great generals.

Attacking uphill into the teeth of enemy musketry and artillery, the young colonel led his soldiers as they fought their way into the center of the fortress. The garrison soon surrendered. The French government was so impressed with the successful assault on La Motte that it promoted 24-year-old Henri de la Tour d' Auvergne to the rank of marechal-de-camp.

Born in the city of Sedan on September 11, 1611, Henri was the second son of Henri de la Tour d' Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne and Duke de Bouillon, a noted soldier and leader of the French Huguenots, and his wife Elizabeth of Nassau, daughter of William the Silent, Prince of Orange. Henri had chestnut brown hair, was of medium height, broad shouldered, short necked, and possessed a high prominent forehead with high cheek bones. He was brought up as a Protestant but converted to Catholicism in 1668. Turenne, as his contemporaries called him, would serve in a number of 17th-century conflicts during the course of his illustrious military career. In addition to the Thirty Years War, Turenne played a prominent role in the Franco-Spanish War, The Fronde, War of Devolution, and the Franco-Dutch War.

Turenne's military career began when his family sent him to serve in the army of his mother's brother, Prince Maurice of Nassau, Stadtholder of the Dutch United Provinces. Starting as a common soldier in the prince's bodyguard, Turenne impressed his uncle to such a degree that he was soon made a captain of infantry at the age of 15. His military service in Holland lasted five years and chiefly involved siege operations. The Dutch bestowed upon him a special commendation for bravery shown during the siege of Bois-le-Duc in 1629.

Turenne left the Netherlands in 1630 and entered the service of France, motivated as much by the desire of his mother to prove the loyalty of her family to the French crown as to secure for her son further military advancement. By then the Thirty Years War had been raging for 12 years. Although it began as a civil war within the Holy Roman Empire, it took on an international character with the intervention of Sweden and France, both of which went to war against the Hapsburg rulers of Spain and Austria.

French Minister of State Cardinal Richelieu promoted 19-year-old Turenne to colonel of an infantry regiment in 1630. Following his

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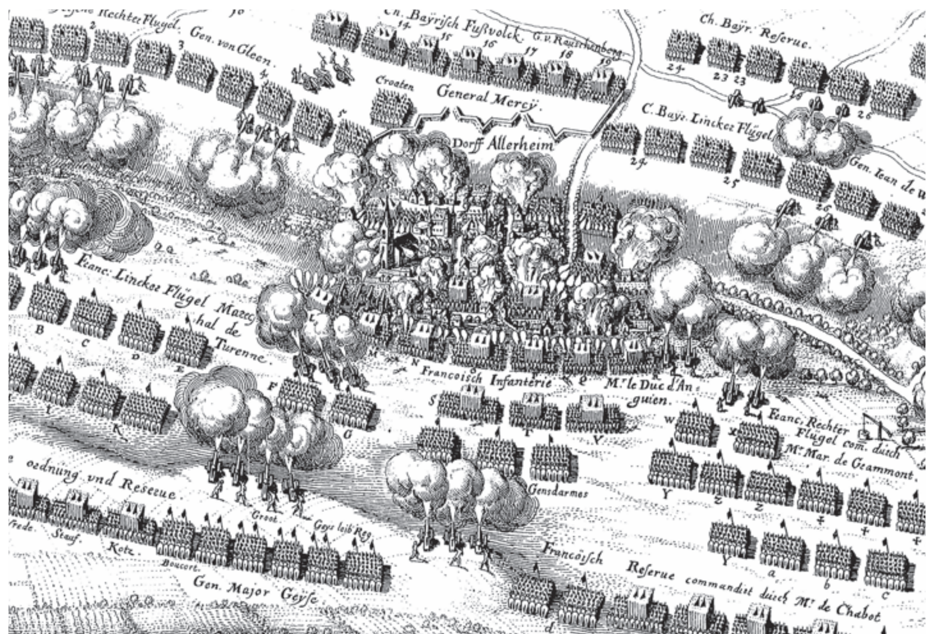


ABOVE: Turrene's French troops drove the Bavarian right wing from the high ground at the Second Battle of Nordlingen in 1645, contributing heavily to the French victory. BELOW: The armies of France and Sweden waged a war of maneuver against the Imperial-Bavarian army in the final months of the Thirty Years War. At Zusmarshausen in 1648, Turenne overtook Raimondo Montecuccoli's retreating army and crushed its rear guard.

courageous performance at La Motte, Richelieu promoted him to marechal-de-camp, the equivalent of major general.

Turenne was stolid and reserved. The most salient feature of his character was his trustworthiness. A gentlemen soldier, he felt little, if any, personal animosity toward his opponents in warfare. He was unemotional in military matters. His battlefield tactics and campaign strategies were driven by logical calculation rather than fire and dash. Toward his superior officers he was scrupulously obedient, obliging, and good tempered. To his subordinates he never sharply reprimanded them in public, but reserved that for private meetings, and was quick to give an officer who had made a misstep a second chance. The marshal was considerate and kind toward the rank and file.

France intervened directly in the Thirty Years War in 1635. Turenne participated in the Lorraine and Rhine campaign under Louis de Nogaret, Cardinal de la Valette. After raising the siege of Mainz, the French and their allies had to fall back after their supply lines were cut by the enemy. During a disastrous retreat marked by great privation suffered by the allied forces, Turenne did yeoman service conducting a series of rearguard actions that saved the army from dissolution. During this episode the general not only showed great personal courage and an understanding of the need for proper army logistical management, but also a sincere regard for the welfare of his men.

Turenne was wounded in the right arm during the storming of Saverne in 1636. He was then given his first independent command with orders to drive an Imperialist army out of Hapsburg-controlled Franche-Comte, which he achieved rapidly and with few losses. The following year he took part in the Flanders campaign. Although that year's fighting proved indecisive, Turenne, who by then was a lieutenant general, again proved himself to be a competent commander. In 1638 he was instrumental in taking the key fortress of Breisach on the right bank of the Rhine River. The capture of Breisach safeguarded French control of Alsace and Burgundy.

Sent to Italy by his patron, Richelieu, Turenne took part in the continuing Franco-Spanish War, serving under Henri de Lorraine, Count of Harcourt. Turenne performed ably in the complicated siege operations that enabled the French to capture Turin on September 20, 1640.

Afterward, he helped capture the Piedmontese cities of Cuneo, Ceva, and Mondovi in 1641. The following year he served as second in command of the French forces that conquered Roussillon in Catalonia.

France bestowed the rank of Marshal of France on 32-year-old Turenne on December 19, 1643. His first orders were to reorganize French forces on the upper Rhine in the aftermath of the embarrassing defeat of French forces at Tuttlingen in Swabia on November 24-25, 1643, at the hands of General Franz von Mercy's Bavarian army.

In the spring of 1644, Turenne crossed the Rhine at Breisach and defeated an Imperialist force near the source of the Danube River and Black Forest. He joined forces with Louis de Bourbon, Duke of Enghien, known as the Great Condé, and with a force of 19,000 men the two French commanders defeated Mercy's Bavarian army at Freiburg in August 1644. Although Condé was in charge of the French forces because he was a royal prince, it was Turenne's tactical abilities that compelled Mercy to retreat east from Freiburg.

The fighting between Turenne and Mercy went back and forth across southern Germany. In March 1645, Turenne again crossed the Rhine with 11,000 troops and attacked Mercy south of Wurzburg. On May 2, Mercy counterattacked Turenne, whose forces were dispersed at the time, at Marienthal, defeating his opponent and forcing Turenne to retreat to the

Rhine River. Then, Condé and Turenne led an army of 15,000 French troops into Swabia and defeated Mercy's 12,000 Bavarians at the Second Battle of Nordlingen on August 3, 1645.

Although Condé was in overall command, the victory was Turenne's alone. With the French right and center defeated, it was Turenne's furious cavalry charge against the Bavarian right flank that sent Mercy's troops fleeing from the battlefield. But a reinforced Imperialist army drove the French back to the Rhine. Time was on France's side, though. The Thirty Years War entered its final stage, and both Bavaria and Austria would soon be forced to capitulate.

In 1646 a Franco-Swedish army co-commanded by Turenne and Carl Gustaf Wrangel conducted a series of strategic marches in which they advanced from Freiburg to the gates of Munich, capturing several key fortresses along the way. Bavaria signed the Truce of Ulm with France and Sweden on March 14, 1647. In the autumn of 1647 Bavaria broke the truce to assist Austria in its struggle with France and Sweden. This afforded Turenne another opportunity to fight the Imperialists. He led a Franco-Swedish army to victory against the Imperialist forces in the last battle of the Thirty Years War fought at Zusmarshausen on May 17, 1648.

During the protracted Thirty Years War, Turenne had led French forces to victory multiple times. In the aftermath of the conflict, he came to be regarded as the leading French commander in the Thirty Years War.

Turenne next served as a commander during The Fronde, a French civil war that lasted for five years from 1648 to 1653. At first, Turenne sided with the anti-royalist party, but by 1651 he had switched sides and was leading royalist armies against the Frondeurs and their Spanish allies. Turenne defeated Condé's rebel army at the Battle of Faubourg St. Antoine on July 2, 1652, and occupied Paris in the aftermath. From 1653 to 1658, he repeatedly defeated Spanish armies on both France's eastern and southern borders. His greatest achievement during that period was leading an Anglo-French force to victory over a Spanish-Royalist army at the Battle of the Dunes fought on June 14, 1658.

After King Louis XIV took personal control of the French government on April 4, 1660, the French king rewarded Turenne for his many past services to the crown by elevating him to Marshal-General of the Camps and Armies of the King. This honor gave the recipient the authority to control all the land forces of France at a time when a marshal only commanded a single army and gave him greater control over the organization and training of the French armies.

Turenne played a prominent role in the War of Devolution from 1667 to 1668, in which Louis XIV's armies conquered the Hapsburg-controlled Spanish Netherlands and the Franche-Comte. Unfortunately for the French king, the subsequent Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle compelled the French to return Franche-Comte to Spain; however, the French managed to retain a small part of Flanders.

In 1670, King Louis XIV enlisted Turenne to negotiate the Treaty of Dover with England. The treaty required England to aid France in its war of conquest against the Dutch Republic. In the wake of the treaty, King Louis began planning his invasion of Holland. Louis's plan called for both Turenne and Condé to have leading roles in the enterprise, although not operating near each other. Louis planned to establish separate commands for other marshals, which would be supervised when necessary by either the king or Turenne.

During many of his military operations Turenne led armies inferior in size to those of his opponents, but this situation was reversed during the Franco-Dutch War of 1672 to 1678. Against a Dutch field army numbering merely 25,000, with another 12,000 garrisoning the

Turenne was struck by a cannonball at the Battle of Sasbach in 1675 during the Franco-Dutch War. As a tribute to the great captain, King Louis XIV insisted that Turenne's body be interred in the Abbey of Saint Denis, the burial place reserved for French monarchs.

vital Meuse River fortress of Maestricht, and 6,000 Spanish allies, Louis had an active army of 100,000, with an additional 30,000 men provided by several German allies. Turenne commanded the majority of the French forces.

Turenne planned the initial stages of the attack on Holland, including the taking of Maestricht with limited forces, while marching to the Rhine River and capturing many towns and enemy strongpoints along the way. However, once the French entered the United Provinces the main Dutch army would have to be faced. Condé's men were soon placed under Turenne as the French advanced on Amsterdam, burning and pillaging the entire way. In response to the French juggernaut, the Dutch flooded Brabant, Holland, and Dutch Flanders.

Widespread flooding precluded military operations, so the two sides attempted to negotiate a peace treaty. But the Dutch deemed the French terms too harsh and rejected them. Turenne had counseled more lenient conditions, but Louis XIV would not hear of it.

Fearing the growing power of France, the major European powers began to unite against her. In 1672 Austrian and Brandenburg forces converged on the Rhine River to join forces with the Dutch. Turenne blocked repeated attempts by these forces to cross the Rhine. Although this involved little fighting, it did require frequent marches. In 1673, he drove the Austrians and Brandenburgers out of Westphalia and advanced on Frankfurt. This compelled Frederick William, the Elector of Brandenburg, to abandon his alliance with the Dutch.

Turenne, with only 20,000 men, was facing 40,000 soldiers of an Austrian-Saxon coalition supported by several minor German states commanded by Italian Raimondo Montecuccoli. Montecuccoli marched to rendezvous with the Dutch on the Lower Rhine. Turenne moved to block the junction of their armies. Giving the Frenchman the slip, the Italians joined the Dutch at Bonn. This one masterful stroke forced the French from Holland. Turenne then went into winter quarters in Alsace and Lorraine.

The campaign of 1674 witnessed a broad coalition that included practically all of the major European powers fighting the French. As a result, Louis abandoned all the territory he had taken on the Rhine and Meuse in the previous two military operations. Turenne was tasked with safeguarding the Rhine front with an army of only 15,000 men. In this operation Turenne demonstrated more than in any other campaigns of the wars of Louis XIV that maneuver could be an effective means of defense. During June he crossed the Rhine and with only 9,000 men defeated an Imperialist force at the Battle of Sinzheim on June 16. Turenne, sword in hand, led a number of cavalry charges himself. However, in August a reinforced Imperialist army took Strasbourg, giving France's foes access to Alsace.

Determined to beat back the Austrians before they were reinforced by an advancing Branden-

burg-Prussian army, Turenne attacked Field Marshal Alexander von Bournonville's Imperialist army near Entzheim on October 4, but only achieved a draw. Both sides withdrew after suffering upward of 3,000 casualties. Turenne continued his efforts to liberate Alsace by conducting a surprise march in the winter in a time when armies campaigned from spring to fall and remained static during the winter. The famous effort became known as Turenne's Winter Campaign.

Turenne led his army southward from Saverne in northern Alsace in early December using the Vosges Mountains to screen its movement. The Imperialists were garrisoned for the winter in bivouacs on the left bank of the Rhine River from Strasbourg to Mulhouse. Aware that spies were operating in the region, Turenne divided his army into small units sending them over snow-covered mountains. The French units regrouped at Belfort. Turrene and Bournonville clashed at Mulhouse on December 29. Turenne defeated the Imperialists, forcing them to withdraw northward.

Turenne then advanced on Colmar, where a fresh army under the Elector of Brandenburg gave battle at Turckheim. Turenne launched an aggressive assault with his 30,000 hungry and footsore troops. After feinting to the center and right, Turenne struck Frederick William's left, forcing him off the field. Although Turenne did not follow up his victory at Turckheim with a vigorous pursuit of his opponent, it took away nothing from Turenne's brilliantly conceived and executed Winter Campaign.

The war continued in 1675 in Germany with Montecuccoli facing off once more against Turenne. From June to late July, the Imperialists maneuvered to gain entry to Alsace, while the French marched to prevent that occurrence. On July 22, Turenne began a turning movement with his 25,000 men to pin his antagonist against the Rhine before the latter could cross into Alsace. Alerted to the looming danger, Montecuccoli withdrew his army to the east and the mountains. Turenne chased the retreating foe and forced him to halt and confront him at the town of Sasbach on July 27.

As the two armies readied for battle, Turenne and his chief of artillery, Saint Hilaire, reconnoitered an enemy artillery battery sited on the French right. Perhaps because the red cloak worn by Saint-Hilaire caught the attention of the gunners, they fired at Turenne's party. The result was that a cannon ball tore off Saint-Hilaire's arm and struck Turenne in the upper body, killing him. "Today died a man who did honor to mankind," said Montecuccoli upon learning of Turenne's death.

Turenne's death compromised the French campaign, and the French army fell back in good order on July 29. Montecuccoli pressed the French and fought a bitter battle with them at the Schutter River. With Turenne gone there was no doubt the French would abandon the Rhine region and retire to Alsace. Condé assumed command of the forces, and it was only with great difficulty that they were able to hold Alsace for the rest of the year.

After Turenne's death, King Louis XIV insisted that Turenne's body be interred in the Abbey of Saint Denis, burial place of the French kings. Napoleon Bonaparte later had the remains removed to Les Invalides in Paris, where they remain to this day.

Turenne showed great tactical brilliance over his long career; however, in the realm of strategy he was cautious. Great maneuvers such as his Winter Campaign of 1674-1675 were his stock and trade. Furthermore, he always strived to keep his army well supplied, and he looked closely after his troops' well-being. Turenne was arguably the most talented French general to serve Louis XIV. Napoleon regarded Turenne as one of history's greatest commanders, and for that reason he instructed all of his officers to study Turenne's campaigns. □

By Gabriele Esposito

The Romans refined and improved the gladius in their quest for the optimum weapon for close-quarter combat.

FEW WEAPONS IN WORLD HISTORY HAVE HAD SUCH GREAT TACTICAL importance as the Roman gladius. To understand the importance this short sword had on the battlefields of antiquity, it is best to start with the Roman historian Livy. In describing the war between the Romans and the Macedonians in 200 BC, Livy wrote of the devastating practical and psychological impact the gladius had on the military forces of King Philip V of Macedon, who were accustomed to fighting with spears, javelins, and arrows. "When they had seen bodies chopped to pieces by the gladius Hispaniensis, arms torn away, shoulders and all, or heads separated from the bodies, with the necks completely severed, or vitals laid open, and other fearful wounds, realized in a general panic with what weapons and what men they had to fight," wrote Livy in the History of Rome.

The Macedonians for the first time were facing the Roman military machine and its awesome military technology. The Greek and Macedonian armies' primary tactical formation was the phalanx, whereas the Romans were organized in legions divided into units called centuries. Unlike the Macedonians, the Romans did not use long lances, such as the Macedonian sarissa. The short and sturdy Romans preferred to fight hand to hand to maximize the effect of their general superiority in training and weaponry. The Roman legion was a large formation of heavy infantry. Each of its components was equipped with extremely efficient but flexible defensive equipment, including a helmet, a lorica hamata (mail cuirass), and scutum (large shield); however, the real strength of the Roman army lay in the offensive weapons used by its soldiers. These weapons were the pilum, gladius, and pugio (dagger).

LEFT: An image from the Roman monument Tropaeum Traiani in modern Romania, which commemorates the Roman victory over the Dacians, shows a legionnaire stabbing with his gladius. RIGHT: The Mainz gladius of the 1st century AD is representative of the swords of the early Imperial period.

A Roman on the Tropaeum Traiani stabs while using his scutum to protect his body. The sword's blade was double edged for cutting and had a tapered point for stabbing during thrusting.

The first weapon the Romans used in a battle was the pilum, a javelin specifically designed to kill enemies from long distances or to limit them in the use of their shields. The pilum was extremely difficult to remove after hitting the external part of a shield or of a cuirass. Once the enemy ranks had been shattered by the initial shower of javelins, the legionaries drew their short swords and charged their opponents. According to Roman tactical doctrine, emphasis was on using the scutum to provide maximum body coverage, while the gladius was used to attack with devastating thrusts and short cuts. Using these tactics, the Romans were able to defeat different types of enemy infantry. The Roman soldiers became efficient with their weapons through intensive and continuous training.

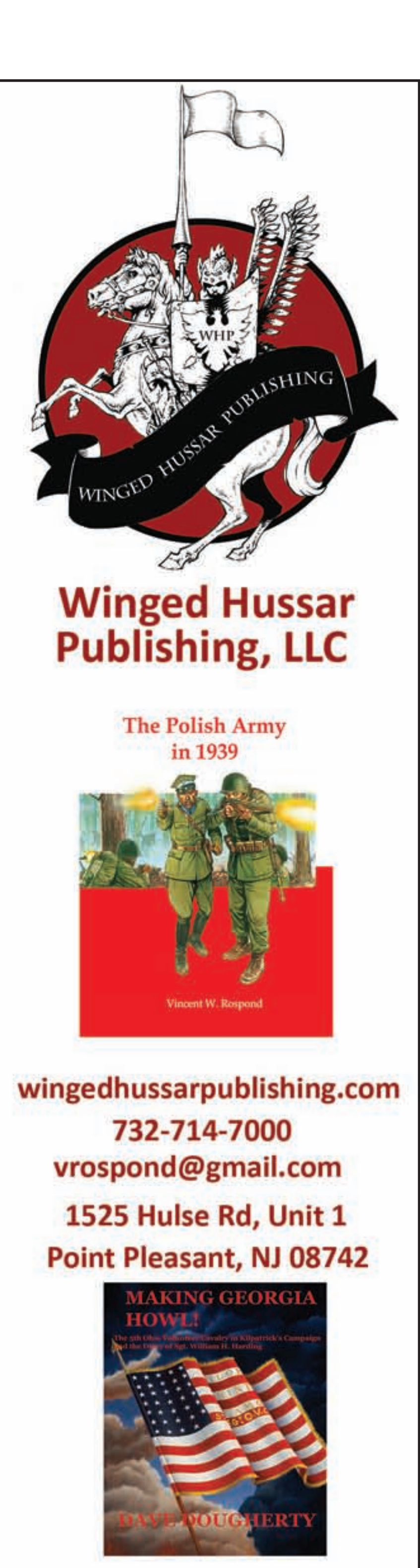
The Roman method of fighting limited the number of casualties suffered by their troops. Using their swords to thrust in the few spaces created between the shields of their close formations, the legionaries were rarely exposed to the offensive weapons of their enemies, who had few chances to manuever. The pugio also was a short stabbing weapon. It was used as a secondary arm during intense hand-to-hand fighting, especially when space for movement became extremely limited or when the gladius could not be used for somr reason.

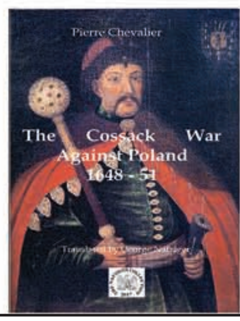
Stabbing wounds produced by the gladius almost always were fatal, especially when the enemy was struck in the abdomen, the main target for thrusts. But the gladius also proved to be effective when used for cutting or slashing. Each Roman infantryman was trained to adapt to any combat situation that might develop. Each one of his weapons could be used in different ways, and he had to be ready to exploit at full any enemy mistake or any favorable momentum. For example, Roman legionaries advancing in close formation were trained to slash kneecaps beneath the shield wall or to cut the throat of the enemies while charging in the testudo (tortoise) formation. The legionaries carried the gladius in a scabbard mounted on a belt or on a shoulder strap. It was worn on the left side of the soldier's body, and the legionary had to reach across his body to draw it. Centurions, to differentiate themselves from their soldiers, wore the gladius on the right side of the body.

The majority of the weapons used by the Romans did not originate with them. Roman superiority on the battlefield was derived from their ability to adopt foreign military technologies and employ them in the most effective way. The pilum and the lorica hamata were invented and employed for the first time by warrior peoples such as the Celts and Etruscans, who had fought against the Romans. After defeating their enemies, the Romans adopted the best elements of their enemies' weapon systems.

The gladius, which in some respects is the most iconic and important weapon of the Roman Army, was not Roman at all. The origin of the gladius is much clearer if we call it by its complete and proper name, which was the gladius Hispaniensis. The gladius originated in Iberia, in the territories of modern Spain and Portugal.

The *Souda,* a 10th-century Byzantine encyclopedia, offers interesting insight into the geographical and historical origins of the Roman short sword. The *Souda* confirms the traditional view of the Romans about the history of their favorite weapon. The gladius was invented by the Celtiberians, one of the many warrior peoples who inhabited Iberia during the Iron Age, according to the *Souda*. Unlike other Iberian tribes, the Celtiberians were of mixed descent. They were the product of Celtic migrations across the Iberian Peninsula. Because of their Celtic heritage, the Celtiberians had a completely different array of weapons from neighboring tribes and constructed weapons with innovative techniques. Their swords were short and had extremely sharp points. In addition, they could





A Roman soldier thrusts with his gladius in a sculpture on a sarcophagus from Portonaccio, Italy.

deliver powerful downward strokes from both hands.

The Romans abandoned their traditional swords in the Greek fashion after the Second Punic War as a result of their many encounters on the battlefield with Hannibal's Celtiberian allies. This chronological reconstruction is confirmed by archaeological evidence and by the Greek historian Polybius. It is estimated that the Roman legions adopted the gladius as their main weapon around 200 BC. The Romans adopted this weapon quickly. Until the appearance of the gladius Hispaniensis, the Romans had been equipped with the Greek xiphos, a double-edged, single-handed blade employed by the hoplites. This weapon was archaic when compared to the gladius but had many basic features in common with the new short sword. The same could be said of the seax, a weapon employed by the Germanic tribes of northern Europe. But none of these similar weapons was employed to the same degree of efficiency as the Roman short sword. After a few years of use, the Romans realized the superior potential of their weapon. They assimilated it into their arsenal and established a new tactical doctrine designed to fully exploit the gladius Hispaniensis.

By the time of the Roman Republic, the classical world was well acquainted with steel and the steel-making process. Weapons technology had developed to the point that it was a good technological environment for the rapid development of an innovative steel weapon like the gladius. Recent metallurgical studies conducted on surviving Roman short swords reveal that the gladius could be forged either from a single piece of steel or as a composite blade. Swords produced with the first process were created from a single bloom of 1,237 degrees Centigrade, whereas those created from the second process required five blooms each at 1,163 degrees Centigrade. Five strips of varying carbon content were created. The central core of the sword contained the highest concentration of carbon, ranging from 0.15 to 0.25 percent. On its edges were placed four strips of low-carbon steel with a concentration of 0.05 to 0. 07 percent. At that point, the strips were welded together by hammer blows. Each blow increased the temperature enough to create a friction weld at that spot.

The forging operation, the most important part of the process, continued until the steel was cold. When produced by welding different strips together, the gladius had a channel down the center of the blade, and when produced from a single piece of steel, the blade had a rhomboidal cross-section. The blades of the gladius, as anticipated by the description of their tactical uses, were double-edged for cutting and had tapered points for stabbing during thrusting.

Craftsmen gave the gladius a solid grip by adding a knobbed wooden hilt to the blade, which usually came with ridges for the user's fingers. Despite its nature as a standardized weapon, the gladius might be decorated according to the owner's personal taste. The hilt, known as the capulus, could be made ornate in many different ways. For example, the swords of high officers and the Praetorian guards usually had hilts sculpted to resemble the head of an eagle. This shape was popular also because it created an additional grip when using the weapon. Indeed, the blade might even have the owner's name engraved or punched on it.

The Romans produced several different designs. According to the traditional categorization used by military historians and archaeologists, the various kinds of gladii can be grouped into three main types. In chronological order these types were Mainz, Fulham, and Pompeii. They derive their respective names from where the canonical prototype of each group was found.

The differences between the three categories and the original gladius Hispaniensis are not significant from a practical point of view but are quite important to understanding the evolution of this weapon across many decades of combat use. The original Iberian sword, used from approximately 200 BC until 20 BC, had a slight wasp-waist, or leaf-blade, curvature. This made it stand out from the subsequent models. It was the largest and the heaviest model of gladius ever produced, with a blade length of 60 to 68 centimeters and a sword length of 75 to 85 centimeters. The blade was five centimeters wide, with the overall weight of the weapon being 900 grams. This earliest form of short sword, still heavily influenced by the original Iberian weapon, was used for a long period of time if compared with its successors.

The Roman city of Mainz was founded as a permanent military camp named Moguntiacum in approximately 13 BC. The original military camp soon became an important center for the production of swords and other military equipment. With the transformation of the camp into a proper city, the manufacture of swords became even more significant, leading to the creation of a new kind of gladius, commonly known as the Mainz gladius. The Mainz gladius retained the curvature of the previous model but shortened and widened the blade. In addition, it modified the original point into a triangular one specifically designed to thrust.

The geographical diffusion of the Mainz model was limited to the border garrisons serving on the northern frontiers in contrast to the less effective Pompeii version that came into use in other areas of the empire. The short swords produced at Mainz during the early imperial period were employed by legions serving in the north. Large numbers of these weapons were exported and sold extensively outside the boundaries of the Roman Empire. Various ex-legionaries who had served on the frontier used their discharge bonus to set up businesses as manufacturers and dealers of arms. The Mainz variety of the gladius was characterized by a slight waist running the length of the blade. The average Mainz gladius had a blade length of 50 to 55 centimeters and a sword length of 65 to 70 centimeters. The blade was seven centimeters wide, with an overall weight of 800 grams.

The Fulham gladius derived its name from a gladius that was dredged from the River

A Praetorian guard wears his gladius on the right side. These elite soldiers typically had hilts sculpted to resemble the head of an eagle.

Thames around Fulham. The model dates back to the years following the Roman invasion of Britain. Experts in Roman history have varying opinions about the effectiveness of the Fulham model. Some consider it as the conjunction point between the Mainz and Pompeii models, while others consider it a later type evolving from the Mainz gladius and being exported to Britain. The Fulham gladius generally has a slightly narrower blade than the Mainz variety, but the main distinction of this type is its triangular tip. The Fulham gladius had a blade length of 50 to 55 centimeters and a sword length of 65 to 70 centimeters. The blade was six centimeters wide, with an overall weight of 700 grams.

The Pompeii gladius was the most popular among the three kinds that the Romans began to produce after the Hispaniensis. It had parallel cutting edges and a triangular tip. From a structural point of view, the Pompeii model, which was the shortest model used by the Romans, eliminated the curvature, lengthened the blade, and diminished the point. The Romans shortened the gladius based on their experience in the Roman civil wars of the Late Republic. Because Romans fought each other during this period, the traditional Roman military superiority had lost its advantage. Having to fight against enemies equipped exactly like themselves, with heavy cuirasses and shields, the Romans had to develop a lighter and shorter version of their sword. They needed one designed to thrust with the point and in very strict spaces. The average Pompeii gladius had a blade length of 45 to 50 centimeters and a sword length of 60 to 65 centimeters. The blade was five centimeters wide, with an overall weight of 700 grams.

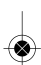
By the end of the Roman civil wars, the Romans introduced a longer model of the Pompeii gladius, which was known as the semi-spatha. The Romans used the term spatha to indicate a completely different kind of weapon. The Romans essentially designed a long sword for use by their cavalry. The spatha gradually took the place of the gladius as the standard weapon of the heavy infantry, thus continuing the general trend toward increasing the gladius's dimensions.

In addition to the legionaries, the Roman gladius was also used by gladiators in the arena. Gladiators used many different sets of weapons. The pairing of gladiators for duels was important to the Romans, who desired to see gladiatorial combats conducted with precise rules and a balanced confrontation between opponents. A matched pair of gladiators typically consisted of one fighter having heavy armor and the other having little or no armor. For example, the former might have heavy armor and a large shield, which hampered his freedom of movement. His opponent, lacking heavy armor, had greater mobility, although if his more heavily armored opponent landed a blow it might prove fatal.

The Romans established approximately 30 different types of gladiators. Each type had a different type of offensive weapon, armor, and shield. Generally speaking, the gladius was given as the main weapon to the heavily armored gladiators, who carried shields similar to those of the legionaries.

Between the end of the 2nd century AD and the beginning of the 3rd century, the gladius gradually disappeared from the weaponry of the Roman infantryman. Roman tactics were slowly changing as a result of the new military threats they faced. Toward the end of the empire, the Roman Army gradually transformed into an elite cavalry force composed of heavily armored cavalrymen and mounted archers. The heavily armored cavalry was copied from the Sarmatians of the steppes, and the mounted archers were the product of the wars against the Parthians and Sassanids in the Middle East.

As a result of the new cavalry's predominance on the battlefield, the Romans abandoned infantry formations that fought at close quarters and began using the long slashing swords of the cavalry. This marked the end of the invincible Roman legionary and his deadly gladius. □



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By Eric Niderost

The USS *Potomac* served as FDR's floating White House during World War II.

BELOW LEFT: The USS *Potomac* carried U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt on the first leg of a voyage in which he rendezvoused at sea for a secret meeting with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill. BELOW RIGHT: The presidential yacht was used for key diplomatic events, such as the visit of Queen Elizabeth and King George in 1939. BOTTOM: The vessel is now a museum at Jack London Square in Oakland, California.

WASHINGTON, D.C., IS NOT KNOWN FOR ITS MILD CLIMATE, but the summer of 1941 seemed particularly enervating. The city was enveloped in a fierce humid heat that tended to suck the air out of one's lungs even as it drenched one's body in perspiration. The political climate matched the torrid temperatures. Most of the world was at war, and the United States had so far managed to stay out of the spreading conflict. Many Americans were isolationists, ardently wishing to avoid war and taking comfort in the fact that the nation was seemingly protected by the vastness of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. A formal isolationist movement known as the America First Committee was created in the autumn of 1940 and eventually boasted more than 800,000 members nationwide.

Still, the news from abroad was troubling. Nazi Germany controlled most of the European continent and in June had launched a massive offensive against Soviet Russia. It was a titanic struggle, and in the late summer of 1941 the Germans were making such progress it seemed only a matter of time before the Russians would succumb to Adolf Hitler's war machine. In the Far East the news was just as grim. Japan was still attempting to subdue China and was already casting covetous eyes on the weakly held European colonies of Southeast Asia.

In March 1941 U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt persuaded Congress to pass the Lend-Lease Act, pledging material support, short of going to war, to any country considered vital to the defense of the United States. The chief beneficiary was Great Britain, which was under the dynamic and charismatic leadership of Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill. But Roosevelt repeatedly assured the American public that the United States was not going to war and that measures like Lend-Lease were purely defensive in nature.

While Washington still suffered under the blistering heat, Roosevelt's Press Secretary, Stephen Early, announced that the president would soon go on a cruise aboard the *Potomac*. This was not unexpected because Roosevelt had been a virtual White House recluse in recent months. Apart from a brief weekend at his country estate at Hyde Park in early June, and a *Potomac* cruise in March, the president stayed close to his desk at the White House.

Just the mere thought of a cruise seemed to invigorate the president, and when he held a cabinet meeting on August 2 he was in his usual ebullient mood. "Franklin Roosevelt patted his perspiring forehead and glanced at his cluttered desk," wrote a *Time* magazine reporter. "There was ... the old optimistic cast in his eye." The reporter's observation was not hyperbole. Roosevelt loved the

When not entertaining visiting dignitaries aboard his "floating White House," Roosevelt used it to host brainstorming sessions with advisers and congressional leaders.

sea and was an avid sailor from his youth.

The wind-dimpled Atlantic waters were like a tonic and the sea air, which was so unlike the stifling, humid hothouse atmosphere of the nation's capital, helped soothe both his chronic sinus problems and his frame of mind. Once aboard the *Potomac,* Roosevelt could relax, fish, and even devote a few hours to his beloved stamp collection.

Late Sunday morning, August 3, Roosevelt left the White House and was driven to Union Station to board a special train to New London, Connecticut, where the *Potomac* was waiting. He had a small entourage with him, a party that included his personal physician U.S. Admiral Ross T. McIntire and his aides.

The *Potomac,* designed as a recreational vessel for the nation's hard-working chief executive, was entering a new phase of its maritime career. The ship would play a major role in an elaborate deception designed to throw a veil of secrecy around a first-time summit meeting between Roosevelt and Churchill. With German submarines, which Roosevelt's described as "those rattlesnakes of the Atlantic," ever on the prowl, this cloak-and-dagger approach was necessary.

When Franklin Roosevelt took office in 1933 the presidential yacht was the *Sequoia,* a 104-foot vessel built in 1925. *Sequoia*'s biggest drawback was that it was made of wood. Roosevelt had been a paraplegic since 1921, and he feared being trapped in a fire. An all-steel ship seemed safer to him, so in 1936 the Coast Guard cutter *Electra* was commissioned a U.S. Navy vessel and renamed *Potomac.* Extensively renovated, it was ready for service by 1936.

Potomac was much larger than its predecessor. The vessel was 165 feet long and displaced 416 gross tons. It could also reach cruising speeds of 10 to 13 knots and had a crew of 54 men. It required no fewer than a dozen stewards to cater to the needs of the president and his guests.

The ship's first real foray into the world of diplomacy occurred when King George VI and Queen Elizabeth came to Washington in June 1939. It was the first time reigning British monarchs had ever visited the United States, and one of the highlights of the tour was a short trip aboard the *Potomac* to George Washington's home at Mount Vernon.

Roosevelt grew to love the *Potomac* and the freedom it gave him to escape the cares of Washington. Not that it was all fun and games; he loved informal talks with congressional leaders and brainstorming strategy sessions with close advisers. Yet when all was said and done Roosevelt usually kept his own counsel. His charm and vibrant wit, while genuine, also were a smokescreen that hid his somewhat enigmatic personality from others.

Churchill was grateful for American aid but wanted more. He also hoped that eventually the United States would join the Allied cause, but he realized this was more than Roosevelt could deliver, at least at that time. For his part, Roosevelt had no desire for war, but he knew he had to slowly but surely prepare the American people for the trials they would almost certainly face in the near future. Roosevelt might have lost the use of his legs, but he was a skilled tightrope walker in the political arena.

Certainly there was a growing need for Anglo-American cooperation in the face of fascist aggression. Roosevelt also mulled the future of Europe once the Nazi scourge had been eliminated from the world. Plans slowly developed for Roosevelt and Churchill to meet to discuss these issues. Each man would bring along military and governmental officials to draw up plans for further Anglo-American cooperation.

The two leaders planned to meet at Argentia on Newfoundland Island in Canada. While Roosevelt and Churchill got to know each other and discussed world affairs, their respective senior diplomatic and military personnel would huddle and draw up plans, laying the groundwork for vital Anglo-American cooperation on air, land, and sea.

The presidential party reached New London at 8:15 PM, the train backing up to within about 100 yards of the waiting *Potomac.* But before Roosevelt could board all the necessary honors had to be observed. There was a brief 10-minute ceremony with Connecticut Governor Robert A. Hurley and the New London submarine base commander. Once all the formalities were out of the way, the president boarded the ship as a bosun's pipe squealed a welcoming acknowledgement of his presence.

The president's staff informed the press corps that reporters would not be allowed on the cruise. A few might be permitted to tag along in the early stages, but once the voyage got underway journalists would be excluded. *Potomac* would have an escort vessel, the Coast Guard cutter *Calypso,* but unfortunately there was not enough room to accommodate the press.

"From the time the president boards the *Potomac* until the time he returns to shore the movement of the ship will be a confidential naval operation under a tight veil of secrecy," said Hurley. Few if any reporters were suspicious; after all, even though America was still neutral one never knew what Hitler had up his sleeve. U-boats prowling along the Atlantic seaboard posed a real threat to U.S. national security.

The first 24 hours of the cruise were routine and roused no suspicion among the press corps. After a leisurely journey up the coast, *Potomac* dropped anchor for the night at Harbor of Refuge in Point Judith, Rhode Island. The next morning the ship continued on to South Dartmouth, Massachusetts, where Roosevelt was scheduled to entertain some special guests. Ever the gallant type, the president personally drove a Chris-Craft speedboat to pick them up.

The guests were Crown Princess Martha of Norway, her brother Prince Karl of Sweden, and Martha's two young children, Ragnhild and Astrid. By all accounts the brown-eyed, 40-year-old princess was tall, elegant, and strikingly handsome. She was, in the words of a breathless admirer, "exactly as a princess should look."

Continued on page 65

EDMUND ALLENBY SOUGHT TO BREAK THE STALEMATE IN PALESTINE IN 1917. IT FELL TO THE AUSTRALIAN CAVALRYMEN TO DISLODGE THE TURKS FROM BEERSHEBA. BY ALEX ZAKRZEWSKI

IN late 1917, the most successful cavalry charge of World War I took place not on the muddy killing fields of the Western Front, but at the foot of the Judean Hills in southern Palestine. The sun had just begun to set over the desert town of Beersheba on the evening of October 31, 1917, when 800 bayonet-wielding Australian cavalrymen swept out of the arid wilderness like wild horsemen from a bygone age. Though they faced trenches, machine guns, artillery, and aircraft, the Australians succeeded in overrunning the garrison and taking the town, including its strategically important water wells. In the months to come, the audacious charge proved more than just the heroic finish to the epic Battle of Beersheba. It turned out to be a major contributing factor to overall British victory in the Holy Land.

THE LIGHT HORSE'S

World War I embroiled the Middle East in late 1914, when the Ottoman Empire entered the conflict as a Central Power. For decades the Ottoman Empire had been derided as the "sick man of Europe" because of the constant wars and political troubles that had eroded its once great power and influence. Though the sultan still reigned in Constantinople, real power lay in the hands of a triumvirate of dictators who had seized power during the wars and revolutions of the early 20th century. Militarist, authoritarian, and fervently nationalistic, the new regime was also unabashedly sympathetic to Germany from whom it received military and economic aid. In August 1914, the Ottomans shocked the world by brazenly refusing to close the Turkish Straits

Australian horsemen overrun the Turkish trenches at Beersheeba. The Ottoman trenches on the town's eastern side were discontinuous and without wire, which made them particularly vulnerable to a sudden and overwhelming attack.

to the renegade German warships *Goebben* and *Breslau,* and three months later they officially entered the war by attacking Russian ports in the Black Sea.

The Ottoman entry into the war created enormous problems for the Allies. While its power was not what it once was, the Ottoman Empire still straddled three continents and bordered the Allies where they appeared most vulnerable. Egypt, the Caucasus, and the Persian oil fields all became critical new fronts in a rapidly widening war. The Persian oil fields were particularly crucial because of the Royal Navy's transition from coal to petrol.

With strong German encouragement, the Ottomans quickly launched two major offensives. The first was a disastrous invasion of the Russian Caucasus, which saw the Ottoman Third Army annihilated by a combination of cold, disease, and Russian forces. The second was much more concerning, particularly to the British, as it threatened the Suez Canal, which arguably was the most important Allied line of communication in the world.

Egypt had been illegally occupied by the British since 1882. Following the Ottoman declaration of war in 1914, the country was made a formal British protectorate complete with a compliant sultan who was installed to give the Egyptians an illusion of self-governance. In truth, the government, economy, and army were all strictly controlled by the British. Their main interest in the country was the Suez Canal, through which flowed the tremendous resources of the British Empire. At the outbreak of hostilities, the British closed the canal to enemy ships and flooded the country with more than 70,000 troops, mainly from India, Australia, and New Zealand. Despite these measures, to many British strategists Egypt's enormous land area, home to a huge population of resentful, mainly Muslim subjects, appeared ripe for the Ottomans' picking.

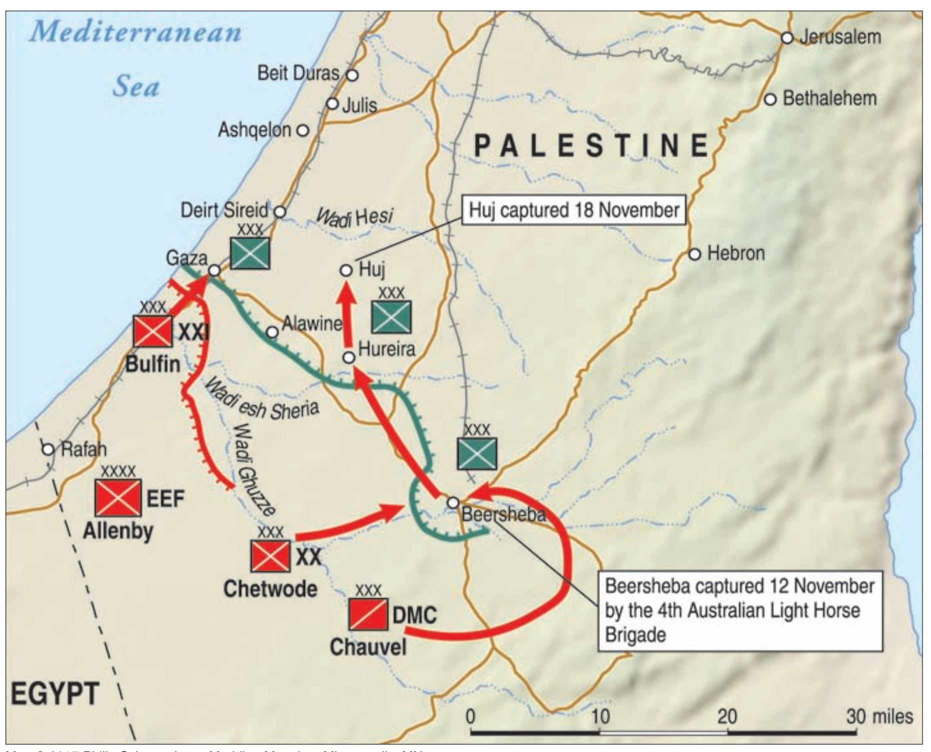
In the first few weeks of January 1915, their worst fears appeared realized when an Ottoman force of 25,000 men crossed the 100 waterless miles of the Sinai and attacked British defenses along the canal. The Ottomans brought with them not only boats and heavy artillery, but also 25

DARING CHARGE

Australian War Memorial

Library of Congress

ABOVE: Ottoman troops assemble in Palestine at the outset of World War I in preparation for a strike against the Suez Canal, which arguably was the most important Allied line of communication in the world at the time. BELOW: The British faced a daunting task in 1917 breaking the Ottoman army's 25-mile defensive line that ran southeast from Gaza on the coast to Beersheba south of the Judean Hills.



Map © 2017 Philip Schwartzberg. Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

corrugated iron pontoons, prefabricated in Germany and smuggled into the empire through pro-German Bulgaria. Though the overall commander of the operation was officially Ahmed Djemal Pasha, one of the empire's governing triumvirs, most of the logistical and tactical planning was carried out by his German chief of staff, Colonel Kress von Kressenstein, a talented and experienced officer with years of service in the Middle East.

Luckily for the British, the one thing the invaders forgot was air support, and within a few days of leaving Palestine the long columns of Ottoman troops were spotted by a French aircraft. The large numbers of Arab tribesmen that Ahmed Djemal had counted on to screen the Ottoman advance had also failed to materialize. As a result, by the time the expedition reached the canal the British were well prepared to receive them. After a week of bitter fighting, only one pontoon made it into the water, and just three boatloads of troops managed to row across. The Ottoman artillery knocked out a few of the Allied ships patrolling the canal, but that was the extent of the expedition's successes. Outgunned and outnumbered, the Ottomans limped back across the desert, having suffered 2,000 casualties.

The Ottomans may have failed in their ultimate objective of seizing the Suez Canal and invading Egypt, but in doing so they opened up a new and costly theater of war. The British in Egypt, though their own casualties were fewer than 200, had also been taught a valuable lesson. The Ottomans were not to be underestimated. Their government may have been corrupt and oppressive and their vast empire torn by interethnic strife, but so-called Johnny Turk, the hardy and resilient Anatolian peasant who made up the bulwark of the Ottoman military, was still capable of incredible feats of courage, endurance, and ingenuity when properly led.

Unfortunately, Allied strategists in Europe did not heed this lesson, and over the course of 1915, they overconfidently blundered into disastrous campaigns against the Ottomans in the Dardanelles and Mesopotamia. Allied defeats on these distant fronts had a profound effect on events in the Sinai as they freed up thousands of battle-hardened Ottoman troops for renewed attacks on Egypt. At the same time in Europe, the fall of Serbia in 1915 and the entry into the war of Bulgaria as a Central Power had also made it easier for Berlin to send weapons and specialists to the Middle East. When the fighting resumed in the Sinai in 1916, the British faced an emboldened and reinforced enemy, more determined and dangerous than before. To meet this new threat, the War Office sent General Archibald Murray, a decorated veteran of the Boer War and former Chief of the Imperial General Staff, to the Middle East to take command of the newly organized Egyptian Expeditionary Force and secure Egypt and the Sinai once and for all.

Loose sand dunes, barren plains, jagged mountains, and sudden sandstorms combine to make the triangle-shaped Sinai Peninsula one of the most inhospitable regions in the world. Murray's strategy for securing this desolate but strategically important region was to build a standard-gauge railway linking the few crucial desert oases in a defensive network. The railway would also provide his troops with all the supplies necessary for survival in the lifeless desert. Alongside the railway, Murray further ordered the construction of a 12-inch pipeline to provide men and beasts alike with fresh water from the Nile. It was a grueling task that largely fell on the backs of the 13,000 sometimes press-ganged workers of the Egyptian Labour Corps, who had to contend not only

with the elements and enemy raids, but also the whips of their overseers.

Following in the path of an ancient caravan route, the railway's progress was slow but steady, and by mid-April 1916, after two months of toil, it reached the oasis of Katia, roughly 25 miles from the canal. Katia was the westernmost in a series of brackish but vital water sources between Egypt and Ottoman Palestine. It was from Katia that Napoleon had launched his invasion of Palestine in 1799, and it was there that Kressenstein, who had been watching the British advance with growing consternation, sought to stop them from advancing any farther.

In the early morning hours of April 23, 1916, the first of the great Sinai battles erupted when an Ottoman force of 3,600 cavalry and infantry poured out of the desert and around the flanks of the British forces guarding Katia. With the help of an early morning fog, the attackers completely surprised the outnumbered and outgunned 5th Mounted Brigade, whose commander had failed to either reconnoiter Ottoman movements or prepare adequate defensive positions. After several hours of hard fighting, the British fled in panic, having lost almost four cavalry squadrons. It was a humiliating defeat that tremendously raised Ottoman morale and gave them the initiative in the desert war.

TOP: A fully kitted Australian cavalryman. BOTTOM: Ottoman Fourth Army Commander Djemal Pasha (left) and German General Friedrich Freiherr Kress von Kressenstein.

A few months later, after building up his forces, Kressenstein struck again, this time north of Katia at the British railhead of Romani. His plan was to pin down the British from the east, then once again swing around their right flank and attack in force from the south. Kressenstein had only 16,000 men, but in another remarkable feat of ingenuity, his troops managed to drag a number of heavy guns across the soft desert sands by creating improvised tracks made of brushwood and wooden boards. Aware that he was outnumbered, Kressenstein was nonetheless confident that his big guns and flanking attack would throw the British off. The British defenders at Romani were awakened at 1 AM on August 4, 1916, by cries of "Allah, Allah!" as the Ottomans launched massed infantry assaults against their defenses.

Men of the British Yeomanry Mounted Division on the outpost line at Gaza in April 1917. One in every four mounted troopers was detailed to hold his section's horses when in action.

This time, Murray anticipated the Ottoman attack from the south and positioned his troops accordingly. The crux of the British defenses was a large sand dune nicknamed Mount Meredith. The Ottoman infantry, many of them barefoot, attacked the dune with reckless determination. As they struggled to clamber up the sandy slopes, the attackers had to dodge not just the murderous fire of the defenders, but also the rolling corpses of their comrades. The Ottomans slowly drove back the defenders, but with every passing hour more and more British reinforcements poured into Romani along the newly constructed railway. By day's end, Murray had 50,000 men at his disposal, and it was the Ottomans who were facing encirclement. Short on ammunition and water, Kressenstein had no choice but to call off the attack and retreat to the desert with the ANZAC Mounted Division in hot pursuit.

The authorities in London were now eager to destroy the Ottomans in the Sinai once and for all. Yet Murray refused to be pressured; instead, he continued the slow, methodical construction of his railway and pipeline. It was not until December 1916 that he finally reached the border of Ottoman Palestine. On December 23 his cavalry encircled and captured the town of El Arish, regarded as the gateway to the Sinai, and on January 9, 1917, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force completed its conquest of the peninsula by capturing Rafah on the Egyptian-Palestinian frontier. The loss of Rafah destroyed the Ottomans' Egyptian aspirations, and they retreated into Palestine never again to threaten the Suez Canal. In less than a year, Murray had conquered an area roughly the size of West Virginia and seemed poised to strike into the Holy Land toward Jerusalem.

As 1917 dawned, British spirits were understandably high as both the troops and the politicians in London believed the Ottomans to be a spent force; however, the fiercest fighting in the desert war was yet to come. Kressenstein and his remaining forces had fallen back to a strong, 25-mile defensive line that ran southeast from Gaza on the Mediterranean coast to the desert town of Beersheba south of the Judean Hills. It was a formidable position protected by a network of entrenchments and fortifications and bolstered by reinforcements from other fronts. It also gave the Ottomans control of the key water sources in the area, meaning they were unhampered by a long, tenuous supply line, unlike the British, who were completely dependent on their ever-lengthening railway and pipeline.

On March 26, 1917, the British attacked Gaza for the first time. Murray hoped to encircle the town and its garrison of 4,000 in the same way that the battles of the Sinai had been won. Before

dawn the cavalry was sent racing around the city from the northeast and actually succeeded in encircling the defenders. Unfortunately, the main infantry assaults had been delayed by dense fog, and despite a deafening artillery bombardment they were quickly bogged down by difficult terrain, lack of visibility, and enemy fire. Still, the attackers pressed on; even with mounting casualties, by day's end the city was almost completely captured. Kressenstein, believing Gaza about to fall, ordered a relief column to halt. Then, inexplicably, just as the battle appeared won Murray convinced himself that the cavalry was too low on water and ammunition to continue fighting and ordered a withdrawal.

Murray's troops were enraged at having to give up their hard-won gains. Their rage was compounded a month later when they once again assaulted Gaza only to learn why the city's name literally meant fortress in ancient times. The Ottomans correctly presumed that after their embarrassing withdrawal the British would return in force, and they spent the weeks in between attacks fortifying the city with trenches, barbed wire, machine gun nests, and artillery emplacements. To his credit, Murray knew a hard fight lay ahead. He used every weapon in his arsenal, including 4,000 gas-tipped artillery shells and eight tanks, the latter yet to be used in the Middle Eastern Theater. Royal Navy battleships stationed offshore pulverized the Ottoman defenses ahead of the infantry assaults.

The Second Battle of Gaza, which began April 17, 1917, resembled a typical Western Front offensive—that is, an extensive artillery bombardment followed by mass infantry assaults resulting in heavy casualties for the attackers. For three days, Murray's men attacked the Ottoman positions,

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and each time they were bloodily beaten back. The artillery and naval bombardment made little impact on the dug-in defenders, who responded with a devastating enfilade of machine gun and artillery fire.

Just like their comrades in France and Flanders, the British in Palestine learned the hard way that a well-armed, well-entrenched, and determined enemy was almost impossible to overcome through frontal assault. It did not help that the poison gas and tanks, the two surprise weapons on which Murray had pinned so much hope, proved useless in the desert. While the former evaporated in the scorching heat, the latter's machinery clogged and broke down in the fine desert sand. By the time the Second Battle of Gaza was called off, the British had suffered 6,500 casualties, more than three times that inflicted on the Ottomans.

Murray desperately tried to save face, and save his job as well, by portraying the two attempts on Gaza as British victories that had cost the defenders crucial troops and resources. The press bought it, but the authorities in London were not fooled. British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, who had succeeded Herbert Henry Asquith in December 1916, and his War Cabinet had lost faith in Murray. The fall of Baghdad in March 1917, coupled with the Arab revolts in Jordan and Syria, convinced them that the Ottomans were on their last legs, and all that was needed to knock them out of the war entirely was one more big push. To make that push they would need an imaginative commander willing to take risks, something they could not expect from the cautious, methodical Murray. Their choice to replace him would prove one of the smartest appointments of the war.

Lieutenant General Sir Edmund Allenby was a hero of the Boer War and one of the most experienced cavalry commanders in the British Army. In 1914, he had led the Cavalry Division during the retreat from Mons before eventually assuming command of the Third Army. Regarded as a "cavalryman's cavalryman," Allenby was a bold and aggressive commander whose tactical instincts called for rapid movement and daring maneuver, qualities ill suited to the static trench battles of the Western Front. In the vast expanses of southern Palestine, however, he was in his element, and he brought with him a sense of purpose and determination that the demoralized Egyptian Expeditionary Force sorely needed. Unlike Murray, who preferred to command from a desk in the Savoy Hotel in Cairo, Allenby placed his headquarters on the front lines where his barrel-chested frame and explosive temper quickly earned him the nickname "the Bull." Although his men may have lived in fear of his surprise visits and inspections, they also quickly came to appreciate their new commander's confidence and hands-on style of leadership.

Allenby immediately recognized the futility in attacking Gaza for a third time and began to explore possibilities for an attack elsewhere along the Ottoman lines. By the summer of 1917, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force had grown to a formidable force of almost 100,000 men, including 15,000 cavalry. Organized into the XX, XI, and Desert Mounted Corps, the Egyptian Expeditionary Force greatly outnumbered the 33,000 Ottoman infantry and 1,400 cavalry they now faced. In guns and planes, Allenby held a considerable advantage as well. He could also boast a powerful ally in the rebellious Arab tribesmen of the Hejaz. Led by the mild-mannered British intelligence officer Colonel T.E. Lawrence, the Arabs had seized the Red Sea port of Aqaba and were poised to cut the Ottomans off from the Arabian Peninsula entirely. Clearly, it was not a question of force, but of where best to exert that force.

Allenby ultimately settled on a plan devised by one of his most competent officers, Lt. Gen. Philip Chetwode, which called for an attack on Beersheba at the other end of the Ottoman line. Beersheba itself was an ancient but otherwise unremarkable desert town at the foot of the Judean Hills. It had been founded by Abraham and his son Isaac, according to the Bible, and over the course of its long history it had changed hands innumerable times. In recent years, the Ottomans had built Beersheba into something resembling a prosperous town complete with an electric station, hotel, and school; however, it was not the town itself that so enticed the British,

but rather the crucial water wells on which it sat. Taking Beersheba would not only pierce the hitherto unbreakable Ottoman line, but it would also give Allenby a reliable water source with which he could conceivably roll up the entire Ottoman line, outflank Gaza, and then strike north toward Jerusalem.

Chetwode's plan was expanded into a major offensive against the entire length of the Ottoman line. To draw the Ottoman troops away from Beersheba, XXI Corps would launch diversionary attacks against Gaza. These attacks would be preceded by an almost week-long artillery bombardment from both land and sea to really convince the Ottoman commanders that Gaza was once again the Egyptian Expeditionary Force 's main objective. With the Ottomans distracted in the north, XX Corps and the Desert Mounted Corps would attack Beersheba, the former from the south and west, and the latter from the northeast, where they would also cut the town off from reinforcements from the north.

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ABOVE: Ottoman troops before the British attack at Beersheba. LEFT: A destroyed British tank near Gaza. OPPOSITE: An Ottoman artillery crew fires a German-made 105mm field howitzer.

The plan was sound enough in theory, but there were numerous practical realities to consider. The first was water. The area surrounding Beersheba was barren wilderness, which meant that not only would the British troops attacking Beersheba have to bring what water they needed with them, but the town would absolutely have to be taken on the first day. If the battle for Beersheba dragged on or, worse yet, if the Ottomans destroyed the town's wells, the attack would have to be called off and the entire plan would be ruined.

There was also the question of how to move large numbers of men and animals across miles of featureless desert without the Ottomans taking notice. Kressenstein knew that a British offensive was in the works, and though Gaza seemed like the logical target he watched the British lines closely for any suspicious activity. Allenby took every precaution to keep him guessing. As his men moved closer to their deployment areas, camps and supply depots were left standing with fires and lanterns burning. A dummy railway complete with its own station was built in the north approaching Gaza, while in the south the real railway and pipeline were covered with brush during the day to hide them from enemy aircraft. The British even constructed depots and camps on Cyprus to give the impression of a pending amphibious landing behind Ottoman lines. However, it ultimately was a brilliantly simple piece of counterintelligence that, more than anything else, convinced Kressenstein that the British were still planning to strike again at Gaza.

At some point in mid-September 1917, a British intelligence officer rode out with a small party into the desert toward the Ottoman lines and deliberately attracted the attention of an enemy patrol. Sources are conflicted over whether it was Major Richard Meinertzhagen or Captain A.C.B. Neale. After a brief scuffle during which shots were exchanged, the British raced back to their own lines, leaving behind a haversack spattered with horse blood. Inside was a large sum of cash, some forged personal letters, a large map with unit locations marked, and confidential papers that outlined plans for an attack on Gaza and a diversionary attack on Beersheba. When the Ottoman patrol returned with the haversack, it was immediately sent to Kressenstein and his staff, who thanked their lucky stars for such a fortuitous twist of fate. In their minds, there was now no question where the British would attack.

Lloyd George urged Allenby to deliver Jerusalem as a Christmas present to a war-weary British nation, yet the British commander refused to move until all the pieces of his plan were in place, and it was not until October 26, 1917, that the attack on Beersheba finally began. While British guns and ships pounded Gaza in the north, in the south thousands of men, horses, and camels began creeping stealthily across the desert toward the Ottoman lines. They brought with them more than 100 artillery pieces, including 60-pounders and 6-inch howitzers. In an indication of the changing nature of warfare, alongside the plodding, camel-driven supply caravans rolled a fleet of 150 trucks and tractors that, despite their troublingly loud engines, proved invaluable for towing the cumbersome stores of artillery ammunition.

The no man's land between the British and Ottoman lines was a wilderness of arid plains and rocky hills interspersed by numerous dry wadis. In an effort to maintain secrecy, the attackers advanced mainly at night following in the path of lanterns stealthily planted by reconnaissance patrols during the day. During the daytime hours, the men and their baggage trains hid in wadis and gullies, making sure to cover their zinc and copper water tanks with blankets to hide their glinting from the enemy planes that occasionally appeared overhead. The slow progress and bitterly cold desert nights, coupled with the constant fear of detection by the enemy, frayed the men's nerves and created a tense atmosphere allayed only by the daily rum rations.

It was a testament to the careful planning and execution of Allenby's plan, as well as his deceptive measures, that this enormous mass of men, animals, and machines was able to advance on Beersheba without raising alarm. Cover was almost blown a few days before the main attack when

two battalions of cavalry crashed into a sizable Ottoman patrol. A fierce fight ensued in which the Ottomans brought in artillery and both sides called for reinforcements. Much to the relief of the British, the Ottomans simply dismissed the encounter as a British reconnaissance in force and retreated to their own lines, such was their conviction that the main attack was going to be at Gaza.

On the night of October 30, 1917, the attacking divisions of XX Corps and the Desert Mounted Corps moved into their attack positions. Beersheba's defenses had been well scouted and plotted by British intelligence staff, and they had a good idea of what to expect. The town itself was fortified by a trench system that was strongest to the west and south but largely unfinished from the east and north. Three miles farther out from the town there was another line of defenses, but it too was discontinuous, particularly from the north and east. The major obstacles to the east were a series of small hills that could prove to be stubborn obstacles if properly defended. Once across these hills, however, the ground approaching Beersheba from the east was a gently sloping, featureless plain.

The town's garrison numbered no more than 5,000 men, including cooks, clerks, and orderlies, and boasted 20 field guns and 56 machine guns. It was a paltry force, and to fill the broken lines of trenches the garrison commander, Ismet Bey, had been forced to dismount his cavalry and deploy them as infantry. To make matters worse, a good portion of his men were Arab conscripts whose loyalty to the sultan and the Ottoman war effort was suspect. During a visit from Kressenstein on October 15, just over two weeks before the British attack, Ismet had asked for more reinforcements with which to extend the two trench lines. Kressenstein assured him that such measures were unnecessary as the British were definitely planning to attack Gaza. Moreover, if there was to be an attack on Beersheba it would have to come from the west where the trenches were strongest because water sources were more plentiful in that direction.

The British plan of attack on Beersheba looked simple enough on paper but would be extremely difficult to execute given the distances and time constraints involved. Although the 60th and 74th Infantry Divisions attacked the outer ring of Ottoman trenches from the southwest, the cavalry divisions of the Desert Mounted Corps would swing around Beersheba from the east, cut the road north, and attack the town where its defenses were seemingly at their weakest. To maintain surprise, the night before the attack the infantry and its supporting artillery would have to march up to eight miles through freezing darkness to a point within 2,000 yards of the Ottoman trenches. The troopers and horses of the Desert Mounted Corps would have the hardest time. After leaving their camp about 16 miles southeast of Beersheba on the afternoon of October 30, they would have to ride all night then fight all day to achieve their objectives. Not only would men and horses be without sleep for more than a day, but the horses would have to go at least 24 hours without being watered, which was the maximum limit allowed by official regulations.

At dawn on the morning of October 31, 1917, the Battle of Beersheba began with a furious artillery bombardment of the Ottoman positions to the southwest. More than 100 guns erupted along a three-mile front. Their main target was Hill 1070, which offered a commanding view of the Ottoman trenches. After the wire-cutting parties reported the positions sufficiently pounded, the attackers quickly overwhelmed the few defenders still alive, and the rest of the 60th and 74th Divisions surged past the hill toward the main Ottoman trench line. By that point the sun had risen, exposing the attackers to a withering machine gun and artillery fire that briefly brought their advance to a halt. The pause was only temporary, however, and by noon the British guns had once again done their job, allowing the attackers to storm the trenches and in some cases advance as far as 1½ miles beyond.

In the east, the cavalry of the Desert Mounted Corps made good progress as well, and by noon the road north had been cut. The most formidable obstacle was Tel el Saba, a 1,000-foot outlier of the Judean Hills to the north that the Ottomans had fortified with strong positions for their machine guns and artillery, all of which enjoyed excellent fields of fire.

It fell to the New Zealand Mounted Rifles and the 3rd Australian Light Horse to take this difficult position on which the easterly approach to Beersheba depended. By attacking in sections, some firing and others advancing, the ANZAC troops slowly scaled the rocky slopes despite a lethal hail of enemy fire whizzing above their heads. When they were within 200 yards of the Ottoman entrench-

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Australian War Memorial

ABOVE: British infantry storms Turkish trenches at the start of the battle. Their main target was Hill 1070, which offered a commanding view of the Ottoman trenches. TOP: Although originally promoted as the actual cavalry charge at Beersheeba, experts say it is a reenactment made by the same units a year after the battle. It shows what three lines of mounted troops 600 yards apart with four to five meters between each trooper would look like. Cavalry officer Lt. William Hopkin James said of the photograph, "You will note that every man has his bayonet in his hand. If it was the real thing you would see riderless horses and horses going down. Also shells bursting among the horses."

ments, the New Zealanders fixed bayonets and pushed the attack home. The sight of the cold steel coming at them proved too much for the exhausted defenders, who broke and fled back to Beersheba.

It was by then 3 PM, and the outer ring of Ottoman defenses had been completely overrun by XX Corps and the Desert Mounted Corps, but the fight on Tel el Saba had taken longer than expected and the British were quickly running out of time. With dusk just two hours away and the Ottoman defenders rapidly regrouping in Beersheba itself, the next move had to be decisive. With each passing minute, the threat of the wells being blown also dangerously increased. The commander of the Desert Mounted Corps, Lt. Gen. Harry Chauvel, surveyed the open plain east of the town, and his cavalryman's instinct immediately recognized the incredible opportunity that had presented itself. Wasting no time, he ordered the 4th and 12th Australian Light Horse Regiments to mount a cavalry charge to overrun the Ottoman defenses from the east and take the town.

It was an incredulous order in many respects, and it brought on a heated debate between Chauvel and his officers. The commander of the 5th Mounted Yeomanry argued that neither regiment was equipped to mount a charge as both were really mounted rifles without sabers or lances. Others argued that advancing across the open plain would expose the troopers to a galling fire from the Ottoman trenches. Both were sound arguments, but the two regiments were also in a uniquely advantageous position to carry out such a daring feat. For one, both were relatively rested, having spent the day waiting in reserve in a wadi. Moreover, though they surely would be briefly subject to a fierce fire, the Ottoman trenches on Beersheba's eastern side were discontinuous and without wire, making them particularly vulnerable to such a sudden and overwhelming attack. These considerations settled the matter, and at about 4 PM the troopers of the two Australian Light Horse regiments received the order that would earn them a legendary place in the annals of military history: "Tighten up all your gear. In ten minutes we are going into Beersheba."

To reach their objective, the Australians would have to cross four miles of bare, gently sloping ground. They could not see the Ottoman positions as they were completely obscured by a thick cloud of dust that the artillery had thrown up earlier that day. The troopers' only point of reference was the town's white-domed mosque, which stood out clearly against the dark terrain. As they crested a low hill onto the plain, they formed a long line with the 4th Regiment on the right and the 12th on the left. The squadrons formed three lines, each about 600 yards apart with approximately 15 feet between each trooper. Altogether, the two regiments numbered about 800 men, though they were further supported by two batteries of horse artillery and the 11th Australian Light Horse Regiment, which was held in reserve. Behind them trailed the horse ambulances and stretcher bearers.

The advance started with a trot, then a canter, and after covering about a mile of ground, the troopers spurred their horses into a gallop. As they did so, two German planes suddenly appeared overhead and strafed the regiments, but to surprisingly little effect. The Australians may have looked painfully vulnerable on the open plain, but their speed coupled with the great clouds of dust thrown up by their horses' hooves made them hard targets. This did not stop the Ottomans from unleashing a devastating storm of rifle, machine-gun, and artillery fire, and soon after breaking into a gallop, men and horses began crashing to the ground with crippling force. With no cover available to them, the troopers could only crouch low behind the necks of their frothing, maddened mounts, many of whom were galloping purely out of terror and instinct.

After the charge it was revealed that the Ottomans had expected the Australians to stop and advance dismounted, and many did not bother adjusting the range on their rifles or guns. Nonetheless, the enemy's fire only intensified the closer the horsemen got to the trenches. As shells continued to burst overhead, grenades and point-blank rifle and machine-gun fire cut holes in the attacking squadrons. It was a hellish scene, almost impossible to describe, and made all the more frightening by the thunderous pounding of hooves and great clouds of blinding dust. When the Australians were within a few hundred yards of the Ottoman trenches, they added a new element of terror by drawing their bayonets and waving them in the air as if they were sabers. The glinting of the blades in the setting sun filled many of the defenders with fear, and they began to abandon their positions and fall back on the town.

The 12th was lucky enough to approach a section of trench that was largely unfinished, and they easily sped past the defenders and onto Beersheba's dusty streets. The 4th faced a better prepared trench system, in places three lines deep, and they were forced to dismount and fight hand to hand. Many troopers leaped off their horses directly into the trenches with bayonets and pistols in hand, some using their rifles as clubs. Others stayed mounted and simply hopped over the 10-foot-wide trenches and continued into the town. A number of troopers later reported having their horses die suddenly beneath them for no apparent reason. A gory trail revealed that their stomachs

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FIRST BLOOD AT WATERLOO

In the face of disaster, few military commanders in history maintained the British stiff upper lip as well as Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington. In mid-June 1815 he attended a ball given by Charlotte Lennox, Duchess of Richmond, in her Brussels home. Her guest list included all the highest nobility and military commanders of the city: Prince William of Orange-Nassau; Frederick, Duke of Brunswick; Lt. Gen. Sir Thomas Picton; right down to 18-year-old Lord James Hay, heir to the Earl of Erroll. "With the exception of three generals, every officer high in the army was to be there seen," wrote Lady Katherine Arden, daughter of Richard, Baron Alvanley.

If the Richmond home was practically a military headquarters, it was with good reason. In March Napoleon Bonaparte, the former Emperor of France and would-be conqueror of Europe, had escaped exile on Elba. From the Mediterranean to Paris, the heart of Europe rang once more with cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" And that very day reports indicated that France's 130,000-strong Army of the North had invaded Belgium.

"When the Duke [of Wellington] arrived, rather late, to the ball I was dancing, but I went to him to ask about the rumours," wrote the duchess's 17-year-old daughter, Georgiana. "He said very gravely, 'Yes, they are true; we are off tomorrow.'" As supreme commander of the combined armies of England and the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, which at the time included modern Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg, Wellington would face death in the days ahead. But that was no reason for him to miss the duchess's ball that evening.

Guests arrived into the night. Colorful gowns and resplendent uniforms swirled across the ballroom floor. The Gordon Highlanders performed a sword dance and reels. Around midnight a messenger arrived with urgent news. Wellington conferred with Prince William, who

AT QUATRE BRAS ON JUNE 16, 1815, MARSHAL NEY HELD THE FATE OF FRANCE IN HIS HANDS. LORD WELLINGTON DID EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO THWART HIM FROM HIS OBJECTIVE.

BY DON HOLLWAY

The 28th (North Gloucestershire) Regiment of Foot, wearing their stovepipe shakos, added to their already illustrious heritage at Quatre Bras by gallantly beating back repeated French assaults.

begged leave to depart. One by one the other officers also began slipping away. "Those who had brothers and sons to be engaged openly gave way to their grief, as the last parting of many took place at this most terrible ball," wrote Lady Katherine.

Sitting beside Lady Georgiana, Wellington indulged in food and conversation until around 1:30 AM and then retired to his guest quarters. Before taking leave he inquired of his hosts if there was a good map in the house. In the study, behind closed doors, he compared field reports to the terrain. The duke had won fame in the Spanish Peninsula as a master of defensive tactics who had fought in nearly 60 battles and never lost; however, he had never fought Bonaparte. He had cantoned the Anglo-Dutch army to the southwest, around Nivelles, to protect his supply line from England, but the French had taken Charleroi, due south, and were just 13 miles from Brussels. "Napoleon has humbugged me, by God; he has gained 24 hours march on me," Wellington famously declared.

Across the border, another great general was also trying to keep up with Bonaparte. Marshal of France Michel Ney had risen from the ranks in every major battle his country fought, from Valmy in 1792 to Leipzig in 1813. He had commanded the French rear guard on the retreat from Moscow, even though at one point completely it was cut off from the main army. At the final escape across the Beresina River he became renowned as "the last Frenchman on Russian soil." His men knew him as Le Rougeaud for his ruddy complexion and fiery disposition. Napoleon himself called Ney the "Bravest of the Brave." He had promoted Ney to Marshal of France and titled him Prince of Moscow.

Yet it had been Ney who, after the surrender of Paris, led the Revolt of the Marshals, refusing

Lord Wellington and other Allied officers attended the Duchess of Richmond's ball in her Brussels home the night before the battle. Wellington spent a good portion of the night in her study reviewing maps behind closed doors and comparing field reports to the terrain.

to fight on. What is more, when Napoleon went off to exile on Elba Ney joined the royalists. But on Bonaparte's return, it was Ney whom fat, gouty King Louis XVIII sent to bring him to heel. "Sire, I hope I shall soon be in a position to bring him back in an iron cage," said Ney.

Ney stormed south but along the way lost his resolve and his royalism. "Embrace me, my dear Ney," Napoleon told him at their meeting. "I am glad to see you. I want no explanations. My arms are ever open to receive you, for to me you are still the bravest of the brave." Ney changed sides again, and so did France. On March 19, Louis fled the country, and less than 24 hours later Napoleon rode into Paris.

Austria, Russia, and Prussia agreed to contribute 150,000 men each alongside the English, Dutch, and Belgians, a Seventh Coalition to crush Napoleonic aspirations once and for all. "Thus France was to be attacked in the course of July by six hundred thousand enemies," wrote Bonaparte's aide-de-camp, General Gaspard Gourgaud. "But, at the beginning of June, only the armies of Generals [Field Marshal Gebhard Leberecht von] Blucher and Wellington could be considered as prepared for action. After deducting the troops, which it was necessary they should leave in their fortresses, they presented a disposable force of two hundred thousand men on the frontiers."

But Napoleon intended neither to wait for the Allies to invade France nor fight them all at once. Preparation for war went on without Ney, who for six weeks awaited a command. "Send for Marshal Ney and tell him that if he wishes to be present at the first battles, he ought to be at Avesnes on the 14th," Napoleon ordered on June 11. "My headquarters will be there."

Ney and his aide-de-camp, Colonel Pierre-Agathe Heymes, arrived in Avesnes-sur-Helpe, on the Belgian border, on the evening of June 13. Forced to scrounge horses and places to sleep, they tagged along with the army like camp followers as it moved up. Before dawn on June 15, the II Corps under General Honore Charles Reille, supported by I Corps under General Jean-Baptiste Drouet, Count d'Erlon, crossed the border and pushed a Prussian battalion out of Charleroi. By noon nothing lay between Bonaparte and Brussels. He finally summoned Ney to his headquarters and revealed his battle plan.

The emperor expected impetuous Blucher to attack from the east, where Napoleon would knock him out of the war with his main force. All Ney had to do was prevent Wellington from coming to the Prussians' aid until Bonaparte wheeled about. Together they would defeat the Anglo-Dutch in turn. The Allies would sue for peace before Austria and Russia even entered the fight. "Take command of the 1st and 2nd army corps," Napoleon told Ney. "I am giving you also the light cavalry of my Guard, but don't use it yet. Tomorrow you will be joined by [cavalry general François Etienne de] Kellermann's Cuirassiers. Go and drive the enemy back along the Brussels road and take up a position at Quatre Bras."

Quatre Bras, which means four arms, was a farm hamlet 10 miles north of Charleroi, where the road to Brussels crossed the route from Nivelles to Namur. By holding it, Ney would block Wellington's path to Blucher. "Depend on it," Ney assured Napoleon. "In two hours we shall be at Quatre Bras, unless all of the enemy's army be there!" And with the same martial spirit he had shown his king, he hurried off in the service of his emperor. "But he forgot that there is nothing worse for a general than to take command of an army the day before a battle," wrote Heymes.

Ney caught up with Reille's II Corps at Gosselies, about seven miles short of Quatre Bras. With several hours of daylight left, he called upon the Guards Light Cavalry Division under General Charles Lefebvre-Desnoettes to follow him up the Brussels road to Frasnes, halfway to their objective. When they topped a rise overlooking the village, they came under cannon fire. A battery of horse artillery and a battalion of troops held the town.

Two squadrons of the 2nd Light Horse Regiment of Lancers of the Imperial Guard, General Pierre David de Colbert-Chabanais's famous Red Lancers, rode around Frasnes in full view of the defenders. "As they observed that we were maneuvering to turn them, they retired from the village where we had practically surrounded them with our squadrons," wrote Lefebvre-Desnoettes.

The enemy fell back not to the east, but to the north. These were not Prussian troops. They were Dutch: the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Nassau-Usingen Brigade, and the 2nd Netherlands Infantry Division. They withdrew toward Quatre Bras, knowing the entire brigade, four battalions under Colonel Prince Bernhard von Saxe-Weimar, was coming down the Brussels road.

"General Colbert even reached within musket shot of Quatre Bras on the high road, but ... it was impossible for us to carry it," wrote Lefebvre-Desnoettes. The Red Lancers spotted the main body of Netherlanders descending on them. Colbert elected not to take on the entire brigade himself but abandoned the town and rode back to Frasnes. By 7 PM, Saxe-Weimar had 4,500 men and six cannons in Quatre Bras.

Given a few more hours, Ney might have organized two divisions to clear the town in a night assault. But the 17,800 men of II Corps were strung out halfway back to France. The 5th Infantry Division under Brig. Gen. Gilbert Desire Joseph, Baron Bachelu, was at Frasnes, 2½ miles to the rear. The 9th Infantry Division under General Maximilien Sebastien, Count Foy, and the 6th Infantry Division under Napoleon's younger brother, Prince Jerome Bonaparte, were twice as far back, in Gosselies. And d'Erlon's entire I Corps was still farther south, around Charleroi. Bringing them all up via the one road to Frasnes by night would be quite the exercise in traffic control. With the troops available Heymes estimated they had not one chance in 10 of taking

Frasnes before dawn.

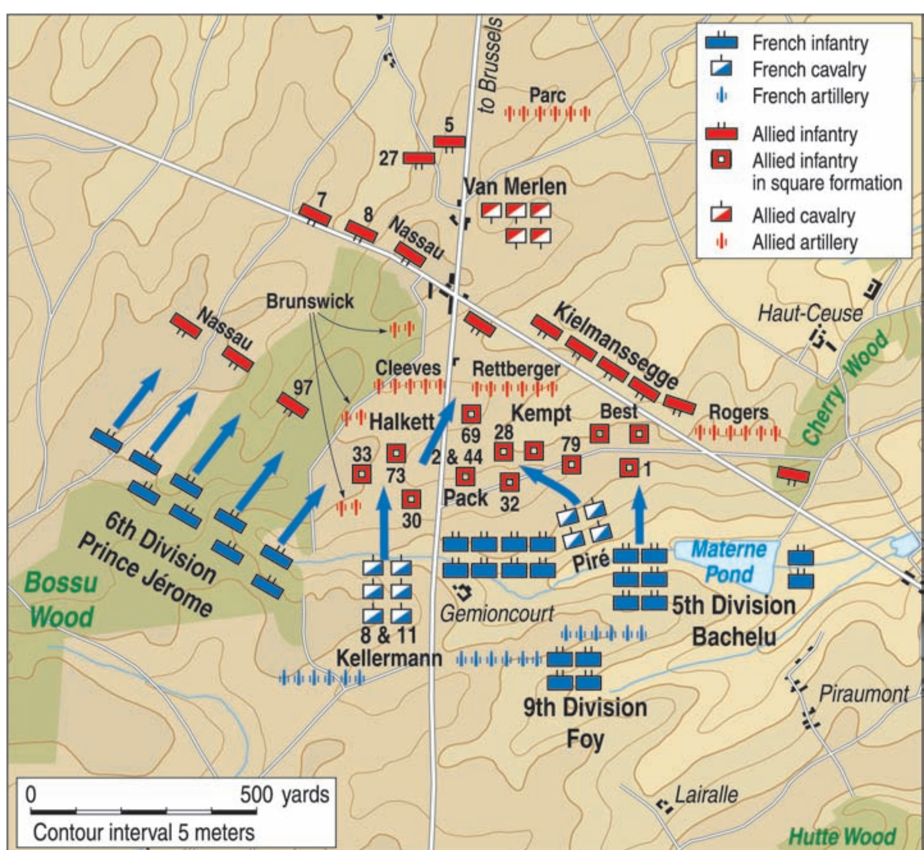
So Ney prepared to carry out his orders in the morning. Meanwhile, Wellington's commanders disobeyed his orders. Overnight, Saxe-Weimar sent word up the road to Nivelles, alerting his division commander, Lt. Gen. Henri Georges, Baron Perponcher-Sedlintsky, of the French invasion. They elected to ignore Wellington's command to concentrate at Nivelles and to fight instead at Quatre Bras.

The battlefield was a rough triangle, pointed upward, with the crossroads at its apex. The Bossu Wood stretched southwest, offering cover for defenders and attackers alike. Likewise, the Namur road led through a defile to the southeast, past the village of Piraumont, toward Ligny and the Prussians. The Brussels-Charleroi road ran up the middle, across a shallow, rolling valley full of undulations and folds of dead ground carpeted with tall fields of wheat, corn, barley, and rye. Centered in the triangle was a large farmstead, Gemioncourt, which consisted of several buildings and a courtyard enclosed by brick walls, a natural fortress commanding the field. Perponcher and Prince William of Orange-Nassau, arriving before sun up with reinforcements, intended to hold it all with just 8,000 infantry and 16 guns.

"The enemy showed many men outside the wood, around the houses of Quatre Bras and on the Namur road," wrote Count Foy. Ney's command totaled nearly 50,000 men, but by noon he had on hand only two divisions of Reille's II Corps, about 10,000 foot, 2,000 horse, and 30 guns. Ney, Foy, and Reille had all fought Wellington on the Peninsula and well remembered the duke's use of terrain to mask his true strength. "Reille thought that this might well be like a battle in Spain, where the English troops would only show themselves when it was the right time and that it was necessary to wait and only start the attack when everyone was concentrated and massed on the ground," wrote Foy.

Wellington, who had arrived around 10:00 AM, as yet had no reinforcements to hide but saw only a small force of French troops opposing him, their mere presence requiring the English and Dutch to block their way. He took the opportunity to ride down the Namur road to meet Blucher. "If, as seems likely, the division of the enemy's forces posted at Frasnes, opposite Quatre Bras, is inconsiderable, and only intended to mask the English army, I can employ my whole strength in support of the Field-Marshal, and will gladly execute all his wishes in regard to joint operations," wrote Wellington.

At Ligny, Napoleon was preparing to attack



ABOVE: Napoleon, who was confronting the Prussians at Ligny, informed Ney in the clearest language possible that he must engage and destroy the Allied forces massing at Quatre Bras. BELOW: Ney's hesitation to attack the small Anglo-Dutch force at Quatre Bras gave Wellington ample time to reinforce his position with Sir Thomas Picton's 5th Division and the Duke of Brunswick's troops.

the Prussians when a messenger arrived from Ney advising that the Allies were massing in Quatre Bras. The emperor had thought the town already in French hands. He immediately fired off fresh orders, in writing and in the strongest terms. "Concentrate the corps of Counts Reille and d'Erlon and that of Count [François Etienne de Kellermann, 2nd Duke de] Valmy, who is just marching to join you. With these forces you must engage and destroy all enemy forces that present themselves."

D'Erlon's corps was still far to the rear. "One o'clock came, and still the first corps did not arrive," wrote Heymes. "There were no tidings of it, yet it could not be very distant. The marshal

ABOVE: Lord Wellington watches from astride his Arabian stallion as the 42nd (Highland) Regiment of Foot, the famous Black Watch, stands firm in the face of repeated French assaults. RIGHT: French General François Kellermann (left) and Lt. Gen. Sir Thomas Picton.

therefore did not hesitate to begin the battle."

At Ligny, Wellington and Blucher had climbed up into a windmill from which they could see through a telescope innumerable French troops gathering and even Napoleon himself. They concluded the main battle would be there, and that only a token force faced Wellington. The duke agreed to come to the Prussians' aid, but as he and his party headed back up the road they could hear cannon fire at Quatre Bras.

Ney's opening barrage forced back the scant Dutch batteries around Gemioncourt. With that, hundreds of French skirmishers, tirailleurs, poured down into the man-high grain fields. Their counterparts in Lt. Col. Johann Grunebosch's 27th Dutch Jäger Battalion withstood them only briefly. An Allied soldier on the campaign remembered the enemy sharpshooters well. "Their fine, long, light firelocks, with a small bore [the .69-caliber Charleville musket], are more efficient for skirmishing than our abominably clumsy machine [the .75-caliber India Pattern Brown Bess]," wrote the soldier. "The French soldiers, whipping in the cartridge, give the butt of the piece a jerk or two on the ground, which supersedes the use of the ramrod; and thus they fire twice for our once.... It was astonishing to find how galling the fire of the enemy proved to be, and how many men we lost."

As the jägers fell back at 2:30 PM, Ney launched his main assault. On the right, 4,300 men of Bachelu's division advanced on Piraumont and the key Namur road. In the center, 5,500 men of Foy's division started up the Brussels road directly toward Quatre Bras. In the face of such numbers Grunebosch's 750 jaegers fell back on Gemioncourt. French snipers harassed them all the way, targeting enemy officers and horses.

Perponcher ordered Lt. Col. Jan Westenberg's 5th Dutch Militia Battalion into the fray. Only about 20 of its 450 men had ever seen action. They immediately received the full attention of the French artillery and, out in the high corn around the farmstead, hidden tirailleurs. They fell back in disarray. French cavalry commander Lt. Gen. Hippolyte Pire unleashed the chasseurs and lancers of his 2nd Cavalry Division on them. The rattled young militiamen barely responded in time. "After we had formed square, we noticed that some men from one company or platoon were mixed with those of other companies and wanted to restore proper order, then Lieutenant-Colonel Westenberg told us we did not have to be so precise," wrote one soldier.

The French horsemen launched four separate attacks but, confronted with a hedge of enemy bayonets and coming under direct cannon fire, were unable to break the Dutch square. Behind them, Foy's division had bogged down in soft ground and high grain, and without infantry support Pire's cavaliers were obliged to fall back.

On the right, though, Bachelu's division found Piraumont undefended and the Namur road within their grasp. They even came within moments of capturing a small party of horsemen that included Wellington himself, on his way back from meeting Blucher. "By God if I had come up five minutes later the battle was lost, but I had just time to save it," wrote the duke.

Across the field, at about 3 PM, Ney welcomed reinforcements. Prince Jerome's 8,000 men of II Corps' 6th Infantry Division, the largest in the Armée du Nord, brought the French forces to almost 20,000 infantry, 4,500 cavalry, and 50 guns. And fresh word arrived from Ligny, where Bonaparte was having a harder fight than expected. "His Majesty's intent is that you should attack all that is in front of you, and that, after having vigorously pushed it back, you should advance toward us to assist in enveloping [the Prussians]," wrote Marshal Jean-de-Dieu Soult.

On the French left, Jerome assaulted the Bossu Wood. Tactics were impossible in the tangled undergrowth formation. The prince, more renowned as a socialite than a soldier, personally led the attack. "Prince Jerome was struck on the hip, but fortunately the ball hit

the big gold scabbard of his sword first and did not penetrate, so he suffered nothing worse than a severe bruise which made him turn pale," wrote his aide-de-camp, Captain Bourdo de Vatry. "Conquering his pain, the Prince remained on horseback at the head of his division, thereby setting for us all an example of courage and self-sacrifice. His coolness had an excellent effect." With three times the manpower, the French cleared all but the northern edge of the forest. A number of tirailleurs reached the Nivelles road behind it, threatening the Allied rear.

In the center, Foy's division used five-to-one odds to compel the Netherlanders to abandon Gemioncourt. The Prince of Orange-Nassau took it upon himself to lead a desperate counterattack. Waving his hat overhead, William led the remnants of the 5th Battalion and 27th Jägers forward, but the French now held the farmstead in strength and hurled them back with heavy casualties. Again Pire sent his cavalry among the disorganized infantrymen. Grunebosch's horse was felled by a French cannonball. He continued the fight on foot, but a French sabreur slashed him about the head and arm, knocking him out of the battle.

At last the Dutch cavalry arrived. Maj. Gen. Baron Jean-Baptiste van Merlen, an ex-officer

of Napoleon's imperial guard, ordered his 6th Dutch Hussar Regiment to the rescue. Having just arrived after a nine-hour ride, the hussars launched a hasty, ill-formed charge, easily repulsed by Pire's horsemen. The Prince of Orange-Nassau was nearly captured, breaking out of a knot of French cavaliers to the safety of a square formed by the 7th Belgian Line Battalion. He gave their color bearer the embroidered star of the Military Order of William, torn from his own breast, saying, "My brave Belgians, take it, you have won it fairly. You have deserved it!"

Having all but ridden into Quatre Bras, Pire's cavalry was overextended, disordered, and vulnerable to counterattack. All the Dutch had left was van Merlen's 5th Belgian Light Dragoons Regiment. A quarter of their riders, including many of the officers, had previously served under Napoleon. Old friends recognized each other in opposite ranks, and several Frenchmen cried, "To us, Belgians, to us!" But the plea went unheeded. The fight devolved into a melee of slashing swords, charges, and counter-charges, even more confused since both sides wore green uniforms with yellow trim. Finally, the French 5th Regiment of Lancers arrived to tip the balance. The Belgians broke and fled with the French charging hard after them, about to pursue them all the way into town and win the Battle of Quatre Bras.

Between the horsemen and the crossroads, however, rode the Duke of Wellington on his famous thoroughbred Arabian stallion, Copenhagen. Far from leading a counterattack, the duke wheeled his mount and spurred hard for the safety of the Namur road. And there, from the ditch running alongside, suddenly arose a line of men in bright red uniforms and kilts. These soldiers were the 92nd (Gordon Highlanders) Regiment of Foot. Their guns were raised and their bayonets fixed. The British had arrived.

Legend has it that Wellington called to them, "Lie down, 92nd!" The Highlanders, some of whom had been performing the sword dance for the Duchess of Richmond the previous evening, threw themselves flat, and Copenhagen carried his master over them, bayonets, ditch, and all. "On a worse horse he might not have escaped," wrote the duke's aide-de-camp.

It must be said that numerous historians find this story too good to be true and doubt Wellington's leap happened at this point in the battle, or that it happened at all. "It is not true that the Duke on retiring 'leaped the bayonets' of the regiment that lined the hollow roadway," wrote General Sir George Scovell. "I was with the Duke, and we were retiring before a charge of the enemy's cavalry, when the Duke cried out 'Make way men, make way!' and a passage opened for us." Accounts by officers of the 92nd mention repeated French cavalry charges but not Wellington's leap. Nevertheless, the story has passed into Quatre Bras folklore.

The French horsemen thundered right up to the British line. "Lord Wellington, who was by this time in rear of the centre of the Regiment, said, '92nd, don't fire until I tell you,' and when they came within twenty or thirty paces of us, his Grace gave the order to fire, which killed and wounded an immense number of men and horses, on which they immediately faced about and galloped off," wrote Lieutenant Robert Winchester of the 92nd Regiment.

Their retreat gave the beleaguered Allies a respite as reinforcements finally poured into Quatre Bras from the north. The reinforcements were the 3,500 men of General Sir Thomas Picton's 5th Division and 4,500 black-uniformed infantrymen and 900 cavalry under Frederick, Duke of Brunswick. Wellington ordered the British to the east to secure the all-important Namur road

"IT'S NOT IMPORTANT, CHARGE WITH WHAT YOU HAVE, DESTROY THE ENGLISH ARMY, TRAMPLE IT UNDERFOOT, THE SALVATION OF FRANCE IS IN YOUR HANDS, GO!" NEY TOLD HIM.

Duke Frederick William of Brunswick bravely led a cavalry charge but was mortally wounded by a musket ball that knocked him from his horse.

and deployed Frederick's Brunswickers to assist them and the Prince of Orange-Nassau, who was on the verge of losing the Bossu Wood.

"He is a rough, foul-mouthed devil as ever lived, but he always behaved extremely well; no man could do better in the various services which I assigned to him," wrote Wellington of Picton. Wellington ordered the 1st Battalion, 95th Regiment of Foot out to bolster the Allied extreme left flank, where they took cover in several small farmhouses along the Namur road. "We remained very quietly where we were until the French, bringing up some artillery, began riddling the house with round shot," wrote Private Edward Costello. "Feeling rather thirsty, I asked a young woman in the place for a little water. She was handing it to me, when a cannon ball passed through the building, knocking the dust about our ears. Strange to say, the girl appeared less alarmed than myself."

At that point, the 79th Regiment of Foot, the Cameron Highlanders, emerged from the road defile. "The rye was so tall before it was broken down that we could see little more than the Frenchmen's heads above it," wrote Private Dixon Vallence. "As we charged, we gave them three Highland hurras, and put them to flight, as fast as their legs could carry them, yelling out the

ABOVE: Brunswickers fire and advance against the French in a German lithograph. Their timely arrival helped stabilize Wellington's line. OPPOSITE: The stout-hearted Scots of the Black Watch only had time to form a partial square before the French Imperial Guard cavalry was upon them.

most opprobrious epithets against 'the men without breeches.'"

The 42nd (Highland) Regiment of Foot, the famous Black Watch, received the order to fix bayonets. "There is something animating to a soldier in the clash of the fixing bayonet; more particularly so when it is thought that the scabbard is not to receive it until it drinks the blood of its foe," wrote Sergeant James Anton. But no sooner had the 42nd routed the French infantry than the imperial cavalry was on them. The Scots had time to form only a partial square. Armored horsemen swirled around the clumps of Highlanders in the tall grass. Caught out in the open, Lt. Col. Sir Robert Macara, a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath, was wounded and captured. Recognizing the gold epaulettes and embroidered KCB of a high-ranking officer, the French ran a lance point under his chin into his brain.

Regimental command changed hands downward four times in minutes. A ricocheting cannonball clipped Picton himself, who carried on. Finally the musketry, firing over the heads of the ranks kneeling with bayonets up, proved decisive. "Riders cased in heavy armour fell tumbling from their horses; the horses reared, plunged, and fell on the dismounted riders; steel helmets and cuirasses rang against unsheathed sabres as they fell to the ground; shrieks and groans of men, the neighing of horses, and the discharge of musketry rent the air, as men and horses mixed together in one heap of indiscriminate slaughter," wrote Anton.

Wellington ordered Frederick of Brunswick to fill the gap between the Bossu Wood and Gemioncourt. The Black Duke harbored a notorious grudge against the French, who had incorporated his duchy into a vassal kingdom ruled by Prince Jerome. His black-uniformed mercenaries, with their silver death's-head badges, had gained a fearsome reputation during the Peninsular War, but in their exposed position the hussars and uhlans took a beating from Jerome's artillery and tirailleurs. When French infantry advanced, they retreated. Frederick, who had been riding up and down their ranks calmly puffing on his pipe, led a cavalry charge, but a musket ball knocked him off his horse. "The deathly pale of his face and his half-closed eyes indicated the worst," wrote an eyewitness. The duke was carried to the rear and pronounced dead. "The column of French cavalry that drove back the Brunswickers retired a little, then re-formed, and prepared to charge our regiment; but we took it more coolly than the Brunswickers did," wrote Sergeant David Robertson of the 92nd Regiment.

Some accounts indicate that this was when Wellington made his leap over the 92nd's bayonets, but there were so many French cavalry charges that day they were easily confused. "When the Duke of Wellington saw them approach, he ordered our left wing to fire to the right, and the right wing to fire to the left, by which we crossed the fire; and a man and horse affording such a large object for an aim, very few of them escaped. The horses were brought down and the riders, if not killed, were made prisoners," wrote Sergeant Robertson.

Wellington ordered the 28th (North Gloucestershire) Regiment of Foot to take over for the decimated 42nd. At Alexandria in 1801, the 28th had stood in two ranks, back to back, to shoot down French cavalry, for which they were permitted the honor of wearing the regimental number both on the front and the back of their stovepipe shakos. At Quatre Bras it very nearly came to that. "Once, when threatened on two flanks by what Sir Thomas Picton imagined an overwhelming force, he exclaimed, '28th, remember Egypt.' They cheered and gallantly beat back their assailants, and eventually stood on their position," wrote Major Richard Llewellyn. Maj. Gen. Sir James Kempt, commanding Picton's 8th British Brigade, of which the 28th was part, rode before them waving his hat. "Bravo, 28th!" he shouted. "The 28th are still the 28th and their conduct this day will never be forgotten."

To the east the battle had flowed back and forth over the vital Namur road. French artillery and infantry drove the 95th off it; the British regrouped and pushed the enemy back again. "I was in the act of taking aim at some of our opposing skirmishers, when a ball struck my trigger-finger, tearing it off," wrote Costello. "On my return to the house at the corner of the lane, I found the pretty girl still in possession, although there were not less than a dozen shot-holes through it. I requested her to leave, but she would not, as her father, she said, had desired her to take care of the house until he returned from Brussels."

It was about 5 PM. Having taken everything Ney could throw at them, the Anglo-Dutch were exhausted and almost out of ammunition, but now their ranks were replenished by the arrival of 6,000 men of the 3rd Infantry Division under Lt. Gen. Count Carl von Alten. Wellington deployed its British brigade toward the Bossu Wood and its Hanoverian brigade on the left flank. With 25,000 infantry, 2,000 cavalry, and 36 guns, the Allies were ready to push back.

But at Ligny, Bonaparte had the Prussians where he wanted them. He called on Ney to deliver the coup de grace. "You must manoeuvre at once so as to envelop the right of [Blucher] and fall quickly on his rear; this army is lost if you act vigorously; the fate of France is in your hands," ordered Napoleon. Ney was still awaiting the arrival of d'Erlon with I Corps: some 20,000 men and 50 cannons. But it was almost at this same moment that Ney learned Napoleon had already doomed any victory at Quatre Bras. "The 1st Corps, by the emperor's order ... had left the Brussels road instead of following it, and was moving in the direction of [Ligny]," wrote Heymes. The reinforcements that Ney so desperately required for victory had been marching away from him for over an hour. "The shock which this intelli-

gence gave me, confounded me," Ney testified after the war.

Ney immediately sent counter orders for d'Erlon to rejoin him, knowing it would require several hours. The only other reserve available was the cuirassier brigade of General Kellermann, Duke Valmy. At Marengo in 1800, these horsemen had ridden over three Austrian grenadier battalions and a dragoon regiment, the resulting French victory confirming Bonaparte in power as First Consul. Ney called on Kellermann to repeat that glory: "My dear general, we must save France, we need an extraordinary effort; take your cavalry, throw yourself into the middle of the English army, crush it, trample it underfoot."

"This order, like those of the emperor, was easier to give than to execute," wrote Kellermann. It meant sending 800 French cavaliers against nearly 30,000 Allied troops.

"It's not important, charge with what you have, destroy the English army, trample it underfoot, the salvation of France is in your hands, go!" Ney told him.

Kellermann assembled his brigade and, as he wrote, "without giving them [time] to realize and reflect on the extent of the danger, led them, lost men, into a gulf of fire." French cavalry usually charged at the trot. "Charge, at full gallop, forward, charge!" he shouted.

Their objective was the open ground to the west of the Brussels road between Gemioncourt and the Bossu Wood. Just to the east of the road, however, the 69th (South Lincolnshire) Regiment of Foot was caught deploying, not into square, but into line. The nearest squadron of cavalry turned on them. "This regiment fired at thirty paces, but without being stopped, the cuirassiers trampled it under foot, destroyed it completely and overthrew everything they found in their path," wrote a French officer.

In the tangle of hooves, blades, and black powder, the 69th's regimental color bearer gave his life falling on top of his banner, saving it. But the bearer of the King's Color was ridden down by a cuirassier who tore the standard from him and bore it off, the ultimate disgrace to a British unit in the field. Several squadrons of French riders actually rode completely through the Allied lines and found themselves clattering about in the crossroads of Quatre Bras itself.

"It had completely succeeded, against all probability," wrote Kellermann. "A large breach had been made, the enemy army was shaken … the English lines were wavering, uncertain, in the expectation of what was going to happen next. The least support of our reserve cavalry engaged on our right would have completed the success." But Pire's cavalry, normally called on for one all-out charge in a battle, had already made two. Their horses were spent. Kellermann's brigade was all alone. "No longer under the control of its leaders, it was struck by the fire of the enemy, who were recovering from their surprise and fear," wrote Kellermann.

In just a few minutes, the cuirassiers, crowded into the wedge of the Quatre Bras triangle with enemy muskets and cannons on both sides, lost 300 men. Their general's own horse was shot out from under him. "Kellermann had the presence of mind to cling to the bits of two of his cuirassier's horses and so avoid being trampled," wrote De Vatry. They carried him back to the French lines.

It was the high water mark of II Corps. "If the 1st Corps, or even a single one of its divisions had arrived at this time, the day would have been one of the most glorious for our arms; it needed infantry to secure the prize that the cavalry had taken," wrote Heymes. But there was none.

As evening came on, Maj. Gen. George Cooke arrived from Nivelles with the British 1st Infantry Division and was immediately ordered to retake the Bossu Wood. "The men gave a cheer, and rushing in drove everything before them to the end of the wood, but the thickness of the underwood soon upset all order, and the French Artillery made the place so hot that it was thought advisable to draw back … more out of range," wrote Captain Henry Powell of the 1st Foot Guards. "A great many men were killed and wounded by the heads of the trees falling on them as [they were] cut off by cannon shot."

"The wood of Bossu, taken and retaken three times with huge losses, was taken fourth by the enemy, who never left it," wrote Lt. Col. Marie Jean Baptiste Lemonnier-Delafosse, Foy's chief of

Continued on page 66

Even in the dark days of March 1945, when the Third Reich was on the brink of collapse, its troops managed to exhibit that grim humor that enables frontline soldiers to endure the horrors of battle. As the panzer crews of mighty Tiger II tanks rumbled forward in the last German offensive of World War II in eastern Hungary, they joked about the difficulties they were having coming to grips with the enemy. A few of the 68-ton King Tigers sank up to their turrets in the mud produced by an early spring thaw. Making light of the situation, tank commanders quipped that they were steering tanks, not U-boats.

The Soviet forces gathering on the Oder River in early 1945 seemed not to bother Adolf Hitler. The German leader became fixed on the need to protect the Hungarian oilfields from Red Army tank and rifle units that had encircled Budapest in late December 1944. Hitler had sent the IV SS Panzer Corps against the forces threatening Budapest in three consecutive counterattacks in January 1945 that were known collectively as the Konrad Offensives. But the tenacious Soviet forces had repulsed each assault. On February 13, the city fell to the soldiers of Marshal Rodion Malinovsky's 2nd Ukrainian Front.

IN MARCH 1945, ADOLF HITLER CONCENTRATED HIS PANZER FORCES FOR A LAST LUNGE ON THE EASTERN FRONT. THE ODDS WERE HEAVILY STACKED IN THE RED ARMY'S FAVOR.

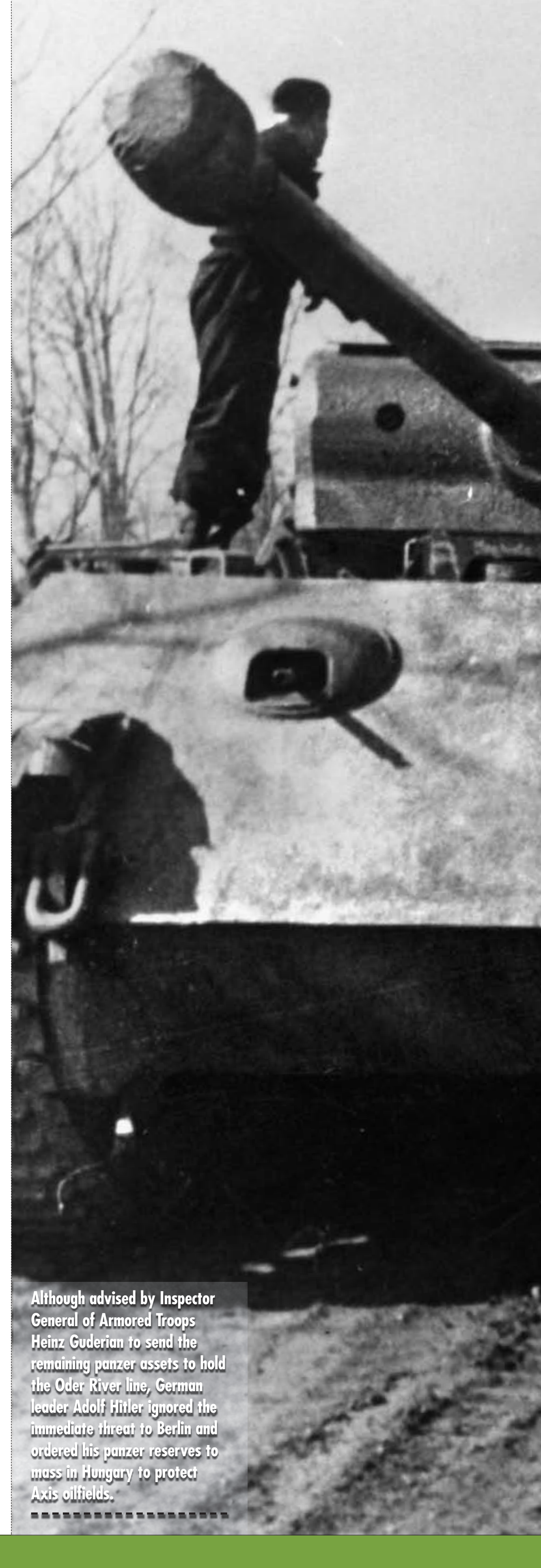
BY JOHN E. SPINDLER

The Hungarian oilfields at Nagykaniscza constituted the last major petroleum resources available to Germany. By early 1945, the Austrian and Hungarian oilfields furnished 80 percent of the oil for the German armed forces. Despite the setbacks of January, Hitler devised a new offensive called Operation Fruhlingserwachen (Spring Awakening) that had both economic and military objectives. Hitler wanted to stem the Soviet tide in Hungary. He envisioned a larger offensive that would roll back the gains of Marshal Fyodor Tolbukhin's 3rd Ukrainian Front in Hungary. If all went according to plan, the Germans would inflict severe distress on the Russian marshal and his forces in the upcoming campaign. Hitler hoped that his panzer forces would be able to establish bridgeheads over the Danube River and perhaps even retake Budapest. In so doing, the Germans would secure the oil resources needed to feed their war machine.

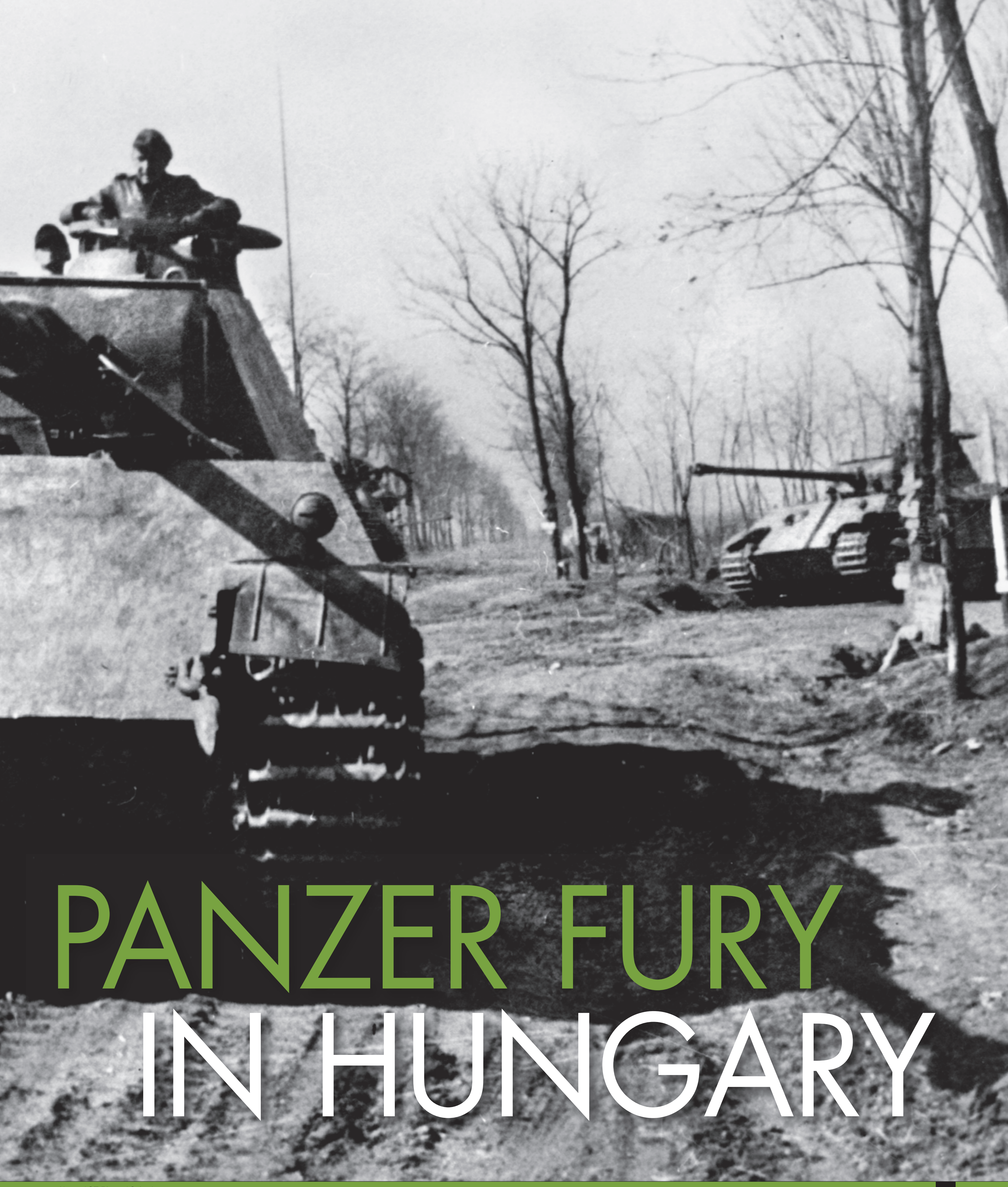
Although Operation Spring Awakening officially began on March 6, 1945, the planning began as early as January. The Supreme High Command of the German Army issued orders on January 16 to SS-Oberfruppenfuhrer Sepp Dietrich to bring his Sixth Panzer Army back to Germany from the Ardennes region to rest and refit for a new operation. Although Dietrich's command is commonly referred to as the Sixth SS Panzer Army, it was not officially known as such until it was transferred to the Waffen SS on April 2, 1945.

Dietrich's Sixth Panzer Army comprised Generalleutnant Hermann Preiss's I SS Panzer Corps and Generalleutnant Willi Bittrich's II SS Panzer Corps. Preiss's corps was composed of the 1st SS and 12th SS Panzer Divisions, and Bittrich's corps was composed of the 2nd SS and 9th SS Panzer Divisions. To bring these battered units up to standard strength for an SS panzer division, the commanders filled the depleted ranks with raw recruits and support personnel from the Luftwaffe and Kriegsmarine. Unfortunately, time and fuel were in short supply, so the replacement personnel received no combat training. Nevertheless, the four panzer divisions did receive nearly all of the arms and vehicle production they needed to build up their tank, assault gun, and tank destroyer requirements. In the end, the Germans amassed 240,000 troops, 500 tanks, 173 assault guns, and 900 combat aircraft for the offensive.

Hitler and his advisers planned to make the main attack for Operation Spring Awakening with General Otto Wohler's Army Group South. Wohler would have plenty of hitting power. His command would consist of General Hermann Balck's Sixth Army,



Although advised by Inspector General of Armored Troops Heinz Guderian to send the remaining panzer assets to hold the Oder River line, German leader Adolf Hitler ignored the immediate threat to Berlin and ordered his panzer reserves to mass in Hungary to protect Axis oilfields.



PANZER FURY IN HUNGARY

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ullstein bild

A German Panther in winter camouflage rumbles through a village during Operation Konrad in January 1945. Although badly mauled during the failed offensive to save Budapest from advancing Soviet forces, the IV Panzer Corps was sent into action again in Operation Spring Awakening.

Dietrich's Sixth Panzer Army, and the Hungarian 8th Corps. Wohler had a total of 10 panzer and five infantry divisions to hurl against the 3rd Ukrainian Front.

While Army Group South advanced south toward the Soviet forces between Lake Balaton and Lake Velencze to the east, other German armies would strike east against Tolbukhin's left flank. Wohler's attack would be supported by a secondary attack by Generaloberst Alexander Loehr's Army Group E in Yugoslavia, as well as another minor attack by General Maximilian de Angelis's Second Panzer Army.

By the start of Operation Spring Awakening, nearly 40 percent of the German Army's heavy combat fighting vehicles in use on the Eastern Front were in Hungary. Under the strictest security measures, additional units made their way there. Col. Gen. Heinz Guderian, the German Army's Inspector General of Armored Troops, disapproved of Hitler's decision to send the Sixth Panzer Army into Hungary. Guderian believed its strength would be better employed behind the Oder River to slow the Red Army's drive on Berlin. Hitler overruled Guderian, and the Hungarian offensive went forward as planned.

Hitler approved the final plan for Operation Spring Awakening on February 23. As part of the final preparations, he reinforced Dietrich's Sixth Panzer Army with the I Cavalry Corps, comprising the 3rd and 4th Cavalry Divisions, and Generalleutnant Joseph von Radowitz's 23rd Panzer Division. Radowitz's troops would serve as a ready reserve to be committed at the most opportune time.

Dietrich assigned Preiss's I SS Panzer Corps the center position, which stretched from Lake Balaton to a point west of Seregelyes. Bittrich's II SS Panzer Corps took up a position on its left, and the I Cavalry Corps deployed on its right. Flank protection would be provided by the 44th Grenadier and 25th Hungarian Infantry Divisions. Dietrich's first objective was to secure a crossing over the Sio Canal and capture the city of Dunafoldvar.

General Hermann Breith's III Panzer Corps of Balck's Sixth Army was to attack north of the Sixth Panzer Army from Seregelyes to Lake Valence. Its objective was to capture the area between Lake Valence and the Danube River. Two heavy tank battalions with King Tigers provided extra firepower for the III Panzer Corps and the Sixth Panzer Army. Generalleutnant Rudolf Freiherr von Waldenfels' 6th Panzer Division would follow behind.

Guarding the left flank of the III Panzer Corps were the 3rd and 5th SS Panzer Divisions of SS-Obergruppenführer Herbert Otto Gille's IV SS Panzer Corps. The IV SS Panzer Corps was badly depleted from the Konrad Offensives, but it would be sent into action anyway.

To the south, the Second Panzer Army held the front line south of Lake Balaton. By the time of the offensive, though, it could hardly be described as a panzer army. It consisted of four divisions equipped not with tanks, but with assault guns. Its best division was the 16th SS Panzergrenadier Division. The Second Panzer Army's objective was to capture Kaposvar. Army Group E was deployed south of the Second Panzer Army along the Drava River. Its objective was to establish a large bridgehead across the Drava near Donati Miholjac with its three divisions.

Although the Germans had employed strict security measures to disguise the transfer to Hungary, the Red Army knew a German offensive was brewing. As early as February 12, the Western Allies passed along intercepted communications regarding troop movements. Any doubt the Red Army commanders might have had was eliminated near the end of February when the last successful Waffen SS operation, known as Operation Southwind, went forward against the Soviet forces in Slovakia. In that offensive, the I SS Panzer Corps eliminated a Red Army bridgehead over the Gran River.

Tolbukhin's 3rd Ukrainian Front would receive the brunt of the German attack. Created in October 1943, the units that constituted the front had participated in various Soviet offensives that had liberated Ukraine and Moldova from German occupation by August 1944. In the following months, the 3rd Ukrainian Front had invaded Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia. Tolbukhin's Red Army troops liberated Belgrade in October. Afterward, Stavka, the Soviet high command, shifted the front north to Hungary where it assisted Malinovsky's 2nd Ukrainian Front in besieging Budapest and helped repulse German attempts to relieve the city.

While the Germans were clearing the Gran bridgehead, Stavka issued directives to Tolbukhin and Malinovsky to prepare for fresh offensives to capture Vienna and Bratislava, respectively. Soviet Premier Josef Stalin set March 15 as the start date for these offensives. Thus, Tolbukhin not only had to prepare for the upcoming offensive, but also establish a defensive plan for the forthcoming German attack.

Tolbukhin created a multilayered defense that stressed antitank obstacles and killing zones. Each layer had multiple fortified belts. The first two layers typically had two or more lines of trenches. Altogether, Tolbukhin had a defense in depth that stretched for 30 kilometers. But since the defenses were created in a short time, the soldiers only strung barbed wire in a few places and had not had time to construct concrete pillboxes.

The 3rd Ukrainian Front had approximately 406,000 soldiers and 407 tanks, assault guns, and tank destroyers. In addition, the Soviet 17th Air Army had 965 aircraft available to support the ground troops.

The 4th Guards Army held the 3rd Ukrainian

Front's right flank. The army comprised three rifle corps, each of which had three rifle divisions. The 4th Guards' main task was to defend Szekesfehvar. Deployed on its right flank was the XXIII Tank Corps, which functioned as a mobile reserve.

To the left of the 4th Guards was Lt. Gen. Nikolai Gagan's 26th Army, deployed directly in the path of the advancing Sixth Panzer Army. Gagan's army was responsible for the area from Seregelyes to Lake Balaton. Because of the likelihood that it would be hit hard, the XXX Rifle Corps had half of the 3rd Ukrainian Front's artillery and ample anti-tank guns.

The XVIII Tank Corps, another of Tolbuknin's mobile reserves, was stationed in the Sarosd area where it could either assist the 4th Guards or the 26th Army as the situation developed. The I Guards Mechanized Corps also was deployed directly behind the 26th Army.

The 57th Army was deployed to the south of Gagan's 26th Army. Comprising two rifle corps, its task was to guard a section of the front that stretched from the shores of Lake Balaton south to the Drava River. Although it had only six infantry divisions, each division had slightly more men than those in the other Soviet armies. It was deployed in the path of the Second Panzer Army. The V Guards Cavalry Corps was situated in the northeast area of the 57th Army in such a way that it might assist either the 57th Army or the 26th Army.

Stationed along the northern banks of the Drava River south of the 57th Army were the six infantry divisions that constituted the First Bulgarian Army. Although the Bulgarian divisions had a strength that was twice that of a Soviet division in numbers, its men had less combat experience. Stavka believed that a major enemy advance in the sector held by the Bulgarians was unlikely because of the difficulty the Germans would have striking across the Drava. Still, Tolbukhin was prepared to send elements of the 57th Army south to assist the Bulgarians if the need should arise. To the Bulgarians' left was the XII Army Corps from the Third Yugoslavian Army, which was not part of Tolbuknin's front.

Tolbukhin entrusted the 27th Army with his second line of defense. The 27th Army consisted of three Guards infantry corps, yet all of its divisions were significantly weaker in men and equipment than the 26th Army. The 27th Army held a section of the front from Lake Valence to the Danube River.

While it seemed as if the Red Army had an extraordinarily large number of troops in this sector, a typical Soviet unit was small in comparison to its German counterpart; for example, a Red Army tank corps in terms of men and equipment was equivalent to a German panzer division.

Tolbukhin also had other units in his sector which, under orders from Stavka, he was forbidden to use. One of these units was the 9th Guards Army, which was slated for the drive on Vienna. Even if the 3rd Ukrainian Front's situation grew critical, Tolbukhin knew from past experience that his request to use such units was likely to be rejected.

Overall, German intelligence had accurately estimated the number of Soviet armies, corps, and divisions against which the German forces would be attacking. But it failed to detect the guards mechanized and guards cavalry corps positioned in the assault route of the Sixth Panzer Army, failed to determine the location of two corps of the 27th Army, and failed to accurately assess the strength and disposition of the Soviets units.

Although the German intelligence omissions were important, they were nothing in comparison to other factors that would influence the Germans before and during the offensive. The security measures that the Germans employed in an effort to deceive the enemy, which in the end were futile, prevented orders from reaching anyone below corps level. This had a detrimental effect on final preparations for the offensive. In addition, some assembly positions were up to 20 kilometers from the actual starting points. To make matters worse, commanders were not allowed to conduct their own reconnaissance of enemy positions to their immediate front.

Dietrich and the staff of the Sixth Panzer Army had considerable concerns about the location chosen for the attack. In addition to being vulnerable to a Soviet thrust north of Szekesfehervar, several waterways and canals crossed the lanes of attack and threatened to slow the German advance. Moreover, only two of the roads were paved, and the dirt roads shown on the maps the Germans would be using were in reality no more than narrow paths.

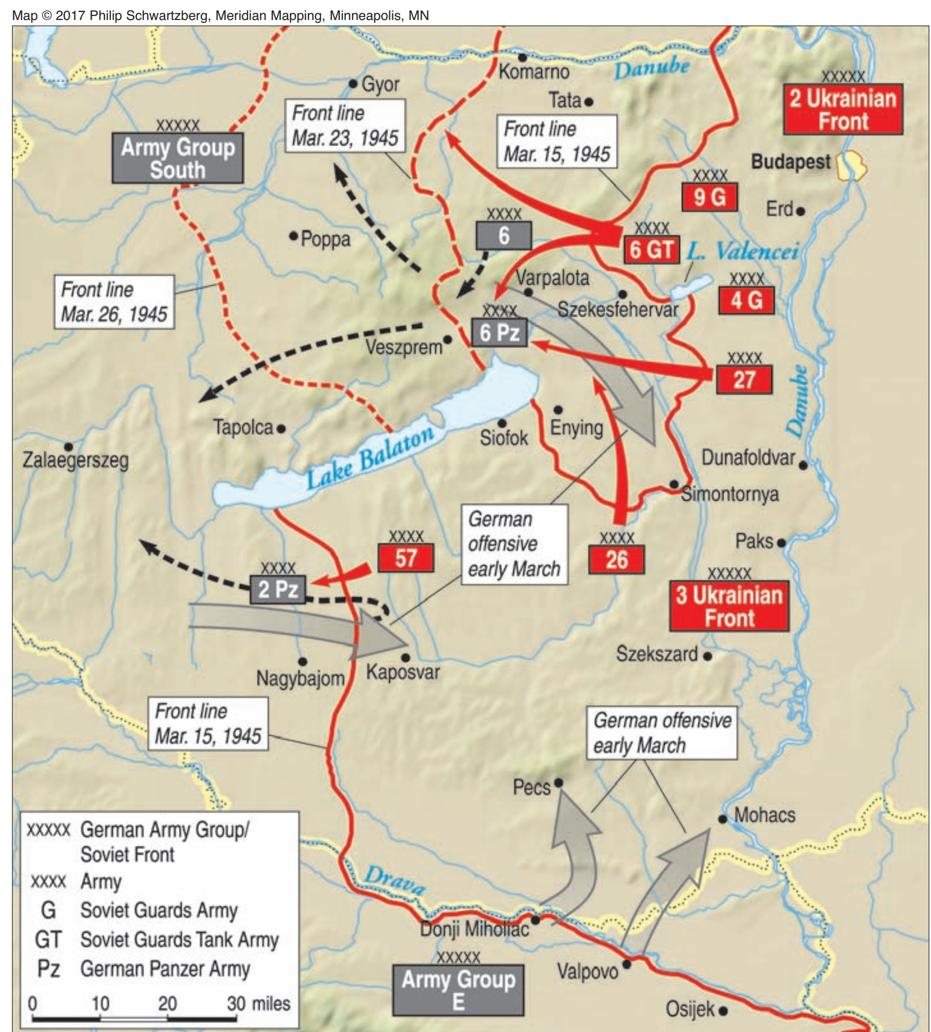
Bundesarchiv Bild 183-J28644; Photo: Hermann Grönert

Soviet troops slain in combat lay in a snow-covered ditch in Hungary. When the snow thawed in early March 1945, German panzers bogged down in mud that slowed their advance to a crawl.

Last but not least, the weather at that time of year was apt to hinder the movement of the tracked vehicles of the German panzer divisions. An early thaw in the spring of 1945 had turned the entire area into a morass. The region's canals and drainage ditches had been unable to contain the runoff. During the first days of the offensive, the SS panzer divisions lost vehicles due to the saturated condition of the terrain. German tanks often sank in mud up to their turrets. The situation was particularly problematic for the King Tigers. Commanders of some units participating in the offensive requested a postponement of offensive operations until either the temperatures dropped low enough to freeze the mud or climbed high enough to dry the ground. Hitler and his advisers refused all such requests.

The effects of the bad weather delayed the II SS Panzer Corps to the extent that by March 5 some of its units still had not reached their starting points. Hitler was adamant that the attack

Map © 2017 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN



Operation Spring Awakening called for a main strike by Army Group South between Lake Balaton and Lake Valence with diversionary attacks farther south. However, the German forces responsible for striking the left flank of the 4th Ukrainian Front were so badly understrength that they stayed on the defensive much of the time.

begin on time, even if all participating units were not in place. The headquarters of Army Group South had experience with these conditions but still did little to assist with the requests. Rather than help those under his command, Balck echoed the orders coming from Berlin. Throughout the war he had always been overly optimistic about an operation's potential outcome, and this operation proved no different than before. But Balck also had a tendency to blame others for shortcomings that ultimately were his responsibility. The situation was exacerbated by Balck's disdain for SS officers due to previous experiences in the war. Specifically, Balck harbored a grudge against Bittrich for the failed relief of the Ukrainian city of Tarnopol in April 1944.

German corps commanders participating in Operation Spring Awakening distributed orders to their division commanders on the evening of March 5. With herculean efforts, most units had by that time slogged their way through the mud to their respective starting points. Hungarian liaison officers had warned the Germans not to underestimate the mud season in their homeland, but their advice fell on deaf ears.

The II SS Panzer Corps, though, had not managed to reach its staging area. Bittrich made multiple pleas to have the offensive delayed until his divisions reached their starting points, but his superiors flatly rejected his repeated requests.

At 1 AM on March 6, Army Group E's three divisions surged across the Drava in five places. Throughout the course of the day, the Germans consolidated their five small bridgeheads into two larger bridgeheads near Valpovo and Donati Miholjac. Not surprisingly, the Bulgarians were unable to repulse the Germans. Three hours later, the Second Panzer Army's four divisions attacked eastward in a drive to encircle Nagybajom. Thirty minutes after that the 1st SS Panzer Division began a preplanned artillery barrage at 4:30 AM.

Other German units opened fire shortly afterward. Although the indirect fire did not have the results hoped for by the German commanders, German tanks and assault guns employed direct fire with good effect against the Soviet forces in the area. The I Cavalry Corps gained ground at the outset but was pushed back by the Russians.

Like the divisions of I Cavalry Corps, the 12th SS Panzer Division stalled after marginal advances, but it managed to hold onto its gains. The 1st SS Panzer Division made noteworthy progress when it exploited some weak spots in the Soviet defense; however, its gains were only two to four kilometers deep. As for the II SS Panzer Corps, its advance elements did not attack until evening and made negligible progress.

In concert with the Second Panzer Army, the Sixth Army established a bridgehead across the Hadas Ditch, which empties into Lake Valence. On either side of Seregelyes, the 1st Panzer Division and the 356th Infantry Division managed to advance only to the north end of the village by nightfall. The 3rd Panzer Division was unable to bring its full weight to bear as some of its units had not yet reached their jump-off positions.

By day's end the attackers had advanced only three to four kilometers on a 3.5-kilometer front. It was fortunate for Tolbukhin that the damage was not more severe because III Panzer Corps had struck the seam between the 4th Guards and the 26th Armies. German air support was restricted on the first day due to inclement weather.

Tolbukhin and his staff had correctly predicted the German avenues of attack. The 3rd Ukrainian Front commander instituted measures designed to further strengthen the defense in the direct path of the German assault. He regrouped his artillery and shifted elements from the XVIII Tank Corps into the second defensive belt. In addition, the 27th Army's XXXIII Rifle Corps was repositioned to block the I SS Panzer Corps, which had made significant progress on the first day of the operation given the weather conditions.

Rain mixed with light snow greeted the combatants at daybreak on March 7. The Germans renewed their attack across the entire front. Along the Drava River, Army Group E was unable to significantly enlarge its bridgeheads due to the mud. For the rest of the offensive, its divisions stayed on the defensive. Farther north around Nagybajom, the Second Panzer Army benefitted from captured enemy plans that detailed Soviet defenses. Based on the intelligence gleaned from the plans, the Second

Panzer Army shifted the focus of its attack to its right wing.

A stubborn Soviet defense permitted little gain, and a stalemate ensued for the next few days. Between Lake Balaton and Lake Valence, the main attack pressed on as worsening terrain conditions trapped more German tracked vehicles, putting a strain on the already weakened infantry. Against the layered defense, the I Cavalry Corps made few gains. To its left the SS panzer divisions enjoyed some success. For example, the 1st SS Panzer captured Kaloz, and the 12th SS Panzer drove six kilometers into the Soviets lines. The II SS Panzer Corps, which was able to attack in force, also made significant headway, advancing six kilometers.

But the adjacent III Panzer Corps did not make any attempt to attack. Dietrich severely criticized its commanders for their lackluster performance. The IV SS Panzer Corps, though, did capture ground near Stuhlweissenburg that strengthened its defensive position.

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ABOVE: Soviet machine-gun teams in action in Hungary. During Spring Awakening, Marshal Tolbukhin masterfully shifted units from relatively secure areas to critical ones to limit the German gains. LEFT: Marshal Fyodor Tolbukhin led the 4th Ukrainian Front (left) and Generalleutnant Willi Bittrich led the II SS Panzer Corps.

An early morning frost on the third day of the offensive saw some road improvement. This was lost as temperatures rose, exacerbating the muddy conditions. The offensive finally looked like it might have a chance when the I SS Panzer Corps made the first real gains across a wide front when the 1st SS Panzer Division breached the enemy's second defense line. Exploiting this momentum, the I Cavalry Corps also gained significant ground. The II SS Panzer Corps failed to follow up the gains of the previous day and became bogged down in heavy fighting near Sarosd. Orders were given for the 23rd Panzer Division to assemble behind the 44th Grenadier Division to be ready for a possible breakthrough. The 3rd Panzer Division was brought forward to attack Adony on the Danube River while the III Panzer Corps captured Seregelyes and an additional couple of kilometers.

These advances continued to be contested by the Soviets. Tolbukhin brought forward more of his reserves beginning on March 8, especially artillery and Katyusha rocket batteries. With the exception of XVIII Tank Corps, most of the Soviet mechanized forces had been held back.

The following day major developments occurred between Lake Balaton and the Sarviz Canal. The I Cavalry Corps made a surprisingly deep penetration with its 3rd Cavalry Division overcoming several defensive lines. These gains were assisted by the success of a night attack by the 1st SS Panzer Division. By the end of March 9, Dietrich had two corps through the Soviets' primary defensive line. But the localized success had a drawback. The III Panzer Corps also enjoyed considerable success as its units advanced along the southern shore of Lake Valence before being stopped by Soviet forces at Gardony.

With his infantry suffering heavy attrition, Bittrich became deeply concerned over the losses suffered by his troops from combat and exposure to the elements. The 9th Panzer Division had lost more than a third of its strength by that point in the offensive.

Tolbukhin also became increasingly worried about the losses his units were incurring. The tempo of battle on March 9 compelled him to commit all of his reserves, except for a few small units. He informed Stavka that the situation was critical, and he asked if they would release to him the 9th Guards Army. His superiors flatly refused the request. They instructed him to make do with the forces at hand. As a result, Tolbukhin began to alter areas of responsibility along the front. He reduced the length of front for which the 26th Army was responsible. The result was that the 27th Army had to take up the slack. Its commander was startled to find that he was suddenly responsible for a critical portion of the front line. Tolbukhin also shifted units from the 4th Guards Army in the second echelon and placed them directly in the path of Dietrich's advancing Sixth Panzer Army in an effort to slow the enemy's momentum.

Frontline troops on both sides shivered in their positions on March 10 as the skies opened up and snow and freezing rain fell in western Hungary. This exacerbated the already poor road conditions. Nevertheless, the Second Panzer Army south of Lake Balaton experienced considerable success when the 16th SS Panzergrenadier Division exploited the seam between the Soviet 57th Army and the First Bulgarian Army. The panzergrenadiers advanced five kilometers, reaching the village of Kisbajom.

Meanwhile, the 25th Hungarian Infantry Division entered battle in the I Cavalry Corps' sector. After a full day of savage house-to-house fighting, the understrength Hungarians captured the high ground around Enying. The 3rd Cavalry Division and the 1st SS Panzer Division reached the Sio Canal and secured sections of its bank in preparation for a crossing.

Elsewhere, the 12th SS Panzer, 2nd SS Panzer, and 44th Grenadier Divisions all made gains. In the Sixth Army's sector, the 3rd Panzer Division surprised a pair of Soviet divisions by attacking amid a heavy falling snow. The panzer troops fought their way into the enemy's second echelon of defense near Seregelyes. Its fellow division, the 1st Panzer, captured several villages.

The pressure of battle compelled some of the German commanders to point fingers of blame at each other. Balck was accused of having misinformed Guderian about the status of the IV SS

Alamy / SZ Photo / Scherl

SS Panzer Grenadiers and police units fought side-by-side in Hungary during the spring offensive. By the time the roads began to dry out in mid-March, German panzer forces participating in the offensive had shrunk to 50 percent of their initial strength, making further gains unlikely.

Panzer Corps. Balck reported that the corps had enough reserves to deal with a Russian counterattack when it no longer had such capability. As for Tolbukhin, he shifted units from relatively secure areas to critical ones to limit the enemy's gains.

The weather improved on March 11, which enabled both Luftwaffe and Red Army ground attack aircraft to fly multiple sorties. With the support of their aircraft, Soviet troops were able to push back elements of the 16th SS Panzergrenadier Division around Kisbajom. The Second Panzer Army requested a change in the direction of its attack, but this was rejected by Wohler.

Instead, Wohler ordered the Second Panzer Army to renew its attack within the next 48 hours to keep Tolbukhin off balance and take the pressure off the Sixth Panzer Army. The Hungarians continued to advance along Lake Balaton, but they ground to a halt at Siofork. The German divisions that reached the Sio Canal spent the day securing its north bank and continued to search for crossing locations. While forward elements of the 12th SS Panzer Division were able to locate an intact bridge over the Sio, they were unable to exploit their discovery because it was blocked by burning vehicles.

The 23rd Panzer Division attacked Sar Egres, but it could not control the village. Despite the good weather of March 11, Dietrich sent a direct request to Hitler asking him to temporarily halt the offensive due to the rain and mud. Not surprisingly, Hitler rejected the request. Elements of the II SS Panzer Corps and the III Panzer Corps nevertheless managed to drive four kilometers into the Soviet 27th Army in some places.

The German armies involved in the offensive faced a determined, veteran commander. As Dietrich's and Balck's panzer divisions sought desperately to punch through the Soviet defenses, Tolbukhin masterfully shifted his resources in ways that prevented a decisive breakthrough. The Soviets' defenses forced the Germans to make tactical adjustments. To catch the Red Army units by surprise, the Germans refrained from conducting preliminary artillery barrages before making an assault.

On the seventh day of the offensive, Army Group E ran out of steam. From that point forward its units did nothing more than hold their ground and fix the enemy units arrayed against them so that they could not be shifted to other sectors.

Tolbukhin, who already was deeply concerned over the condition of the 26th Army, watched in dismay as the German 4th Cavalry Division and 1st SS Panzer Division established bridgeheads across the Sio. These bridgeheads were approximately three kilometers deep and three kilometers wide. In addition, elements of the 1st SS Panzer Division entered Simontornya. On the opposite bank of the Sarviz Canal, most of the units of the II SS Panzer Corps could make no progress, although the redoubtable soldiers of the 44th Grenadier Division cleared the village of Aba. To the north, the three panzer divisions of the III Panzer Corps advanced two kilometers mainly because they benefited from the support of a heavy panzer battalion that used its King Tigers to blast Soviet positions. Despite the impressive gains made by the German forces that secured the Sio Canal bridgeheads, the soldiers of the 3rd Ukrainian Front had succeeded in preventing a breakthrough.

March 13 marked a week since the Germans launched what was to be their final offensive. The weather improved, and the roads began to dry out. Despite this, the Germans were unable to make any significant progress. There were two noteworthy exceptions. First, the 23rd Panzer Division captured Sar Egres. Second, the 1st SS Panzer Division occupied Simontornya. A change occurred in the nature of the fighting when the Soviet forces, which up to that point in the German offensive had only used self-propelled guns, introduced tanks to the battle.

The Soviets continued to hold their defensive lines, though Tolbukhin withdrew one division that had the potential to be encircled. The IV SS Panzer Corps reported increased enemy troop movement. If the enemy counterattacked, Dietrich believed his veterans would have sufficient time to establish strong defensive positions. German intelligence at the army and army group levels misinterpreted this activity in the 2nd Ukrainian Front as local reinforcement movement and not as preparation for a major offensive.

Stavka transferred Maj. Gen. A.G. Kravchenko's crack 6th Guards Tank Army, which had approximately 500 tanks, and the 9th Guards Army from their positions near Budapest to the rear of the 4th Guards Army. The Germans did not detect the arrival of Kravchenko's armored units.

On March 14, the German panzer forces were able to maneuver better than in previous days due to the arrival of better weather. But by that time, the panzer force divisions participating in the offensive had shrunk to 50 percent strength.

With the sun peeking out from behind the clouds, the 16th SS Panzergrenadier Division received orders to spearhead an attack that day, which only made limited progress in the face of heavy artillery fire from the Soviet 57th Army. Dietrich watched helplessly as his cavalry divisions lost all offensive capability. Although his panzer divisions were still able to make small gains against the enemy, it became increasingly apparent that there would be no armored breakthrough. Bittich's II SS Panzer Corps held its ground in bitter fighting near Sarkeresztur. At that point Dietrich was greatly concerned about his flanks, which were vulnerable to enemy counterattack. Reports flooded into his headquarters about increased Soviet vehicle activity, particularly in the passes of the Vertes Moun-

tains northwest of Lake Velencze.

Balck responded by frantically organizing every possible reserve unit to bolster the German and Hungarian forces in his sector of the battlefront. He reluctantly committed his last reserve, the 6th Panzer Division, to the battle. After making some initial headway, its attack was easily contained by the reinforced Soviet XVIII Tank Corps. Even the most optimistic of the German commanders realized by that time that the offensive had ground to a halt. Although they also were exhausted, the Russians sensed that they had won the battle. At that point, the armies of the 3rd Ukrainian Front began making preparations to resume offensive operations. Tolbukhin's subordinate commanders ordered their units to move into the staging areas for the drive on Vienna.

The good weather held on March 15. The Second Panzer Army resumed its advance. To the north the Sixth Panzer Army and the III Panzer Corps of the Sixth Army tried to gain new ground on their respective fronts, but they had nothing appreciable to show for the blood spilled that day. The II SS Panzer Corps remained on the defensive. The only positive developments for the Germans were that the 1st SS Panzer Division slightly expanded its bridgehead and the 44th Grenadier Division erected a pair of pontoon bridges capable of handling tanks. Hitler and his advisers debated the merits of reorganizing their forces for a new direction of attack.

Unwilling to abandon his objectives, Hitler allowed the reorganization to proceed after an entire day was squandered in the debate. The upshot was that the lengthy delay put some of the units of the I SS Panzer Corps in greater danger from the looming Soviet assault than they would have been if they had received permission to adjust their positions.

March 16 dawned much like the previous 10 days. Heavy fighting occurred the length of the battlefront. Taking advantage of the good weather, the Soviet Air Force stepped up its operations flying numerous sorties against the Sixth Panzer Army and Sixth Army. On the southern end of the battlefront, the Russians attacked Army Group E's bridgeheads. As for the Second Panzer Army, it only made negligible gains. Elsewhere, the I Cavalry Corps and II SS Panzer Corps remained on the defensive.

The momentum had shifted by that point, and even the best plans for reorganization were nullified by the Red Army's resumption of offensive operations. Both Ukrainian Fronts attacked in force on March 16. The 4th Guards Army and the 9th Guards Army, with the 6th Guards Tank Army and 46th Army following in reserve, struck the left flank of Balck's Sixth Army northwest of Lake Velencze.

The Soviets targeted the Hungarian divisions, which were the weakest of the enemy's units. In heavy fighting on the second day of the offensive, the Soviet 46th Army overran the 1st Hungarian Cavalry Division. Wohler responded by cancelling all offensive operations. The Germans had completely abandoned the Drava bridgeheads by March 20. The panzer troops fought tenaciously against the advancing Russians to protect a narrow escape corridor and avoid being surrounded and cut off. The fighting grew in intensity in the following days, and during that time the German retreat corridor narrowed to no more than two miles in width. Speed was of the essence, and the retreating German units abandoned their equipment and supplies as necessary to ensure their escape.

Some of the SS panzer divisions fell back without orders. Hitler threw a tantrum. He immediately dispatched a representative to Hungary to summarily strip the SS troops of their armbands, which had been bestowed upon them to signify that they were elite troops of the Third Reich.

As the Germans withdrew, low-flying Russian Ilyushin Il-2 Sturmovik ground attack planes pounded their columns from above and Russian tanks and tank destroyers pursued them on the ground. Dietrich's and Balck's panzer divisions fell back as quickly as possible given the conditions. Elements of Dietrich's 6th SS Panzer Army fought for a short time on the outskirts of Vienna, but the weight of the Russian attack forced them to retreat to avoid being encircled. On April 2, the Soviet 57th Army and 1st Bulgarian Army captured the Nagykaniscza oilfields.

Alamy / SZ Photo / Scherl

Soviet self-propelled guns helped stem the German advance in Hungary. German leader Adolf Hitler was furious that some of his elite SS troops withdrew without orders when the offensive ground to a halt.

The Germans suffered 14,800 casualties compared to 33,000 Russian casualties. Malinovsky captured Bratislava on April 4, and Tolbukhin secured Vienna on April 13 after an 11-day battle.

In the final analysis, Hitler would have done well to heed Guderian's advice to commit the Sixth Panzer Army to the defense of the Oder line to slow the Russian advance on Berlin. Georg Maier, deputy chief of staff for operations for the Sixth Panzer Army, offered a fitting summation of the failed offensive. "Time, pressure, poor weather, extremely difficult terrain conditions, [and] Hitler's impatience joined forces with the well-prepared enemy defense to form a combined front," he wrote. □

BLOOD *on th*

The garrison soldiers of Beziers gazed down from the ramparts at the Crusader army setting up camp outside their high-walled city on July 21, 1209. Situated directly across the Orb River on the south side of the bridge leading to the city's main gate was a group of impoverished mercenaries armed mainly with cudgels and shovels. Beyond them were the knights of the Crusader army, whose attendants were pitching their tents on the river plain. With the knights were companies of professional soldiers, such as crossbowmen, sappers, and artillerymen, who were well trained and well paid.

The 3,500 garrison troops serving Raymond-Roger Trencavel, the Viscount of Beziers and Carcassonne, were not worried about their ability to withstand a siege for they had stockpiled supplies and strengthened their defenses. But the shoeless, lightly armed rabble nearest their great city annoyed garrison commanders and burghers alike.

The soldiers on the ramparts had engaged in a series of insults and challenges with the rabble below. When a drunk mercenary strolled onto the bridge and taunted them, an armed group sallied forth from the main gate. Armed with swords and bows, the defenders charged down the steep hill from their fortified city toward the long bridge over the Orb. They continued through the tenements of the Faubourg slum that lay between the escarpment where the city was situated and the bridge.

"They went waving their coarse white linen banners, shouting at the tops of their voices, and thinking to scare the enemy as one might scare birds in a wheatfield," wrote chronicler William of Tudela. They fired

IN THE ALBIGENSIAN CRUSADE OF THE EARLY 13TH CENTURY, THOUSANDS PERISHED IN A BLOODY CONFLICT THAT PITTED WESTERN EUROPEANS AGAINST EACH OTHER.

BY WILLIAM E. WELSH

a shower of arrows at the mercenaries. Rushing onto the bridge, they grabbed the boisterous mercenary and stabbed him to death. Afterward, they threw his body into the river.

The mercenaries were "all barefooted, dressed only in shirts and breeches, with a variety of hand weapons," wrote Tudela. They charged over the bridge to even the score. What they lacked in armor and weapons they more than made up for with their courage and aggression. The mercenaries waded into the group from the town, driving them back through Faubourg and uphill toward the main gate. It is not known for certain whether the mercenaries slipped into the city before the gate closed or whether they managed to batter their way through the gate, but they gained a foothold in the city.

The entire Crusader camp was soon buzzing with activity. Knights, sergeants, and sappers all sprang to action and ran toward the city walls. They threw up scaling ladders and simultaneously began hammering the walls with picks and mattocks.

Painting © Jose Daniel Cabrera Peña

e CROSS

Cistercian Abbot Arnaud Amalric watches on horseback from the banks of the Aude River as Crusader trebuchets batter the walls of Carcassonne and the suburbs burn in August 1209 in a modern painting by Jose Daniel Cabrera Pena.

Meanwhile, the mercenaries inside the town ran through the narrow streets hacking down anyone who got in their way. They kicked in the doors of private residences and ransacked them. “The churlish soldiery broke into houses everywhere, finding them full and running over with wealth,” wrote Tudela. The bells in the city’s great churches began tolling. This was a signal for noncombatants to seek refuge inside one of the city’s several churches.

The mercenaries eventually overpowered the townspeople and began to slaughter them. They spared no one, stabbing and slashing men, women, and children with the same awful, cold-blooded fury. The leaders of the Crusading hosts and the powerful knights of the army eventually arrived inside the city. Under threat of force, the nobles and knights, backed by their household troops, forced the mercenaries to pile the loot so that it might be divided among the wealthy at a later time. Furious over having to relinquish the spoils, the mercenaries set fire to the town. Flames licked upward, engulfing the homes and the churches in fire and smoke. Cathar and Catholic died together in the great fire.

Beziers was the first battle in a 20-year war that was fought in six phases in southwestern France. Approximately 20,000 people perished in Beziers as a result of the Catholic Church’s desire to stamp out the Cathar heresy that had thrived for nearly a century in the Languedoc territory of southern France. “Cathar” is the Greek word for “pure,” and the believers considered themselves the “pure ones.” The Cathar Crusade also was known as the Albigensian Crusade. The word “Albigensian” derives from Albi, a city in the Languedoc where many of the heretics lived.

The Cathar heresy thrived in the counties of the Languedoc region between the Rhone and Garonne Rivers. One of the most prominent counties was Toulouse, which was ruled by Count Raymond VI, the most powerful of the Languedoc barons. At the time of the Albigensian Crusade, the count of Toulouse was a vassal of King Peter II of Aragon.

The Albigenses, or Cathars, were Dualists who believed in the existence of two gods; one was good and resided in the immaterial and spiritual realm, and the other was bad and existed in the material world. They had inherited the belief from ancient times when Dualism was one of many religions existing in the Near East. It is possible that Crusaders from the Languedoc brought back Catherism when they returned from the Second Crusade in the mid-12th century. The papacy was particularly incensed by the Cathar belief in the existence and acceptance of the idea of an evil entity controlling the material world. Indeed, the intolerant Catholic Church went so far as to assert that the Cathars worshipped Satan, the enemy of what they believed was the one true God.

The heresy was not something that involved just the commoners or the aristocracy. Believers and those who either directly or indirectly sanctioned or provided safe haven to the heretics were found in all strata of society in the Languedoc. Indeed, even Catholic ecclesiastical officials were tainted by the heresy for their halfhearted attempts to suppress it.

In early 1207, Pope Innocent instructed papal legate Peter of Castelnau to excommunicate Raymond of Toulouse. In compliance with the pope’s wishes, he formally excommunicated Raymond in April 1207. By November, Peter had established a league of Languedoc barons to hunt down heretics. Additionally, he encouraged all of the lords of Languedoc to rebel against Raymond. He also took action against the prelates responsible for the region. He not only suspended the bishops of Beziers and Viviers, but also ordered a formal investigation of the activities of Berenger II, the Archbishop of Narbonne and Primate of Languedoc.

Count Raymond travelled to St. Gilles in the eastern Languedoc and met with Peter during the second week of January 1208. Although heated words were exchanged between the two

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ABOVE: Pope Innocent III’s Crusade Bull against the Cathar heretics in southwestern France resulted in a protracted religious war. LEFT: Mail-clad Crusaders expel the residents of Carcassonne during the siege of the city in a manuscript illumination from the *Grandes Chroniques de France.* TOP: The Roman Catholic Church persecuted Count Raymond VI of Toulouse for his tolerance of the Cathars.

during their meeting, Raymond agreed to submit to the demands of the pope in an effort to have the excommunication removed. On January 14, Peter and his assistants, who a short time before had departed from the Abbey of St. Gilles, were riding mules on their way to the ferry crossing on the Rhone River when they were ambushed by a man-at-arms who ran his lance through the legate's back, inflicting a fatal wound. After he murdered the legate, the unknown assailant rode away.

The assailant turned out to be a member of Count Raymond's retinue. Although contemporary sources are unclear whether Raymond ordered Peter's assassination, evidence indicates that he did not. The death of a papal legate was a capital crime that could not go unpunished. Since Pope Innocent already had excommunicated Raymond, he decided on a more drastic, sweeping action in the wake of the assassination.

Pope Innocent issued a crusade bull in March 1208 against Count Raymond and all Cathar heretics in the Languedoc. His bull provided that those participating in the crusade would receive an indulgence; that is, forgiveness for their previous sins. The heretics' lands would be confiscated and eventually transferred to a high-ranking noble who would continue to root out the heresy. Innocent appointed Arnaud Amalric, the Catalan Cistercian Abbot of Citeaux and a Papal Legate, to lead those who wished to participate in the crusade. The Crusaders were to assemble at Lyons on June 24, 1209, in preparation for an invasion of the Languedoc.

Lords and knights from northern France jumped at the chance to avoid having to travel to the Holy Land to obtain their indulgences. By the end of June, approximately 10,000 knights and men-at-arms, as well as another 10,000 peasants and camp followers, had assembled at Lyons. Participants came from all parts of France as well as Flanders, Germany, and northern Italy.

The secular leaders of the crusade were Duke Eudes of Burgundy, Count Herve of Nevers, and Count Gaucher of Saint-Pol. King Philip allowed his vassals Eudes and Herve to each take a maximum of 500 knights. Also in leadership positions were the legates Abbot Arnaud, Master Milo, and Master Theodosius. Included among the high-ranking church officials were Archbishop Peter of Sens, Archbishop Robert of Rouen, and six bishops.

Count Raymond submitted to representatives of the pope at St. Gilles on June 18 and agreed to correct his transgressions against the Catholic Church. Raymond had to appear naked at the church doors for scourging. The papal legate and 20 archbishops and bishops were present. He had to vow to follow the rules of the Catholic Church in all respects. During the meeting, the legate granted him permission to join the crusade. "The Count [was] a false and faithless crusader," wrote chronicler Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay. "He took the cross not to avenge the wrong done to the Crucifix, but to conceal and cover his wickedness for a period."

Alamy

Crusaders built a giant pyre in a meadow at Lavaur and burned 300 Cathars in 1211. The presence of Toulousians in the garrison gave Simon the excuse he needed to attack Raymond's comital city.

While the Crusaders were en route to Beziers in early July along the Via Domita leading from Italia to Narbonensis, Count Raymond-Roger Trencaval rode into the Crusader camp and met with the Abbot of Citeaux. He volunteered to join the crusade, but the Abbot of Citeaux refused to allow him to participate.

The Crusader army, whose soldiers of Christ typically enlisted for a 40-day term, had marched from Lyons to Beziers in two weeks. A large block of the crusading army consisted of mercenaries who had agreed to participate in hopes of obtaining wealth during the looting and robbing of the heretics and their Catholic supporters. Although the Catholic Church expressly forbade the use of godless mercenaries, the rule was universally flouted. Viscount Raymond-Roger was not on hand to see the Beziers defense as he was hurriedly preparing the defense of other parts of his realm.

When the Crusaders, whose column stretched along the Via Domita for nine kilometers, arrived on July 21, Renald de Montpeyreux, the recently appointed Bishop of Beziers, met with the Abbot of Citeaux. The abbot gave de Montpeyreux the names of 222 prominent residents of Beziers whom the Catholic Church suspected of heresy.

The bishop subsequently met with the burghers of Beziers. He implored them to turn over the suspects or simply leave the town and allow the Crusaders to enter it and arrest the heretics. If they

did either one of those things, the bishop said, the Crusaders would protect their lives and property. Otherwise, the Crusaders would take the city by force. The burghers refused both options. They viewed the Crusaders as foreign invaders, and they refused to assist them in their objective.

What followed was a three-hour massacre that ended with the city in flames. Those Catholics who were not killed outright died in the flames. The Abbot of Citeaux made no effort to curtail the slaughter. When asked by a monk how the Crusaders could distinguish the Catholics from the Cathars, the abbot said. "Kill them all, God will recognize his own." The Crusaders, choking on the smoke of the fires set by the mercenaries, withdrew from the city and let it burn to the ground.

Viscount Raymond-Roger, who had assembled a substantial army consisting of his knights and the garrison troops, awaited the arrival of the Crusaders at Carcassonne, 90 kilometers west of Beziers. He allowed those subjects living in the Aude Valley near the fortified city to take refuge inside its strong walls.

On their way to Carcassonne, the Crusaders accepted the surrender of Narbonne, which lay 30 kilometers from Beziers. After a long march under the hot summer sun, the Crusaders arrived before Carcassonne on August 1. Its sandstone and limestone walls, which were three feet thick, soared as high as 115 feet. Twenty-six towers were placed at intervals around the oval-shaped fortress, and the defenders had constructed wooden galleries between the towers that further enhanced the city's defense.

On August 4, the Crusaders assaulted the suburb of Castelar on the south side of Carcassonne using scaling ladders in an attempt to get over its low walls. Raymond-Roger had ordered Castelar defended. Skilled crossbowmen on the high ramparts fired bolts at the Crusaders, while other soldiers hurled javelins or dropped stones on them.

Peter II, King of Aragon and Castile, arrived unexpectedly two days later escorted by 100 mounted troops. The King of Aragon, who was the overlord of both Count Raymond of Toulouse and Viscount Raymond-Roger of Trencaval, wanted to settle the conflict diplomatically. Although he was received warmly by the northern barons because of his stature, the Abbot of Citeaux rebuffed his negotiation efforts. Before he departed, King Peter advised Raymond-Roger to reach a settlement with the Crusaders or risk the slaughter of everyone inside the city.

Pope Innocent III (left) excommunicates the Cathar heretics in an illuminated manuscript. With the Papacy behind them, God-fearing northern European knights set about ridding the Languedoc region of the Cathar heresy, which they saw as a malignant threat to the Roman Catholic Church.

The fighting resumed with a vengeance after the king's departure. On August 7, the Crusaders bombarded Castelar with large stones while a team of sappers rolled a large hide-covered "cat" up to the wall and began tunneling under a section of the wall weakened by their artillery. The sappers worked vigorously throughout the night, and in the morning the wall collapsed in a cloud of dust and debris. The defenders retreated into the city, but not before burning the suburb to deny cover to the enemy.

A week after they had been chipping away at Raymond-Roger's defenses, the Crusaders had built an impressive array of trebuchets with wood from local forests. The crews working the trebuchets hurled granite stones weighing between 500 and 1,000 pounds at the town walls.

By mid-August the refugees had drunk the city's wells dry, and the city could not hold out anymore. Although the exact terms negotiated are unclear, Raymond-Roger turned himself over to the Crusaders apparently in exchange for the release of the noncombatants. The leaders of the Crusade wanted to ensure that they were able to take possession of the city's wealth without the kind of uncontrolled frenzy that resulted in the massacre at Beziers. For that reason, they allowed the noncombatants to leave provided they take nothing of value with them. "Out they came ... till there was no one left in the town," wrote William of Tudela. "Quite unprotected, they rushed out pell-mell in their shirts and breeches; nothing else, not even the value of a button were they allowed to take with them."

The Crusaders gathered the booty from the town into a great pile. "We shall give it all to some powerful lord with whom God's grace will hold and keep this great country so the wicked heretics can never retake it," William of Tudela quoted the Abbot of Citeaux as having said.

The Duke of Burgundy and the Counts of Nevers and Saint-Pol each refused the offer. Each said he had abundant land and did not wish the additional territory. They shunned the prospect of taking territory that was far from their home and would require significant manpower and resources to hold in a hostile region. After the siege was over, the majority of the Crusaders returned home since their 40-day service had expired.

The Abbot of Citeaux formed a selection committee, and it decided to give the territory to veteran Crusader Simon of Montfort. He was selected partly because he possessed no great domains whose administration and defense would distract him from the work of the Crusade. He agreed to accept the fief offered to him provided that each of the lords agreed to come to his aid if necessary in the years ahead. They pledged their support and then departed for their homelands.

After locking Raymond-Roger away in a cell in Carcassonne where he would soon perish, Simon proceeded to secure as many castles in his territory as possible before the onset of winter. Nearly all of the castles had a village, known as a castrum, which was enclosed by a single or double curtain wall. The lords of the castles and their castrum oftentimes were Cathars themselves; if not, they were at least sympathetic to the heretics and allowed them to practice unhindered. Some of these castles, such as Cabaret, Minerve, and Termes, would prove particularly difficult to capture because of their remote mountain locations.

In early September 1209, Simon marched against Cabaret Castle, situated on a craggy spur in the Black Mountains 15 kilometers north of Carcassonne. The main castle was protected by two outlying towers, Surdaspina and Quertinheux, built on the same narrow ridge. Lord Peter-Roger of Cabaret ruled over a mineral-rich area where gold, silver, iron, and copper were mined. He was "an old man rich in years of evil doing," wrote Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay, adding that he was "a veritable fountain of heresy." After his initial assault was repulsed, Simon was forced to abandon the siege because his army continued to shrink with the departure of provisional Crusaders. Lord Peter-Roger actively worked against the Crusaders, and

Simon was keenly aware that Cabaret Castle was an active base in the resistance.

Simon set out in late August on a month-long reconnaissance of his domains. He secured those villages, towns, chateaux, and castles that voluntarily surrendered to the Crusaders. Simon faced a difficult diplomatic situation in regard to his overlord, King Peter of Aragon. Even though Pope Innocent III had given explicit approval for Simon to become the Viscount of Carcassonne and Beziers, Simon still owed homage to the Aragonese king. Peter remained bitter following his rebuff by the Abbot of Citeaux, and therefore he initially refused to meet with Simon and acknowledge him as his vassal.

In the autumn of 1209, Simon clashed repeatedly with Count Raymond-Roger of Foix, whose lands lay southwest of Carcassonne. The Count of Foix gave safe haven to Cathars, and for this reason Simon regarded his lands as subject to rightful seizure. Sharp clashes occurred at Pamiers and Fanjeaux.

A grisly series of related incidents occurred in November 1209 that set the tone for the barbarous behavior that the Crusaders and their opponents in the Languedoc would use in an effort to intimidate one another. One of Simon's knights had murdered the uncle of Giraud de Pepieux, a southern French knight who had joined the Crusaders. To appease Pepieux, Simon had the perpetrator buried alive; however, Pepieux remained unsatisfied and launched a brutal attack against the Crusader garrison at Puisserguier Castle 20 kilometers west of Beziers. After slaughtering 50 men, he took two of Simon's knights to Minerve Castle where they were mutilated and cast out naked as a sinister warning to Simon.

In March 1210, Simon's army swelled with the arrival of recruits. They trickled in throughout the spring, raising the viscount's principal army to approximately 4,000 knights, sergeants, and foot soldiers. The influx of new 40-day troops from northern France, Flanders, and Germany was essential to roll back the gains of the opponents of the Crusade. Simon's army stormed the pro-Cather stronghold of Bram located a day's march west of Carcassonne. He then proceeded to blind 100 enemy soldiers, but he left one of them with one eye to lead the others to Cabaret. Using terror to his advantage, he swept through the Minervois region, pillaging and burning the lands of any who refused to bow to his authority.

Simon made it a top priority to capture the castles and castrum that abetted the heretics. He led his army to Minerve, a seemingly impregnable fortified village on a gnarled spur of rock that was home to Viscount Guilhem of Minerve. The only access to Minerve was from the northwest as the other three sides of the stronghold were protected by the steep gorges of the Le Brian and La Cesse Rivers. Moreover, the village had a double curtain wall, and the entire mountaintop featured overhanging ledges. On the east side, the castle featured a covered walkway that led to a collection point for the water necessary to the residents' survival. Simon had ample forces necessary for the siege, and he divided them into four groups.

Wikipedia

Perched on a tall peak and surrounded by deep ravines, Castle Termes was a daunting objective for Simon de Montfort in 1210. Despite a tenacious defense lasting three months, the Crusaders ultimately prevailed.

Each group had one or more trebuchets. The siege engines "smashed openings in the high walls and in the stone-built hall," wrote William of Tudela. The largest of these, which the attackers named Bad Neighbor, was operated by a crew of 50 men directly across the Le Brian River from the covered walkway. Some of the 200 garrison troops defending Minerve launched a sortie on June 27 to burn Bad Neighbor, but it was discovered before it did serious damage. The Crusaders quickly returned it to working order.

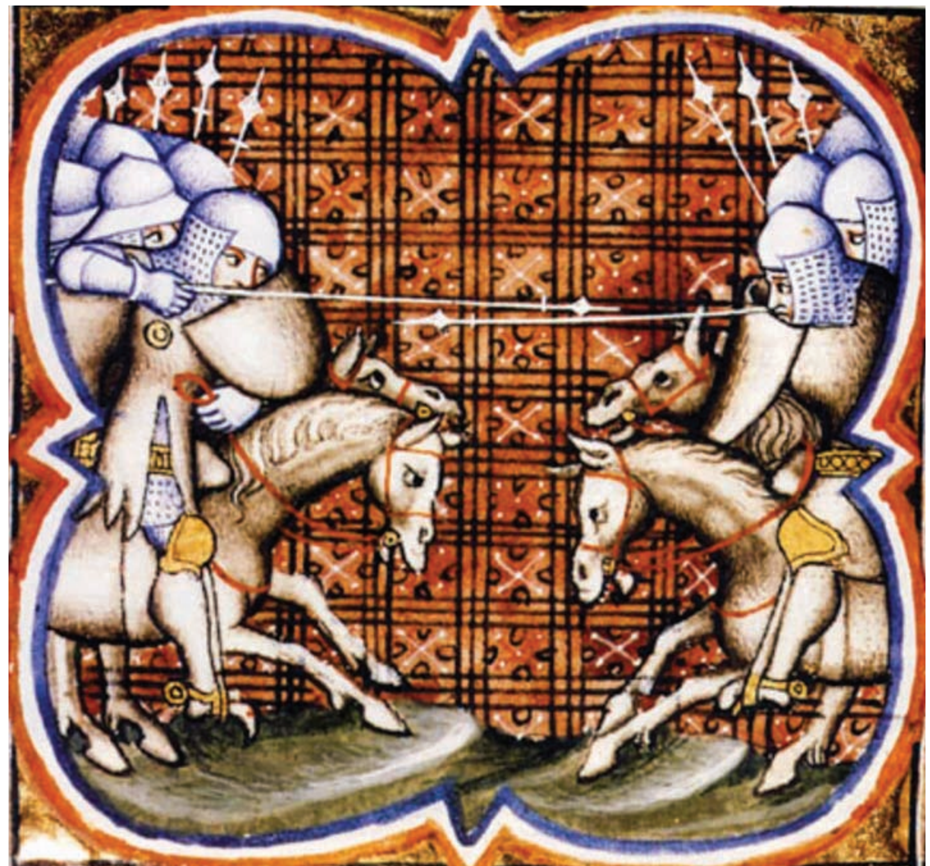
Guilhem requested a parlay with Simon on July 22 because the residents had exhausted the drinking supply. The Abbot of Citeaux arrived at just the right time to take over the negotiations. He told the viscount that if the Cathars would agree to conversion, they would be allowed to go free; if not, they would be burned. Robert de Mauvoisin, one of Simon's commanders, vehemently protested the offer of freedom. He said he fought to kill heretics, not to grant them merciful terms. "Forget your concern, I believe very few of them will accept conversion," said the Abbot of Citeaux.

The Crusaders built a great fire, and approximately 140 men and women "perfects," as the Catholics called the most devout heretics, opted for the pyre. "There was no need for our soldiers to throw them on, since they were so hardened in their wickedness that they rushed into the fire of their own accord," wrote Peter of les Vaux-de-Cernay. William of Tudela painted a more vivid portrait of the horror. "[The Crusaders] burned many heretics, frantic men of an evil kind and crazy women who shrieked among the flames." The less devout agreed to undergo conversion.

Simon marched in August 1210 against Lord Raymond of Termes, whose stronghold was located in the County of Narbonne. Like Minerve, Termes also was perched on a tall peak surrounded by steep ravines. Simon received a fresh influx of Breton 40-dayers in time for the expedition.

Raymond was an elderly, veteran warrior, and his strong garrison included troops from Aragon, Catalonia, and Roussillon. The siege dragged on for two months during which time the Crusader siege engines failed to cause any major damage to the castle's defenses. Raymond's troops intimidated the Crusaders with their defensive artillery fire. A scorpion bolt on one occasion penetrated Simon's tent, barely missing him and killing a soldier standing next to him. Lord Raymond ordered frequent sorties against the Crusader positions, which mounted troops sought to burn the Crusader siege engines.

By mid-October the defenders had exhausted their water supply. Raymond opened negotiations with Simon but promptly broke them off when a steady rain filled the cisterns. Simon was on the



Simon de Montfort's crusaders won a decisive victory over King Peter of Aragon's army at the battle of Muret in 1213. The open field battle between roughly equal forces was clear evidence of Simon's skill as a medieval commander.

verge of breaking off the siege when a fresh force of Crusaders from Lorraine arrived at his camp. The new Crusaders helped dig trenches that by the mid-November reached the base of the castle walls. The crew of a large trebuchet by that time was able to reduce one of the castle walls.

On the night of November 22-23, the garrison tried to escape. The Crusaders found Lord Raymond crouching in the bushes. They tossed him in a cell in Carcassonne, where he died three years later. Simon's tenacity paid off because it compelled Lord Peter-Roger of Cabaret to surrender his castle to Simon in April 1211.

While Simon had been waging war against the Cathars by sword, the Abbot of Citeaux had been waging it against the heretics and their leaders with words. Following the capture of Carcassonne two years earlier, the abbot travelled to Toulouse, where he compiled a long list of transgressions by Raymond VI. During his visit, he put an interdict on the city and also recommended the continued excommunication of Raymond. The interdiction meant that the city's churches were to be locked and that services were denied to faithful Catholics. In so doing, the abbot hoped to drive a wedge between the count and his subjects. The abbot believed Raymond was insincere in his submission to the Catholic Church, and he intended to do everything within his power to bring about Raymond's downfall.

Despite this, Innocent III forbade the Crusaders from invading Raymond's lands, which included the regions of Toulouse, Lauragais, Rouergue, and Quercy, until Raymond committed an overt act of war. His plight worsened at the colloquium held in Narbonne in January 1211, which was attended by Raymond, the Abbot of Citeaux, Master Thedisius, Peter II of Aragon, Viscount Simon, Raymond-Roger of Foix, and various other high-ranking Catholic Church officials in the region.

The Abbot of Citeaux said that he had failed to expel the Cathar heretics. He gave Raymond an exhaustive list of penances he must perform and acts he must take to avoid renewal of the excommunication. In addition to expelling the heretics, he was to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where he would have to serve for a period of time in a military order. At the subsequent Synod of Montpelier held on February 6, the Abbot of Citeaux and the other high-ranking ecclesiastical officials in attendance again excommunicated Count Raymond.

From that point forward, no reconciliation was possible for Count Raymond. He no longer had any hope of getting the Catholic Church to lift the censure its leaders had put on him. In the wake of the excommunication, Raymond appealed to the lords of the counties bordering Toulouse for military assistance. This marked the beginning of an organized, formal resistance that included Raymond of Toulouse and his principal allies, the Counts of Foix, Comminges, and Couserans.

With the majority of the strongholds in his domains under Crusader control, Simon set his sights on Toulouse, but he still needed Raymond to commit an offense that would give him just cause to attack the city. In early April 1211, Simon besieged the castrum of Lavaur just 40 kilometers from Toulouse. While Simon was engaged at Lavaur, Raymond-Roger of Foix's troops ambushed a group of German Crusaders in the Forest of Montgey 40 kilometers east of Lavaur who were on their way to join Simon. In retaliation for the ambush, Simon ordered the 90 soldiers of the Lavaur garrison put to the sword when his troops breached its walls on May 3. The Crusaders built a giant pyre in a meadow at Lavaur and burned 300 heretics who refused the offer to convert. Some of the soldiers who fought Simon at Lavaur had been sent by Count Raymond of Toulouse. This gave Simon the excuse he needed to attack the city of Toulouse.

With his army reinforced by a fresh army of German Crusaders led by Count Theobald of Bar and Luxembourg, Simon marched to Toulouse. Before he arrived, Raymond's allies in the Pyrenees foothills to the south had heavily reinforced the Toulousian garrison with their best troops. The Crusaders prevailed over the so-called Resistance Army in a preliminary clash at Montrauden in which the Crusaders nearly captured Raymond, but the Resistance troops withdrew safely to Toulouse. After an initial attempt to storm the walls, the Crusaders settled into desultory fighting over the next two weeks. Toulouse's walls stretched in a circuit for nearly five kilometers, and Simon did not have enough men to surround the city. The Resistance troops conducted frequent sorties, and the Crusader casualties steadily mounted. For these reasons, Simon decided to abandon the siege despite the damage it would do to his military reputation.

On June 29, Simon and Theobald ordered their men to break camp. By abandoning his siege, Simon risked losing the support of local lords and knights throughout Languedoc who had gone over to his side. Simon needed to prove he was still a powerful force in the region in the wake of his failed siege. For that reason, Simon undertook a devasting chevauchee into

the County of Foix in which he burned homes and destroyed vineyards. Afterward, he led his mounted force north more than 100 kilometers to secure the important trading hub of Cahors on the Lot River. Despite these shows of force, Simon's hold on the Languedoc was slipping. By late summer as many as 50 towns, villages, and castles that had been secured by the Crusaders went over to the Resistance.

A major clash occurred in the autumn of 1211 when Simon attempted to occupy the town of Castelnaudaray 60 kilometers east of Toulouse. Control of the town had alternated frequently between the Crusading army and the Resistance forces. Raymond had retaken the town in the aftermath of the Crusaders' abortive siege of Toulouse but then decided to abandon it. As he did so, Raymond ordered his men to dismantle its defenses as much as possible so that it could not be used as a stronghold by the Crusaders. Simon, however, was not cowed by Castelnaudaray's lack of defenses. He occupied it with 500 men. Seeing an opportunity to crush Simon and his small army, Raymond arrived with approximately 2,000 men.

After failing to retake Castelnaudaray by storm despite its weak defenses, Count Raymond established a fortified camp nearby. When Raymond learned that a supply caravan was approaching Castelnaudaray from Carcassonne, he dispatched Count Raymond-Roger of Foix to destroy it. Guarding the caravan were the troops of Bouchard de Marly and Martin Algai, a Navaresse mercenary captain, both of whom were allies of Simon. The Count of Foix took up a blocking position on the east side of Castelnaudaray. When Simon learned of this, he sallied forth with 60 mounted troops to reinforce the caravan's armed escort. Meanwhile, de Marly and his men charged the Count of Foix's small force. A fierce melee ensued. The Count of Foix was withdrawing when he was charged a second time by Simon's troops and the routed Resistance troops fled the field. Realizing he could not defeat Simon at Castelnaudaray, Count Raymond abandoned his fortified camp and withdrew west.

In the spring of 1212, Simon set off on an expedition to Quercy, where he began retaking strongpoints along the Tarn and Garonne rivers that had reverted to the Resistance. But the city of Toulouse remained beyond Simon's grasp throughout 2012.

King Peter of Aragon hoped to avoid intervening militarily in the situation involving his vassals north of the Pyrenees. He tried to settle the matter peacefully during the first half of 1213, but neither the pope nor his legates would take strong action against Simon. For that reason, Peter raised an army and in September marched north to Muret, a stronghold 20 kilometers south of Toulouse occupied by a Crusader garrison. Peter already had made an assault on Muret when Simon arrived with his army, but he allowed Simon to enter the garrison unopposed because he did not want Simon interrupting his siege efforts.

The stakes were enormous at Muret for both leaders. Peter established a camp for his mounted troops two kilometers north of Muret. The Toulousian militia bivouacked southwest of Muret on the banks of the Garonne River, where they could easily unload supplies from barges from Toulouse. Peter's 4,100-man army outnumbered the Crusaders by more than two to one. He was not inclined to conduct a lengthy siege, and therefore he made no effort to encircle the city and starve its garrison. He hoped that Simon would give battle, and that was exactly how it played out.

On September 12 Simon led his 900 cavalry out of a southern gate. He ordered Guillaume de Barres to lead 600 knights and sergeants in a frontal charge against Peter's cavalry. Simon led the remaining 300 men in a flank march designed to strike the enemy a fatal blow once it was already engaged with the Crusader main body.

Peter deployed his army in a sound manner on a narrow front not far from his fortified camp. His left flank rested on a marsh near the Garonne River, and his right flank was anchored on the Saudrune River. The Count of Foix was in the front rank, and Peter was in the second rank. In an effort to conceal his identity from those who might try to fight their way to his position and slay him, Peter switched armor with a low-ranking knight.

Alamy

Simon de Montfort cheated death many times while leading the Cathar Crusade, but it finally caught up with him when a giant rock fired from a siege engine inside Toulouse struck him during the third siege of the city in 1218.

De Barres' troops formed up in six ranks and charged the Franco-Aragonese army with such force that they shattered its front rank. A swirling melee unfolded between De Barres' knights and the second rank of the Franco-Aragonese cavalry. Seeing his troops were gaining the upper hand, Simon led his reserve in an unexpected charge that caught the enemy completely by surprise. Hewing and slashing their way through the enemy, Simon's reserve force so terribly slaughtered the Resistance that it had no chance to rally. The victorious Crusaders sent the survivors flying over the hills to the safety of Toulouse.

Peter was slain in the confusion of the close-quarters fight. If the Aragonese king had been wearing his own armor, it is possible the Crusaders would have tried to take him prisoner and his

Continued on page 66

SPANISH TROOPS IN A REDOUBT OUTSIDE PENSACOLA, THE BESIEGED CAPITAL OF BRITISH West Florida, stacked their arms and waited for their midday meal on May 4, 1781. Enemy shot and shell soared over and around the partially finished works that sheltered the troops. As noon passed, few soldiers cared to risk looking out toward the British redoubts spitting shot and shell at them, and only a few unfortunates were on duty as sentries. It was then that 200 enemy soldiers poured into their works, driving back the Spanish at bayonet point. As one cannon after another slipped from Spanish hands, it seemed that the Union Jack just might remain flying over British West Florida.

By 1781, the Revolutionary War had evolved into an international conflict. France and Spain had declared war on Great Britain, and the war had reached Pensacola Bay on Florida's Gulf Coast. Permanent European settlement at Pensacola began with a Spanish fort built in 1698. The third location of Spain's outpost on the bay, the 1754 presidio called San Miguel de Panzacola, became the nucleus of the modern-day city of Pensacola. The Treaty of Paris signed in 1763 gave Spanish Florida to Great Britain in exchange for the return of Cuba; in turn, France ceded the vast territory of Louisiana to Spain.

The British split their new possession into two colonies: East Florida and West Florida. Pensacola became the capital of the new colony of West Florida, which included the Florida panhandle as well as slices of former French

PENSACOLA UNDER SIEGE

BY DAVID A. NORRIS

Spaniard Bernardo de Galvez besieged British-held Pensacola in 1781. It fell to Scotsman John Campbell to defend the remote outpost.

territories in what are now parts of Alabama and Mississippi. West Florida stretched from the Apalachicola River as far west as the Mississippi River.

Pensacola sat on the mainland inside a large bay sheltered by long, narrow Santa Rosa Island. Ships entering Pensacola Bay sailed nine miles to reach the town. At the time of the Revolutionary War, Pensacola consisted of 200 houses clustered around a stockade fort. There was little support for independence from England in the Floridas, and the provinces became safe havens for Tory refugees from the other colonies.

The British crown ordered Scottish nobleman Maj. Gen. John Campbell to West Florida in 1778 with 1,200 troops. They disembarked at Pensacola in January 1779. West Florida was a long way from help in the event of attack. British forces were spread thin to deal with the colonial rebellion on the Atlantic Seaboard, which by that time had the backing of the French.

Spain stayed out of the Revolutionary War for a few years, but London was suspicious of the intentions of the government in Madrid. Resentment still festered in Spain over the loss of Florida and the British capture of Gibraltar during the War of the Spanish Succession of the early 18th century. On June 21, 1779, Spain declared war on Great Britain. Rather than directly reinforcing Washington's army, as did the French, Madrid targeted its former colony of West Florida.

Bernardo de Galvez y Madrid, the governor of Spanish Louisiana, was an exceptionally able military commander and civil administrator. At the age of 16, he joined the Spanish Army. By 1775 his military career had taken him to campaigns in Portugal, North Africa, and against the Apaches in the deserts of New Spain. He arrived in New Orleans in 1776 as commander of the Regimiento Fijo de Luisiana. De Galvez became the acting governor of Louisiana on January 1, 1777. As a fijo, or fixed regiment, his unit was recruited and permanently stationed within the colony.

After Spain declared war, London dispatched orders for Campbell to attack Spanish-held New Orleans. Campbell would use his own forces, enlist the help of as many pro-British Indians as possible, and draw help from the Royal Navy in the Caribbean.

U.S. Army Center for Military History

White-coated Spanish troops of the Louisiana Regiment and the red-jacketed Company of Free Blacks of Havana storm Fort George in Pensacola harbor. Because of the rivalry between European powers in North America, Pensacola changed hands repeatedly.

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Left to right: British Maj. Gen. John Campbell, Captain Jose Solano y Bote, and Spanish Maj. Gen. Bernardo de Galvez.

Unfortunately, a copy of his orders fell into the hands of the Spanish. Forewarned of London's designs against New Orleans, Galvez assembled a force to capture the British forts at the western edge of West Florida on the Mississippi River. Before he could launch an attack, a hurricane tore through New Orleans in August 1780 and wrecked most of Galvez's vessels.

Gathering what troops he could, Galvez at last set out from New Orleans on August 27. His 1,400 men were a diverse group consisting of a mixture of regulars, militia, Indians, and even a handful of Continental volunteers. Despite losing a large fraction of the force to desertion, the Spanish far outnumbered the British frontier garrisons. Fort Bute fell on September 7, 1779. After a brief siege, Lt. Col. Alexander Dickson surrendered Fort New Richmond and the settlement of Baton Rouge on September 21, 1779. Included in the surrender was the last British post on the Mississippi, Fort Panmure, which stood near the village of Natchez in present-day Mississippi.

All of West Florida again belonged to Spain, other than the coastal enclaves around Mobile and Pensacola. Adding to Campbell's worries, the strongest earthquake in Florida history shook Pensacola on February 6, 1780. The tremors came at night while a violent thunderstorm lashed Pensacola with rain and lightning. "In the barracks the regimentals and the arm racks fell from the walls," wrote a British soldier. "The doors were sprung, chimneys were thrown together, and from the fires burning on the hearths, a conflagration threatened to burst forth. Neighboring houses clashed together, and those buried in the ruins cried for help."

While the earthquake rattled Pensacola, Galvez was sailing across the Gulf of Mexico toward Mobile Bay when his ships sailed into another hurricane. Strong wind and heavy seas stalked the fleet when it neared Mobile Bay on February 10. Several vessels ran aground, and the frigate *Volante* was wrecked. A great share of their supplies were lost in the damaged ships or ruined when waves overturned or swamped the boats taking their provisions ashore. The governor considered calling off the attack and retreating by land back to New Orleans; instead, he persisted.

The soldiers saved cannons from the wrecked frigate, and they crafted scaling ladders with wood from some of the wreckage salvaged from the water. The capture of a British ship bound for Mobile replenished their supplies, and reinforcements arrived from Cuba. Meanwhile, Campbell set out from Pensacola with a relief force.

Winter rains flooded the countryside and delayed Campbell's relief column. By the time they neared Mobile, it was too late. After two days of bombardment, the Spaniards had breached the British defenses at Fort Charlotte, and its garrison surrendered to Galvez on March 14, 1780. Scouts warned Campbell that the Spanish flag was flying over the fort, and the troops returned to Pensacola.

To defend Pensacola, Campbell had about 1,300 regulars, sailors, and militia. He also had the help of 500 allied Indians, including Choctaws, Creeks, and Chickasaws.

Campbell's regulars included the 16th Regiment of Foot; the 3rd Battalion, 60th Regiment of Foot (the Royal Americans); the Hessians of the 3rd Waldeck Regiment; and Captain Johnstone's company of the 4th Battalion, Royal Artillery. On hand in the bay to assist were 180 men aboard two small Royal Navy sloops of war, the 18-gun *Port Royal* and the 24-gun *Mentor,* in the bay.

Also present were the Maryland Loyalist Battalion and some Pennsylvania Loyalists, which together totaled 310 men. With the Marylanders was Captain Philip Barton Key. Key's nephew, who was just a baby at this time, was Francis Scott Key, who during a later war between England and America would write the lyrics to "The Star-Spangled Banner." Another 40 soldiers served in a locally recruited Loyalist company, the West Florida Royal Foresters.

The 3rd Waldeck Regiment came from the German principality of Waldeck-Pyrmont. Prince Friedrich Karl August raised these troops, and the British subsequently hired them in 1776. The regiment was commanded by Colonel Johan Ludwig Wilhelm van Hanxleden.

Florida was an exotic land of Indians, alligators, and Spanish moss. The Waldeckers were surprised to find a fellow countryman, but living with the Creek Indians was a man named Brandenburg, from the village of Konigsburg in Waldeck. Brandenburg was an army deserter who took refuge with the Creeks and translated for them when the tribe dealt with Europeans. Brandenburg apparently had not deserted from the Waldeck Regiment, for his name had never appeared on their rolls and no mention was made of an arrest for desertion.

Pensacola sprawled across low, sandy ground by the water. Campbell was not the first officer to realize that the settlement and fort were vulnerable to bombardment from a rise north of town called Gage Hill. Rather than relying on the old fort, Campbell built new fortifications on the hill.

Largest of these new works on Gage Hill was Fort George. Its main section was a quadrangle with four bastions that were pierced for 21 guns. Two long earthworks of fascines and sand stretched to the southeast, each ending with a bastion constructed of the same materials and armed with three more guns. Between the bastions was a cluster of storehouses, offices, and a barracks. Outside the south wall of the quadrangle, huddled near a defensive wall on its eastern side, was the fort's magazine.

North of Fort George, the ground rose higher, so it was necessary to protect Gage Hill with two smaller outlying works. About 500 yards beyond the fort was an outerwork known as the Queen's Redoubt, which the Spanish would call the Crescent Redoubt. Its half-moon-shaped central portion was flanked by additional earthen walls on each side. Between the two larger fortifications was a smaller, pentagonal work. Officially called the Prince of Wales Redoubt, it was often referred to as the Middle Redoubt.

West of the town, Spain once fortified a rise called Barrancas Coloradas. This spot, which the British called Red Cliffs, guarded the entrance to the bay. The British built a new work on the site that they named the Royal Navy Redoubt. Like the redoubts on Gage Hill, the one at Red Cliffs was protected by abatis, interlaced tangles of small trees arranged with their sharpened points facing outward.

Across the water from Barrancas Coloradas,

Spain once had a settlement on Santa Rosa Island, but it was exposed to the full force of the Gulf's storms. After a 1752 hurricane, the Spanish abandoned the island and moved to the site later occupied by the British town. Campbell had no troops to spare to garrison the island.

It seemed that Pensacola's defenses would be tested in October 1780 when an invasion force commanded by Galvez sailed from Havana. Seven ships of the line and four frigates escorted 50 transports loaded with troops and supplies. A Gulf hurricane broke up the fleet on October 18. Several ships were lost, and the survivors were scattered to Yucatan, the mouth of the Mississippi, or back to Havana.

While the Spanish regrouped, Campbell sent an expedition against Mobile at the start of the new year. On January 7, 1781, 300 Indians and 160 soldiers under Colonel Hanxleden struck La Aldea, a village eight miles across the bay from Mobile. Although heavily outnumbered, the Spanish held on. The attack collapsed after Hanxleden was killed.

On February 28, Galvez left Havana again with 1,315 troops. With the troops from Spain were about 300 men from what is now Belgium in the Flanders Regiment and another 300 in the Hibernia Regiment, a unit of Irishmen in the Spanish service.

Commanding the naval escort was Captain Jose Calvo de Irazabal aboard the expedition's largest vessel, the ship of the line *San Ramon*. With Calvo were the frigates *Santa Cecilia* and *Santa Clara* and two smaller armed vessels.

The Spanish fleet arrived off Pensacola Bay on March 9. Part of the Hibernian Regiment and some guns were landed on Santa Rosa Island. Campbell had concentrated his forces on the mainland, leaving the island undefended.

Sandbars and a narrow, winding channel made it tricky to enter Pensacola Bay. The Spanish hovered off Santa Rosa Island and apparently did not keep a close guard on the entrance to the bay. At midnight on the day they arrived, a British brig escaped to alert the authorities in Jamaica about the invasion. On March 10, a Captain Roberts slipped into the bay with a prize schooner laden with Governor Galvez's silver dinner service, a collection of fine wines, and personal baggage.

Two days after their arrival, Spanish guns were readied on Santa Rosa Island. They opened fire, and drove the British sloops of war nearer to Pensacola. The Spanish unloaded their vessels before attempting to sail into the bay. Although substantially lightened, the *San Ramon* ran aground. The crew managed to free the ship in about 20 minutes, but Calvo ordered the other ships to stay out in deeper water.

If a ship of the line could not enter the bay safely, perhaps a smaller vessel could. Galvez boarded the Louisiana privateer brig *Galveztown*. He hauled aloft a rear admiral's pennant to signify his presence as the expedition's commander. Three row galleys, hired from Louisiana owners, were also under Galvez's orders rather than the Spanish navy. Together, the four Louisiana ships sailed through the harbor entrance. Royal Navy gunners at Red Cliffs opened fire. Their shots severed some rigging and punctured a few sails but did no serious damage. All four vessels made it into the bay on March 18. The next day, using detailed sailing instructions provided by the captain of the *Galveztown,* the rest of the smaller vessels sailed into the harbor. Calvo returned to Havana in the *San Ramon*.

On March 22, Colonel Jose de Ezpeleta arrived with 900 troops after an overland trek from Mobile. The following day a flotilla from New Orleans brought another 1,600 regulars and militia. Galvez shifted his men onto the mainland, disembarking them on the eastern shore of a bayou then called Sutton's Lagoon.

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Spanish expeditionary force commander Bernardo de Galvez is shown in a period portrait. The Spanish battled hurricanes, as well as British troops, in their quest to conquer the Gulf Coast.

The Spanish were about 1½ miles west of Pensacola itself. They settled into an entrenched camp guarded by two small redoubts and began exploring the enemy positions. Several soldiers caught outside the camp were killed or wounded by Campbell's Indian allies on March 25. "[At] 9 o'clock a.m., Indians brought in 23 horses belonging to the enemy, and 2 scalps," Ensign Robert Farmar of the 60th Regiment of Foot noted in his diary that day.

Frequent Indian attacks, whether ambushes of small parties or stragglers or sustained nighttime attacks against the main camp, kept the Spanish on edge for the next several weeks.

April 12 was a day of sharp skirmishing. While Galvez was directing operations from a forward redoubt, a bullet shattered one of the fingers on his left hand and creased his abdomen. Galvez temporarily turned over command to Ezpeleta.

Most of the British sailors were detailed for duty in the redoubts. A few hands steered the

Mentor into the east end of the bay and then up the Blackwater River. While at anchor in the river, the ship capsized during a storm on March 23. Three weeks later, the hulk was set afire to prevent its capture by a Spanish patrol on April 14.

One week after Galvez was wounded, lookouts spotted sails on the horizon. It was troubling news. The approaching vessels were identified as warships, and no friendly ships were expected. It was a great relief when the ships were revealed to be a combined French-Spanish fleet bringing more troops from Havana. This fleet's commander, Captain Jose Solano y Bote, was much more cooperative than Calvo. Solano detailed 1,350 seamen, including experienced gunners, for shore duty. Counting the 725 French soldiers and the 1,600 Spanish reinforcements, Galvez had approximately 8,000 troops.

After weeks of little progress, Galvez had plenty of hands to construct siege works. He gave little consideration to the little fort at Red Cliffs. Its guns managed to drive a Spanish schooner ashore onto Santa Rosa Island on March 28. Otherwise, the Red Cliffs battery was ineffective at closing the entrance to the bay and too isolated to have any influence on the main efforts of the siege. Galvez focused on taking Fort George and the Gage Hill redoubts. Late on the afternoon of May 26, a party of engineers traced the line of an entrenched road running to a hill facing the Queen's Redoubt. Five companies of grenadiers and light infantry and a pair of field guns accompanied the engineers.

About 200 redcoats and "many parties of Indians" attacked the surveyors, wrote Galvez. With the help of their cannons, the Spanish drove the enemy back into the Queen's Redoubt. But the British guns inside the work opened up a heavy fire on the Spanish and drove the engineers and their escorts back to their lines.

That night, 700 Spanish troops carrying fascines set out to work on the entrenched road, guarded by 800 grenadiers and light infantry. At 3 AM, a storm burst over the work parties and halted work for the night.

Two companies of light infantry were assigned to guard the area during the day of May 27 to prevent the British from tearing out the survey marks for the rest of the planned works. The Spanish light infantry clashed with an advance picket of 50 Loyalists and an unknown number of Indians. Four more companies of Spanish troops were sent forward with two field guns. They kept the enemy away from the area and stopped them from clearing trees and digging new trenches in front of the Queen's Redoubt. Galvez reported four men killed and a dozen wounded in the skirmishing. The Indians brought in "a great number of scalps, firelocks, and bayonets," wrote Farmar.

An entrenched roadway led from the Spanish camp to a hill, where they built a five-sided battery. One façade faced the Queen's Redoubt and the other faced Fort George at a longer range. Under cover of darkness, the Spanish brought four mortars into the battery on April 30 and six 24-pounders the next night.

From that 24-pounder battery a protected trench continued northward to a small redoubt equipped with three 9-pounders. Perpendicular to that line, another earthwork was dug to run east for perhaps 300 yards to a rise that the British called Pine Hill.

At Pine Hill, the Spanish started work on two new redoubts. Shielded by walls of sand, fascines, and cotton bales, the smaller redoubt would have a pair or mortars and a pair of howitzers, but the larger redoubt would hold a battery of nine 24-pounders. Captain Francisco de Miranda, an officer of the Aragon Regiment, estimated the distance between the nine-gun battery and the Queen's Redoubt was 420 meters.

Spanish troops worked all through the night of May 3-4 on the new battery, but "the time was not sufficient for the formation of the gun embrasures, so that the soldiers could with difficulty fire from the parapet of these works, nor was it possible to remain outside on account of the hail of shot thrown from the crescent," according to Galvez.

At midday on May 4, 200 of Campbell's men made a bold dash at the unfinished enemy works. The part nearest the Queen's Redoubt was held by a company of grenadiers from the Mallorca Regiment and half a company of the Hibernian Regiment. Intense artillery fire drove the Spanish under cover. Distracted by the ongoing bombardment, they did not detect a party of men from the Waldeck Regiment and the Pennsylvania Loyalists quietly slipping through the low ground between the fortifications.

Part of the attacking force waited in the woods while the others rushed into the Spanish entrenchments. "We were almost upon them before they discovered us," wrote a Loyalist soldier.

Sergeant James A. Matthews remembered, "A panic ensued. We dashed at them with the bayonet, [and] drove them out of their works." The captain and second lieutenant of the Mallorca Regiment were killed. The remaining Mallorcan lieutenant and all three officers of the Hibernian Company were wounded and captured. Their troops fled to a smaller redoubt about 60 yards west, but the British pursued them down the connecting trench and drove them out of this second work as well.

Galvez, when he was notified of the attack, sent four companies under Colonel Ezpeleta to eject the enemy from their gains. By the time Ezpeleta reached the scene, the British had rejoined their companions. Before withdrawing, the British spiked four guns and set the gun mounts, fascines, and cotton sacks on fire. From their smoldering fortifications, the Spanish watched their jubilant foes cheering and tossing their hats in the air.

The Spanish suffered 18 killed and 16 wounded. The silverware laid out for Don Pablo Figuerola, the commander of the section of the works, was gone, as were the money and buckles belonging to the dead and wounded. After securing the position, the Spanish set about making repairs and building emplacements for the battery of 24-pounders.

Nature assailed both sides on the night of May 5-6, as a hurricane swept across the Gulf Coast. The Spanish fleet withdrew from the bay after many of the ships cut their anchors and marked them with buoys.

There was no way for the soldiers on land to escape the storm. Winds blew down tents in the Spanish camp, and the deluge left so much rain that the soldiers slogged through waist-deep water in the trenches. On the British side, the storm "washed some of the sand from the barme [berm] of the fort and two redoubts," wrote Farmar. After sunrise, Galvez issued a special allowance of grog to the hundreds of men who spent the night on duty in the flooded works.

As Galvez steadily completed his siege works, he made plans for a surprise attack on the Queen's Redoubt, the key to the enemy's positions. Approximately 800 men were readied to move out after midnight on May 7. Some carried hatchets to hack through the abatis and others carried ladders to lean against the walls. Hundreds more men under Ezpeleta waited in the earthworks as reserves. To avoid detection, the attackers took a roundabout route around a hill covered with thick pine woods. They were guided by two deserters, one of whom was a Loyalist officer who was for some reason ejected from Pensacola, according to Miranda. The attack was poorly timed. A bright moon floated in the sky, and by the time the Spanish were assembled for the final rush at the redoubt it was so late that the British were already stirring from their beds. Surprise was then impossible, and the attack was called off.

Throughout the siege a constant trickle of

Library of Congress

A Spanish howitzer strikes the powder magazine in the Queen's Redoubt on May 8, 1781, setting off a deadly explosion. With the loss of the fort's outlying works that day, the British raised the white flag over Fort George.

deserters flowed from one side to the other. A Pennsylvania Loyalist was captured when trying to desert and sentenced to receive 500 lashes, according to Farmar. At noon on May 7, the deserter was drummed out of the camp "with his hands tied behind his back, and large libel pinned to his breast, with his crime," wrote Farmar. "He was escorted close to the Spanish lines, and left to his fate, but he soon returned."

Farmar's story may reflect an incident noted by Carl Phillip Steuernagel, the regimental chaplain, which the Waldeck soldiers believed had serious consequences for the siege. Steuernagel said a provincial officer committed an offense serious enough to warrant expulsion from the service. He was drummed out of the lines and was immediately taken by the Spanish. The expelled officer revealed the exact location and construction of the door of the magazine in the Queen's Redoubt, according to Steuernagel's report. Whether or not a traitor revealed details about Fort George, plans of the fort show that the entrance to the magazine opened to the west and so was exposed to the Spanish guns.

At any rate, the Queen's Redoubt was already the target of the enemy's artillery. A shell struck a tent at the redoubt at 6 AM on May 7, setting off a box of gunpowder. The blast killed a Waldeck soldier and wounded two more soldiers and three sailors. Eight hours later, "a shell came in at the window of one of the barrack rooms" of the redoubt and killed one officer and wounded another, wrote Farmar.

On May 8, the new battery of nine 24-pounders added its fire to the Spanish siege works. It turned out that this heavy battery was never needed. At mid-morning a Spanish howitzer hurled a shell into the vulnerable doorway of the magazine in the Queen's Redoubt.

More than a mile away in the main Spanish camp, a tremendous explosion startled Miranda and his fellow officers. At first they could see only a vast pillar of smoke rising in the distance. They soon learned that the stubborn Crescent Redoubt was on fire. The resulting explosion blasted the redoubt into "a heap of rubbish" and killed 76 men, wrote Campbell. The dead were "forty seamen belonging to H.M.'s ships the *Mentor* and *Port Royal*; and forty-five men of the Pennsylvania Loyalists," according to Farmar.

Seven cannons were "lost in the redoubt," according to Campbell. Two smaller outworks that flanked the redoubt were untouched by the blast. With the remaining guns, Captain William Johnstone of the Royal Artillery fended off enemy troops who closed in on the ruined works. A Captain Byrd rushed to the scene with 70 men of the 60th Foot. Johnstone and Byrd bought enough time to drag away five guns and some of the wounded. When great numbers of Spanish troops formed for another advance, Johnstone spiked the remaining guns and withdrew.

One hour after the explosion, Galvez's men poured into the Queen's Redoubt and took cover behind the remaining ruins. They "kept up so heavy and incessant a fire from their small arms ... that the seamen could not stand to their guns in the middle redoubt, and several [soldiers and seamen] were wounded," wrote Campbell.

With the loss of the outlying works and much of his gunpowder, Campbell's position was untenable. He saw that there was "little to no shot left (except what the enemy had furnished us with for our own four 24-pounders)." At 3 PM, six hours after the explosion, a white flag was raised over Fort George. One officer from each side was sent as a hostage to the other while surrender

Spanish troops press the siege on Pensacola in a modern painting by Spanish artist Augusto Ferrer-Dalmau. Galvez's skillful victory at Pensacola was the climax of a two-year campaign that cleared the British from the Gulf Coast.

terms were hammered out.

Negotiations dragged on for two days. On May 10, Campbell surrendered Pensacola. "It has been my Misfortune, my Lord, to be employed in an ill-fated Corner of His Majesty's Dominions," the general lamented in his report to London. The Spanish took 1,113 prisoners, along with 101 women and 123 children. About 300 more men slipped away during the surrender negotiations. Galvez reported that they went to Georgia. The Choctaws and other Indians likewise escaped and were not mentioned in the articles of surrender. With the prisoners the Spanish took 143 cannons, 40 swivel guns, six howitzers, and four mortars.

British losses, the great majority of which were a result of the detonation of the magazine, numbered 90 killed and 46 wounded. In addition, 83 of the British deserted. No tally was made of the Indian casualties. Galvez's losses included 74 dead and 198 wounded soldiers. These figures do not include possible additional casualties among the naval contingent.

The garrison received honorable terms of surrender, and the soldiers were paroled and exchanged. While Spain was at war with England, it was not officially allied with the rebels. Campbell was required only to pledge that his men would not fight against Spain again until their formal exchange. The British and the soldiers of Waldeck could fight against the Continentals as soon as they were released. For that reason, the Continental government alerted rebel privateers to board Spanish vessels and seize any of the paroled Pensacola prisoners they found.

From Pensacola, the captured garrison was taken to Havana before being conveyed in Spanish ships to British-occupied New York City. Of the British troops aboard the Spanish *St. Joseph* and *St. Joachim,* 160 were captured off the Delaware River by the Continental privateers *Holker* and *Fair American*. A prize crew of 30 men steered the Spanish ship toward Philadelphia. En route, the prisoners were freed when their ship was recaptured and diverted back to New York by the Loyalist privateers *General Arnold* and *Surprize*.

Some of the Waldeck soldiers remained in captivity in Cuba until the following year. In 1783, Parliament paid the Prince of Waldeck the sum of 904 pounds, 12 shillings, and eight pence for arms, camp equipment, and other spoils seized by the Spanish troops at the capture of Pensacola.

After the capture of Pensacola, Spain opted against invading East Florida; instead, Madrid planned an attack with the French against the British colony of Jamaica. Galvez would have played a prominent role in the campaign, but the plans came to naught after Admiral George Brydges Rodney defeated the French fleet at the Battle of the Saintes on April 12, 1782, leaving the Royal Navy in firm control of the Caribbean. Nevertheless, Galvez did lead an expedition that forced the surrender of the Bahamas to Spain on May 8, 1782. In that action, the Spanish captured the entire British garrison as well as a dozen privateers and numerous merchant ships.

King Charles III rewarded Galvez with a promotion to lieutenant general and the titles of Viscount of Galveztown and Count of Galvez. At the time of his death in 1786, he was the Viceroy of New Spain. The city of Galveston, Texas, was named for Galvez. His contributions to the Continental cause were remembered with a joint resolution of Congress in 2014, when Bernardo de Galvez y Madrid became the eighth foreign national to be declared an honorary citizen of the United States. □

Waterloo. Normandy. Agincourt. Gettysburg.

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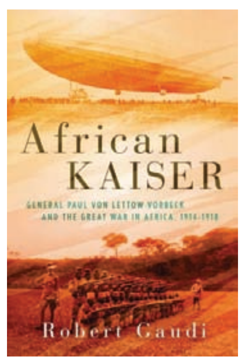
By Christopher Miskimon

Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck conducted a brilliant campaign against daunting odds in East Africa during World War I.



German General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck led German and Askari forces in a sustained guerrilla operation in East Africa that tied up thousands of Allied troops in World War I.

A MOTLEY FLOTILLA OF BRITISH SHIPS ARRIVED ON NOVEMBER 2, 1914, in the port of Tanga in German East Africa. The ships carried Force B, which was composed of mostly Indian troops, who soon began landing with the intention of seizing the key port. Local officials met with the British aboard one of their ships. The pro-German officials tried to stall for time in the hope that they would receive help from the contingent of German troops in the area.

The landing was a rough affair for the British force, but not due to enemy action. The Indian troops had suffered during the sea voyage from bad food, sickness, and inactivity. They staggered about as though drunk to the astonishment of native and German observers. British scouts stumbled about unable to locate the German troops. Nearby a company of Askaris, native soldiers under the command of a Captain Otto Adler, dug in to await the inevitable British assault. When it came, Adler ordered his men to hold their fire until the Indian troops were 200 yards away. The Askaris, who were crack shots, poured a deadly fire into their opponents.

Black powder smoke soon made a haze in the morning air. The Askaris carried obsolete 40-year-old rifles that could not reliably fire the new cartridges. The chatter of their few machine guns joined the pops of the rifles, stopping the enemy in their tracks. Soon many of the Indians turned and fled back to the beach. They could have been utterly routed, but Adler simply lacked the numbers to complete the victory.

Another assault also failed. The raw and suffering Indian troops were simply unable to stand up against the determined Germans and their Askaris. Another indignity soon visited the Indians. The fighting enraged swarms of African honey bees, more venomous than the European variety, which descended in a stinging frenzy. Although it was later reported the bees were a German trick, they actually had stung soldiers on both sides. The battle would soon end with a British withdrawal. It was a victory for German commander Lt. Col. Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, who would go on to lead the Askaris until the end of the war and gain fame as one of the most able guerrilla commanders in history.

Overall, the fighting in German East Africa was a mere sideshow to the bloody struggles in Europe and the Middle East. Nevertheless, it was filled with all the drama and horror human beings experience during war. Beyond the conflict of man against man, nature itself added yet more difficulty to the fighting. It was a curious affair, for elephants and even giraffes played a role in some of the battles. Throughout the campaigns starvation and hardship plagued the combatants. The story of the war in this unique theater is well told in ***African Kaiser: General***

Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck and the Great War in Africa, 1914-1918 (Robert Gaudi, Berkeley Caliber Press, New York, 2017, 448 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $29.00, hardcover).

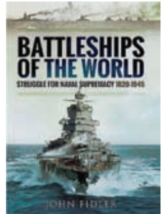
Once British forces arrived in strength, Lettow-Vorbeck and his troops took to the jungles and fought a guerrilla war, avoiding defeat until the war's end. The Germans and the Askaris lived and fought together, suffering the same hardships equally, which bonded them in comradeship. It was the first racially integrated military force of the modern era, and it functioned superbly, despite the German-Askari army being vastly outnumbered and suffering from a lack of supplies due to the British blockade. After the war, a defeated German nation would hail Lettow-Vorbeck as a hero for avoiding surrender and carrying out his duty so bravely. When he finally capitulated, he had the honor of being the last German general to surrender in World War I.

The book brings this relatively unknown corner of the war to vivid life through lively prose and extensive detail. It explores the role and position of Africa in the war, revealing there was far more happening on the continent than at the British base in Egypt. The book also chronicles Lettow-Vorbeck's life both before and after the war, including his service in the Boxer Rebellion and his risky opposition to Hitler in the years following World War I. This volume is as much a biography as a military history, and it serves both roles well.

Praetorian: The Rise and Fall of Rome's Imperial Bodyguard (Guy De La Bedoyere, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 2017, 336 pp., photographs, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, $35.00, hardcover)

The Emperor Augustus founded the Praetorian Guard in 27 BC and tasked it not only with his own protection but that of his family. Known at the time as the Praetorian Cohorts, for centuries afterward they guarded the emperor and enforced his will. Over time, though, they expanded their role into the realm of politics as well. Eventually they became a political force that no emperor would dare ignore. On many occasions they ruthlessly deposed emperors who were dangerous, foolish, or uncooperative with Praetorian desires. Others they simply competed with, and some they rewarded with almost fanatical loyalty. At one point they even sold the empire to the highest bidder after murdering the sitting Emperor Pertinax in AD 193. In 312 the Emperor Constantine defeated his opposition, which included the Praetorians, at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. He disbanded the Praetorian Cohorts afterward because he was unwilling to tolerate their expansive power and influence any longer.

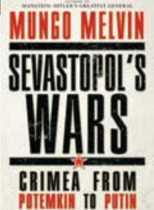
The author is an authority on Roman history and archaeology, and his expertise is apparent in the thorough detail of his research in this volume. The text effectively combines both a broad overview of the Praetorians with details of the individuals both great and small who made up the organization. The detailed appendices provide extra information and depth.



Battleships of the World: Struggle for Naval Supremacy 1820-1945 (John Fidler, Pen and Sword Books, South Yorkshire, UK, 2017, 145 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, $32.95, hardcover)

The battleship reigned supreme for over a century. These massive vessels evolved from wooden ships of the line boasting massive broadsides to steel-armored behemoths sporting turrets with giant cannons capable of hurling projectiles 20 miles or more. Early ships such as HMS *Warrior* introduced iron hulls to accompany the advances in steam propulsion that had been gradually overtaking sail for decades. Ironclads saw wide use in the American Civil War, providing more experience in the use of battleships. The late 1800s brought new iron ships with turrets and mixed armaments of large and small guns. After the turn of the century, the HMS *Dreadnought* introduced the big-gun battleship, which balanced firepower, armor protection, and speed. It was during the early 20th century that the battleship reached its zenith as nations competed to have the largest and most powerful designs afloat. Eventually, though, the battleship gave way to the airplane.

This new work charts the evolution of the battleship from the 1820s, when the Industrial Revolution made them possible, to the end of World War II, when aircraft and atomic weapons ended their supremacy. The book is well-illustrated with more than 100 black and white photos in the text and a color insert with period depictions of famous and notable ships. It offers a solid overview of one of history's most significant weapons.



Sevastopol's Wars: Crimea from Potemkin to Putin (Melvin Mungo, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2017, 800 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $38.00, hardcover)

The city of Sevastopol, which was founded by Catherine the Great, is located on the Crimean Peninsula. The city has a long tradition as a naval and military fortress. The city and the region have played major roles in some of the world's greatest conflicts. The Tatars occupied the Crimea during the Mongol invasion of the 13th century. The region gave its name to the Crimean War, where British, French, and Turkish troops fought a bloody siege with the Russians for control of Sevastopol.

Seven decades later Sevastopol was the site of more fighting, this time between Reds and Whites in the Russian Civil War. The Crimea was just close enough to the Caucasus oil fields coveted by the Germans to make it the scene of savage combat during World War II. In recent years, the Crimea has seen the return of Russian troops. When the Russian Federation took the Crimea by force from the Ukraine in 2014.

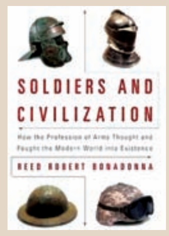
The story of Sevastopol is expertly told in this narrative, which blends first-person interviews, battle analysis, and archival material. The author deftly explains how the city has come to occupy a central place in Russian culture and imagination due to its history of struggle. This has caused Sevastopol to remain important to Russia down through the years to the 21st century.

Fighters Over the Fleet: Naval Air Defense from Biplanes to the Cold War (Norman Friedman, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2016, 300 pp., photographs, notes, appendix, index, $72.00, hardcover)

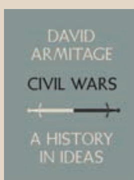
The Marianas Turkey Shoot, during the World War II Battle of the Philippine Sea, was a masterpiece of naval warfare. Coordinated strikes by carrier-based dive bombers and torpedo planes struck a heavy blow against the remaining Japanese surface fleet. Meanwhile, hundreds of U.S. fighter aircraft annihilated the enemy's air fleet. The Americans downed 243 of 373 Japanese aircraft. In so doing, the Americans killed Japan's remaining experienced pilots.

The battle did not have to turn out that way, though. The Japanese had spotted the Americans first, which gave them the advantage. Their successful reconnaissance brought them nothing, though, because the U.S. Navy

SHORT BURSTS



Soldiers and Civilization: How the Profession of Arms Thought and Fought the Modern World into Existence (Reed Robert Bonadonna, Naval Institute Press, 2017, $35.00, hardcover) The author holds that soldiers have made unrecognized contributions to society and modern civilization. He makes his case using the humanities and sociology.



Civil Wars: A History in Ideas (David Armitage, Knopf Publishing, 2017, $27.95, hardcover) This analysis of civil conflict examines its sources and effects upon their respective nations and the wider world.

Forged Through Fire: War, Peace and the Democratic Bargain (John Ferejohn and Frances McCall Rosenbluth, Liveright Publishing, 2017, $29.95, hardcover) The authors argue that democracy has risen only through bloodshed and difficult wars. They hold democracy is imperiled by a lack of a threat.

My Lai: Vietnam, 1968, and the Descent into Darkness (Howard Jones, Oxford University Press, 2017, $34.95, hardcover) This examination of the infamous Vietnam War massacre covers the event and its effect on the nation.

The General vs. the President: MacArthur and Truman at the Brink of Nuclear War (H.W. Brands, Doubleday Books, 2016$30.00, hardcover) The work covers in detail the contest of wills between President Harry Truman and General Douglas MacArthur. Reining in the insubordinate general was a test of Truman's leadership.

The Suomi Submachine Gun (Leroy Thompson, Osprey Publishing, 2017, $20.00, softcover) This Finnish weapon was prized for its reliability and firepower. The gun was used from World War II until the 1980s.

Engineering Victory: How Technology Won the Civil War (Thomas F. Army Jr., Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016, $49.95, hardcover) A critical part of the Union's ability to achieve victory was its technical superiority, which it used to outmaneuver the Confederacy.

The Victory at Sea (Rear Admiral William Sims, USN, Naval Institute Press, 2017, $24.95, softcover) The man who was the architect of U.S. naval efforts in World War I describes the effort in his own words.

Heligoland: Britain, Germany and the Struggle for the North Sea (Jan Ruger, Oxford University Press, 2017, $34.95, hardcover) This island was at the center of Anglo-German naval competition for decades. The work covers the struggle in great detail.

defended itself with skill and agility. Using radar to detect the incoming strikes, the Americans launched synchronized fighter sorties to intercept all four Japanese attacks up to 60 miles from the carriers. It was a triumph. The Japanese never managed to inflict damage on the American carriers. The blow to the Japanese forced them to change tactics and introduce kamikaze attacks.

The rise of naval aircraft brought a new vulnerability to fleets, but it also brought a new defense. Planes could both attack ships and defend them. To do this effectively required a system of fighter direction. The purpose of this system was to get the defending interceptors moving in the right direction and altitude to meet the attacking aircraft before they could inflict damage.

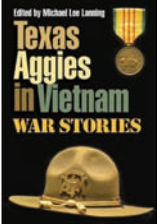
This new work is both a technical and tactical history covering the dawn of naval aviation in the 1920s to the Falkland Islands War.

Special Forces Berlin: Clandestine Cold War Operations of the US Army's Elite, 1956-1990 (James Stejskal, Casemate Publishers, Philadelphia, PA, 2017, 333 pp., photographs, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, $32.95, hardcover)

In the mid-1950s Berlin was fast becoming a hotbed of the expanding Cold War. The oppressive nature of Soviet rule was fully understood by the East German people after the blockade of 1948 and a speedily crushed worker's strike of 1953. Hundreds of thousands of East Germans were fleeing to West Germany through NATO-held West Berlin. It was a thorn in the Communist side, but Berlin was a city the Warsaw Pact completely surrounded, and its garrison had little hope of surviving a full onslaught.

Even with the odds against it, though, the U.S. Army prepared to make full use of its assets within the city. It placed six Special Forces A teams in the city. These units are specially designed to operate behind enemy lines, so in the event of war they would already be there. They were ready to sow chaos and destruction upon Soviet forces in Germany. Although the men would come and go over time, the Berlin Special Forces Detachment would maintain that readiness for the next 35 years.

This in-depth history of a little-known military organization is written by one of its veterans. It details the myriad ways in which these soldiers planned, trained, and prepared to fight the next global conflagration in East Germany. They also carried out clandestine missions, and as their reputation grew they were even drawn into operations involving Iran during the hostage crisis of the late 1970s. All of this is laid out in the sort of stark detail only a true participant can convey. Most books on American Special Forces in the Cold War focus on Vietnam, but this one shows them fighting a remarkably different kind of war.



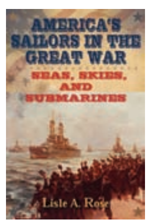
Texas Aggies in Vietnam: War Stories (Edited by Michael Lee Lanning, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, 2016, map, appendices, glossary, index, $30.00, hardcover)

Ed McDaniel was a young Naval Intelligence officer in the Quang Ngai area of Vietnam in 1969. One day he was assigned to fly with a U.S. Army Cessna O-1 Bird Dog observation plane. During the afternoon flight he spotted a lone military-age Vietnamese walking along the beach in a free fire zone. They radioed the sighting in and soon were told to fire on the man as a suspected Viet Cong. The aircraft was unarmed, but McDaniel had brought an M-79 grenade launcher with him instead of his usual M-16. He fired a grenade but did not account for the plane's motion, so the projectile landed far behind the target, exploding harmlessly.

They circled around for another try and

noticed the young man was standing still, looking at them with his arms outstretched. As the plane circled the man pivoted to keep facing them. McDaniel took careful aim, but held his fire. "I don't think the guy is a VC," he told the pilot. "But if he is, he is damn smart and this country needs smart citizens." The pilot agreed and they returned to base. It was a gesture of humanity in a long and bitter war.

Texas A&M University produced more officers for the Vietnam War than any college except the service academies, including the author. This volume collects the stories of more than three dozen such veterans pertaining to their Vietnam experience. More than just a collection of war stories, it is a tribute to those who served in the conflict and did not return. The author pays tribute to the fallen by including them in a list at the end of the book.



America's Sailors in the Great War: Seas, Skies, and Submarines (Lisle A. Rose, University of Missouri Press, Columbus, 2017, 328 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $36.95, hardcover)

Few know of the U.S. Navy's role in World War I; it took part in no enormous battles such as Jutland. There were no amphibious assaults upon enemy-held beaches or daring raids along the enemy coast. When the Navy entered the war it had nothing with which to combat that new scourge upon the seas, the German U-boat. It needed to adapt quickly and, to its credit, the U.S. Navy did just that.

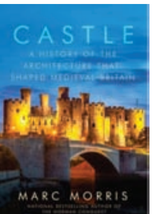
The answers were a new type of warship called the subchaser and the convoy system. As a result, all but one of the 178 U-boats lost to enemy action during the war were sunk at the hands of the U.S. Navy. The fleet's battleships reinforced the British Royal Navy, making it suicidal for the German High Seas Fleet to dare a sortie from its ports. Importantly, American sailors made it possible for American soldiers to cross the Atlantic Ocean and help defeat Germany.

This history of the U.S. Navy in World War I is part of the University of Missouri's series "The American Military Experience," which records the involvement of American fighting men and women across the span of their nation's conflicts. It conveys the unforgiving conditions of the North Atlantic to the reader as the sailors knew them. The author describes how World War I prepared the Navy for what it would have to do a generation later in World War II.

For Their Own Cause: The 27th United States Colored Troops (Kelly D. Mezurek, Kent State University Press, Kent, OH, 2017, 354 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $37.95, hardcover)

The 27th United States Colored Infantry Regiment, which was composed mainly of free black men from Ohio, served in Virginia and North Carolina from April 1864 to September 1865. The regiment took part in the Battle of the Crater at Petersburg, Virginia, on July 30, 1864. When they were not fighting Confederates they struggled against prejudice from their supposed comrades in arms and a sometimes indifferent government. Their battle did not end with the conclusion of the war. When they returned home, the soldiers sought to receive the acceptance and social benefits their sacrifice and service had earned them.

Rather than a simple regimental history of a unit at war, the author expands the narrative to show what members of the 27th experienced after the war and how their service influenced their community and the racial narrative in Ohio. The author uses clear prose and diverse sources to show the war from the soldiers' perspectives.



Castles: Their History and Evolution in Medieval Britain (Marc Morris, Pegasus Books, New York, 2017, 272 pp., photographs, bibliography, index, $27.95, hardcover)

The castle is a symbol of the age of chivalry, medieval warfare, and armored knights. Medieval castles were centers of power that were designed to defend an area against attackers who could not afford to leave its occupants unbeaten within its walls. Castles were also the site of epic sieges as conflicting forces vied for power and control. A castle also was a place where families were raised and lived their lives.

This new work takes the reader on a tour of Great Britain's most famous castles, delving into their design, construction, and history both in peace and war. The author also visits some of the lesser known yet important castles which dot England's landscape to this day. Likewise, famous men such as William the Conqueror and Edward I figure alongside those lesser known today such as Roger of Montgomery and Edward Dallingridge. Castles were built for the specific purpose and need of their owner, and this book examines it all in detail, providing an in-depth look at the famous structures, showing their purpose and influence upon the course of history. □

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 By Joseph Luster

ACTIVISION BRINGS ITS MOST FAMOUS *CALL OF DUTY* BACK AS A STANDALONE RELEASE, AND *AGE OF EMPIRES JOINS* IN ON THE REMASTERING.

PUBLISHER ACTIVISION

GENRE SHOOTER

SYSTEM(S) PS4, XBOX ONE, PC

AVAILABLE NOW

Call of Duty: Modern Warfare Remastered

Activision ruffled a few feathers when it restricted access to *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare Remastered* to those who purchased *Call of Duty: Infinite Warfare*. Call it a little insurance to make sure people actually bought the then-latest entry, and maybe some of the reactions went a little overboard, but it was still a rather shrewd strategy. Flash forward about nine months later—even more by the time you read this—and we finally have a standalone release of the remastered shooter, but was it worth the wait?

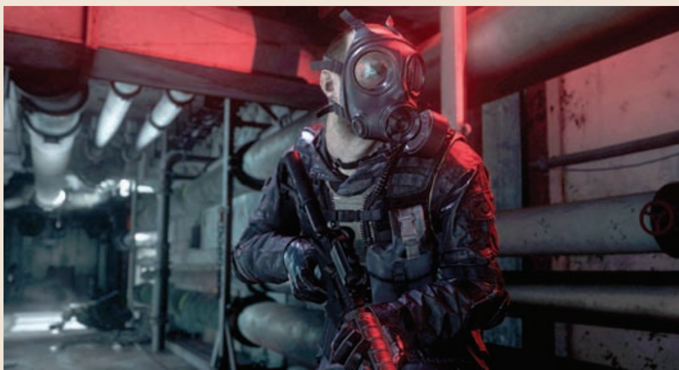
The short answer is easy: *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare Remastered* is a prettier, smoother version of one of the best first-person shooters in modern gaming. When *CoD4* first dropped back in 2007, it didn't just help pave the way for every *Call of Duty* game that followed, it had a major influence on big-budget shooters as a whole, particularly on consoles. From the rhythm of gunplay to the major story beats and setpieces, you can see a lot of *CoD4* reflected in the current generation of games. Some will bemoan this fact, occasionally for a good reason, but it's mostly a positive thing.

Modern Warfare is a smartly paced, exciting shooter that manages to create drama and escalate the stakes despite adhering to a rather straightforward difficulty curve. That hasn't changed with the remaster, which retains all the solid writing, memorable scripted scenarios, and quick-to-hook multiplayer. If you don't mind shelling out 40 bucks for a decade-old game, there's still plenty of fun to be had here. When you get to some of the other decisions Activision made, however, the waters get a little murkier. Thus, it's time for the less favorable long answer.

Generally speaking, when the "definitive edition" of a game comes out you can look forward to enjoying all the previously released content in one package. Just think of any "Game of the Year" version of a game and you get the idea. Activision and developer Raven Software weren't content with this, and instead chose to add in DLC in the form of paid microtransactions. While they initially promised the related supply drop crates would be cosmetic only, it wasn't long before they added a slew of weapons and weapon sets into the mix. Regardless of whether or not the guns and melee options in question affect the overall balance, adding DLC into a game that never had it in the first place just isn't a very consumer-friendly move.

Adding fuel to this unfortunate fire is the release of the Variety Map Pack, which is available to download on PS4 at the time of this writing. Not only is the map pack not included with the full game, it's actually more expensive than it was when it first came out. What was initially priced at $9.99 nearly 10 years ago is now $14.99, so if you want everything in this remaster you're going to end up paying roughly the price of a full, brand new 2017 game.

Look, I love *Modern Warfare,* so it's tough for me to take away any of the accolades it deserves as a standalone game. Love for the core content aside, though, I simply can't recommend rewarding this type of release. I'd sooner have you dust off your previous-gen consoles or boot up an older file on your PC to experience *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare* because it's just as fun there as it is here. If fewer people support these tactics, we might see less of it in the future.



PUBLISHER MICROSOFT STUDIOS

GENRE STRATEGY

SYSTEM(S) PC

AVAILABLE NOW

PREVIEW

Age of Empires: Definitive Edition

4K was a big talking point during this past summer's E3 2017 event, and that didn't just extend to brand new games. The PC Gaming Show was host to Microsoft Studios' unveiling of *Age of Empires: Definitive Edition,* which aims to bring the 1997 strategy classic into the modern era with the help of updated graphics and other notable improvements.

The timing is perfect, of course, considering the fact that we're right in the middle of the game's 20th anniversary celebration. In addition to the fully-remastered 4K UHD visuals, *Age of Empires: Definitive Edition* features new zoom levels, new and improved gameplay, completely new narration, Xbox Live multiplayer and achievements, rebuilt sound effects, and a reorchestrated soundtrack. Old school fans won't have to worry about being overwhelmed by all the new bells and whistles, because there's also a classic mode to bring back those pure '97 vibes.

A beta program is underway at the moment, and the full release will have more to offer besides a remaster of the original base game. Players can also look forward to the inclusion of the *Rise of Rome* expansion, which will have similarly enhanced narration and gameplay, as well as 10 campaigns to conquer and 16 explorable civilizations. As far as historical strategy franchises go, *Age of Empires* is one of the most beloved, so it's nice to see it being preserved so thoroughly. We're currently itching to dig into the beta program, so we'll be sure to report back once the remastered and retooled action has been finalized.

Continued from page 19

Roosevelt loved to flirt with the ladies, and nothing put him in a better mood than to have feminine companionship, especially with an old friend like Martha. The president insisted that he personally take the royals on a tour of *Potomac.* Although he genuinely enjoyed playing host, there was a method to this seemingly frivolous madness. Roosevelt knew, and subsequent events bore this out, that the newspapers would take the bait and prominently feature the royal visitors in their latest editions. It made colorful copy, and it also obscured the real purpose of the cruise.

The *Potomac* was roughly divided amidships. The forward half included the radio room, galley, guest bedrooms, ship's bridge, and quarters for the officers and crew. The aft section was truly the "White House" section of the vessel, for it included a saloon, the president's cabin, and the fantail.

The saloon was essentially the dining room, although to landlubbers the name conjures images of a bar in the Old West. But in ship parlance saloon means a large public area. Tastefully decorated but not ostentatious, the room featured green curtains and framed nautical prints, the latter revealing Roosevelt's deep love of the sea.

Roosevelt's guided tour probably did not include his personal cabin. The cabin, faithfully restored when *Potomac* became a museum ship, is surprisingly small for such an important figure. A modest bed, small dresser, and mirror hover over a miniscule sink. But rank does have its privileges, even in such a tiny cabin. A small side door opens to reveal a flush toilet and a steel sitz tub.

Mobility was always a problem, especially if Roosevelt wanted to go to the ship's upper deck to do a little fishing off the fantail. The issue was solved when the aft smoke stack, which apparently was not essential for the ship's operation, was converted into a hidden elevator. Its interior space is about three feet by four, which was just about enough space for his wheelchair. The elevator was raised and lowered by means of a manual rope and pulley system, which again posed no problem for a man of Roosevelt's muscular build.

The fantail, located on the lower deck of the ship's stern, was probably Roosevelt's favorite part of the presidential yacht. It was a place designed for both business and pleasure. The president could receive reports, discuss plans, or simply enjoy a cocktail with friends. The fantail's most notable feature is a semicircular settee. Roosevelt liked to sit in the center of the settee and hold court, so to speak.

Security was always a factor, especially as the nation approached war. The fantail was covered in bulletproof glass, and after 1940 at least one machine gun was mounted when the president was aboard.

The covert phase of the voyage began after *Potomac* left South Dartmouth. *Potomac* quietly and secretly made a rendezvous with the heavy cruiser *Augusta,* flagship of the Atlantic Fleet, just off Martha's Vineyard. *Augusta* was accompanied by the heavy cruiser *Tuscaloosa* and five destroyers of Destroyer Division 17, *Madison, Moffett, Sampson, Winslow,* and *McDougal.*

It was a formidable array of naval power, but the *Potomac,* which was Lilliputian compared to the other great vessels, still had a vital role to play. After Roosevelt was transferred to the *Augusta, Potomac* continued to sail the coast as if he were aboard and the fishing trip was in full swing.

Everything possible was done to lull people's suspicions; not one detail was overlooked. The presidential ensign still flew proudly on the *Potomac*'s flagstaff, a flag that only was raised when Roosevelt was aboard. When the *Potomac* entered the 17-mile Cape Cod Canal, the subterfuge went into full swing. Because the canal allowed people to see the ship more closely, an actor of roughly the same facial features and build played Roosevelt to the unsuspecting crowds.

The substitute wore much the same clothes, waving to enthusiastic onlookers while smoking a cigarette in a holder that jutted from his mouth at a 45-degree angle. Everyone was taken in. Many people must have been delighted to have seen the president, not knowing he was completely counterfeit.

The deception was not only visual. Dispatches from *Potomac* painted an idyllic picture of a president at play, free from cares. "After a night of restful sleep the President is continuing his cruise," read one note. "He is ... enjoying the sea air from the fantail."

But no secret is really safe in Washington, and rumors began circulating that Roosevelt just might be meeting Churchill. The rumors were substantial enough that the *New York Times* made note of them. The newspaper printed the speculation under the banner headline: "Meeting of Churchill and Roosevelt on President's Cruise Reported."

Rumors might fly, but *Potomac*'s deceptive cruise continued without interruption. While the presidential yacht continued playing charades, Roosevelt met Churchill and engaged in three days of substantial talks from August 9 to 12. By August 14, the conference over, and the participants, one of whom was Churchill, safe, it was decided to inform the press of the diplomatic progress.

The *New York Times* banner headline said it all: "Roosevelt, Churchill Draft Peace Aims. Pledging Destruction of Nazi Tyranny; Joint Steps Believed Chartered at Parlay." Eventually Roosevelt transferred back to the *Potomac* and on August 16 held a press conference in the yacht's saloon. Roosevelt affably fended off questions that asked too many details but did not mind giving his impressions of Churchill. *Potomac*'s smokescreen mission was successfully concluded.

Potomac's role as a kind of floating cover story was not yet over. On Veteran's Day, November 11, 1943, Roosevelt visited the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. He was accompanied by the secretary of war and the U.S. Navy secretary, but no other dignitaries. Perhaps more unusual was the fact that Roosevelt, who usually could be counted on to give a memorable word or two, gave no speech and did not speak to the press. It was to be his last public appearance in Washington for several weeks.

Roosevelt left the White House that very evening, accompanied by a small entourage that included adviser Harry Hopkins and perhaps a couple of other guests. The presidential party motored to Quantico, Virginia, where *Potomac* was waiting. On the morning of November 12, *Potomac* rendezvoused with the battleship *Iowa,* and the president was transferred to the larger ship. A special ramp connected *Potomac* and *Iowa,* allowing Roosevelt to remain in his wheelchair when he came aboard.

Roosevelt was beginning a 7,000-mile odyssey that would eventually take him to Teheran, Iran. The Teheran Conference reunited him with Churchill and brought in a third player, Soviet dictator Josef Stalin. The so-called Big Three discussed many issues, including the opening of a second front against Germany.

Once again, *Potomac* played its role to perfection. Its radio room also posted routine, almost laconic trivialities about good fishing and the like. Once again, no one suspected anything was wrong. *Potomac*'s second foray into diplomatic subterfuge was also a success.

When Franklin Roosevelt died in April 1945, *Potomac*'s life as a presidential yacht was at an end. After suffering many ordeals and coming close to being scrapped, *Potomac* was reborn as a museum ship dedicated to the 32nd U.S. president. It can be visited at Jack London Square in Oakland, California. □

Beersheba

Continued from page 27

had been torn open by Ottoman bayonets as they leaped the trenches; the poor beasts had continued galloping as long as they could before collapsing.

The fighting was savage and witness to many incredible individual acts of courage. One trooper, Staff Sergeant Jack Cox, captured 40 prisoners including a machine gun crew with nothing more than a revolver and an evil look on his face. Some defenders were happy to surrender and even offered their attackers money to spare their lives. Others fought to the bitter end, including many of the derided Arab conscripts. Amid the chaos, some defenders surrendered only to return to the fight once their captors had moved on. They were shown no mercy by the supporting waves of horsemen. Despite the fierce resistance, within 10 minutes of reaching the trenches the Australians had completely overrun the town, and soon the rest of the besieging British forces were descending on Beersheba from all directions.

The attackers briefly received a terrible scare when two explosions suddenly shook the streets. A retreating German officer had taken the initiative to blow two of the wells before retreating with the remainder of the garrison. Fortunately, he was captured before he could detonate any more, and as the sun set over the town the exhausted British forces watched triumphantly as a terrified mob of Ottoman troops, including Ismet Bey and his staff, fled north into the hills, some vainly trying to drag their guns behind them. By nightfall, Beersheba and its precious water wells were firmly in British hands.

Incredibly, only 31 troopers and 70 horses died during the charge, a testament to the surprise and speed of the maneuver. The majority of the 1,250 British casualties during the battle had been suffered by the infantry in the south and around Tel el Saba in the east. Ottoman casualties are not certain, but the trenches were full of their dead, and more than 1,000 Turks were taken prisoner.

As the British consolidated their victory, they were disappointed to discover that Beersheba's water supply was much smaller than they expected. However, the capture of the town destabilized the entire Ottoman defensive line. Over the course of the following week, further breakthroughs occurred, and one week after the taking of Beersheba Allenby marched into Gaza. Though the Ottomans continued to fight stubbornly, there was now no stopping the relentless British advance into the Holy Land. On December 9, 1917, Jerusalem surrendered to Allenby well in time for Christmas. □

Waterloo

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staff. Among the dead, picked off by a tirailleur, was young Lord Hay, the ensign in the Foot Guards who had so enthralled Lady Georgiana at her mother's ball. Nearly three-quarters of a century later, as 23rd Baroness de Ros of Helmsley, she still remembered "being quite provoked with poor Lord Hay, a dashing merry youth, full of military ardour, whom I knew very well for his delight at the idea of going into action, and of all the honours he was to gain; and the first news we had on the 16th was that he and the Duke of Brunswick were killed." By Sunday night, 11 of her mother's party guests would be dead, including Sir Thomas Picton.

All along the line, fresh Allied troops pushed the exhausted, depleted French back. In the center, they retook Gemioncourt; on the right, Piraumont. As night fell, Ney's men stood on their original lines before Frasnes, looking out on trampled fields strewn with 4,100 French and 4,800 Allied dead. Winchester remembered he and the survivors of the 92nd Regiment "cooked our provisions in the cuirasses which had belonged to the French Cuirassiers whom we had killed only a few hours before."

"About nine o'clock, the first corps was sent me by the Emperor, to whom it had been of no service," Ney testified after the war. "Thus twenty-five or thirty thousand men were, I may say, paralyzed, and were idly paraded during the whole of the battle from the right to the left, and the left to the right, without firing a shot." When King Louis returned to power, Ney was arrested, tried for treason, stood against a wall near Paris's Luxembourg Garden, and executed by firing squad.

The entire Hundred Days campaign turned on D'Erlon's failure to follow either Ney's or Napoleon's conflicting orders to join battle at Ligny or Quatre Bras. Ligny was a tactical victory but a strategic defeat as Napoleon vanquished Blucher's Prussians but failed to knock them out of the war. Quatre Bras was a tactical defeat in that Ney failed to rout the Anglo-Dutch or even take the crossroads, but a strategic victory in that he prevented Wellington from going to the Prussians' aid.

The two battles set the stage for the climactic clash of the Napoleonic Wars. Wellington himself predicted as much in the map room at the Duchess of Richmond's house in Brussels on the eve of battle, when he declared, "I have ordered the army to concentrate at Quatre Bras; but we shall not stop [Napoleon] there, and if so I must fight him there," and pointed on the map to Waterloo. □

Albigensian Crusade

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life would have been spared.

Simon was determined to make his victory a complete one, and his troops subsequently attacked the camp of the Toulousian militia. The startled foot soldiers rushed for their barges, but many were cut down as they tried to escape. The Franco-Aragonese army suffered 1,500 casualties compared the 100 Crusader casualties.

Simon spent the majority of 1214 systematically subjugating the provinces ruled by Raymond, including Armagnac, Quercy, Lauragais, and Rouergue. The Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 declared Simon to be the rightful Count of Toulouse since Raymond had failed to meet the outrageous demands imposed on him by the Catholic Church in penance for his harboring heretics. Pope Innocent III, who would pass away the following year, confirmed the decision in a papal bull issued December 14.

When Simon subsequently journeyed to Paris for a ceremony in which King Philip II would invest him with his new title in April 1216, the townspeople of Toulouse revolted against Simon's authority. Upon his return, Simon quashed the revolt. He ordered all defenses dismantled and levied an indemnity of 30,000 marks on the town. In the interim, Raymond had journeyed to Aragon seeking fresh support from that quarter. On September 13, 1216, Raymond entered the city at the head of an army made up of Aragonese mercenaries and his southern French allies.

To assist Simon, Pope Honorius III eventually announced a new crusade against the Cathars. Simon besieged Toulouse in April 1218, but met his end when a stone flung from one of the massive siege engines inside the city struck and killed him on June 25, 1218. Although Prince Louis of France resumed the siege, he abandoned the effort in 1219.

Simon's hereditary rights had passed to his eldest son, Amaury Montfort, who ceded his claims in southern France to French King Louis VIII in 1224. Louis led a royal army south to conquer his new territories but made little headway even though most of the southern lords acknowledged his suzerainty.

The Treaty of Paris in 1229 effectively ended the Albigensian Crusade. The treaty between Raymond VII and Louis IX provided that Raymond VII's daughter Jeanne should marry Alphonse of Poitiers, one of Louis's brothers. When Alphonse died in 1271, the County of Toulouse passed to the French crown. □

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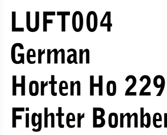

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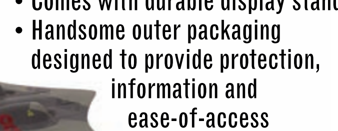

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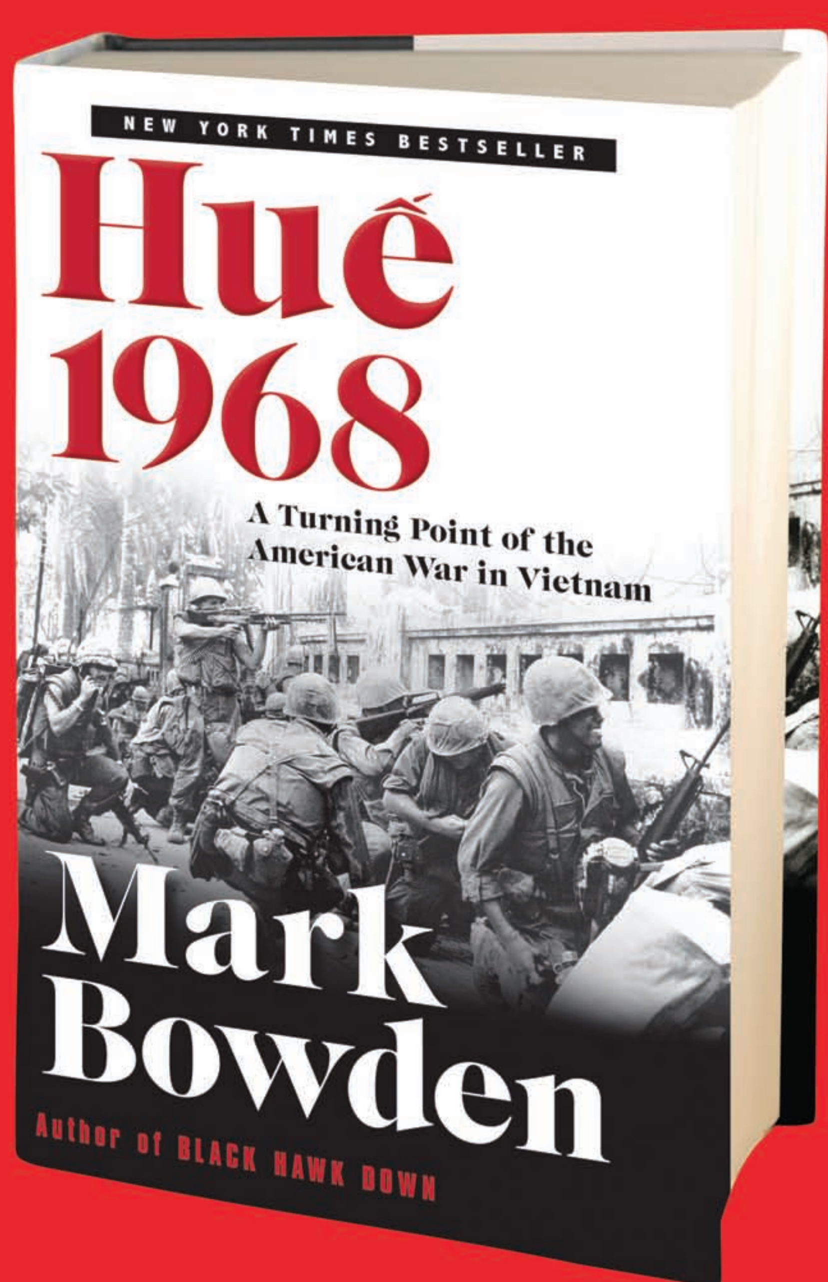

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