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MILITARY HERITAGE

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Cover: A New York Militia soldier from the 14th Brooklyn Regiment advances against Confederates. See story page 48. Painting: Don Troiani, Bridgeman Art Library.

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Medieval bombards at the siege of Constantinople.

THE OTTOMAN ARMY'S BOMBARDS PLAYED A KEY role in its successful conquest of Constantinople during the epic siege of 1453. In the 15th century the great powers of medieval Europe paid talented gunsmiths to build massive bombards to batter walls and shorten the length of sieges. The introduction of bombards meant that artillery replaced mining as the surest way to breach a stronghold.

Bombards were massive guns, the largest of which weighed 20 tons or more. Smaller guns were referred to during the period as cannons. Bombards were transported on massive carts to the siege site where engineers transferred them by crane onto a wooden platform or frame. Wheeled carriages could not withstand the devastating recoil of these behemoths.

Upon the death of his father Sultan Murad II in 1451, Sultan Mehmet II began making preparations to capture Constantinople, the last and mightiest bastion of the Byzantine Empire. He hired a Hungarian named Urban to oversee the production of bombards and cannons for his campaign against Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI's army at Constantinople.

The largest bombard made for the siege was a 27-foot-long bronze gun that fired a 1,500-pound stone ball. Urban oversaw the manufacture of 70 bombards and cannons specifically for the siege. The walls of Constantinople had withstood 20 earlier sieges, but the bombards Mehmet commissioned would give the Ottomans a major advantage.

For a 15th-century artillery piece to be effective, it had to use gunpowder made from purified saltpeter. The purified saltpeter was mixed with sulfur and charcoal to create gunpowder. The ingredients in the gunpowder used for bombards tended to separate during the bumpy ride to the battlefield, so the crews transported the ingredients separately and mixed them on site.

The smoothbore, muzzle-loading bombards had ranges of upward of 1,000 yards. However, to avoid barrel explosions crews used smaller powder charges. This meant firing from a range of 200-250 yards. Wooden barriers protected the crews from enemy archers, crossbowmen, and hand gunners.

The bombard crews set wooden blocks or beams behind the behemoths in an effort to contain the recoil. The recoil was tremendous; it routinely smashed the beams behind it. After each firing, the crew repaired damage to the beams and the firing platform. This fire-and-fix process meant that the largest bombards might fire as little as five times a day.

The bombards of the mid-15th century were either cast of bronze or forged of iron strips. Although it was far less expensive to make a bombard of iron, such a gun ran a far higher risk of exploding. The cast bronze bombards had walls of uniform thickness, whereas the forged cannons had numerous welded joints that were suspect.

Stone balls for bombards were made of limestone. Making the balls was a time-consuming process by which the ball was smoothed and rounded by hand. However, smaller caliber guns in the mid-15th century did use iron balls. It was not until the close of the century that manufacturers were able to perfect the production of cast iron balls. Cast iron balls were denser than stone balls and caused greater destruction.

Sultan Mehmet's bombards gave him a decisive advantage in the 1453 siege of Constantinople. Yet the Ottoman victory owed as much to the tenacity of the crack Turkish soldiers as to the bombards.

—William E. Welsh

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WARFAREHISTORYNETWORK

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By William F. Floyd, Jr.

In the absence of a heavy bomber, the Luftwaffe pushed its medium bombers in World War II to the limits of their endurance.

AN ARMADA OF GERMAN HEINKEL HE-111 BOMBERS DRONED through the Ukrainian night sky on September 21, 1944, en route to Poltava Airfield in the Ukraine for a mission against American bombers parked at the base. The B-17 Flying Fortresses and their escort P-51 fighters were part of an experimental cooperative "shuttle" program between American and Russian forces known as Operation Frantic by which American strategic bomber crews based in England and Italy would fly against Axis targets in and around Berlin, lay over at Soviet Union airfields, and strike more targets on the return leg of their circuit.

The chief architect of the German bomber raid was General der Fleiger Rudolf Meister, the commander of Fliegerkorps IV, based at Brest-Litovsk. The mainstay of this particular air corps was the Heinkel He-111 medium bomber with a range of 1,400 miles. The bombers had been upgraded with advanced avionics and their crews were well trained in long-range navigation and target location. A group of Junkers Ju-88 pathfinder aircraft navigating electronically would guide the Heinkels to their target.

The armada took off from airfields near Minsk bound for their target 500 miles away. The Ju-88s dropped flares to mark the targets for the Heinkels. At 12:40 AM the Heinkels began dropping their ordnance. They roared over the airfield in several waves. Altogether, the bomb crews dropped 15 tons of high explosives on the airfield. The raid lasted 90 minutes during which the Soviets mounted a weak defense. No Soviet night fighters took off to contest the attack, and 50mm truck-mounted antiaircraft guns proved wholly inadequate for the task. Of the 73 B-17s parked at Poltava, 47 were destroyed and the remaining 26 suffered varying degrees of damage. In contrast, the Luftwaffe did not lose a single aircraft. It was an exhilarating triumph not only for Meister's Fliegerkorps IV, but for the German military leadership and German people at a time when bad news from the front lines vastly outweighed good news.

The Germans employed the Heinkel He-111 in all WWII theaters. INSET: The Plexiglas paneling of the Heinkel's cockpit offered superb visibility.

After Germany's defeat in World War I, the country was banned from having an air force by the Treaty of Versailles. In spite of this restriction, the Germans secretly began to rearm in the 1930s. One of the aircraft designers who most benefitted from the German rearmament was a short, bespectacled aircraft engineer named Ernst Heinkel. The native of Baden-Wurttemberg eventually became a

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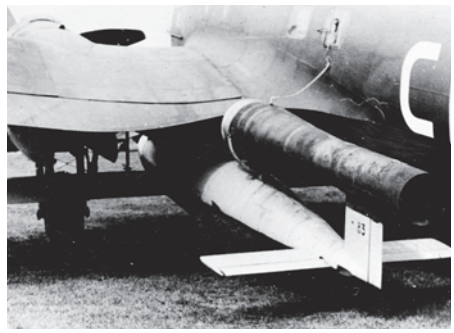


ABOVE: The German Luftwaffe called upon its Heinkel crews to carry out night strikes against London and other cities during the "Blitz" that began in September 1940. RIGHT: A Heinkel variant served as a launch platform for V-1 flying bombs used against targets in England in 1944.

Wehrwirtschaftsführer. Having paid his dues as an aircraft designer for various companies during World War I and in the early postwar period, 34-year-old Heinkel established his own company, Heinkel-Flugzeugwerke, in 1922 at Warnemunde in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania.

In the postwar period, Heinkel was fixated on fielding the world's fastest passenger aircraft. He was passionate about high-speed flight and was keen on exploring different forms of aircraft propulsion. Because of his interest in propulsion, he donated aircraft to aviation wizard Wernher von Braun, who was exploring rocket propulsion for aircraft. Many of his colleagues in the German aircraft industry were dismissive of Heinkel's concepts and ideas, but that was generally the case with all innovators.

In June 1933, Albert Kesselring, who at the time headed the Luftwaffe Administration Office, wanted to build a German Luftwaffe whose air wings were composed of modern aircraft. Kesselring convinced Heinkel to relocate his factory and increase his work force to 3,000 employees. Among the aircraft that Heinkel would develop under a government-sponsored program was a fast medium bomber. To disguise the work so that Germany would not be found in violation of the Treaty of Versailles, the Luftwaffe requested in 1934 that Heinkel design and build a commercial airliner incorporating Germany military specifications that could be converted to a medium bomber.

Heinkel entrusted the project to gifted aircraft designers Siegfried and Walter Gunter. The Gunter brothers designed what would come to be regarded as a classic World War II airplane. The He-111 not only incorporated the latest aerodynamic features and structural refinements, but also handled well and performed to the designers' expectations.

The Gunter brothers had designed the He-70 Blitz, a German mail plane and fast passenger aircraft in 1932, and they incorporated many of its best features into the medium bomber they were building. The first prototype was tested in February 1935, but it was found to be under powered, and therefore required significant changes. The design team subsequently replaced the original 600 horsepower BMW engines with 1,000 horsepower Daimler-Benz engines for the 111B series.

The He-111E series aircraft came off the production line in February 1938 and were flown to Spain where they joined the bomber fleet operated by the German Condor Legion fighting for the Nationalist cause during the Spanish Civil War. Afterward, the Heinkel team made some minor refinements to the aircraft, such as raising the pilot's seat so that he could see over the glazed cockpit if necessary because it proved difficult to see through in extremely bright sunshine and in rainstorms. During this period the crew increased from four to five as more machine guns were added for protection against enemy fighters.

The He-111P, which incorporated these improvements, went into action in the skies over Poland when the Germans invaded that country in September 1939. The Kampwaffe, or bomber force, in Poland consisted of 705 Heinkel He-111s and 533 Dornier Do-17s.

During the first half of 1940, the He-111s became a workhorse of the German Luftwaffe. They harassed British shipping in the North Sea, participated in the invasion of Denmark and Norway, and supported Wehrmacht forces in the Low Countries and France. They played a key role in the bombing of Rotterdam on May 14, 1940, which was intended to ensure the Dutch surrender. During the fall of France, they harassed Allied troops attempting to evacuate from the Dunkirk beaches.

After the fall of France, the Luftwaffe began preparing for the Battle of Britain. The He-111H, which could deliver 5,500 pounds of bombs, inflicted an impressive amount of destruction. Whereas in the Spanish Civil War the Heinkel bomber could outrun enemy fighters, this was not the case during the Battle of Britain. During the three-month campaign that began in July 1940, the Heinkels faced fierce resistance from Royal Air Force Hawker Hurricanes and Supermarine Spitfires. Their one advantage lay in their large numbers because there generally were not enough fighters in the skies to stop the incoming bombers. Still, the campaign revealed substantial defensive deficiencies in regard to speed, armor, and weapons.

In the strikes on Great Britain, it soon became evident that the bombers needed an escort. Even better, the bombers needed their own defensive capabilities. Heinkel engineers placed machine guns in the nose and tail and a 20mm cannon in the ventral gondola. To man the guns, it was necessary to add more crew as well. The aircraft eventually had five crewmembers: a pilot, navigator-bombardier-nose gunner, dorsal gunner/radio operator, ventral gun-

ner, and side gunner. The redesign called for machine-gun positions in the glass nose and in the flexible ventral, dorsal, and lateral positions of the fuselage.

The Heinkel design team developed a variant specifically for attacking Allied surface vessels. The He-111J-1 was designed to serve as a torpedo bomber. It boasted two external torpedo racks in lieu of an internal bomb bay. But following a short period in service, the Kriegsmarine discarded it because the service felt it required too many crew members to operate.

The He-111 also saw action in the Balkans and North Africa and during the invasion of the Soviet Union. The He-111 would have a long career on the Eastern Front not only conducting raids against the Soviet rail network, but also serving as a transport workhorse along with the venerable Junker Ju 52. During the Battle of Stalingrad, the He-111F was one of the aircraft used to fly food and ammunition to the encircled German Sixth Army during the winter of 1942-1943.

In late 1942 the Germans pressed the Heinkel into service as a transport aircraft during the Battle of Stalingrad where it delivered food and supplies to the beleaguered German Sixth Army.

The first versions of Germany's V-1 Flying Bombs were launched in the summer of 1944 not from rocket launchers as they would be later in the war, but from He-111Hs. To launch the powerful weapon, the pilot approached the target below 300 feet to avoid detection by British radar. As the aircraft approached the coast of England, the pilot would increase the altitude of his aircraft to 1,700 feet, which was deemed the minimum altitude for a safe launching. He then released the cruise missile. Over a period of seven weeks, it was reported that the Luftwaffe launched more than 300 of the bombs against London. The initial missions achieved great success; however, during the next six months only 240 of the 1,200 V-1s

Although overshadowed by the Heinkel, the versatile Dornier bomber served in a variety of critical roles, including conventional bomber, floatplane, reconnaissance aircraft, and night fighter.

reached their intended targets.

As the Luftwaffe was putting other bombers, such as the He-177 and the Dornier 217, into service, the He-111 became increasingly obsolete. As the war moved into its final phase, it became obvious that it was too late to begin developing a replacement for the He-111. For that reason, the Luftwaffe continued to produce the He-111, but eventually the beleaguered Third Reich stopped building bombers altogether in order to produce fighters to defend the Fatherland against Allied air raids. Altogether, Germany built 6,500 He-111s during World War II.

Unlike the prototype of the Heinkel He-111 that was passed off as a civilian passenger aircraft to disguise its real purpose as a medium bomber, the thin fuselage of the Dornier Do-17 V1 prototype built in 1934 could in no way fool anyone into believing it was a civilian airliner. The Dornier had seating for only a half dozen people behind the flight deck after which its fuselage tapered so dramatically that it earned the sobriquet "Flying Pencil."

German aircraft builder Claude Dornier, whose firm Dornier-Werke was based in Friedrichshafen, intended the aircraft to be a fast mail plane. When the Luftwaffe high command got a look at it, they knew at once it could serve as a fast medium bomber. Following initial test flights in 1934, the Do-17E-1 bomber was ready for service in 1937 and could carry a 2,200 poujnds of bombs. Although this was less than half of what the Heinkel He-111 could deliver against a target, the Dorniers achieved far greater accuracy than the Heinkels.

For protection against fighters, the Do-17 had a 20mm cannon and three hand-aimed MG 15 machine guns. The Do-17E's performance with the Condor Legion in the Spanish Civil War revealed that it was highly vulnerable to Soviet-made Polikarpov I-16 fighters used by Republican forces. To remedy this, the Dornier Do-17Z series, which became the most heavily produced variant, featured an expanded cockpit and canopy to accommodate a rear gunner position. In addition, the designers improved the arcs of fire for its machine-gun positions and installed side machine guns in the cockpit.

The Luftwaffe halted production of the Do-17 in mid-1940, though, in favor of the more powerful Do-217. Production on the Do-217 began in late 1940. It entered service in early 1941 and by the beginning of 1942 was being produced in significant numbers. The Do-217 fulfilled a number of roles during World War II. These included use as a conventional bomber, floatplane, reconnaissance aircraft, and night fighter.

Manned by a crew of four, the Do-217E-1 had a single 15mm MG151 cannon mounted in the nose along with five 7.9mm machine guns that provided defensive armament. These were not as effective as one might think, because the radio operator was assigned to operate multiple machine guns. The Do-217E-1 was followed by the 217E-2, the first version to feature a gun turret in the aft cockpit.

The Dornier team further improved its defensive capability against fighter aircraft by installing a twin, and later quadruple, MG 81 machine gun position in the tail cone. The boasted an impressive bomb load of 8,800 pounds of which 5,550 was inside the bomb bay and the rest mounted externally.

The Do-217E-3, which had been developed for antishipping operations in the Atlantic, carried additional armor plating and two additional fuel tanks in the bomb bay. It was armed with seven MG 15s supplementing a single 20mm MG FF cannon in the nose. The 217E became operational in a reconnaissance role in the closing months of 1940 and as a bomber in the spring of 1941.

In the fall of 1942, Dornier introduced the 217K-1 bomber which had a new glazed nose with an unstepped cockpit. The 217K-2 was the model that sank the Italian battleship *Roma* on September 14, 1943, when the Italian fleet broke out from La Spezia to join the Allies.

The lack of a long-range heavy bomber in the Luftwaffe's inventory of aircraft can be traced back to the decision in prewar planning that the Luftwaffe was to serve as an appendage to the German Wehrmacht. The Luftwaffe high command was full of ex-Wehrmacht officers who believed wholeheartedly that the air force should function in a strictly support role. A strategic air force would only be contemplated if it became absolutely necessary.

The Luftwaffe was to achieve and maintain air superiority over enemy air forces and, at the same time, it was to support the Wehrmacht and Kriegsmarine. In this approach, German dive bombers, such as the Junkers Ju-87 Stuka, and the medium horizontal bombers, were to serve as aerial artillery. Luftwaffe aircraft were to disrupt enemy communications, destroy railroad infrastructure, and shatter enemy troop concentrations.

In some respects Germany was so severely handicapped by the Treaty of Versailles that there was little chance it could get enough of a head start in bomber development to field a heavy bomber for such important aerial campaigns as the Battle of Britain. In 1933 the airplane industry in Germany was practically nonexistent. This was aggravated by the lack of raw materials and the long lead time between design and production. Generally, it took the Germans at least four years to get a new aircraft from design to production.

Yet when it came to defeating Great Britain, the shortsightedness of the approach became all too apparent. The blame lies squarely with German leader Adolf Hitler. When asked to throw his support behind the establishment of a heavy bomber program, Luftwaffe Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring explained that Hitler cared little for the idea. Hitler was more interested in quantity over quality, according to

Göring. Luftwaffe Chief of Staff General Walter Wever had been the strongest advocate for a long-range heavy bomber, but he died in an airplane crash in 1936.

Before his untimely death, Wever had started a four-engine long-range strategic bomber program under the name Uralbomber. Technical problems, such as underpowered engines and excessive fuel consumption, led to his successor General Albert Kesselring's decision to cancel the Junkers Ju-89 and Dornier Do-19 four-engine bomber programs on April 29, 1937. From a production standpoint, it might have been the right decision because for every four-engine heavy bomber that Germany manufactured, it could produce two and a half twin-engined medium bombers.

Begun in the same time frame, Heinkel's Project 1041 program moved slowly forward. The Gunter brothers designed a bomber that included many radical design concepts and features. The He-177 Griffen was an impressive achievement. Although the aerodynamically clean tube-like fuselage was a marvel to behold, the rest of the aircraft was so poorly conceived as to manifest one glitch after another. These were not minor glitches by any means, but major glitches involving various aspects and components of the engines.

The first V1 prototype flew in 1939. It handled well, but its speed and range were insufficient. More than a half dozen other prototypes followed, one of which had triple bomb bays, but serious engine fires plagued many of those tested. The sticking point ultimately became the need to resolve the problems associated with the aircraft's power plants. The attempt to have the He-177 in production by 1940 was unrealistic.

In October 1942, Heinkel began delivering the heavy bombers for service; however, the manufacturing facility in Oranienburg in the Brandenburg region could only turn out five per month, whereas it was supposed to be putting out 70 per month. By then Hitler had taken a keen interest seeing it as a way to bomb deep behind the lines on the Eastern Front, as well as escort German U-boats and blockade runners in the Atlantic Ocean. Heinkel ultimately produced 170 177A-3s in 1943 and 261 177A-5s in 1944.

The He-177 participated in Operation Steinbock in early 1944. The program was conceived as a way to get revenge against the Allies for their strategic bomber attacks on Germany. But the results achieved were hardly worth the effort. For example, on February 13, 1944, 13 took off. Of those, eight returned with overheated or burning engines, four reached the target, and one went missing. □

By David A. Norris

Confederate agents and Southern citizens relied on personal ads to correspond during the Civil War.

To alert prisoners at Johnson's Island in Lake Erie of a plan to rescue them, Confederate agents sent coded messages through the *New York Herald*. INSET: The *New York Herald*'s personals were an untraceable means of communication.

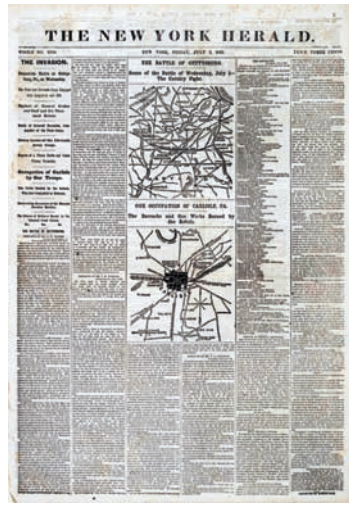
THE *HERALD*, LIKE OTHER MAJOR NEW YORK NEWSPAPERS, WAS packed with classified ads on November 1, 1863. In the personal column, Jenny asked Charley to "let me know if you are better yet, and don't keep me in suspense." J.W. promised if "the lady with whom I had an engagement … on Thursday, at one o'clock, which I regret my inability to keep" will send him a letter, "she will hear something of interest to her."

Frank advised Kate or Maggie that "I shall not call for the letter.... I desire neither to see you again nor to hear from you. You know the reason why." Additionally, a ring of Confederate spies announced that they were going to capture a Union Navy gunboat and spring 2,500 captive Rebel officers from prison at Johnson's Island, Ohio.

Newspapers of the 1860s were crowded with advertising. Along with the usual commercial and business advertisements was a new category of announcements known as the personals. Rather than the traditional advertisement that tried to draw as much attention as possible, the personal was a message between one individual and a very small clientele, sometimes only one person.

Some personals were, indeed, very personal. Under the cover of initials or pet names, would-be lovers flirted. Amorous couples arranged trysts or sent apologies and explanations for missed meetings. Families sought missing relatives. Other ad buyers discreetly touted services, such as astrology readings, fortune telling, or phrenology, or offered to buy second-hand furniture or clothing.

By the end of the 1850s personal ads had established the practice of sending anonymous coded messages under false names. A correspondent of the *Charleston Mercury* noted in 1859 that the personals were "well understood, under all their ingenious cryptographic and other preconcerted evasions, to refer to assignations, or dealings in counterfeit money.... The *Herald* is a safer medium than the postoffice (sic), as nobody can tell who pays for the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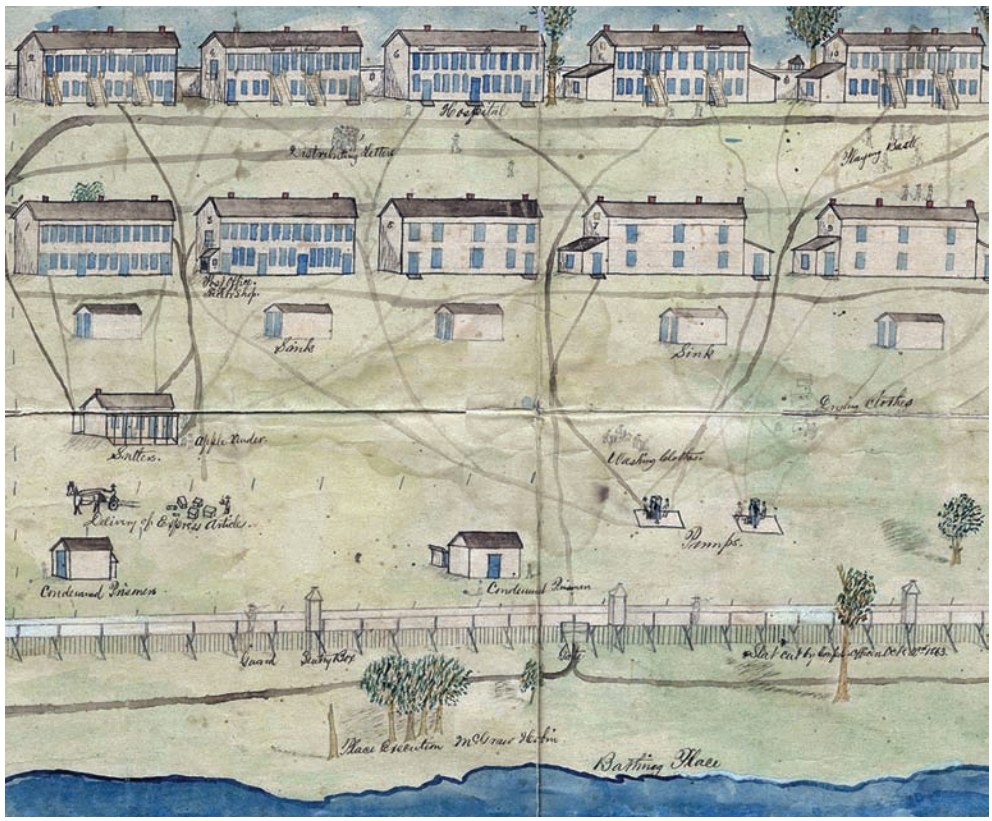

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★★★★★★★

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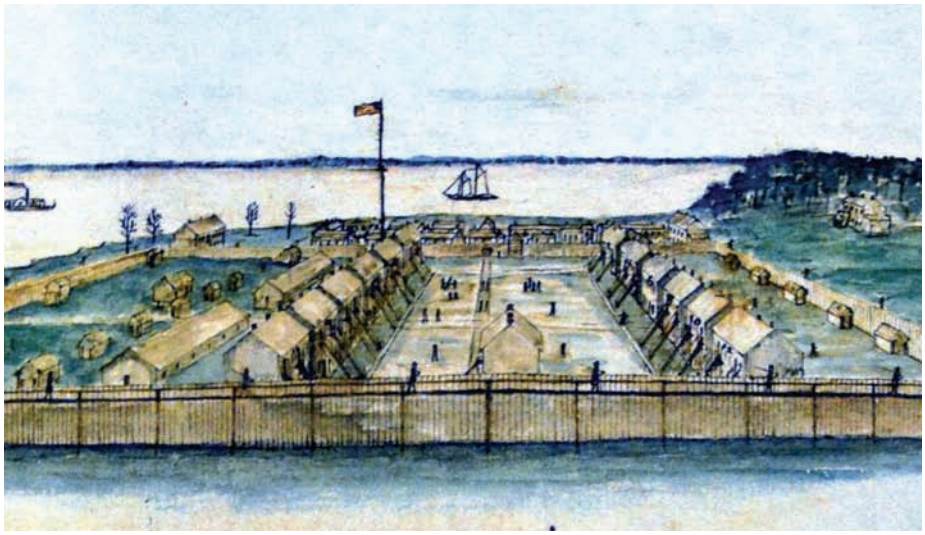


The secret expedition in November 1864 to rescue Confederate prisoners at Johnson's Island collapsed when one of those involved in the plot alerted authorities.

advertisement—it generally being sent to the paper with the accompanying money. Instead of being the most public vehicle of intelligence, it is, in fact, the most private." It is little wonder that such ads were a useful way for Civil War spies to smuggle messages to each other.

Personal ads were most effective when placed in newspapers with wide distribution. During the Civil War big city dailies, such as the *Herald* in New York, circulated across the United States. Indeed, they crossed the Mason-Dixon Line easily and were eagerly read across the Confederate States as well.

It is impossible today to identify the writers and intended recipients of the vast majority of personal ads from the 1860s, but there are a few well-documented examples involving Civil War espionage.

In 1863, the Confederates contemplated a raid to free captives from the Union prison camp at Johnson's Island in Lake Erie, near Sandusky, Ohio. Canada, then under British rule, offered neutral ground for organizing and launching such an expedition away from the Union authorities. Early plans were shelved because Richmond was reluctant to complicate relations with the United Kingdom by violating Canada's neutrality.

New Rebel prisoners poured into Johnson's Island following the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863, bringing the total captive population to about 2,500 officers by October 1863. The prospect of getting back so many prisoners of war tempted the Confederate Navy into reviving the plan to raid Johnson's Island.

Lake Erie was guarded only by the 163-foot-long USS *Michigan*. The steamer was the U.S. Navy's first iron-hulled warship when she was launched in 1842. At the time of the Civil War, the Michigan was armed with a 30-pounder Parrott rifle, five 20-pounder Parrotts, six 24-pounders, and two 12-pounder boat howitzers. In Confederate hands, the *Michigan*'s battery would overwhelm the garrison at Johnson's Island. With Lake Erie's only available Union warship in Confederate hands, the raiders could seize as many civilian vessels as needed to ferry the prisoners to Canada.

In charge of the mission was Lieutenant John Wilkinson, a Virginia native who served in the antebellum U.S. Navy. Canada had to be the staging point of the expedition. Wilkinson wrote that "his sole explicit instructions" were "not to violate the neutrality of British territory. How this was to be avoided seemed ever impossible to me."

Including Wilkinson, 22 men, mostly officers, were assigned to the expedition. Among them was Colonel William B. Ball, transferred from command of the 15th Virginia Cavalry to serve as an acting master in the Navy while on this mission. Only two of his top officers, Lieutenants Benjamin Loyall and Robert D. Minor, were told all the details of the plan. Somehow, the idea spread that the men were bound for England to bring home some Confederate vessels obtained there. Wilkinson was happy to let his men, as well as any newspapermen or other outsiders, believe the rumors.

There was little time to lose, as it was getting late in the year. Wilkinson had to execute his plan before ice prevented him from maneuvering the *Michigan* to cover Johnson's Island. On the night of October 7, 1863, the men left Wilmington, North Carolina, aboard the blockade runner *Robert E. Lee,* which was under Wilkinson's command for the trip. Wilkinson eluded pursuit and brought the steamer into Halifax, Nova Scotia.

To finance the mission, the Confederate Navy Department provided $35,000 in gold. In addition, the *Robert E. Lee* carried a shipment of cotton to be sold on behalf of Wilkinson's operation. In Halifax, the cotton brought another $76,000. Most of the money was earmarked for getting the freed prisoners back to the South.

Traveling by different routes, Wilkinson's men left Halifax and reassembled on October 21 in Montreal, Quebec. Using assumed names, the men checked into boarding houses, which offered more privacy than the large hotels. The Rebel spies had orders to stay inside much as possible and never leave their rooms for more than half an hour.

To alert the prisoners at Johnson's Island, Wilkinson relied on exiled Southern sympathizers living in Canada, such as George P. Kane, former head of the Baltimore police, and former Baltimore liquor dealer Patrick Charles Martin. Lieutenant Minor reported that Johnson's Island prisoners Brig. Gen. James J. Archer and Maj. Gen. Isaac Trimble wrote to Beverly Saunders, a Confederate sympathizer in Baltimore. Saunders passed the letter to Martin's wife, Mary, and it reached Wilkinson's circle. In their letter to Saunders, Archer and Trimble asked that Confederate agents communicate with them through coded messages in the personals section of the *Herald*. Evidently, the communications were to be addressed to "A.J.L.W."

A personal written for Archer and Trimble appeared in the *Herald* each day from November 1 to November 6. Minor referred to the ad in an 1864 report to Rear Admiral Franklin Buchanan, and Wilkinson mentioned the advertisement in his 1877 memoir *Narrative of a Blockade Runner*. In the *Herald,* the advertisement addressed to A.J.L.W. read, "Cannot comply with your wishes till after Wednesday, the 4th of November. Your solicitude is fully appreciated, and a few nights after that date the carriage will call for you, and the present seeming obstacle will be overcome. Be ready."

Wilkinson recruited a few more volunteers among Confederate refugees in Canada. Some were exiles; others had escaped from POW camps. One man named Thompson had escaped from Johnson's Island the previous winter by crossing to Canada across the frozen surface of Lake Erie.

The raiders' arsenal consisted of 100 Colt revolvers and a plentiful supply of ammunition. Butcher knives stood in for cutlasses. For bigger guns, they obtained two 9-pounders. Buying cannon balls would of course attract unwanted attention, so they purchased some dumbbells as

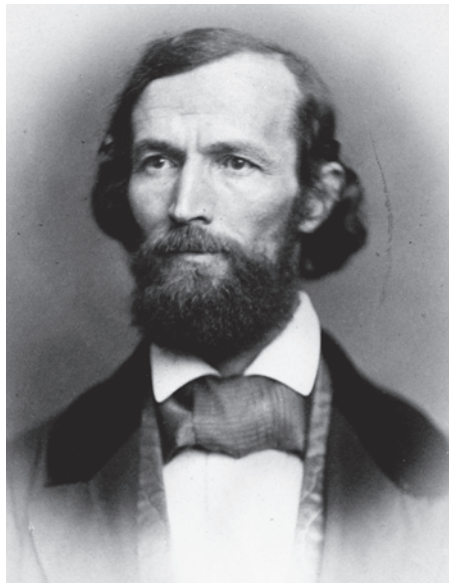
substitute 9-pounder ammunition.

A Private Connelly slipped into Ogdensburg, New York, with money to buy passage for the raiders aboard one of the steamers plying the Welland Canal and Lake Erie. The Confederates would disguise themselves as laborers and pretend that they were on their way to jobs at the Chicago Water Works. Labeled as "machinery" bound for Chicago, crates containing the raiders' pistols, ammunition, and 9-pounders would be packed in the hold.

Once out of the canal and on Lake Erie, Wilkinson's men would take over the steamer and mount their two cannons. They planned to arrive off Sandusky about sunrise and, "as if by accident," collide with the Michigan. After throwing grappling hooks to fasten the two vessels together, the Confederates intended to swarm aboard the warship. Then, they could turn the guns of the *Michigan* on the prison.

On the verge of setting the plan into action, the operation collapsed. Minor learned that one of their band, a Canadian named McCuaig, "became alarmed at the last moment." McCuaig revealed the plans to a member of the provincial cabinet, who immediately notified the governor-general.

Washington was alerted very quickly after Viscount Monck, the governor-general of Canada, learned of the plot. Secretary of War Edwin Stanton sent a barrage of telegrams late on Tuesday, November 11. In a timely, albeit inaccurate, manner Stanton tipped off Maj. William S. Pierson, commander at Johnson's Island, of a scheme to attack the prison with four chartered steamers from Canada. The *Michigan* sowed mines in the channel leading to Johnson's Island, and three steam tugs were chartered as emergency guard vessels.



Former U.S. senator from Alabama Clement Claiborne Clay received regular communications from his wife and other conspirators through personals.

Stanton also telegraphed David Tod, the governor of Ohio. Tod ordered troops to reinforce Pierson's garrison and sent six Parrott guns from Cincinnati. The mayor of Buffalo received a telegram warning that the Confederates intended to attack his city with the freed prisoners.

Minor said that he and Wilkinson along with some of the other spies stayed on for five to 10 days after the news broke. Canadian authorities made no attempt to arrest the Confederate agents, and they eventually returned to Halifax to make their way back to the South. With the onset of winter, the navigation routes were blocked by ice, so they traveled by sleigh through a bleak and frozen landscape.

Another Confederate operation unfolded on Lake Erie the following year. Led by Acting Master John Yates Beall, 20 Rebel naval personnel in civilian clothing seized the steamers *Philo Parsons* and *Island Queen*. But, one of Beall's agents was arrested and revealed what he knew of the plan. Beall abandoned the mission, leaving the *Michigan* alone to guard Johnson's Island until the end of the war.

Nothing seems to be known for certain about

any further communications to or from the Johnson's Island prisoners through the personals in the *Herald* after McCuaig betrayed their escape plan to the Canadian government. However, a few ads that appeared in the following days hint of the possibility that the prisoners at Sandusky received some final messages.

An ad that ran on Sunday, November 8, 1863, read, "J.W., J.W., we are doomed to disappointment. Cannot see you Sunday. Will on Monday, if it rains on Tuesday. M." And, a November 9 ad read, "A. Not this week. See next Monday's *Herald*. Steamer." Next Monday, November 16, there appeared a cryptic message, "A. – Friday. – Steamer." However, on Friday, nothing appeared in the personal column from "Steamer." If these messages did pertain to the intended raid on Johnson's Island, there was no need for a followup from "Steamer." All of the plans had fallen apart, and the agents were making their way back to the Confederacy.

Southern newspapers formerly scoffed at the personals. On October 26, 1861, the *Charleston Mercury* said that "the increasing length of the 'Personal' advertisements in the *Herald* shows what open and unblushing profligacy is going on in Gotham." Later in the war, though, these advertisements were seen in a more practical light. Letters could be sent across the lines under flag of truce. But such letters often disappeared and were never delivered. Families divided by the war, or whose loved ones were held in enemy prisons, found the personals the only way they could send news.

Late in the war, many heartbreaking stories were contained in a few lines of type in the personals. "Amanda died, January 1, 1864," read one advertisement in the *Richmond Enquirer.* "I am almost crazed. Break it softly to her mother." On January 27, 1864, Michael Hammaker asked in the *Richmond Enquirer* about his son, Sergeant James P. Hammaker of the 50th Virginia, who was "captured or killed in the fight of Gettysburg. Any information of him will be thankfully received by his distressed parents."

One Northern newspaper, the pro-Southern *New York Daily News,* made a specialty of placing personal ads for readers who wanted to send messages across the lines. Ads often added a conclusion such as "Richmond newspapers please copy" to ensure the intended recipient saw the message. Southern newspapers, particularly the *Richmond Enquirer* and other journals in the Confederate capital, obliged by reprinting the advertisements.

The *Richmond Enquirer* quoted rates for "communications between North and South" for "persons who wish to communicate with each other in regard to their health or whereabouts." Each ad of eight lines or less cost two dollars, which included the cost of the newspaper printing replies when they were spotted in Northern papers. Patrons were urged to pay for at least five ads to increase the chances of the message getting through. By the late fall of 1863, issues of the *Richmond Enquirer* often contained two-thirds of a page filled with personals.

A library called the Confederate Reading Room opened on 11th Street in Richmond in October 1861. For 50 cents a month, patrons had access to newspapers from cities across the South. By early 1864 they carried *Harper's Magazine* and other Northern papers, and even *Punch* and the *Illustrated London News* from across the Atlantic Ocean. January 1865 arrivals included files of several California newspapers and the *Honolulu Commercial Advertiser.*

In late 1864, the Confederate Reading Room purchased advertisements in the Richmond papers that listed people who had personals for them in the latest Northern papers. One ad, published in the *Richmond Dispatch* on September 20, 1864, named more than 30 people including some under aliases such as Pete, Col. A.J.I., and No. 259 Main Street.

Among the tragic stories of lost loved ones were at least a few more personals tied in with

clandestine operations. Clement Claiborne Clay, a former U.S. senator from Alabama, joined the Confederate agents in Canada in 1864. He helped plan schemes such as Beall's hijacking and Lieutenant Bennett Young's famous Confederate raid on the banks in St. Albans, Vermont. Clay's wife Virginia Tunstall Clay, who was staying in South Carolina, found that the personals were a more reliable way to contact her husband than the mails.

Clay used several aliases, with "T. E. Lacy" being one that he used in some of his secret correspondence as well as personal advertisements. Virginia Tunstall Clay's 1904 memoir *A Belle of the Fifties* gave some examples of how the *New York Daily News* and the *Richmond Enquirer* let her keep in touch with her husband.

A message from "T.E. Lacy," addressed to his brother, H.L. [Henry Lawson] Clay, was reprinted in the *Richmond Enquirer* on November 10, 1864. "I am well," he said. "Have written every week, but received no answer later than the 30th of June." Then, as the ad placed by Lacy continued his message, it revealed a potential danger of communication by classified ads: typographical errors. Virginia Clay quoted her husband's message in her memoir as "Can I return at once? If not, send my wife to me by flag of truce, via Washington, but not by sea…." The *Enquirer* incorrectly rendered the passage as "Can I return at once? If so, send my wife to me."

A message authorizing T.E. Lacy to return to the Confederate States, signed by H.L. Clay, appeared in the *Enquirer* on November 15. "Your friends think the sooner you return the better. At the point where you change vessels you can ascertain whether it is better to proceed direct or via Mexico. Your wife cannot go by flag of truce."

The highest Confederate officials were involved in authorizing messages conveyed in the personals. In a letter, Henry Lawson Clay explained to his sister-in-law Virginia, "I consulted Mr. Mallory, Mr. Benjamin and the President" before placing the advertisement for November 15. Another ad directed to Clay on the same day was signed "B.P.J.," which were perhaps the scrambled initials of Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin.

One month later, Clay acknowledged receipt of the communication from Richmond. Bearing the date of November 20, a reply from T.E. Lacy to H.L. Clay appeared in the *Richmond Enquirer* on December 15, 1864: "Yours and B's received. Will try to leave, as suggested, by 1st of December, and may go to Mexico." He continued, "Am very well; Bob and wife with me. He [is] improving."

Clement Clay arrived in Charleston, via Bermuda, on the blockade runner *Rattlesnake* on February 4, 1865, and was reunited with his wife a few days later. After the end of the war, accused of involvement in the Lincoln assassination, Clay was held for nearly a year before his release in April 1866.

The growth of personals placed by Confederates and Southern sympathizers aroused suspicion and anxiety in the U.S. War Department. On January 22, 1865, the department acted. Maj. Gen. John Dix, commander of the Union's Department of the East, which included New York City, threatened to arrest the editors of the *New York Daily News* unless they immediately halted all such advertisements. Interestingly, the War Department said nothing about help wanted or other types of classified advertisements, which apparently had also been used by spies.

The Confederate Reading Room was destroyed in the fires that raged through Richmond as the Rebel military evacuated the city on April 2-3, 1865. Lost in the building were extensive files of Confederate newspapers, some of which may have contained other hidden messages placed by Civil War spies that will never be brought to light. □

By John E. Spindler

Jan Zizka led the militant Hussites to victory on countless battlefields in Bohemia in the turbulent 15th century.

JAN ZIZKA BELONGS TO THE ELITE GROUP OF LEADERS WHO NEVER lost a battle. He was born on or around 1360 in the village of Trocnov in the Kingdom of Bohemia. During his early life he lost an eye. Although it is not known exactly how the accident happened, it is believed that it occurred either as a result of a child-hood injury or an adolescent fight.

During unrest in Bohemia, Zizka served John Sokol, a prestigious Bohemian noble. Sokol served on the staff of Polish King Wladyslaw II at the Battle of Grunwald fought on July 13, 1410. The epic battle drew nobility and knights from far and wide, and therefore it is entirely possible that Zizka was present with Sokol to assist the Polish-Lithuanian army in its fight against the Teutonic Knights. The following year Queen Sofia of Bohemia hired Zizka as a bodyguard. It was in her service that Zizka met priest Jan Hus and became a devout follower of the Bohemian reformer.

Hus had a large following in his native land. He condemned papal authority insisting that supreme authority rested in the Bible. Outspoken in his criticism of clerical corruption, the relentless reformer believed that all people should be able to receive both forms of Communion; that is, both bread and wine. At the time, only clergy were permitted to receive Communion in the form of wine. Provoked by his protests, the Church excommuni-

In a typical Hussite clash, handgunners and crossbowmen fought from wagons, and foot soldiers armed with flails and halberds followed up in close-quarters combat. INSET: Ziska's impressive victories placed him in the pantheon of great medieval commanders.

cated him in 1411. The following year, he composed his greatest work, *De Ecclesia* (*On the Church*).

In 1414, Hus was summoned to appear before the Council of Constance to defend his position. He agreed to abide by the summons provided that Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund, who was king of the Germans, Hungarians, and Romans, and the host of the council guaranteed his safe passage. Imprisoned and placed on trial for heresy when he appeared before the Council the following year, Hus ultimately was condemned as a heretic and sentenced to death. He was burned at the stake on July 6, 1415.

Hus immediately became a martyr to his followers, who were known as Hussites. They blamed Sigismund for the awful fate that befell Hus. Emperor Sigismund despised the Hussites and wanted to eradicate them. At the time, Bohemia was ruled by Sigismund's brother, King Wenceslaus IV of Bohemia. A period of internal strife ensued in Bohemia in which the peasant Hussites drove out Catholic priests.

In 1417, the Council of Constance issued a blanket excommunication of all Hussites. To protect themselves against persecution, the Hussites organized themselves and established hilltop strongholds. One of these fortresses 50 miles south of Prague was called Mount Tabor. It became home to a radical faction of Hussites known as the Taborites.

Zizka joined forces with Hussite priest Jan Zelivsky. On July 30, 1419, the two men led a group of armed protesters through the streets of Prague to New Town Hall where they demanded the release of imprisoned moderate Hussites known as Utraquists. When the pro-Catholic councilors refused to release them, the Hussites threw the 13 councilors out of the window. The event is known as the First Defenestration of Prague. Those who survived the fall were killed. King Wenceslaus, who was visibly shaken by the rioting, died two weeks later. Sigismund was next in line for the throne. The Hussites were prepared to go to war to prevent him from becoming their king. Sigismund's supporters in Bohemia were known as Royalists.

Following the riot, Zizka was elected captain of the Hussite force in Prague. In October he and his troops seized control of Vysehrad Castle on the south side of the city. On the north side, Queen Sophia, who Sigismund had appointed as regent until such time as he could be crowned king of Bohemia, held Hradcany Castle. Her sympathies were with the Hussites, and she wanted to avoid armed conflict at all costs.

Although wagon forts had been used in ancient times and therefore were not an innovation, Ziska used them with great skill to offset the superior numbers of his aristocratic foes.

The Utraquists subsequently entered into a truce with Queen Sophia whereby they turned over Vysehrad Castle to her. The decision marked a breach between the moderate Utraquists and the conservative Taborites. Zizka objected to the truce, and he led the militant Taborites southwest to Pilsen where he worked with Father Nicholas Koranda to fortify the stronghold so that it would be able to resist the ruling Catholics.

Zizka initiated operations against the Royalists by besieging the town of Nekmer. In response, Lord Bohuslav of Svamberg assembled a force of 2,000 cavalry and led it against Zizka's 400 infantry. Bohuslav and his men expected an easy victory since they outnumbered the Hussites five to one. Zizka deployed his hand gunners and crossbowmen in and around seven wagons that he used to form a strong defensive perimeter. When Lord Bohuslav's cavalry charged the Hussite war wagons, they were repulsed with heavy losses. The noise, smoke, and effectiveness of the guns shocked the Royalists. The battle was significant because it marked the first recorded use of war wagons by the Hussites.

While Zizka's Royalist opponents could call on veteran armies, the Hussites had to make do with peasant militia. In the Middle Ages not only was there a lack of military discipline, but tactics for both infantry and cavalry basically consisted of a mass charge. Zizka insisted on rules, drills, and a strict code of conduct for those who fought under him.

Zizka made do with what was readily available to him and his troops. Since peasants threshed grain for a living, Zizka transformed their threshers into flails. This gave him an inexpensive weapon with which to arm the peasants. Hussite funds were used to purchase crossbows, hand guns, and halberds. What his peasant infantry needed to stand up to cavalry in battle was protection.

Zizka made enhancements to four-wheeled baggage wagons to make them suitable for warfare. Stout planking was added so the walls sloped outward slightly. Another panel of planking, which was fastened by ropes, was draped over the left side to protect the wheels. A plank also was hung below the wagon to stop the enemy from crawling under it. Loopholes were cut through which the crossbowmen and hand gunners could fire their weapons. On the right side of the wagon was a narrow door fitted with a ramp. A wagon crew consisted of 20 soldiers: two armed drivers, six crossbowman, two hand gunners, four flail men, four halberdiers, and two pavisiers. The fire from the crossbowmen and hand gunners would unhorse the charging cavalry, then the Hussite soldiers, armed with staff weapons, such as flails and halberds, would slash and hack the unhorsed cavalrymen to death.

For battle, Zizka developed the tactic of arranging the wagons in a defensive square known as a *wagenburg*, meaning wagon fort. The Goths, Byzantines, and Mongols all used some type of wagon fort. The gaps between wagons were plugged either with small cannons or by pavises. Within the square were the horses, supplies, cavalry, and infantry.

Zizka had a keen eye for terrain. He sought in every situation to occupy the highest elevation possible. He preferred hills with steep slopes so that the enemy's heavy cavalry would be compelled to dismount and ascend the slopes on foot.

The Hussite Wars continued long after sexagenarian Ziska died in 1424. Unfortunately, Hussite factions waged bitter warfare with each other after vanquishing their crusader foes.

When King Wenceslas died in August 1419, Sigismund prepared to secure the crown of Bohemia by force. To facilitate and sanctify this effort, Pope Martin V issued a papal bull on March 17, 1420, calling for a crusade against the Hussites. In response, the Hussites turned to Zizka to lead them in battle against Sigismund's powerful Imperial army.

Hussite moderates in Pilsen persuaded Zizka to make a deal with Bohuslav rather than have Pilsen besieged and possibly destroyed by a Royalist army. On March 22, 1420, Zizka led 400 Hussite soldiers with 12 war wagons and a large number of women and children away from Pilsen. Under the terms of an agreement, Bohuslav had granted safe passage to the small Hussite force. But his intentions were entirely disingenuous. The Royalists spread word throughout the region that the Hussite force was marching overland and vulnerable to attack.

The Hussites were bound for Tabor. They had just forded the Otava River near Sudomer three days later when scouts reported a large Royalist force bearing down on them. The Royalist army was led by Henry of Hradec and Peter of Sternberg. Zizka parked his *wagenburg* on a dam between two fish ponds that had been drained for the winter.

The initial attack by the Royalists was repulsed. The two leaders conferred and devised a different plan. Henry of Hradec's men would launch a dismounted attack against the *wagenburg*, while Peter of Sternberg's mounted troops would attempt to outflank the Hussites through the fish pond on the Hussite right. The attack sputtered when Sternberg's cavalry became mired in the muck. All further assaults were repulsed. The Battle of Sudomer further enhanced Zizka's reputation. He was no longer merely respected; he was revered.

While Sigismund was assembling a mighty host with which to secure the throne of Bohemia, Zizka answered the call of the townspeople of Prague and led 9,000 Hussite soldiers to the Bohemian capital where he arrived on May 21. Zizka studied the possibilities available for a strong defensive position given that the both of the city's castles were in Royalist hands. Importantly, the Hussites controlled the walled New Town on the east side of Prague. Zizka determined that Vitkov Hill, which controlled the eastern approaches to the city, was a crucial position worth occupying and defending. His troops strengthened an old watchtower atop the hill ans constructed a palisade and rampart next to it. Sigismund arrived the following month with 80,000 crusaders—45,000 infantry and 35,000 cavalry that had been recruited from all parts of the Holy Roman Empire. Many were mercenaries who felt no real sense of allegiance towards Sigismund, though.

To successfully besiege the New Town, Sigismund knew he had to control Vitkov Hill. On July 14, he ordered 8,000 cavalry to drive the Hussites from the key position. The narrowness of the hill, which was only 100 yards wide, enabled the defenders to hold on until Zizka launched a surprise flank attack. The Crusaders panicked and streamed downhill onto Hospital Field, a level plain alongside the Vltava River. Another force of Hussites sallied forth out of the New Town and routed the crusaders. With his mercenaries unwilling to stay longer, Sigismund departed Bohemia after having himself crowned king of Bohemia in St. Vitus Cathedral in Prague's Catholic-controlled Hradcany Castle.

In the first half of 1421, Zizka won many battles against Sigismund's Bohemian allies with his *wagenburg* tactics. During the siege of Rabi in late June, Zizka was struck in the face by an arrow, blinding him in his good eye. For the remainder of his life, the blind general relied on detailed information about the enemy and terrain to craft his battle strategies.

The second anti-Hussite crusade gained momentum in the late summer of 1421. A large army of German crusaders entered Bohemia from the west on August 28. They besieged the key town of Zatac on the Eger River in northwestern Bohemia on September 10. The Hussite garrison repulsed a half dozen assaults on the town. But when the Germans learned that Zizka was marching to the town's relief, they withdrew on October 1 despite their superior numbers.

Sigismund's army entered Bohemia in October, but the emperor waited so long for additional troops to join his army that Zizka's 12,000 troops were able to occupy Kutna Hora and improve its defenses. After Prague, Kutna Hora was the most important town in Bohemia as it was the center of the Bohemian silver mining industry.

Although Sigismund was present with his army, day-to-day operations were handled by an Italian mercenary captain named Philip Scolari. Sigismund's 50,000-strong crusading army arrived at Kutna Hora on December 21 to find a Hussite *wagenburg* defending it. Scolari's heavy cavalry made repeated charges against the stout wagon fort. Hussite cannons inside the *wagenburg* roared to life, inflicting great carnage on the crusaders.

Realizing force alone could not defeat the Hussites, the crusaders intrigued with sympathetic townspeople who opened a gate to a column of crusader cavalry that entered the town from the south. Just when it seemed that Zizka might be beaten for the first time, the clever Hussite commander decided to launch a surprise attack at night against that portion of the crusader battle line where Sigismund's headquarters was located.

Zizka attacked the crusaders in the early morning hours of December 22. The entire Hussite force advanced toward the north portion of the crusader line. They were heading straight for Sigismund's camp. Since night fighting was practically unheard of in the Middle Ages, Zizka used the confusion and fear cre-

ated by hand guns and cannons to open a breach in the enemy lines large enough for the Hussites to pass through to safety. Stopping a short distance later, another *wagenburg* was established on Kank Hill to await the Hungarians. But Sigismund was content to retain possession of Kutna Hora and did not pursue the retreating Hussites.

In the sharp skirmishes that followed, the Hussites defeated the Imperialists multiple times in central Bohemia in early January 1422. Hussite maneuvering eventually compelled Sigismund to abandon Kutna Hora altogether. Although Scolari and other officers advised Sigismund not to engage in further battles with the Hussites, he ignored their advice. The crusaders formed for battle at Habry on January 8. When the Hussites attacked, the crusader army immediately fled the field.

The crusader army marched south toward Moravia with the Hussites on its heels. When Sigismund's main body reached the town of Nemecky Brod, it had to cross the Sazava River. Leaving behind a rear guard to impede the Hussite pursuit, the emperor continued on to Moravia. A bottleneck eventually developed at the bridge over the Sazava as refugees joined the fleeing columns of soldiers. Having grown impatient at the long delay, a force of Hungarian cavalry decided to ride across the frozen river. Some managed to make it across, but the weight of men and horses eventually caused the ice to break. When it did, 548 Hungarian cavalrymen plunged to an icy death.

In October 1422, Zizka had become alienated from the Taborites and had taken up with the Orebites. Even though he allowed himself to become embroiled in Hussite politics, he continued to conduct small operations against Catholic Bohemians who opposed the Hussites.

On April 27, 1423, Zizka fought a battle at Horice against Catholic Royalist forces led by Cenek of Wartenberg. The forces were evenly matched at approximately 3,000 troops each; however, the Hussites had 120 war wagons to augment the strength of their force. Zizka deployed his *wagenburg* on high ground, and Cenek's cavalry dismounted to assail it. Zizka's cannons tore gaping holes in the Catholic ranks. Zizka then ordered his small cavalry force to attack the Catholics. Their charge routed the enemy. Between campaigns Zizka found time to complete a military treatise, *Statutes and Military Ordinances of Zizka's New Brotherhood,* which codified his beliefs for the Hussite army.

In January 1424 Zizka opened a new campaign against the Catholic Royalists. He moved against Pilsen in May with 7,000 foot soldiers, 500 cavalrymen, and 300 war wagons. As Zizka's power and influence grew uncomfortable for certain elements in Prague, the conservative Utraquists entered into an alliance with the Catholic Royalists. This coalition force outnumbered Zizka's and marched to engage him in the first week of June. Approximately 15 miles northeast of Prague near the town of Kostelec, which is situated along the Elbe River, the two sides met in battle. Zizka deployed his *wagenburg* and held out for several days against forces who knew his tactics.

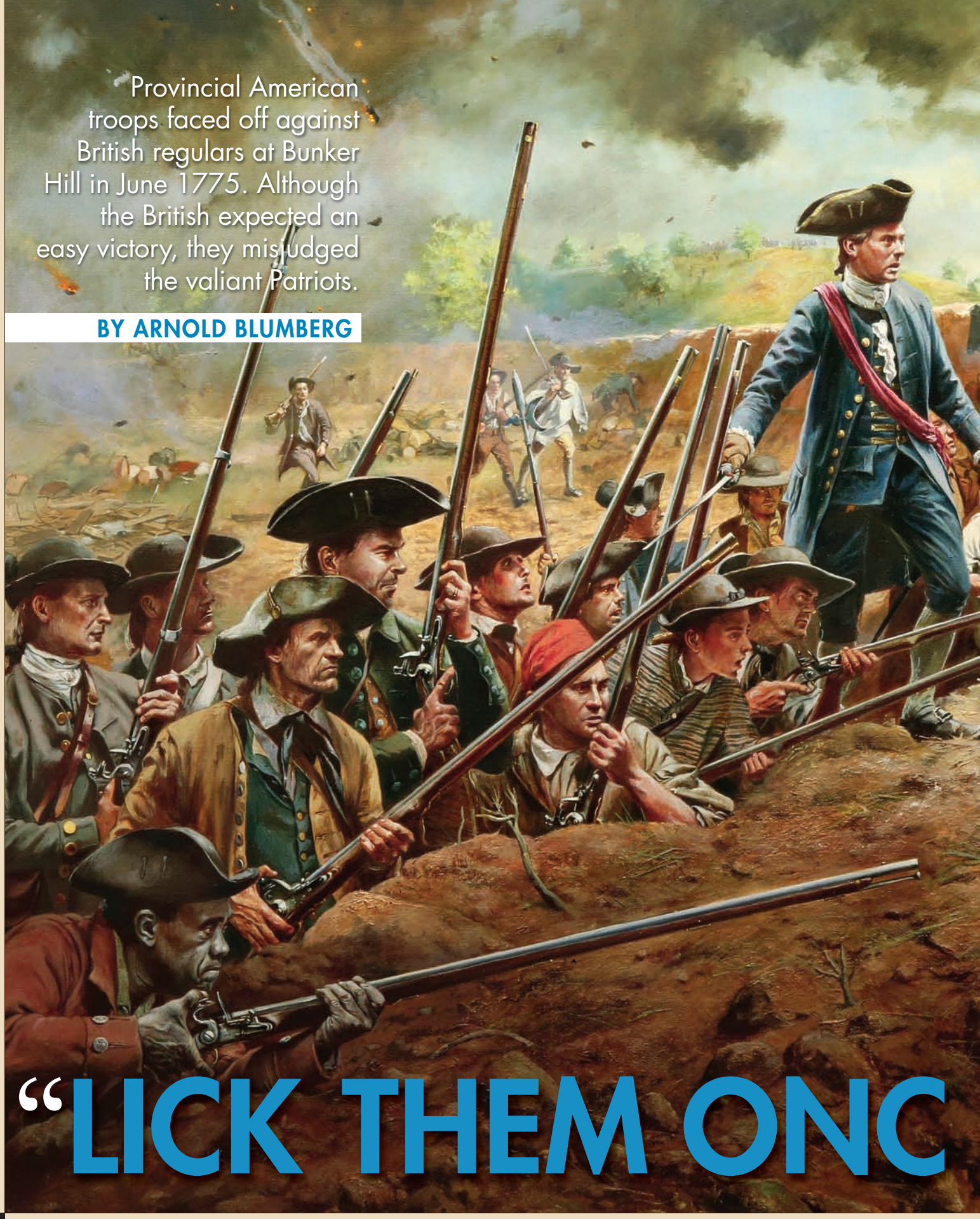
In the mistaken belief that they had at last defeated the great Hussite commander, the Utraquist-Royalist force awoke on June 4 to find Zizka and his soldiers had disappeared into thin air. Although it is not known for certain how he did this, one theory is that an ally of his arrived with boats to ferry him and his men across the river. Zizka then marched on Caslav with the Utraquist-Royalist force in pursuit. He made a stand at the fortress of Malesov.

He deployed his *wagenburg* atop a high plateau alongside the Malesovka River. On June 7, while the enemy was in the midst of fording the river, Zizka launched a combination of gunfire and stone-filled wagons down the slope. His foot soldiers advanced behind them. The tactic disrupted the entire enemy force, which is believed to have lost upward of 1,400 Royalist men in the battle. Zizka's decisive victory crippled Prague's military capabilities for years to come.

Zizka and the townspeople of Prague eventually reconciled their differences. They signed an agreement on September 14 known as the Peace of Liben through which they agreed to refrain from future hostilities.

Zizka seemed satisfied with the reconciliation. He soon organized a force designed to liberate Moravia. The motley army of various Hussite factions numbered 20,000 men. On October 3 it marched against the Moravian capital of Brno. Just before it crossed the border, Zizka inexplicably stopped to besiege the Royalist castle at Pribyslaw. He fell severely ill and died on 11, 1424. Although the exact cause is not known, it was presumed to be the plague.

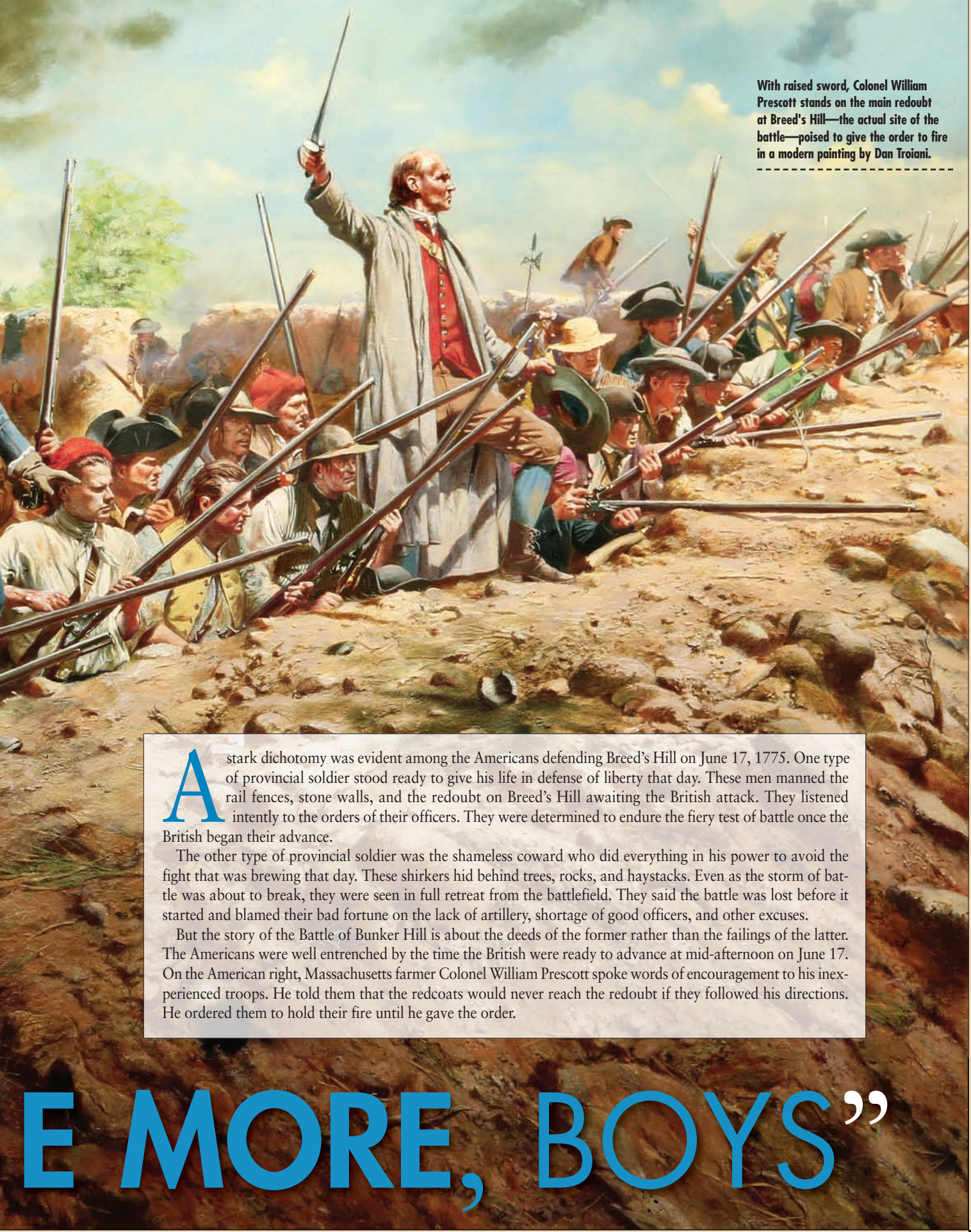
Jan Zizka inspired those who fought for him to feats unheard of at the time. For example, they launched surprise attacks at night and fought long campaigns throughout the harsh winter months. He implemented a strict code of conduct among his peasant, lower class troops that enabled them to defeat armies with far greater resources and numbers. Zizka's mastery of strategy and tactics enabled him to win all of his battles. For these reasons, he is counted among the world's greatest military commanders. □



Provincial American troops faced off against British regulars at Bunker Hill in June 1775. Although the British expected an easy victory, they misjudged the valiant Patriots.

BY ARNOLD BLUMBERG

"LICK THEM ONC



With raised sword, Colonel William Prescott stands on the main redoubt at Breed's Hill—the actual site of the battle—poised to give the order to fire in a modern painting by Dan Troiani.

A stark dichotomy was evident among the Americans defending Breed's Hill on June 17, 1775. One type of provincial soldier stood ready to give his life in defense of liberty that day. These men manned the rail fences, stone walls, and the redoubt on Breed's Hill awaiting the British attack. They listened intently to the orders of their officers. They were determined to endure the fiery test of battle once the British began their advance.

The other type of provincial soldier was the shameless coward who did everything in his power to avoid the fight that was brewing that day. These shirkers hid behind trees, rocks, and haystacks. Even as the storm of battle was about to break, they were seen in full retreat from the battlefield. They said the battle was lost before it started and blamed their bad fortune on the lack of artillery, shortage of good officers, and other excuses.

But the story of the Battle of Bunker Hill is about the deeds of the former rather than the failings of the latter. The Americans were well entrenched by the time the British were ready to advance at mid-afternoon on June 17. On the American right, Massachusetts farmer Colonel William Prescott spoke words of encouragement to his inexperienced troops. He told them that the redcoats would never reach the redoubt if they followed his directions. He ordered them to hold their fire until he gave the order.

E MORE, BOYS"

Don Troiani / Bridgeman Images

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Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

Senior Commanders: British Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, British Maj. Gen. William Howe, and American General Israel Putnam.

As for the troops on the American left, New Hampshire native Colonel John Stark advised them to make every shot count. Each man had only 15 rounds and scant gunpowder. Stark told the men not to fire until the redcoats had passed a stake that he had planted 35 yards in front of their position. Furthermore, he advised that they should hold their fire until they "could see the enemy's half-gaiters."

As both sides waited anxiously for the battle to begin, the town of Charleston on the British left flank erupted in flames. British Admiral Samuel Graves had not only ordered incendiaries fired into the town from British warships, but also ordered a detachment of sailors to go ashore and make sure that the town burned to the ground. The gunfire from the warships sent a Patriot detachment in the town scurrying west toward the main American line.

While the flames licked skyward, Maj. Gen. William Howe addressed his troops just before he ordered a general advance. "I shall not desire one of you to go a step farther than where I go myself at your head," he said. Howe thought that his men would be able to cover the distance from Morton's Hill to Breed's Hill quickly, but he had not reconnoitered the ground over which he would be attacking. The undulating ground was studded with rocks and laced with gulleys that would disrupt the alignment of the British lines. Furthermore, the British would have to climb over several stone walls. The British stepped off at 3 PM. They initially were unaware that the Americans were behind breastworks, but as they drew closer they saw that the Americans held a strong position.

Howe marched smartly at the head of his imposing grenadiers toward the American left. To his right marched Lt. Col. George Clark's Light Battalion. Howe's staff, as well as a servant carrying a bottle of wine, accompanied him. The British guns fell silent so as not to injure their own soldiers.

As Clark's troops passed Stark's stakes, they lowered their 17-inch-long bayonets and charged. "Fire!" Stark shouted. A sheet of flame erupted from behind the stone wall. The British line staggered under the well-aimed volley. The front rank of the Light Company of the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers crumpled to the ground. In the second line, the Light Company of the 4th King's Own Regiment of Foot was decimated as it struggled to push forward. Many men belonging to the 10th and 52nd Regiments fell dead and dying on the beach on the Americans' extreme left flank. Minutes after being struck by the American fire, the English light forces turned and fled. They left behind 96 dead and dying men. Howe's attempt to turn the enemy's weakest point had failed.

As the light infantry decamped for the rear, the British grenadier companies approached a rail fence. By that point, their well-aligned formation had deteriorated. They had become a disordered mass. They fired one volley and then charged with their bayonets. The lead from their volley flew harmlessly over the heads of the crouching Patriots.

Prescott's troops opened fire on the British at 50 yards. The volley devastated the unprotected British line, cutting deep furrows in the grenadiers' ranks. Howe pulled his shocked and battered men back to regroup. He had no intention of giving up or altering his basic plan of attack.

Following the disastrous British raid on American arms and powder supplies at Concord on April 19, 1775, the British withdrew to Boston to plot their next move. It fell to Maj. Gen. Artemas Ward, who was the senior general present at Boston, to organize the provincial militia of Massachusetts and adjacent colonies and keep the British bottled up in Boston until Continental Army Commander in Chief General George Washington arrived.

Ward, who suffered from extremely poor health that often forced him to rest in bed, had the formidable task of organizing upward of 10,000 volunteers who were present for duty at Cambridge and would become the Army of Observation. A Massachusetts native, Ward initially had no power to enlist, pay, or arm the troops, but on April 24 the Massachusetts Provincial Congress authorized the regular enlistment of an army to be composed of regiments of 10 companies each. Enlistments were to run until the end of the year.

While Massachusetts went about organizing a force to defend its cities, towns, villages, and farms, the other New England colonies raised their own forces. The New Hampshire General Assembly voted on May 18 to form the New Hampshire Volunteers under Colonel John Stark, a veteran of the French and Indian War and a member of the famed Roger's Rangers. As for Rhode Island, its assembly had established three regiments and an artillery company under the newly promoted Brig. Gen. Nathaniel Greene. The Connecticut Assembly on April 26 raised six infantry regiments, a total of 6,000 men, to serve until December 10, 1775. Two of these formations were sent to Cambridge where they were commanded by Brig. Gen. Israel Putnam of the Connecticut militia.

By early June 1775, the Patriots had assembled a sizable force outside Boston. The Patriot army effectively blockaded the city and its British garrison. The British at Boston were led by Lt. Gen. Thomas Gage, the commander in chief of the British Army in North America.

Gage had extensive experience in North America dating back to the French and Indian War. He later served as commander in chief of the British forces in North America from 1763 to 1775. While serving as military governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay, he had earned the animosity of the colonists for his role in applying the Intolerable Acts.

Gage's attempt to seize military stores of Patriot militias in April 1775 touched off the Battles of Lexington and Concord. Of medium height and slender build, Gage had a sober nature. He was a nondescript battlefield commander. He exhibited more ability as a politician than a general.

Keenly aware of the growing opposing force surrounding him, Gage, exhibiting a cautious trait he had been criticized for during some of his past military dealings, believed his 3,000 troops at Boston were insufficient to make any offensive move against the mounting Patriot threat. Another 1,500 reinforcements were expected in May, so Gage decided to await their arrival. The result was a stalemate.

On the American side, the Rebel leaders became aggressive as their forces grew. On May 9, Ward ordered the fortification of Dorchester Heights. Maj. Gen. John Thomas blocked Ward's sound military idea. Thomas, who was trained as a surgeon, had served as a militia colonel during the French and Indian War. In

February 1775 he had been appointed a brigadier of the Massachusetts militia. Thomas had taken command of all troops stationed at Roxbury, which was situated southwest of Boston, following the clash at Lexington. Although nominally under Ward, Thomas acted as if his force was an independent army. For this reason, he refused to obey any of Ward's directives.

The two opposing armies engaged in a series of raids on the tightly packed islands in Boston Harbor in May in an attempt to grab as much of the food stores and livestock as possible. On May 21 Gage sent four British sloops-of-war to harvest the hay from Grape Island. Responding to the enemy move, the Weymouth Minutemen and three companies from Thomas's force at Roxbury chased off the sailors and marines landed by the British warships.

The most significant skirmish of this period occurred on May 27. Stark, who commanded the 1st New Hampshire Regiment, and Colonel John Nixon, commander of the 6th Massachusetts Regiment, led 600 men to Hog Island and Noddle's Island, which were situated next to each other directly northeast of Boston. Their mission was to remove livestock from farms on the two islands.

Graves issued orders for a force of 400 Royal Marines to land and engage the Americans on Noddle's Island. Fired upon by the British, the Americans fell back to Hog Island. Putnam had arrived on Hog Island with 300 men, and the two forces joined together to defend a makeshift entrenched position built in a marshy ditch. The Patriots, who were supported by several 3-pounder guns, fought the British to a stalemate over the course of seven hours. The heavy guns of the British warships failed to dislodge the Americans.

During the fighting the British schooner *Diana* ran aground, and the Americans fired upon it with their artillery. Unable to dislodge the *Diana,* the British abandoned it. Having found the American position too strong to carry, the marines withdrew. The Battle of Chelsea Creek, as the affair was called, ended in an American victory.

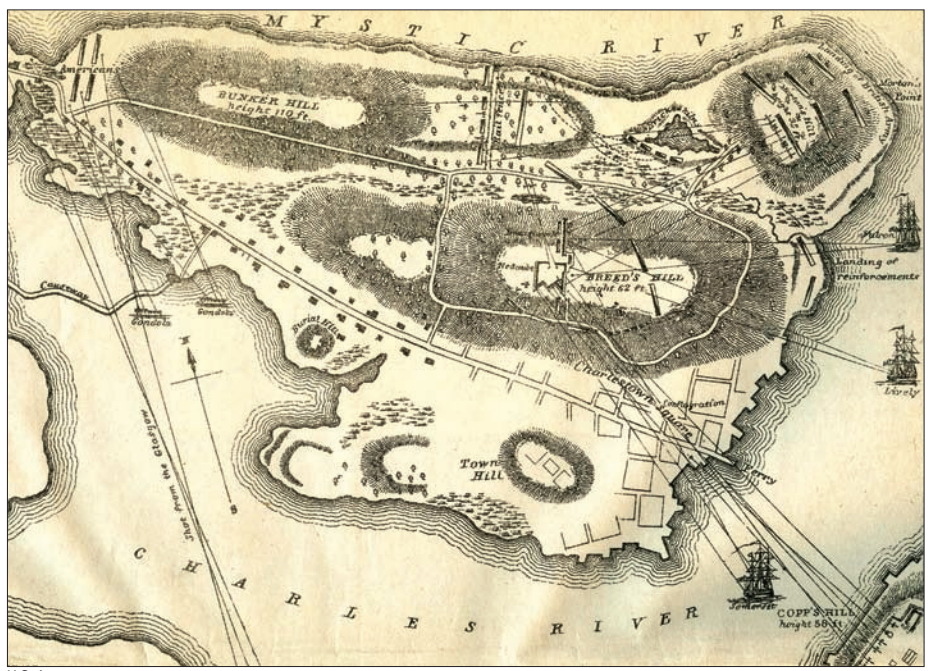
The British attempted another raid on May 28 against Hog Island near the Winnisimmet Ferry crossing. The Americans were waiting, though, and repulsed the Royal Marines. When American artillery demolished a British barge, the battle came to a speedy conclusion. The British withdrew to Boston, and the Americans retained control of the islands.

American casualties from the island skirmishes amounted to one killed and three wounded, while the British suffered 20 killed and 50 wounded in addition to the loss of a schooner and two barges. Further American raids on Noddle's and Paddocks Islands on May 30 and May 31, respectively, netted additional livestock. By keeping the island livestock out of British hands, the Americans denied their foe desperately needed sustenance.

The island skirmishes also revealed important traits of some of the opposing combat leaders. Stark proved to be a formidable leader of men. He handled his troops well on both attack and defense. As for Putnam, he showed that he still had fire in his belly when it came to a pitched fight. On the British side, Graves exercised too much caution with the ships he commanded. He was reluctant to expose his warships to the hazards of combat. The head of the British Navy in North America since mid-1774, he did not get along with Gage. The admiral, who was known for his incompetence and corruption, failed to use his overwhelming naval superiority to protect the Boston Harbor islands and the vital supplies they held during the spring of 1776.

Panorama 1453 Historical Museum

ABOVE: Patriot militiamen work feverishly with pickaxes and shovels at night to fortify their positions atop Breed's Hill. BELOW: A bird's eye view of Charlestown Peninsula shows the central location of Breed's Hill. Behind it are Bunker Hill on the northeastern end of the peninsula and Morton's Hill on the southeastern corner.



U.S. Army

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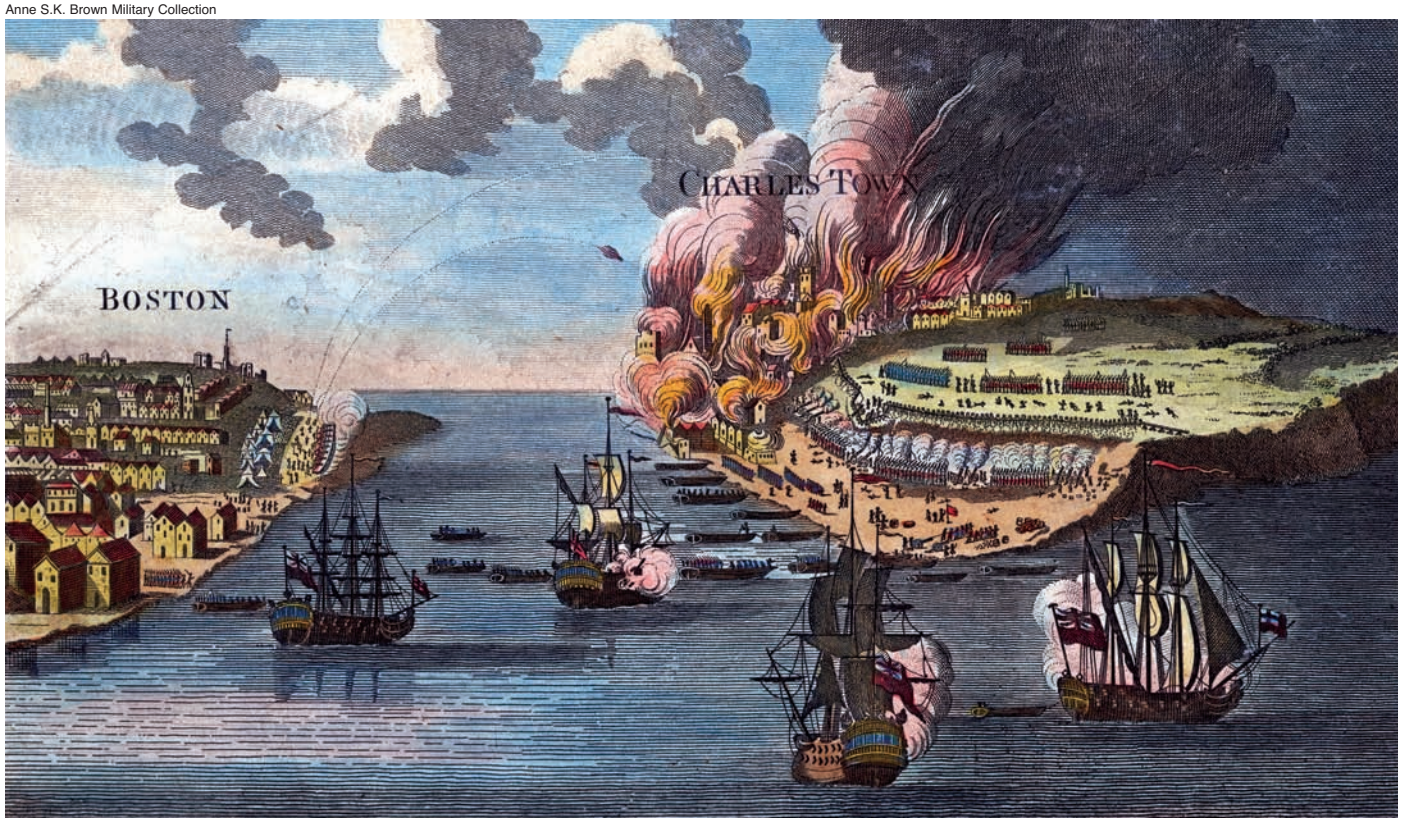


In early May, the remaining companies of the British Army's 65th Regiment of Foot and a second battalion of Royal Marines arrived from Halifax. Then, more reinforcements arrived in late May from Ireland. These troops were the 35th, 49th, and 63rd Regiments of Foot and the 17th Light Dragoon Regiment. With the substantial reinforcements he received, Gage's army of occupation in Boston swelled to 6,500 men.

On May 25 three British major generals—Howe, John Burgoyne, and Henry Clinton disembarked from the *Cerberus* at Boston Harbor to assist Gage. Tall, handsome, and well mannered, Howe had served in North America during the French and Indian War, participating in the Louisburg expedition and the Battle of the Plains of Abraham. A gifted tactician with a commanding presence on the battlefield, he had championed the use of light infantry as an essential element of the British Army. As for the assertive and self-promoting Clinton, he had served on the European continent during the Seven Years War. Burgoyne, the most junior and least experienced of the generals sent to Gage, had served in Portugal during the Seven Years War.

Both Clinton and Burgoyne were bothered by the inactivity of the British Army at Boston. Encouraged by the two aggressive newcomers, Gage held a council of war on June 12. As an outgrowth of the council of war, Gage decided to extend a final offer of general pardon to all rebels provided they agreed to immediately lay down their arms. Because he did not expect the rebels to accept their proposal, Gage ordered his generals to draw up plans to seize Dorchester Heights and Charleston Neck in a operation set to begin June 18.

The Americans learned of Gage's plan through their robust spy network. They had about 10,000 troops in the Boston area by mid-June. To counter the British operation, on June 16 Ward ordered Colonel William Prescott of Massachusetts to take 1,000 men and supporting artillery to entrench on Dorchester Heights and Bunker Hill. Prescott, a veteran of the French and Indian War, was known for his unhurried movements and coolness in times of danger, was one of the more aggressive of Ward's subordinates. Captain Thomas Knowlton, who commanded the 5th Connecticut Regiment, reinforced Prescott with 200 Connecticut soldiers. Although they asked General Thomas if he desired to participate in the operation, he declined the offer.

Charlestown Peninsula, which was situated across the Charles River from Boston, was a mile long and a half mile wide. Bunker Hill is located on the northern end of the peninsula, Breed's Hill in the center, and Morton's Hill on the southeastern corner. Bunker Hill is slightly higher than Breed's Hill. A narrow point in the northeastern sector known as the Neck, connects Charlestown Peninsula with the mainland. Most of the peninsula was open ground, except for the buildings of Charlestown.

After crossing the Neck, Prescott deviated from his original orders. Instead of occupying and fortifying Dorchester Heights and Bunker Hill, he took control of Breed's Hill. Since it was closer to Boston, he reasoned that the rebel cannons stationed atop it would pose a greater threat to British shipping in Boston Harbor.

With the help of Chief Engineer Captain Richard Gridley, Prescott's troops constructed a roofless, quadrangular fort on Breed's Hill. Rather than refer to it as a fort, they called it a redoubt. Using pickaxes and shovels, the Patriots in the space of four hours constructed six-foot-high earthen walls that they reinforced with fascines, gabions, and empty barrels to absorb British shells. Inside the redoubt was a wooden platform the soldiers could stand on to fire over the walls. A single entrance was located in the rear of the redoubt.

The British reacted quickly to the Patriots' bold gambit. Gage had planned to send an amphibious force to seize the position, but the Patriots had beaten him to it. Therefore, Gage decided to attack Charlestown Neck before the enemy strength increased around Breed's Hill. Clinton proffered a plan by which he would take a brigade by boat up the Mystic River and land near Charlestown Neck. Such a move would seal off the peninsula, thereby trapping the entire rebel force. But Gage rejected Clinton's plan on the grounds that the

British lacked sufficient shallow-draft transport craft for such an operation. Furthermore, Graves refused to implement Clinton's idea. He feared that his ships would run aground on the Mystic's mudflats.

Howe suggested the plan that eventually was adopted. Howe would land a force at Morton's Point where the danger of running aground was considerably less. The invasion force would then march around the northern flank of the enemy position and take the rebel redoubt from the rear. Howe was confident of success. Breed's Hill was "open and of easy ascent and in short order would be easily carried," wrote Howe. Howe's plan was fraught with risk. He would be undertaking a direct assault on a fortified locale of unknown strength defended by an unknown number of the enemy.

Gage accepted Howe's risky plan. Howe would lead the light, grenadier, and line companies of the 5th and 38th Regiments, which would debark from Boston's Long Wharf. The remaining flank companies and the 43rd, 57th, and a portion of the 47th Regiments would embark from the Boston's North Battery under the command of Brig. Gen. Robert Pigot. Howe would have overall command of the 2,200 British troops participating in the amphibious operation, and Pigot would serve as his second in command. Pigot's troops would land on Morton's Point in the early afternoon during high tide. Twenty-eight flat-bottomed barges would ferry the amphibious force. The two barges at the front of the flotilla would be armed with 3-pounder brass field guns to cover the landings. Clinton would command the reserve, which consisted of two battalions of Royal Marines. Once ashore, Clinton and Howe's columns would chase the Patriots to Cambridge.

As Gage and his officers spent the morning debating how to get at the Americans ensconced on Breed's Hill, the British warship *Lively,* on her captain's initiative, shelled the American fortification. Graves, who was not yet convinced that war with the Americans was a certainty, ordered the *Lively*'s guns silenced.

Prescott attempted to use the unexpected ceasefire to erect a 150-foot-long earthen breastwork to cover the redoubt's vulnerable left side. The Americans had barely begun the new construction when the British cannonade resumed in earnest. Gage had countermanded Graves' order. British 24-pounders stationed on Copps Hill at the north end of Boston also joined in the bombardment. They were soon joined by all of the British warships in Boston Harbor, as well as those stationed in waters around the Charlestown Peninsula. In addition, the shallow-draft *Symmetry* was positioned to interdict Charlestown Neck. Fortunately for the Americans, the redoubt was strong enough to withstand the long-range bombardment.

The British plan was aggressive, bold, and ambitious, but it failed to take into account the capabilities of an entrenched enemy. While viewing the Patriot position on Breed's Hill, Gage asked Loyalist Abijah Willard, who was standing with him, if he could identify the officer standing atop the redoubt. Willard said that it was his brother-in-law Prescott. "Will he fight?" asked Gage. "I can't answer for his men, but Prescott will fight you to the gates of Hell," replied Willard. Perhaps if a lesser man than Prescott had commanded the defenders on Breed's Hill and no American reinforcements reached him between the time of the British council of war and high tide, Howe's plan might have succeeded.

The American forces on Charlestown Peninsula vowed not to remain passive in the face of the British advance. Prescott desperately wanted to strike back. One of the guns in the redoubt began to shell the British atop Copps Hill. The Americans lacked powder, so the cannonading was largely for show.

With the redoubt completed, Prescott put Knowlton's Connecticut regiment to work fortifying Bunker Hill to guard the American left flank. They deployed 200 yards back from the redoubt

Wikimedia

ABOVE: John Stark leads New Hampshire militia to reinforce General Israel Putnam's troops. Stark joined Knowlton's regiment at the rail fence, plugging a gap on the rebel left. OPPOSITE: British warships bombard Charlestown, setting it ablaze as British reinforcements arrive.

behind a tall fence with a stone base and rails for the upper section. Under Knowlton's direction, the Connecticut men added additional rails to strengthen the barrier, referred to as the rail fence. Prescott, who deployed some of his force along a fence to his right in case the enemy tried to turn his flank, sent word to Ward that he needed reinforcements.

As Knowlton completed his rail fence, Prescott discovered his force was still vulnerable to attack on his left. He ordered his men to construct another earthen wall to the east. The wall would extend to an impassable swamp. This fortified line became known during the battle as the breastwork.

Unknown to Prescott, Ward had already detached men to come to his aid. Stark, with two regiments, had crossed Charlestown Neck earlier in the day. Viewing a gap of 300 yards on the rebel's left between the breastwork and the rail fence as the weak point in their line, Stark joined Knowlton's regiment at the rail fence and covered the gap in the line with three V-shaped defensive structures called fleches made of rails and dirt fronting some swampy ground. He also had his men make a stone barricade across the Mystic River beach to the water's edge. Stark remained in this area. His decision to protect this sector proved critical to the strength of the Americans' defensive position during the battle.

At 1 PM the alarm was sounded in the American camp near Cambridge that the British were preparing a landing at Morton's Point. Ward immediately directed 10 regiments to Bunker Hill.

Wikimedia

ABOVE: British Maj. Gen. Thomas Pitcairn receives a mortal wound as his men storm the Patriot redoubt. He was one of 19 British officers to lose their lives in the desperate battle. OPPOSITE: Dr. Joseph Warren lies mortally wounded in an iconic painting by contemporary American artist John Trumbull. Warren, who was major general in the Massachusetts militia, declined to lead the army and served instead as a private.

Two more were sent to Prospect Hill to protect the left flank, and another two were sent to defend Lechmere Point. In addition, Thomas's men at Roxbury were put on alert.

Unfortunately, many of the American soldiers did not go where they were ordered. Some were caught in a bottleneck approaching Charlestown Neck, and others were delayed or turned back when they encountered the British bombardment of Boston Neck. Nevertheless, 1,000 Americans did reach Bunker Hill, and portions of five regiments went on to join Prescott.

The lack of any overall commander on the scene to direct operations was a serious flaw in the American defense. Problems arose controlling the large number of stragglers among the American army. Dr. Joseph Warren and Seth Pomeroy, both of whom were major generals of the Massachusetts militia, agreed to serve as volunteers; however, both declined to take command of the army.

With the leadership vacuum threatening to derail the American defense, Putnam assumed command and ordered troops to march immediately to Prescott's aid. But the American troops milling about had received conflicting orders. Ward had told them to go to Bunker Hill, and now Putnam was telling them to do otherwise. Since Putnam had no authority over the Massachusetts troops, the rank and file ignored his entreaties. Still, he managed to persuade a small number of them into relocating the rail fence. What is more, some of them even went to join Prescott.

Captain John Callender's Artillery Company had been forced to abandon its artillery pieces due to the intense bombardment of their battery by British warships and British guns deployed atop Copps Hill. Putnam ordered the small detachment of Connecticut troops to defend the rail fence. Most importantly, he rounded up volunteers to serve Callender's guns. As the British attack loomed, Colonel Prescott would lead the 1,400 Americans that were positioned to receive the brunt of the assault.

As the Patriot army was arraying itself for battle, Howe landed on Morton's Point at 2 PM. The presence of the Patriot army allowed him no opportunity to reconnoiter the ground. Howe therefore formed his men for the attack in three columns: Clark's light infantry, Lt. Col. James Abercrombie's grenadiers, and Brig. Gen. Robert Pigot's foot soldiers. The light infantry advanced on the British right, the grenadiers in the center, and the foot soldiers on the left. Their preliminary objective was the rail fence. As for Pigot, his troops would demonstrate against the redoubt.

Sensing he was in for a hard fight, Howe called forward additional troops from Clinton's reserves. When Howe's artillerymen tried to drag their field guns to the top of Morton's Hill, the heavy guns quickly became mired in the soft ground. When they eventually deployed their 10 cannons, his gunners discovered that they had the wrong size ammunition.

But that alone would not stop the attack. Howe gave the signal and the advance began. While the British light infantry was able to advance without difficulty, the lines of the tightly packed grenadiers soon became disordered. Undaunted by these unforeseen problems, the redcoats pressed on.

After pulling his men back to regroup following their initial assault, Howe led them forward in a second attack 15 minutes later. He directed Pigot's men, reinforced by part of the reserve, to assail the redoubt. At the same time, Howe ordered the light troops and grenadiers to again attack the Patriots manning the rail fence.

This time they swung left and attacked the Patriots manning the fleches. The result was much the same, though. The Patriots poured a withering fire into the light troops and grenadiers. The British fell back leaving their path of attack strewn with dead and dying redcoats. In the space of just 10 minutes the grenadiers of the 4th King's Own Regiment had suffered the loss of all but four of their men, the grenadiers of the 52nd Regiment lost all but eight men, and the 10th Regiment grenadiers all but nine men. Coming up to join the fight, the light troops of the 38th Regiment retired with just five enlisted survivors. Their commander had received a mortal wound.

With his men repulsed and every member of his staff either dead or wounded, Howe feared he was on the verge of a humiliating defeat. At that point, Pigot's regulars and the Royal Marines began their advance against the Americans. They got close enough to trade fire with Prescott's men, but they did not press their attack for they believed that Howe might be able to turn the American position by getting behind the Patriots. But when Pigot saw Howe's column fall back, he realized that it was up to his troops to dislodge the Americans from their strong position. Pigot ordered the 38th and 43rd Regiments to assault the Americans from the east while the 47th regiment, the Royal Marines, and six light and grenadier companies attacked south.

The British closed within 60 yards of the redoubt before Prescott ordered his men to fire; however, they fired too soon and failed to inflict any damage on their target. Prescott ordered his men to hold their fire. The British interpreted the lack of Patriot fire as a sign the rebels were going to retreat. At that point, the redcoats charged. When they were within 20 yards of the American line, Prescott gave the order to fire. The British troops recoiled, falling back 150 yards. The British senior commanders observing the retrograde movement were shocked. Once again

the British suffered staggering losses.

Burgoyne, who was out of favor with Gage and therefore had been relegated to being an observer of the battle from Copps Hill, had a radical take on the situation. He believed that the British might not have lost just the battle but perhaps the entire war. By that point, the Patriots on Breed's Hill felt victory within their grasp. They cheered loudly as the British fled down the hill a second time. Despite their losses, the British were not done yet. As Howe reformed his men, Clinton crossed to the peninsula from Copps Hill and prepared to make another attack with the last of the British reserves.

Despite two failed assaults, Howe was determined to make one more attack. Howe carefully reformed his force into columns for a massed bayonet attack. The British soldiers were not to fire their weapons. No British musket fire during the assault by columns as they stormed the enemy lines.

The target of the third attack was not the rail fence. This time the objective was the redoubt and breastwork. Howe once again would lead the assault. He issued orders to the artillery to fire grapeshot. While some of the guns would pin Stark's men in place and prevent them from firing on the attackers from behind, other guns would rake the breastworks with the intention of forcing Prescott's men into the redoubt.

Inside the redoubt, Prescott began to doubt whether the Americans could win the battle. He had only 150 men remaining, and they were down to their last musket balls. Prescott could see Americans on Bunker Hill but did not understand why they uselessly remained there instead of coming to help him and his men. But he did not give up. "The best soldiers in the world cannot take the losses we have given them," he told his men to instill confidence in them. The men cheered in response. "Lick them once more boys, and they'll never come back," Warren added.

Howe's final attack was patterned much like his second one. A few men supported the artillery screening the rail fence, while the light troops of the 5th and 52nd Regiments and the remaining grenadiers feinted toward the fence. Following the feint, they wheeled south and struck the northern end of the redoubt. Pigot's main force was to attack the eastern face of the redoubt, while Maj. Gen. Thomas Pitcairn again led the Marines and the 47th Regiment against the southern flank.

Prescott's men held their fire until the enemy was within 20 yards, then unleashed their last rounds. Pitcairn fell mortally wounded, which slowed the British advance. But as the Patriots began to run out of ammunition, the redcoats climbed the rampart and thrust their long bayonets at the enemy. The Patriots, who were at a decisive disadvantage since they lacked bayonets, had no other choice than to swing their muskets as clubs and throw rocks at the attacking enemy. But clubbed muskets were simply no match for the bayonet thrusts of the determined redcoats.

At that point, Prescott ordered a general retreat. During the retrograde movement Warren was mortally wounded as he tried to form a rear guard. Prescott, as one of the last Americans to leave the redoubt, was nearly captured by the British, but miraculously avoided being bayoneted.

The Patriots fell back in good order toward Charlestown Neck. Stark's men prevented Prescott's group from being encircled. Putnam tried desperately to organize a stand on Bunker Hill but was unsuccessful.

Burgoyne, who was observing the Patriot army's movements from Copps Hill, admired the resolve of the enemy. The withdrawal "was covered with bravery and military skill," he said. Once they were back on the mainland, the Americans entrenched on Winter Hill to defend the approaches to Cambridge.

As the Americans escaped, Howe and Clinton met at the redoubt. Exhausted and demoralized, Howe had no interest in pursuing the enemy. Clinton did not argue the point; instead, he undertook to clear the peninsula of any remaining enemy forces.

Wikimedia

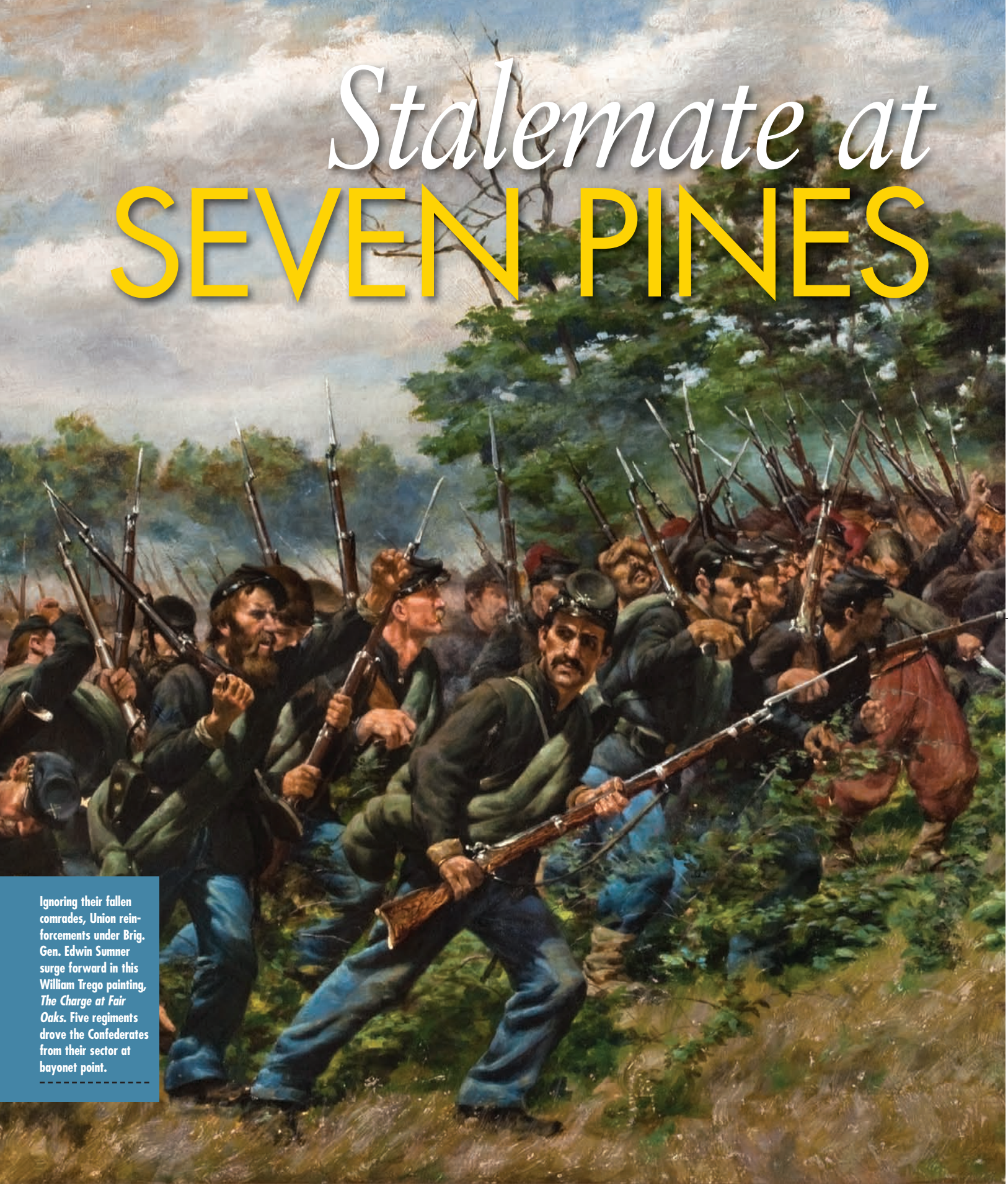
The British won a tactical victory at Bunker Hill given that they controlled the battlefield at the conclusion of the action. But from a strategic standpoint, nothing had changed. The opposing armies held the same positions they had at the start of April. The British suffered a severe loss of manpower, while the Americans had depleted their stores of gunpowder. Because of their respective resource shortages, neither side would undertake any significant operations until the following year.

The British paid a high price for their victory. They suffered 226 killed and 900 wounded, which amounted to nearly half of their forces engaged. The loss of British officers in the battle was staggering. Of the British officers participating in the battle, 19 died and 70 were wounded. The officer losses constituted a quarter of the entire British officer casualties suffered over the course of the entire war. In contrast, the Americans had 140 killed, 271 wounded, and 30 captured. The bulk of the American losses were incurred during the retreat.

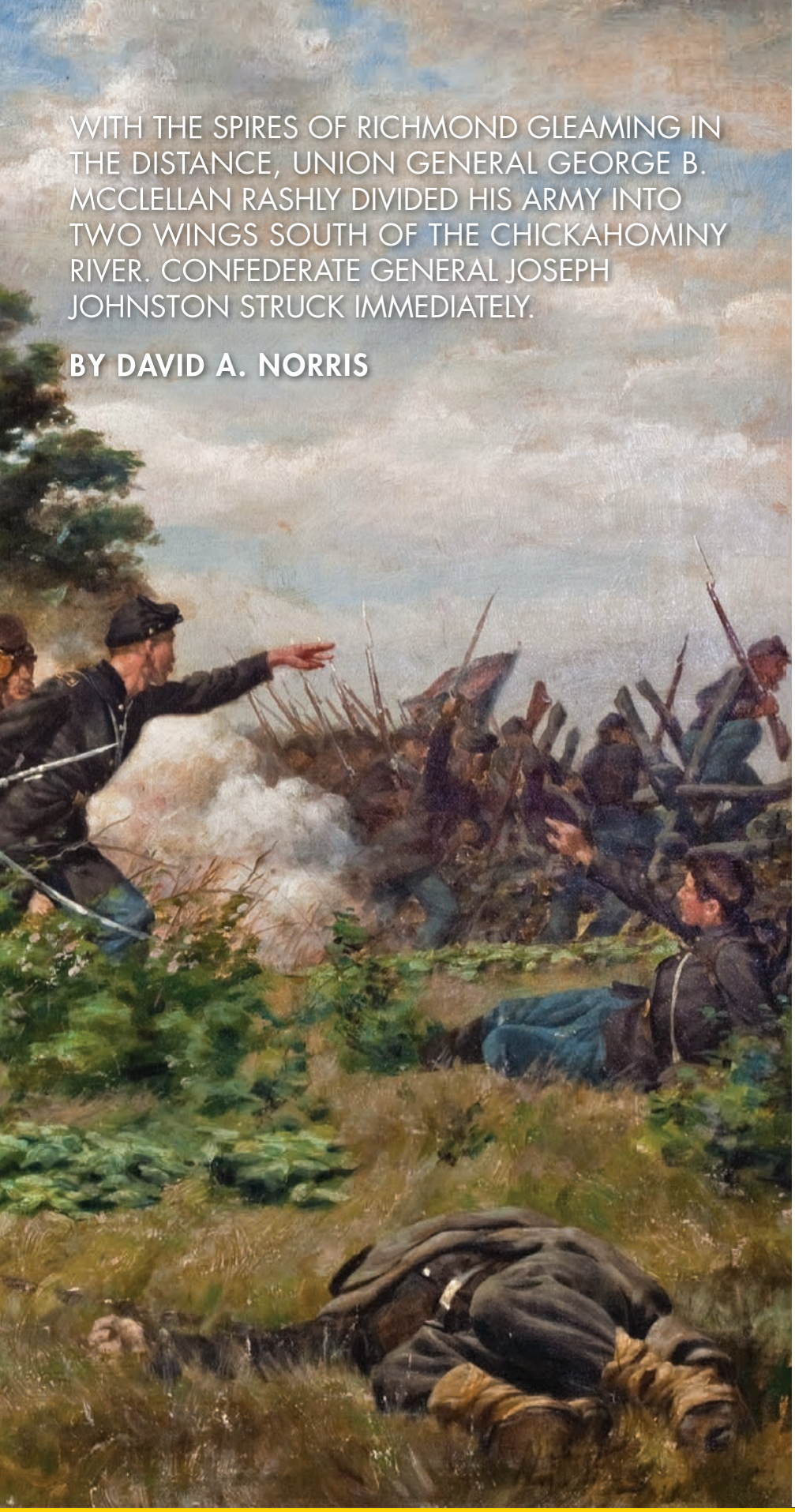
But the true import of the battle has to be seen through a political lens. Before the fight the dominant view in the American colonies was that they could reach an accommodation of some sort with Great Britain that would circumvent a costly war. That notion was shattered by Lexington and Concord and reinforced by Bunker Hill.

Even though the Americans fought from a fortified position, they had stood up to highly disciplined British regulars. Howe had underestimated his foe, and his decision to attack with the bayonet in the opening stages had cost the British army at Bunker Hill dearly. General Clinton made a trenchant observation when he stated that the battle "was a dear bought victory; another such would have ruined us." □

Stalemate at SEVEN PINES



Ignoring their fallen comrades, Union reinforcements under Brig. Gen. Edwin Sumner surge forward in this William Trego painting, *The Charge at Fair Oaks*. Five regiments drove the Confederates from their sector at bayonet point.



WITH THE SPIRES OF RICHMOND GLEAMING IN THE DISTANCE, UNION GENERAL GEORGE B. MCCLELLAN RASHLY DIVIDED HIS ARMY INTO TWO WINGS SOUTH OF THE CHICKAHOMINY RIVER. CONFEDERATE GENERAL JOSEPH JOHNSTON STRUCK IMMEDIATELY.

BY DAVID A. NORRIS

ON the last day of May 1862, heavy gunfire rumbled and thundered in the distance beyond the Confederate capital of Richmond, Virginia. Gloomy clouds overhead reinforced the darkness that shadowed the Union Army. Only the day before, Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac had seemed poised to move decisively against Richmond, but a torrential rainstorm that night had turned the roads into deep quagmires. McClellan, as usual, decided to wait.

McClellan had greatly restored the army's morale in the months after the Union disaster at Bull Run on July 21, 1861. He was sensitive to the needs of his soldiers, and the men in the ranks were devoted to him. A methodical planner, McClellan initially enjoyed great success after opening the Peninsula campaign in March 1862. Outmaneuvering the Confederates, he continually pushed General Joseph Johnston's forces inland into Virginia from the Chesapeake. By May, weeks of successful campaigning had brought the enemy nearly to the gates of Richmond. So close to the Rebel capital were the lead elements of McClellan's army that they could hear the clanging of church bells in Richmond.

McClellan's opponent, Joseph Eggleston Johnston, mirrored him in many ways. Born in Virginia in 1807, Johnston had graduated with Robert E. Lee in the West Point class of 1829. (McClellan had graduated from the Academy in 1846.) Johnston's steady and exemplary service in Indian conflicts and the Mexican War earned him several brevets. In 1860 he was appointed the U.S. Army's quartermaster general. Joining the Confederate Army in 1861, he distinguished himself at the First Battle of Manassas, which Southerners called Bull Run. Promoted to full general in August 1861, Johnston was assigned command of the Army of Northern Virginia early in 1862.

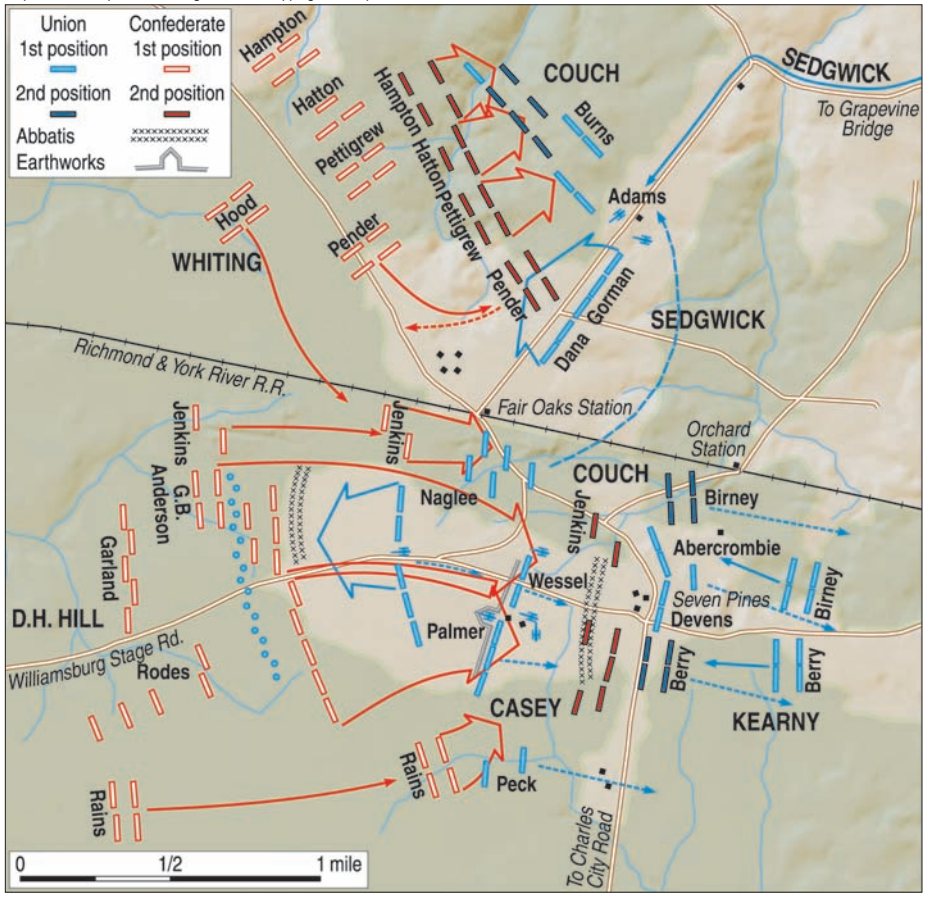
Both Johnston and McClellan were thoughtful, cautious commanders. McClellan, in particular, constantly pleaded for reinforcements. President Abraham Lincoln, wanting more aggressive action, grumbled that the general had a bad case of "the slows." McClellan believed he was facing a Confederate army much larger than his own; in reality, he outnumbered the enemy by 40,000 men. For his part, Johnston knew he was outnumbered and sought to keep his army out of harm's way while he waited for a chance to strike a decisive blow against the enemy.

As the Union Army edged ever closer to Richmond, the James River offered a tempt-

ing avenue for the Navy to aid the campaign with heavy artillery and ironclad vessels. On May 15 a Union flotilla was battered by stubborn Confederate guns atop the high ground along the river at Drewry's Bluff. The armor of the ironclads *Monitor* and *Galena* could not withstand the advantageously placed land batteries and had to turn back. It was plain that the James would not lead Northern forces into Richmond.

The Union Navy's failure did not assuage worries in Richmond about the advancing enemy, and Johnston's next move only increased the alarm. Although Confederate batteries blocked the James, Johnston worried that Union forces might still approach the capital from the river below Drewry's Bluff. Accordingly, he withdrew all his troops south of the Chickahominy. The troops settled into positions three miles east of Richmond, behind a line of earthworks dug the year before.

Even more alarming to Confederate prospects were reports about Union Brig. Gen. Irvin McDowell's I Corps. Numbering more than 30,000 men, McDowell's corps had kept well



ABOVE: Maj. Gen. D.H. Hill opened the Battle of Seven Pines by sending Brig. Gen. Gabriel Rains's brigade against the Union left. Other attacks followed against the Union center but bogged down with heavy casualties below the Richmond & York River Railroad.

north of Richmond to guard Washington. Now it was reported to be marching toward Fredericksburg on its way south to join McClellan. Uniting I Corps with McClellan's men would create an overwhelming army of 135,000 troops—the largest military force yet seen in North America. Although the potential junction with McDowell would create a vast and unstoppable Union force, it also gave Johnston an opening. To speed the union with McDowell while maintaining pressure on Richmond, McClellan had dangerously split his vast army in two. Keeping most of his men north to be nearer to McDowell, McClellan shifted two corps south of the Chickahominy. If Johnston swiftly struck and crushed the detachment below the river, the remaining Union forces would be vulnerable to a quick attack.

The Chickahominy was an insignificant squiggly line on a map, only 15 yards wide in dry weather. Before the war, several bridges provided easy crossing points, but the shallow river was easily fordable in many places. Occasionally splitting into multiple streams to flow around swampy islands, the river twisted through a belt of wooded wetlands 300 to 400 yards wide. Beyond the swamps the terrain rose slightly into stretches of woods or cleared and cultivated bottom land cut with drainage ditches. Despite its shallowness, the Chickahominy was a formidable barrier. The month of May was notorious for relentless and heavy rain, and the river overflowed its banks and kept on rising over wide stretches of swamps and bottom lands. Farther back from the stream the ground was so saturated with water that it had become a mushy quagmire in which artillery, wagons, and horses were virtually useless.

Johnston ordered all the Chickahominy bridges destroyed after he withdrew south of the river on May 16. Union troops set to work building new bridges. They quickly erected Bottom's Bridge, a span crossing the stream at the Williamsburg Road on the direct route to Richmond. A short distance upstream, they also repaired the Richmond & York River Railroad bridge. Union forces began crossing the river on May 20. Eventually, two Union corps, commanded by Maj. Gens. Erasmus D. Keyes and Samuel P. Heintzelman, assumed positions on the south bank of the river. McClellan's other three corps, under Maj. Gens. Edwin Sumner, William Franklin, and Fitz John Porter, remained on the north bank.

Keyes moved his corps along the Williamsburg Road. The night of May 26 brought more rain to soak the troops despite their rubber blankets. Pickets posted in thick brush found the night so dark that "had a battle line of the enemy been within bayonet's thrust, it would have been invisible." Occasionally skirmishing with the Confederates, Brig. Gen. Silas Casey's troops settled into a crossroads community called Seven Pines, which was distinguished by two curious-looking twin farmhouses. Originally, the houses were intended to be the opposite ends of a much larger mansion. The owners planned to live in the houses while construction went on for the palatial main building, but the intervening rooms were never built. Near the houses was a tremendous woodpile, 10 to 12 feet high and more than 100 feet long.

Three-fourths of a mile west of Seven Pines, Casey's soldiers cut down trees to build a line of abatis in front of their earthwork. Half a mile to the east of the front line of works, a longer and heavier line of

abatis shielded the Williamsburg Road and Seven Pines. Between the two lines was the Union camp, situated behind a line of defenses anchored by a five-sided earthwork fort called Casey's Redoubt. Behind Casey's men was Brig. Gen. Darius Couch's division; in their rear was Heintzelman's corps. Farther back along the Williamsburg Road toward Bottom's Bridge were the divisions of Brig. Gens. Philip Kearny and Joseph Hooker. To their left the Federals were shielded by White Oak Swamp, but to the front and right the Union works were unprotected by any natural barriers. Keyes recognized the peril and told staff officers on May 29 that "our position is certain to tempt the enemy to attack us."

Seeking to guarantee quick access to reinforcements from across the Chickahominy, Keyes put his soldiers to work building several new bridges. Bridging the river was only part of the effort needed for the crossings. Each bridge required hundreds of yards of corduroy roads to provide access across the saturated bottom lands. One of the new bridges was built by the 1st Minnesota Regiment. Company officers supervised the work, with no help from Army engineers. Without regulation bridge materials, soldiers chopped down trees in the surrounding woods to hew beams and planks. To support the bridge, they built timber cribs. Each crib sank deep into the mud, surrounded with stones to weigh them down. Once the pilings were firmly set, log stringers were laid across them to hold the roadway, which was then floored with split logs. Holding the bridge together were withes, flexible branches that firmly lashed planks and beams together. Wild grapevines used for the withes provided the name for the span: Grapevine Bridge.

By May 25 Johnston had set his plans in motion to attack the divided Union army, calling in troops from Petersburg, Gordonsville, and Fredericksburg. When assembled, the Confederates would number nearly 75,000. Each of Johnston's three top commanders had graduated from West Point in the Class of 1842. Maj. Gen. James Longstreet of South Carolina had served in the Indian wars and the Mexican War. Also from South Carolina, Maj. Gen. Daniel Harvey Hill had left the Army after the Mexican War to become a college professor and administrator in North Carolina. As colonel of the 1st North Carolina Regiment he won an early Confederate victory at the Battle of Big Bethel on June 8, 1861. Kentucky-born Maj. Gen. Gustavus W. Smith had also left

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Elements of the 1st Minnesota Infantry mill around a 32-pounder field howitzer near Seven Pines. In the background are the twin houses that served as key landmarks, with Union infantry massed on the right.

the Army in the 1850s. His training as a military engineer had helped secure him the post of street commissioner of New York City.

Johnston originally planned to move against the Union forces on both sides of the Chickahominy on May 29 and shatter McClellan's army before it became even larger with the addition of McDowell's men. But late on the evening of May 28, Brig. Gen. J.E.B. Stuart sent word that McDowell had been diverted to deal with Maj. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson's army in the Shenandoah Valley. For the time being, at least, Johnston could focus on smashing the smaller wing of the Union army. If the attack succeeded, the odds would be less daunting for an attack on the rest of the Federals north of the stream. The Confederate move was set for Sunday, May 31.

Johnston divided his army in two for the attack. Two of Smith's divisions, under Maj. Gens. A.P. Hill and "Prince John" Magruder, would shield the Confederates from enemy troops on the other side of the Chickahominy. For the main attack against the 31,500 troops of Keyes and Heintzelman, Johnston allotted Longstreet 40,000 troops. They would advance along three different roads and strike from three directions at once. D.H. Hill had orders to take the Williamsburg Road, which ran directly east from Richmond to Seven Pines, and move against the enemy center and right. Maj. Gen. Benjamin Huger would cross the Williamsburg Road and take the Charles City Road, which ran to the southeast. From there, a rural road ran north to a position menacing the Federals' left flank.

Longstreet, in turn, would take the Nine Mile Road. For several miles, the Nine Mile Road ran parallel and to the north of the Williamsburg Road. But, it took a southeastern turn to cut across the Richmond & York River Railroad at Fair Oaks before meeting the Williamsburg Road at Seven Pines. Coming down from the northwest against Seven Pines, Longstreet would hit the Union right, prevent the escape of the enemy to Fair Oaks, or block any Union reinforcements coming from the upper Chickahominy. For reinforcements, Brig. Gen. W.H.C. Whiting's division was to follow Longstreet's force.

The timing of the attack depended on Huger. Once his troops were in place on the Confederate right, he was to send a message to Hill, who would then open the attack on the enemy center. The sound of Hill's firing would be the signal for Longstreet to move in against the Union right. Huger could then move against the left. Johnston's plan promised great results, but he evidently did not clearly explain it to any of his commanders. To Longstreet, who was placed in charge of the attack, Johnston gave only verbal orders. The two generals spoke at length on May 30, but by the next day it was clear that Longstreet had misunderstood his orders. Huger was not told that he was the key to the Confederate offensive. There

was only a vague order advising him to "be ready, if an action should begin on your left, to fall upon the enemy's left flank." It would prove to be a costly oversight.

Heavy rain pounded both armies on the night before the attack, and the Chickahominy quickly surged to new heights. At about 11 PM on May 30 a detail of pickets from the 33rd New York went to guard one of the half-built Chickahominy bridges. Within a short time they were cut off from their main camp by the swiftly rising water. When another shift came to relieve them at 2 AM, they found the pickets "standing nearly up to their arm-pits in the now new channel, and others, having lost their footing, were clinging to trees, for dear life." The relief detail sent for boats to rescue their comrades.

On the morning of May 31 Longstreet's men rose from their camps. Bivouacked at the Fairfield Race Course on the northeastern edge of Richmond or scattered farther east along the Nine Mile Road, they were within easy reach of the jumping-off position Johnston intended. But for some reason Longstreet didn't follow Johnston's plan. Instead of taking the Nine Mile Road toward Seven Pines, Longstreet ordered his division to march west, then turn south toward the Williamsburg Road.

Longstreet told no one of his decision to take the Williamsburg Road, and his seemingly casual decision scrambled Johnston's carefully laid plans. Whiting, trying his best to follow orders, found the Nine Mile Road clogged by Longstreet's men but could not locate any of the senior officers. When Whiting wrote to warn Johnston that the road was blocked, the commander sent back a note saying merely that Longstreet would precede him. Going to Johnston's headquarters in person, Whiting found that no one knew what was happening. Everyone assumed that Longstreet was well down the Nine Mile Road, and Johnston was surprised when a staff officer was unable to find him anywhere on the road.

In fact, a stream called Gillis's Creek, overflowing from the previous night's rains, had blocked Longstreet's march to the Williamsburg Road. To avoid a long detour, his men drove a wagon into the creek and used it to support a makeshift bridge. Huger arrived on his way to the Charles City Road to open the battle and was forced to halt while thousands of Longstreet's men trod single-file across the little bridge ahead of him. Ultimately, Huger was stuck near Richmond until 10:30 AM, long after he was supposed to be facing the Union left flank. Because of Johnston's vague and partial orders, it wasn't clear to the other officers that by delaying Huger they were delaying the start of the entire operation.

Johnston dispatched another staff officer, Lieutenant J.B. Washington, to check the Nine Mile and Williamsburg Roads and locate Longstreet. Washington never came back; he was taken by Union pickets. He told them nothing, but the mere presence of a member of the commanding general's personal staff was a tipoff that something large was being planned by the Confederates. A message from another staffer, Captain R.F. Beckham, reached Johnston's headquarters at 10 AM. Beckham reported that instead of taking the Nine Mile Road, Longstreet now was on the Williamsburg Road where the Charles City Road branched off to the south. The attack was going to have to wait until D.H. Hill and Huger could squeeze past the congested road to their assigned positions. Johnston had expected the battle to begin early in the morning. He fretted and worried as invaluable hours crawled by with no news.

Several hours late, D.H. Hill finally reached his assigned place on the Williamsburg Road. Halting a half mile ahead of Casey's pickets he waited anxiously for Huger, not knowing that the other general was still waiting far behind them. Brig. Gens. Robert Rodes's and Gabriel Rains's brigades were on Hill's right, south of the road; the Confederate left was held by the brigades of Brig. Gens. Samuel Garland and George B. Anderson. The woods and brush were so thick that many of the officers could see no farther than the neighboring companies. To minimize friendly-fire casualties, each man was ordered to tie a strip of white cloth around his hat.

At last, at 1 PM, Hill learned that Huger's advance brigade was in position. Hill ordered the signal guns fired to launch the attack. Rodes, supported by Rains, marched forward first. The left brigades moved out 15 minutes later. The advancing Confederates held their lines tolerably straight despite slogging through water that was three feet deep in places.

In the Union camp the first sign of the approaching Confederates was a pair of artillery shells whistling overhead to interrupt the noontime meal. Hill sent Rains to make a flanking movement against the Union left. Meanwhile, Rodes pressed forward toward the enemy works, smashing through Casey's pickets and his outermost regiment, the 103rd Pennsylvania. The Confederates surged forward until they stopped against the main line of Union muskets and six guns inside Casey's Redoubt.

Rains arrived on the scene to confront the left face of the redoubt. Hill personally led Captain Thomas H. Carter's battery, the King William Artillery, and found the Virginians a good field of fire against the enemy earthwork. South of the fort the tall trees edging White Oak Swamp offered ideal firing positions for Confederate sharpshooters. Most of the gunners and two-fifths of Casey's troops were hit. With Rodes and Rains pressing in from two directions, Casey's troops crumbled. Streaming out of the redoubt in panic, they swept around Casey, who stood in their path imploring them to halt. Eight guns were abandoned to the Rebels. The attackers cut through the abandoned Union camps and charged over a clearing in front of the second Union line of works 150 yards behind Casey's Redoubt. The line of abatis at Seven Pines was more strongly held than Keyes' original line, and Casey's scattered troops joined Couch's division, which was already in place.

On the Confederate right Rains's regiments slowed down on the edge of White Oak Swamp, leaving Rodes's men to take most of the heavy defensive fire. Wounded in the arm, Rodes stayed in the saddle and continued to lead his troops. They were under heavy fire in the clearing in front of the abatis when more Union troops from Kearny's division appeared in the woods to their right. Rodes had to shift some of his men to the right to meet the new threat.

Ahead of Rodes's division Colonel John B. Gordon and the 6th Alabama pushed deep against the Union line. Gordon's lieutenant colonel, adjutant, and major were killed. Half the company officers and many of the rank and file also fell dead or wounded. Gordon was conspicuous on his horse, and some of his men heard the enemy shouting, "Shoot that man on horseback!" Bullets tore through the colonel's uniform and struck his canteen but never touched him. Among the wounded Gordon glimpsed his 19-year-old brother, Captain Augustus Gordon, lying amid a scattering of dead men. The younger Gordon was shot through the lungs. Ascertaining that his brother was still alive, if bleeding heavily, Gordon pressed on. Only after the battle did he learn that his brother would recover. His force was trapped under heavy fire on ground so saturated with rain that many men were up to their hips in water. First aid details rushed about the field, propping wounded men against trees and stumps so that they would not drown before they could be taken away for medical aid.

Library of Congress

Brigadier General Daniel Sickles' brigade charges into battle after crossing the Chickahominy River via the shaky Grapevine Bridge. The bridge collapsed and washed away shortly after the last man had crossed.

D.H. Hill appealed for help, and Longstreet sent forward Colonel James S. Kemper's brigade to relieve Gordon. Kemper's men met streams of wounded comrades flowing back from the fighting. They pushed through Casey's abandoned camp but came under heavy fire from the abatis to their front. Adding to the fearsome roar of the guns and screams of the wounded was the sound of bullets ripping through the canvas of the tents. A Union soldier visiting the scene after the battle counted more than 200 bullet holes in a single Sibley tent in camp. Kemper's men pulled back to take cover in the captured Union earthworks on the other side of the camp, pinned down under heavy fire.

Eventually, orders came for the Alabamians to pull back. They gave ground slowly, bringing back as many of the wounded as they could. When Gordon rejoined his division he learned that Rodes's wounds had forced the general to relinquish command to him. Gordon's regiment that day lost 91 men killed, 277 wounded, and five missing. The 373 casualties included 59 percent of the 6th Alabama, a grim record at the time for the highest loss by a single Confederate regiment.

Across the Williamsburg Road the brigades of Garland and Anderson hit the Union center. After leaving the Williamsburg Road and advancing to the northeast, Anderson detached Colonel Micah Jenkins and two regiments. Jenkins pushed through the Union lines near the left end of the abatis, cutting off Couch and part of his force, which retreated toward Fair Oaks. Kearny had to shift around from the Union left to deal with Jenkins.

Although Johnston was only two miles from the developing battle, a peculiar atmospheric condition known as acoustic shadow muffled the sound of cannon and musket fire. Adding to the confusion, his staff had failed to keep Johnston informed of conditions on the battle front. In fairness, the belts of thick woods and deep pools of mud and water kept the aides from gathering and relaying intelligence in a timely manner. Johnston knew only that Longstreet had taken the wrong road several hours ago and that his whole plan had fallen apart. "I wish all the troops were back in camp," Johnston grumbled.

Johnston's old classmate Robert E. Lee joined him at his headquarters. During the afternoon they heard a dim echo that sounded like cannon fire. Lee thought he heard a hint of musketry as well, but Johnston concluded that it was merely an exchange of cannon fire. About 4 PM the wind shifted enough to allow the cacophonous sounds of battle to reach Johnston. At the same time, a courier arrived with a request from Longstreet for reinforcements. It was the first clear report the Confederate commander had received that day. Johnston left his headquarters and personally led Whiting's division down the Nine Mile Road toward the fighting. Just as Johnston left, Confederate President Jefferson Davis arrived on horseback to monitor the progress of the battle. More than one officer believed that Johnston had seen Davis approaching and had left hurriedly to avoid talking to him.

Johnston reached Fair Oaks at 5 PM. He planned to send Whiting to drive the enemy out of Seven Pines and secure a major victory. Suddenly, several Union cannons boomed on their left—it was Couch's artillery. Cut off from Seven Pines, Couch was leading his force back toward the Chickahominy when he saw Whiting's troops in the distance, formed a line of battle, and ordered his guns to open fire. Whiting's troops were repulsed twice by Couch's guns. They surged forward again as the Union gunners ran out of canister. The artillerymen kept firing with explosive shells, the fuses cut down so short that they burst almost instantly after leaving the muzzles.

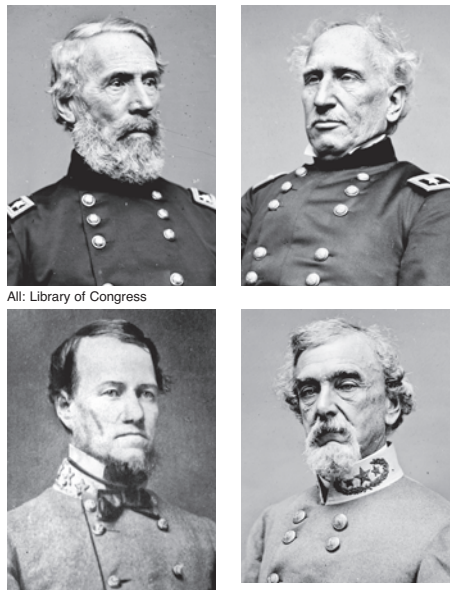
Although Johnston's headquarters was in an air pocket that muffled the sounds of battle, McClellan back at Gaines' Mill could clearly hear the increasing volume of fire. He alerted Brig. Gen. Edwin Sumner and his II Corps to be ready to march. Sumner wasted no time; when a final order arrived at 2:30 to cross the river, Sumner already had his corps at the edge of the flooded stream. The surest crossings, Bottom's Bridge and the Richmond & York River Railroad bridge, were too far in the Union rear to allow the corps to cross in time. Sumner had his choice of two recently built makeshift spans. One brigade made it across

one of the bridges, but the planks were so deep underwater that the soldiers were practically wading across. The bridge collapsed soon afterward.

The loss of the first bridge left only Grapevine Bridge, which strained and twisted against the flood currents. Colonel Barton Alexander of the Corps of Engineers looked on with concern as water washed over the floor planks of the wobbly bridge. The rough logs of the corduroy approaches to the bridge were mostly afloat, tenuously held together by tree stumps and grapevines wrapped around the bridge timbers.

Sumner was not a man to fret over a nervous engineer's forebodings. Born in Boston in 1797, he had seen extensive service on the frontier and in the Mexican War. At the Battle of Cerro Gordo in 1847, a spent musket ball struck him on the head and bounced off. From then on he was known in the Army as Bullhead Sumner. Coincidentally, one of Sumner's daughters was married to Colonel Armistead Lindsay Long, a fellow antebellum officer who was serving as an aide to Robert E. Lee.

Sumner's soldiers sloshed along the approaches, waist-deep in water, to the crossing. As the first men stepped onto the split-log flooring, Grapevine Bridge swayed to and fro. To the surprise of the skeptical Alexander and the relief of the soldiers using it, the bridge held. Once across, Minnesota soldiers watched Kirby's battery roll onto the bridge, the drivers lashing their horses. Oddly, the weight of the soldiers, horses, and equipment on the planks had the effect of pressing them tightly against the supports, stabilizing the flooring. By 5 PM Sumner's lead division, under Brig. Gen. John Sedgwick, had joined Couch. The 8,000 men secured the position and set up a second defensive line at a right angle to the first.



All: Library of Congress

Clockwise, from top left, Edwin V. Sumner, Silas Casey, Benjamin Huger, Gustavus W. Smith. OPPOSITE: Bayonets bristling, the well-ordered 72nd and 74th New York Regiments of the Excelsior Brigade charge quick-firing Confederates on Sunday morning, June 1, 1862.

Johnston was unaware of the new arrivals and thought there was only a small force of Federals remaining in the way. Whiting's men blithely charged across an open meadow that was immediately swept by almost a dozen Union cannons. Kirby's guns hammered the attackers, the force of the blasts pressing the gun carriages nearly to their hubs in the soft ground.

More and more Confederates poured into the fighting at Fair Oaks. Couch's and Sedgwick's men inflicted heavy losses on the Confederates, who were entangled in marshy ground. Brig. Gen. Robert Hatton was mortally wounded leading his brigade. Another brigade commander, James Johnston Pettigrew, was shot and captured. A third brigadier, Wade Hampton, was shot in the foot. Hampton refused to get off his horse, choosing to stay in the saddle while Surgeon E.S. Gaillard finished extracting the musket ball from his foot. A few minutes after finishing the operation Gaillard was hit in the right arm by a bullet, a wound that would cost the surgeon his arm.

It was now clear to Johnston that the troops he had intended to throw into the fighting at Seven Pines needed to remain at Fair Oaks. Pushing the enemy out of the way would be impossible before sunset. Johnston ordered his regiments to stay where they were during the night. About 7 PM a Minie bullet struck Johnston in the right shoulder while he was inspecting the lines. A few moments later a shell exploded and drove a fragment into his chest. The bullet wound was not serious, but the shell fragment injured a lung and cracked a couple of Johnston's ribs. The stricken commander was being placed in an ambulance when Davis and Lee arrived on the scene. Davis asked Johnston if there was anything he could do for him. Somewhere between the spot where he was wounded and the ambulance, Johnston said, he had lost his sword, a treasured family heirloom that his father had carried during the Revolution. Davis would not permit the ambulance driver to leave until the sword was found and returned to the general's side.

During the night the woods were alive with soldiers of both armies searching for dead or wounded comrades. Soldiers slept wherever they could while rain drizzled down on them. Lieutenant William N. Wood of the 19th Virginia, like many Confederates, found himself forced to camp in standing water. "I broke off small pines and piled them up," wrote Wood, "until I had a superb bed in the midst of muck and mud. Very few found a place on which to build a fire large enough to set a tip cup in which to make coffee."

At Fair Oaks, Brig. Gen. William H. French was awakened at 2 AM on June 1 by Colonel Edward E. Cross of the 5th New Hampshire. Cross told the general that in all the disorganization after the battle ended, three Confederate regiments had unwittingly bedded down in woods only 100 yards from the right flank of French's division. French quietly shifted his regiments to face the enemy. He didn't want to risk a night attack, but his men captured a few stray soldiers and a courier. By the time the sun rose the next morning the rest of the Confederates were gone.

Many Federals worked all night on their fortifications. Captain George W. Hazzard worked through the dark hours trying to bring more guns to the front for Brig. Gen. Israel Richardson's division. The guns of Sedgwick's division, passing first, "had cut up every spot by which artillery could move without first constructing corduroys," Hazzard complained. West of Grapevine Bridge Hazzard found 200 yards of water, 18 inches deep. Adding to his problems, "the corduroy was floating on the surface of the water, and two ambulances had been abandoned in the roadway." Late in the night an infantry lieutenant arrived with a 44-man work detail but without either lamps or tools. They were no help. Hazzard managed to get a new corduroy road built, and three batteries were dragged out of the swamp to Richardson's front by 4:30 AM.

Gustavus Smith replaced the wounded Johnston as leader of the Army of Northern Virginia. Suddenly confronted with the burden of command, Smith was nearly paralyzed with anxiety and indecision. Thinking—or hoping—that the enemy had been driven back from Seven Pines, Smith decided to press the attack another day. He wanted Longstreet to remove his forces from the Confederate right and center and cross behind the battlefield to attack Fair Oaks. Such a complicated maneuver, Longstreet warned, was impossible to make efficiently through the swampy woods and brush at night, and it would leave the new Confederate right vulnerable. Instead of a full attack, Longstreet ordered D.H. Hill

to make a limited advance against the enemy lines at Fair Oaks.

At 6:30 AM the brigades of Brig. Gens. William Mahone and Lewis Armistead hit French's Federals along the railroad tracks at Fair Oaks. As the fighting spread, more units were fed into the clash. Union Brig. Gen. Oliver O. Howard lost his right arm during the heavy fighting. In a more comical interlude, French fell headfirst into a deep mud puddle. Angry and spluttering, the general was fished out amid the exploding shells and shrieking bullets. Although confined to a relatively small section of the field, the fighting was heavy and intense. Greatly aiding the Union troops were the guns that had so laboriously been pulled through the swamps during the night. The Confederate attacks, launched without overall planning or coordination, were easily repulsed.

By early afternoon it was apparent to the Confederate commanders that the half-hearted offensive operations were a tragic waste of lives. At dawn on June 2 the Confederates pulled back from the battlefield to their old lines outside Richmond. Struggling on the boggy ground and without adequate bridges to bring reinforcements across the Chickahominy, McClellan was unable to unite his army to inflict a decisive final blow against the retreating army.

Fittingly, for a military action with so much confusion and so many mistakes, the battle came to have two names. Confederates referred to the clash as Seven Pines, the site of their successes during the battle. On that portion of the field Johnston's men had swept the Union lines back and captured several cannons, along with more than 6,000 muskets dropped by fleeing Federals. Several days after the battle a dog with a note tied around its neck wandered into the picket line of the 33rd New York. The note said politely that the Confederates were "obliged for the tender of cannons they took from us the other day, and anything more of the same sort sent them, would be gratefully received."

The fighting around Fair Oaks had a much different outcome. There the Union troops stood their ground and fended off the enemy. Proud of that localized success, the Union referred to the battle as Fair Oaks. Whether called Seven Pines or Fair Oaks, the two days of fighting marked the largest battle yet fought in the eastern theater of the war. Some 11,000 men were killed, wounded, or missing, most of them from the first day of the battle. There were 6,134 Confederate casualties, including 980 dead. Union losses were somewhat lighter: a total of 5,031, with 790 killed. Jesse Walton Reid of the 4th South Carolina wrote, "If this is a victory, I never want to be in a battle that is not a victory."

On its face, Seven Pines was less a victory for the South than a draw. Federal forces had shaken off the initial impact and remained more or less in place. Still, Seven Pines altered the course of the war in the South's favor for a time, halting McClellan's seemingly unstoppable drive toward Richmond. It would be a long time before the Union Army would again be so close to taking the capital of the Confederacy. The most important outcome of Seven Pines came when Joseph E. Johnston's wounds were deemed serious enough to keep him out of action for months. With Gustavus Smith proving unsatisfactory as a commander, Jefferson Davis replaced him with Robert E. Lee—one of the most impactful military appointments in American history.

It did not take Lee long to make his mark. At Mechanicsville, on June 26, he opened the first of what became known as the Seven Days' Battles. The Confederates endured horrendous casualties, far worse than the losses at Seven Pines, but Richmond was saved and McClellan was driven back along his line of march. By September the Union Army found itself north of the Potomac again, confronting an increasingly emboldened Lee at the head of a Confederate invasion of Maryland. For the time being, at least, the momentum of the war had shifted to the South. □

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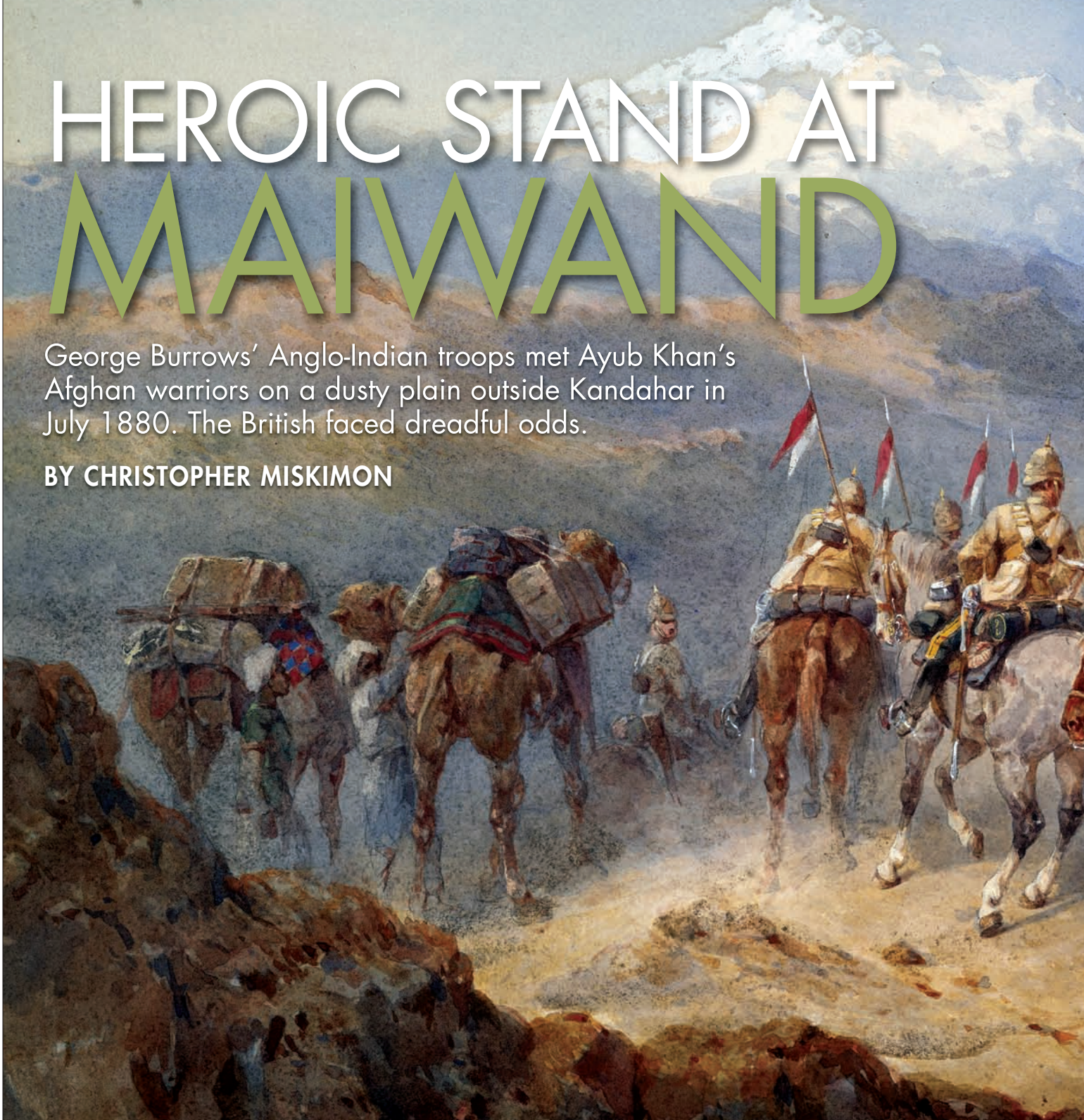
HEROIC STAND AT MAIWAND

George Burrows' Anglo-Indian troops met Ayub Khan's Afghan warriors on a dusty plain outside Kandahar in July 1880. The British faced dreadful odds.

BY CHRISTOPHER MISKIMON



THE 68 men of the Corps of Guides at the British Residency in Kabul all perished on September 3, 1879, but they died a magnificent death. They had arrived less than two months earlier, escorting Major Louis Cavagnari, the newly appointed British Regent to the Emirate of Afghanistan. It was part of an arrangement with the Afghan government. The city was quiet for a few weeks, but in September the situation suddenly turned in the course of a day.

Several Afghan regiments arrived in the city during a routine transfer. They had not been paid in months and were contemptuous of the units they were replacing, which had recently been defeated by the British. On the morning of September 3, they were given a small portion of their back pay, but this only seemed to incense them. They decided to get the balance from the British Residency and went there to loot it, only to be driven off by the sentries. The Afghan troops retrieved their weapons and returned at the head of a mob.

The Residency had no walls for protection, and high ground overlooked it from several directions. The troops, backed by the mob, besieged the Residency. The Guides repelled several attacks, but the

Major General Sir Frederick Roberts leads lancers belonging to the Kabul Field Force through the rugged Shutargardan Pass into central Afghanistan in 1879.

Afghans deployed an artillery piece and began blowing the Residency apart. The Indian and Sikh troops made several counterattacks of their own, which frustrated Afghan attempts to end the fight. Offers to allow the Muslim men among the Guides to live were ignored. The Guides were a cohesive group, and the men would not abandon each another.

As evening arrived, the buildings were burning and only a few Guides were left unwounded. A Sikh junior officer named Jewand Singh led them on a final charge straight into the attacking mob. Cavagnari was killed early in the attack, but the honorable Guides fought to the last man. Seven other Guides were away from the Residency on other duties. They were the only members of the detachment remaining. The Afghans lost 600 men.

Competition between Russia and the United Kingdom combined with internal Afghan politics to drive the country back into war in the late 1870s. The British could not bear the idea of Russia controlling territory bordering colonial India. England issued a warning to the Afghans that anyone cooperating with the Russians would be considered to have committed an intolerable act. But when Russia attempted to gain influence

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

National Archives

ABOVE: British political emissary Louis Cavagnari is shown with Afghan leaders in Kabul. In the 19th century, the British desperately wanted Afghanistan as a British protectorate to block Russian expansion. RIGHT: The brave soldiers of the Corps of Guides, a regiment of the British Indian Army, gave their lives defending the British Residency in Kabul against mutinous Afghan troops.

with Afghan Emir Sher Ali Khan, the Afghan ruler snubbed the British in favor of the Russians.

Sher Ali subsequently had issued orders to his army in September 1878 to turn away Cavagnari on his initial attempt to enter the country to conduct counternegotiations. Robert Bulwer-Lytton, the British Viceroy of India, had written Sher Ali requesting safe passage into Afghanistan for Cavagnari, but his request had gone unanswered. Nevertheless, the delegation proceeded. Cavagnari was escorted by General Sir Neville Chamberlain and 250 Guides. But an Afghan outpost at the eastern entrance to the Khyber Pass refused them entry when they arrived. This was the spark that ignited the Second Anglo-Afghan War.

The war began in November 1878 when Maj. Gen. Frederick Roberts led 35,000 Anglo-Indian troops into Afghanistan. Roberts defeated an Afghan army at Peiwar Kotal on December 2, 1878. Sher Ali requested Russian troops to counter the invasion, but the Russians refused to conduct a winter campaign. Sher Ali decided to go in person to St. Petersburg to confer with Tsar Alexander II. Leaving his son Yakub Khan in charge as regent, he rode to the border. But much to his dismay the Russians refused him entry. Discarded by Russia and Great Britain alike, he died a broken man in Mazar-e Sharif in February 1879.

Yakub Khan was more amenable to the British. For a payment of 60,000 pounds sterling to Afghanistan in May he agreed to allow the British to install a resident with extensive powers. The post was given to Cavagnari, who had served in key political posts in Punjab and Peshawar.

After the massacre at the Residency in Kabul in September fighting broke out once again. For a time the campaign went well for the British. Roberts won another victory when he defeated the Afghan army of Nek Mohammed Khan on October 6, 1879, at Charasiab and then occupied Kabul. The British promptly executed the leaders of the attack on the Residency. Yakub proclaimed himself a friend to the British while secretly he remained in communication with those who opposed them. For the winter, Roberts' army stayed in Kabul where it occupied an old fort named Sherpur, strengthening it with barbed wire and abattis, a field fortification made of sharpened wooden branches. Meanwhile, thousands of hostile Afghans gathered in the city and prepared to attack.

Once assembled, the Afghan troops attacked Roberts' force shortly before dawn on December 23, 1879. The night skies were still black and the Afghans hoped to rush the fort under the cover of darkness in the hope of preventing an effective response. The British were ready, though. Roberts' army had several batteries of mountain artillery equipped with a new invention: the star shell. As these new rounds burst overhead, the snowy battlefield was revealed in an eerie light that exposed the charging Afghans. The British infantry, though thinly spread across the 4½-mile perimeter, poured volley after volley of accurate rifle fire into the enemy ranks. Despite their losses the Afghans continued their assault until 10 AM at which point they broke and fell back. Another attack an hour later was beaten off with artillery fire, and by late evening the battle was over. The Afghans were in the process of making an orderly withdrawal when a British cavalry charge scattered them. Roberts lost three killed and 30 wounded in contrast to 3,000 Afghan casualties.

Afghanistan was still in chaos, but a new ruler came to the fore. The British chose Abdur Rahman as a reasonable compromise to take the throne. The appointment met the approval of many Afghans given that Rahman was the grandson of Dost Mohammad Khan, Afghanistan's ruler during the First Anglo-Afghan War of 1839-1842. This did not produce peace since Ayub Khan, another of Sher Ali's sons and the governor of Herat Province, wanted the throne for his own. Ayub gathered thousands of troops and in June 1880 marched toward Kabul via Kandahar, determined to unseat Abdur and seize the crown. This started the fateful march to the Battle of Maiwand.

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

A division of British troops, composed of two infantry brigades and one cavalry brigade, was posted at Kandahar under the command of Lt. Gen. J.M. Primrose. There were also 6,000 friendly Afghan troops under the command of Abdur Rahman's local governor, also named Sher Ali. These troops were equipped by the British. When he heard Ayub Khan was about to march out from Herat, Sher Ali decided to take his troops to set up a blocking position about 80 miles northwest of Kandahar. His troops entrenched at Girishk on the Helmand River. Sher Ali hoped this display would impress the local tribes and prevent them from joining Ayub Khan. The locals were instead angered by Sher Ali's presence because he was seen as a British lapdog. Even his own troops

showed open contempt for him.

Concerned about his army's ability and the lingering anger, Sher Ali sent a request to the British for support. While it was acknowledged that Sher Ali and his troops were in a bad position and there was considerable risk, the English leadership felt they could not leave Sher Ali alone without seriously damaging their own reputation among the Afghans. Primrose was ordered to take one brigade of infantry and one of cavalry and go to Sher Ali's support.

The British forces that marched to Girishk were a mix of English and native troops from nearby India. This was normal for the period, as memories of the Indian Mutiny of 1857 were still strong. Most large units had British troops to back up and perhaps monitor the locally raised soldiers. The infantry brigade was commanded by Brig. Gen. George Burrows and had three regiments. Lt. Col. James Galbraith's 66th Regiment of Foot, later known as the Royal Berkshires, was composed of Englishmen equipped with the Martini-Henry single-shot rifle. This unit was short two companies, though, which had been detached for duty elsewhere.

The Indian regiments were the 1st Bombay Native Infantry (Grenadiers) and the 30th Bombay Native Infantry (Jacob's Rifles). The Grenadiers were considered a steady, senior unit that had seen service in Aden while Jacob's Rifles had not seen recent active service and carried a large number of untrained recruits in its ranks. Both units carried the Snider-Enfield .577-caliber rifle. This was a breechloading conversion of the Model 1853 Enfield muzzle-loader. A trained soldier could fire 10 rounds per minute.

The cavalry brigade consisted of a pair of horse regiments and accompanying artillery. The 3rd (Queen's Own) Bombay Light Cavalry and the 3rd Sind Horse were veteran units that performed well during the campaign. E Battery of B Brigade (E/B), Royal Horse Artillery was a former unit of the East India Company that was drawn into the British Army after the Mutiny. It was equipped with six 9-pounder, muzzle-loading cannons. Brig. Gen. Thomas Nuttall commanded the brigade.

Both officers were older men in their mid-50s. Neither of them had seen combat service in years but both were veterans of the Indian Mutiny. As for Nuttall, he also had served in Abyssinia in 1867. Additionally, Burrows had half of a company of the Bombay Sappers and Miners. He was in overall command of the brigade, whose total strength was about 2,565 men. There were also an unknown number of civilians employed as drivers and other camp followers behind the formation as it marched to Girishk.

Wikimedia

Major General Frederick Roberts solidified his reputation as one of Britain's great colonial generals during the Second Afghan War. He led an Anglo-Indian army to victory at Peiwar Kotal, a key pass into eastern Afghanistan.

The British column reached the Helmand River on July 1. Ayub Khan's army was nearby and the threat of battle was impending. Tragically, Sher Ali's troops were upset by this rather than emboldened. Ali and Burrows decided to march the Afghan troops back over the river where they could be disarmed before they deserted. The feared mutiny occurred before they could enact this plan. All the troops except the cavalry fled over to Ayub Khan. As they marched to their former enemy's camp, the British pursued them.

In a short but sharp action, the fleeing Afghans were forced to abandon their artillery; however, fleeing Afghan gunners managed to make off with the horses for both the guns and ammunition wagons. They even cut up the harnesses to make it more difficult to move them. Burrows decided to move the guns with some of E/B Battery's horses and burn the ammunition wagons. He kept 52 rounds per gun and dumped the rest of the ammunition in the river to deny its recapture. This choice was the subject of much criticism later, given that there were 50 captured camels that could have carried the ammunition. Still, the captured artillery was used to form a smoothbore battery, stripping a number of officers and men from E/B Battery to provide steady leadership and expertise. Captain J.R. Slade took command of the unit with three lieutenants to assist him. The rest of the gun crews were filled out with 42 men from the 66th Regiment.

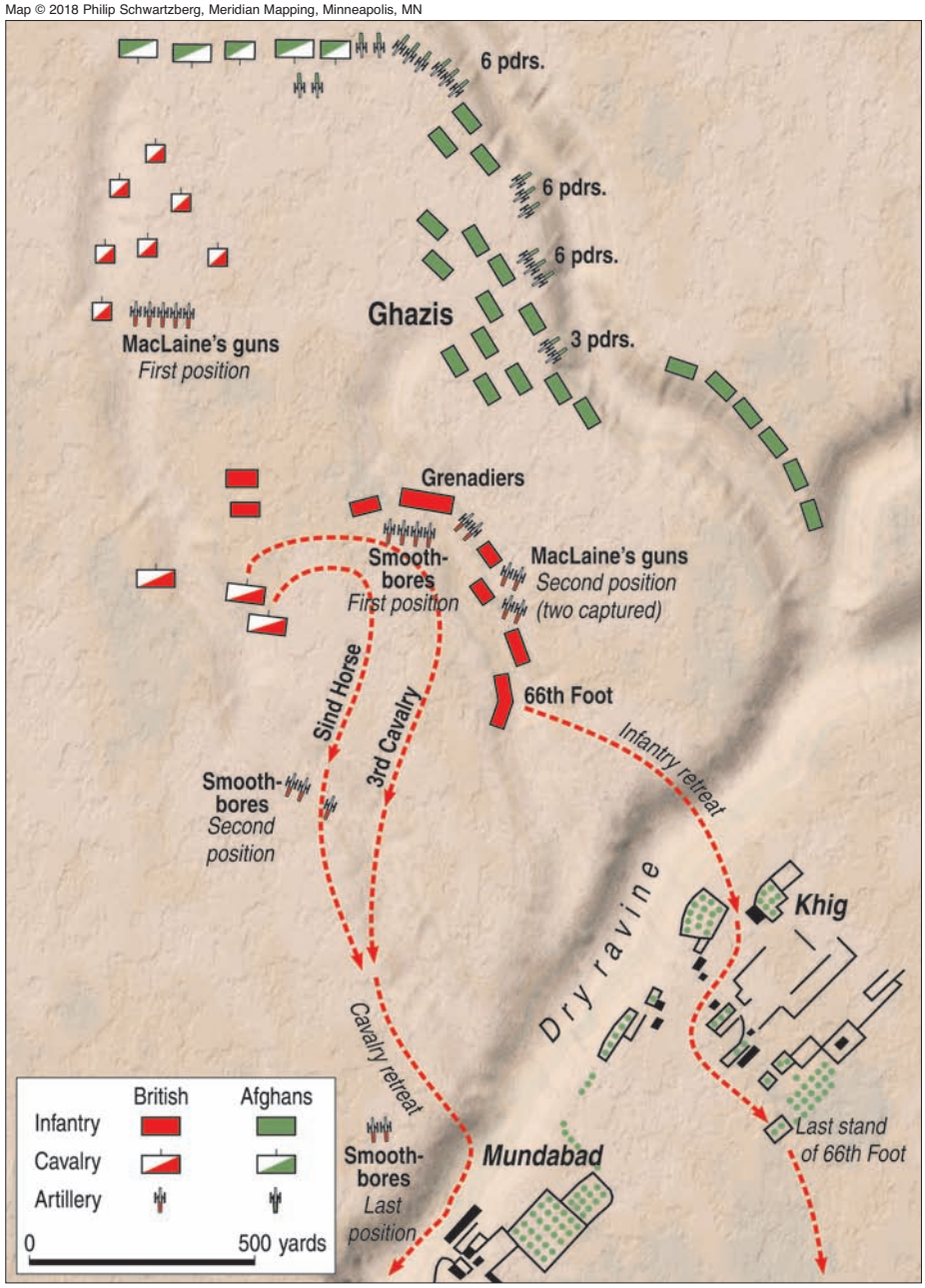
At that time of year the Helmand River was characteristically shallow. This meant that there were many fords available. The region was stripped of supplies, which made it untenable for the British to hold, particularly with the loss of Sher Ali's army. Burrows decided to fall back to the Khusk-i-Nakhud River, which was directly on the route to Kandahar. The local tribes saw this movement as a retreat, coupled with the recent desertion of the Afghan troops. This encouraged large numbers of the tribe's warriors to join Ayub Khan's army, which was rapidly closing up on the British.

The British had solid intelligence regarding the strength of Ayub's army. He had 25,000 men, of which 10,000 were regular infantry and cavalry and the remainder Afghan tribesmen. The army was equipped with three dozen guns, including three powerful Armstrong breechloaders that outshined any guns in the British force.

At that point, Burrows received instructions from the British High Command for Afghanistan, which had been forwarded to him by Primrose in Kandahar. "You will understand that you have full liberty to attack Ayub, if you consider you are strong enough to do so," stated the orders. "[The government considers it] of the greatest political importance that his force should be dispersed, and prevented by all possible means from passing on to Ghazni." The town of Ghazni was situated between Kabul and Kandahar.

Burrows considered the wording to mean that he should attack. This was also a tradition of the British Army. It always attacked, and it usually won. The opinion also existed that Afghans were less dangerous when defending.

On July 23 the cavalry screens of both armies were in contact. The British realized they were outnumbered and Ayub Khan's army was marching to Maiwand, which put it on a course for Kandahar. This also put the Afghan force closer to that city than the British, so Burrows realized he had to march after his opponent. Unfortunately, he did not order the movement for several days. The camp was not packed up until the night of July 26, leaving a tired army to march out on the morning of July 27. The British cavalry formed the advance guard supported by four cannons from the E/B Battery. The main body marched in parallel columns. From left to right were the Grenadiers, Sappers and Miners, Smoothbore Battery, Jacob's Rifles, 66th Regiment, and the baggage train. Trailing the formation was a squadron of the Sind Horse and the rest of E/B Battery's guns.



Brigadier George Burrows faced the Ayub Khan's army on a stark plain where the rebel advantage in cavalry could be brought to bear. The map shows the path the British forces took as they sought to escape.

By mid-morning the British were at the village of Mundabad on the east side of a dry ravine that ranged up to 100 feet wide and 25 feet deep. As the infantry passed through the village the cavalry screen crossed the ravine and began searching the desert beyond. Soon dust clouds were spotted off to the north from west to east. The scout soon made out columns of Afghan troops marching into Maiwand. Afghan cavalry soon appeared and spotted their British counterparts. The two armies had located each other and now an engagement was beginning. Burrows formed a plan to defend along the ravine and village and force his enemy to cross the desert plain to engage him. This would allow the British to wear down the more numerous Afghans. Ayub Khan was more intent on continuing to Kandahar after defeating the small British force shadowing his flank. It was not an ideal situation for either side, but the battle had begun and it was too late to change positions.

The artillery went into action first. Major G.F. Blackwood's E/B Battery unlimbered with the cavalry in support. Lieutenant N.P. Fowell's division set up on the right about 500 yards from the ravine. His men opened fire at 10:50 AM. Lieutenant H. MacLaine's division went to the left but continued on until it was a mile from the ravine and then opened fire. While these two divisions started firing on the distant Afghans, Blackwood called up his third division from the rear. Commanded by Lieutenant E.G. Osborne, these guns were consolidated with the rest to form a new, stronger position 2,000 yards from the ravine and an equal distance from the approaching Afghans.

With the artillery in position, the infantry was gradually brought up and placed into line using the artillery as an anchor. The 66th and Jacob's Rifles were on the right of E/B Battery while the Grenadiers formed on the left. The Sappers and Miners dug in immediately behind the guns to act as protection for them. The Smoothbore Battery deployed on the Grenadiers' left facing to the north. The cavalry pulled in behind the left flank of the formation.

The day was almost unbearably hot as the Afghan army advanced. The temperature soared to 120 degrees Fahrenheit and the approaching army was obscured in a shimmer-

Alamy

The men of the British 66th Regiment and the Royal Horse Artillery at the outset of the Battle of Maiwand.

ing haze rising from the desert floor. Although it was a plain, the ground was not entirely level and parts of the Afghan force would disappear into low spots only to reappear minutes later. As they grew closer Burrows could see the enemy formation was long enough to flank his force on both sides. Burrows still had time to pull back to the ravine and village, but he did not issue the order and at 12 PM the British were still out in the open expanse of the plain. This was a glaring error in judgment that would cost the British dearly.

The British batteries went into action, sending their shells crashing into the enemy's ranks. The Afghans soon responded with 30 of their own guns. This was all they had since Ayub had decided to leave behind six of his guns during the march. Ayub deployed his guns in an arc so that they could bombard every part of the British position. The Afghans skillfully used cover offered by the landscape to move their guns closer to the enemy. Neither side's fire was having much effect, though. The gunners had difficulty getting the proper range given the haze from the heat. Both sides' rounds generally landed beyond their targets. This did have an effect on the ammunition wagons and regimental water carriers behind the British formation as the errant shells often landed among them. Afghan shells set several British ammunition wagons on fire. The bombardment of the British rear also frightened water carriers from bringing badly needed water forward to the troops on the front line.

The distance between the two armies gradually closed until they were within rifle range of one another. The 66th Regiment was the first British infantry formation to open fire. Galbraith waited until the approaching Afghans were close enough for the rifles to be effective. The first volleys felled only a few warriors, called ghazis, but the majority of the rounds fell in front of the formation, kicking up spurts of dust. Galbraith knew this was where their fire would have most effect and told his company commanders to take over.

The 66th Regiment was deployed in a shallow, dry wadi that offered a small measure of cover against incoming fire. The unit was firing its volleys from its Martini-Henry rifles using a new technique in which the line maintained a continuous stream of fire from the right end to the left end with each man firing immediately after the man to his right. After a soldier fired his round, he would immediately reload his rifle, working the breech lever to open the chamber and eject the empty cartridge case before reaching into his ammunition pouch for another round to insert into the chamber. Closing the breech lever would make the rifle ready to fire, the entire process taking just a few seconds. A trained infantryman could fire 12 rounds a minute without difficulty. Thousands of bullets per minute flew across the distance between the two armies. The rounds caused ghastly wounds that were often fatal.

The carnage the British fire inflicted did not stop the Afghans. They continued attacking, taking little heed of the casualties they were receiving from the daunting fire of the British. When a flag carrier fell, someone else picked up the flag and carried it forward. The attacking troops began to flank the 66th Regiment to its right, so Galbraith pivoted his right side company to face them. One of Burrows' staff officers suggested sending some guns from the Smoothbore Battery to support them and he agreed, sending a pair of cannons to the endangered flank. These adjustments were enough to temporarily stem the enemy tide. As the Afghans surged forward to overwhelm the British flank, many were mowed down by rifle fire or from the iron balls from case shot. The fearsome fire caused the Afghan attack to falter. Many of the retreating Afghans followed the line of the ravine back toward Mundabad, hoping to capture the vulnerable baggage train. In return the Afghan guns began firing on the 66th Regiment. It was not an accurate fire and Galbraith ordered the regiment to lie down in the wadi to further soften the effects of the enemy cannons.

Ayub now transferred his attention to the British left flank, sending his Herati irregular troops and cavalry to attack. Seeing the movement, Burrows ordered two companies of the Grenadiers to wheel left to face the new threat. He also ordered two companies of Jacob's Rifles under Lieutenant Duncan Cole moved to the left of the Grenadiers to bolster the line alongside two more guns of the Smoothbore Battery. Meanwhile, Nuttall's cavalry, guarding the rear of the British position, was being outflanked by the Afghan horsemen. The British lacked the numbers to mount

an effective charge, so they relied on their carbines to keep the Afghans back.

While the two cavalry forces hotly skirmished at 12:30 PM, the British baggage train now had enemy groups on two sides. "Shells and round shot came up to the baggage," wrote Major J.T. Ready of the 66th Regiment. "The ghazis and the cavalry pressed on the right. Colonel Malcolmson told me to retire the baggage. I found Bray and a few men hotly engaged with men behind walls, high ones, and shooting cavalry and others trying to work round towards our rear. Our cover was not good, the walls running mostly towards the enemy. However, we held on for a long time."

The British army was in a difficult position. It was surrounded on three sides and heavily outnumbered. Its tenuous line of retreat was held open only by the baggage guard. The Afghan guns were still moving forward, making their fire gradually more accurate while the foot soldiers were closer as well. In response the men of E/B and the Smoothbore Batteries continued their fire. They thought they knocked out one gun and forced an enemy battery to withdraw but could not be sure in the haze caused by the extreme heat.

Burrows realized the predicament he had placed his command in and ordered the Grenadiers to advance 500 yards and shatter the Afghan formation. It was the only thing they could do to save the situation, and past experience had shown that such offensive action could turn the tide. The regiment went about 100 yards before the Afghans realized what was happening and focused their artillery on them. Dozens of shells crashed down around the Grenadiers, but few caused any casualties. The sight of the barrage concerned Burrows, though, who halted the advance.

In the meantime, the Afghan regiments completed their own preparations and began their own advance. The Herati regiments were facing the Grenadiers while the Kabuli regiments and some tribesmen faced Jacob's Rifles. The two Indian regiments raised their Snider-Enfields to their shoulders and opened fire at 800 yards, supported by the British artillery. Once again lead flew downrange to tear into the enemy ranks. The Heratis took heavy casualties and appeared on the verge of breaking but then rallied and came on again. The Grenadiers kept up their fire, volley after volley, smoke and flame belching forth from the muzzles of their rifles. It eventually proved too much, and the Heratis turned and retreated, leaving the bodies of the dead strewn across the field. Jacob's Rifles also succeeded in repulsing the Kabulis, though instead of fleeing the ghazis lay down and sniped at the Indian troops.

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ABOVE: The British learned the hard way that the Afghans were formidable troops when fighting on their own terrain. An Afghan soldier of the period is shown with a jezail, a matchlock, large-caliber rifle. OPPOSITE: The "Last Eleven" of the 66th Regiment gained immortality when they fought to the last man at Maiwand.

The Afghans continued moving around the British left flank, causing Burrows some concern. The Smoothbore Battery was out of ammunition so it was ordered back to Mundabad to resupply. Slade stayed behind to replace the wounded Blackwood as commander of E/B Battery. The sight of the artillery leaving unsettled the two companies of Jacob's Rifles that held the extreme left flank. It also encouraged the Afghans, who advanced again using the small folds in the terrain to mask their movements. By 2 PM they had advanced their infantry to within 600 yards of the British. The Afghans advanced 10 guns to support them, which kept up a steady fire on the British.

The effect on the British was apparent as casualties rose significantly. The Grenadiers had lost a third of their numbers, but they were still holding on even though the British believed that Indian units would not hold up under such high losses. Jacob's Rifles had lost a fifth of its men. In addition, Lieutenant Cole, who commanded the left flank companies, was killed by an enemy cannonball. The artillery batteries had suffered 25 percent casualties in men and more than 50 percent of their horses; the cavalry was suffering heavy losses as well. Only the 66th Regiment, having cover in its shallow wadi, was still mostly intact. All the men were suffering from the heat and many were without water.

At 2:30 PM the Afghan fire slackened and then quit, causing some among the British to hope the enemy ammunition was gone. They quickly realized it was just a lull. Ayub was preparing his army for a major assault. The entire force charged forward and the British replied with renewed volleys and the booming of E/B Battery's guns. They killed hundreds of the charging Afghans within minutes. It seemed as if the attack was going to falter, but suddenly the situation took a turn for the worse.

The two companies of Jacob's Rifles on the extreme British left, untrained and with only a single junior officer leading them, were overwhelmed by an attack that hit them on both their left and front. It was too much for them to bear and they broke, fleeing to their right into the rear ranks of the Grenadiers. Seeing their chance, the Afghans renewed their charge, many of them pursuing the fleeing troops of Jacob's Rifles. The Grenadiers saw the impending disaster and tried to form a square, but the charging Afghans kept them from closing the formation. As a result, the formation became filled with fleeing Indians and attacking warriors.

With the Afghans threatening to roll up the British line from the left, Slade ordered the guns farthest to the front withdrawn. Unfortunately, MacLaine waited to withdraw his guns, although it is unknown whether he tried to fire one round too many or if he simply had not heard the order to retreat. Afghan warriors overran his cannons in a chaotic clash of swords, knives, and ramrods. Almost all the artillerymen were cut down. MacLaine managed to get one gun team out when Sergeant Patrick Mullane charged his team of horses through a mob of Afghans and snatched a wounded driver from their grasp. Mullane received the Victoria Cross for his bravery. The gun division on the right also was nearly overrun, but one of its officers was saved by Lieutenant Osborne, who cut down several of his attackers. Osborne was killed after he dismounted to help some men hook up a gun to its limber.

As the gunners rode off, the Sappers and Miners fired three volleys to cover themselves and then fell back. Slade went 400 yards and stopped to resume firing, but almost immediately realized the battle had turned against the British and pulled his guns and those of the

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

Smoothbore Battery back across the ravine to Mundabad where they set up to cover the retreat of the infantry and cavalry.

Burrows ordered Nuttall's cavalry to charge, hoping to relieve the infantry. It was challenging for them to disengage from their front, but they made the charge even though it was weakened when Nuttall himself rode off to the right. Some of his horsemen followed him while others stayed their course and crashed into the Afghans attacking the rear of the Grenadiers' formation, giving them time to regroup. This last effort was all the cavalry could manage, though, and it rode back to Mundabad afterward.

The Grenadiers were split into two groups, one of which joined the Sappers and Miners. It is not certain what happened to the other group, but later investigation suggested that parts of three companies formed a square and held off their attackers for a long while. It is known that the Afghan right wing was occupied and did not advance toward Mundabad until later. In addition, the bodies of 70 Grenadiers were later found about halfway between the ravine and their first position. Their exact fate is lost to history, though.

Burrows directed his retreating troops toward Mundabad, but many were panicked and a large group ran into the wadi occupied by the 66th Regiment. The frightened men forced many of the regiment's troops out of the wadi and into full sight of the Afghans. This actually had a positive effect for the sudden appearance of so many British soldiers caused the nearby Afghans to think a counterattack was occurring and they promptly fled.

At that point, Galbraith began marching his men out, though the wadi blocked them from going directly to Mundabad. Their roundabout course actually led them toward a neighboring village named Khig. It was a difficult movement. The men were badly affected by the heat and the panicked troops were mixed in among them. But they continued on, firing to both front and rear while Afghans sniped at them. By the time the regiment reached the main ravine 80 men were lost, including two company commanders.

The ravine was 20 feet deep in this area and the 66th Regiment became disordered getting across it as the men had to climb down one side and up the other. Once on the other side, some of them found some of the officers' baggage, which had been abandoned by civilian drivers who fled when they saw the tide of battle turning.

Galbraith rallied his men by uncasing the regimental colors, a beacon that drew many of his soldiers directly to him. Soon 200 men from various units took up positions around the flag. They were not in a good position, though, and the Afghans bore down on them. The Afghans killed Galbraith and Barr, who fell across the broken staff of the colors. The rest maintained a steady fire and moved slowly into Khig until they reached a mud wall surrounding a garden. It was there that 130 survivors made their final stand. They fought bravely but soon the Afghans brought up some artillery and pounded the position. Blackwood, the wounded E/B Battery commander, died there, too, along with a number of other officers.

"Men! What shall we do to save this?" cried a lieutenant named Henn, who held the colors aloft over his head. He soon fell, too. Someone continued to pick up the fallen colors until all were slain by screaming Afghans who charged the position, eventually capturing the colors. When there were only 11 men left, a pair of lieutenants and nine others, they resolved that it was impossible to recover the colors, and so they decided to fight their way toward Mundabad. They had gone only 300 yards when Afghan cavalry surrounded them. The remaining men formed up back to back and fired steadily at their attackers until all of them were dead. Weeks later dead horses were still lying in a ring around the spot where these men perished. They would be memorialized as the "Last Eleven."

Even the Afghans praised the 66th Regiment's final stand. "These men charged out of the garden and died with their faces to the foe, fighting to the death," said one of Ayub Khan's officers "The conduct of these men was the admiration of all who witnessed it."

The rest of the British force was probably saved by the Afghan army's desire to loot the abandoned baggage. This allowed Burrows' survivors to begin falling back to Kandahar. The companies that formed the baggage guard and the artillery maintained their cohesion and fought a rearguard action whenever any Afghans paused in their looting to pursue. It was a sorry sight. Wounded men were carried by animals or on wagons and caissons while thirsty men staggered alongside, the column six miles long. Five guns were abandoned as horses gave out. After nightfall the retreating troops reached the village of Hauz-i-Madat. It had a small well, which afforded the wounded an opportunity to quench their unremitting thirst. MacLaine was

Continued on page 70

ROMAN DISASTER
ADRIANO

Romans and Goths engage in close-quarter combat on a Roman sarcophagus. Roman infantry fought more like barbarians than legionnaires in the 4th century, relying heavily on spears.

Alamy

AT PLE

EMPEROR VALENS TOOK THE FIELD AGAINST THE GOTHS IN AD 378. THE GOTHIC FURY PROVED TOO MUCH FOR THE WEARY ROMANS.

BY ALEX ZAKRZEWSKI

After five hours of continuous slaughter, an eerie calm descended on the blood-soaked plain near the Roman city of Adrianople. As far as the eye could see were bodies, some of which were piled high in gruesome mounds. The fighting had been so savage and cramped that men fought and died atop the bodies of their comrades. Compounding the carnage was the heat. August 9, AD 378, had been a brutally hot day. As the din of battle finally faded, all across the battlefield the wounded could be heard wailing for water as they slowly suffocated beneath the crushing weight of the dead. For them, the cooling dusk brought no relief.

With the battle finally over, the two sides took stock of what had occurred. While the victorious Goths offered prayers of thanks to their ancestors, the surviving Romans fled into the nearby woods and hills to contemplate the scale of their defeat. Fifteen thousand men lay dead or dying. The losses constituted more than two-thirds of the Roman Army. Among them were 35 tribunes, two senior officers, and the Eastern Roman Emperor himself. Valens' body would never be found. Much like the myth of Roman invincibility, it was too badly mangled to recover.

In the days that followed, news of the calamity spread across the Roman world like a plague, bringing with it a similar sense of helplessness and impending doom. St. Ambrose went so far as to predict the end of humanity and the end of the world. Not since the days of Hannibal had Rome been so threatened. The Goths were poised to strike deep into the heart of the empire and it seemed only a matter of time before every other barbarian race along the frontier did the same. As citizens across the Empire braced themselves for the coming onslaught, there was one question on everyone's lips: "How could this have happened?"

The Battle of Adrianople is a story of desperation, greed, incompetence, and envy that began years earlier north of the Danube River in the land the Romans called Barbaricum. This vast region between the Carpathian Mountains and the Crimea was dominated by the Goths, a Germanic people who had migrated south from the frozen shores of the Baltic centuries before. During the 3rd century, Romans and Goths had fought a series of brutal battles. But by the mid-4th century, the two sides had settled into a tense but mutually beneficial coexistence. Roman commerce and Christianity spread rapidly among the Gothic nobility. At the same time, the Imperial legions, decimated by years of civil war and population decline, had become heavily reliant on well-trained, well-armed Gothic mercenaries, many of whom served long terms of service across the Empire.

This tenuous peace was shattered in the 370s by the appearance on the fringes of Europe of a people that defined the world barbarian. Dressed in the rotting skins of field mice and nourished on raw meat they tenderized beneath their saddles, the ferocious Huns had blazed a trail of destruction across the Eurasian steppe before stumbling on the rich lands of the Goths. At first they seemed content to merely raid isolated Gothic settlements and even served the warring Gothic tribes as mercenaries. Eventually the Goths' lands proved too tempting a prize and they outright invaded. In so doing, they also sparked an invasion from the Alans, another steppe people whom the Huns had displaced in their relentless drive across Central Asia.

The divided Gothic tribes stood no chance against this dual onslaught, and one by one they fell like dominoes. The survivors retreated westward into the lands of their kin, eventually fortifying themselves in the rough, forested slopes of the Carpathian Mountains. It was here that Fritigern, a chieftain of the Thervingi tribe, stepped forward to unite the refugees. Fritigern knew that they could not remain indefinitely in their mountain strongholds, and he somehow managed to convince his proud people that their only hope was to cross the Danube and seek sanctuary within the Roman Empire.

In the summer of AD 376, huge numbers of Gothic refugees began gathering on the northern banks of the Danube, a point that is now the modern Bulgarian city of Silistra. It was a desperate and disparate group that included Goths from all tribes and clans. The Romans had an excellent record of settling and assimilating barbarian tribes going back many centuries to Caesar's conquest of Gaul; however, they were totally unprepared for the mass of humanity they were now confronted with. Roman historians put the number of refugees as high as 200,000, though a third of that number is a more realistic figure. Either way, it was an enormous number of people, even by modern standards, that would have to be disarmed, fed, housed, and settled on suitable land. Imperial border officials were quickly overwhelmed, and a delegation of Goths led by Fritigern was sent to negotiate directly with Eastern Roman Emperor Valens.

Valens was not in Constantinople but on the Armenian frontier campaigning against the Parthians when the crisis on the Danube arose, and it was many months before Fritigern reached him. Fritigern promised military service in exchange for land, and as a further show of goodwill, even converted to Valens' Arian branch of Christianity. Impressed by this show of respect and always in need of more soldiers, Valens agreed to Fritigern's terms. He even ordered the Roman border fleet on the Danube to help bring the refugees over.

It was many more months before Fritigern returned to the Balkans with the good news. During this time, the situation had worsened considerably. The food and supplies the Goths had brought with them had long been exhausted, and the Huns were beginning to drive toward the Danube. When Fritigern announced that he had struck a deal with the Romans, many Goths did not wait for the Imperial ships to arrive but instead waded into the swollen summer currents and drowned attempting to swim across. For weeks, the Danube teemed with rafts and crafts of all kinds as tens of thousands of men, women, and children of all ages poured across to what they believed would be their safe haven. They were sorely mistaken.

Valens ordered his border officials to provide the refugees with temporary food and shelter until they could be settled farther south in Roman Thrace; unfortunately, the two leading officials on the scene were Lupicinus, the local governor, and Maximus, the commander of the frontier troops. Even by the notoriously avaricious standards of Roman provincial officials, these two men stood out for their wanton greed, and they predictably saw in the desperate hordes of refugees an opportunity to line their own pockets. Instead of feeding the Goths, they sold them rotting food at inflated prices. When the Goths ran out of money, they were offered a pound of bread for every slave they handed over. When the slaves ran out, they bartered their children in exchange for dogs to eat.

The Goths were a proud people, and it was not long before disaffection began to spread. They could not understand why they were being made to starve instead being allowed to settle on land of their own, as was the agreement Fritigern had struck with the Romans. Eventually the deprivation and humiliation proved too much and they broke out of their riverside camps and began moving south toward the Roman city of Marcianople. Though the Goths were not yet in open revolt, the situation was rapidly spinning out of control, and Lupicinus and Maximus found themselves in a precarious position. The border garrisons were too small and thinly spread to corral the Goths back into their camps. They could hardly send to Constantinople for reinforcements without revealing their own wicked activities. The two schemers instead hatched a plot that would have dire consequences, both for themselves and the entire Empire.

As the Goths approached Marcianople, the Romans invited Fritigern and the Gothic leadership into the city to negotiate over a sumptuous banquet in the governor's palace. The plan was to ply

ABOVE: Valens was unprepared for the vicious war that erupted with the Goths. LEFT: Emperor Valens appealed to Western Roman Emperor Gratian for troops but only received second-rate auxiliaries. OPPOSITE: Dislodged by the Huns in the 4th century, the Goths crossed the Danube into Roman territory. Roman treachery sparked the Gothic uprising.

the barbarians with food, wine, and women until they were sufficiently distracted, then murder them all and cut any potential revolt off at the head. To reassure Fritigern that nothing was amiss, they allowed him to bring into the city a small armed escort of bodyguards that would remain outside the palace while he and his party feasted. They even spared the Gothic leaders the indignity of disarming before entering the banquet hall. To make sure their plans were not interfered with, a large detachment of the city's garrison was posted outside the walls to keep an eye on the anxious refugees.

At first, everything went as planned. Then, just as the festivities were getting started, a commotion erupted outside the palace. It seems that the people of Marcianople had come to despise the hordes of Goths milling about their countryside, eating their crops and defiling their land, and they decided to vent their frustrations on Fritigern's bodyguard. Sneers and jeers quickly led to fists and stones, and eventually weapons were drawn and a deadly brawl broke out. The clamor caused everyone inside the palace to panic and spring the trap prematurely. In the ensuing melee, all the Gothic leaders were killed except for the wily Fritigern, who managed to fight his way out and even steal a horse before escaping.

Outside the walls, the Goths heard the fighting inside the city and immediately realized that the Romans had once again double crossed them. Their patience finally snapped. If the Romans would not honor their agreement, then they would take what was owed to them. Though poorly armed, they attacked and slaughtered the Romans troops keeping watch over them and took their weapons. Fritigern returned to find the clan banners unfurled and the war horns blaring. Even if he wanted to, there was now no containing his peoples' fury. The Gothic Revolt had begun.

The Goths did not have the means to take the city, so they instead swarmed the countryside, pillaging Roman farms and villas and butchering the inhabitants. Lupicinus scrambled together what troops he could and confronted the horde about nine miles west of Marcianople in a last-ditch effort to end the Gothic problem once and for all. In the short, fierce battle that followed, the outnumbered Romans were annihilated. Lupicinus was last seen galloping back to Marcianople having abandoned his troops, standards, and weapons to the enemy.

The Goths spent the following year rampaging unchecked across the Balkans. Thousands of Romans slaves, many of them Goths recently sold into bondage, rebelled against their masters and joined Fritigern's growing horde. Many of these erstwhile slaves proved invaluable sources of local intelligence, readily pointing out hidden stores of food, horses, and weapons. The isolated Roman garrisons could only watch helplessly from their city walls as the countryside burned and the barbarians' numbers swelled. Fritigern tried to take Adrianople but was repulsed due to a lack of siege weapons. Still, the Goths scored a victory of sorts when a large garrison of Roman troops of Gothic origin mutinied en masse and marched out to join the invaders.

By that point Valens had noticed the escalating emergency in the Balkans and transferred some of his veteran units from the east under the command of his trusted generals, Trajan and Profuturus. He also asked for reinforcements from his nephew, Western Roman Emperor Gratian. The western emperor duly dispatched the aging but experienced General Frigeridus and the commander of his household troops, Richomeres, to the east with a large force drawn from his Gallic Field Army. Unfortunately, Gratian was dealing with his own border troubles and the troops he sent were largely second-rate auxiliaries. A great many deserted before even leaving for the Balkans.

Trajan and Profuturus originally sought to bottle the Goths up in the Balkan Mountains where starvation and the elements would do the fighting for them. It was a shrewd strategy but it was poorly executed, and in the summer of AD 377 a large force of Goths led by Fritigern managed to evade the blockaders and move north out of the mountains, back towards the Danube. Trajan and Profuturus pursued them and en route linked up with Frigeridus and Richomeres. The latter took command of the combined Roman force and followed the Goths to a fertile meadow near the mouth of a river called Ad Salices or "Place by the Willows." Like Lupicinus, he hoped to quash the Gothic revolt in one decisive encounter.

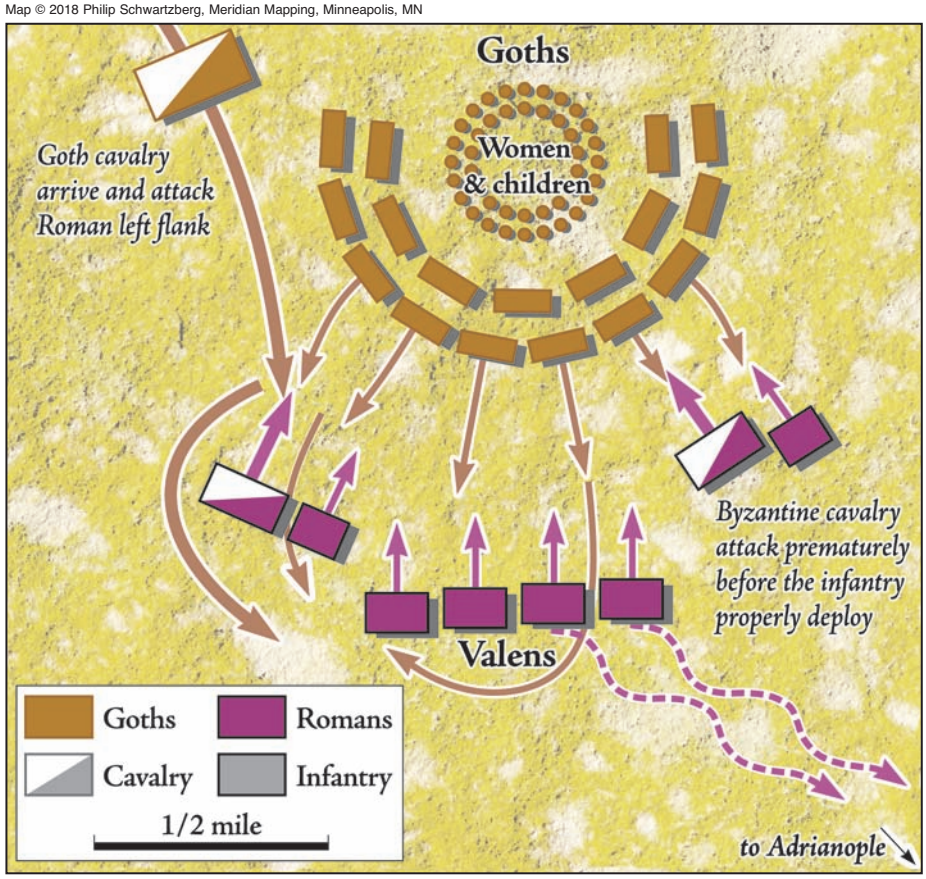
The Goths were well informed of the Romans' movements, and as they waited for them to arrive, they fortified themselves in a carrago, a type of wagon laager common to the peoples of the Eurasian Steppe. They also sent out calls for help to other scattered parties of Goths along the Danube. Their calls were answered, and by the time the Romans arrived to do battle their numbers had grown considerably. The exact number of Gothic warriors is unknown, but there were more than the 12,000 men the Romans had. Most would have been infantry armed with a combination of captured Roman arms and traditional Gothic weapons like battle axes

Lempertz, Cologne

and huge war clubs with fire-hardened points.

The exact date of the Battle of Ad Salices is unfortunately lost to history, but it was most likely sometime during the late summer of AD 377. The two armies met shortly after dawn. Fritigern moved first, occupying a section of high ground that gave him a commanding view of the enemy movements. Having taken their positions, the two sides advanced cautiously toward one another, shoulder to shoulder, shields overlapping. Just as it looked like the front lines were about to meet, they halted and stared at each other like two heavyweight prize fighters sizing each other up before a match. The legionnaires broke the silence by sounding their barritus war cry, an ironically Germanic chant that began with a low rumble that swelled to a deafening roar. The Goths responded in their own traditional way by blowing war horns and yelling the names of their ancestors. Amid this cacophony of voices and instruments, the orders to attack were given, and the two sides crashed into each other.

For most of the day the two shield walls jostled back and forth, the Goths smashing heads with their hammers and clubs, the Romans hamstringing legs with their swords. At a certain point, a fierce Gothic charge broke the Roman left. But Richomeres committed his reserves and the line



ABOVE: Believing they were superior in battle to the Goths, the Roman commanders launched weak attacks that were easily repulsed. In a well-orchestrated counterattack, the Goths carved up the Roman army. OPPOSITE: Valens watched his left flank melt away as the Gothic cavalry rolled it up. Entire cohorts of Roman infantry disappeared beneath the Gothic horsemen as they drove inexorably through the Roman ranks.

was quickly restored. The opponents disengaged at dusk. Both commanders sent their cavalry in to run down any stragglers. Both sides were utterly exhausted and badly bloodied by the day's hard fighting. The Romans, in particular, suffered greatly because they had fewer men than the Goths. Richomeres spent a week laying siege to the Gothic wagon fort, but his losses were such that he could no longer seriously challenge Fritigern and the Romans marched back south.

Valens was furious when he heard that Ad Salices had not been a decisive victory. He sacked Trajan and replaced him with Sebastian, a decorated general with years of campaigning experience on both the western and eastern frontiers. The reason that Richomeres was not blamed remains a mystery. Perhaps it was because he returned to the west immediately after the battle to cajole more troops out of Gratian. Sebastian enacted a divide and conquer strategy that involved once again blockading as many Goths as possible in the Balkan Mountains while still keeping a watchful eye on Fritigern and his band along the Danube. Sebastian's tactics proved extremely effective and soon the Goths trapped in the mountains were growing increasingly desperate. But just when it seemed that their luck had run out, Fritigern did the unthinkable and struck a deal with the same Huns and Alans that had driven the Goths out of their homeland.

The Huns and Alans, lured by promises of booty, poured into Roman territory and rapidly overwhelmed the thinly spread Roman troops guarding the mountain passes. Sebastian was forced to abandon his divide and conquer methods and consolidate his forces in the towns and cities, leaving the barbarians the run of the countryside. After the drubbing at Ad Salices the Romans were anxious to avoid another pitched battle and they instead fought a hit-and-run campaign with the invaders in a desperate effort to buy time until reinforcements arrived. When at Diabaltum a column of elite Roman infantry was ambushed and destroyed almost to a man by a force of Gothic cavalry, Roman morale sank completely. As the year came to an end, the Imperial commanders concluded that only a major joint expedition by both the eastern and western Imperial armies could defeat the Goths.

In the spring of AD 378, Valens made a hasty peace with the Persians and returned to Constantinople to plan the campaign against the Goths. He found his citizens in a violent uproar. The people were furious about the situation in the Balkans and they blamed their emperor for letting it get so out of hand. Valens took their vitriol personally. He was not a bad emperor. Actually, he had governed the east admirably well for more than a decade. But he had never been loved by his people and he resented them for it. Part of his unpopularity was due to his Arian Christian faith, which set him apart from the Catholic majority. Nevertheless, Valens also was by all accounts a boorish, cruel, and vindictive man. His bowlegged, potbellied frame and squinting, curmudgeonly demeanor matched his personality and inspired more snickers and jokes than confidence or loyalty.

The anger in the capital also fueled Valens' growing envy and distrust of his nephew Gratian. The western emperor, even though he was just 19 years old, already possessed all of the good attributes that his uncle lacked. He was handsome, endearing, and sophisticated. Everyone loved him. Worse yet, while the Goths had been making fools of Valens' generals in the Balkans, in the West, Gratian had led his legions to glorious victories against the barbarian tribes

AKG Images

of the Rhine frontier. Stories of his bravery and ingenuity in battle were the talk of the Empire. Valens, who had deeply resented having to ask his nephew for troops the year before, was stung by this news and loathed having to work with him in the coming campaign. He had no illusions as to who would get the glory in the event of a major victory over the Goths.

The mood in Constantinople was so volatile that after only 10 days Valens moved his headquarters to the Imperial estate of Melanthias, about 12 miles west of the capital. Here he consolidated his forces and planned his next moves with his commanders. To ensure his troops' loyalty after their exposure to so much dissent in the capital, he prudently saw to it that they were paid and well supplied. He also ordered Sebastian, his most successful commander, to take a picked force of 2,000 men and distract the Goths by waging a guerrilla campaign against some of the smaller war bands.

For the next few months, the advantage seemed to shift back to the Romans. The Goths and their allies were dispersed along the fertile river valleys of the Eastern Balkans, mostly between Marcianople in the north and Adrianople in the south. Sebastian's hit-and-run tactics proved surprisingly successful in ambushing and destroying unwary raiding parties. At the same time in the Western Balkans, Frigeridus succeeded in blocking the westward mountain passes, effectively trapping the barbarians where they were. In June, more good news arrived, this time from Gratian. He had finally restored order to the Rhine and was sailing down the Danube with an army of his own. Encouraged by these fortuitous events, in July Valens marched north to Adrianople to link up with his nephew.

Fritigern noticed the Roman noose tightening and he too began calling together the scattered war bands and consolidating them into a single fighting force. When he learned that Valens had arrived at Adrianople and was showing no signs of moving any farther, he marched south toward the town of Nice, about 16 miles southeast of Adrianople. It was a sound plan. Taking the town would cut the Romans off from the capital, severing their main supply line and forcing Valens into either a risky battle or out of the Eastern Balkans entirely.

When Valens heard of the Goths' moves his patience, never one of his strongest virtues, began to run out. Richomeres had returned from the west with news that Gratian had run into a sizable force of Alans and would be delayed. A heated debate ensued among Gratian's officers as to how to proceed. Sebastian urged Valens to strike now before the barbarians cut them off. The scouts put the Goths' numbers at no more than 10,000, half the size of Valens' force. He argued that if they struck fast enough, victory was assured. Richomeres pleaded with Valens to stay put and await Gratian's arrival. If the scouts were wrong, the combined eastern and western army could deal with whatever the barbarians threw at them.

While the generals argued, an Arian priest claiming to be an emissary from Fritigern arrived in Adrianople with a surprising offer. The old man announced that the Goths were still willing to accept the original terms of land for military service. If Valens were to ensure that this time the terms were honored, so would Fritigern. Before leaving, the priest slipped Valens a note from Fritigern. It said that the Gothic leader and his people desperately wanted to avoid battle and that a Roman show of force was all that was needed to convince the Goths to lay down their arms.

This was all Valens needed to hear. He now had definitive proof that the Goths were on their last legs. If he moved quickly enough, he could defeat Fritigern decisively without his nephew's help and win all the glory for himself. Richomeres and a few other officers continued to urge patience, but Valens refused to hear it. At dawn on August 9, AD 378, he confidently led his army out of Adrianople toward what he was sure would be the crowning achievement of his reign.

Valens' roughly 20,000 men more closely resembled a medieval army than one of Caesar's legions. Years of warfare with barbarian tribes had profoundly changed the look and armament of the Roman military. Iconic classical features like the segmentata plate armor, the rectangular scutum shield, and the short, wide gladius sword had long since disappeared. They were replaced by barbarian-style chain mail tunics, oval shields, and longer, narrower swords. Even the famous

pilum throwing javelin had been largely superseded by a taller, heavier stabbing spear, though smaller throwing spears were still carried.

Another example of the changing face of Roman warfare was the growing reliance on cavalry. Almost a quarter of Valens' troops were on horseback. This percentage was a significant increase over classical Roman armies. His cavalry units would have varied from lightly armed skirmishers and horse archers to heavily armored cataphracts like those fielded by Persian, Armenian, and future Byzantine armies; however, most would have been armed and armored similar to the infantry with chain mail shirts and oval shields, but longer swords and spears more practical for cavalrymen.

The Romans followed the main road northwest toward where Valens' scouts reported the Goths to be. They advanced in a long column with the cavalry at the head and rear and the infantry in the center. It was the height of an extremely hot Balkan summer and by mid-morning the temperature was already brutally high. The army plodded along the rough, hilly terrain for about eight miles until stumbling upon a series of Gothic carragos on a low hill in the middle of a dry plain. Valens was thrilled to discover that his scouts were right that the Goths had no more than 10,000 warriors. They were joined by many thousands more women and children, but they were of no concern. Despite the fact that it was now early afternoon and his troops and horses had been roasting all day in their armor without food or rest, Valens gave the order to deploy for battle.

With every passing moment the Gothic ring tightened, squeezing the Romans until they could barely lift their weapons to defend themselves. From all directions wild-eyed Goths hammered and slashed at the hapless legionaries while a storm of deadly projectiles rained overhead. It soon became impossible to tell friend from foe.

Had Valens bothered to reconnoiter the surrounding countryside, he probably would have discovered that the warriors on the hill were only part of Fritigern's force. Foraging not far away were 5,000 Gothic horsemen. Most were members of the Gothic Greuthungi tribe, which had taken advantage of the chaos in the Balkans to cross the Danube the summer before. They were commanded by the Gothic chieftains Alatheus and Saphrax and would likely have included contingents of Huns and Alans. Gothic horses were larger than their Roman counterparts and Gothic horsemen rode into battle with a heavier assortment of armor and weaponry, including scale armor, large, round shields, and long lances.

The Romans deployed in their standard battle formation of infantry in the center and cavalry on either side. Valens and his staff took position with his household cavalry on the right side of the line, which was the traditional place of honor. Virtually the entire army was committed to battle, and only a small force of Batavian auxiliaries was held in reserve some distance to the rear. Moving tens of thousands of troops from a marching formation to a battle line was a difficult undertaking and Valens, anxious to engage to Goths as soon as possible, quickly grew frustrated by the slow progress.

Fritigern had the opposite problem. Though he also deployed his troops on the crest of the low hill in front of the wagon forts, seemingly ready to do battle, he was desperate to avoid a fight at all costs until his cavalry returned from their foraging. To slow and confuse the Romans, he had his men light brush fires across the plain that sent dark clouds of acrid smoke wafting into the faces of the already exhausted and dehydrated legionaries. He also sent emissaries to the emperor in an effort to barter for time through negotiations. Valens, probably to buy more time for his own deployments, agreed to negotiations but only if hostages of appropriate rank were exchanged.

While the emissaries raced back and forth, Valens' troops grew more and more restless as they broiled under the blazing sun on the open plain. Suddenly, without order, the Roman cavalry on the extreme left charged the Gothic line. The sources are conflicted on whether this was due to disobedience or overzealous skirmishing. Regardless, it was a foolish move. From atop their elevated position, the Goths patiently waited behind their shield wall until the cavalry was in range then let loose a torrent of arrows and other projectiles. Before they had even reached the hill, the Roman horsemen took heavy casualties and they soon retreated in disarray back to their lines.

In the center, the infantry units watched the attack on the left and assumed that they had missed their own orders to advance in support of the cavalry. Up went the rumbling barritus war cry, and once again without orders thousands of men began marching forward, relieved that they were at last coming to grips with the enemy. From his position on the right, Valens was aghast, but there was little he could do. As an experienced commander he knew how difficult it was to pull back even the most disciplined troops once they had been committed to combat. He could only sound the trumpets and watch with bated breath as the Roman attack officially began.

The Goths watched the ironclad mass of Romans begin to move and they steeled themselves by shouting the names of their ancestors, blowing their war horns, and banging their weapons against their shields. They pelted the advancing Romans with the same arrows, stones, and javelins that brought down the cavalry, but Valens' better-armored infantry simply raised their shields in unison and continued marching forward, shoulder to shoulder, with lockstep discipline, as the projectiles lodged harmlessly in the reinforced wood and leather. When the Romans were at the foot of the hill, the Goths let out a final bellowing war cry then rolled down the slopes like a human avalanche.

The Goths collided with the Roman front line and the air rang with the thunderous clap of thousands of wooden shields slamming together. The savagery of the Gothic charge stopped the Roman advance dead in its tracks. The Gothic warriors were not just fighting for their own lives, they were fighting for the lives of their women and children cowering in the wagon forts. They hacked wildly, like men possessed, at the Roman shield wall with their clubs and battleaxes, cleaving apart any legionary foolish enough to lower his guard even for a second. Accounts tell of Goths with hamstrung legs and even severed limbs fighting tooth and nail from their knees like wounded animals. Even the most battle hardened of Valens' troops surely must have been struck by the barbarians' defiant resolve.

The Roman center briefly buckled from the momentum of the Gothic charge but recovered and held firm. The elite palace legions had deployed in the center. As the most senior and experienced units, they could be relied on to retain their composure even in the fiercest of fighting. On the Roman left, which was still in the process of deploying when battle was joined, the situation was much more precarious. There the advancing infantry ran into some of the retreating cavalry, disrupting their cohesion. Worse yet, as often happens when assaulting a defensive circle, gaps began to appear in the line; in this case, between the cavalry on the extreme left and the infantry con-

tingents to their right. The Goths saw this and they intensified their attacks in this direction, which drew more and more Roman troops toward the left.

For some time the battle ebbed and flowed with neither side gaining a discernable advantage. The gap on Valens' left continued to grow unsettlingly wide, but on his right and center, the infantry had begun to push the Goths back up the hill and were edging dangerously close to the wagon forts. Just as it seemed that the tide was at last beginning to turn in favor of the Romans, suddenly there arose from the distance a faint but distinct rumble. It grew louder and louder until out from around the western side of the hill, through the smoke, poured thousands of Gothic cavalrymen. Alatheus and Saphrax had returned.

The Gothic horsemen plunged into the weakened Roman left, easily brushing aside the disordered Roman cavalry. By then most of the Roman infantry were utterly exhausted and unprepared for this dangerous new threat. Most would have also shattered their spears in the close-quarter fighting, leaving only their swords, an ineffective weapon for facing a cavalry charge. Entire cohorts disappeared beneath the Gothic horsemen as they drove inexorably through the Romans, trampling and skewering anything in their way. The terrified legionaries crashed into each other trying to flee, and soon the entire Roman line began to crumble and devolve into a panicked mob.

From his position on the right flank, a horrified Valens watched his left flank melt away. He tried to rally his men, but before he could, more Gothic horsemen swept out from around the eastern side of the hill and a similar scene began to play out on his right. Valens immediately ordered his Batavian reserves into battle in a last-gasp effort to stave off disaster. But they had already fled the field and were nowhere to be found. There was nothing he could do but watch helplessly as the pincers of the Gothic cavalry closed around his army. Realizing the inevitable, he bravely galloped into the fray and joined his palace guards, who were still standing firm in the center.

The surrounded Roman army rapidly degenerated into a chaotic jumble of terrified men and maddened horses. With every passing moment the Gothic ring tightened, squeezing the Romans until they could barely lift their weapons to defend themselves. From all directions wild-eyed Goths hammered and slashed at the hapless legionaries while a storm of deadly projectiles rained overhead. It soon became impossible to tell friend from foe. The cloud of dust thrown up by the Gothic cavalry was so thick that it blotted out the sun and made it increasingly difficult to breathe, let alone see. Amid the press of shields, many exhausted Romans choked and collapsed to the blood-soaked grass to be trampled to death by their comrades. Eventually, officers stopped trying to shout orders over the din of screaming men, whinnying horses, crashing weapons, and splintering shields. It fell on each man to do his duty as best he could from where he stood.

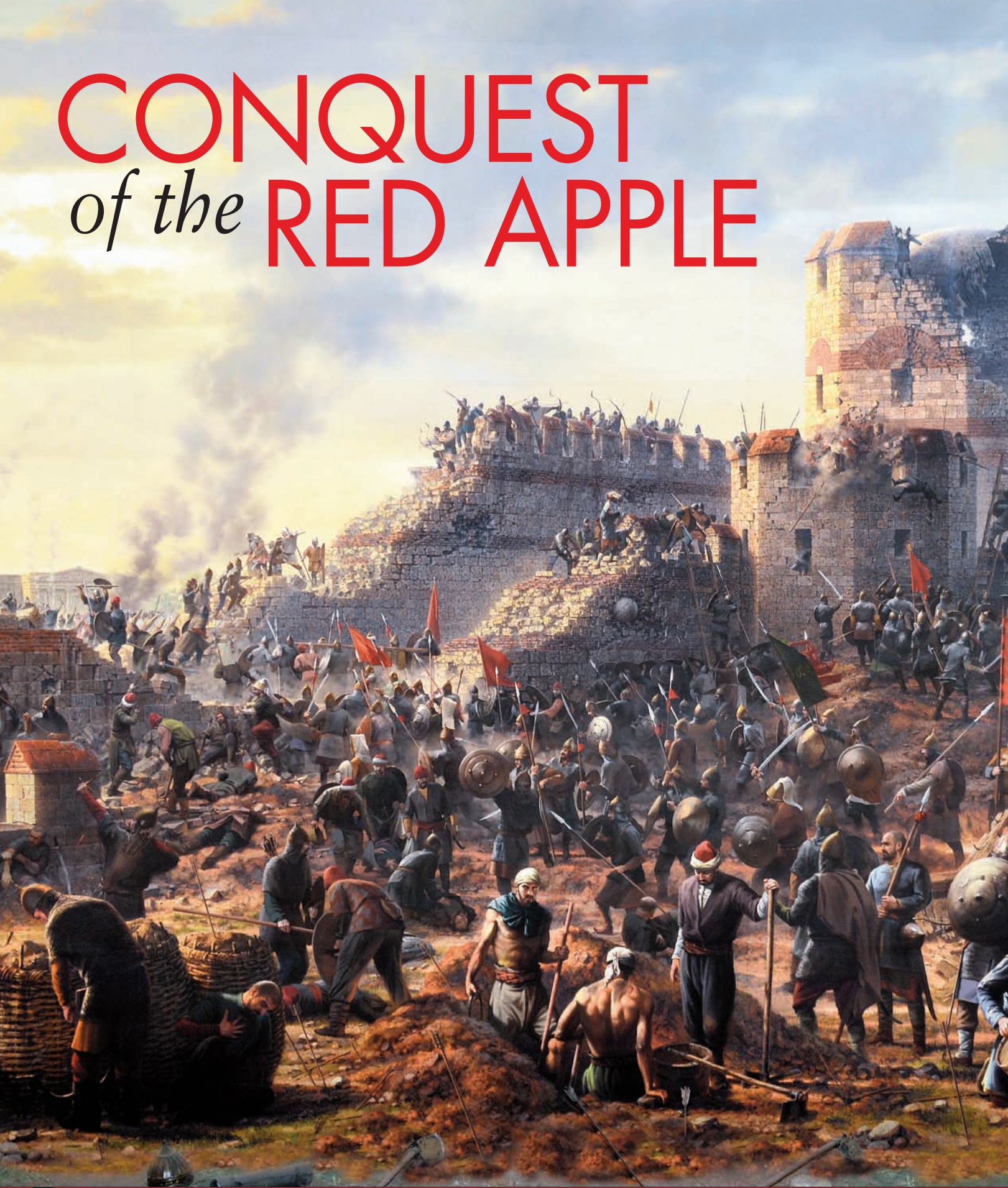
The doomed legionaries did their duty well and the fighting dragged on for hours under the blazing sun. Many Gothic warriors briefly withdrew to the wagon forts to refresh themselves and catch their breath before resuming fighting. The Romans had no choice but to fight until their last ounce of strength gave out. Gradually the mass of surrounded Romans began to diminish until only a small cluster remained to make a heroic last stand. As dusk descended on the battlefield, they too were cut down and the last ember of Roman resistance was snuffed out.

Continued on page 70

At some point in the fighting, Valens was felled by an arrow and disappeared beneath the bloody piles of corpses. Although the Goths continued their offensive, they lacked the siege equipment needed to capture Roman fortresses.

AKG Images

CONQUEST *of the* RED APPLE



Panorama 1453 Historical Museum

IN the late evening of March 29, 1432, Murad II, sultan of the Ottoman Turks, awaited the imminent birth of his child to one of his harem wives. According to tradition, Murad was reading the verses of the Koran promising victory against the unbeliever when he was told that he had a son. The son would become known as Mehmet the Conqueror.

Twenty-one years later, early in April 1453, the middle-aged Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI joined his soldiers on the walls of Constantinople. Curly haired, bearded, and lean of face, Constantine looked through eyes that had seen plenty of battles and bloodshed. They would see more, for below, only 250 yards away, sprawled the gigantic camp of the enemy. Behind a ditch and rampart, a sea of conical tents sheltered 200,000 soldiers, servants, and followers. Sultan Mehmet II, the son of Murad, had come to claim the ultimate prize in the 800-year-old war between Islam

SULTAN MEHMET II UNDERTOOK TO CONQUER THE SEEMINGLY IMPREGNABLE CITY OF CONSTANTINOPLE IN 1453. THE EFFORT PUT THE OTTOMAN ARMY TO ITS GREATEST TEST YET.

BY LUDWIG HEINRICH DYCK

and Christendom. That prize was Constantinople, capital of the Byzantine Empire, which was commonly known as the Red Apple to the Turks.

The Ottoman camp stretched across the horizon—from the north, where Constantinople's landward wall ended in the deep water inlet of the Golden Horn, to the south, where it reached to the Sea of Marmara. Cutting down orchards and vineyards, the Turks cleared the sights for their guns, including monstrous cannons the likes of which had never been seen before. In addition, a huge Ottoman fleet isolated Constantinople by sea.

To oppose the powerful forces arrayed against him, Constantine had a paltry 8,000 men, more than half of whom were armed civilians, a few outdated cannons, and a handful of ships. Such was the sorry state to which the once powerful Byzantine Empire had been reduced.

Ottoman troops breach the Byzantine defenses in the final assault on Constantinople on May 29, 1453.

The story of Constantinople began in 330, when Constantine the Great built his new Christian capital of the Roman Empire at the site of the ancient Greek colony of Byzantium. On a hilly headland jutting east into the Sea of Marmara, Constantinople stood at the crossroads of Europe and Asia and of the Black and Mediterranean Seas. Made rich through trade, Constantinople flourished to become a city of 500,000 people. Famed were its riches, its towering arches and columns, its marble palaces and mesmerizing mosaics, its gardens, and awe-inspiring churches.

The Byzantines were continually at war. Yet whenever the hour was darkest, Constantinople was the unbreakable bastion of strength. A procession of barbarian invaders from across the Danube was deflected westward. While the Western Roman Empire succumbed to the barbarians, the eastern part endured. In the Middle East, the Byzantines grappled with the Persians until both were swept aside by the Arabs. United by Muhammad and Islam, the Arabs carried their holy war to the gates of Constantinople. Both in 678 and in 718, the city was saved by Greek fire, which obliterated the Arab fleets; however, in Anatolia warfare with the Muslims raged on, even as, from the 11th century onward, the Turks supplanted the Arabs as rulers of most of the Muslim world.

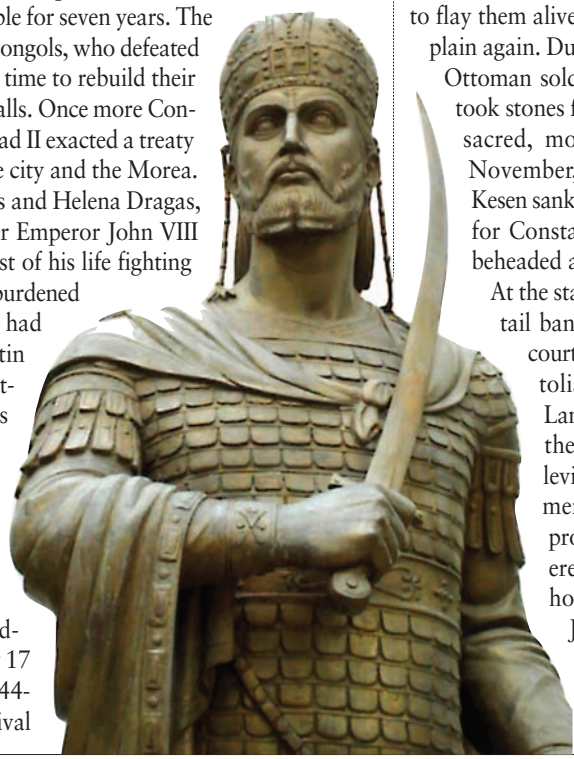
It was not Muslims, however, but Christians who dealt Constantinople the crippling blow. Embroiled in a Byzantine civil war, the crusaders of the Fourth Crusade sacked Constantinople in 1204. Religious animosity between the Latin and Greek churches intensified the brutality of the crusaders and the ruin wrought by the six decades of subsequent Latin rule. When the exiled Byzantines under Michael VIII reclaimed Constantinople, the city was a shadow of its former self. Further beset with civil wars, the Black Death, and earthquakes, Constantinople's population plummeted to 100,000.

In the Middle East the heyday of the crusades had barely passed when the Mongols overran the land and built their Ilkhan Empire. When the Mongol empire in turn began to wane, various Turkish factions vied to refill the power vacuum. At this time, a small tribe in western Anatolia began its meteoric rise under its namesake Othman. Embracing the cause of the ghazi, the holy warrior of Islam, Othman wrested lands and cities from the Byzantines. Purportedly Othman experienced a visionary dream of conquest in which the moon rose from the chest of Sheik Edebali and set in Othman's own. From Othman's chest then grew a great tree, its branches spread across the sky and from its roots flowed four mighty rivers. A wind blew up and the sword-like leaves pointed to Constantinople.

Othman's successors carried their crescent moon banners to victory against rival Turks and Byzantines. In 1346 the Ottomans first crossed into Europe to take part in another Byzantine civil war. Gaining a toehold in Gallipoli in 1354, the Ottomans set out to enlarge their Balkan domains. In 1361 they seized Adrianople and made it their capital. At the turn of the 15th century, the Ottomans laid siege to Constantinople for seven years. The city was saved by advent of Tamerlane, last of the great Mongols, who defeated the Ottomans at Angora in 1402. The Ottomans needed time to rebuild their power, but in 1422 they were back at Constantinople's walls. Once more Constantinople avoided conquest, though the pragmatic Murad II exacted a treaty that reduced the Byzantine Empire to little more than the city and the Morea.

In 1449, Constantine XI, son of Manuel II Palaeologus and Helena Dragas, was crowned emperor following the death of his brother Emperor John VIII in 1448. Virtuous and brave, Constantine had spent most of his life fighting in the Morea. The empire he inherited was bankrupt and burdened with tribute. It was also torn with internal strife. John had brought about a union of the fractured Greek and Latin churches, gaining Pope Eugenius IV's support but infuriating Constantinople's Orthodox population. There also was antagonism between the city's mercantile factions, the Genoese and the Venetians. Yet through it all, Constantine remained emboldened by a spirit of unwavering patriotism.

Only two years after Constantine became emperor, Murad passed away from illness and was succeeded by Mehmet II. Hawk-nosed, with sensuous lips and a red-tinged beard, Mehmet was tall and strong. Although only 17 years old, Mehmet had already reigned as Sultan in 1444-1446 when Murad temporarily abdicated to deal with rival Turks in Anatolia. However, the boy-sultan was overwhelmed by the invasion of a Hungarian-Polish army and by Constantinople's release of prince Orhan, a pretender to the sultanship. Murad had to return to save his empire, leaving Mehmed embarrassed.



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Mehmet's lackluster trial run convinced the Christian sovereigns that he was naive and in the hands of his peace-loving vizier, the white-bearded Halil Pasha; however, in reality Mehmet was anything but harmless. One of his first acts was to have his remaining brother and potential rival, an infant, drowned. No dullard, Mehmet studied the Koran, history, geography, and science and learned multiple languages. Above all, though, Mehmet idolized Alexander the Great. He fancied himself an Islamic version who would conquer the west just as Alexander had conquered the east.

When the Byzantines arrogantly demanded that Mehmet double the stipend for Orhan's confinement, Mehmet was given a handy excuse for war. He confiscated the taxes for Orhan's upkeep. He then further provoked the Byzantines by building a new fortress six miles north of Constantinople, on the European side of the Bosphorus Strait. The new fortress became known as Bogaz Kesen, which means throat-cutter, because only 700 yards of water separated it from an older Turkish fortress on the Anatolian side and between them the two fortresses could choke off any traffic to and from the Black Sea. When Byzantine envoys complained, Mehmet told them their city owned nothing beyond its walls. He threatened to flay them alive if they dared return to complain again. During the fortress construction Ottoman soldiers killed local farmers and took stones from outlying ruined, but still sacred, monasteries and churches. In November, cannon fire from Bogaz Kesen sank a Venetian ship carrying food for Constantinople. Its survivors were beheaded and its captain impaled.

At the start of 1453 the sultan's horse-tail banner was set up in the palace courtyard, calling to arms the Anatolian and European armies. Land-holding sipahi cavalry and their retainers, azap infantry levied from peasants and craftsmen, and Christian auxiliaries provided by Balkan vassals gathered to join the sultan's household troops, the Kapikulu, the Janissaries, cavalry regiments, gunners, and special body guard units. The Muslims were motivated by the holy

war, which sanctioned three days of plunder of any city taken by force, especially since that city would be the Red Apple.

The surrounding population gathered into Constantinople and the gates were shut. The cisterns and granaries had been filled to capacity. Fall turned to winter as Constantine prepared for war. Only 5,000 men volunteered to augment Constantine's 2,000 professional soldiers. Precious little help arrived from afar. Pope Nicolas V sent Cardinal Isidore of Kiev with 200 archers, whose main mission, however, was to make sure the church union was celebrated in St. Sophia basilica on December 12. Afterward the general population shunned St. Sophia like a heathen temple. Constantine also gained support from Gabriel Trevisano and his Venetian captains; three Genoese brothers, Antonio, Paolo, and Troilo Bocchiardo; a Castilian nobleman; and a handful of Catalans. Most important, there arrived on January 26, 1453, Giovanni Giustiniani Longo. Connected to the great families of the Genoa Republic, Giustiniani brought with him two large galleons and 700 professional soldiers from Genoa, Rhodes, and Chios. The sight of the heavily armored soldiers arrayed on the decks awed and encouraged the gathered population.

Constantinople's greatest assets were its legendary defenses. The sea lapped two sides of the roughly triangular city. The Sea of Marmara, with its hazardous currents and unpredictable storms, washed against Constantinople's southeastern sea wall. The northern sea wall was more vulnerable, running along the Golden Horn inlet with its anchorage for two main harbors and water gates. To close off the inlet, a massive 300-yard-long iron chained boom could be drawn from Constantinople to Galata, the otherwise neutral and independent Genoese colony on the north shore.

The only way to attack Constantinople by land was from the west but there towered the wall of Theodosius. Besieged 23 times since being built in the early 5th century, the land wall had never fallen to an invader. The fortifications consisted of a 40-foot-high inner wall with 112 60-foot-high towers, a 25-foot-high outer wall with 80 additional towers, and a rampart overlooking the fosse, a 60-foot-wide and 15-foot-deep ditch.

The weakest spot in Theodosius's wall was in the center, where the wall sloped down across the Lycus River valley. From the valley summits an attacker could fire down upon the wall. Furthermore, since the Lycus entered the city through a culvert, the fosse was not as deep. Another vulnerable spot was along the northern section where the wall jutted outward

Panorama 1453 Historical Museum

ABOVE: Sultan Mehmet II and his troops arrive outside Constantinople on April 2, 1453. Ten days later he began a steady bombardment of the city with powerful bombards and trebuchets. OPPOSITE: Byzantine Emperor Constantine XI Palaeologus led the defense of the city and fought alongside its defenders.

around the sacred shrine of the Virgin. Although built on a rocky outcrop, the wall was reduced to a single line of fortifications and the fosse mostly discontinued.

Constantine set up his headquarters behind the central section and placed Giustiniani, an expert in wall fighting, in command of its defense. The northern section of the land wall was allotted to the three Bocchiardi brothers. The southern section was held by a mix of Greeks, Genoese, and Venetians. Orhan commanded the sea wall along the Marmara. The old sea dog Grand Duke Lucas Notaras defended the Golden Horn with the small Byzantine navy.

The Ottoman army arrived on April 2. The Balkan troops took position along the northern sector of the land wall, the Anatolian troops along the southern. The Janissaries, distinguished by their tall Bork white-felt caps and clean-shaven, mustachioed faces, deployed in the center. Their soldiers were recruited from Christian prisoners of war and from the first generation of the Devsirme, the infamous child tax. Taken from subjugated Balkan Christians, the youths had undergone intense military training and Islamic indoctrination. They were the finest infantry of the 15th century. The Janissaries protected Mehmet's red and gold pavilion and his white and gold banner. Another Ottoman force under Zaganos Pasha, a Christian renegade, deployed across the Golden Horn, facing Constantinople's northern sea wall. The discipline of the more than 60,000 Ottoman soldiers was exemplary; there was none of the gambling, boozing, and whoring that characterized Christian armies.

The Ottoman artillery made its way along the 150 miles from Edirne. Through spring rains and muddy roads, bellowing oxen pulled sturdy wooden wagons laden with cannon barrels. One of the cannons was so huge that it needed 60 oxen to pull it, 200 men to stabilize it, and another

National Archives

200 to level the ground ahead. This was the mightiest of Mehmet's bombards, his Royal Gun. The creation of Hungarian master cannon founder Urban, the Royal Gun featured the newer and larger bronze casting and used powerful granulated powder. Its barrel was 27 feet long, with a 30-inch-diameter bore and an 8-inch-thick barrel, and its stone shot weighed 1,500 pounds. Urban boasted that his cannons could level the walls of Babylon.

Mehmet tested Constantinople's defenses on April 6, but only the lighter guns had arrived and their weak shot bounced harmlessly off the walls. The first assault by thousands of disorderly irregulars was likewise easily brushed off. Five days later all the heavier guns had arrived. Urban's Royal Gun was deployed right in front of Mehmet's tent, facing the St. Romanus Gate. In total there were around 12 great bombards and 56 smaller cannons in addition to the more traditional trebuchets.

On April 12 the great Ottoman guns erupted with thunderous explosions, the sound reverberating through the hulls of the ships in the Golden Horn and carrying across the Bosphorus. The great stone shot brought down whole sections of the walls and, alongside the looping rock projectiles of the trebuchets, fired into the city.

At midday Ottoman galleys were sighted from the southern sea wall. With oars plying against the wind, the ships grew in number until their masts covered the sea like a forest. Admiral Baltaoglu had arrived with a fleet of war galleys, triremes, biremes, fustae, light brigantines, transport barges, and other boats, totaling between 140 to 200 vessels. Seeing the Byzantine-Italian fleet arrayed in front of the boom, the Ottoman ships continued on north for two miles to a harbor called the Double Columns.

At that point, Baltaoglu limited his fleet's activities to the blockade. The city bombardment, meanwhile, caused more panic than actual damage. Because of Constantinople's shrunken population, projectiles were more likely to bury themselves in an orchard than hit a person or even a building. As for the Royal Gun, it took two hours to load and could only fire six or eight times a day. Eventually, the immense heat and pressure cracked the barrel, and it blew up in a fearsome explosion.

More worrisome was the concentrated cannon fire hitting the central wall. Giustiniani organized the repair of the growing gaps. Day and night, drenched in rain or sweating in the sun, men and women, young and old, laymen and clergy alike, toiled to erect a makeshift rampart of logs, rubble, and earth.

On April 18 Mehmet launched the first great assault on the outer wall. Yelling "Yagma! Yagma!" (plunder), the Turks came on with a fury but were swept back with arrows, crossbow bolts, and musket fire. "Strewn like a bed of tulips ... the ground was red with the blood of the champions of our religion," wrote Sa'd-ud-din, a 16th-century Ottoman chronicler.

The Turkish galleys, meanwhile, bore upon the line of Christian ships protecting the boom. The thick-hulled Christian carracks shrugged off the flaming arrows, metal bolts, and small cannon balls that spat forth from the Turkish galleys. From lofty fore-and-aft castles, arquebusiers blasted straight into the Turks on the galley decks below, exacting a ghastly toll. The Turks threw grappling hooks and clambered up the carrack sides on ladders but the Christians hacked at them with swords and axes. By the morning of April 19, the Turks had been defeated on land and at sea. Infuriated, Mehmet had to be restrained from catapulting his own dead into the city.

Two days after the failed assault, three large Genoese warships and a large Byzantine grain ship approached the city from the Sea of Marmara. Baltaoglu sallied forth to intercept them but the great sails of the Christian ships billowed in the wind and their mighty bows crashed through the slim and low galleys of the Ottomans. Constantinople's spectators broke out in jubilation but then, suddenly, the wind stopped. The Ottoman galleys swarmed around the immobilized Genoese and Byzantine ships but in a repeat of the earlier naval battle were flung back by the Christians defending from higher ground. When the wind picked up again, the Christian ships gained the safety of the Horn. Mehmet wanted to impale Baltaoglu, but he was dissuaded to personally thrash him with a stick. Stripped of his command, Baltaoglu was replaced with Hamza Bey. Hoping that their failures would induce the Turks to consider a peaceful resolution, Constantine sent envoys. Halil was urged to end the siege in exchange for a huge tribute, adding that the apple was not yet ripe but in time would fall into Mehmet's lap. In opposition, Zaganos talked of glory and battle, reflecting Mehmet's own wishes and re-stoking his resolve.

As Mehmet saw it, the problem was that his fleet could not get through the boom and put pressure on the northern sea wall. So he decided on April 22 to haul all but his largest galleys overland to a stream called the Springs, from which the ships entered the Golden Horn. "It was an extraordinary sight to behold ... the ships being carried over the dry land as if sailing on the sea," wrote15th-century Greek historian Kritovoulos.

Seizing the initiative, Venetian and Genoese ships set out to destroy the Ottoman fleet moored at the Springs. Things went downhill from the beginning when Captain Giacomo Coco inexplicably charged ahead. A Turkish cannon shot straight through his fustae, which did not "stay afloat as long as it took to say ten Our Fathers," recounted Nicolo Barbaro, a surgeon of the Venetian fleet. The Turks sank several ships and captured 40 Christians. In view of the walls, the captives were impaled through the rectum. The Byzantines responded by hanging Ottoman prisoners off the battlements.

The end of April witnessed another massive Turkish assault on the land wall. "The Turks

walked over the broken corpses crammed to the top and fought on, for the dead resembled a bridge or stairway to the city," wrote 15th-century Russian monk Nestor Iskander. Demoralized by the relentless attacks, Constantine's councilors urged him to escape from the doomed city; however, Constantine refused to leave the churches and the people and vowed to fight on.

On May 7 the fighting nearly claimed the life of Giustiniani, who was pressed hard by the slashing blade of a Janissary named Murat. Giustiniani was saved by a Greek who leaped from the wall and severed Murat's leg with an axe. During the same day, Rhangabes, one of the bravest Greek commanders, fought Omar Bey, standard bearer of the Ottoman European army. Stepping on a rock, the powerful Omar sheared through Rhangabes' shoulder and sliced him in two. On May 12 Anatolian troops even managed to enter the city near the palace but were driven out by a battle-crazed Constantine leading a counterattack.

Over the course of a 10-day period beginning May 15, Mehmet tried to undermine the walls. The ground was nearly impervious rock but Mehmet had at his disposal Saxon silver miners. Recruited from Serbian vassal states, the Saxons were masters at cutting through mountains. Buckets of water were placed along the wall to show ripples from subterranean vibrations. John Grant, a Scot from Germany, led the anti-mining counterattacks. His men suffocated the Saxons with smoke, dropped stink bombs, blew up or flooded the tunnels, and even fought hand to hand with the enemy. Captured Saxons were tortured, interrogated, and decapitated, their heads thrown from the walls.

Mehmet also built a gigantic siege tower, the Helepolis, or City-Taker. From the top Ottoman archers shot down at the Byzantines near the Charisian Gate. Out of lower tower openings, the Turks shoveled earth into the fosse. Giustiniani rolled powder barrels below the tower and blew it up. "The earth roared like a great thunder and lifted up the siege turrets and the men to the clouds, like a mighty storm ... people and logs fell from high," wrote Iskander.

The ceaseless assaults continued to wear down the defenders' morale. Surely the Turks were the scourge of God, come to punish the Christians for their sins. People recalled the ancient prophecy that an emperor Constantine would both give birth to the city and preside over its demise. Ominous signs occurred or were imagined. A partial eclipse caused the nearly full moon to look like the crescent of Islam. The Hodegetria, the most sacred icon of Mary and Jesus, slipped to the ground during a procession. A frightful storm broke out, followed by a thick fog and an eerie light hovering on St. Sophia's dome. On May 23 a brigantine that had slipped through the Ottoman blockade returned, having found no sign of the long awaited papal fleet.

Despite all the gloom and doom, the Christians were closer to victory than they thought. The Turks were frustrated because no matter how hard they tried, the Christian defense refused to break. Although the Ottomans were meticulous in burning corpses, keeping their water supplies clean, and properly disposing of excrement, for any large army the specter of disease was never far away. In addition, supplies were rapidly diminishing. Mehmet offered to raise the siege if Constantinople paid an outrageous annual tribute of 100,000 bezants, or to spare the population if the city was evacuated. Constantine's refusal prompted another war council on May 26. Once more, though, Zaganos's bravado overshadowed Halil's defeatism. There would be one last, all or nothing assault.

From the morning of May 27 into the evening of the next day, a veritable storm of cannon balls thundered against the walls. Mehmet promised wealth and slaves for the brave and torture and death for cowards. Imams and Bektasi dervishes recited holy verses. On Mehmet's orders, each tent lit two camp fires. The whole horizon glimmered like a giant crescent pointing at Constantinople.

Giustiniani was on the walls on the eve of May 27 when an incoming artillery projectile hurled

Alamy

ABOVE: When his fleet was unable to enter the Golden Horn, the sultan ordered his troops to haul the Ottoman galleys overland. In the final assault, they forced open the sea gates. OPPOSITE: Ottoman gunners played a central role in the siege. Their stone shot brought down whole sections of the city's massive walls, opening large breaches.

a stone splinter into his chest. He spent the night under a doctor's supervision and the next morning needed to be carried to inspect the defenses. Priests were leading a singing and praying procession from St. Sophia through the city and along the walls. Displaying the Hodegetria and other relics, they sprinkled holy water on the soldiers. By the late afternoon of the 28th, Giustiniani had recovered to resume full command. Constantine called together his followers and commanders. Eyewitness Archbishop Leonard of Chios recounted Constantine's words: "Today is your day of glory, on which, if you shed even one drop of blood you will prepare for yourself a martyr's crown and immortal glory."

Catholic and Orthodox attended evening Mass in St. Sophia. Past rivalries that had divided the Christians at that point seemed trivial. The limestone of Theodosius's wall shone bright in the setting sun. The eagle banners of the emperor still fluttered defiantly from the parapets and towers. Constantine rode west into the sunset to await the coming battle at the St. Romanus Gate.

Only 4,000 men remained to defend the city. Five hundred of them would have to suffice to hold the walls of the Golden Horn. Along the Sea of Marmara, the defenders were stretched so thin that some towers were held by a single soldier. Constantine and Giustiniani defended the

heavily embattled Lycus valley with nearly 2,000 men. They would make their stand fighting from the Peribolos, the enclosure between the outer and inner walls. All the gates would be closed off. There would be no retreat.

Around midnight Constantine walked along the parapet, reviewing the defenses, heartening the spirits of the men. A handful of raindrops began to splatter off chain and plate armor, off shields and battlements. The Turks had kept up the bombardment, but otherwise things had been calm in their camp. They had devoted May 28 to atonement—fasting, ritual washing, and praying. Suddenly, the Ottoman guns fell silent, all their fires went out, and misty darkness shrouded the land. Tension gripped the defenders. They had survived 53 days of grueling siege. Could they hold on for one more?

Between 1 and 2 AM there erupted from the Ottoman camp a deafening blare of trumpets, booming kettle drums, clash of cymbals, and roar of voices. Fire blazed out of the Ottoman cannons, illuminating the crews in the dark. The azaps unleashed a barrage of missiles and came on like mad dogs, charging through the half-filled ditch and up hundreds of siege ladders. Glowing red-hot in the dark, Greek fire poured down on them. Musket fire tore bloody holes into their ranks. Dying like flies, the azaps fled in panic but were driven back into the attack by the chain-

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Sultan Mehmet II enters Constantinople in a romantic depiction of its fall. The city fell when Karaja Pasha's men found an undefended passage and streamed into the city.

whips of Chaoushes (sergeants). At last, Mehmet had mercy and allowed the azaps to withdraw.

Mehmet next called on the chain-mailed Anatolians, the dismounted sipahi and their retainers. Accompanied by another crescendo of musical instruments and shouts of "Allah!" the Anatolians attacked with a vengeance. Crossbow bolts punctured their mail, rocks crushed their bones, fire and boiling oil burned their skin, but waves of Anatolians surged over their own dead. The intensity of the assault reverberated throughout the city. Church bells rang louder, people quivered as they prayed, and hundreds ran to the walls to help. A section of the stockade crumbled under the impact of a great bombardment. The Anatolians rushed through the gigantic cloud of dust and smoke. Three hundred of them gained the Peribolos but, pressed from all sides by Greeks and Italians were pushed back over the walls. The attack died down an hour before dawn.

While the main fight raged in the Lycus valley, the Ottomans attacked elsewhere as well. Despite support fire from light galleys, Zaganos's assault on the northern section of the land wall came to naught. Likewise, along the palace area, the Bocchiardi brothers fended off Karaja Pasha, commander of the European Army. The Bocchiardi "were frightened by nothing," wrote Leonard of Chios, the Archbishop of Mytilene, and even sallied forth from the small Circus Gate. The lack of Turkish success was repeated along the southern section of the land wall and along the Sea of Marmara.

Only the Janissaries remained to salvage victory from looming defeat. Their archers fired a cloud of arrows that blotted out the sky. With a soul-shaking roar the Janissaries charged "not like Turks, but like lions," recalled Barbaro, driven forward by an enormous din of military instruments that was heard all the way to the shores of Asia. Heavily armored from head to toe in gomlek mail-and-plate cuirasses, Janissary assault squads tore at the stockades with polearms and used shields to fend off missiles while they climbed ladders. Giustiniani and his men stabbed downward with lances and pikes. Armed to the teeth with broad kilic sabers, double-curved yatagans, ram's head maces, axes, halberds, and bardiches, the Janissaries were animated by their sultan and by their faith. They were fresh while the defenders had been fighting for over four hours. But Greeks and Italians took heart in that Constantine and Giustiniani fought among them. "Neither hunger pressed on them, nor the lack of sleep, nor unremitting and continuous fighting, nor wounds and slaughter, nor the death of their relatives in front of their eyes, nor any other frightful spectacle could make them give in," wrote Kritovoulos. Archbishop Leonard recalled Constantine's words of encouragement: "Brave soldiers, the enemy is weakening, the crown of victory is ours. God is on our side, keep fighting!"

Meanwhile to the north an Italian soldier returning from a sortie neglected to close the Circus Gate. Noticing the undefended gate, 50 of Karaja's men gained entrance into the city. They fell on the defenders on the walls from behind, hauled down the flag of St. Mark, and raised the Turkish standard. The Bocchiardi counterattacked, regained the walls, and temporarily isolated the Turks that had gained entrance to the palace.

In the Lycus valley, the third Janissary assault was repulsed by the Christians. Victory seemed within their grasp when Giustiniani was gravely wounded. Some exclaimed that an arrow skewered Giustiniani's leg, others swore that a lead shot had penetrated his breastplate or that a culverin shot smashed his shoulder. Constantine pleaded for Giustiniani to remain at the front but Giustiniani needed urgent medical help. Constantine relented and gave Giustiniani's bodyguard the key so that he could be carried out through a small side gate.

News of the wounded Giustiniani being car-

ried out of the Peribolos spread like wildfire. Bereft of their hero, the morale of the Christians teetered on a knife edge. The Janissaries sensed victory and stormed forward with renewed fury. A giant Janissary, Hasan of Ulubat, defiantly planted the flag of Islam on the top of the walls, hurling back attackers like rag dolls. Still the Greeks and Italians held on. Hasan was cut down and the fourth assault was stopped.

Meanwhile, the Turks from the palace had made their way south to the Charisius Gate where they hoisted the Turkish flag. The sight of the flag, combined with shouts that the Turks had taken the city, shattered the resolve of the last defenders of the Lycus valley. The fifth Janissary assault became unstoppable, driving before it frantic Christians trying to flee through the side gate. Pushing, shoving, and trampling over each other, the Christians jammed their only way out while being hacked to pieces by the Janissaries. The macabre drama repeated itself at the locked Charisius and Fifth Military Gates.

Constantine galloped down the Peribolos, desperately trying to rally his men before disappearing into a mass of killing, fleeing, and dying humanity. There are many versions of Constantine's final moments. In a disparaging Ottoman account, a fleeing Constantine is killed by a wounded azap. Given Constantine's record as a frontline fighter, the heroic Greek versions are likely closer to the truth, even if generously embellished. They have him slaying 10 pashas and 60 Janissaries, only being overcome after his sword and lance had broken.

Clearing a path through the heaped dead and dying, the Janissaries burst through the Fifth Military Gate. Encountering little resistance, the Janissaries fanned out to open other gates. Ottoman flags fluttered on the towers as below them the entire Turkish army rushed into the city like an irresistible flood of destruction.

Mounting their horses, the Bocchiardi brothers shouted at throngs of fleeing soldiers to hold their ground. After Paolo was slain, the remaining brothers gave up as well and beat their way back to the Horn. At his galley in the harbor, Giustiniani ordered the trumpets blown to signal the retreat. Hoards of people stampeded madly across the docks to reach the ships. Overloaded rowboats capsized, people drowned in the water. At the same time the Ottoman fleet in the Horn forced open the sea gates. Ignoring the Christian ships, the Turkish sailors hastened to take part in the plunder of the city.

Along the Sea of Marmara, the Ottomans likewise pulled their ships along the shoreline and seized the walls. For the Christian ships slipping out of the Horn it provided a godsend opportunity to make good their escape. On the

National Archives

Sultan Mehmet leads a procession of viziers, imams, and generals into the captured city at the end of the 53-day siege.

ships were the surgeon Nicolo Barbaro and the mortally wounded Giustiniani.

Prince Orhan and his men still held their section of the Marmara sea wall, a handful of Cretans barricaded themselves in a tower of the Horn, and some of the isolated, fortified districts continued hold out. They were but outcrops in a sea of ransacking, raping, and killing Turks. Quivering families huddled in cellars, and women threw themselves down wells to escape the horror. The Turkish scimitars were bloodied by the slaughter of 4,000 lives before Mehmet ordered a halt to the chaotic frenzy. Approximately 50,000 people were dragged into slavery. Neither Constantinople's population nor its culture survived the city's fall. Countless books were either burned or sold, the Hodegetria was shattered. Turkish hats were mockingly placed on crucifixes and horses dressed in priest's robes.

Around 7 AM the Janissaries reached Justinian's column, surmounted by the equestrian statue of the 6th-century emperor. To one side of the column stood the partially collapsed Hippodrome, a reminder of the pagan past; on the other side was St. Sophia, soon to be part of the Christian past. The Janissaries hacked through the church's gate with axes, bursting upon a terror-struck clergy and crowd of citizens. The Janissaries bound and chained everyone and stripped the church of anything valuable. In a postscript of the disastrous sack of 1204, the Janissaries broke open the tomb of the responsible Venetian doge, Enrico Dandolo. Finding no treasure, they threw his bones to the street dogs.

The headmen of some of the resilient districts negotiated less harmful surrenders. The stalwart Cretans too proved impossible to oust out of their tower and were granted free passage. Cardinal Isidore exchanged his fancy Episcopal robes for those of a dead soldier. Although captured, Isidore was not recognized. He bought his freedom for a few coins, since his old age made him of little value, and escaped on a ship. The two Bocchiardi brothers saved their lives by hiding in Galata. Most were not so lucky. Prince Orhan jumped to his death. Many of the

Continued on page 70

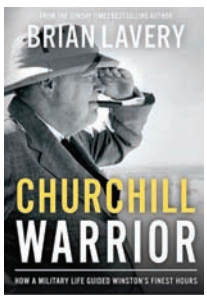
By Christopher Miskimon

Long before Winston Churchill led Great Britain in World War II, he experienced the thrill of battle.

ABOVE: Young Winston Churchill in his Hussar's uniform in 1895. Three years later Churchill joined in the charge of the 21st Lancers at the Battle of Omdurman in 1898, below.

YOUNG WINSTON CHURCHILL EXPECTED TO ENTER BATTLE ON September 1, 1898, but instead he watched as British gunboats bombarded Dervish forts. Attached to the 21st Lancers, he stood on a nearby ridge as the gunboats steamed relentlessly forward against the river current. Enemy shot splashed around them from 50 guns manned by Mahdists in the forts. The better trained British gunners soon smashed the enemy gun embrasures with their highly accurate fire. Many of their guns were blown from their carriages. After destroying the enemy artillery, British Maxim machine gunners cleared the trenches around the forts. It was a thrilling sight, but Churchill awaited his chance for action.

He got that opportunity the following day during the Battle of Omdurman, Great Britain's decisive victory over the Mahdist army in the Sudan. The 21st Lancers charged a group of Dervish troops, wheeling right into line at the bugler's call and charging headlong toward the enemy mass. Churchill, who was a trained cavalryman, hoped the British horsemen would charge headlong into the enemy formation and shatter it. Instead, at the last moment "they all fell (arse over tip) and we passed through without any sort of shock," he wrote.



After riding through the Dervish formation, the cavalrymen found themselves embroiled in isolated melees. During one such melee, Churchill fired the 10 rounds in his Mauser pistol. He estimated that he killed three enemy soldiers. A Dervish lunged at him with a sword in an effort to hamstring his horse, but Churchill turned his horse away from the danger. He knew that as long as he stayed armed and atop his horse he could keep the enemy at bay. But if he or his horse was wounded, or if he was disarmed, the Dervishes would kill him. When he saw two Dervishes aim their rifles at him, Churchill galloped off to reunite with his squadron.

Churchill realized he did not even have a scratch, nor did his horse. It was "the most dangerous two minutes I shall live to see," he wrote. He wanted to lead his troopers back into battle, but his squadron was ordered to dismount and fire at the enemy. After the British victory Churchill wrote that he was glad to have experienced a cavalry charge. It was the last one the British Army ever carried out and it was of little purpose for the British could have engaged the

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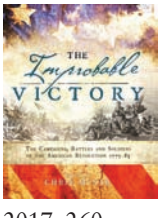
enemy as a safe distance by rifle. One historian later noted the charge of the 21st Lancers was comparable to the Charge of the Light Brigade in that "the most futile and inefficient part of the battle was the most extravagantly praised."

The Battle of Omdurman was a formative experience for Churchill who four decades later would go on to lead his nation through the darkest time in its history. The time Winston spent soldiering taught him valuable lessons about strategy and warfare. These experiences are deftly gathered and retold in ***Churchill Warrior: How a Military Life Guided Winston's Finest Hours*** (Brian Lavery, Casemate Publishers, Havertown, PA, 2017, 448 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index $32.95, hardcover). The new work affords a thorough analysis and history of Winston Churchill the soldier and how he applied it to lead Great Britain to victory in World War II.

The author investigates how Churchill gained his knowledge of strategy and tactics as well as administration. During the intervening years he developed a keen understanding of new weapons and technologies and of the concept of combined arms operations. The author covers all of these aspects in great detail, illustrating them with many compelling anecdotes. The author uses Churchill's writings to back up his assertions.

The result is a fascinating look at one of history's greatest wartime leaders through a new lens. That lens is Churchill's military life where he learned the uncompromising, hands-on style he used to help steer Great Britain as the First Lord of the Admiralty during World War I and as prime minister during World War II. He and the British people faced their greatest test in the latter conflict and emerged triumphant.

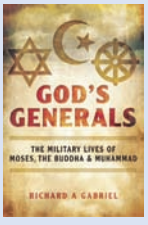


The Improbable Victory: The Campaigns, Battles and Soldiers of the American Revolution 1775-83 (Edited by Chris McNab, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2017, 260 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, $35.00, hardcover)

By any reasonable estimate, the American Revolution should have failed. There was no real army or navy, and the British possessed a military that had few equals in the world. It was a long, bloody struggle full of failures and successes on both sides. The conflict was also part of a global conflagration against England by a number of its foes. Despite all this, it was a war the fledgling United States was able to win through determination and perseverance. It was the America's first step on its way to

SHORT BURSTS

The Samurai in 100 Objects (Stephen Turnbull, Frontline Books, 2017, $24.95, softcover) A history of the famous Japanese warrior class is told through the various items they used during the centuries they were active. It is well-illustrated in full color.

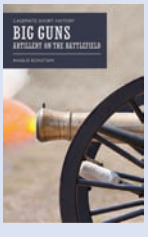


God's Generals: The Military Lives of Moses, the Buddha and Muhammad (Richard A. Gabriel, Pen and Sword Books, 2017, $24.99, softcover) The founders of three of the world's great religions also were accomplished field generals. This work examines their military achievements.

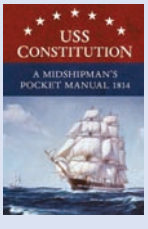
Eutaw Springs: The Final Battle of the American Revolution's Southern Campaign (Robert Dunkerly and Irene Boland, University of South Carolina Press, 2017, $21.99, softcover) The Battle of Eutaw Springs was a microcosm of the American Revolution in the South. It was a desperate fight with inconclusive results, but it exemplifies the desperate combat that took place.

My Lai: Vietnam, 1968, and the Descent into Darkness (Howard Jones, Oxford University Press, 2017, $34.95, hardcover) The My Lai Massacre was one of the most significant events of the Vietnam War. It affected morale, political sentiment, and the outcome of the war.

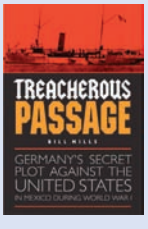
World War I and America: Told by the Americans Who Lived It (A. Scott Berg, Library of America, 2017, $40.00, hardcover) This is a collection of firsthand accounts of the Great War. Some were written at the time while others are the result of interviews.



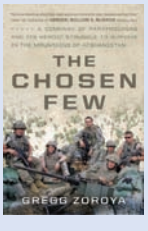
Big Guns: Artillery on the Battlefield (Angus Constam, Casemate Publishers, 2017, $12.95, softcover) Artillery has come to dominate the modern battlefield. This concise history covers the seven centuries since the invention of gunpowder.



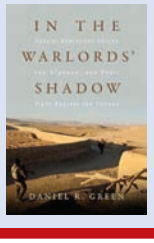
USS Constitution: A Midshipman's Pocket Manual 1814 (Eric Clements, Osprey Publishing, 2017, $15.00, hardcover) This compilation gathers the information a new midshipman would need to serve aboard the early American warship. It also includes reports of the ship in action.



Treacherous Passage: Germany's Secret Plot Against the United States in Mexico During World War I (Bill Mills, Potomac Books, 2017, $29.95, hardcover) America's tacit alliance with Britain and France made it a target of German schemes for sabotage and even invasion. The author covers the full extent of this intrigue.



The Chosen Few: A Company of Paratroopers and Its Heroic Struggle to Survive in the Mountains of Afghanistan (Gregg Zoroya, Da Capo Books, 2017, $27.00, hardcover) A company of the 173rd Airborne spent 15 months fighting in Afghanistan. Its struggle culminated in the Battle of Wanat in July 2008.



In the Warlords' Shadow: Special Operations Forces, the Afghans, and Their Fight Against the Taliban (Daniel R. Green, Naval Institute Press, 2017, $29.95, hardcover) This history shows how the American Special Forces adapted to the demands of fighting the Afghan insurgency.

becoming a world power a century later.

Many of the events of this war have become legends to the American people. While stirring and inspirational, some of the events are not true. Many books have been written about the conflict, but this one stands out for the way in which it tells the whole story with balance and detail. The author effectively brings the conflict into its proper place within the larger scope of world events at the time.

The work is liberally illustrated with both period images and color artwork from notable modern artists, such as Steve Noon and Don Troiani. The layout is practical and pleasing to the eye. As with all of Osprey's books, the work includes a large number of superb maps.

The Siege of Vienna (John Stoye, Birlinn Limited, Edinburgh, UK, 2017, 320 pp., maps, photographs, notes, index, $12.99, softcover)

An Ottoman army laid siege to the city of Vienna in 1683. It was an enormous threat to Western Christendom. Indeed, the threat was so great that the Christian powers laid aside their petty squabbles and united against the growing Islamic threat in Eastern Europe.

The defeat of the Ottomans and their Tartar allies marked one of the great turning points in history. The vast empire of the Turks lost much of its territory and began the slow decline of succeeding centuries. The victorious Hapsburg Empire turned its attention from battling France and invading the Rhine region and instead focused on the newly available lands in the Balkans that the Hapsburgs would rule until World War I destroyed the status quo. This campaign set the stage for the Europe that would burst forth and take control of much of the world in the following decades.

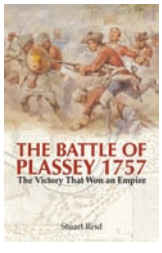
This work by a late English scholar is full of rich detail, giving the reader a complete picture of this epic battle, one that covers the events that led up to the battle, as well as the battle itself. It provides the background leading up to the event, as well as information on the people, places, and events involved in the great siege. Last but not least, the author tells how the siege and its consequences influenced the development of Europe.

Operation Banner: The British Army in Northern Ireland 1969-2007 (Nick van der Bijl, Pen and Sword Books, South Yorkshire, UK, 2017, 272 pp., maps, photographs, appendices, bibliography, index, $19.99, softcover)

On July 21, 1972, Belfast exploded. During

a 90-minute period, a total of 22 bombs, some in cars and other in packages, detonated at various points across the city. Members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army set them off in retaliation for the breakdown of peace talks. The group alerted the local security forces every few minutes to a different bomb's presence, but tragically they badly underestimated the security troops' ability to effectively respond and clear the area. Nine people died and 130 were wounded. The incident became known as Bloody Friday and caused outrage on all sides. One local paper printed that the city had not seen such devastation since the Nazi Blitz of 1941. As a result, the British Army carried out Operation Motorman to force its opponents to either flee or fight.

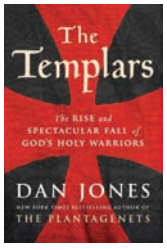
The seesaw struggle went on for four decades. It was either a bitter counterterrorist fight or a struggle of desperate freedom fighters, depending on one's outlook. The book covers in great detail the British Army's operations during this time, including its contributions to the eventual peace. The author does a comprehensive job of covering the various operations. The work includes multiple appendices that offer a stunning array of facts and figures about the conflict.



The Battle of Plassey 1757: The Victory That Won an Empire (Stuart Reid, Frontline Books, South Yorkshire, UK, 2017, 270 pp., maps, photographs, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, $39.95, hardcover)

The Battle of Plassey was an amazing victory for the nascent British Empire. In the space of 40 minutes, 3,000 British and Sepoy troops soundly defeated an 18,000-strong Bengali-French army led by Nawab Siraj-ud-Daulah, the ruler of Bengal. The Nawab of Bengal wanted to drive the English from India. He turned to the French for help, but to no avail. The campaign leading up to the decisive battles was full of small-unit actions. They were fought by soldiers often led by ambitious but roguish men eager to make their names and fortunes in the Subcontinent. These victories led to all of India falling under British control within a century. It was also the beginning of a century of bloody conflict that eventually would spread to Afghanistan.

This work offers an in-depth look at a critical campaign largely from the point of view of the young captains and soldiers who fought it. The author makes liberal use of eyewitness accounts to bring out the action, weaving them effectively into the narrative. An excellent group of appendices gives detailed information on tactics and opposing forces.



The Templars: The Rise and Spectacular Fall of God's Holy Warriors (Dan Jones, Penguin Random House, New York, 2017, maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index, $30.00, hardcover)

Each Templar wore a white tunic emblazoned with a red cross. It was a symbol not only of the blood Jesus Christ shed for humanity, but also the blood they were willing to spill in the service of God. The Latin Crusades in the Holy Land had given rise to them and many other religious orders, but the Templars were different. They had a broad popular appeal, despite also being kingmakers, financiers, tax collectors, and castle builders. The Templars began as an auxiliary force, but they soon became one of Christendom's elite forces. Eventually their power grew to the point they became a threat to the established order of European life. This made their fall even more rapid than their meteoric rise. The legacy of the Knights Templar is that of one of the most famous, yet also one of the most controversial, of the military orders.

The author cuts through the myths that have arisen about them over the centuries and gets to the truth of what is known about them. The book is divided into four sections, highlighting a significant period of the Templars' role: pilgrims, soldiers, bankers, and heretics. It is thoroughly researched with a brisk narrative.

The Miracle of Father Kapaun: Priest, Soldier and Korean War Hero (Roy Wenzl and Travis Heying, Ignatious Press, San Francisco, CA, 2017, map, photographs, appendices, bibliography, index, $15.95, softcover)

Father Emil Kapaun was a former Kansas farm boy who served as an Army chaplain in World War II. When the Korean War began he rejoined the Army to continue ministering to the soldiers fighting there. He was known for his energy and diligence. He refused to abandon his wounded men when he was captured. Marched off to a prisoner of war camp, he would spend a year in it before he succumbed

WE TAKE TO THE *SKIES OF FURY* BEFORE THROWING DOWN WITH COMPETITIVE GROUND WARFARE IN *TANGO 5* AND *GIRLS UND PANZER.*

PUBLISHER ILLUMINATION GAMES
GENRE FLIGHT
PLATFORM(S) NINTENDO SWITCH
AVAILABLE NOW

Skies of Fury DX

Sometimes you just can't get the full experience of a game from the original smartphone version, and that goes doubly so for most titles with war as the subject matter. Enter *Skies of Fury DX,* an upcoming port that takes the iOS and Android game *Skies of Fury* to a combination of big and small screens on Nintendo Switch.

For those who haven't played the mobile version—which made its debut back in May of last year—*Skies of Fury* is a dogfighting action game set during World War I. Players take on the role of either a British or German fighter pilot in operations throughout the notorious Bloody April of 1917. As you may have gathered, the original game's timing was almost precisely spot on for the 100th anniversary of that particular conflict.

Depicted in a hand-drawn visual style, *Skies of Fury DX* features 10 World War I aircraft and 100 different missions. Planes can be customized further with the help of hundreds of additional items, and the more you play the more you'll be able to upgrade combat and flight abilities. While there's certainly plenty of single player content to dig into, dogfighting games shine in the multiplayer department, and you can play Survival and Versus modes with up to four players. You can also unlock bonus comics based on the real history behind Bloody April.

At the time of this writing we're still waiting to get our hands on the Switch version of *Skies of Fury DX.* The mobile version was fun enough, and Switch seems like the logical next step with its mix of on-screen, portable, and tabletop playing options. We'll definitely be gathering some friends to fire away with so we can properly dig in and report back later with a final call.

PUBLISHER NEXON COMPANY
GENRE SHOOTER
PLATFORM(S) iOS, ANDROID
AVAILABLE NOW (SOFT LAUNCH)

Tango 5

MOBA (Multiplayer Online Battle Arena) games are wildly popular at the moment, especially in the eSports community. This paves the way nicely for *Tango 5,* a five-on-five competitive action game designed with mobile devices in mind. While it's more of a hero-based shooter than something based on any specific wars or battles, there's an inherent stylistic crossover that should make it of interest to some of our more action-oriented readers.

The battles in *Tango 5* go down in real time as players take on opponents from around the globe. It's not just about knocking enemies out of the game entirely; there are certain battlefield objectives in modes like Capture or Annihilate, tasking players with thinking on their feet and successfully capturing said objectives while staying alive and holding off the other team. All matches are judged

with best-of-three rules, and they clock in at 99 seconds a pop, so expect a pretty fast-paced gauntlet right from the get-go.

Most promising, however, is Nexon's claim that there is no "pay-to-win" structure in *Tango 5.* While that doesn't mean there aren't any microtransactions, it does bode well for the overall game balance. Time will tell if they stick to this, but at the moment they promise an emphasis on skill-based rewards that value the player's own ability to think things through and play strategically to triumph over the competition.

Tango 5 is currently in its "soft launch" period, which means it may not yet be available in certain markets by the time this issue is in your hands. Keep an eye out, though, because like most free-to-play games this one is worth a quick download and a few online matches to see if it has any staying power on your mobile device.

PUBLISHER BANDAI NAMCO
GENRE ACTION
PLATFORM(S) PLAYSTATION 4
AVAILABLE FEBRUARY

Girls und Panzer: Dream Tank Match

Unless you count yourself among the fan ranks, you might be surprised to find out how many anime series have ties with legitimate historical warfare subject matter. Many manga and anime creators are known for their attention to detail, and that definitely applies to *Girls und Panzer,* a TV series that originally aired from 2012 to 2013. It may not be a period piece, but all the historical tanks are at your disposal in a new game adaptation, *Girls und Panzer: Dream Tank Match.*

The best way to describe *Dream Tank Match* is to picture something like *World of Tanks* ... only with cute anime girls at the controls. The original series is set in a world in which historical World War II-era tanks are maintained and put to use in competitions, and "the way of the tank" is a popular activity for high school girls. Thus, you end up with plenty of exciting school-on-school battles, paving the way for the likes of light tanks such as the Panzer 38 and BT-42; heavies like the Churchill, Tiger II, and Carro Armato P40; and even the Type 10 tank used by the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force.

Dream Tank Match takes these behemoths and puts them in online battles with up to 10 players. Since this is based on an anime, there are some very, shall we say, anime-centric actions, like the ability to drift and dash in your tank. All the tanks are fully customizable, as well, letting players choose their own colors and decals to turn a historical piece of hardware into something they can call their own.

If you're a fan of *Girls und Panzer*—or if you just want to try a different type of tank battle action game—there's some good news. While a Western release has yet to be officially announced at the time of this writing, *Dream Tank Match* is getting a release in Southeast Asian regions in addition to Japan. As tends to be the case with those releases, that means there's an importable version out there that supports English subtitles.

to malnutrition and disease in March 1951

Before he died, he cared for the men in the camp, tending to the sick and doing everything in his power to lift their spirits. Father Kapaun would scrounge for food to feed them, argue calmly against the communist propaganda directed at them, and strive to help them maintain their faith under the harsh conditions of camp life. He gave away so much of his own food and clothing that many people believed he hastened his own death.

This new biography gives the reader a close look at a soldier who waged war through his love for his fellow Americans and unwavering support of them in their time of need. The book also discusses his nomination for sainthood. More than 8,000 documents concerning him have been turned over to the Vatican for their consideration.

The work is an inspiring tale of a man of God who led by example and never gave up in his duties to his faith or his flock.

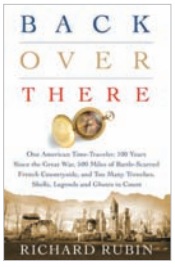
Russo-Turkish Naval War 1877-1878 (Piotr Olender, MMP Books/Casemate, Havertown, PA, 2017, maps, photographs, appendix, index, $49.00, softcover)

This conflict pitted the declining Ottoman Empire against an alliance of Eastern Orthodox nations, such as Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro, which were led by Imperial Russia. For their part, the Balkan States exercised their increasing sense of nationalism. As for the Russians, they sought to regain territory they had lost during the Crimean War, as well as support the Balkan nations' struggle to be free of the Ottomans.

It was a bitter war between religious adversaries. The naval portion involved a series of battles using ships both old and new and often in support of the various land campaigns. The book covers a war many Westerners are not aware existed.

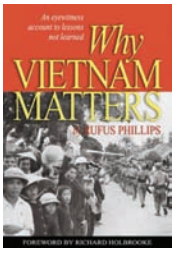
The author covers the war in great detail. The work includes illustrations of the ships involved, as well as charts comparing the opposing navies.

Back Over There: One American Time-Traveler, 100 Years Since the Great War, 500 Miles of Battle-Scarred French Countryside and Too Many Trenches, Shells, Legends and Ghosts to Count (Richard Rubin, St. Martin's Press, New York, 2017, 304 pp., maps, photographs, appendix, bibliography, index, $27.99, hardcover)



World War I was one of history's most important conflicts, arguably the most important due to what it set in motion for the rest of the 20th century. While Europeans are still affected by the war's results and generally acknowledge this, most Americans know relatively little about them and don't have much interest in learning more.

To study the conflict, the author embarked on a journey across Europe. He retraces the steps of the American Expeditionary Force, walking through old trenches and tunnels, viewing graffiti from a century ago and finding veritable mountains of old and discarded artifacts, such as canteens and mess tins. During the course of his travels, he met many amateur historians and archaeologists who are devoted to preserving artifacts of the conflict. Much of what he found was documented in his writings for the *New York Times*. The full story is retold in this lively and moving work. It is an interesting combination of history and travel book created on the war's actual battlefields.



Why Vietnam Matters: An Eyewitness Account of Lessons Not Learned (Rufus Phillips, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2017, 448 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $24.95, softcover)

In 1951 the Cold War was in its infancy. The CIA was searching one of its favorite recruiting grounds, Yale University, when it found a young man named Rufus Phillips. Rufus joined the Agency and arrived in Saigon in August 1954, just after the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu.

Rufus was an energetic man and rose rapidly in the organization. Eight years later he joined the Foreign Service in the Department of Rural Affairs, drawn by President John F. Kennedy's call to service. He returned to South Vietnam. Along the way he met made many friends who would one day play vital roles in the American defense establishment.

This book is part memoir and part history of America's involvement in Vietnam. The author forcefully argues the America did not understand the war in which it became embroiled.

The book provides not only a detailed assessment of the war, but also a useful summary that encapsulates the various lessons learned from the conflict. □

Maiwand

Continued from page 47

captured and beaten by the villagers. They turned him over to the Afghan army. Although initially treated well, he was murdered in September in the aftermath of an Afghan defeat.

At dawn the column continued on. They endured harassing fire from Afghan cavalrymen who were shadowing the column. Gunner Edward Collis grabbed a rifle and took cover in a nullah where he fired on the horsemen and drove them off. Collis earlier had helped save the guns. He was awarded the Victoria Cross for his valor. But many years later the medal was rescinded when he was convicted in England of bigamy and child molestation. After a harrowing march, the column reached the Argandab River in later morning and the men drank their fill. This raised morale and improved discipline considerably.

A few cavalrymen sent forward reached Kandahar, bringing news of the disaster. General Primrose sent a relief column that found Burrows' troops and escorted them. By mid-afternoon the rear guard had reached Kandahar after 33 hours of marching. It had lost 969 killed and only 177 of the wounded survived through the retreat. Ayub Khan lost 3,000 men. Many of his troops left to take their comrades' bodies home. The Afghans would be defeated outside Kandahar in September, ending the war as Abdur Rahman took the throne.

Both Burrows and Nuttall remained in the army. Their careers did not materially suffer as each would be promoted. Slade was made a Companion of the Bath and eventually rose to become commander in chief of Egypt. The loss of the 66th Regiment's colors was taken as final proof that the treasured objects were no longer appropriate for the modern battlefield and henceforth they would be stored when regiments went on campaign. The Afghans kept them for at least 12 more years, but eventually they also were lost to history.

Yet there was one survivor of the final exchange. Bobbie, a white dog with brown ears, was a regimental mascot. He stayed with the Last Eleven until they had all fallen. He may have fought the Afghans, too, for they had slashed him with a sword and left him for dead. When the ghazis departed to loot the baggage trains, Bobbie went off to find his regiment. He found them and survived to return to England in 1881. Sadly, he died a year later when he was run over by a taxi. He was stuffed and can still be seen in the regimental museum in Salisbury with his Afghan War Medal, which Queen Victoria personally awarded to him. □

Adrianople

Continued from page 55

At some point in the fighting, it is not known exactly when, Valens was felled by an arrow and disappeared beneath the bloody piles of corpses, never to be seen again. Trajan and Sebastian suffered similar fates. Well into the night, the Gothic cavalry pursued the fleeing remnants of the Roman Army, and by morning the surrounding countryside was littered with dead men and animals. Sadly, many of the Roman survivors lucky enough to make it back to Adrianople were denied entry by the panicked citizenry.

For the Eastern Roman Empire, the defeat at Adrianople was a catastrophe of almost incomparable proportions. In one day, its military and political power structure had been almost completely destroyed. Within days, wild panic had swept across the east and contingents of Gothic mercenaries as far away as Mesopotamia were butchered in revenge by hysterical Romans. Upon receiving the news of his uncle's defeat and death, Gratian did not even bother trying to subdue the victorious barbarians. He turned his army around and returned to the west, leaving the entire Balkan Peninsula at the mercy of the Goths and their allies.

Incredibly, the aftermath of the battle proved anticlimactic. Fritigern followed up his momentous victory by first besieging Adrianople and then Constantinople; however, both sieges quickly failed and the Goths returned to raiding and pillaging the rich lands of the western Balkans. Luckily for the Romans, the Goths were a steppe people with an aversion to siege warfare. Fritigern was even famously heard to comment that "he had no quarrel with stone walls." The end of humanity that St. Ambrose had predicted never occurred.

For almost four years, the barbarians rampaged across the Balkans with little to stand in their way. Rather than claim the east for himself, Gratian gave the eastern crown to Theodosius, a talented young general from Roman Spain. There were many who said that the new eastern emperor had been given a fool's errand, that the east was lost to the barbarians. But Theodosius breathed new life into the army of the Eastern Roman Empire. He launched a massive recruitment drive and raised a new army. He even enlisted Gothic renegades to shore up his numbers. Through a combination of blunt force and shrewd diplomacy, he convinced Fritigern to accept the original agreement of troops for land. Although the empire would never be the same after the trauma of Adrianople, the Gothic Revolt was over and peace returned to the Danube. □

Constantinople

Continued from page 63

captured Greek nobles, including the Grand Duke Notaras and his two young sons, were executed. What was assumed to be Constantine's corpse was eventually found and its head stuck on Justinian's column.

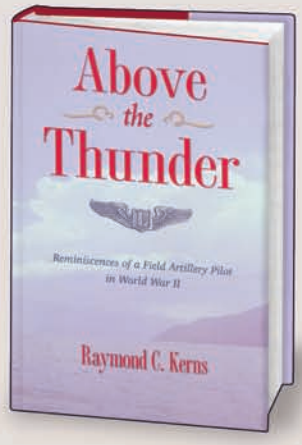
The banners of Islam and Sultan Mehmet unfurled along the sultan's triumphant route into the city. Riding proudly on his horse, Mehmet led a procession of viziers and imams, generals, and bodyguards followed by a column of Janissaries with glittering spears. Appalled by the damage inflicted on his future capital, Mehmet ordered a halt to the carnage after the first day. Mehmet even granted mercy to a few Greeks found hiding in the church. Calling for an imam to recite the call to prayer and dedicate the church to Allah, Mehmet mounted the pulpit and thanked God for victory. Twenty-one-year-old Mehmet had won the Red Apple and fulfilled Othman's dream.

Renamed Istanbul (full of Islam), Constantinople became the new Ottoman capital. The Muslim world rejoiced in a euphoria not seen since the glory days of the Prophet. Constantine's head was stuffed with straw and paraded around the Muslim courts. Mehmet reaffirmed his position as leader of the Muslim world and champion of the Holy War.

Istanbul was rebuilt in Islamic grandeur with domed mosques, white-spire minarets, shining places, exotic gardens, and colorful buzzing bazaars. St. Sophia still dominated the city, but the Ottomans renamed it the Aya Sofya mosque. For years after the siege, Mehmet repopulated the city with both Christians and Muslims. Christian neighborhoods within Istanbul were protected and the anti-unionist Gennadius was made patriarch of the Orthodox Church. As for Galata, Mehmet demanded hostages, confiscated its cannons, and demolished its fortifications but otherwise safeguarded its independence.

The fall of Constantinople sent chills of terror through the West, the horrors of its sack exaggerated a hundredfold. For centuries after, the threat of the Turks dominated European politics. By the time of his death in 1481, Mehmet's empire spanned from the Black Sea to the Adriatic and from the Danube to the Taurus. It was the conquest of Constantinople, though, that remained Mehmet's greatest legacy. Mehmet had brought to an end the last vestige of the Roman Empire and given birth to a new capital of an Islamic world power 2,260 years after the founding of Rome. □

First-Hand Accounts That Will Put You in the Middle of the Action



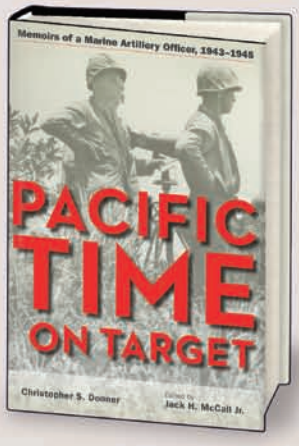
Above the Thunder

Reminiscences of a Field Artillery Pilot in World War II

Raymond C. Kerns

Winner of the 2009 Army Historical Foundation Book Award

In a simple but riveting style, Raymond Kerns recalls flying multiple patrols over enemy-held territory in his light, unarmored plane, calling and coordinating artillery strikes. While his most effective defense was the maneuverability and nimbleness of the L-4, Kerns was often required to defend himself with pistols and rifles, hand grenades, and a machine gun he welded to his landing gear.

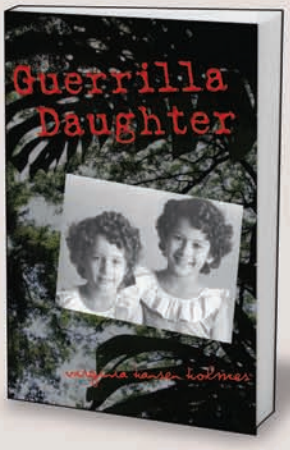


Pacific Time on Target

Memoirs of a Marine Artillery Officer, 1943–1945

Christopher S. Donner
Edited by Jack H.McCall Jr.

"The three month battle for Okinawa became a slaughterhouse. . . . Lieutenant Donner's personal memoir—written a year after the battle—recounts the searing experiences of this Marine artillery officer serving as a forward observer with front-line infantry units of the U.S. Tenth Army. . . . Tautly written, painstakingly honest, and exacting in detail, Donner's memoir chronicles his frustrations in striving to deliver precise fire support in chaotic amphibious assaults, from the Solomons to Okinawa, the climactic battle of the Pacific War."—*Colonel Joseph H. Alexander, ISMC (ret.)*



Guerrilla Daughter

Virginia Hansen Holmes

This is a powerful memoir of the Hansen family's extraordinary struggle to survive the Japanese occupation of Mindanao from the spring of 1942 until the end of the war in 1945. The men in the family fought as guerrilla soldiers in the island's resistance movement, while the women, facing disease, hunger, harsh living conditions, and possible capture and death, were left on their own to evade the Japanese.

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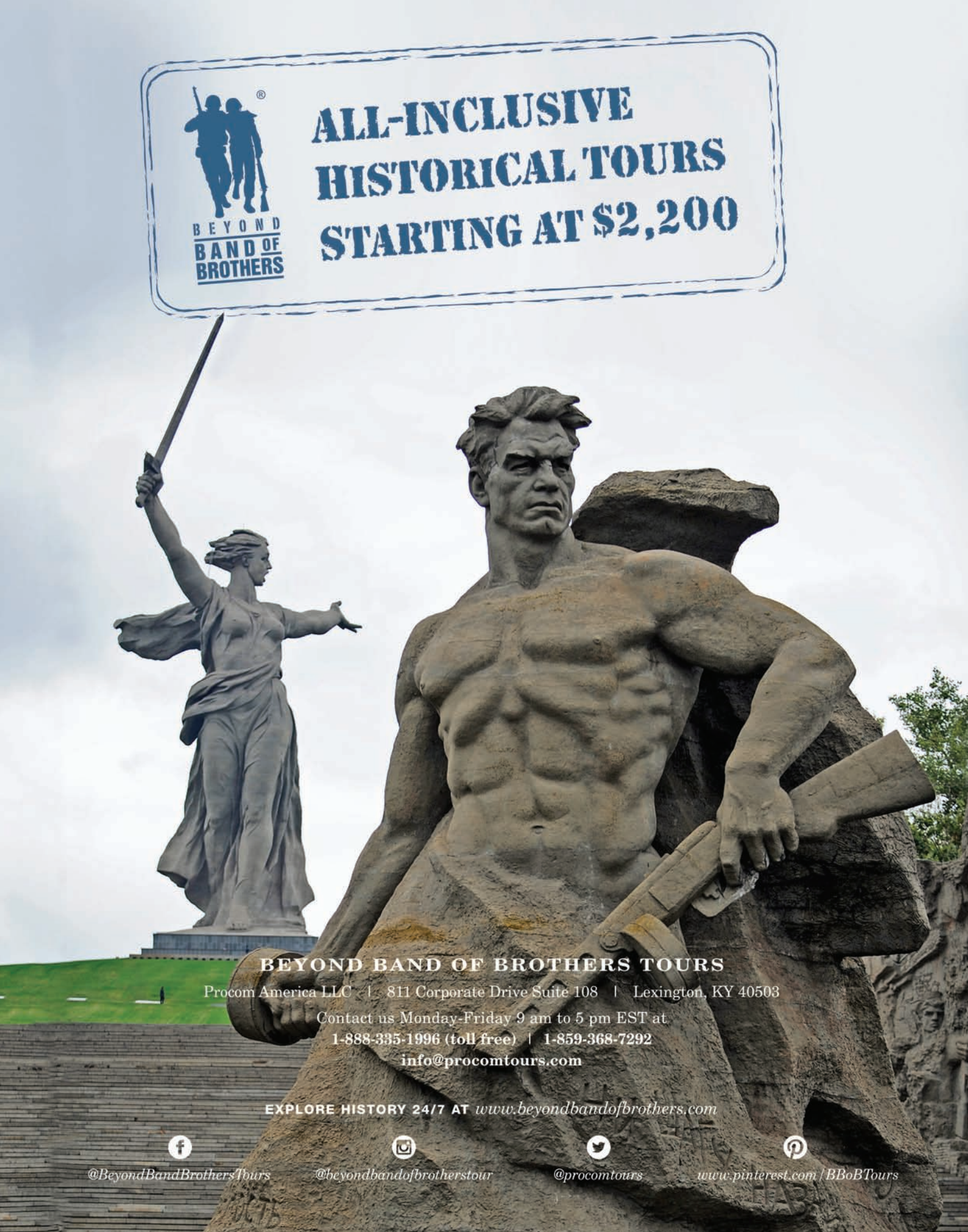
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