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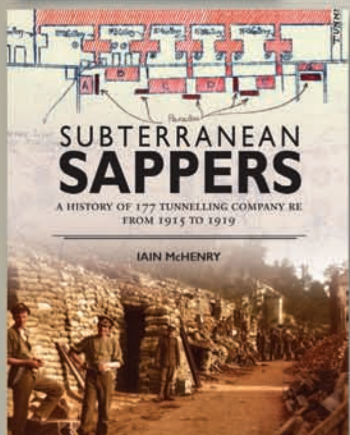

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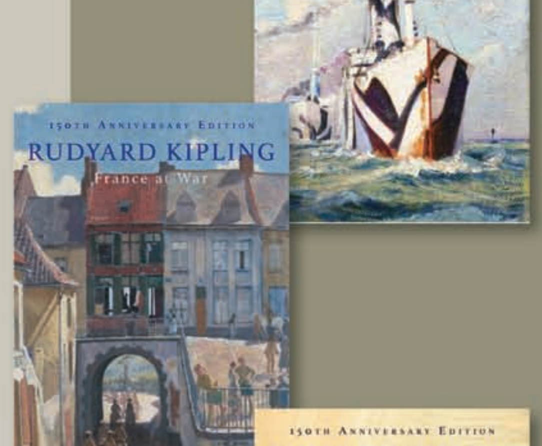

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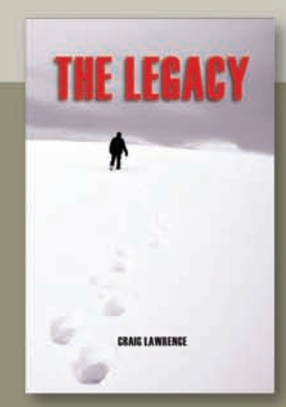

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May 2016

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Cover: Young Macedonian king Alexander the Great leads his Companion cavalry across the Granicus River to attack the Persian Army of Darius III in 334 BC. Image: AKG Images / Peter Connolly

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March to Destruction: Nicopolis 1396

A DELEGATION FROM THE KINGDOM OF HUNGARY seeking military aid to fight the Ottomans undertook a diplomatic mission in the spring of 1395 to a number of great cities in France and Burgundy. They met with Latin rulers and high royalty, including Doge Antonio Venier in Venice, Duke Philip "The Bold" of Burgundy in Lyons, Margaret of Flanders in Dijon, Duke John of Gaunt in Bordeaux, and the regents of French King Charles VI in Paris. Pope Boniface IX, eager to ensure that Constantinople remained in Christian hands, already had thrown its weight behind the venture.

The purpose of the planned military expedition was to roll back the advances of Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I, who had recently extended his empire's western border to the Danube River. In the final decade of the 14th century, Bayezid was on the offensive in the Balkans. The Ottoman sultan was steadily gnawing his way north through the lesser kingdoms and principalities of the Balkans. Some of these, such as Bulgaria, he conquered outright; others such as Serbia, he coerced into becoming his vassal.

Following the fall of Acre in May 1291, which brought an end to the 200-year lifespan of the Crusader States in Palestine and Syria, the so-called Later Crusades began. These military undertakings, which were put in motion by papal bulls, were not called crusades at the time; instead, they were pilgrimages in which those who signed on were warrior pilgrims said to be "taking the cross," writes Eric Christiansen in *The Northern Crusades*. The Later Crusades were directed against pagans and infidels in several theaters, including the Iberian Peninsula, the Balkans, and the Baltic.

Philip of Burgundy was the main sponsor of the Crusader army that would march overland to Hungary to assist King Sigismund. The crusade had been four years in the making and had suffered numerous leadership changes and schedule delays. Through special taxes, Philip raised 700,000 gold francs. His son, 24-year-old Count John of Nevers, was picked, not surprisingly, to lead the Franco-Burgundian army.

It was impractical to await an attack by Bayezid, so the Crusaders' strategy was to march into enemy-occupied Bulgaria to force Bayezid to give battle, notes Norman Housley in *The Later Crusades*.

All Latin crusades, including the 1396 crusade, had a major organizational weakness, which was that the Latin armies were composite forces, writes John France. This led to a lack of unity regarding the tactics to be used. In the case of the Battle of Nicopolis, dissension occurred at the most inopportune time imaginable: the arrival of Bayezid's army to lift the Crusaders' siege of Ottoman-held Nicopolis.

On the eve of the battle, King Sigismund submitted to the will of the overbearing French and Burgundian nobles. Rather than fighting a defensive battle as Sigismund would have preferred, the Crusader army would attack. The Franco-Burgundian troops formed the vanguard of the attack. On the morning of September 25, their heavily armored cavalry struck. That tactic had failed the French up to that point in their war with England.

The French and Burgundian nobles had no appreciation of what they were up against. The Ottoman army was unified, well led, and experienced. Nicopolis was a great victory for Bayezid and a catastrophic defeat for the Crusaders. Many a soldier who might have remained in France or Burgundy to fight the English in the early 15th century died in the Danube Valley that day.

William E. Welsh

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CARL A. GNAM, JR.
Editorial Director, Founder

WILLIAM E. WELSH
Editor
editor@militaryheritagemagazine.com

LAURA CLEVELAND
Managing Editor

SAMANTHA DETULLEO
Art Director

Contributors:
Arnold Blumberg, Joseph Luster, Tim Miller, Christopher Miskimon, Eric Niderost, David A. Norris, Mike Phifer, John E. Spindler, Blaine Taylor

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

MARK HINTZ
Chief Executive Officer

JANINE MILLER
Subscription Customer Services
sovereign@publishersserviceassociates.com

MITSY PIETENPOL
Accountant

ROBIN LEE
Bookkeeper

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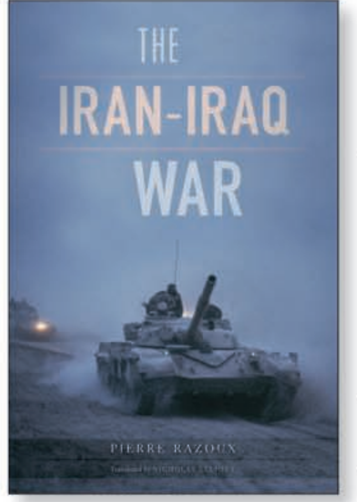

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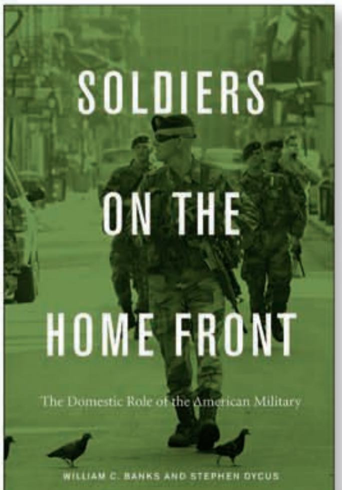

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By John E. Spindler

Polish-born Union Army Colonel Wlodzimierz Krzyzanowski showed great skill handling his troops during key battles of the American Civil War.

THE BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG WAS THE TURNING POINT IN THE American Civil War. Various parts of the battle have been proposed as pivotal moments for the Union victory, such as the successful defense at Little Round Top or Pickett's failed charge on the final day. While these are well-known highlights of the battle, another key highlight was the defense of the Union position on East Cemetery Hill on July 2, 1863, where a Polish immigrant led a charge to stop a major Confederate assault that aimed to break the Union line. That Polish-born general and American immigrant, a man who loved his new homeland and vigorously defended the ideals of freedom espoused in it, was Colonel Wlodzimierz Krzyzanowski.

Conflicting orders from his superiors resulted in Wlodzimierz Krzyzanowski's brigade sitting out the Battle of Lookout Mountain in November 1863, but it did participate in the general assault on Missionary Ridge.

Also known as Wladimir, Krzyzanowski was born on July 8, 1824, near the village of Roznowo in the Grand Duchy of Posen (Polish city of Poznan). At that time in history, the Republic of Poland no longer existed, being partitioned for the final time in 1795 by Russia, Austria, and Prussia, and the Grand Duchy was under Prussian control. Krzyzanowski grew up in Posen. Enrolled at a college in the city, he was introduced to efforts to reestablish the Polish state and became a participant in this cause. Unfortunately for the movement, the planned revolution was stopped by a preemptive raid in February 1846 due to an informant within the revolutionaries' ranks. With the help of family, Krzyzanowski fled to the port of Hamburg, where he caught a ship to New York City, arriving on January 25, 1847.

Penniless and with no knowledge of the English language, Krzyzanowski persevered thanks to help from other Polish immigrants. Learning English and continuing his education, the Pole eventually saw much of America during his career as a civil engineer and surveyor. After marrying, he settled in Washington,

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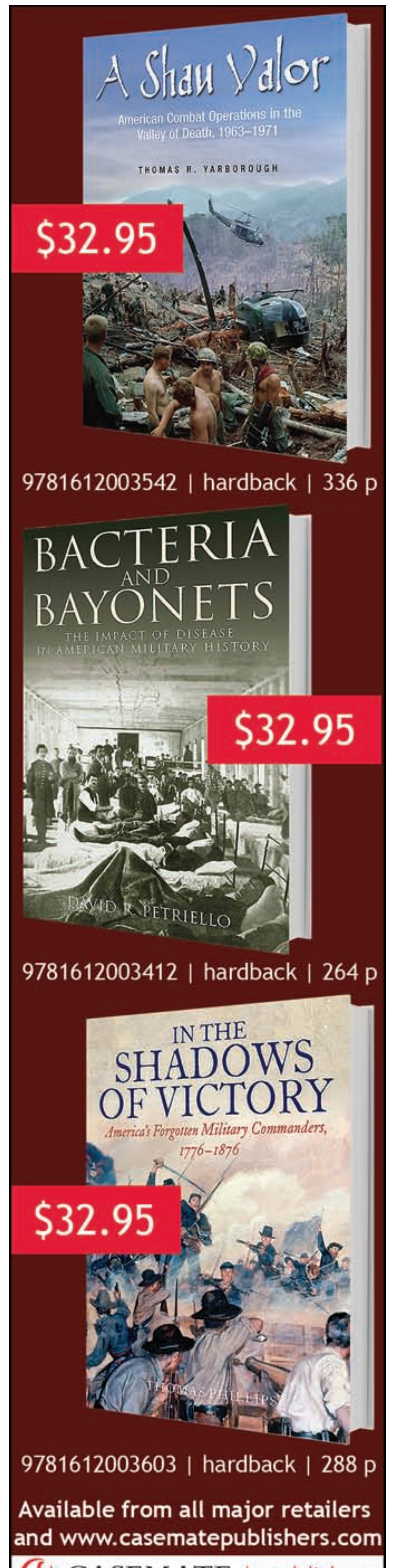

D.C., and became a successful businessman. In 1854, he was attracted to the fledgling Republican Party because of his belief in protecting personal freedoms, as well as abolishing of slavery, and opposing States' Rights. Thus, he was a staunch supporter of Illinois Congressman Abraham Lincoln.

In April 1861, Krzyzanowski was aware of the tensions and the need to defend the capital. Having no previous military experience, he enlisted in the District of Columbia militia as a private. Because of his active recruiting efforts, less than two weeks later he was commissioned as a captain. It was most likely at this time he earned his nickname of "Kriz," probably due to difficulty pronouncing his name. In July, Kriz saw his first combat while leading a small detachment along the Potomac River at Great Falls. In August, and with the rank of colonel, Krzyzanowski moved to New York City to recruit more volunteers for the Union. The men who joined were merged with other recruits into the 58th New York Volunteer Infantry (58th New York), though it soon was known as the Polish Legion. The men departed from New York on November 7, 1861.

Spending several months marching south into Virginia, Krzyzanowski and the 58th New York became part of Maj. Gen. John Fremont's army from the Mountain Department of Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky and met the Confederates for the first time in a major battle on June 8, 1862, in the Shenandoah Valley at Cross Keys. He showed his courage, leadership skills, and ability to assess tactical situations. Seeing that Confederate infantry had the opportunity to turn the Union flank and cut off the route of retreat, Krzyzanowski rallied his 58th New York to charge the enemy. This bold move halted the Confederate drive and brought stability to Fremont's left flank.

Soon after the Battle of Cross Keys, the 58th New York was assigned to the newly formed Army of Virginia and placed under the I Army Corps. Krzyzanowski commanded the 2nd Brigade of German immigrant Maj. Gen. Carl Schurz's Third Division. In addition to the 58th New York, his command included the 54th New York and 75th Pennsylvania Regiments and a light artillery battery. Operations continued in Virginia as the Union forces tried to defeat Confederate Maj. Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson, which led to the Second Battle of Manassas on August 28-30, 1862.

In a wooded area by the Manassas-Sudley Road on the morning of August 29, the 2nd Brigade fought hard for eight hours in a slugfest that ended in a stalemate. Schurz's division searched for Jackson's men in the area just south of Sudley Church. Jackson had deployed the Confederate II Corps along an unfinished railroad grade where railroad builders had moved dirt to make a level grade, and these cuts and fills served as entrenchments. The Yankee division marched north from Henry Hill toward the unfinished railroad where the Rebels were waiting for them. Krzyzanowski's brigade, which held the division's left, soon made contact. Kriz ordered the 54th and 58th New York to strike the Confederate position, holding the 75th Pennsylvania in reserve.

The Empire State regiments were soon engaged in a hot contest in which they traded volleys with Brig. Gen. Maxcy Gregg's 1st South Carolina, which was soon reinforced by the 12th South Carolina. When the South Carolinians drove the New Yorkers back, Kriz ordered the Keystone Staters to join the fighting on the left of the units already engaged. The 75th Pennsylvania poured hot lead into the flank of the 1st South Carolina, at which point Gregg sent the 13th South Carolina into the expanding fight.

Throughout the long morning and into the afternoon, Kriz's regiments were hotly engaged with the Rebels. Schurz shifted Brig. Gen. Alexander Schimmelfennig's brigade to the left to support Kriz's brigade. When the 12th South Carolina charged the Yankees, it routed the 54th New York on the brigade's right. Schurz and Kriz rallied the men, though, and they drove the South Carolinians, who had advanced from the railroad cut to engage them, back to their original position. It had been a hard-fought contest with some of the best of Maj. Gen. A.P. Hill's men, and Kriz's Yankees had fought admirably.

Unfortunately, Maj. Gen. John Pope made decisions the following day that resulted in a Federal retreat. For most of the day the 2nd Brigade was in reserve, but by late afternoon Union forces had been forced back. On Chinn Ridge, Krzyzanowski's men were again fed into the fray. Seeing the battle was lost, Kriz knew he could only buy time for Pope to organize a rearguard action. Being flanked by the enemy on both sides, the 2nd Brigade repulsed a frontal assault before conducting an orderly retreat as part of the rear guard. It was during this battle that Krzyzanowski was injured when he had his horse shot dead while rallying his men. Pope's army retreated to Centreville.

During the winter of 1862-1863, another reorganization took place that made Schurz's 3rd Division part of Maj. Gen. Joseph Hooker's Army of the Potomac, specifically the XI Army Corps commanded by Maj. Gen. Oliver Howard. Krzyzanowski was designated for

promotion to brigadier general, but the Senate failed to confirm his promotion in a timely manner. Schurz remarked this was because no one could pronounce his name, but in reality it was due to an anti-immigrant feeling among the politicians. While awaiting the decision on his appointment, Krzyzanowski celebrated the Emancipation Proclamation.

The spring brought about another attempt to defeat the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. Marching into battle under Krzyzanowski's command, the 2nd Brigade consisted of the veteran 58th New York and 75th Pennsylvania Regiments and the new 119th New York and 26th Wisconsin Regiments. At the start of May 1863, the two sides fought at Chancellorsville, Virginia. Positioned on Hooker's far right flank, the XI Corps was the weakest formation with 11 of its 27 regiments in combat for the first time. General Robert E. Lee sent Jackson's force on a long flanking maneuver to strike at the vulnerable positions of the XI Corps. Though this movement was reported several times by Union skirmishers, the senior commanders refused to accept these reports.

At 5:45 PM on May 2, Jackson launched his assault on the XI Corps from the west. After shattering the ill-positioned 1st Division, Krzyzanowski's 2nd Brigade, which Schurz had repositioned to face a likely attack from the west, was next. Though the regiments fought well, they were outnumbered and soon outflanked. Forced to retreat, the unit incurred horrific casualties. As at Second Manassas, Kriz directed the brigade well and conducted an orderly withdrawal under heavy fire. For the next few days, the unit fought against Confederate skirmishers on the left flank of Hooker's army and was one of the last units to retreat from the area. Looking for scapegoats to explain his defeat by an outnumbered Confederate force, Hooker blamed the XI Corps with its high number of immigrants.

Colonel Wlodzimierz Krzyzanowski witnessed many battlefield disasters in Virginia.

When Lee invaded Pennsylvania in the summer of 1863, the Army of the Potomac reacted, and in July the two sides engaged in the crucial battle at Gettysburg. During the march, Krzyzanowski added another infantry regiment, the 82nd Ohio, bringing his strength to 1,424 troops. Upon reaching the area, Howard was given overall command of Union forces after the unfortunate death of I Corps commander, Maj. Gen. John Reynolds. Schurz was temporarily promoted to command the XI Corps with 1st Brigade commander Schimmelfennig taking over the 3rd Division.

On July 1, 1863, the fatigued 1st and 3rd

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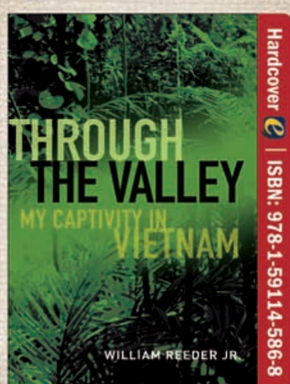

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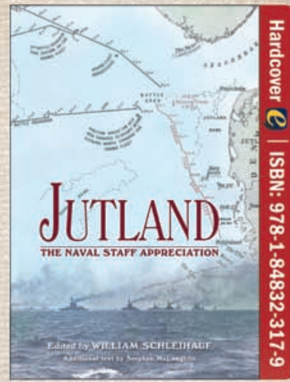

Naval Staff Appreciation sparked controversy within the Royal Navy, was heavily censored, and was deemed too explosive to publish. Transcribed from one of the few extant copies, *Jutland: The Naval Staff Appreciation* reveals this long hidden work for the first time.

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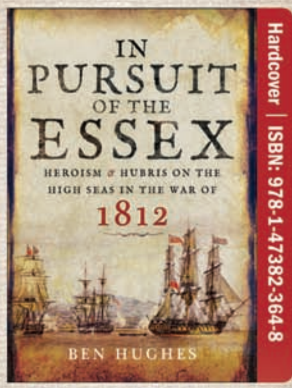

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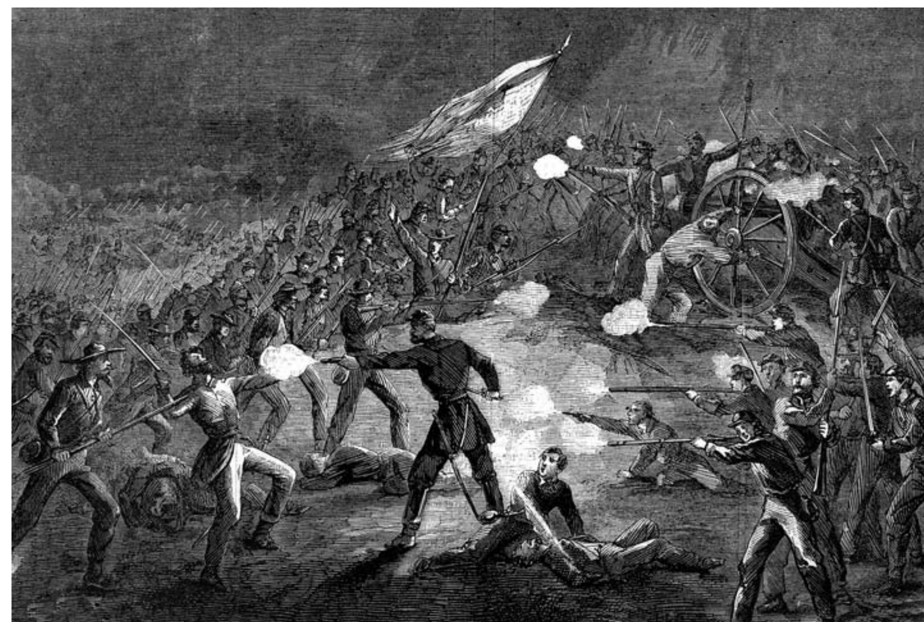
Divisions were sent north of Gettysburg. After reaching their positions the 1st Division commander, Brig. Gen. Francis Barlow, acted on his own initiative and extended his front to occupy a patch of high ground known as Blocher's Knoll. To close a gap, Kriz was ordered to extend his line. While this move to reestablish contact was commencing, Maj. Gen. Jubal Early's division easily overran the ill-positioned 1st Division. Ordered by Schurz to aid the other division, Krzyzanowski charged into battle and was able to stop one Georgia regiment before being attacked on both flanks by superior Confederate forces. The 26th Wisconsin was decimated, and so was the 119th New York.

Kriz described the bloody and bitter fighting conditions of the Battle of Gettysburg as "a portrait of Hell" and the situation in which he found himself at that moment was a representation of this observation. As at Second Manassas, Kriz had his mount shot from beneath him as he rode around the battlefield. This time he suffered more serious injuries, being knocked unconscious, and had to be carried back to the outskirts of town. In a 15-minute period, his brigade took staggering casualties. The 119th New York, 26th Wisconsin, and 75th Pennsylvania each lost 100 men, and the 82nd Ohio lost 150 men.

The routed XI Corps fell back though town, where Krzyzanowski rejected Schurz's suggestion to retire to the field hospital; instead, Kriz stayed with his men. The injuries he suffered would remain with him the rest of his life. While the retreat to Gettysburg was as orderly as might be expected considering the circumstances, the units became jumbled in the streets of the town. As a result, the Confederates captured a significant number of Union soldiers. Kriz's regiments reached the safety of Cemetery Hill, just south of the town, where Howard had established his headquarters. Maj. Gen. George Meade arrived about that time and took overall Union command; thus, all officers returned to their normal commands.

The Union troops entrenched on Cemetery Hill, and their line was studded with more than 20 artillery pieces. Throughout July 2, Meade stripped regiments from Cemetery Hill to the Union left flank, which weakened the position atop Cemetery Hill. Confederate snipers used buildings in Gettysburg for cover, and their steady fire kept the Yankees' heads down. As the day progressed, Confederate batteries opened fire on the hill. At dusk, Howard and Schurz became occupied by an attack on nearby Culp's Hill. While the battle raged on Culp's Hill, Early ordered Brig. Gen. Harry Hay's Louisiana Brigade (Louisiana Tigers) and


Union troops repel a ferocious charge by the Louisiana Tigers against East Cemetery Hill on the night of July 2, 1863. Krzyzanowski played a key role in preventing Lt. Gen. Richard Ewell's II Corps from isolating the units deployed on the Union right flank.

Colonel Isaac Avery's North Carolina Brigade to prepare for an attack on East Cemetery Hill.

At 8 PM, Hays and Avery overran the depleted XI Corps units stationed at the base of East Cemetery Hill. The Confederates continued their advance by scaling the hill and striking Union artillery units that faced northeast. By this time Howard, Schurz, and Krzyzanowski knew a major attack was underway. Kriz ordered the troops closest to him, the 119th and 58th New York Regiments, to fix bayonets. Schurz arrived and ordered him to personally determine the source of the commotion. Marching at the double quick and accompanied by Schurz, the men reached the artillery positions and were surprised to find a melee swirling around the imperiled Union guns. The German general later wrote in the *Reminiscences of Carl Schurz* that "the fate of battle might hang on the repulse of this attack." Hays did see this approaching force, but in the darkness he was unable to ascertain if it was friend or foe, and so he withheld the order to fire on them. This hesitation was all the time the 119th New York needed, and with a determined Krzyzanowski leading, the Empire Staters executed a bayonet charge. After a brief yet bloody melee, the Louisiana Tigers broke and retreated down the hill. The 119th New York not only retook the lost ground but aggressively pursued the Confederates to the base of the hill.

The third and final day of the Battle of Gettysburg found the 2nd Brigade again taking casualties from Confederate artillery fire, especially around midday during the Confederate assault on the Union center on Cemetery Ridge. The 2nd Brigade lost 698 men killed, wounded, captured, or missing during the battle. The XI Corps remained at Gettysburg until July 5. The stigma of the first day's loss and retreat brought the need to assign blame, and again this fell upon the immigrant soldiers of XI Corps.

In September 1863, XI Corps was transferred to the Army of the Cumberland and sent to the Western Theater under the command of Hooker. Krzyzanowski had his brigade reorganized, losing the 75th Pennsylvania and the 82nd Ohio Regiments, and adding the 141st New York Regiment. The corps received orders to proceed to Chattanooga, Tennessee, and raise the Confederate siege of the city. On October 28, the unit was in Tennessee's Lookout Valley near Wauhatchie when Hooker ordered the men to establish camp. The way he situated his men and the lack of adequate security precautions reminded XI Corps veterans of Chancellorsville.

After midnight the sounds of battle erupted, and Kriz prepared his men to join in. Hooker ordered Schurz to deploy his division to support Brig. Gen. John Geary; however, the 2nd Brigade never saw combat as it was halted on a road. There were conflicting reports as to whether the halt was ordered by Schurz or Hooker. While Geary was in a desperate fight, Kriz also received various conflicting orders. By the time he was allowed to march to Geary, the battle was already over. Later in the campaign, Kriz led his troops in the tough assault on Mis-

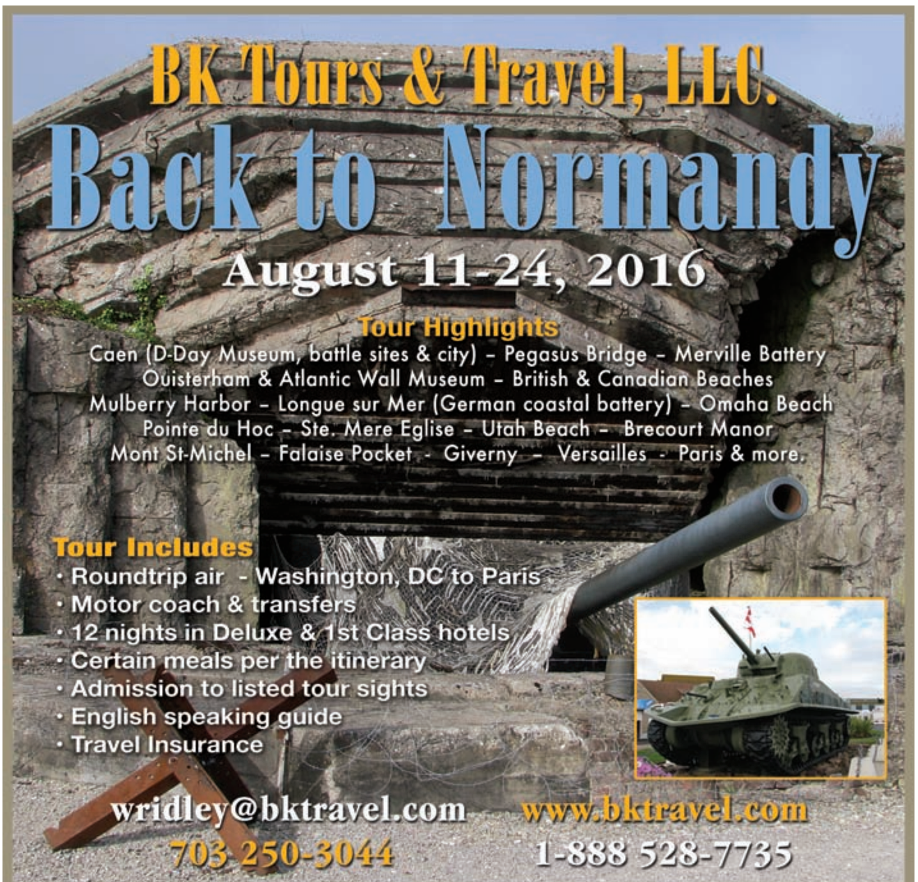
sionary Ridge. In December, his unit was part of the force that relieved the besieged Union forces in Knoxville, Tennessee.

In January 1864, the 58th New York returned to New York City on leave. While Kriz was there, a court of inquiry convened in Washington D.C., to investigate the disparaging claims by Hooker regarding Schurz's alleged failure to act at Wauhatchie. Though the court vindicated Schurz and proved Hooker lied about certain claims he made, it also declared the commander of the 2nd Brigade had halted on his own and neglected orders to continue. Unaware of the proceedings, Krzyzanowski took the blame instead of Hooker.

In early 1864, a reorganization of Union forces took place, and XI Corps was dissolved. With his days in the field over, Kriz spent the remainder of the war stationary in the South. Among the more important positions he commanded was safeguarding the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, a vital supply line for Maj. Gen. William Sherman's invasion of Georgia. For this assignment, Kriz commanded the garrison at Bridgeport, Alabama. During the next several months, his forces fought several skirmishes. On March 2, 1865, he was nominated by President Lincoln for brevet brigadier general of volunteers. This time the U.S. Senate confirmed his appointment. He continued to serve in the District of North Alabama through the Union victory and the assassination of President Lincoln.

From the end of the war until his death, Kriz held several government positions between various business ventures. In July 1882, he returned to New York City, where he eventually wrote his memoirs, which were published in serial format in *Klosy,* a Polish magazine. Illnesses, the death of his wife, and lingering effects from battle injuries took their toll, and on January 31, 1887, Krzyzanowski passed away at his New York home. Through efforts by Polish-American veterans, his remains were transferred from Brooklyn to Arlington National Cemetery in October 1937. A monument on his grave site in Arlington was unveiled on May 14, 1938.

Throughout his life, Krzyzanowski fought for the right of personal freedoms. From the ill-fated revolution in Posen to serving in the Union Army to various government positions, this belief and the desire to protect it never faltered. He arrived in the United States alone and poor, but learned that one can achieve anything in America and should have the right to do so. He called the U.S. Constitution the greatest thing about his new homeland and fought to uphold it. □



By David A. Norris

The sergeant's halberd and the officer's spontoon survived as symbols of rank well into the Napoleonic Era.

PIKES AND MOST SIMILAR POLE WEAPONS DISAPPEARED FROM European armies by the early 1700s. After all, bayonets let each man convert his flintlock into a pike that fired bullets. Nonetheless, 18th-century officers and sergeants still carried archaic-looking bladed weapons attached to six-foot-long shafts that seemed more appropriate to the Middle Ages than the Age of Enlightenment.

Halberds and spontoons represented military rank just as much as epaulets, gold braid, or other insignia, with the additional benefit of serving as emergency weapons in dire situations.

Halberds appeared by the late Middle Ages. The halberd's origin, or its evolution from earlier battle axes, is obscure. Some Georgian-era antiquarians traced the weapon all the way back to the ancient Amazons of classical mythology. Other sources called it "the Danish axe" and credited its invention to the Vikings. In documented history, Swiss soldiers fighting for the independence of their cantons or as international mercenaries made the halberd famous in the 14th century.

Halberds were mounted on sturdy poles about six feet long, which were crafted from ash or similar hardwoods. The iron head had a pointed spear tip with two additional blades set at right angles to the central axis. One of these side blades resembled a hatchet head, and the other was a sharp, downturned fluke or hook. The hatchet blades often were small and crescent-shaped and could have elaborate contours and pierced decoration. On the other hand, some halberds had a monstrously large axe added to one side. Those designed for combat were usually sturdy and simple, while those with the more elaborate patterns were carried by honor guards and palace sentries.

The halberd's pointed tip fended off opponents, as would a simple pike. The sharp point could puncture chain mail or slip between plates of armor. The curved fluke could catch a horse's reins or pull riders down from their mounts. By swinging the six-foot-long wooden handle, the axe blade landed with considerable power on the armor of a dismounted knight. Halberdiers were vulnerable when swinging their weapons back to deal a blow. They were also at a disadvantage against soldiers carrying much longer weapons, such as lances or full pikes. In practice, armies mixed halberdiers with soldiers bearing pikes, bows, and other weapons.

Halberds also helped soldiers climb up steep slopes or defensive obstacles. The sharp axe-like blades were also handy for hacking and tearing down field fortifications such as fascines or gabions.

Deploying their formidable infantry with a mixture of halberds and pikes, the united Swiss cantons during the 14th and 15th centuries

A French sergeant uses his halberd to straighten an infantry line at the Battle of Fontenoy. The halberd was a noncommissioned officer's multipurpose tool; as such, its sharp blade could be used for hacking through enemy fieldworks.

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The halberd endures to this day as a ceremonial weapon used by the Vatican's Swiss Guard.

defeated several Burgundian and Hapsburg armies. In 1386, Duke Leopold of Austria and many of his troops were killed by the halberd when the Swiss routed the Hapsburg army at the Battle of Sempach. At the 1477 Battle of Nancy, the halberd-wielding Swiss destroyed the army of Charles the Bold, the Duke of Burgundy. The duke was killed, his head split by a halberd. This catastrophic defeat finished Burgundy as a major power, and its lands were absorbed by the Hapsburgs and the French.

European monarchs, well aware of the effectiveness of Swiss troops, hired Swiss mercenaries and also adopted the halberd for their own armies. In 1480, Louis XI of France founded a mercenary company, le cent-Suisses (The Hundred Swiss). Armed with halberds, they served as a palace guard as well as accompanying French kings on military campaigns.

In 2012, the remains of King Richard III of England were exhumed from beneath a parking lot. Extensive forensic examination of the royal skeleton found evidence of multiple wounds evidently sustained at the 1485 Battle of Bosworth Field, where the king was slain. Scientific analysis indicated that it was quite likely that Richard III's fatal wound was inflicted by a halberd.

Halberds came to the Americas in the early 1500s, with Spanish conquistadors such as Cortez and Pizarro. English colonists brought halberds, which they often spelled as "halbert," to Jamestown and New England, and Dutch soldiers carried them in New Amsterdam. Jamestown's laws of 1612 required sergeants to bear halberds during garrison duty but carry firearms in the field. There is evidence of their use during the 1636-1638 Pequot War in New England. Generally, in the Atlantic colonies halberds were carried by honor guards or militia sergeants rather than combat troops. Accounts of Indians using halberds may refer to a small hybrid "halberd tomahawk."

The heyday of the halberd ended in the early 1500s. Swiss troops, who were heavily dependent on the halberd, were decimated by French artillery at Marignano in 1515. A Swiss army hired by the French met a similar fate at La Bicocca in 1523, their halberds and pikes no match for Spanish infantry armed with the arquebus. In 1525, the Hundred Swiss were killed to the last man in a vain attempt to save Francis I from capture at the Battle of Pavia.

Fading as a battlefield weapon, the halberd stayed in military usage as a symbol of a sergeant's rank. Gervase Markham wrote in 1625 that in England "halberds doe properly belong to the serjeants of companies." For two centuries, halberds were closely associated with sergeants in European armies. Havildars, the equivalents of sergeants in the Indian companies of the army of the British East India Company, also carried them. Expressions such as "to get a halberd" meant receiving promotion to sergeant. By the late 17th century, if an English sergeant was demoted his dishonor was intensified by the confiscation of his halberd in front of the assembled company or garrison.

Sergeants straightened their formations, set distances between the ranks, or prodded men into line with the halberd. François-Apolline de Guibert wrote of the Prussian Army in 1778, "The sergeants' halberds are sixteen feet long .... The divisions are closed at the right and left by sergeants; who, when there is occasion, hook their halberds together, and by this means enclose their platoons, so that the soldier cannot make his escape, but is obliged to fight."

Because they could serve as measuring rods, halberds were useful for surveying the layout of a new camp. In a more macabre function, halberds were used to drag the dead from the ranks during a battle.

Both: Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

ABOVE: A Spanish soldier carries his halberd in a period illustration from 1530. The introduction of the harquebus in the early 16th century heralded the demise of the halberd as a battlefield weapon. BELOW: British sergeants used the versatile halberd to straighten their formations, set distances between the ranks, and prod men into line.

Some armies allowed sergeants to strike soldiers with the staffs of their halberds. For more formal punishment, sergeants tied halberds together to form makeshift whipping posts. Often, three were placed together as a tripod, while the prisoner was lashed to the staff of a fourth halberd tied horizontally across two of the other ones. In the British Army in the 18th century, to be "brought to the halberds" meant to get a flogging.

Sergeants of British grenadier and light infantry companies carried fusils instead of halberds. But, in battalion companies, sergeants carried halberds until 1792. In that year, sergeants took up pikes or spontoons.

One of the first weapons ever captured by American troops was a halberd. On July 1,

1775, a party from the new Continental Army made a predawn raid on the British lines outside Boston Neck. Driving away some redcoats, the patriots set fire to a guard house and carried off some spoils of war: two firearms, one drum, and one halberd. However, halberds otherwise are little mentioned during the American Revolutionary War. While spontoons found use among the Continentals, the British while fighting in America put aside their halberds, and the Americans never officially made use of them.

Even today, a few special units of European soldiers are equipped with halberds. When the Swiss Guard of the Vatican was founded in 1506, such weapons were standard issue for foot soldiers. Members of the same unit, attired in Renaissance-style uniforms, still carry halberds today. Other modern halberd bearers include Spain's Royal Guards and two British units: the famed Yeomen Warders (i.e., Beefeaters) who are posted at the Tower of London, and the Yeomen of the Guard, who serve as royal bodyguards and ceremonially open Parliament.

The French still use an expression, "Il pleut des hallebardes" (it's raining halberds), in the way English speakers might say, "It's raining cats and dogs."

Spontoons (also spelled "espontoons") appeared later than halberds, coming into use in the late 17th century. The word seems to come from the Italian *spuntone,* meaning "pointed." A spontoon's iron point, sometimes decorated with tassels, was fitted to a sturdy hardwood shaft measuring from six to nine feet in length. The weapon's distinguishing feature was a sort of crossbar, sometimes plain and sometimes elaborately ornamental, perpendicular to the main blade.

Spontoons may have evolved from earlier spear-like weapons called pertuisanes or partisans. The partisan had a large blade, sharp on both sides. The blade was wider at the bottom, where twin symmetrical blades of various shapes sprouted from the sides. Rather blurry lines separate the spontoon and a number of other spear-like staff weapons. There were hybrids known as "partisan spontoons," and some 18th-century European accounts refer to officers' weapons as partisans rather than spontoons. Other sources refer to spontoons as "half-pikes," and some simply call them spears.

Never primarily intended for combat, the spontoon was introduced to armies as a new symbol of officer rank. They appeared in France in 1690, with new military regulations requiring infantry officers to carry an espontoon. After 1710, junior officers carried fusils instead, but senior officers retained their spontoons until the

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French Army abandoned them in 1756.

Following the French example, the infantry officers of Spain carried spontoons between 1704 and 1768. Many foot officers of Great Britain, Prussia, Austria, Russia, and other European countries also used them, although in some armies officers of grenadier regiments carried fusils instead of spontoons.

In drill formation, officers saluted with their spontoons, and they could also convey orders with them. Standing one vertically on the ground indicated a halt. Tilting the point forward signaled a forward movement; tilting it backward ordered a withdrawal.

Although ornamental, spontoons nonetheless were deadly weapons. Numerous accounts mention their use at the Battle of Culloden in 1745. Captain Lord Robert Kerr of Barrell's Regiment (4th Foot) speared a charging highlander with his spontoon before he was cut down and slain moments later.

By some accounts, Kerr died because he drove his spontoon so deeply into his enemy's body that he was unable to draw it out before he was attacked again. By the late 1800s, British tradition had it that the spontoon's crosspiece was added as a result of Kerr's death. However, an April 1746 account of the battle in *The Scots' Magazine* explained that a spontoon is "a weapon used of late years by the officers of foot." According to this article, even before the Battle of Culloden the spontoon was already "rendered more fit … by a cross-stop, which makes it easily recovered, when thrust into the enemy; whereas the half-pike usually run so far, as to be lost or broken in those occasions."

Also at Culloden, Lt. Col. George Howard of the 3rd Foot slew the Jacobite officer William Drummond, the Viscount of Strathallan, with his spontoon. A postbattle report stated that among the heavily involved redcoat regiments, "there was scarcely a soldier or officer … who did not kill one or two men with their bayonets and spontoons."

In America's wilderness, many professional officers saw long pole or staff weapons as useless impediments. Before his ill-fated 1755 march that ended in the disastrous defeat at the Battle of the Monongahela, Maj. Gen. Edward Braddock ordered his sergeants and officers to leave their spontoons and halberds behind.

In 1786, British Army regulations decreed that "the Espontoon shall be laid aside," and that officers would thereafter "make use of swords." Even before that, during the Revolutionary War many British officers never carried them in combat. In March 1776, the sergeants and officers of the First Guards were ordered to stop carrying halberds or spontoons. These orders were for safety as well as practicality. "A report being current that the Americans were in the habit of picking off the officers," discarding their pole arms would "assimilate their appearance more to that of the men."

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

ABOVE: Prussian officers hold various types of spontoons. At left is a traditional spontoon and at right is a hybrid best described as a partisan spontoon. BELOW: This British sergeant with a spontoon would have been a familiar sight during the Napoleonic age.

Halberd-carrying British sergeants exchanged their traditional weapons for a spontoon or half-pike in 1792. Thus, these staff weapons appear in accounts of battles in the Napoleonic Wars.

At the Battle of Corunna fought on January 16, 1809, Major Charles Napier commanded the 50th Regiment. In front of a chest-high wall, his men halted under heavy French fire. Some men crossed at a lower section of the wall, but the rest still hesitated. "Leaping back," wrote Napier, "I took a halbert, and, holding it horizontally, pushed many over the low part." A Sergeant Keene followed Napier with his own pike. Four of five of the enemy aimed their muskets at the British major, but Keene spoiled their aim by striking their musket barrels. When Napier's men formed a new line in front of the wall, he laid his "halbert … over the men's firelocks to keep their level low."

Sergeant's pikes or halberts were at the center of desperate clashes over regimental flags and French eagle standards. At the Battle of Barrosa on March 5, 1811, Sergeant Patrick Masterson of the 87th Regiment of Foot used his pike to kill a standard bearer of the French 8th Regiment of the Line. Masterson captured the first Napoleonic eagle taken during the Peninsular War. At Salamanca on July 22, 1812, two French eagles were taken. One, seized by the 44th Regiment, had been detached in vain from its staff by a French soldier trying to hide it from capture. The British fastened their prize to a sergeant's "halbert" and held it aloft on its new staff.

At the Battle of Waterloo on June 18, 1815, Lieutenant R.T. Belcher of the 32nd Regiment of Foot picked up the regimental colors when the regiment's ensign was wounded. Nearby, a French officer had his horse shot from under him. The Frenchman charged Belcher and grabbed the staff, but the British lieutenant managed to grasp the silk cloth of the flag. In a moment, the French officer started to draw his saber. Before he could get the sword from his scabbard, a color sergeant of the 32nd named Switzer impaled the Frenchman with his halbert.

In the armies of Russia and some German states, the spontoon survived into the first decade of the 19th century. After the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the British Army did away with the sergeant's pike in 1830.

Although the British serving in America put aside their pole weapons during the Revolutionary War, spontoons formed part of the equipment of the Continental Army. Captain Daniel Morgan led a portion of the Continental attack on Quebec on December 30, 1775. His men carried spontoons in addition to rifles

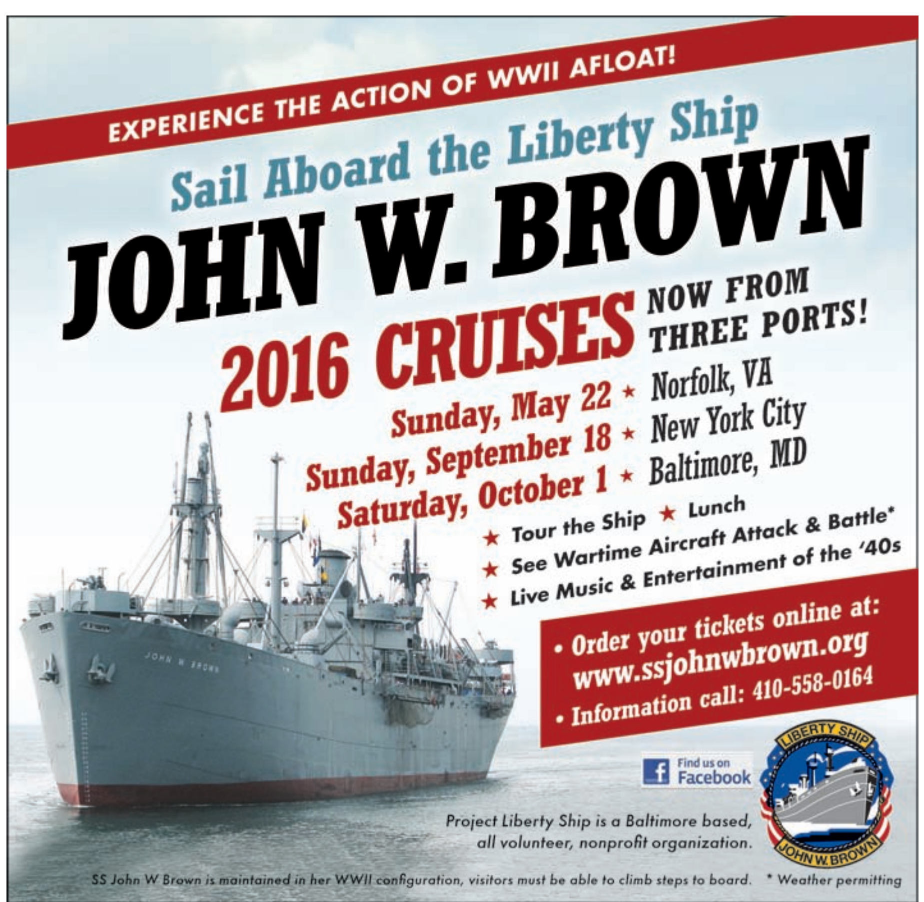
and scaling ladders. Attacking a two-gun battery, they drove the defenders into a nearby house. Morgan ordered his men to "fire into the house and follow up with their pikes (for in addition to our rifles, we were also armed with long espontoons), which they did, and drove the guard into the street."

In several surviving written orders, General George Washington insisted that Continental officers carry spontoons. At Valley Forge on December 22, 1777, Washington directed that each officer "provide himself with a half-pike or spear, as soon as possible." Washington did not want his officers to carry muskets, which he believed had a way of "drawing their attention too much from the men." He needed the officers focused on commanding their men, not distracted with loading and firing a musket. Additionally, Washington believed that an officer with neither firearm nor spontoon had "a very awkward and unofficerlike appearance."

In America, spontoons held on into the early Federal period. A North Carolina militia law of 1787 required infantry officers to carry "side arms or a spontoon." Because militia officers might well wear civilian clothing, a spontoon or sword served as an indication of superior rank.

The U.S. War Department ordered 120 spontoons for its officers in 1800. Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark each carried one during their transcontinental expedition of 1804-1806. Both officers would have reason to be glad they were burdened with these heavy staff weapons. In what is now Montana, on the night of May 26, 1805, Lewis nearly stepped on a rattlesnake. Guided by the sound of the rattles, Lewis stabbed about in the dark with his spontoon until he killed the snake. Three days later, Clark killed a wolf with his spontoon. Lewis's spontoon would twice more save his life, once in driving away a bear and another time when the captain saved himself from falling 90 feet from a precipice by bracing himself with his weapon's long staff.

Lewis and Clark may have been the last American military officers to get any real use out of the spontoon. Watchmen and policemen in some cities carried smaller versions of spontoons until about 1860, but by the time of the War of 1812, they had essentially disappeared from military life. However, William T. Sherman, in an 1890 article in the *North American Review,* pointed out that U.S. militia laws still on the books stated that "each commissioned officer shall be armed with a sword or hanger and spontoon." So, strictly speaking, all militia officers without spontoons were in violation of Federal statutes until the militia laws were revised in 1903. □



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By Blaine Taylor

Axis Sally taunted U.S. troops from a radio studio in Berlin, earning nearly universal animosity from her fellow Americans.

"THIS IS BERLIN CALLING. BERLIN CALLING THE AMERICAN MOTHERS, wives and sweethearts. And I'd just like to say, girls, when Berlin calls it pays to listen." So began a typical address by Nazi propaganda radio broadcaster Mildred Gillars, known as Axis Sally, during World War II. Her program was filled with hateful rhetoric directed against U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and the Jewish people. Her radio broadcasts were heard not only by U.S. soldiers fighting Nazi Germany, but also by Americans in the States.

Mildred Gillars arrives in the United States to face a grand jury on allegations of treason. Gillars, better known as "Axis Sally," was an American broadcaster who became a propaganda mouthpiece for the Third Reich in World War II.

"A defeat for Germany would mean a defeat for America," she said. "I say damn Roosevelt and Churchill, and all of their Jews who have made this war possible. I, as an American girl, will stay over here on this side of the fence because it's the right side. Girls, watch out! Don't forget the beautiful things we have at home which are now in danger."

Gillars' theme song was the German hit "Lili Marlene," which became a favorite with soldiers of all the fighting armies of both sides. Hundreds of thousands of American servicemen in North Africa, the Mediterranean, and northwestern Europe listened to her broadcasts from 1943 to 1945 at the height of World War II. They instantly recognized both her distinctive voice and appealing format that encompassed Big Band-era tunes played by a live orchestra.

Gillars began working at the German State Radio in 1940 as an announcer. At the time she was living in Germany with her fiancé, who was a naturalized German citizen. He threatened to leave her if she returned to the States, so she stayed in Germany despite advice the following year from the U.S. State Department that American nationals return home.

Her broadcasts initially were apolitical. Gillars' main Nazi program included the *Home Sweet Home Hour,* which was designed to discourage homesick Americans from fighting against Germany via implied unfaithfulness of their wives and girlfriends stateside, as well as disparaging the war's purpose and the Allies' ability to win it. Other programs were *Club of Nations, Smiling Through, Morocco Calling, Christmas Bells of 1943, Easter Bells of 1944,* and *Survivors of the Invasion Front.*

During the course of her on-air work, she interacted with German radio's Hans Fritzsche, who was later tried and acquitted at the Nuremberg Trials, and Kurt Georg von Kiesinger, the station's liaison with the German Propaganda Ministry for Overseas Broadcasting. Kiesinger became the chancellor of West Germany in 1966.

Another program, *Midge at the Mike,* ran from spring to fall 1943. After D-Day in 1944 came yet another major program, known as the *G.I.'s Letter Box and Medical*

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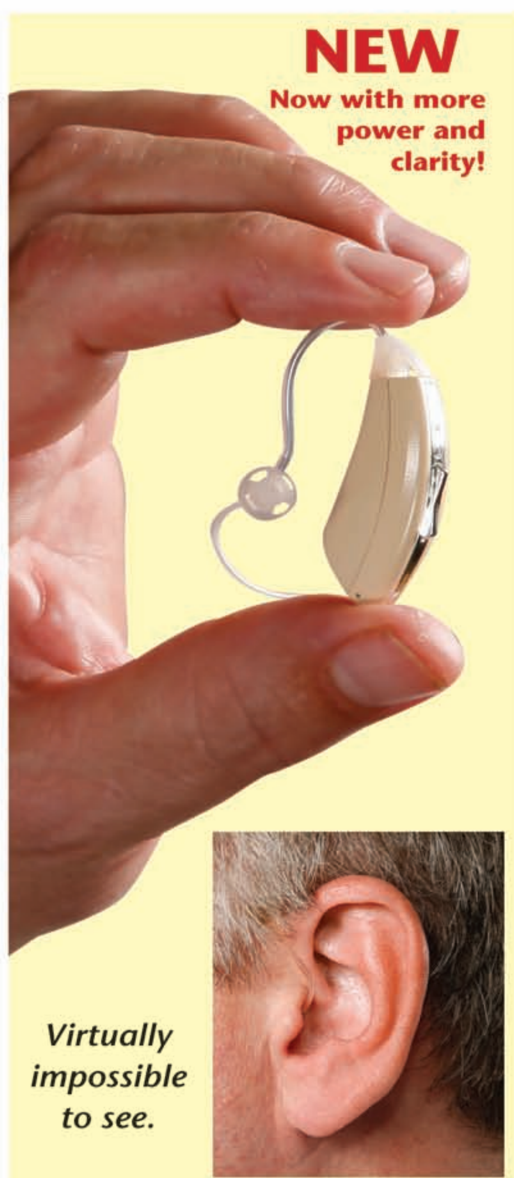

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TOP: Gillars flamboyant persona is apparent in this photo taken in Algiers before the war. BOTTOM: Gillars smokes a cigarette as she talks to reporters at U.S. Counter-intelligence headquarters in Berlin, Germany, March 21, 1946.

Reports, which had at its core the actual names, individual service numbers, and current prisoner of war status of wounded American soldiers. The relatives of captured soldiers listened to the program regularly.

One key listening post in the States was the U.S. Federal Communications Commission's monitoring facility at Silver Hill, Maryland, which duly recorded as much of it as possible for an expected postwar judicial reckoning when the Nazis lost.

On the widely scattered battlefronts, the mystery female announcer's identity soon became cloaked in a variety of nicknames, such as Berlin Babe, Berlin Bitch, Olga, and Sally. The last one, which morphed into Axis Sally, became her most lasting nickname. It stemmed from her self-description as "the Irish type—a real Sally—with a figure, black hair, white skin. I think I'm just an armful."

"Sal is a dandy," wrote U.S. Army Air Corps weatherman Corporal Edward Van Dyne, in a January 1944 article, "No Other Gal but Sal," in *The Saturday Evening Post*. "[She is] the sweetheart of the American Expeditionary Force! She plays nothing but swing—and good swing! She has a voice that oozes like honey out of a big wooden spoon. 'Homesick, soldier? Throw down your gun and go back to the good old USA.' Dr. Goebbels no doubt believed that Sally is rapidly undermining the morale of the American doughboy. I think the effect is directly opposite. We get an enormous bang out of her. We love her. Well, Sally, we'll be in Berlin soon, with a great big hug for you, if you have any kisses left!"

Undoubtedly, her most infamous broadcast was titled *Vision of Invasion* on May 11, 1944, in which she played an Ohio mother named Evelyn, who in a nightmare foresaw her son's death on an Allied ship in the English Channel during what she described as a failed seaborne invasion of Nazi-occupied France.

Indeed, it was this singular broadcast, which garnered one of 10 postwar counts of treason, which saw her both convicted and imprisoned for having committed treason against the United States. She was a lifelong citizen of the United States despite having sworn in writing an oath to German leader Adolf Hitler on December 9, 1941, under later alleged duress, just two days before Nazi Germany declared war on America.

Failing to remain in Paris in August 1944 just 10 days before the Allied liberation that would have freed her, Axis Sally instead fled back to Berlin, where she gave her last broadcast on May 6, 1945, literally exiting her radio station by its back door as Red Army soldiers entered through the front, according testimony she gave at her postwar trial. Two days later, the shattered Third Reich surrendered, and Axis Sally went underground, using the alias Barbara Mome until she was arrested by a U.S. agent in March 1946.

Her real name finally emerged upon her arrest, and more dramatically again when she arrived in Washington, D.C., for a criminal trial as an accused traitor in 1948. She showed up at her trial with her long, silver hair tied back with a black bow and the color of her clothes accented by a bouquet of bright red roses, as if at a Hollywood movie premiere rather than a criminal arraignment for treason.

But who was she, really? Born Mildred Elizabeth Sisk on November 29, 1900, in Portland, Maine, at the age of seven, her last name became Gillars when her mother remarried in 1908. Both her father and stepfather were practicing alcoholics and may or may not have abused her as a child. Her half-sister idolized her, recalling decades later that people on the streets stopped and gaped at Mildred's beauty.

At Ohio Wesleyan University, where she was known as Millie, Gillars studied drama, played

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all the available female dramatic leads in its plays, and excelled at oratory. A known flirt with no female friends and who boasted a fur coat in 1919, Gillars mimicked the stage actress Theda Bara. During her senior year in college in 1922, she suddenly moved, without having graduated, to New York's Greenwich Village to pursue acting and afterward tour with road show stock companies. She also performed as a chorus girl in 1926 Broadway musicals, performed in both comedies and vaudeville, and dyed her hair platinum blonde. In 1933, she and a lover departed for Algiers in North Africa where she studied French. She traveled back and forth between France and America several times, eventually becoming an artist's model in Paris.

Gillars speaks to reporters upon her return to Washington, D.C. On the witness stand, she stood by everything she did while employed in the service of the Nazi propaganda machine.

In September 1934, Gillars and her mother traveled to Germany, where Gillars worked as an instructor of English at Berlin's Berlitz Language School. During this time, she learned German. She took time in 1936 to attend the Summer Olympics in Berlin.

After her mother returned home to America in 1939, Gillars never saw her again. To earn her way, Gillars served as a personal assistant to actress Brigitte Horney, translated German titles into English for the Universum Film AG movie studio, and ghost wrote reviews of German movies in *Variety* and the *New York Times*.

On May 6, 1940, Mildred was hired as an American announcer on Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft, the German State Radio Network in Berlin, introducing various entertainment programs, displaying an inborn, natural talent for live broadcasting. For nearly five years, the new radio personality became the highest paid announcer on the German Foreign Ministry's Overseas Service. Her German fiancé, Paul Karlson, was killed in action on the Eastern Front in 1941.

After Pearl Harbor, Gillars castigated off-air the Third Reich's ally Japan, jeopardizing both her job and her freedom from incarceration in a concentration camp, as she was investigated by the Gestapo. It was at that point that she took the oath of loyalty to Hitler and thus was allowed to continue on-air, doing record announcements and chatty shows as an American national disc jockey.

At her U.S. postwar trial, she steadfastly maintained that she was always a patriotic American: "My war was with England and the Jews," she said, denying that she had ever wanted America to lose the war.

Her next lover was a married man, Max Otto Koischwitz. He allegedly became her mentor, writing shows for her to perform live as an actress on-air that the U.S. Justice Department regarded as blatantly seditious. "I loved him, and was willing to die for him," she said at her trial. Gillars might be considered a mixture of several types, including an overly emotional drama queen, a hysterical would-be actress, and a "stupid woman who sold out," to borrow the words of a U.S. prosecutor. But she was not boring on the stand. The most tedious part of the trial for the jurors was listening to excerpts of her radio programs.

When Koischwitz suddenly died in August 1944 of tuberculosis and heart disease, Gillars at last began to fully realize the postwar political and criminal implications that her wartime activities would have for her: both imprisonment and even possible execution in the electric chair.

Remarkably, Gillars survived the brutal Battle of Berlin from April 16 to May 2, 1945, but remained silent until her death as to possibly being raped by Red Army soldiers. However, there was a strong sexual component to her prosecutorial character defamation at her Washington treason trial when one U.S. soldier testified that during her interview of him in 1944 she exhibited lewd behavior. As with her married affair with a German propagandist whose wife was undergoing her fourth pregnancy, this went against her reputation at trial.

Gillars was arrested in Berlin on March 15, 1946, and kept in Germany until August 1948, without being charged or given legal representation until flown home for indictment and trial. Her captors even allowed her leave outside detention for Christmas 1946. Indicted by the U.S. Justice Department after being turned over to the FBI by U.S. Army Military Police upon her landing in U.S. territory, Gillars' heavily reported 102-day trial began in Washington, D.C., on January 25, 1949. The trial included a particularly dramatic fainting spell, as well as a request for sick leave from the courtroom,which was approved,.

While she was in jail, noted newspaper columnist Walter Winchell asserted on February 7, 1949, that in fairness to her, Sally's wartime views might have gotten her elected to the U.S. Congress in prewar America, even as her 1944 radio predictions started coming true. For example, the Truman-era Marshall Plan was enacted to thwart the takeover of all of Europe by Stalin.

The most dramatic moment of her trial came when she was confronted by one of the former POWs she had interviewed, Gunnar Dragsholt. On the witness stand he yelled and pointed his finger at her saying, "She threatened us as she left—that American citizen! That woman right there! She threatened us!"

"We called her a traitor and shouted names at her as she left the camp," said another eyewitness, adding, "She shouted vile names right back at us!" She despised the GIs for an incident in which one of them gave her a carton of cigarettes that turned out to be packed with horse manure instead. Another witness disparaged her self-alleged sex appeal, asserting that her jet black hair "had been colored with axle grease, she was heavily rouged, with a low-cut neckline."

On the witness stand, Gillars stood by everything she did. She insisted that she was a paid performer and not a traitor. But a jury convicted her and sentenced her to 10 to 30 years in prison, as well as a fine of $ 10,000. A Federal appeals court in 1950 upheld the conviction, and the next stage of her eventful saga duly unfolded.

Sent to the Federal Reformatory for Women at Alderson, West Virginia, Gillars quickly settled into prison life again, but because of her superior airs she was generally disliked by her fellow inmates. She kept to herself for the most part and read alone at night in her locked domicile. By 1953, though, her tough exterior began mellowing a bit, and she began participating in activities, such as directing the Protestant choir in 1957. She then began serving others by participating in religious services in jail. She converted from her native Episcopalian faith to

Continued on page 70

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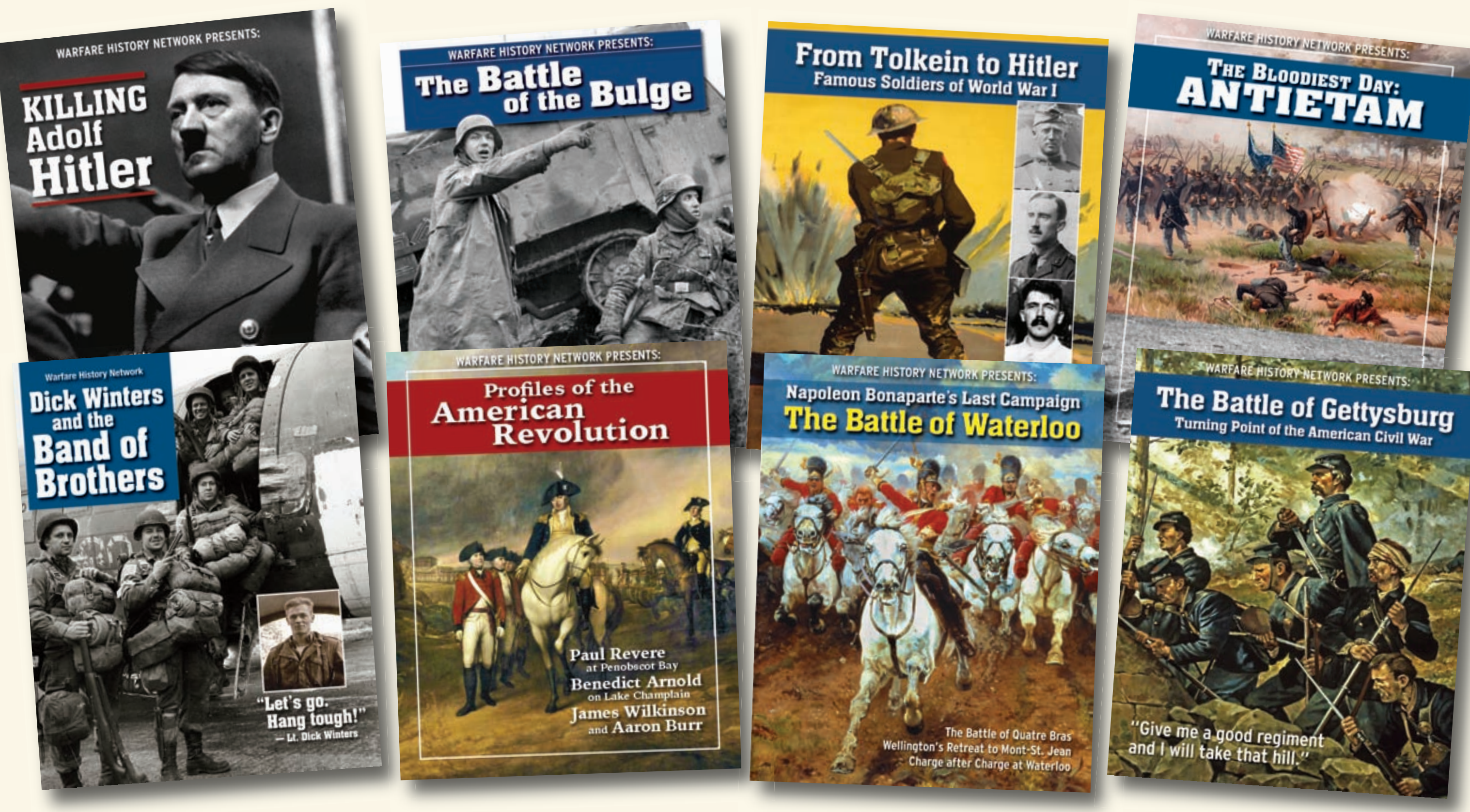

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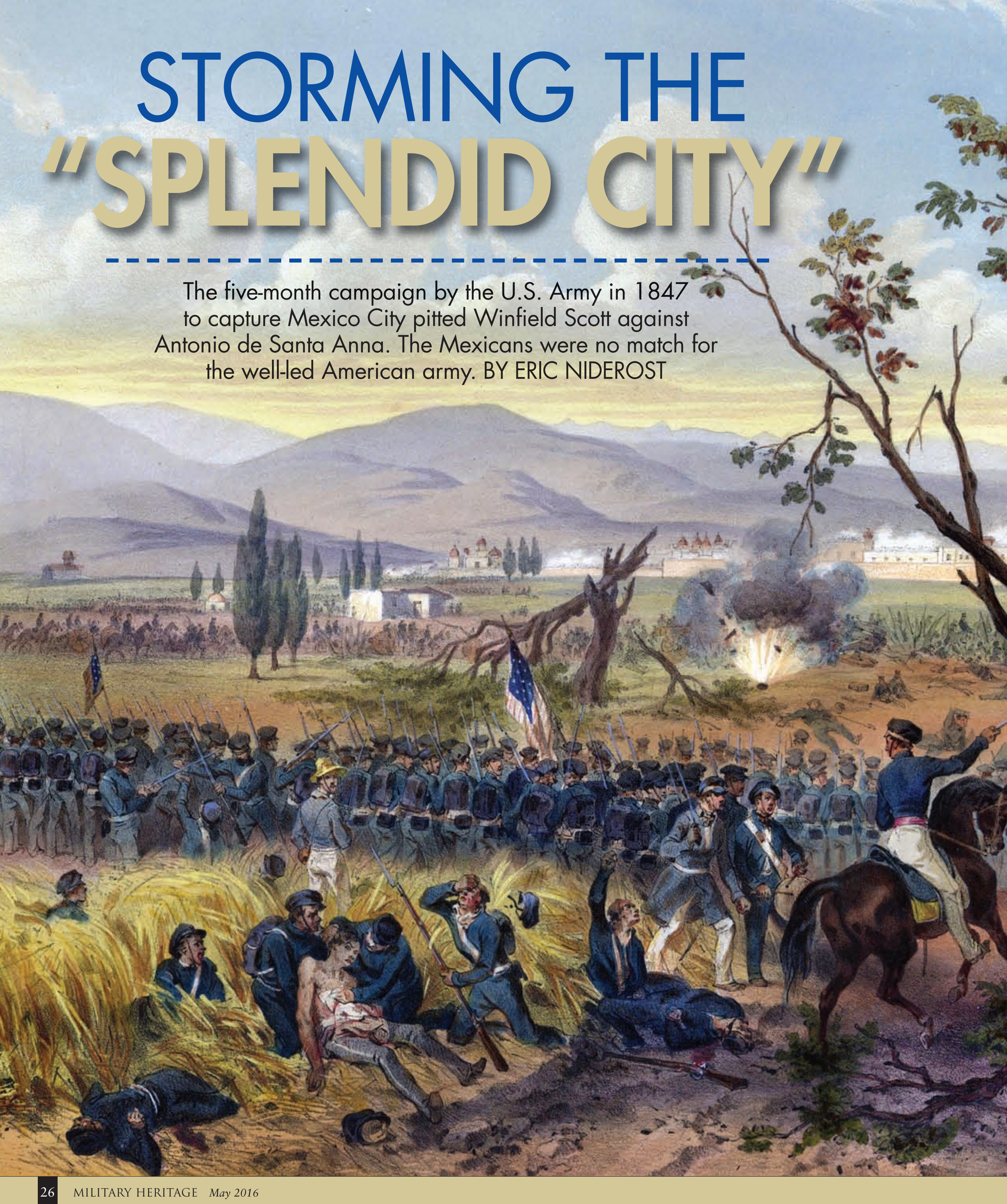
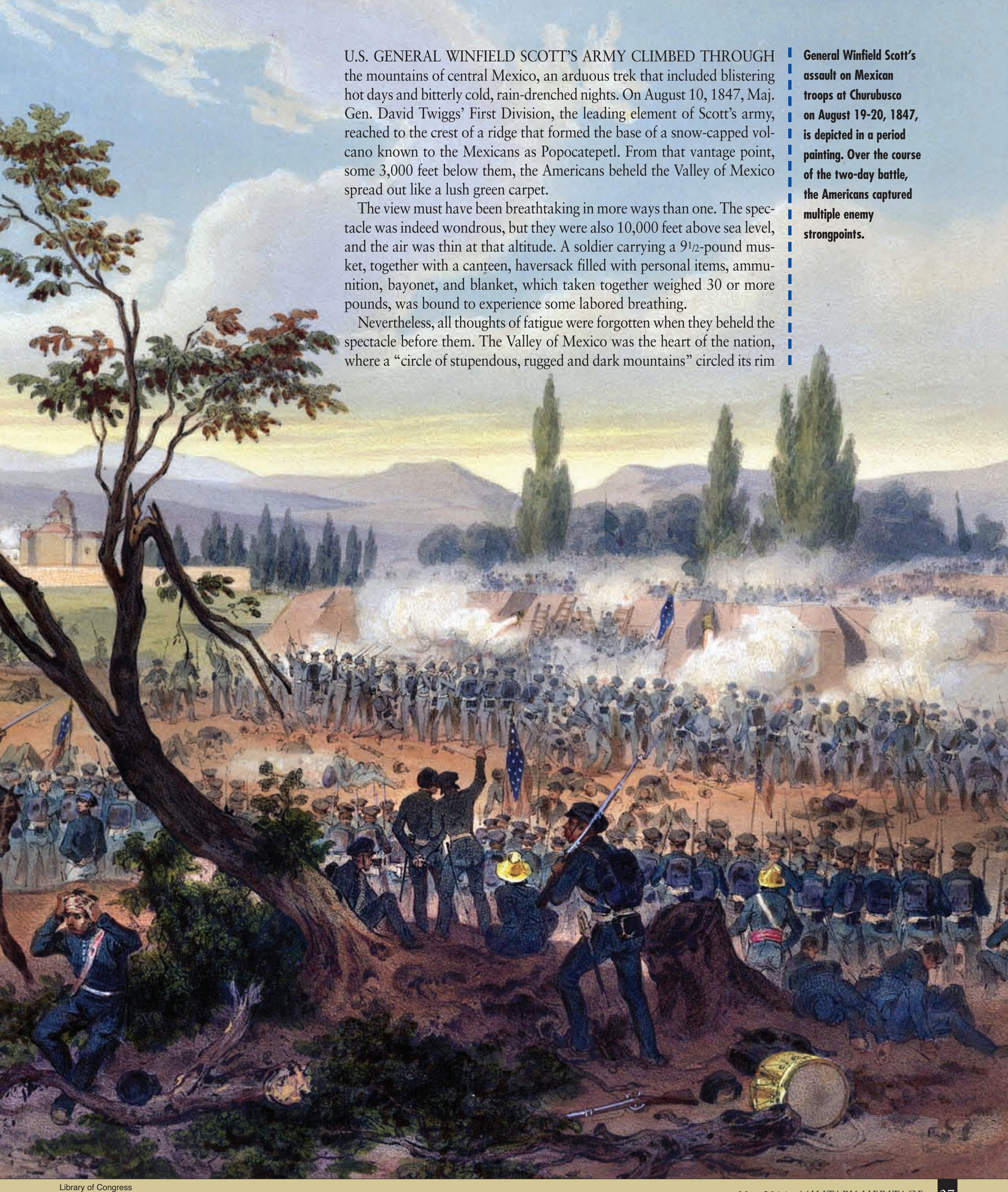


STORMING THE "SPLENDID CITY"

The five-month campaign by the U.S. Army in 1847 to capture Mexico City pitted Winfield Scott against Antonio de Santa Anna. The Mexicans were no match for the well-led American army. BY ERIC NIDEROST



U.S. GENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT'S ARMY CLIMBED THROUGH the mountains of central Mexico, an arduous trek that included blistering hot days and bitterly cold, rain-drenched nights. On August 10, 1847, Maj. Gen. David Twiggs' First Division, the leading element of Scott's army, reached to the crest of a ridge that formed the base of a snow-capped volcano known to the Mexicans as Popocatepetl. From that vantage point, some 3,000 feet below them, the Americans beheld the Valley of Mexico spread out like a lush green carpet.

The view must have been breathtaking in more ways than one. The spectacle was indeed wondrous, but they were also 10,000 feet above sea level, and the air was thin at that altitude. A soldier carrying a 9½-pound musket, together with a canteen, haversack filled with personal items, ammunition, bayonet, and blanket, which taken together weighed 30 or more pounds, was bound to experience some labored breathing.

Nevertheless, all thoughts of fatigue were forgotten when they beheld the spectacle before them. The Valley of Mexico was the heart of the nation, where a "circle of stupendous, rugged and dark mountains" circled its rim

General Winfield Scott's assault on Mexican troops at Churubusco on August 19-20, 1847, is depicted in a period painting. Over the course of the two-day battle, the Americans captured multiple enemy strongpoints.

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ABOVE: Americans assault a Mexican position at Cerro Gordo early in General Winfield Scott's march to Mexico City. One of Scott's talented engineers, Captain Robert E. Lee, discovered a route around the Mexican strongpoint blocking the mountain pass. OPPOSITE: When the Americans attacked General Gabriel Valencia's position at Contreras at dawn on August 20, they caught Valencia's men completely by surprise. In a battle lasting only 17 minutes, the startled Mexicans ran for their lives.

like a snow-mantled crown. Three great lakes, Texcoco, Chalco, and Xochimilco, shimmered in the distance like some otherworldly mirage.

The lakes were complemented by a lush green plain speckled with Indian villages and white haciendas. But sooner or later all eyes were drawn to Mexico City, some 25 miles away from the American vantage point. The city's magnificent buildings were punctuated by green trees, and numerous church steeples spiked the sky. Scott, commander-in-chief of the American expeditionary force, was exultant. "That splendid city will soon be ours!" he said.

The Mexican-American War was the inevitable result of tensions that had been building for a decade or more. The United States had a dynamic, growing, and land-hungry population, and Mexico possessed a western empire stretching to the Pacific that was rich but sparsely settled. Political considerations, seasoned with cultural, language, and even religious differences, made compromise impossible.

James K. Polk was elected president on a platform of Manifest Destiny. That doctrine held that it was America's God-given fate to advance to the shores of the Pacific. Polk tried to buy California and the Western territories, but when he was predictably rebuffed by the Mexican government he engineered an incident that led to war. A skirmish between Mexican and American troops on disputed territory allowed Polk to boldly proclaim, "American blood has been shed on American soil."

A few were skeptical about Polk's claims, such as U.S. Representative Abraham Lincoln, but the vast majority of Americans were wildly enthusiastic about the war. Nevertheless, after some months of fighting it was clear that the Mexican capital itself would have to be taken before the Mexicans would ever capitulate. Scott, America's premier soldier, was given the task of landing at Vera Cruz on the coast and then fighting his way some 279 miles through the mountains to Mexico City.

Scott's assignment was unenviable, and at the start of the campaign most Europeans felt Mexico would emerge the victor. The U.S. Army's performance in the War of 1812 was mixed, and it had more experience fighting Indians than conventional armies on foreign soil. The Mexicans would be fighting on their home ground, and they had a powerful ally in their country's formidable geography. The rough roads that wound through precipitous mountain ranges were perfect for defense. Making matters worse, the coastal regions were plagued by yellow fever.

In spite of all these difficulties, Scott persevered. The Americans landed near Vera Cruz, taking the city on March 29, 1847, after a short siege and a particularly heavy and effective bombardment. Scott and his 8,500-strong army departed for Mexico City via the National Road. This was the route that Cortez had taken in 1519, more than 300 years earlier, to conquer the Aztecs.

General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, the victor of the Alamo, awaited Scott at Cerro Gordo. After a fall from grace, Santa Anna was once more Mexico's supreme leader but knew his power depended on his ability to defeat the Americans. Though much ridiculed for his greed, pomposity, and overweening vanity, Santa Anna was a good general and under pressure could rise to the occasion. His position at Cerro Gordo, which effectively blocked a mountain pass that led to the capital, was a good one.

One of Scott's engineers, Captain Robert E. Lee, found a way around the Mexican positions. In a sharp fight on April 18 the Mexicans were flanked and forced to retreat. Approximately 3,000 Mexican soldiers were captured, and Santa Anna himself fled so quickly he left his wooden leg behind. It was an American triumph against formidable odds.

Only a few days later, however, Scott faced a crisis at Jalapa. His army, already small, was going to be reduced by the departure of 3,000 volunteers. Their one-year enlistments were up, and Scott felt in good conscience he could not restrain them. He also was faced with a logistical nightmare, because his supply line was a long one that stretched back to Vera Cruz. The Americans had established garrisons along the route to keep that vital corridor open.

Scott decided to order all those garrisons to abandon their stations and join him. At one stroke his bolstered the numbers of his field army but also cut himself off from the coast. It was a bold and audacious move that left European observers dumbfounded. The Duke of Wellington, who had defeated Napoleon at Waterloo, declared, "Scott is lost! He has been carried away by his successes! He can't take the city [Mexico City] and he can't fall back on his base."

Scott stayed in Puebla for three months from May to August, and during this period reinforcements trickled in. Among these were Brig. Gen. Franklin Pierce, a politician turned soldier, and 2,400 volunteers. By August, Scott was ready to march again, especially since peace negotiations with Santa Anna seemed to have fallen through.

In the meantime, Santa Anna was gathering a new army and preparing the defenses of the Mexican capital. The defeat at Cerro Gordo, and an earlier reverse on February 23 at Buena Vista against Maj. Gen. Zachary Taylor, had tarnished his reputation. But Santa Anna's record was quickly forgotten, or at least forgiven, when Scott approached Mexico City. For all his faults, he had a genuine charisma that appealed to Mexicans in times of crisis.

Mexico City buzzed with activity that spurred a rising patriotic zeal. Church bells sounded the alarm, a deep-toned cacophony that echoed across the valley in a clarion call to duty. After much reflection, Santa Anna decided to block the National Road at El

Penon, a hill that was about 10 miles from the city proper. This well-fortified post would stop the invaders in their tracks.

The Grand Plaza of Mexico City, today generally called the Zocalo, was the scene of an impressive spectacle as the Mexican army marched out to defend the city. The brigades that marched out past cheering crowds were a cross-section of the city's population. The Independencia Brigade, for example, was composed of tailors, bricklayers, and carpenters who carried older muskets because that was the best they could afford.

Later that day, Santa Anna appeared on the Grand Plaza surrounded by a glittering staff and an escort wearing resplendent uniforms. Thousands of voices cried, "Viva Santa Anna!" as he rode by, acknowledging their cheers. Further cries of "Viva la Republica!" filled the air as drums beat a throbbing martial tattoo and ladies waved from balconies.

But would the Americans really come up the National Road as anticipated? Scott had intelligence that El Penon was heavily fortified, but he wanted to confirm the findings. Once again, Lee and a party of other engineers were sent out to reconnoiter the position. Lee reported back that the El Penon position was indeed strong and defended by at least 7,000 troops.

But the Americans were aware that there was another road that snaked south through a narrow isthmus between Lake Chalco and Lake Xochmilco, which then turned west to San Augustin. At that location, it joined the Acapulco Road, which led north to Mexico City. When he learned this from the engineers, Scott needed no persuasion. The Acapulco Road would be Scott's new axis for his advance. The American army would follow this newly discovered route, thereby executing a classic turning maneuver on an unsuspecting Santa Anna.

It took Santa Anna two or three days to become fully convinced that Scott had stolen a march on him. Adaptable as always, he shifted his forces to new defensive positions to counter Scott's moves. The Mexican leader spread his 25,000 men in a line about five miles wide, with natural obstacles providing further defense.

The shortest way to Mexico City was via the Acapulco Road, through the San Antonio hacienda. The Americans would soon occupy San Augustin, about five miles farther south. Santa Anna lost no time in building strong fortifications at San Antonio, which once again blocked the path to the capital. The position itself was strong and could not be immediately outflanked. To the west was the Pedregal, a large lava bed of razor-sharp rocks, and to the east the ground was impenetrable marshland.

Scott's situation was becoming desperate. The American horses needed fodder, and rations were short and growing musty. His army had only about 10,000 effectives, confronting a Mexican army of 20,000 men fighting on their own soil. But perhaps there was a solution. If the Americans could find a way near or through the Pedregal's southern edge, they could circle around the lava and get behind the San Antonio fortifications.

Lee once more came to the fore. He did an extensive reconnaissance, and on August 18 Lee reported that he had found a mule track across the southwestern tip of the 15-mile-wide lava bed, which might be widened or otherwise improved, at least enough so it would be passable for infantry and artillery. Hearing this, Scott quickly formulated new plans. Lee would take some 500 men to act as sappers and improve the approach as best they could.

In the meantime, Twiggs' division would take the lead, at the same time protecting the road builders. If Twiggs got into trouble, which Scott felt was unlikely, Maj. Gen. Pillow's division would come up, and Pillow would take command of the entire force. Twiggs was not happy over this arrangement, but Scott felt the point was not worth debating since the commander in chief would soon join them.

Mexican politics were sordid in this era, a Machiavellian nightmare as scheming generals jockeyed for power and their own selfish interests while the fate of the nation hung in the balance. General Gabriel Valencia, while technically subordinate to Santa Anna, was an ambition-driven man who hoped to replace his one-legged chief. Against orders, he moved his Army of the North five miles beyond Santa Anna's original defense lines to a position between the Indian villages of Padierna and Contreras.

Santa Anna immediately ordered Valencia to move back to San Angel, his original position. Valencia gave Santa Anna lip service, but did not budge a foot. Finally, Santa Anna gave up in disgust. He would "leave Valencia to act on his own responsibility." Of course, what Valencia really wanted was a chance to defeat the Americans singlehandedly and emerge as Mexico's new hero.

The road builders moved out on the morning of August 19. The American soldiers were tough

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and inured to hardship, but hacking a path through this lunar-like landscape of jumbled volcanic boulders proved difficult, backbreaking, and dirty. They made good progress until they reached a point overlooking Padierna in front, San Geronimo to the right, and Contreras to the left.

At this point Twiggs' men came under heavy artillery fire from no fewer than 22 Mexican guns. Though the Americans did not know it, this was an element of Valencia's command, now firmly ensconced in the Contreras area. Twiggs immediately ordered two American batteries up to reply to this cannonade. It was an order more easily said than done.

George Ballentine, an Englishman in American service, was a soldier in one of the units called up, namely Captain John B. Magruder's 1st U.S. Artillery. He later wrote that the lava bed was so rough and treacherous that often they were brought to an abrupt if temporary halt. "We had to lift the [gun] carriages as if over a wall," he wrote, "the men lifting at the wheels and the horses whipped to their utmost exertions at the same time."

At first Valencia could not believe the Americans had crossed the Pedregal. "No, no, you're dreaming, hombre!" he said to the messenger who brought him the news. But once he accepted the idea, his joy knew no bounds. He had defeated the Yanquis and gained fresh laurels for himself.

But as the artillery duel increased in fury, Valencia seemed to be obsessed with its progress to the exclusion of all other fronts. Pillow ordered Colonel Bennet Riley to take his brigade and occupy San Geronimo, the idea being to get behind Valencia and cut him off from his lifeline, the San Angel Road. Other units joined Riley until there were about 3,500 Americans in and around San Geronimo.

As the American infantry worked its way through the Pedregal to join Pillow, they found the going very tough. Lee's sappers had done their best, but apparently there were stretches that were little improved. Soldiers were forced to have a "compelling rapid gait in order to spring from point to point of rock, on which two feet could not rest and which cut through our shoes," wrote a soldier in Riley's brigade.

The Americans at San Geronimo were in grave danger. A large body of Mexican troops could be seen at San Angel, just about a half-mile up the road. There were some 7,000 of them, commanded by Santa Anna himself. If Santa Anna showed any initiative or drive, he could crush the American troops, his hammer striking them against Valencia's anvil.

Library of Congress

Clockwise from top left: General Antonio López de Santa Anna, General Winfield Scott, General Gabriel Valencia, and Brig. Gen. Franklin Pierce.

Seeing the problem, Brig. Gen. Persifor Smith joined the American forces at San Geronimo, arriving just about an hour before sunset. Though he kept a wary defensive eye on Santa Anna, Smith planned an early morning attack on Valencia. But Smith felt it was imperative that Scott know about it. Not only was night falling, but thick gathering clouds announced the coming of a thunderstorm.

This meant a nocturnal crossing of the Pedregal under the worst of conditions, but Lee was undeterred. Lee left about 8 PM, groping forward in the pitch blackness in a pouring rain. The captain was guided by his uncanny sense of direction, a small lantern, and lightning bolts as they flashed through the sky. Carefully, almost gingerly, Lee and his small party threaded their way past jagged outcroppings and treacherous crevasses that threatened to swallow them. Lee, drenched and sore, found Scott after 11 PM.

Ironically, this torrential downpour worked in the Americans' favor, since Mexican pickets had left their positions because of the bad weather. In the meantime, Santa Anna did virtually nothing to help or reinforce Valencia. Santa Anna's lack of movement was due either to lethargy or a desire to see his rival crushed.

When the Americans attacked at dawn, they caught Valencia's men completely by surprise. Wet and cold, they were disheartened by Santa Anna's failure to reinforce them. When the Americans attacked, the majority of Valencia's men broke and ran. Valencia had been in an ebullient mood, mistaking the earlier artillery duel as a great Mexican triumph. It was said that Valencia spent the previous night celebrating his "victory" by getting roaring drunk.

The so-called Battle of Contreras on August 20 lasted only 17 minutes. Santa Anna now hoped that the Americans would be stopped at Churubusco with its fortified convent, earthworks, and seven cannons. The Churubusco River fronted the Mexican position, and a bridgehead fort guarded the approaches on the south side of the stream. The fortified Convent of San Mateo, founded by the Franciscans, was to the southwest, about 500 yards away from the Churubusco Bridge.

Santa Anna gave strict orders that the bridgehead and convent were to be held at all costs. One Mexican unit in particular was determined to fulfill his instructions to the letter. The San Patricio Battalion was largely composed of Irish and German immigrants, many of whom were veterans and deserters from the U.S. Army. It was said they received their name and outwardly Irish flavor because of their commander and founder, John Riley.

The men of the San Patricio Battalion came from different countries, but on the whole it was their Catholic faith that united them. At the time, Catholics often faced discrimination in the United States, where the bulk of the population was Protestant. Few of them were American citizens, or even American born, so they had little love for a country that seemed to despise their religion.

By the same token, many were deserters from the U.S. Army, and they knew that if captured they faced the draconian punishments that were common to the armies of that period. They might be brutally flogged, branded, or even hanged for their desertion. They knew their fate if Mexico were defeated, which provided a powerful motivation to resist at all costs.

The usually cautious Scott dispensed with reconnaissance and ordered a full-scale attack on both the bridgehead and the convent. Learning that there were two other bridges across the Churubusco River, Scott sent Brig. Gen. James Shields and Brig. Gen. Franklin Pierce north to cross one of them and go on to the town of Portales. This would put Shields and Pierce behind the Mexican defenders at Churubusco.

Scott underestimated the strength of the Churubusco positions. The better course would have been to send the bulk of his army with Shields and Pierce, neatly outflanking and getting behind Churubusco. All of the formidable fortifications would have been neutralized in one stroke.

Most accounts say the Churubusco defenders were supported by powerful artillery. In addition to the men of the San Patricio Battal-

U.S. Army Art Collection

American infantry advances in neat ranks on the convent at Churubusco in a highly romantic depiction of the battle by James Walker. Nevertheless, the painting captures the imposing nature of the fortified convent.

ion, other Mexican units that participated in the fighting were the Independencia Battalion and Los Bravos Battalion, with some elements of the Tlapa and Lagos Battalions in support. The convent was commanded by Brig. Gen. Pedro Anaya, and the strategic bridgehead fort on the south bank was under the command of General Francisco Perez.

Scott committed virtually all his forces to the Churubusco advance. Maj. Gen. William Worth and Pillow would attack the Churubusco Bridge and the bridgehead fort, while Twiggs would advance on the convent. Shields and Pierce were already committed to the northern flank march. Pierce, handsome and dashing, would become a somewhat ineffectual U.S. president a few years later.

The Mexicans fought well in the initial stages, but as time went on they were hampered by a lack of ammunition. When an ammunition wagon belatedly arrived, the cartridges were of the wrong type for the majority of the weapons, rendering them useless. Nevertheless, the Mexican soldiers at the bridgehead fought courageously, repulsing several American assaults.

The Americans took heavy casualties but pressed on, courage meeting equal courage. Elements of Colonel Newman Clark's brigade, which included the 5th and 8th U.S. Infantry, took the bridgehead fort with the bayonet, ably supported by Brig. Gen. Cadwallader's 11th U.S. Infantry and 14th U.S. Infantry.

The Americans had endured a punishing fire as they approached the bridgehead, and once inside the fort the hand-to-hand fighting was intense. When his soldiers won, Worth felt his heart "filled with gratitude."

But the Mexicans were not finished. They withdrew into the walls of the convent, intent on a last stand. The San Patricio men were the heart and soul of the defense at this stage, refusing to even consider the possibility of surrender. According to some accounts, the San Patricio Battalion singled out advancing American officers for special attention, killing all they could. It was their revenge for the abuse many had endured as common soldiers in the ranks.

After a battle that lasted 2½ hours, Mexican ammunition was running out, and several of their cannons were out of action. But when a Mexican officer tried to raise the white flag, Captain Patrick Dalton of the San Patricio Battalion tore it down. Taking his cue from the Irishman, Anaya ordered his men to continue the resistance, even if they had to fight with their bare hands.

Twice more Mexicans tried to raise the white flag, but according to some stories the San Patricios shot dead anyone who attempted to capitulate. Lt. Col. Francisco Penunuri of the Independencia Battalion tried a desperate bayonet charge against the Americans, but he was killed and the attack was unsuccessful. The San Patricios fought with the courage of desperation, but after the fall of the bridgehead American victory could not be long delayed.

Captain Edmund Alexander of the U.S. 3rd Infantry was the first over the convent rampart, and soon other followed. There was bloody fighting in the ancient rooms and corridors of the convent, with men wielding sabers and thrusting bayonets with wild abandon. All dissolved into chaos as the shouts and curses of the combatants mingled with the screams of the wounded and echoed and reechoed down the convent halls.

U.S. Army Captain James Smith raised his white handkerchief. This was done not to surrender but to make the Mexicans pause long enough for him to make a suggestion. He tactfully asked that the Mexicans at Churubusco capitulate, and this time the offer was accepted. Thirty-five men of the San Patricio Battalion were killed and 85 taken prisoner, including a wounded Riley.

Not all Mexicans surrendered; some managed to escape, including fewer than 100 men of the San Patricio Battalion. The American forces assaulting Churubusco had suffered approximately 1,000 casualties in the operation and were not in a forgiving mood when they finally met the captive San Patricio men face to face. It was said they "vented their vocabulary of Saxon expletives" on the captives.

Anaya was still defiant after surrendering. When the Americans asked where his ammunition was, he said, "If I still had ammunition, you would not be here." Mexican losses totaled 700 killed and wounded and 1,800 captured.

Both: Library of Congress

Major General Gideon Pillow's division scrambles up steep terrain in a mid-September assault on Chapultepec Castle. The formidable position was the last major obstacle before the Americans reached Mexico City.

Scott halted the pursuit of the retreating remnants of the Mexican army, which were falling back toward Mexico City. He could have taken the city, but he did not because he said he was willing "to leave something to this [Mexican] republic."

The twin Battles of Contreras and Churubusco, which really were two phases of the same battle fought on August 20, constituted a Mexican disaster. In a single day, Santa Anna had lost 4,000 killed or wounded and an addition 3,000 captured. Among the prisoner haul were eight generals, two of whom were former presidents of Mexico.

Santa Anna returned to Mexico City "possessed of a black despair from the unfortunate events of the war." Any other Mexican leader would have been discredited and more than likely swept from power; indeed, Santa Anna had already experienced a checkered career of ups and downs. But in truth there was no one else available with his charisma and ability to rebound from disaster. The peg-legged dictator remained in power, recovered his optimism, and suggested a truce.

Scott could have taken Mexico City at this time, but he halted operations and agreed to the truce. This was done for political, not military reasons. It was hoped that if their capital was not taken the Mexicans, honor and face intact, would be more willing to enter negotiations. Santa Anna, as wily and duplicitous as ever, used the truce to strengthen his defenses and rebuild his army. Scott resumed the offensive in early September when it was plain Santa Anna had no intentions of making a serious peace.

On September 8, Scott attacked Molina del Rey, which also was known as King's Mill. He believed the structure contained a cannon foundry. The incident was one of Scott's rare mistakes because the mill was heavily defended and the Americans should have bypassed it. They did take Molina del Rey, but at heavy cost. When the Americans entered the building, they found it did not contain any cannons.

Scott by then had reached Tacubaya, a village located about four miles from Mexico City, where stopped to explore his options. The city was far from helpless, and there were still a number of formidable defenses to overcome before the Americans could seize the prize. The first of these was the Chapultepec Castle, perched atop a 220-foot hill.

Chapultepec means "grasshopper hill" in the Aztec language. In 1775, Viceroy Bernardo de Galvez built a magnificent home for himself at the highest point of Chapultepec Hill. The stately home later was converted into a military school. The hill itself was about three-quarters of a mile wide, and a quarter-mile long. The north and east sides were quite steep. They were too precipitous for an assault with scaling ladders. The west slope had possibilities, but a walled garden and a tree-choked cypress swamp would hinder any advance.

Scott hoped Chapultepec might surrender by being subjected to an artillery bombardment alone. American batteries were placed in position, guns that included 16-pound siege guns, eight-inch howitzers, a 10-inch mortar, and a 24-pounder. Scott's artillery opened fire at 5 AM on the morning of September 12.

The bombardment was fairly light at first but gained in intensity as the morning wore on. The castle walls were breached in places, and heroic Mexican engineers did what they could to repair the damage even as new shells fell. The roof was partly destroyed, and Mexican casualties grew to such an extent a corridor was converted into a makeshift hospital. Wounded soldiers were piled together, their moans echoing through the building, but there were no medications to ease their pain.

In the end, Scott decided the Americans would mount a two-pronged attack on the castle. Pillow's men would launch an attack on the western side. Quitman's division would be on Pillow's right on the Tacubaya Road, scaling the walls on that side. Each division would be spearheaded by a "forlorn hope" of 265 men each, all regulars. Some 50 Marines also would take part, the action forever immortalized by the Marine Corps hymn in the "Halls of Montezuma."

The castle was commanded by Nicholas Bravo, a tough old soldier who was something of a legend in his own time. There were perhaps 260 men in the castle proper, including 50 young cadets. They were augmented by about 600 men posted around the walls that protected the castle.

Scott chose September 13 as the day to attack

Chapultepec. It was a beautiful, clear day. The sky was a cobalt blue, and the surrounding snow-capped peaks stood out in sharp relief in the far distance. But Mexican resistance seemed to grow more determined the closer they came to the capital, and the small American army was far from home. Worth privately said, "We shall be defeated." Even Scott had his misgivings.

After a preliminary bombardment, the American assault went forward. Lieutenant James Longstreet of the 8th Infantry was wounded, and Lieutenant George Pickett took the colors Longstreet had been carrying. The advance momentarily halted at the base of Chapultepec's walls while scaling ladders were brought forward. American sharpshooters kept Mexican heads down while the attackers waited. The first few ladders placed on the wall were flung off by the defenders, even though they were heavily laden with soldiers and Marines clinging to the rungs.

Eventually more ladders were placed on the wall, enough to have 50 Marines and soldiers climb simultaneously. The Mexican wall defenders fell back for a last stand, and the subsequent hand-to hand fighting was short but bloody. A patriotic Mexican story tells of six cadets who refused to surrender. One of them, teenaged Juan Escutia, wrapped himself in the Mexican flag and plunged to his death from the high battlements.

Nothing could prevent the Americans from taking Chapultepec Castle. The American flag was raised, and General Nicolas Bravo Ruedo gave up his jeweled sword in token of surrender. The Americans were triumphant, but the city still was not in their possession. The city was protected by fortified gates, so there was no time to lose.

There were two roads, both of which were raised causeways above a boggy swamp that led from Chapultepec to Mexico City. The roads branched out, forming a "V." They were fairly wide because each had an aqueduct running down its center with a road bed on either side. One led to Mexico City's San Cosme Gate and the other to Belen Gate.

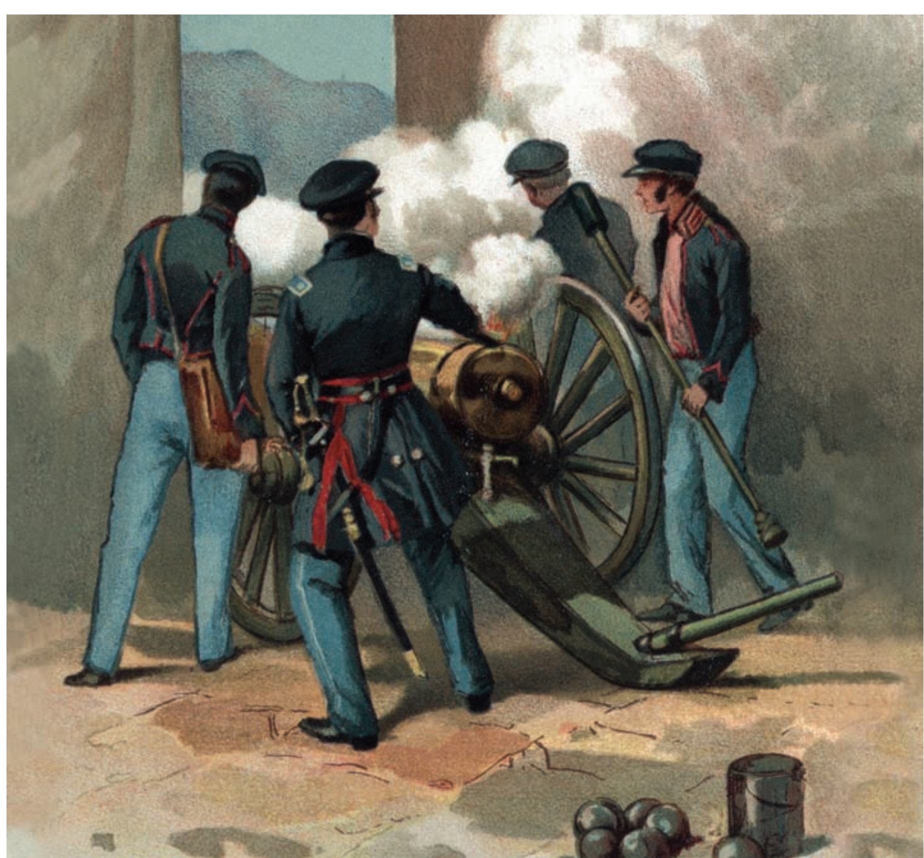
Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant of the 4th Infantry was with those who pushed up the road to San Cosme Gate. He noted that the road and its aqueduct made a sharp right turn before reaching the gate itself. The aqueduct offered advantages as well as disadvantages. Although its arches offered protection for advancing American troops, they also gave Mexican defenders similar protection.

"At points on the San Cosme road parapets were thrown across, with an embrasure for a single piece of artillery each," wrote Grant. There were also houses along the way, "covered with infantry and protected by parapets made of sand bags," he wrote, adding that "deep, wide ditches, filled with water, lined the sides of both roads." Worth's command surged up the road to San Cosme, while Brig. Gen. John Quitman's division advanced on Belen Gate.

Grant saw a church whose belfry commanded a view of the fortified San Cosme Gate and the territory just beyond. Quickly formulating a plan, Grant took a handful of artillerymen forward with a disassembled mountain howitzer. The Model 1841 fired a 12-pound shot and weighed 500 pounds with its carriage. The barrel alone, disassembled, was some 220 pounds.

Carrying the various components of the gun was no easy task since the sweating men had to cross some water-filled ditches. When Grant reached the church he pounded on its door seeking admission. A priest appeared, no doubt amazed at this strange apparition in a dirt-spattered dark blue coat. Grant spoke a little Spanish, and finally the priest reluctantly let the Yankees in.

The soldiers manhandled the gun pieces up to the belfry and then reassembled the howitzer as fast as they could. In no time, the howitzer was lobbing shot in the midst of the San Cosme Gate defenders, who were only about 300 yards away. The fire was so effective that the Mexican defenders were thrown into confusion. Grant's gun and its handful of artillerymen did much to help open the San Cosme gate.



Lieutenant Ulysses S. Grant and his artillery crew heroically carried a disassembled howitzer to the top of a church belfry and, after reassembling it, began shelling the defenders of the San Cosme Gate. On the morning of September 14, Scott was informed that Santa Anna and his men had fled the city.

In the meantime, Quitman and his men had taken the Belen Gate and were entering the city. There was not going to be any last-ditch defense of the capital. In fact, as the Americans were coming in Santa Anna withdrew his army from the city. Santa Anna released several thousand criminals from the city's jails in an apparent attempt to create chaos in his wake.

The Americans had the pride but not the panoply of their retreating foes. After several days of hard fighting, their blue uniforms were ragged, dirty, and bloodstained as they entered the capital. Quitman entered with only one shoe on. It was said a U.S. Marine raised the American flag atop the National Palace. Scott formally entered Mexico City the next day. There would be many months of wrangling before a formal peace treaty was signed, but Scott's prediction had come true. The Splendid City was in American hands. □

The chaotic fighting on Edson's Ridge is captured in a painting by Marine Corps combat artist Donald Dickson. The ferocious Japanese attack on the night of September 13 resulted in heavy casualties for both sides.

BLOODY BRAWL ON GUADALCANAL

The Japanese believed they could retake the vital Lunga perimeter and Henderson Field on Guadalcanal from the U.S. Marines in August 1942. Events would prove otherwise. **BY MIKE PHIFER**

U.S. Navy

THE column of sweaty, exhausted Japanese soldiers trudged single file through the thick, dark jungle. For days they had been pushing inland from the western end of Guadalcanal. They had embarked on their slow-moving jungle march on October 16, 1942. They tramped steadily through nearly impenetrable jungle growth, clawing their way over knife-edged ridges. At one point they waded through the chest-deep Lunga River, holding their weapons aloft as they crossed. Adding to the weight of their gear and rations was the artillery shell that each soldier was required to carry. The crews of the weapons teams had it particularly tough. Each carried a section of a dismantled gun. Their load was so heavy that they all eventually dropped back to the end of the column.

These men belonged to Lt. Gen. Masso Maruyama's 2nd Division of Lt. Gen. Harukichi Hyakutake's 17th Army. Despite their difficult trek, they were confident they could defeat the U.S. Marine Corps units and the one U.S. Army unit holding the vital airfield known as Henderson Field. A thick jungle canopy kept Maruyama's column hidden from the eyes of American aviators. The Japanese planned to launch a surprise attack from the south against the Americans on October 22. So confident of success were the top officers of the Japanese 17th Army that a plan would be drawn up beforehand for the expected American surrender, which would be heralded by the code signal "Banzai." After their victory, Guadalcanal would be back in Japanese hands.

At Lunga Point, the gritty American leathernecks, many of them tired and sick, along with a regiment of green U.S. Army troops, waited in their rifle pits and entrenchments for the main attack, which they believed would come from the west. They would soon learn otherwise.

More than three months earlier the Japanese had begun construction on that very airfield. As the Japanese advanced across the South Pacific, they captured Rabaul on the island of New Britain in January 1942. By securing Rabaul with its excellent harbor and constructing an airbase there, they strengthened their defensive perimeter in the South Pacific, which also included a strong naval base at Truk in the Caroline Islands.

To safeguard Rabaul from Allied attack, the Japanese advanced to New Guinea, landing forces there and in the Solomon Islands. In early May, the Japanese captured Tulagi, which had been the site of the headquarters of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate and was located 20 miles from Guadalcanal, the largest island in the Solomons chain. They landed a small force on Tulagi and established seaplane bases there and on a nearby island.

After the strategic defeats Japan suffered at the Battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942 and the Battle of Midway in June of that year, the Imperial Japanese Navy further strengthened its defensive perimeter by ordering airfields constructed in key areas such as Guadalcanal. In early July 1942, two Japanese construction units landed at Guadalcanal and began work on the airfield at Lunga Point which was expected to be completed the following month.

Once the airfield was completed, it would help counter anticipated Allied operations in the region and help cut the vital Allied supply line between Australia and Hawaii. The Americans did not plan to let that happen.

National Archives

TOP: Marines land unopposed on Guadalcanal in August 1942. Allied control of Guadalcanal was essential for the southwestern Pacific offensive against Imperial Japan. RIGHT: Colonel Kiyono Ichiki.

After some serious discussions and compromise among the American Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Chester Nimitz, Allied commander in chief of the U.S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas, was ordered to capture Tulagi and the Santa Cruz Islands, where a base would be established, while General Douglas MacArthur, supreme Allied commander in the southwest Pacific, was to capture the northeast coast of New Guinea. After that, the Americans planned to attack Rabaul. Upon learning of the Japanese airfield that was being constructed on Guadalcanal, Nimitz was ordered on July 5 to take Guadalcanal. Thus, the capture of the island became the primary focus of Operation Watchtower. The Americans also planned to take Tulagi.

With an amphibious force of 82 vessels drawn from the U.S. and Australian navies, the 1st Marine Division under Maj. Gen. Alexander Vandegrift was tasked with securing both Tulagi and Guadalcanal. The 1st Division was missing its 7th Marines, which had been sent to Samoa and had been replaced by the 2nd Marines, 2nd Marine Division. The assault, which was to be the first American ground offensive of the war, was scheduled for August 1.

The attack would be delayed for a week. Vandegrift needed the extra time to get supplies loaded on ships at Wellington, New Zealand, and learn what he could about Japanese strength on Guadalcanal. He also needed information on the island. Guadalcanal is roughly 90 miles long and 25 miles wide. A mountain chain runs down the middle of the tropical island. The coastal plain on the north side of Guadalcanal is more suitable to military operations than the south side.

On August 7, the task force divided into two groups as it moved into position to attack Guadalcanal and Tulagi, as well as other nearby islands. After Allied naval guns had shelled suspected enemy shore batteries and carrier-based planes bombed enemy airfields, 3,000 U.S. Marines hit the beaches on the islands of Tulagi, Gavutu, and Tanambogo. They secured their positions after only two days of fighting.

Meanwhile, the roughly 11,300 men of the 1st and 5th Marines, minus its 2nd Battalion, landed on the northern coast of Guadalcanal 6,000 yards east of Lunga Point. The Marines met no initial resistance from the roughly 2,800 enemy troops on the island, which were mostly from the Japanese constructions units. On the second day, they encountered only scattered resistance as they secured the nearly completed airfield and its buildings. They also found three antiaircraft batteries, a refrigeration plant, ammunition dump, and a large cache of supplies.

The Marines quickly established a defensive perimeter. Believing a Japanese attack would likely come along the beach, Vandegrift placed the bulk of his leathernecks there with a strong defensive line established to the east at the Ilu River, which the Americans called Alligator Creek, while to the west the defensive line stretched to the village of Kukum past Lunga Point, bending back toward jungle-covered hills. The southern sector, which seemed an unlikely approach for a large-scale Japanese attack due to its rough terrain, was held by support troops strung out in a series of outposts.

Events were soon to take a turn for the worse when the Allied carrier support group, which was exposed to Japanese air attacks, withdrew to a safer location. In the early hours of August 9, the Japanese 8th Fleet moved into the area. It engaged a number of the destroyers and cruisers of the amphibious task force off Savo Island, sinking four Allied cruisers and damaging two others. It was a stunning victory for the Japanese, who had only one destroyer damaged. Fortunately for the Americans, the Japanese did not attack the transport area, fearing a daylight air attack. The Japanese ships headed back to Rabaul, and not long afterward the remaining vessels of the American amphibious task force departed, even though only half of their cargo had been offloaded.

The Marines moved the supplies piled on the beach into the perimeter and continued construction of the airfield. On August 12, the Marines named the airfield Henderson Field after aviator Major Lofton Henderson, who was killed at Midway two months earlier. That same day the first American aircraft landed on the airstrip. Eight days later two squadrons, one of 19 Grumman F4F Wildcat fighters and the other of 12 Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bombers, landed on the airstrip to a joyous reception from the Marines. The Cactus Air Force, as the air support would soon be called, would grow in the coming weeks and months and play a vital role in the defense of Guadalcanal.

Japanese air attacks had started on August 7 and became almost daily after the American carriers departed. At night Japanese warships pummeled the Marines with their heavy guns. Meanwhile, Marine patrols gathered information on the enemy. On August 15, Vandegrift received invaluable intelligence when Coastwatcher Captain Martin Clemens, a member of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate Defence Force, and his native scouts arrived and offered their services to the Americans.

The Japanese high command ordered Hyakutake, whose headquarters was located on Rabaul, to recapture Guadalcanal. On August 15, a contingent of 900 men from the 2nd Battalion, 28th Infantry who were led by Colonel Kiyono Ichiki landed under cover of darkness at Taivu Point on the eastern end of Guadalcanal. This force, also known as the Ichiki Detachment, was the first of those landed in what the Americans called the Tokyo Express. The Tokyo Express was the term Americans coined for the Japanese Imperial

Navy's method of transporting and supplying troops in and around the Solomon Islands.

Ichiki sent out a reconnaissance patrol, which subsequently was wiped out by a Marine patrol on August 19. The Marines quickly returned to their perimeter. On the night of August 20-21, Ichiki's force attacked at Alligator Creek. Waves of screaming Japanese troops charged the Marines' position and were mowed down by machine guns. The following morning the Marines enveloped the enemy. Backed by light tanks, the Marines methodically destroyed the encircled Japanese.

More Japanese reinforcements were in a convoy on their way to Guadalcanal, as well as two naval task forces that included a total of three aircraft carriers. On August 24, two American carrier task forces engaged the Japanese in what became known as the Battle of the Eastern Solomons. The Americans sank three Japanese vessels, including a carrier. The following day, the Japanese task forces withdrew. Meanwhile, U.S. aircraft based at Henderson Field attacked the Japanese transport convoy 150 miles east of Guadalcanal, forcing it to retire. Despite the continuing American air threat, the Japanese managed to land reinforcements at Guadalcanal.

The Marines on Guadalcanal were reinforced on August 21 when the 2nd Battalion, 5th Marines was shifted to the larger island following operations on Tulagi. But the Americans still needed more troops to man their expanding perimeter. The Marines made a second attack against the enemy on the west side of the Matanikau River on August 27 after having destroyed a small enemy garrison in the area eight days earlier. The Japanese put up a staunch defence during the day and then withdrew during the night to avoid being encircled as they had been at Alligator Creek.

To the east, U.S. intelligence indicated that a large Japanese force was located at the village of Tasimboko. The 1st Raider Battalion and the 1st Parachute Battalion, which had been transferred from Tulagi, were put under the command of Lt. Col. Merritt Edson and sent by destroyer transports to investigate. Aided by air support, Edson's men took the village on September 8 expecting to find only light resistance. However, they were surprised at the size of the Japanese force they encountered.

Edson's men had hit the rear guard of a force of 5,200 Japanese troops, most of whom belonged to Maj. Gen. Kiyotaki Kawaguchi's 124th Infantry, which had begun arriving at Taivu Point in late August. Simultaneously, a smaller force of 1,000 Japanese troops had landed on the western end of the island.

Kawaguchi struck out southwest, planning to attack Henderson Field from the south. Waiting for them were Edson's 1st Raider and 1st Parachute Battalions, which had been deployed on Lunga Ridge in a sector south of the airfield that became known by two other names: Edson's Ridge and Bloody Ridge. Over a two-day period beginning September 12, the Japanese launched repeated frontal assaults that were repulsed with heavy losses.

Library of Congress

A Marine patrol makes contact with the Japanese along a narrow trail in an illustration by combat artist Howard Brodie. The U.S. Marines prevailed in the struggle for control of Guadalcanal despite the harsh jungle environment. U.S. Army Sergeant Brodie worked for *Yank* magazine and accompanied Marines on Guadalcanal into combat.

Despite Kawaguchi's failure, the Japanese were determined to take the island and continued sending more troops to Guadalcanal, including the 38th Division, 2nd Division, 8th Tank Regiment, and artillery units. Vandegrift also received much needed reinforcements when the 7th Marines rejoined their division. With the arrival of this regiment, Vandegrift was able to construct a comprehensive defense of his perimeter. He divided it into 10 sectors. Three of the sectors fronted the beach, and

the other seven faced inland. Some areas were lightly manned and vulnerable to attack.

Diseases, such as malaria and dysentery, took a heavy toll on the Marines and airmen who were subsisting on reduced rations. The situation was no better for the Japanese troops, who were reduced to a third of their normal rations due to supply problems caused in part by the rough terrain, difficulty of moving supplies, and the interdiction of Marine aviators. Japanese pilots also were making things miserable for the Americans with their almost daily bombing runs.

With his reinforcements, Vandegrift set out to clear the enemy from the Matanikau area. On October 7, the Marines launched their assault first with the 5th Marines (minus its 1st Battalion) attacking west toward the mouth of the Matanikau River, driving back elements of the Japanese 4th Infantry, 2nd Division. A second Marine force under the command of Colonel William Whaling, which consisted of the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines and the divisional Scout Sniper Detachment, together known as the Whaling Group, followed by the 7th Marines (minus the 3rd Battalion), was to push inland and cross upriver. This movement would occur while the 5th Marines made their holding attack.

The 5th Marines drove the enemy back to the river's mouth, where the tenacious Japanese clung to a small bridgehead. Reinforced with a company from the 1st Raider Battalion, the 5th Marines continued to shrink the Japanese bridgehead on October 8. At dusk the Japanese troops attacked the Raiders in an attempt to escape, but the Raiders held their positions.

Delayed by heavy rain, the Whaling Group crossed the river on October 9, while the 5th Marines and the Raiders destroyed the last of the Japanese resistance on the east side of the river. At the same time, the Whaling Group and the 7th Marines on the west bank of the river pushed north. The leathernecks under Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, the commander of the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy with infantry fire and artillery support. In three days of fighting, the Japanese 4th Infantry lost 700 men.

National Archives

Japanese soldiers of the Kawaguchi Detachment make their way toward the battlefront. Kawaguchi was relieved of command for his bungled handling of the assault on Edson's Ridge.

Despite the defeat, the Japanese continued to prepare for their assault on Henderson Field. But they underestimated the Marines' strength on the island, which they put at 10,000 men. The Marines' actual strength was more than double that estimate. On October 10, Hyakutake arrived on the west end of Guadalcanal to personally oversee the operation. He found understrength battalions, a shortage of shells for the artillery, and many of the troops in poor shape. Hyakutake ordered more troops to the island.

The Marines also received reinforcements. On October 13, approximately 3,000 soldiers of the 164th Infantry of the Army's Americal Division landed on Lunga Point. Vandegrift's force now numbered 27,727 men, of which 23,088 were on Guadalcanal and the rest on Tulagi.

With the arrival of the 164th Infantry, Vandegrift expanded his perimeter by establishing a position along the east bank of the Matanikau River. Such a position was essential to control the mouth of the river, as a sandbar made it possible for the Japanese to move up tanks, large guns, and vehicles. Elsewhere along the river the terrain and jungle made it impossible to move heavy equipment across.

The 3rd Battalion, 1st Marines and the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines were responsible for holding this key position. They were supported by a battalion of the 11th Marines and elements of the 1st Special Weapons Battalion. The units established a fortified horseshoe-shaped position on the high ground along the Matanikau with their right flank refused east along the beach and their left refused east along the ridge of Hill 67.

Marine patrols covered the gap between the exposed position and main line. To bolster their defenses, the Marines laid antipersonnel and antitank mines. The Marines also placed 37mm antitank guns and a 75mm tank destroyer in concealed positions to cover the sandbar, which they planned to illuminate with headlights from amphibious tractors in the event of a night attack by the Japanese.

After receiving substantial reinforcements, Vandegrift adjusted his 22,000-yard-long defensive line atop Lunga Ridge. He divided it into five sectors.

Sector One, which covered the beach, was held by the 3rd Defense Battalion along with part of the 1st Special Weapons Battalion. They were supported by amphibian tractor, engineer, and pioneer troops. Sector Two, which stretched partly along the beach and then turned inland along the Ilu River for 4,000 yards before swinging west, was defended by the 164th Infantry and part of the 1st Special Weapons Battalion.

Sector Three, which covered 2,500 yards of jungle from the Army regiment's right flank to the Lunga River and included the southern slope of Edson's Ridge, was held by the 7th Marines (minus a battalion). Sector Four, which was the responsibility of the 1st Marines (minus a battalion), stretched from the Lunga River for 3,500 yards of jungle. Sector five, which constituted the perimeter's western corner, was defended by the 5th Marines.

Each regiment was ordered to hold a battalion in reserve. An exception to this rule was the two battalions of the 1st and 7th Marines at Matanikau. The 1st Tank Battalion and 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines aboard trucks were also held in reserve.

The Japanese attack on Guadalcanal was to be a combined operation. A pair of senior Japanese officers peered at the terrain south of Henderson Field from the towering Mount Austen, six miles southwest of the airfield. From their observation, they deemed the jungle more accessible than first thought and mistakenly reported no American defenses in this area.

Meanwhile, a Japanese naval force steamed toward Guadalcanal. It intended to shell Henderson Field, but American patrol planes spotted the Japanese ships shortly before midnight on October 11 and radioed their positions for counterattack purposes. U.S. Navy vessels engaged them in what became known as the Battle of Cape Esperance, sinking two vessels and damaging two more. The next day two Japanese destroyers were sunk by fighters and dive bombers from Henderson Field.

On October 13, two waves of Japanese bombers hit Henderson Field. Then enemy artillery, which the Marines soon nicknamed "Pistol Pete," positioned near Kokumbona opened up. To make matters worse, two Japanese battleships blasted the airfield for 80 minutes. They also damaged some aircraft in their bombardment. When their smoking guns stopped, bombers were soon raiding the airfield again until daylight.

Henderson Field was badly damaged by the afternoon of October 14 and was shut down, although a few B-17s did manage to take off in the morning. The Cactus Air Force, however, was not out of operation because the construction battalion had built a grassy runway strip, known as Fighter Strip No. 1, to the southeast, which now acted as the main airfield.

At dawn the next day five enemy transports unloading men, equipment, and supplies were spotted at Tassafaronga Point on the western end of the island. With the transport vessels were 11 escort warships. Scavenging what fuel they could and draining drums flown in from Espiritu Santo, the Cactus Air Force soon had some planes in the air. Battling Japanese fighters, the Cactus Air Force, aided by Army bombers, sank one transport and set two more on fire. Despite this the Japanese managed to offload 4,000 troops and 80 percent of their cargo before retreating. A land attack was imminent.

Hyakutake had assembled 20,000 troops, including the survivors of the Ichiki and Kawaguchi forces, as well as two battalions of the 38th Division and the 2nd Division. Besides artillery support, Hyakutake also had a tank company.

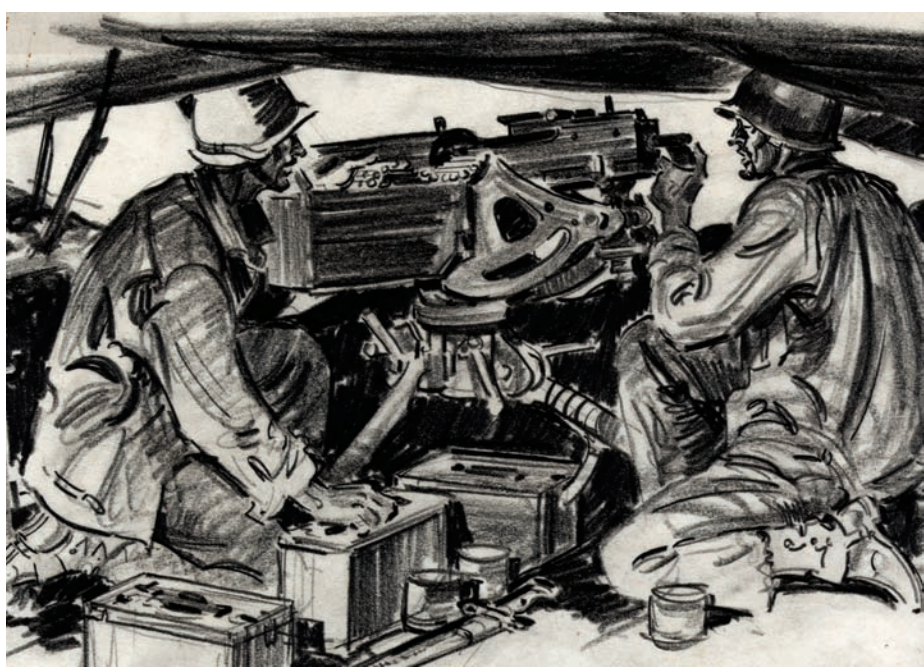
As part of the Japanese plan, a force led by Maj. Gen. Tadashi Sumiyoshi, artillery commander of the 17th Army, with the Army's heavy artillery, a tank company, and five battalions of infantry totaling 2,900 men, was to divert American attention along the Matanikau costal area. His force was to continue to shell the airfield and American artillery positions.

At the same time, Maruyama would launch the main assault. He was to march his force, which was composed of 5,600 men drawn from nine infantry battalions of the 2nd Division and divided into two wings, inland to be in a position to attack Henderson Field from the south. The right wing of the force was led by Kawaguchi, and the left wing was led by Maj. Gen. Yumio Nasu.

Another force made up of one battalion of the 228th Regiment, named the Koli Detachment, was to make an amphibious landing at Koli Point, where it was mistakenly believed the Americans had another airfield. The attack was scheduled for October 22, when Hyakutake expected to soon hear the code word "Banzai" for success.

On October 16, Nasu's left wing led the advance for Maruyama's enveloping force. The last of his command left two days later. Their journey was horrendous as they followed a narrow trail named the Maruyama Road that led through the thick jungle and over ridges. The gunners, some of whom were unable to carry their heavy dismantled guns through the thick jungle, discarded them along the way. Although Maruyama's force was behind schedule, the Americans were entirely unaware of their presence.

Both: Library of Congress



ABOVE: The hardship of constant frontline duty is captured in a Brodie sketch of two Marines sharing a foxhole. BELOW: Marines operate a .30 caliber machine gun in a forward post. Heavy machine guns were essential to disrupting Japanese banzai charges.

The Americans waiting in their entrenchments expected the main attack to come from the west, even though a captured Japanese map indicated a three-pronged attack. While no enemy appeared from the east, patrols to the south found only half-starved, poorly armed stragglers, and air patrols spotted nothing, the west seemed the likely direction of the attack, especially on October 18, when Sumiyoshi's batteries opened up. The Marine batteries quickly returned fire.

Meanwhile, Colonel Akinosuku Oka's 124th Infantry (minus one battalion) and the 3rd Battalion, 4th Infantry crossed the Matanikau on the evening of the October 19. Sumiyoshi had ordered Oka to take up positions at Mount Austen in preparation to attack the Marines east of the Matanikau from the south. Oka's troops would be delayed by the terrible terrain that was

National Archives

ABOVE: A U.S. plane takes off from the strip made for fighter aircraft at Henderson Field on Guadalcanal. An assortment of U.S. military aircraft dubbed the Cactus Air Force operated from the airfield against Japanese targets. OPPOSITE: The heavy cost the Japanese paid trying to retake Guadalcanal is evident in the image of slain Japanese at the mouth of the Ilu River, which the Americans called Alligator Creek.

bogging down Maruyama's men.

Colonel Nomasu Nakaguma, who commanded the rest of Sumiyoshi's infantry contingent, gathered his troops for an attack on October 22. Two days before, three tanks that approached the river came under fire from a 37mm gun, which damaged one of them. The next evening after the artillery went silent, nine Japanese tanks with infantry support attempted to cross the sand bar. The 37mm gun knocked a tank out, and the patrol pulled back.

By October 22, Maruyama reported to Hyakutake that his men were not in position yet, and the attack was postponed for the next day. Maruyama was not to make that date either, and the attack was postponed for two additional days.

Sumiyoshi, who was out of contact with Maruyama, launched his attack on October 23. For most of the day it had been quiet. At 6 PM the Japanese artillery began pounding the Marines' horseshoe along the Matanikau River, as well the coast road and rear areas. When the guns fell quiet, Nakaguma attacked. Unknown to Nakaguma, Oka, who was to begin his assault to the south, had to delay his attack because his troops were not in position.

Four Japanese tanks from the 1st Tank Company emerged from the jungle and rumbled toward the sandbar. The first tank had not gone far when fire from a 37mm gun stopped it. A second tank pushed on, making it over the sandbar and overrunning a machine-gun post. Then, the tank churned near the foxhole occupied by Private Joe Champagne, who reached out and stuck a grenade in its track. The grenade exploded, knocking off the track and causing the tank to veer down the beach toward the water. The crew of an American half-track with a 75mm gun finished it off. The remaining two tanks were soon knocked out, as were five tanks in the second wave.

Meanwhile, Marine artillery and mortars broke up Nakaguma's infantry attack before it got very far. A second attempt to cross the river around midnight was quickly stopped. The Japanese lost 600 men in the failed attack, while the Marines suffered 39 casualties.

The next morning, the Marines holding the horseshoe along the Matanikau spotted a column of Japanese troops on a ridge to their left rear. This was part of Oka's force still moving into position. To counter this enemy force, Lt. Col. Herman Henry Hanneken's 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines was diverted to a ridge east of the horseshoe's refused left flank.

Meanwhile, Puller's battalion covered the 2,500-yard sector by itself, having a platoon from each rifle company, a part of the weapons company, and the battalion command post take over the right half of the sector. On a hill 1,500 yards in front of Puller's left flank a platoon held an outpost that dominated a large grassy area.

Troubling intelligence was received on the afternoon of October 24, when a straggler from a 7th Marines' patrol reported spotting an enemy officer with binoculars studying Edson's Ridge. A scout sniper mentioned seeing smoke from many rice fires south of Edson's Ridge near the Lunga River. About 4 PM native scouts brought word to the 164th Infantry that they had seen 2,000 enemy troops not far from their sector. Despite these reports it was too late in the day for any major troop rearrangement.

Maruyama's two wings were finally moving into position. They were to begin their attack at 7 PM. At 4 PM it started to rain, which began to pound down an hour later and slowed the troops as they struggled forward through muddy areas. After sunset the jungle became pitch black, and units had difficulty finding their directions. There was no way the attack was going to be launched at 7 PM.

By 9 PM the rain stopped. The moon cast a feeble light through openings in the thick jungle canopy. Thirty minutes later the Marine outpost in front of Puller's sector spotted the enemy. Puller ordered the Marines there to withdraw to the main perimeter.

Each of Maruyama's wings had three rifle battalions forward and three in reserve. The right wing was now under the command of Colonel Toshinaro Shoji. He had been given the command following the removal the day before of Kawaguchi for his bungled handling of his wing. These troops lost their direction and became confused in the darkness, which left the 29th Infantry of Nasu's left wing to make the main attack.

Around 10 PM the Japanese, probably from one of Shoji's battalions, made contact with the Americans' southern perimeter, attacking the junction between the 164th Infantry and 7th Marines. A blaze of machine-gun and infantry fire lit up the night from the defenders' positions. Mortar and artillery shells quickly came screaming down on the Japanese struggling through the barbed wire in front of the American perimeter. Canister rounds from 37mm guns ripped into the attackers, doing deadly damage. The first attack was stopped cold. Despite this, a mistaken signal from the 17th Army claimed the right wing had taken the airfield around 11 PM.

Lead elements of the 29th Infantry from Nasu's left wing attacked shortly after midnight on October 25. Barbed wire was soon discovered in a clearing in front of the Marines, and Japanese engineers attempted to cut gaps through it. A company of Japanese soldiers crawled up through foot-tall grass, but before the opening in the wire was complete some of them stood up. Another screamed "Banzai." Machine-gun fire sliced through these soldiers at ground level while mortar shells rained down on them.

More attacks would follow. To beat back these attacks the Marines received reinforcements from the Army. The first of these reinforcements were three platoons from Lt. Col. Robert Hall's 3rd Battalion, 164th Infantry, which were soon followed by the remainder of the battalion. As these troops were untested in battle, they were distributed among the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines by squads and platoons.

Machine-gun and infantry fire, along with mortar, artillery, and 37mm fire support, hammered the Japanese troops. During these attacks, Marine Sergeant John Basilone, who was in charge of two sections of heavy weapons of Company C, kept his machine guns operating by ensuring his men had extra ammunition belts. When two machine guns were knocked out in the midst of the action, he brought a replacement. He then repaired the damaged one and fired it until help arrived to take it over. For his actions, he received the Medal of Honor.

At 3:30 AM, the soldiers of Colonel Masajiro Furimiya's 3rd Battalion, 29th Infantry charged the Marines. While most of his attacking force was cut down, Furimiya, with 100 men, managed to penetrate the American line but became trapped in a pocket. The Marines repulsed another attack at sunrise. Nasu ordered his troops to fall back into the jungle and wait for night to attack again. The Marines, meanwhile, wiped out Furimiya's pocket and other clusters of Japanese troops trapped inside their lines.

At 8 AM on October 25, Japanese artillery began shelling Henderson Field for three hours. Japanese aircraft bombed the Americans in seven separate attacks during the day. At first, the Marines could not offer much resistance to the aerial assault with their own fighters because the heavy rains had saturated Fighter Strip No. 1, making it difficult, if not impossible, for aircraft to take off. Meanwhile, three Japanese destroyers arrived in the morning and sank two American destroyer transports. After sinking two harbor patrol boats, the Japanese destroyers began shelling Lunga Point. Marine shore batteries returned fire, striking the destroyers three times. The Japanese ships withdrew out of range, taking with them the Koli Detachment. Thus, there would be no Japanese landing at Koli Point. As the day wore on, the fighter strip became dry enough for the Marine aviators to take off to engage the enemy over Guadalcanal; they knocked out more than 20 enemy aircraft.

While the American position was receiving its heaviest concentration of shells and bombs to date, the lines were readjusted as the 5th Marines in Sector Five shifted their line to the southwest, closing the gap with the left flank of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines at the horseshoe. In Puller's sector, the intermingled 3rd Battalion, 164 Infantry reunited and took over the eastern part of the line while the Marines held the other part including the south slope of Edson's Ridge.

Maruyama prepared to resume his attack once the sun set. He placed his reserves, the 16th Infantry and the 2nd Engineer Battalion, under Nasu's command. The 16th Infantry on the right and the remnants of the 29th Infantry on the left would make the main attack. In addition, two of Shoji's battalions were deployed to cover Maruyama's right flank. This action was the result of a false report that indicated an American force was headed toward them.

The 2nd Division's mountain howitzers and mortars opened up around 8 PM on Puller's Marines and Hall's soldiers with a light barrage. Supported by machine-gun fire, the Japanese attacked in groups of 30 to 200 men, mostly against Hall's soldiers. The attacks were beaten back with heavy casualties for the Japanese.

In the early hours of October 26, a heavy attack was launched by the Japanese 16th Infantry against the seam dividing the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 164th Infantry. The Marines, who were supported by a pair of 37mm guns from the weapons company of the 7th Marines, shattered the Japanese attack, killing approximately 250 enemy troops. At daylight the Japanese withdrew into the jungle. Maruyama reported to Hyakutake that he simply could not penetrate the American perimeter.

At 3 AM on October 26, Oka attacked Hanneken's 2nd Battalion, 7th Marines, which was holding a ridge on the eastern end of the refused horseshoe position. Company F of the 2nd Battalion found itself especially hard hit by swarms of enemy troops.

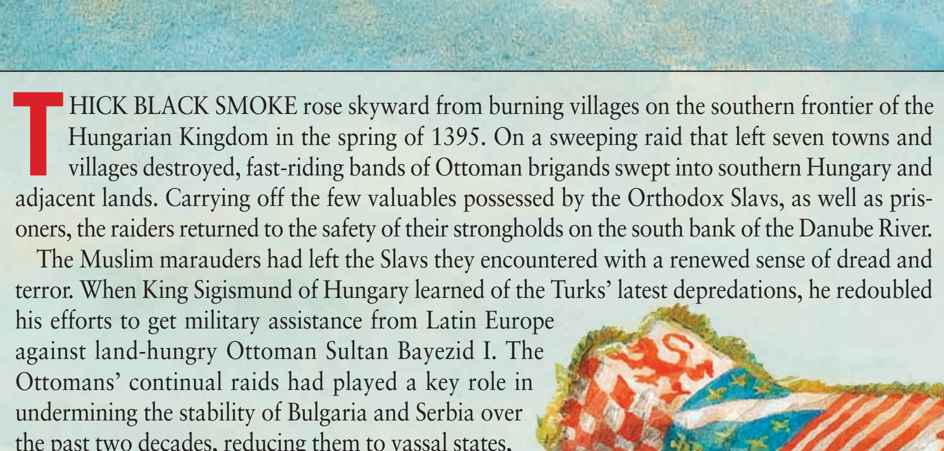
Sergeant Mitchell Paige's machine-gun section fired at the enemy. In the wild fight, all of

Continued on page 69

National Archives

THICK BLACK SMOKE rose skyward from burning villages on the southern frontier of the Hungarian Kingdom in the spring of 1395. On a sweeping raid that left seven towns and villages destroyed, fast-riding bands of Ottoman brigands swept into southern Hungary and adjacent lands. Carrying off the few valuables possessed by the Orthodox Slavs, as well as prisoners, the raiders returned to the safety of their strongholds on the south bank of the Danube River.

The Muslim marauders had left the Slavs they encountered with a renewed sense of dread and terror. When King Sigismund of Hungary learned of the Turks' latest depredations, he redoubled his efforts to get military assistance from Latin Europe against land-hungry Ottoman Sultan Bayezid I. The Ottomans' continual raids had played a key role in undermining the stability of Bulgaria and Serbia over the past two decades, reducing them to vassal states, and Sigismund had no intention of leaving his kingdom open to similar ruinous consequences.



The Hungarian king knew full well that the Ottomans' steady march of conquest north through the Balkans was a dagger pointed at the heart of his vulnerable realm. A weak response would send no clear message to Bayezid. What was needed was a massive show of force that would drive the Ottomans back to Adrianople and, just possibly, out of Europe altogether. Sigismund had appealed to the kings of England and France, as well as the Pope in Rome. They heard his desperate plea for help, and they responded favorably by organizing a crusade specifically directed against the seemingly unstoppable Ottomans.

Pope Clement IV tried in the 1340s to get the kings of France and England to end their war against each other and focus instead on the Ottoman threat. But the

The tide of battle turns in favor of the Ottomans as allied Serbian cavalry strikes the Hungarian division of the crusader army.

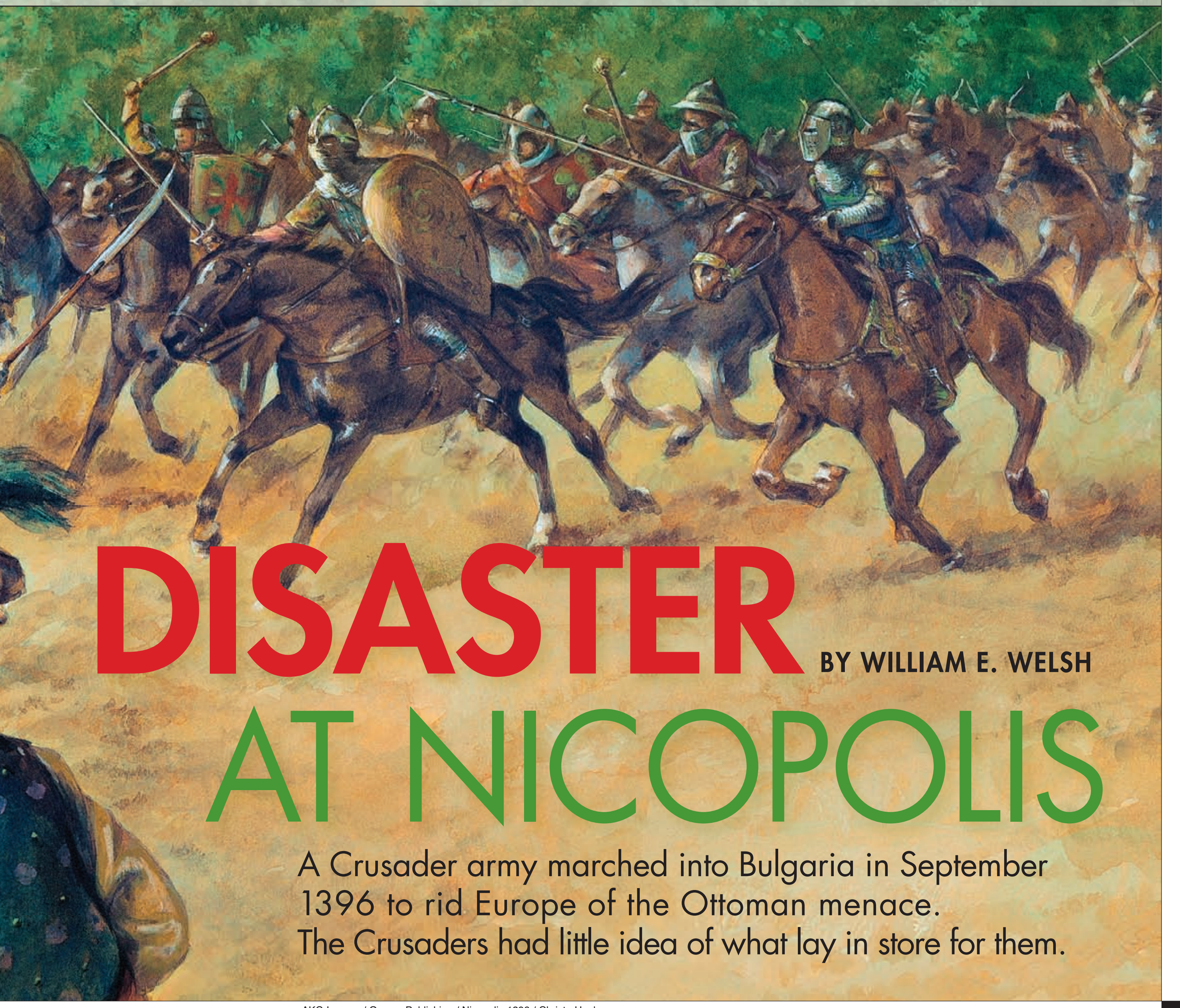
two kingdoms were so deeply embroiled in a war against each other at the time that his plea fell on deaf ears. But by 1390 both King Richard II of England and Charles VI of France were eager to establish a truce and proved agreeable to the idea of a religious crusade.

In the spring of 1394, Duke Philip of Burgundy sent a delegation to meet with King Sigismund of Hungary on the matter. Fortunately for Sigismund, his generally unruly barons set aside their objections to his method of rule so that the kingdom could unite against the external threat. Shortly afterward, Pope Boniface X in Rome proclaimed a crusade in a bull issued on June 3, 1394, and again in a second bull issued in October.

The Hungarians and Franco-Burgundians did not hammer out the specifics of the Crusade until May 1395. By August that year the Hungarians believed an Ottoman invasion was imminent. They told the French that Sultan Bayezid planned a full-scale invasion of their kingdom in an effort to force upon it a vassal arrangement similar to that imposed on the Serbs and Bulgarians.

The Crusaders agreed to assemble in Buda, Hungary. Forces from far-flung parts of the Holy Roman Empire would either join the Crusaders en route or rendezvous in Buda. Sigismund favored a defensive campaign. In theory it sounded good, but from a practical standpoint it would not have worked. First, it would have been difficult to supply such an army over a long period. Second, there was no guarantee that Bayezid would oblige the Hungarians and their allies and attack them so far from his primary base at Adrianople. Instead, the Crusaders would march south along the Danube seeking battle with the Ottomans. It was not a crusade to the Holy Land, but rather a crusade to rid the Balkans of the Ottomans.

The crusading army ultimately would total 16,000 men. Of this total, approximately 4,000 were heavy cavalry, 5,000 light cavalry, and 2,000 archers. The remaining 5,000 men were Wallachian cavalry led by Mircea the Elder, who remained a vassal of Hungary. The heavy cavalry were predominantly Franco-Burgundian and Hungarian. The retinue of Count John of Nevers, the leader of the Franco-Burgundian complement, was composed of 150 knights. The mounted light cavalry



DISASTER AT NICOPOLIS

BY WILLIAM E. WELSH

A Crusader army marched into Bulgaria in September 1396 to rid Europe of the Ottoman menace. The Crusaders had little idea of what lay in store for them.

AKG Images / Osprey Publishing / Nicopolis 1396 / Christa Hook

were Hungarian crossbowmen or bowmen, who fired a Turkish bow with three fingers. The infantry were Genoese and Lombard crossbowmen and also German foot soldiers.

The two opponents were nearly evenly matched. Bayezid scrambled throughout the summer of 1396 to raise an army large enough to meet the Latin Crusaders in battle. Ultimately his army included 10,000 Turks and 5,000 Serbian heavy and light cavalry under Prince Stefan Lazarevic. Although the exact numbers of each type of Ottoman warrior in Bayezid's army are not known, it included three types of cavalry: *kapikulu, sipahis*, and *akinjis*. The *kapikulu* were Bayezid's household troops and were held in reserve. The *sipahis* were provincial cavalry of either Anatolian (Asian) or Rumelian (European) origin. The *akinjis* were light cavalry armed with Turkish bow and sword who functioned as skirmishers. The heavier *kapikulu* and *sipahis* were armed with lance, sword, and bow. Except for the *kapikulu*, the Ottoman cavalry was not as well armored as the Crusader cavalry. Importantly, the lightweight Turkish arrows were not capable of penetrating the mail worn by the Crusader cavalry.

TOP: Hungarian King Sigismund. BOTTOM: Count John of Nevers.

As planned, the Franco-Burgundian army departed Dijon, France, on April 20. Nevers joined the army at Montbeliard as it passed through French-Comte. Nevers led the army east to Regensburg, where it paused to wait for German contingents arriving from the north and for supply boats to be provisioned. The Franco-Burgundian army did not arrive in Vienna until May 24. During this time, Sir Enguerrand de Coucy VII had marched separately through northern Italy to gather Lombard and Genoan troops. In late July the Franco-Burgundians arrived in Buda, where they rendezvoused with de Coucy, Bohemians, Poles, and Sigismund's Hungarian army.

In mid-August the main Crusader army started south toward Orsova on the Hungarian frontier. Due west, 70 riverboats navigated the Danube in support of the land army. Meanwhile, Venetian Admiral Thomas Mocenigo departed Venice at the head of a Venetian fleet bound for Rhodes. On August 29 the 44 ships that made up the Venetian-Hospitaller fleet sailed for the Black Sea.

Nicholas de Gara, Constable of Hungary, led the vanguard of the Crusader main army, which consisted of some of the Hungarian troops and the German troops. The Franco-Burgundian nobles and their troops formed the main guard. Sigismund led the rear guard with the remainder of the Hungarians. During the last week of August, the Crusaders reached Orsova, where the Danube flows through a limestone gorge known as the Iron Gates. Because of a shortage of large boats to ferry the troops across the wide river, it took the commanders eight days to get their troops across to the south bank. Once across the river, the Crusaders moved quickly against the fortress of Vidin. Bulgarian Tsar Ivan Sratsimir surrendered the 200-man Ottoman garrison to the Crusaders, who promptly executed the Turks. Next, the Crusaders entered Ottoman territory and sacked the stronghold of Orjahova.

After mopping up at Orjahova, the Crusaders continued east along the south bank of the Danube toward Nicopolis. Nicopolis occupied a strategically important location on the lower Danube and was situated near a crossing of the mile-wide river. It served as a base for Ottoman forces conducting offensive operations into southern Hungary and Wallachia.

The fortress at Nicopolis consisted of two walled towns in close proximity. The larger citadel on a hilltop afforded a commanding view of the approaches from east and west. A smaller fortress was situated directly below it to the south. Bayezid had entrusted its defense to a stalwart Turkish governor, Dogan Bey, and given him additional troops to resist Crusader thrusts until the main Ottoman army arrived from Constantinople.

The Venetian-Hospitaller fleet arrived on the Danube from the Black Sea and anchored near the Ottoman-held citadel on September 10. Two days later the Crusader main army arrived and invested the stronghold. The Crusaders lacked siege engines with which to soften the walls and terrify the garrison. In the week following the Crusaders' arrival, the Hungarians, who bivouacked on the west side of the fortress, dug mines for the purpose of bringing down a section of the wall by detonating explosives under it. The Franco-Burgundian troops, who camped on the east side where the ground was less steep, cut trees from nearby forests to build scaling ladders. The lack of siege engines significantly hampered efforts to capture the strong citadel. Neither siege method produced any results.

Bayezid had moved rapidly to field an army capable of meeting the Crusaders in battle. Ottoman forces assembled in Constantinople throughout August and at points designated for assembly on Bayezid's expected route north to the Danube valley. Bayezid ordered Stefan Lazarevic to rendezvous with him at Tarnovo on the north side of the Balkan Mountains. As the Crusaders fought their way east along the Danube toward Nicopolis, Bayezid's army departed Constantinople.

Bayezid's field army included all of the administrative functions of the palace. The sultan's army comprised the troops who had been besieging Constantinople and Anatolian and Rumelian contingents. It initially marched northwest from Adrianople along the Maritsa River and then turned north to Kazanlak. The Serbians preceded the sultan's army through the Shipka Pass in the Balkan Mountains. The long columns of Bayezid's army with its moon-adorned banners tramped through the same mountain pass on September 20. The Ottoman-Serbian army was 116 kilometers to the north, which the Ottoman army could reach in just two days by forced marches. Hungarian scouts under the command of John of Maroth, Viceroy of Belgrade, reported the arrival of the Ottoman main army.

French chroniclers Jean de Wavrin and Jean Froissart describe in detail a preliminary clash that occurred on September 24 between French and Turkish scouting parties. When informed of the arrival of the Ottoman host at Tarnovo, de Coucy assembled 900 lance-wielding knights and mounted crossbowmen to reconnoiter the enemy. Upon spying a reconnaissance party of Turkish *akinjis*, which belonged to Gazi Evrenos Bey's command, de Coucy ordered 800 of his force to conceal itself. The other 100 "that were best horsed," in Froissart's words,

Bayezid at left arrives with his army at Nicopolis. Preferring to fight a defensive battle, the Ottoman sultan waited for the Crusaders to attack his fieldworks in the nearby hills.

baited the enemy into pursuing it. The Turks took the bait, and those concealed in ambush fell upon them. The French inflicted severe casualties on the Turks before returning to camp, according to the French chroniclers.

Bayezid's main army took up its position for battle that same day. South of the Nicopolis citadel the ground gradually rose so that the hills, which were dotted with woods, had a commanding view of the river valley to the north. Instead of attacking the Crusaders, he established a strong defensive position on one of the hillsides and waited. He preferred to fight a defensive battle, and he fully expected that the aggressive Crusaders would oblige him. He chose his ground beautifully. The first line of his defense was on the slope of a hill above a dry stream bed. His left flank rested on woods, and his right flank on rough terrain unsuitable for cavalry operations.

While Bayezid was deploying his army for battle on September 24, the Crusaders executed the prisoners taken from Orjahova. The Crusaders did this because they feared that when they marched south to attack Bayezid's army the Ottoman garrison at Nicopolis might be strong enough to free the lightly guarded prisoners.

Borrowing heavily from Mamluk field tactics, which called for constructing field works consisting of a ditch and palisade to thwart enemy cavalry, Bayezid put his troops to work immediately. Rather than building a palisade, he ordered them to construct a hedge of sharpened stakes five meters deep behind the berm that would be created by the excavated dirt from the ditch. The stakes, which were to be angled forward, were planted at the height of a horse's belly to break up a cavalry charge. The Crusader cavalry would be slowed not only by having to attack uphill, but also by having to find its way through the sharpened stakes. The Ottoman *akinjis* would be stationed at various points between Bayezid's front line and Nicopolis to harass the advance of the Crusaders.

Dismounted infantry known as *azabs* were stationed directly behind the stakes. The *azabs* were armed with composite bows, which they used as their primary weapon. They also had swords and axes for hand-to-hand fighting. Stationed a short distance behind the *azabs* were cavalry known as *sipahis*. The Rumelian *sipahis* constituted the right wing, and the Anatolian *sipahis* made up the left wing. Each division of *sipahis* was commanded by one of Bayezid's sons. Suleyman Celebi led the Rumelians, and Mustafa Celebi led the Anatolians.

Bayezid placed his reserve troops, composed of the *kapikulu* and also Janissaries, on the reverse slope of the hill. Although this may have been a deliberate effort to deceive the Crusaders into believing he had fewer troops than he actually had, it might have been because there was no space for them on the forward slope behind the sipahis. The sultan's field headquarters, marked by a white banner with gold lettering known as the *Ak Sancak*, also was located on the reverse slope. The Serbs also were stationed in the valley behind the Ottoman front line.

In a council of war held the evening of September 24, Sigismund suggested that the Crusaders send the Wallachians and Transylvanians to drive off the *akinjis* the following morning and probe the enemy defenses. He suggested that the Hungarians and Germans form the second rank and the Franco-Burgundians the third rank. Sigismund's logic was that the central and eastern Europeans had experience fighting the Ottomans and would know how to crack their line. For example, he planned to use bowmen to soften up the enemy before the heavy cavalry attacked.

De Coucy supported Sigismund, but Nevers and Philippe d'Artois, Constable of France, were insulted by the notion that they should follow "peasants" into battle for they believed that the Wallachians, Transylvanians, and some of the Hungarians and Germans were not equal to them in stature. "To take up the rear is to dishonor us and to expose us to the contempt of all," said Artois. He added that Sigismund was attempting to "gain all the honor of the day" for himself should the Hungarians dislodge the Turks and drive them from the field. The following morning, Sigismund reluctantly agreed to allow the Franco-Burgundian troops to lead the attack.

On the morning of September 25, the Crusaders prepared for battle. Many of the Franco-Burgundian knights wore expensive harnesses. "Every knight of France was in his coat armor, so that every man seemed to be a king they were so richly appareled," wrote Froissart.

When the Crusaders began the short advance south to assail the Ottoman position, the Franco-Burgundian heavy cavalry formed the vanguard. The main guard that followed was composed of Hungarian and German cavalry. Guarding the Crusader right flank were Steven Lackovic's Transylvanians, and protecting the Crusader left flank were Mircea the Elder's Wallachians. During their advance toward the wooded hills to the south the Crusaders were harassed by *akinjis,* who shot arrows at them.

The vanguard passed through a thin belt of woods and emerged onto the north slope of a ravine. To their front the Crusaders saw a valley with a dry streambed at the base. Halfway up the steep hill on the opposite side of the valley were the Ottomans. The Crusaders surveyed the line and saw infantry wearing conical-shaped headgear with armored cavalry behind them near

the crest of the hill. On the opposite side of the hill, the Turks were undoubtedly dazzled by colorful banners and gleaming armor worn by the Crusaders that flashed in the sunlight.

Eager for blood, the Franco-Burgundians began a steady walk down the hill. The *akinjis* withdrew slowly in front of them continuing to shower them with arrows. As the Crusader knights and squires crossed the valley and rode uphill, *akinjis* peeled off to the left and right and took refuge behind the *azabs*. As the Crusader horses moved uphill, the *akinjis* withdrew and a fresh storm of arrows fired by the *azabs* zipped through the air toward the attackers. The lightweight arrows used by the Turks did not inflict the desired casualties on the Crusaders because of the sturdy hauberks they wore; nevertheless, the storm of arrows was frightening. "Hail nor rain does not come down in closer shower than did their shafts," wrote Boucicaut. For their part, the Turks were stunned that their arrows produced so few casualties among the Crusaders clad in what the Turks called "blue iron."

When the Franco-Burgundian cavalry observed the *akinjis* withdraw, they immediately charged. This was because they believed the Turkish cavalry was in full retreat and that the Turkish army already might be on the verge of breaking simply by anticipating the consequences of the Crusader charge. While the Turks were not purposely conducting a feigned retreat, the withdrawal of the *akinjis* lured the Franco-Burgundian vanguard into a premature attack before the Hungarians had closed the wide gap that existed between the vanguard and main guard.

French and Burgundian horsemen, some of whom deliberately sprang from their horses and others who already had been unhorsed, worked together to pull up stakes and create a gap wide enough for 20 men abreast to pass through the rows of stakes. The *azabs* attacked the dismounted Crusaders, and hand-to-hand fighting became general as the Crusaders fought to smash through the first line of the Ottoman defense. Swordsmen on both sides fought with abandon. Orders were shouted on both sides, and screams of agony from the wounded and dying could be heard above the clang of steel as the fighting grew in intensity until the roar of warfare filled the narrow valley. After a short time, the Franco-Burgundian cavalry succeeded in smashing through the center of the Ottoman line. In response, the *azabs* pulled back to the right and left and fired into the flanks of the Crusader cavalry.

De Coucy and Jean de Vienne, Admiral of France, who were in the forefront of the fighting, shouted to those around them to wait for the Hungarians to reinforce them, but many of the young knights and squires eager for personal glory disobeyed their orders and continued uphill. Unable to stop them, the more experienced knights joined what became a second charge against the Ottoman *sipahis*. Fighting between the cavalry of both sides occurred near the crest of the hill.

Realizing the Crusader cavalry were more resilient than they were because of their sturdy armor, the Ottoman *sipahis* focused on trying to charge their opponents in the flank as they pushed uphill. In a valiant and often suicidal move, the dismounted Crusaders attempted to stab the unarmored Ottoman horses with their swords or daggers to unhorse their riders. The Crusaders who were still mounted charged toward the crest of the hill a third time, but they never reached their objective. By then half of the vanguard was unhorsed and fighting dismounted. The Hungarians and Germans were nowhere to be seen behind them.

Suddenly trumpets blared and cymbals crashed from the other side of the hill occupied by the Turks. Fresh Ottoman cavalry thundered over the crest. Bayezid had sensed the battle hung in the balance and made the fateful decision to send the *kapikulu* into the battle. The fresh Ottoman cavalry crashed like a monster wave into the enemy. The Crusader vanguard, which had suffered significant losses by then,

The Crusader vanguard composed of French and Burgundian knights penetrates the forward position of Bayezid's army defended by skirmishers armed with bows.

AKG Images / Osprey Publishing / Nicopolis 1396 / Christa Hook

was outnumbered. The Ottoman troops already engaged rallied when the *kapikulu* entered the battle and pressed their attack anew against the Crusaders. The *kapikulu,* who were much better armored than the *sipahis,* fought with abandon. They battered their opponents with heavy maces. The French and Burgundians fought on against frightful odds. The Ottoman cavalry eventually surrounded the Crusader vanguard, cutting off their path of retreat. "The Turks are behind us!" shouted some of the Crusaders. The *kapikulu* focused on capturing the banners carried by companions of the French and Burgundian nobles who led the vanguard.

The French sources are full of accounts that record the deeds of valor performed by their nobles as they tried to stave off defeat. De Vienne's companions were responsible for the Banner of the Virgin Mary. When the last of his companions had been slain, de Vienne raised the banner aloft for the last time. Fighting with the banner in one hand and his sword in the other, he was slain by the Turks. As for de Coucy, the Turks clubbed him, presumably with maces, on his helmet, beating him to the ground in the process. Although heavily bruised, he would survive. Boucicaut was said to have "rushed into the thickest ranks of the enemy and cut passages for himself like a mower in a meadow." He also would survive the ordeal. Eventually, the Ottomans surrounded Nevers, at which point he surrendered. Following his lead, so did the other French and Burgundian soldiers. The French would come to regard the humiliating defeat as akin to the disaster Charlemagne suffered at Roncesvalles. The Turks herded them together to await Bayezid's orders regarding their fate.

When the Hungarian Army emerged from the thin belt of wood about an hour after the Crusader vanguard had started fighting, it was too late to save them. Nevertheless, Sigismund ordered an attack against the reformed Ottoman infantry on the opposite slope. The Hungarians, Hospitallers, and Germans had broken through the infantry and were fighting the *sipahis* when a fresh column of enemy cavalry struck them in the right flank. These were the Serbs. They were well armored and capable of fighting the Hungarian heavy cavalry on equal terms. The Serb cavalry, which had been concealed on the reverse slope of the hill, had somehow managed to work its way through the woods and fall upon the Hungarians.

Sigismund believed the day was lost and began a headlong flight north in he abandoned the hapless French and Burgundians to what would be a terrible fate. The fleeing Hungarians and Germans were pursued hotly by the Turkish and Serb cavalry. "Great murder there was; for in flying they were chased, and so slain," wrote Froissart. As they made their way toward Nicopolis as quickly as possible, the Hungarians found that the Transylvanian and Wallachian cavalry, who had no love for Sigismund, had already exited the battlefield. The mindset of their respective commanders was to save their men for future battles against the Ottomans.

TOP: King Sigismund is evacuated from Nicopolis by the Crusader fleet waiting in the Danube River. The small number of ships could not evacuate large numbers of Crusaders, and most of those who evaded capture drowned trying to cross the river. BOTTOM: Bayezid ordered the execution of all except the nobles and knights he could ransom.

The retreating knights, squires, and common soldiers all rushed toward the Danube. Each hoped to reach the safety of one of the Venetian or Hospitaller boats anchored near the shore. A battalion of 200 crossbowmen covered the evacuation and eventually was wiped out by the Turks. Sigismund waded into the water on horseback and was fortunate enough to climb aboard a small boat along with seven of his companions. As for the other Crusaders, many of whom were in a state of panic, most of them were not evacuated because the boats could only accommodate a small number of men. Thus, the vast majority of the Hungarians and Germans either drowned in the Danube or were slain by the Turks on the river bank.

As for the French and Burgundians, Bayezid ordered the majority of them executed in retaliation for the Crusaders' execution of garrison troops and prisoners from the Ottoman-held Danube fortresses. In total, the Ottomans executed approximately 3,000 prisoners. Nevers, Artois, Coucy, and a few hundred others were taken into captivity to be ransomed, but some would die in captivity. Sigismund blamed the French for the loss. "We lost the day by the pride and vanity of these French," he purportedly said. □

AT 2:30 AM ON JUNE 15, 1815, TENS OF THOUSANDS OF FRENCH SOLDIERS around the town of Beaumont, France, were roused from their bivouacs. After hurriedly cooking breakfast, cleaning weapons, and answering roll call, the myriad battalions, regiments, and divisions formed up ready to take the road to the Belgian frontier three miles to the north. This mass of soldiery assembled into three great columns that snaked along the paved avenues and dirt paths leading to the Belgian city of Charleroi. At 3:30 AM the first French troops stepped foot on Belgian soil.

As the Gallic host entered Belgium, squadrons of light cavalry leading the advance fanned out over the countryside. Within minutes these marauders clashed with mounted Prussian vedettes monitoring the Franco-Belgian frontier crossing points. Here and there sharp skirmishes and running fights ensued. As the Prussian sentinels were pushed back, French riders attempted to secure the border villages; at some of these they were met with vicious enemy sniper fire. Both French and Prussian cannons boomed intermittently as Prussian infantry garrisoning the villages resisted the French advance. Soon smoke from burning and looted buildings boiled upward into the summer sky as the French troops made their way deeper into Belgium. The critical phase of the Waterloo Campaign had begun.

The French troops who marched into Belgium on June 15, 1815, belonged to the 120,000-strong Army of the North commanded by the recently restored emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte. It would be the instrument Napoleon intended to employ for the destruction of the two enemy armies then stationed there: an Anglo-Dutch-Belgian-German force of 106,000 men under English Field Marshal Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, and the Royal Prussian Army of the Lower Rhine, composed of 117,000 troops overseen by Field Marshal the Prince of Wahlstatt Gebhard Leberecht von Blucher.

Prussian infantrymen fire on Napoleon's troops advancing through a village during the opening phase of the Battle of Ligny. House-to-house fighting characterized much of the battle. Painting by Keith Rocco.

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The decision for a strike into Belgium was the result of the French leader's desire to seize the strategic initiative by immediately going on the offensive. By clearing the Allies from Belgium, Napoleon could then circle around the 220,000 Austrians preparing to invade France from southern Germany and the 150,000 Russians then gathering in the central Rhine area, thus cutting their line of communication, forcing both foes to retreat eastward away from France. The gist of the emperor's move into Belgium was clear: he intended to grab Charleroi, getting between the coalition armies, then strike each in turn, anticipating each would fall back on its lines of communication: the English to the west, the Prussians to the east. However, he had to do more than merely push the Allied armies in Belgium back; one or the other had to be wrecked enough to force its parent country out of the war.

To achieve his Belgian gambit, Napoleon fashioned the Army of the North, which he would command in person. The most experienced force he had led since 1807, it was largely composed of veteran volunteers, with few raw conscripts in its ranks and no dubious allies marching with it. Leadership up to corps level was generally good, and the emperor had the undivided loyalty of the majority of the enlisted men as well as the field grade officers. French General Count Maximilian Foy noted in his journal that "the troops exhibit not patriotism, not enthusiasm, but an actual mania for the Emperor and against his enemies."

In terms of accumulated experience and achievement the Army of the North possessed both in abundance and its junior and mid-level leadership was outstanding; however, the army was deeply divided. On the one hand the "old sweats" that had refused to serve under the restored Bourbon crown looked with great suspicion at those who

NAPOLEON'S LAST

VICTORY

Napoleon pummeled Blucher at Ligny on June 16, 1815. Although forced back, the Prussians maintained contact with Wellington for the grand clash at Waterloo.

BY ARNOLD BLUMBERG

had pledged allegiance to King Louis XVIII, half expecting treachery and betrayal from them. Those who had switched from the Royalist side to that of Napoleon on his return in 1815 loathed the superior airs of the other half of the army and secretly longed to see them cut down to size. As one French officer recorded, there was "no mutual confidence, no fraternity of arms, no interchange of generous feelings; pride, selfishness and thirst of prey reigned throughout."

If the lower ranks and junior officers in the Army of the North were of good quality and capable of solid military performance, the same cannot be ascribed to its senior leaders. Napoleon in many respects, even at the age of 46, was the same master of war he had been for the past 20 years. His capacity to organize, move, and inspire his troops remained extraordinary.

When it came to concentrating before battle and then fighting an engagement, the army's corps commanders were the most important figures. By 1815 so many of Napoleon's finest marshals and generals were dead, retired, or exiled that he had to staff senior positions with what was available. Some of these commanders were talented, while many others were timid and tired. During the Hundred Days Campaign the quality of Napoleon's army wing and corps leaders was uneven. Marshal Michel Ney, who handled the left wing on June 16, was popular with the ordinary soldier and extremely brave in battle. But his tempestuous personality and lackluster performance during the 1814 campaign in northeastern France had shown he was past his prime.

Other corps leaders' shortcomings included indecisiveness and a lack of confidence. Such was the case with Jean-Baptiste Drouet, Count d'Erlon, the I Corps commander, and also Count Honore Relle, the II Corps commander. As for Dominique Vandamme, the III Corps commander, he was not terribly bright. In contrast, Count Maurice Gerard, the talented head of IV Corps, and Georges Mouton, Count of Lobau, the VI Corps leader, were capable, as was Count Antoine Drouot, who efficiently handled the Imperial Guard Corps.

At the helm of the army's Cavalry Reserve stood Marshal Emmanuel, Marquis de Grouchy. Like Ney, Grouchy would act as an army wing commander when Napoleon was not present. He was a capable commander of mounted forces but when exercising independent command lacked dash and imagination. His veteran subordinate cavalry corps leaders, General of Division François Kellerman, Counts Claude Pajol, Remy Exelmans, and Edouard Milhaud, all were reliable tacticians.

The Army of the North lacked cohesion resulting from the men not being familiar with their commanders and mistrusting their generals. The latter was due to the return of the Bourbon dynasty to power after Napoleon's abdication in 1814, during which time many generals had taken office under Louis XVIII. This left the majority of the rank and file in the army suspicious of the trustworthiness of these commanders. As a result, this military force was capable of swings between exuberant morale and great feats of arms and gloomy depression. The troops attributed every mishap and delay to treason, and if put under pressure were prone to panic. The army lacked discipline; it was very able but also unstable. Ultimately, it was held together only by the shared fanatical loyalty to the emperor.

The first enemy the Army of the North would encounter in its thrust into Belgium was the Prussians under Blucher. The armed forces fielded by the Kingdom of Prussia for the campaign of 1815 were plagued by low manpower quality, outdated equipment, and overall poor organization, making it the worst army the kingdom employed during the entire Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. This was in part brought about by the general lack of national resources due to 25 years of continuous warfare and the largely agrarian and economically underdeveloped nature of the kingdom.

A substantial part of the Prussian infantry in 1815 consisted of untrained, badly equipped militia known as the Landwehr, many of whom came from territories only recently occupied by Prussia and whose loyalty to their new masters was doubtful. The Prussian mounted arm was in the midst of a major reorganization when the campaign of 1815 began. Many of the newly raised cavalry regiments lacked training and cohesion and thus were not ready for active service. The artillery arm needed equipment and was understrength in both guns and manpower.

The poorly equipped, inexperienced Prussian Army of 1815 was held together and prevailed due to the determination of its officers and enlisted men. At the apex of that leadership stood the army commander, Blucher. The Prussian commander was indomitable, resilient, and optimistic. He was always ready for a fight. Blucher was a veteran of dozens of battles. He harbored a pathological hatred for Napoleon. At age 72, the "Old Hussar" possessed an unlimited capacity to inspire his troops and was a team player.

Although a dogged consuming persistence did much to win him battles, Blucher did have drawbacks as a field commander. He tended to wage war by instinct rather than reasoned logic, had a modicum of tactical skill, but in the realm of strategy was completely out of his depth. Fortunately, the field marshal's military shortcomings were compensated for by the talents of his capable chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Count Neithardt von Gneisenau.

Gneisenau joined the Prussian Army in 1786. After the crushing defeat inflicted upon it by Napoleon in the campaign of 1806, he was instrumental in reshaping the outdated army into a modern national patriotic force. Together

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

ABOVE: Prussian Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Count Neithardt von Gneisenau. The chief of staff and Field Marshal Blucher made a formidable command team. BELOW: A panoramic view of the Ligny battlefield shows French forces advancing in the foreground over the gently rolling terrain. Approximately 150,000 men participated in the clash two days before Waterloo.

Alamy Stock Photo

Gneisenau and Blucher made a formidable command team. The final word on that extraordinary combination may have come from Colonel Baron Carl von Muffling, the Prussian military liaison to Wellington's Allied army, when he wrote, "Gneisenau really commanded the army.... Blucher merely acted as an example as the bravest in battle."

The four infantry corps that made up Blucher's army were commanded by Lt. Gen. W. Hans Karl Friedrich Ernst Heinrich von Zieten (I Corps), Maj. Gen. George Dubislav Ludwig von Pirch I (II Corps), Lt. Gen. Johann Adolf Freiherr von Thielmann (III Corps), and General Friedrich Wilhelm Bulow von Dennewitz (IV Corps).

Zieten was a tough and effective veteran of the 1813 and 1814 campaigns against the French. Pirch I had served adequately in the German Wars of Liberation against Napoleonic France. Thielmann, a Saxon by birth, had fought in the French Revolutionary Wars as an officer in Saxon service; fought for the French in 1809 and at the 1812 Battle of Borodino; changed sides for the 1813 and 1814 campaigns fighting under the Russian flag, then entered Prussian service in early 1815. He was an experienced combat leader. Bulow was a seasoned veteran with victories over the French at the Battles of Gross Beeren and Denewitz in 1813. Although his corps was not present at Ligny, it was the main Prussian contribution at the Battle of Waterloo two days later.

Except for Bulow, Blucher's army did not contain Prussia's tested senior combat leaders. Because it was deemed vital that Gneisenau be paired with Blucher, outstanding Prussian military leaders such as Yorck, Kleist, and Tauenzien, all of whom outranked Gneisenau, could not be assigned to the Army of the Lower Rhine. Hence, the only answer was to appoint younger generals to handle Blucher's corps even at the price of depriving the army of the services of the better, yet senior, officers. Of the four corps heads, only Bulow was senior to Gneisenau, and so his IV Corps was designated as Blucher's reserve in the hope Bulow would not find himself under Gneisenau's orders. In all, the Prussian generals were a reasonably able lot with experience and valor; however, they lacked the élan and tactical flair possessed by the best of their French counterparts.

As the spring of 1815 wore on, Wellington's polyglot army gathered around Brussels, and Blucher's I, II, and III Corps spilled into Belgium. Many of the Prussian units, especially the cavalry, never reached full strength. Much of the rapidly expanded army consisted of ill-trained militia armed with barely serviceable weapons: the infantry of I and II Corps consisted of one third Landwehr, that of III Corps one half, and in IV Corps two thirds. Yet Blucher was not concerned with that; morale and zeal mattered most to him, and he felt his men had both attributes in abundance. To Karl August von Hardenburg, Prussian chancellor, Blucher wrote in late May, "In our troops reigns a courage that becomes boldness."

The Allies planned to defeat Napoleon through their numerical superiority. All their armies were to cross the French frontier between June 27 and July 1. Aside from this broad strategy, Blucher and Wellington had not arranged a concrete plan of operations. At a meeting on May 3, though, they did agree to concentrate their forces on the Quatre Bras-Sombreffe line if attacked so they could support each other. The Prussian remained confident about the military situation and wanted the Coalition forces to attack the enemy "with the most possible haste." To Hardenburg he said, "Our delay [in attacking the French] can only have the greatest disadvantages." Blucher was soon proven correct after Napoleon launched his assault into Belgium.

Within two hours of setting off from their encampments on June 15, the French cavalry made contact with enemy outposts on the road to Charleroi. Prussian screening forces were soon forced to retire as Prussian cannons fired three warning rounds signaling the start of hostilities. As the French advanced during the morning, battalion-sized clashes at the towns of Thuin, Marchienne-au-Pont, and Ham-sur-Heure marked the approximately 20,000-strong center column's progress toward Charleroi. To its left was a mass of 27,000 French infantry and cavalry, to its right another column of 18,000 French foot and horse soldiers. At 11 AM sappers and marines from the Imperial Guard breached Charleroi's defenses, followed by its occupation by French hussars. As the

French light cavalry swarmed into the city the Prussian defenders retreated. Napoleon entered the town soon after. With the capture of Charleroi, the French quickly fanned out toward Gosselies and Gilly to the north and east, respectively.

It was not until 9 AM that Blucher, at his headquarters in Namur, learned of the French invasion. Faced with a critical situation, the Old Hussar issued orders to concentrate his army at the town of Sombreffe 15 miles northeast of Charleroi. This would be difficult in the face of an advancing enemy since the Prussian Army was spread widely over southern Belgium. Zieten's 32,533 man I Corps was encamped between Charleroi and Gembloux; Pirch I's II Corps, numbering 31,000, was situated northeast of Namur; Thielmann's III Corps of 25,000 troops was below the Meuse River near Dinant; and Bulow's IV Corps of 30,000 troops was near Liege.

Regardless of the delicate situation he was in, Blucher, after sending word of the French invasion to Wellington at Brussels, wrote to his wife, "Bonaparte has engaged my whole outposts. I break up at once and take the field against the enemy. I will accept battle with pleasure."

As the Prussian Army moved to assemble at Sombreffe, Zieten, on instructions from Blucher, drew back toward Sombreffe. On the way he placed division-sized forces supported by cavalry and artillery in defensive positions to slow the French advance. By nightfall the Prussian I Corps had successfully broken contact with the oncoming French and bivouacked between Ligny and Sombreffe. Its casualties for the day numbered 1,200 men; the French lost half that number.

By day's end Blucher had started concentrating his army around Sombreffe as agreed with the Duke of Wellington. I Corps covered the assembly area as II and III Corps raced west. The Prussian IV Corps had been sent orders to proceed to Sombreffe, but those instructions were not received by Bulow in time for him to carry them out. At the end of June 15, Blucher had every reason to believe that the plan formulated on May 3 to combine the Allied armies in Belgium and confront Napoleon in one great battle was on track and would take place the next day. He could not have been more wrong.

Anne S.K. Brown Military Collection

Seventy-two-year-old Field Marshal Blucher is shown pinned under his horse after leading a counterattack by his cavalry. Quick thinking by one of Blucher's aides, who covered him with a cloak as French cavalry streamed past, helped the field marshal avoid capture while he was pinned for two hours.

As June 15 came to a close, Napoleon sent part of the Army of the North under Marshal Ney to secure the Quatre Bras crossroad, while Marshal Grouchy, with the remainder of the army, pursued the Prussians to Ligny. Napoleon's intent was to cut the link between his two adversaries, the Nivelles-Sombreffe-Namur road, and as he later wrote, "take the initiative of attacking the enemy armies, one by one."

Unknown to Blucher, Wellington, described as "always being inclined to accept a battle than to offer one," had done little on June 15 to comply with the arrangement he had previously made with Blucher. The French assault at Charleroi had not convinced him that Napoleon intended to drive a wedge between the two Allied armies. He believed the French would attack Mons to his right in an attempt to cut him off from his supplies and escape route to the English Channel. It was not until early on June 16 that Wellington realized Napoleon's true intentions; regardless, Wellington did not issue orders to move his army to Quatre Bras (eight miles from Sombreffe) until 5 AM on June 16. The duke's dawdling prevented his army from concentrating in time to lend direct support to the Prussians at Ligny later that day. Instead, Wellington spent June 16 merely containing Ney's force at Quatre Bras.

Arriving at Sombreffe during the evening of June 15 and aware that Bulow's command would likely not join the rest of his army the next day, Blucher nevertheless decided to engage the French in battle southwest of Sombreffe at the village of Ligny on the 16th. The field marshal's decision was influenced by messages from Wellington assuring him that 60,000 men of Wellington's army would be in a position to support Blucher by the afternoon of the 16th. In reality, the duke's information regarding his troop positions was extremely inaccurate. Wellington's soldiers would only arrive at Quatre Bras after 3 PM on June 16, and only in a steady trickle. It would not be until the afternoon of June 17 that the Englishman's entire force was finally united.

Around noon on June 16, Wellington rode from Quatre Bras to meet Blucher. The former promised that he would come to the aid of his ally only if the French did not attack him at Quatre-Bras. Nevertheless, Blucher still expected at least the aid of 20,000 soldiers from the Anglo-Dutch army. In anticipation of receiving this support, the Prussian right wing at Ligny was intentionally left in the air ready to connect with Wellington's men coming from the west.

Meanwhile, thinking only one Prussian corps stood at Sombreffe, Napoleon ordered Grouchy to advance against it on June 16 with the III and IV Infantry and I, II, and IV Cavalry Corps. At the same time, Marshal Ney, leading I and II Infantry, and III Cavalry Corps would drive on Quatre Bras. Napoleon followed with the Imperial Guard and VI Infantry Corps as a reserve, ready to support either Ney or Grouchy as the situation demanded.

In the early morning hours of June 16, Napoleon fully expected the Prussians to con-

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A romantic depiction of hand-to-hand fighting shows the combatants fighting with bayonets. The Prussians benefitted heavily from the protection of sturdy limestone buildings in the half dozen villages they defended that day.

tinue their retreat east from their exposed position at Sombreffe. He therefore decided to throw the majority of the Army of the North against Wellington's forces in the area of Quatre Bras and then move on Brussels. Then news reached him that instead of retreating the Prussians were reinforcing Zieten's corps at Sombreffe. At 11 AM the emperor saw the large masses of new Prussian forces (Prussian II and III Corps) approaching the area.

Napoleon decided to change his plan for June 16. He would frontally assault the Prussian forces then staging at Ligny and have Ney bring most of his command from Quatre Bras to fall upon the Prussian right flank and rear. Exclusive of Ney's force, Napoleon planned to mass 68,000 men, including 12,500 cavalry and 210 cannons, for the battle. With only Vandamme's infantry and two reserve cavalry corps on hand facing the Prussians at the time Napoleon made his decision, the battle he anticipated could not begin until the rest of the army's right wing arrived and deployed for action. This would be around 2 PM at the earliest.

As Napoleon revised his strategy, the Prussians concentrated their available forces near Ligny. The terrain there gave a number of advantages to the defenders. First, the undulating countryside contained considerable areas of dead ground in which troops would be concealed. Second, villages like St. Amand, Ligny, Sombreffe, Tongrinne, Boignee, and Baltare contained limestone buildings that could be turned into strongpoints. These sturdy buildings would function as ready-made field fortifications from which raw troops could fight. Third, Ligny Brook was a hard to cross marshland with only four bridges leading out of the Ligny Valley, all of which were dominated by Prussian held villages. Fourth, the hamlet of Brye, north of Ligny and Ligny Brook, covering 600 yards of front, was built like a fortress and could serve as a staging place for Prussian counterattacks or a last line of defense. Fifth, behind St. Amand and Ligny was a long, gentle, clear slope leading up to Brye. If the French were to seize St. Amand and/or Ligny, they would then have to advance up the slope in open terrain against massed Prussian artillery.

One weakness of the Prussian position was its right flank, which rested precariously in the air and on open ground. Another flaw in the deployment was that the Prussian troops were packed in close-ordered formations on rising ground north of Ligny Brook. They proved to be perfect targets for French artillery once the battle opened.

Blucher's strategy for the battle was one of aggressive defense. After holding up French attacks with his urban strongpoints, he would send his inexperienced men to retake any lost terrain by vigorous counterattacks. The recovered ground would then be held by fresh troops as long as possible. Blucher hoped this strategy would allow him to maintain his position long enough for Wellington to arrive. To implement his defensive plan, Blucher placed Zieten's I Corps along the line of the Ligny Brook, its left holding Ligny, its center at St. Amand, and its right near the village of Wagnelee. The II Corps was placed in reserve in the rear of I Corps on the Nivelles-Namur road, while III Corps was stationed between Sombreffe and Mazy on the Prussian left. By 3 PM Blucher had established a seven-mile battle line containing 76,000 infantry, 8,000 cavalry, and 224 cannons.

The French Army deployed for its assault throughout the hot early afternoon. Vandamme's III Corps, supported by Lt. Gen. Baron Girard's 7th Infantry Division, II Infantry Corps, drew up north of the village of Wangenies just to the west of Fluerus facing northeast toward the Prussians holding St. Amand. Nine squadrons of light cavalry under Lt. Gen. Jean Simon Baron Domon covered its left flank. Vandamme's artillery did not arrive until after the battle began.

Gerard's IV Corps deployed at right angles to III Corps facing Ligny, its 24 pieces of artillery drawn up 600 yards from the town. The mile and a half between III and IV Corps was filled by Milhaud's horsemen. Gerard placed Brig. Gen. Baron Etienne Hulot's infantry division, with eight guns, behind his other divisions at right angles facing northeast.

Flanking Hulot was Lt. Gen. Baron Maurin's cavalry division with six guns. Exelman created a line by forming his II Cavalry Corps and 12 cannons to the left of Pajol's reduced I Cavalry Corps,

which also controlled 12 guns and two infantry battalions detached from Hulot. Exelman and Pajol faced the left flank of the Prussians covering the area between Sombreffe and Balatre.

The Imperial Guard Corps, with its 96 guns, and Milhaud's IV Cavalry Corps were held in reserve a little to the west of Fleurus.

At 2:30 PM a French Guard artillery piece boomed, than again and a third time, signaling the start of the Battle of Ligny.

Vandamme commenced the fight by sending forward the division under General of Division Etienne Lefol. His task was to attack St. Amand to draw as many Prussian reserves as possible into the front line of their western wing. This would ensure a large number of Prussians would be trapped around St. Amand when Ney's flanking force arrived. Lefol's regiments, formed in attack columns, rolled forward under the fire of Blucher's cannons situated north of Ligny Brook. Despite the pounding they took, after 15 minutes the French ejected the three infantry battalions of the Prussian I Corps' 3rd Brigade defending the village from its houses, walled gardens, and the church. As the retreating enemy fled over Ligny Brook, Lefol's men followed, but as they debouched from St. Amand they were crushed by 40 Prussian cannons sited north of the town.

Meanwhile, French artillery dueled with their Prussian counterpart causing the earth to tremble. With friendly artillery shells passing over their heads, four battalions from the Prussian 1st Brigade, I Corps, counterattacked and drove the French out of St. Amand.

Fifteen minutes after the attack on St. Amand began, French artillery poured fire on Ligny held by Maj. Gen. Henckel von Donnersmarck's 4th Brigade, I Corps. Much of the French fire was, however, directed against the Prussian guns and reserve infantry beyond Ligny. One French eyewitness recorded, "Our artillery did considerable mischief among the great body of Prussian troops that were posted in mass on the heights and slopes." Since the French forces were on slightly higher terrain, as well as protected by undulating ground, they fared better against their enemy's return cannon fire.

Lieutenant General Baron Marc Pecheux's infantry division, IV Corps, advanced on Ligny in three columns preceded by a line of skirmishers. Prussian musket fire forced one column to retire, but the column made up of the 30th Line Regiment penetrated into the village only to be driven out due to mounting casualties and lack of support. Another assault on Ligny went in led by clouds of skirmishers and under cover of a barrage of French artillery, which blasted the town and the slopes beyond. Although this too was repulsed, three more attacks were made enabling the French to gain a tenuous presence in the village.

On the French right, the cavalry made moves to outflank the eastern margin of the Prussian III Corps, but without infantry support the threats were idle. Hulot could not come to the aid of the cavalry since he was tied up fighting Prussian III Corps units holding Sombreffe and Tongrenelle.

The battle escalated when Girard hurled his 5,000-man division at the village of La Haye, threatening the right flank of the Prussians defending St. Amand. Blucher, from his headquarters at the Bussy windmill, sent 2nd Brigade, I Corps, 5th Brigade, and the cavalry of II Corps to counter the French threat. Following a dense line of skirmishers, 2nd Brigade's two assault columns drove the enemy out of La Haye. Girard rallied his men and, again moving forward, expelled the now exhausted Prussians from La Haye, causing them to retreat over Ligny Brook. The cost to the French for this achievement was high, including the mortal wounding of Girard.

Reacting to the loss of La Haye, Blucher threw 2nd Brigade at the town, driving the now disorganized and bloodied French out. At the same time, 5th Brigade occupied Wagnelee despite suffering heavy fire from Lt. Gen. Habert's division, III Corps. To the west, Domon's light cavalry contained the opposing horsemen during the infantry clash. Reinforcements from the French right flank in the form of Lt. Gen. Baron Jacques Gervais Subservie's cavalry division helped achieve this.

By 5 PM the Prussian garrison in St. Amand was finally expelled and its mauled battalions retreated to Brye. However, the devastating fire of Zieten's 12-pounder batteries prevented the French from debouching from the village. Meanwhile, part of Lt. Gen. Baron Louis Vichery's division, IV Corps, accompanied by two cannons, was thrown into the fight for Ligny. The Prussians responded by reinforcing the town with four battalions from the 3rd Brigade.

As increasingly fierce combat raged among the villages below Ligny Brook, Napoleon, at 5:30 PM, prepared to deliver the coup de grace by having Ney attack their western flank with d'Erlon's Corps from Quatre Bras, while Lobau's VI Corps, the Guard, and Milhaud's cuirassiers crashed through the Prussian center. If all went according to plan, the western Prussian forces would then be encircled and destroyed between Vandamme, the Guard, and d'Erlon. "If Ney carries out my orders well, not a single gun of the Prussian army will escape; it is going utterly to be smashed," said Napoleon.

As the emperor prepared to deliver his decisive blow, news of an unidentified column was reported heading eastward to Fleurus in the French rear. Then it was learned that the French had abandoned La Haye. Worse, Vandamme wrote that unless he was reinforced he would lose St. Amand. Reacting to the multiple crises, Napoleon ordered VI Corps and part of the Guard back to Fleurus, while sending support to Vandamme.

As the French scrambled to cope with the phantom force bearing down on their left flank and rear, Blucher scrounged together battalions from his I and II Corps and flung them at St. Amand. After close quarters fighting the French fled the northern part of the village. Meanwhile, the Prussian 5th Brigade, supported by artillery, left Wagnelee and attacked La Haye but was thrown back. Blucher was seen in the thick of the fighting on his black charger.

In the nick of time the Young Guard Division, Guard Corps, arrived and with Girard's infantry rallied and drove back the enemy near La Haye, while Vandamme's men ushered the Prussians out of St. Amand. On the French eastern flank the villages of Boignee and Balatre were barely wrenched from the Prussians in bitter fighting.

At Ligny, the close quarters combat amid the burning buildings continued unabated. The Prussian 4th Brigade was replaced with fresh battalions after losing 2,500 men out of the 4,721 who entered the fight. The French countered by pouring Vichery's 2nd Brigade into the inferno.

At 6 PM Blucher received the shocking news that Wellington, who had his hands full fighting Ney at Quatre Bras, would not be coming to support the Prussians at Ligny. Undaunted, Blucher resolved to win the battle by himself. He gathered up a few wrecked formations from his second line, as well as the last fresh battalions from II Corps, and shouting to his men, "Fix bayonets and forward!" led them again between Wagnelee and La Haye toward the French. The Prussian tide soon broke upon the immovable three chasseur regiments of the Old Guard Division, which repelled the Prussian assault and then went on to occupy La Haye.

At this point in the battle the 22nd and 70th Line Regiments, Lt. Gen. Baroin Habert's division, tramped through St. Amand and deployed to its north and, seeing enemy cavalry nearby, went into squares. Charged by enemy cavalry, the 22nd panicked, broke, and was mercilessly hacked down by the horsemen. The 70th retained its square and maintained its position.

It was now 6:30 PM and Napoleon finally discovered the identity of the mystery column approaching from the west. It was d'Erlon's I

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Gneisenau orders a general retreat to Wavre as Prussian artillery at the village of Brye delays the French.

Corps, 20,000 strong. Napoleon sent it orders to attack the Prussians at Wagnelee, but it was too late; d'Erlon was marching back to Quatre Bras on Ney's instructions.

By 7:30 PM, thick clouds of smoke from burning villages mixed with rain and the sound of thunder hung over the battlefield. Suddenly, several Guard batteries commenced firing from south of St. Amand, while others east of Ligny opened a devastating cannonade. This was followed at 7:45 PM by the advance into Ligny of the Guard infantry, General Claude Etienne Guyot heavy cavalry division, and Milhaud's riders. These formations moved through Ligny and north and south of it. This avalanche was sent forward by Napoleon when he realized the Prussians had no reserves north of Ligny, Blucher having squandered them in the failed counterattack in the Wagnelee-St. Amand sector. As the Guard passed their emperor they shouted, "No quarter!"

As the Guard crashed into Ligny the Prussians buckled but did not break; in fact, they counterattacked but were repulsed. The French infantry soon exited Ligny, reformed their lines, and started up the slopes toward Brye and the heart of the Prussian position. In support rode a massed column of Milhaud's cuirassiers. As the Guard juggernaut neared, the Prussian line dissolved.

Seeking to avert the unfolding disaster about to overtake his army, Blucher ordered a counterattack with the I Corps cavalry brigade. The 6th Uhlans Regiment charged the 4th Grenadiers of the Guard but was swept away by French musket fire. Then a second and third wave of Prussian cavalry attacked, meeting the same fate as their Uhlan comrades, also being struck by French cuirassiers.

Blucher had charged at the head of the 6th Uhlans and had his horse killed from under him, the animal pinning the field marshal to the ground. Blucher's aide, Lt. Col. Count von Nostitz, was able to cover his leader with a cloak as French cavalry stormed past. With help from some retreating Prussians, the dead mount was removed from Blucher's body and the general was placed on a horse and led to a nearby unit of Prussian infantry, which retired to safety.

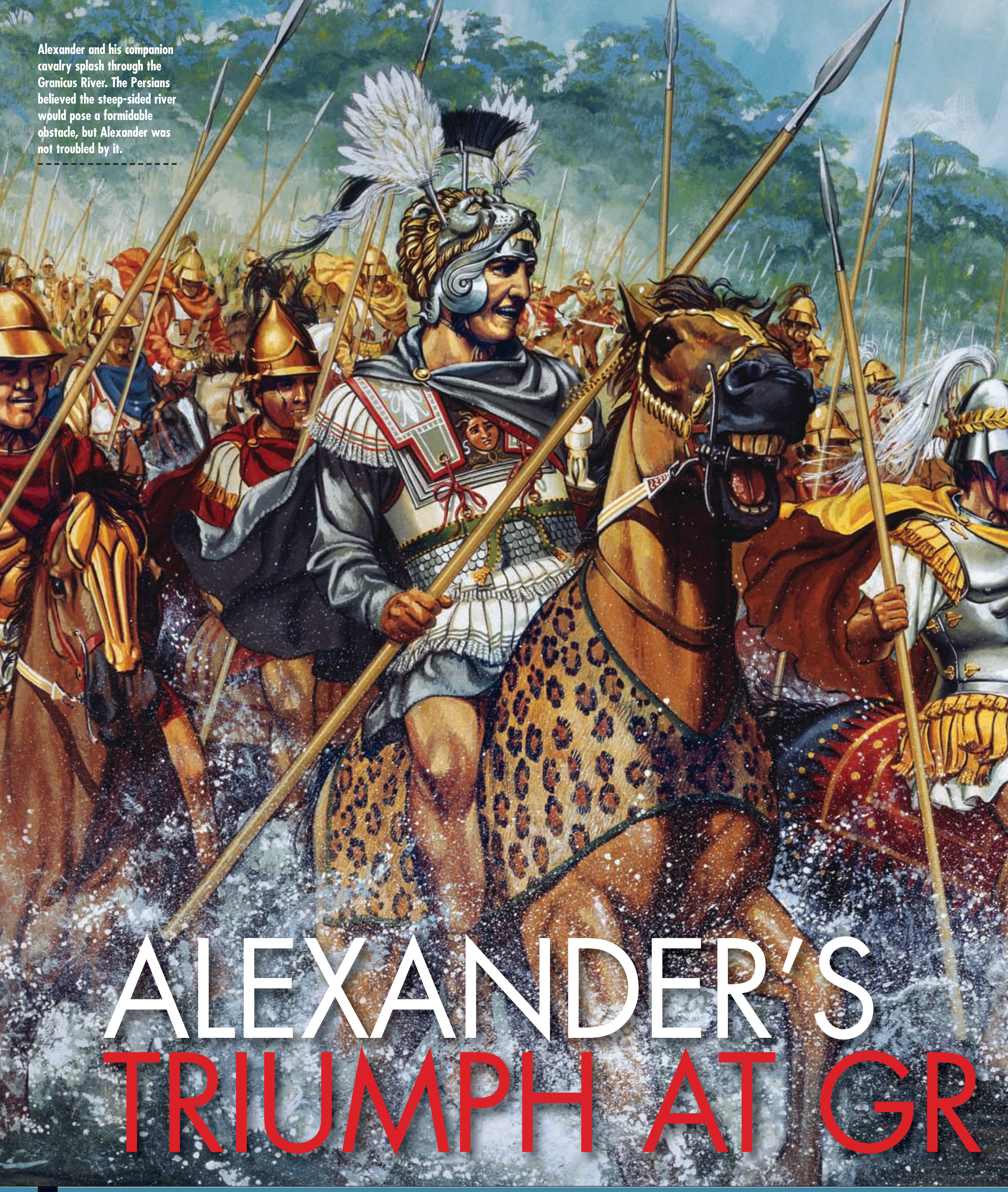
French forces pushed on from St. Amand and Ligny and attacked Sombreffe, driving back the Prussian 12th Brigade, III Corps, and the remains of the 1st Brigade.

As the Prussians attempted to create a defense at Brye, to the east Thielmann tried to take the pressure off of the Prussian west wing by attacking down the Sombreffe-Fleurus highway with a brigade of cavalry supported by a battery of horse artillery. This small effort was soon derailed when French dragoons attacked the Prussians and drove them back.

In the gathering darkness, Lt. Gen. Antoine Maurin led his French cavalry division, detached from Gerard's corps, up the Fleurus-Sombreffe road deep into the enemy's position. He was brought to a halt when Thielmann sought to establish a new defense line between Brye and Sombreffe. Grouchy's cavalry pressed forward to occupy Tongrinne, just vacated by Thielmann, but could advance no farther.

Not knowing whether Blucher was alive or dead, command of the army devolved on Gneisenau. The army was ordered to retreat to Wavre 13 miles to the north. It was the only real choice since I and II Corps were already streaming away in that direction and the way to join Wellington was blocked by the French. Later that evening Blucher directed the army to march to join Wellington, who on June 17 pulled out of Quatre Bras.

At 5 AM on June 17, 14 hours after the Battle of Ligny began, the Prussian Army, after suffering 16,000 casualties as well as the loss of 21 artillery pieces, moved northward. Although they had captured Ligny, the French, who lost 12,000 killed, wounded, and missing in the battle, had never reached the open ground beyond the village, having been stopped by the Prussian rear guard and the dark of night. On June 18, 1815, Napoleon would fight at the village of Waterloo, and his fate would be decided by the timely arrival of Blucher's Prussians, whom he had failed to destroy two days earlier. □



Alexander and his companion cavalry splash through the Granicus River. The Persians believed the steep-sided river would pose a formidable obstacle, but Alexander was not troubled by it.

ALEXANDER'S TRIUMPH AT GR

AKG Images / Peter Connolly

In a closely fought battle against the Persians in Asia Minor, the young Macedonian king nearly lost his life, but his well-led army prevailed over Greece's longtime foe.

BY TIM MILLER

IN the spring of 334 BC, Alexander of Macedon paused with his army on the western side of the Granicus River. Only 22 years old, he had become king of Macedon 18 months earlier after the assassination of his father. Since then he and his army had spent their time shoring up the allegiance of other Greek states, securing their northern borders against the barbarian tribes, and only recently had crossed the Hellespont into Anatolia out of Europe and into Asia.

But it was no mere tribe that faced them across the Granicus. Only a shallow riverbed and a calm stream separated his army from that of the Persians, both lines of battle extending nearly three miles downriver. Already midafternoon, and with not only his men watching him but also the Persians, Alexander had to decide what to do. The young Macedonian king was quite ostentatious with his shining weapons and double-plumed helmet and the orchestrated flurry of his men clustering around him, but such gestures belied a moment of true indecision.

The river had probably never received so much attention as in these moments, on this spring day in an open, largely featureless landscape. Every Macedonian eye took in the river: each bend, the placement of each stone, the height of the bank as it rolled higher or lower, the breaks along it that would allow egress from the river, and the softness of the gravel. The restlessness of Alexander's men, tens of thousands of them, from the rattling together of their sarissas (waves of 13- to 20-foot wooden pikes lining the riverside like a desiccated forest) down to their greaves as they shifted from one leg to another, or back up to the cavalry and the neighing and muttering of horse and rider, or the rattle of sword and lance. All of it would have been a huge drinking in of the lazy river and wondering who among them had come here to die and when.

For the question was a matter of timing: whether to attack now, when both sides knew Alexander had superior numbers but an inferior position, or wait until morning, certain of a better position but risking the arrival of more Persians. And from the first moment, Alexander and his veteran generals saw it differently.

The young king's advisers were made up equally of an old guard, men many years his senior who had served with his father, and quite literally men young enough to be their sons, many of them Alexander's friends from the elite and enclosed Macedonian court. One of the former, the general Parmenion, advised him to wait. A crossing now, he said, could only be done at a point of the Persians' choosing and while under immediate attack. This could only lead to slaughter. "Thus our first stumble would harm our present standing and might even spoil the outcome of the larger war," he said.

"I would be ashamed, after having easily crossed the Hellespont if this little stream keeps us from crossing as we are," Alexander replied. Like all great propagandists, he considered that what his actions symbolized were just

as important as what those actions actually were. “I would consider [waiting until morning] unworthy of the Macedonians’ renown and of my quickness to accept risks,” he said. “And I think the Persians would take courage and think themselves a match for the Macedonians in battle, seeing that up to now their fears have not been confirmed by what they have experienced.”

Already Alexander had a confidence in himself and in his men and their affection for him that his soldiers could not yet comprehend. But they soon would, since the Alexander of history was born in moments like this, in those minutes by the calm river before he ordered his men across.

King Philip II of Macedon had as many as eight wives, and Alexander was the son of one of these women, Olympias. Legends inevitably attached themselves to the boy, many of them merely pious inventions created after the fact, or even by his mother for the sake of her own and her son’s security. As Arrian cautions at the outset of his own long narrative of Alexander, “There is no figure about whom more writers are more at variance.”

One of these stories is of his mother dreaming that her womb had been struck by a thunderbolt; and since Zeus was known to have a thunderbolt or two, it was said that the god was Alexander’s real father. Another involved Busephalus, the horse Alexander rode from his adolescence to the Battle of the Hydaspes many years later. Originally a gift from Thessaly and meant for his father, Philip found it untamable and thought to send it back. His son proved defter, and through his tears Philip was supposed to have told his son that Macedon was too small for him and that he would have to find a kingdom big enough for his ambitions.

Famously, Alexander’s teacher from ages 13 to 16 was 43-year-old Aristotle, and it is often assumed the young boy and the older philosopher learned next to nothing from each other. But this presumes that Aristotle was merely otherworldly and Alexander only a brute. Aristotle, however, was politic enough, and one of his stipulations upon accepting the position was for Philip to rebuild his hometown, Stageira, which the king had destroyed. He later advised Alexander to be a just leader to the Greeks but to treat the Persians as if they were “beasts or plants.”

Aristotle also instilled in the boy a lifelong love for Homer’s *Iliad,* an annotated copy of which Alexander took on campaign with him. The popular image of the philosopher teaching Alexander alone is also, surprisingly, incorrect. As head of the academy in Macedon, many of those who would become Alexander’s core “Companions” were also taught by Aristotle, including Cassander and Ptolemy, the future Hellenistic kings who inherited and divided Alexander’s empire.

Library of Congress

TOP: King Philip II is slain by Pausanias of Orestis, one of his seven bodyguards, as he and his entourage enter a theater. MIDDLE: King Philip II of Macedon. BOTTOM: Alexander III of Macedon.

When he was just 16, Alexander was left in charge of Macedon when Philip went off to war in Byzantium, and the young man quickly put down a revolt of Thracians, repopulated the area with Macedonians, and modestly named the new town after himself, the first of nearly 20 cities so named. Over the next few years he campaigned by himself and then alongside his father, and at the Battle of Chaeronea in 338 father and son each commanded a wing of the army. In the years before his assassination, however, Philip fell in love with and married another woman, briefly putting a question to Alexander’s succession, and even exiling him for a time. At the wedding banquet Philip made a drunken charge at his son only to slip and fall to the floor, to which Alexander said, “See there, the man who makes preparations to pass out of Europe into Asia, overturned in passing from one seat to another.”

Philip seems to have been more than a little unstable, and on bad days was a bit of a buffoon. In the summer of 336 BC, one of his bodyguards assassinated him. As motive, ancient sources detail an elaborate love triangle (or quadrangle) involving Philip’s male lovers; another conspiracy supposedly involved Alexander and Olympias. While the latter was no doubt relieved to have Philip gone, if the Macedonian nobles or generals suspected they were behind the assassination it did not stop them from backing Alexander after the usual instability and near rebellions that always ripple up after such events.

Even more telling is that, only a year earlier, in 337 BC, Philip had helped create and was elected leader of the League of Corinth. The member states included nearly all of the Peloponnese, with the major exception of Sparta and the islands of the eastern Aegean Sea near Persian Anatolia, as well as the Hellespont. As the agreement states, members swore “by Zeus, Gaia, Helios, Poseidon” not to attack any other member states and further not to “depose the kingship of Philip or his descendants.” Had officials in Macedon been under suspicion of doing just that, the then 20-year-old king would likely have had more serious revolts on his hands than he did.

As it happened, Alexander immediately began planning the same Persian campaign his father had already set in motion. He first traveled north with his army to secure the far borders of Macedon, subduing the Thracians and then the Getae with little difficulty. These northern peoples, while they did meet Alexan-

der in battle, are characterized in the ancient sources as overawed by the machinery of a civilized army and by the figure at the head of it: the Getae were caught off guard simply by Alexander's ability to cross his army over "the largest of rivers" (the Danube) in one night. This took place while the Taulantians were intimidated merely by witnessing a series of orderly drill maneuvers. When Alexander led his army against an Illyrian stronghold, the men of the city sacrificed a handful of women, children, and animals only to retreat so quickly that Alexander's soldiers came upon the corpses, still smoldering.

All of this was accomplished by the beginning of the summer of 335 BC, when Alexander turned south again and led his men against a revolt at Thebes, which had been spurred by rumors of Alexander's death while fighting the Illyrians. Arrian writes, "In the absence of accurate information, people formed conjectures in keeping with their wishes," a form of coping with the nightmare of history that continues until this day. For whatever reason, though, even after the rumor was proved false, many of those in Thebes remained stubborn. Alexander himself procrastinated in assaulting the city and only did so when a few of his officers were goaded into acting on their own and attacked the city themselves.

A general slaughter and enslavement ensued, the severity of which is indicated by the execution of even those suppliants seeking refuge at temples. Perhaps as a nod to Aristotle, one of the only homes left standing was that of the poet Pindar; otherwise, the butchery was apparently so vicious, even for the ancient world, that motives and exonerations have been sought everywhere. Alexander's reticence to attack is proof that he did not order it or his Greek allies were to blame since they had previously lived under the thumb of Theban brutality and were happy to turn the tables, or it is supposed that Alexander waited so long to attack because his army was low on supplies.

The destruction of Thebes, at least, is without question. Alexander then continued on to Athens, a hotbed of anti-Macedonian sentiment; one of its citizens, Demosthenes, had celebrated publicly at the news of Philip's death, and during his lifetime had referred to him as "neither Greek nor a remote relative of the Greeks, nor even a respectable barbarian." Alexander ordered nine of its citizens to be given up for various crimes against himself and his father, yet it says something that he relented when only Demosthenes was given up. Arrian suggests this was done out of respect for the city but, as will be suggested, his reluctance to attack Athens was linked to his eagerness the following spring to get on with the Persian war: he was running out of money with which to pay his troops and keep them supplied. Such practicalities are usually forgotten by the future myth makers, but the razor's edge moment of those months before the Persian campaign must be imagined if the full weight of his victory is to be comprehended. The campaign could so easily have stalled and gone exactly nowhere. At this point, Alexander was still just a charismatic 21-year-old who only became king because his father angered the wrong people. History, as it were, was still in the future.

Eon Images

In the wake of Philip's death, many Greek states revolted against Macedonian rule. Alexander procrastinated in assaulting Thebes, and only did so when a few of his officers were goaded into acting on their own.

Alexander and his army did leave Greece for Asia in the spring of 334 BC, however, and it is worth noting that he and his father only sought war with Persia over a grudge more than a century and a half old. Just as the destruction of Thebes was interpreted as divine retribution for the city's surrender during the Persian Wars of 490 BC and 480 to 479 BC in the same way, Alexander sought to retaliate for that same Persian aggression.

When his army crossed the Hellespont into Anatolia, it did so with the weight of generations behind it. And when he sacrificed at the grave a Greek hero from the Trojan War, he pushed his own narrative back further for he was beginning yet another war with the ancient enemies of Greece.

Alexander crossed first, at the head a small group that landed at Troas; he then poured libations into the sea for the protection and safe crossing of as many as 160 triremes, led by Parmenion, which landed at Abydos. By this time Alexander had arrived in Troy, where he sacrificed to Trojan Athena and thought it best to take the sacred weapons from the temple there for his own use. He and his probable lover Hephaistion then placed wreaths on the graves of those other probable lovers, Achilles and Patroklos. Traveling north, he joined his army again at Arisbe and continued on through Perkote and Lampascus, hugging the northwestern coast of Anatolia. The roughly 60 miles from Arisbe to the Granicus was covered in a swift three days.

The Persians knew he was coming. Persian King Darius III had succeeded to the throne the same year and under the same circumstances, which was the previous king's assassination, as Alexander. But by the spring of 334 BC, Darius and his royal army were occupied in Egypt, a fact that, on the one hand, Alexander may well have been exploiting or, on the other, is evidence that Darius thought little of the Macedonian and saw no reason to face him. The sizable force that had been gathered to face the Macedonians was filled by men from the Anatolian territories and led by their satraps: Arsites, the satrap of Hellespontine Phrygia, as well as the satraps of Cilicia, greater Phrygia, southern Cappadocia, Lydia, and Iona. In addition, there was also a large contingent of Greek mercenaries.

A strategic council was held at Zeleia 30 miles east of the Granicus, where one of the advisers to the Persians was Memnon of Rhodes, commander of the Greek mercenaries. Knowing how low Alexander and his men were on supplies and how unlikely it was that he would remain in

Louvre / Wikimedia Commons

The epic cavalry clash at Granicus is depicted in a 17th-century painting displayed in the Louvre Museum in Paris. Always in the thick of the fighting, Alexander was nearly slain but his men rescued him.

the country if provisions were scarce, he advised a scorched-earth policy. Under the policy, the Persians and their Greek allies would destroy the fields, burn the harvest, and raze even the cities themselves. It would not have been difficult to learn that Alexander had ordered his men, as they marched east from Arisbe, to hold off looting or ravaging the land and draw one's conclusions from there. Indeed, the ancient sources stress that from the moment he crossed the Hellespont Alexander only had enough supplies and money to sustain his army for at most 30 days and that he was eager for battle if only to seize control of the treasuries of the satraps.

Memnon's advice may well have been sound, but he sabotaged himself by prefacing this strategy with a warning about the superiority of Alexander's infantry. Taken together, both pieces of advice amounted to purposely avoiding battle, and seen in this light, the advice to destroy much of Hellespontine Phrygia was not much different from surrendering it. Such words were not welcomed by the Persians, especially from an outsider, and even one with such a deep knowledge of both the Persian and Greek armies as Memnon clearly had. Thus, they rejected both ideas and decided to set out immediately to meet Alexander.

At least recognizing Alexander's superior numbers, the Persians also saw their own advantage: desperate as he was for a decisive battle that would refill his coffers, the Persians could essentially choose when and where the battle should take place. They decided to take up a position on the eastern side of the Granicus, knowing that when Alexander came to the river he would be forced to cross and fight. In this they were correct. If they considered it a trap, or at the very least a provocation, it worked. But it was a defensive rather than offensive position, one that required the Persians to wait; and the history of Alexander, and of warfare in general, suggests the psychological strength of the offensive position well enough. While the Macedonian army was in a technically desperate situation, and fresh from the march, circumstances turned desperation into a benefit. The only way forward for Alexander's army was to fight. As for the Persians, they were simply in a reactive mode.

This is what Alexander must have considered when he refused the advice of Parmenion and decided to cross the Granicus on that same day. The Persian army was composed of approximately 11,000 cavalry and 5,000 Greek infantry. In contrast, the Macedonians numbered approximately 30,000 infantry and 5,000 cavalry. Alexander set his line of battle with the main infantry in the center. To the right were the hypaspists, elite infantrymen known as shield bearers who were responsible for protecting the cavalry. They were followed by Alexander and his Companion Cavalry of nearly 2,000 men and additional cavalry units fronted by archers and lancers. A similar composition was found on the left side, led by Parmenion. Across the river, the Persian cavalry faced them immediately from the bank with the Greek mercenaries behind them on higher ground and with a view above the river.

Alexander's infantrymen and lancers would have been equipped with sarissas, 13- to 20-foot-long wooden spikes tipped with iron that required both hands to use. The first few ranks of infantry would advance with their sarissas level, while those in the remaining ranks would proceed with them held at an angle, providing protection for the advancing whole. The

hypaspists, free from the restrictions of infantry that required advancement as a unit, were much more mobile and carried a smaller spear than the sarissa, while the cavalry was equipped with a smaller slashing sword as well as a xyston, a lance that while shorter than the sarissa (at about nine feet) had the advantage that it could be used with only one hand and which, since it had a tendency to shatter, also had a second spear end on the butt. Each of the Persian cavalrymen had a spear for throwing and another for close encounters, and the ancient sources relate that many of them also had a curved sword, or kopis.

Alexander made a great point of being conspicuous in his double-plumed helmet on his army's right side. Indeed, the Persians took the bait and concentrated their forces on him, expecting him to lead the charge against their left. The Persians' main objective, of course, was to kill Alexander. Indeed, Alexander ended up aiming for the Persian commanders as well. This was a common ancient tactic, where loss in battle came about from the death of a king or general, a virtual decapitation of the leadership that fanned out and destroyed morale all down the line.

After the ordering of Alexander's line, Arrian writes, "There was a great silence on both sides." The Macedonians were waiting to begin, the Persians to defend. Alexander then ordered a large force of cavalry and javelin men and archers to his right (led by his generals Amyntas and Socrates) to cross the river and attack the Persian left, but he and the remaining Companion Cavalry did not join them. Not comprehending this, the Persians drew even more cavalry from their center to protect their left flank. Despite the drama of some of the ancient authors, the river itself would have been neither deep nor rushing as his men crossed and likely would not have risen above the horses' knees. And while the banks leading out of the river and to the plains beyond were steep at points, much of Alexander's army would have encountered only a simple slope.

While Alexander had successfully drawn the Persians from their center, he had not bolstered his own forces to match them, and they were horribly outnumbered. First attacked from above, in a moment the Persians came down to the riverbank to face them there as well. The violence in the water was great, and the outnumbered Macedonians, while paving the way for those who followed them, paid for this opening with their lives. Arrian simply says that they were cut to pieces, in part because they faced the most furious strength of the Persian cavalry that had been maneuvered there in the mistaken hope of facing Alexander.

But as Alexander predicted, the bloody distraction worked. As more Persians advanced to their right, Alexander finally led the remaining force of his Companion Cavalry and the full thrust of his infantry phalanx to the weakened Persian center, which buckled even more when it could confidently make a rush for Alexander himself. This left a gap in the Persian center that allowed, as Arrian writes, "Battalion after battalion of Macedonians to succeed in crossing the river with no difficulty." Blind to this, the Persian command rode down the bank to engage him in direct combat, and the river was so crowded with men and horses that it was said to be more like an infantry engagement. The confusion of such close, hemmed-in fighting at the edge of and within the river, all swirling around the figure of Alexander, must have been tremendous, and one hopes that the Persians savored these moments, since their upper hand was soon to evaporate.

The Macedonians gained the upper hand in part thanks to the cavalry's capable use of their xyston, which they thrust into the face of the Persian cavalry and their horses, seriously injuring the men or even just goading the horses; a good many horses reared up and threw their riders. At the same time, the Persian focus on Alexander quickly backfired and turned into the deaths of many among their own command: Alexander killed the son-in-law of Darius, Mithridates, but a moment later was struck in the head by Rhoisakes, who lives on in history simply for this one swing. The blow cut open Alexander's helmet (and the double white plumes atop it), but somehow he was able to fight back and kill Rhoisakes. Dazed in the water and trying to make for the bank, Alexander did not see another Persian, Spithridates, coming toward him, kopis raised, but before he could deal a death blow to Alexander, his arm, which was grasping the sword, was cut off by Kleitos, son of Dropides, the real hero and savior of the battle.

ALEXANDER MADE A GREAT POINT OF BEING CONSPICUOUS IN HIS DOUBLE-PLUMED HELMET ON HIS ARMY'S RIGHT SIDE. INDEED, THE PERSIANS TOOK THE BAIT AND CONCENTRATED THEIR FORCES ON HIM, EXPECTING HIM TO LEAD THE CHARGE AGAINST THEIR LEFT.

All three of these men, Mithridates, Rhoisakes, and Spithridates, were prominent Persian leaders, and their deaths had the same effect as Alexander's demise would have had on the Macedonians. Other members of the Persian command were also probably killed in the melee, and entire divisions of cavalry were thrown into a panic only veteran soldiers can truly imagine and which historians can only pretend to put into words: a sudden claustrophobia, mere adrenaline replaced by fear, and a previous confidence shredded by an enemy that keeps on coming. It was the decisive moment in the battle since by this time the Macedonians on the left had forced the remaining Persians into the plain beyond the river. The demoralization of the Persian center rolled outward like a wave until the entire army collapsed. The two sides had been fighting, perhaps, for less than an hour.

With the disappearance of any advantage they may have had and unable to face the Macedonian forces in open country, the Persians fled. Many cavalry were killed in the retreat, and those who got away only did so because Alexander now turned his attention to the Greek mercenaries that had been stationed behind them, a half mile away, waiting to be called into the action. One wonders why they did not retreat as well. It is only too easy for Arrian to say that they remained where they were "not so much from any firm determination as from terror at the unexpected turn of events," but we might give them the benefit of the doubt; certainly no face could have been lost had they chosen to retreat alongside the Persians who had hired them. It must have taken some courage indeed to not flee and to stand their ground for the brief second before they were slaughtered. Those who survived were taken captive, bound, and sent to Macedon to serve as forced labor in the mines or elsewhere.

Rijksmuseum

ABOVE: Kleitos, at far right, charges to stop the Persian Spithridates, who is behind Alexander swinging an axe. Spithridates actually wielded a kopis, and Kleitos hacked off his arm before he could strike Alexander.
RIGHT: Alexander's premature death in June 323 BC is depicted romantically in an illustration. Whether he died of an illness or was intentionally poisoned remains a source of dispute.

The harshness of this treatment has been commented upon for centuries. Plutarch's version of the event is even worse, since here the mercenaries at least attempted to surrender but were butchered or led off anyway. Perhaps Alexander was simply carried away after nearly being killed himself, since we must still imagine him with his split helmet and tattered plumes. Another motive, which was that he was interpreting the terms of the League of Corinth as literally as possible since it forbade Greeks to fight other Greeks, assumes a level of detached and reasoned reflection in the heat of battle which even in the best commanders seems impossible. This conclusion is even more unlikely since in later times Alexander did not hesitate to take in Greek mercenaries when it suited him, including those who had served under Darius III.

One account of the battle leaves this episode out entirely, and there are, of course, as many reasons to leave it out as to make it up. But if it did happen, Plutarch sums it up simply enough by stating that in his treatment of the mercenaries Alexander was "influenced more by anger than by reason." It is always worth reminding ourselves that if he chose to and if he calculated the reactions of others correctly, Alexander could largely do what he wanted.

In the days following the battle, Alexander had the dead of his army buried and their parents and children exempted from a whole slew of taxes. He also visited the wounded, Arrian writes, "examined their wounds, inquired how each man came to be wounded, and gave them the opportunity to recount and even embellish their exploits." Just as quickly, then, it is not difficult to see why his men loved him so. Individuals, let alone those living lives of constant warfare, are never just one thing.

Alexander also buried the dead Persian commanders who had been left on the field by their comrades. Their main losses, after all, had not been in great numbers of men, but in the small number of important leaders, among them cavalry commanders, satraps, and relatives of Darius III. One commander, the satrap Arsites, the Persian who in many sources is the most vocal opponent to Memnon's advice for caution and in whose territory the battle was fought, escaped to Phrygia and committed suicide for his part in the defeat. Memnon of Rhodes died the following year, but only after capturing a few Greek islands and nearly bringing Athens around to revolt. His son took over command of the fomenting rebellion in and around the Aegean, but when Darius lost to Alexander at the Battle of Issus in 333 BC, his career was over too. And here it is interesting to imagine how, under other circumstances, Memnon and his son could have risen to great heights, while the unfortunate Philip and his son Alexander made a mess of Macedon.

But Alexander lived, and Granicus was only the beginning. He had 300 sets of Persian armor sent to Athens as a dedication to Athena on the Acropolis and as a reminder that he had avenged the Persian destruction and sacrilege to the older Parthenon in 480 BC. He also had an inscription placed on the new Parthenon which read: "Alexander, son of Philip, and the Greeks, except for the Spartans, dedicated these spoils from the barbarians dwelling in Asia." Ever the politician, he emphasized the usually denied "Greekness" of the Macedonians, who themselves had been considered barbarians or lower only recently, and this even though he had certainly killed more Greeks than Persians in the battle.

In the years following, Alexander conquered the Levant and Syria, was greeted as a liberator in Egypt and, upon visiting the Oracle of the Siwa Oasis in the Libyan Desert, was declared the son of the Egyptian god Amun and founded the city of Alexandria. By the close of the 330s BC he defeated Darius III, had taken Babylon, and finally entered central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. By this time any initial

motive of avenging Persian aggression had passed into an extreme form of egomania, culminating in the desire to simply conquer the entire known world. But bogged down in India, his army refused to go any farther, longing, they said, to see their kinfolk and homeland.

Whatever good Alexander had done by creating such far-reaching links between the Mediterranean and the Far East and everywhere in between, and by allowing disparate cultures to intermingle and learn from each other, one of his last recorded remarks suggests a kind of cynicism that he must have learned from day one. Asked on his deathbed who his kingdom should devolve to, he is said to have replied, "To the strongest." He had only succeeded to the throne by chance and by strength, after all, and it is hard to imagine that in the decade since he had not learned and relearned the brutal fickleness of everything. Had he uttered the name of a specific heir, which utterance would today be considered as apocryphal as his saying "To the strongest," that person would have been killed immediately or he would have set about massacring any rivals. In these three deathbed words is encapsulated much of the callousness of history, so much so that one wishes the Roman historian Tacitus had lived a few centuries earlier to put his own stamp of dark realism on the scene.

New cities named after Alexander, or old ones renamed, are still scattered across modern Turkey, Iraq, Pakistan, Iran, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. His refusal to destroy the cultures he encountered, preferring rather to fuse them with Greek culture, was laudable. Yet, to give one illustration among thousands, it is undeniable that some of the earliest representations of the Buddha were influenced by Greek statues of Apollo and that those were in turn influenced by much earlier Egyptian art. There had always been continuities of this kind, and Alexander only facilitated them. Religious, artistic, political, scientific, and philosophical ideas continued to cross between East and West and to coalesce with the help of the many silk roads and other trade routes that Alexander's conquest, culminating in an empire approaching two million square miles, helped to create. It was all set in motion because of his victory at Granicus and the further opening into Asia that this victory gave him.

So many anecdotes are possible from these vast links made across the known world, and fewer lives and careers are as full of potential stories as that of Alexander, but the best are of philosophers or others who find little to admire in him. Thrilled one day to meet with Diogenes of Sinope, Alexander approached him and asked if there was any favor he could do for the infamous philosopher, who simply asked for the conqueror to stop standing in his sunlight. Much later, in India, when Alexander asked to take a handful of local Brahmin priests on campaign with him, he received these words in reply: "I want nothing from you, for what I have suffices. I perceive, moreover, that the men you lead get no good from their worldwide wandering over land and sea, and that of their many journeyings there is no end. I desire nothing that you can give me; I fear no exclusion from any blessings which may perhaps be yours."

Just as Memnon's advice to the Persians seems too easily paired with Parmenion's advice to Alexander and verges on the folk motif, so these and other stories from Alexander's life may well be less than historical though no less instructive of a deeper truth. No one should ever think too highly of themselves, and anyone in their lifetime or later known as "Great" should be treated with suspicion. The ancient world valued large personalities and individuals but also saw how ambition could turn to tragedy and ego to tyranny. To achieve that paragon of civilization, that is, to use the tools and advantages of civilization to conquer others, and attempt to civilize them under the authority of one person or country, could just as much be a poison as a positive ambition. □

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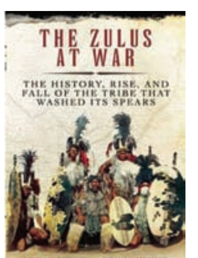
By Christopher Miskimon

The Zulus rose quickly to prominence in southern Africa, but they could not withstand the might of the British Empire.

COLONEL REDVERS BULLER OF THE BRITISH ARMY RODE OUT AT the head of 500 horsemen on the morning of July 3, 1879. His mission was to scout out the area around the Zulu city of Ulundi, find a good location for the English to give battle, and determine the strength and location of the Zulu main army. The natives had long known the British were coming and 20,000 of their remaining warriors had gathered at Ulundi. Buller spied a small rise near the homestead of the Zulu King Cetshwayo and realized it would make a good defensive position. He led his men forward after posting a detachment to guard his rear.

The Zulus, always tactically astute, had guessed the British move and laid an ambush. A few Zulus hid in some tall grass and then rose up and ran away, baiting the English cavalry into chasing them. As they pursued, one of Buller's officers called out that he saw more Zulus hiding ahead. Buller called a halt, narrowly avoiding the trap. Approximately 4,000 warriors rose and attacked the British, who quickly fell back. A small group of Zulus, armed with captured Martini-Henry rifles, fired into the horsemen and hit a few. As they fled, the rear guard Buller had posted earlier fired into the pursuing Zulus, helping the main body reach safety.



The next morning the British commander, General Frederic Augustus Thesiger, Lord Chelmsford, led his 5,000 soldiers back toward the small rise Buller had seen the day before. They marched in a tight column, ready for action. Six months earlier a column of more than 1,000 British troops had been wiped out at the Battle of Isandlwana; Chelmsford was determined not only to avoid a second such dis-

The 17th Lancers pursue fleeing Zulus at the Battle of Ulundi in July 1879. The Anglo-Zulu War began with a great victory and ended with a humiliating defeat, paralleling the Zulus history as a tribe.

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Waterloo. Normandy. Agincourt. Gettysburg.

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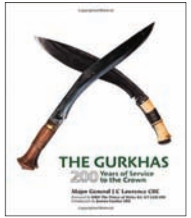
aster, but to salvage his reputation. Once they reached the high ground they formed square, the classic British defensive formation that had served them well since before Waterloo. As the Zulu army approached, Buller led his cavalry out of the square and fired into the enemy main body from 100 yards, enraging the Zulus and causing them to give chase. This brought them within range of the square. The battle began at about 8:45 AM and by 9 AM the Zulus were beginning to wither under the combined fire of rifles, Gatling guns, and cannons. The Zulus began to fall back and the British cavalry again rode out, this time to finish them.

The climax of the Battle of Ulundi lasted only 40 minutes; the slaughter of the fleeing Zulus went on for two hours. Afterward Cetshwayo's home was burned and the British marched away, their band playing "Rule Britannia." The final battle of the Zulu War of 1879 was over, and Zulu power was forever broken. There would be more fighting in years to come but the proud Zulu nation was never again the same.

The history of the Zulu people is one of conflict, a meteoric rise, and a hard, brutal downfall. The 1879 war is the best known period of their history outside South Africa; the conflict similarly started with a great victory, gave way to hard fighting, and ended with a humiliating defeat, paralleling their history as a tribe. This history is told again in ***The Zulus at War: The History, Rise and Fall of the Tribe that Washed Its Spears*** (Adrian Greaves and Xolani Mkhize, Skyhorse Publishing, New York, 2014, 222 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $24.95, hardcover).

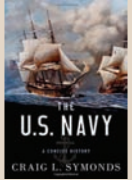
Though the book is of relatively modest length, it gives the reader a very complete view of the Zulu nation's journey. It describes the rise of King Shaka, perhaps the most famous of their leaders, who led the tribe to establish its reputation as great warriors, the strongest of the tribes in South Africa. The Zulus did so well they even defeated the Boers in 1877-1878. This proved their undoing, however, drawing the attention of the British Empire and providing them with the reason to invade Zululand in what became the Anglo-Zulu War. Some maintain this was merely the excuse Great Britain needed to remove the Zulus as a threat to their plans for the region.

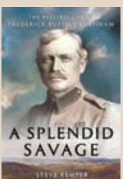
The authors have vast experience of the Zulu and their history and it shows in their writing. One is a former soldier and founder of the Anglo-Zulu War Historical Society and the other is the manager of the Zulu Village at Rorke's Drift, where one of the most famous battles of the conflict was fought. Together they have created a work that stands out as one of the best on the subject.

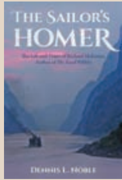


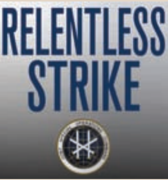
The Gurkhas: 200 Years of Service to the Crown (Maj. Gen. J.C. Lawrence CBE, University of Chicago Press, 2015, 244 pages, photographs, appendices, bibliography, index, $60.00, hardcover)

The Gurkhas, soldiers from Nepal, were recruited into the British Army beginning in 1815. Formed into their own unique regiments, they rank among the most famous and feared units in English service. Gurkhas have fought in almost every war the United Kingdom has fought in the past two centuries, earning 26 Victoria Crosses from the Indian Mutiny to









SHORT BURSTS

Warriors: Fighting Men and Their Uniforms (Martin Windrow, Osprey Publishing, 2015, $14.95, hardcover) An illustrated look at military uniforms from ancient times to the present. This is a compilation of the best of the publisher's commissioned artwork from past works.

The Christmas Match: Football in No Man's Land 1914 (Pehr Thermaenius, Uniform Press, 2015, $19.95, softcover) This history of the famous World War I Christmas Truce focuses on two men, one German and one Scotsman. Both were professional football players who met on the playing field during the truce.

The U.S. Navy: A Concise History (Craig L. Symonds, Oxford University Press, 2015, $18.95, hardcover) The author traces the rocky path the American navy has taken from a small fleet of second-class sailing ships to the most powerful force afloat. The Navy's story has in many ways mirrored that of America itself.

Great Battles: Gallipoli (Jenny Macleod, Oxford University Press, 2015, $29.95, hardcover) Part of the publisher's new *Great Battles* series, this book looks at the fateful landing of British and Commonwealth forces on the Turkish shores in 1915.

A Splendid Savage: The Restless Life of Frederick Russell Burnham (Steve Kemper, W.W. Norton and Co., 2016, $16.95, softcover) Burnham was a late 19th-century adventurer and soldier. He fought in both the American West and South Africa.

The Sailor's Homer: The Life and Times of Richard McKenna, Author of the *Sand Pebbles* (Dennis L. Noble, Naval Institute Press, 2015, $42.95, hardcover) This work is one of the few biographies of an enlisted sailor. McKenna possessed enormous willpower and a desire to learn and write, earning him a place in naval fame.

Drone Warfare: The Development of Unmanned Aerial Conflict (Dave Sloggett, Skyhorse Press, 2015, $24.99, hardcover) Drones are nearly ubiquitous on the 21st-century battlefield, even though they have been around for several decades. The author explores their history and development.

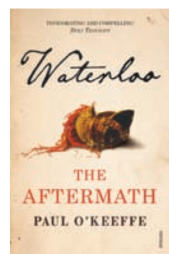
Glorious Victory: Andrew Jackson and the Battle of New Orleans (Donald R. Hickey, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015, $19.95, softcover) The victory at New Orleans is one of the most influential battles of American history. This book recounts the campaign and the larger-than-life Maj. Gen. Andrew Jackson.

Templar Knight versus Mamluk Warrior (David Campbell, Osprey Publishing, 2015, $18.95, softcover) This work compares the Christian and Muslim fighters whose battles raged across the Levant in the 13th century. Both were elite military groups for their time.

Relentless Strike: The Secret History of Join Special Operations Command (Sean Naylor, St. Martin's Press, 2015, $29.99, hardcover) The modern world is full of small, unknown conflicts fought by elite soldiers who work in the shadows. This book relates the story of the American Special Forces umbrella organization.

Afghanistan. Along the way their reputation for bravery and loyalty has grown to near legendary status.

This book is a product of the Gurkha Welfare Trust, an organization that provides for retired Gurkhas and their families as well as carrying out humanitarian projects in Nepal. It is a coffee table-style book full of interesting text and lavish illustration. All royalties from the book go to the Trust, making its purchase a good deed as well as a fine addition to a military history collection.



Waterloo: The Aftermath (Paul O'Keefe, Overlook Press, New York, 2015, 392 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index, $$37.50, hardcover)

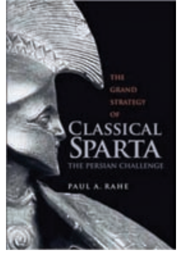
The Battle of Waterloo was truly one of the decisive battles of world history. It ended the aspirations of Napoleon I and helped propel Great Britain into its role as the 19th century's superpower. At the end of the battle 50,000 soldiers lay dead or struggled with wounds. While indeed a horrible day, the war did not just end on June 18, 1815. The next morning the field was littered with dead men and horses; soon people showed up to take what they could, bury the fallen, and view what they already knew was a momentous event. The defeated French had to withdraw while the British and Prussian armies had to advance into France itself and bring the war to a final conclusion. It was a period where the future of Europe began to take shape.

The carnage of the Waterloo battlefield is brought to vivid life through the eyewitness accounts of those who were there. The author also covers the actions of the leaders on both sides as they had to act in response to the battle. The tension and stress of the period is well relayed to the reader, bringing a detailed overall view of what the end of the war truly looked like from both a soldier's eyes as well as those of national leaders.

1916: A Global History (Keith Jeffery, Bloomsbury Press, New York, 2015, 426 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index, $30.00, hardcover)

The year 1916 was a difficult one across the globe. It began with the end of the failed campaign at Gallipoli, where Commonwealth troops had to withdraw from the Turkish coast. The year also saw the battles at Verdun and the Somme, the indecisive naval clash at Jutland, and difficult fighting for the Italians at the Sixth Battle of the Isonzo. On the Eastern Front, the Russians fought what would be known as the Brusilov Offensive accompanied by a revolt in Russian Central Asia. In Africa, colonial forces struggled against each other for control of territories that were as much prestige holdings as economic boons. As for the Middle East, the initial promises of the Sykes-Picot Agreement took place. This covenant partitioned the region into imperial territories that would survive into the 21st century, only to begin crumbling and creating difficulties for the modern world. This was only one legacy of World War I.

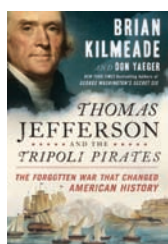
Most books on this conflict focus on a single area or battle of the war. This new work covers a year and explains what was happening around the world during those 12 months. It uses the experiences of both soldiers and civilians to give the reader an impression of what they were experiencing as all these events occurred around them. The author effectively demonstrates the war was truly global in scope and gives the reader a wide vision of the war and what it did to people across the map.



The Grand Strategy of Classical Sparta: The Persian Challenge (Paul A. Rahe, Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, 2015,424 pp., maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index, $38.00, hardcover)

About 2,500 years ago the Persian Empire was the most powerful on earth. It turned its attention west toward southeastern Europe. In response the city-states of Greece banded together to resist the Persian invasion. The leaders of this coalition were the Lacedaemonians, who are more commonly known as the Spartans. They were responsible for the initial establishment of the Greek alliance which, in time, was able to beat back the Persians. This seemingly small victory preserved Greek thought and philosophy and greatly influenced the development of the western world.

This is the author's argument about the Greco-Persian war. He maintains the Spartans were at the center of the Greek alliance, a departure from the normal view that focuses on the Athenians. The writing stresses that Spartan culture instilled the discipline and pride needed to create a union capable of withstanding the Persian onslaught.



Thomas Jefferson and the Tripoli Pirates: The Forgotten War that Changed American History (Brian Kilmeade and Don Yaeger, Penguin Random House, New York, 2015, 233 pp., maps, notes, bibliography, index, $27.95, hardcover)

The Barbary Pirates were a collection of city-states dotting the Mediterranean shores of North Africa. Nominally part of the Ottoman Empire, they exercised great autonomy, no more so than in the local waters. For centuries they used piracy as a means of income, seizing cargoes, and ransoming sailors. Those who could not pay spent their lives as slaves. Rich nations such as Great Britain could afford to pay off the pirates, but after the United States became an independent nation the protection of the British no longer applied. In July 1785 the American ship *Dauphin* was captured and its crew enslaved. It was only the first in a series of ships to be taken over the following years.

U.S. President Thomas Jefferson inherited the dilemma of North African piracy and chose to take action against it. He ordered the dispatch of warships to Tripoli, arguably the worst of the pirate concentrations. This offensive undertaking led to the Barbary Wars. It posed a formidable challenge for the young nation, but one it proved equal to meeting.

Reading almost like a novel, this book entertains as it informs. It was an exciting episode in history, full of battles, bluster, and action. The authors bring the flavor of these events to the page with clear, gripping prose throughout. A wide range of sources were used to create a detailed, in-depth look at one of America's first foreign wars.

Great Battles: Agincourt (Anne Curry, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 2015, 256 pp., maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index, $29.95, hardcover)

There are a few battles so important they remain in the cultural memory of a nation centuries afterward. Agincourt is one such engagement. The 1415 battle, which pitted English longbowmen against French heavy cavalry, helped forge England's national identity. Four centuries later the British would use the battle as an example of their nation's martial prowess and the innate bravery of the Englishman. It not only inspired one of William Shakespeare's most famous plays, but also hundreds of years' worth of songs, books, and films.

This new work covers not only the battle itself, but also the campaign that led to it and the long-lasting aftereffects. The author succeeds in summarizing both in great detail. She argues that the British force was larger than commonly thought, and that the French force was likely smaller. Her findings were reached through careful analysis of the financial records of the campaign. This book is part of the publisher's new series on the most important battles of history.

The First Blitz: Bombing London in the First World War (Ian Castle, Osprey Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2015, 208 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, appendices, index, $19.95, softcover)

Two days after Great Britain declared war on Germany, *The Times* newspaper in London published information that the German military had a fleet of 11 airships. While it further advised only two of them had the range to reach England, there was fear among the populace about being bombed from the air by this fearsome new weapon. In response, the British government put up a few, scattered antiaircraft guns, but little else. In May 1915 a single Zeppelin appeared over London and dropped its bombs into a residential neighborhood. It was first of 26 raids to follow. These airship raids continued into 1917. That same year Germany began sending Gotha bombers on raids as well, increasing the destruction. The British response evolved over time as well, laying a foundation for British concepts of air defense that would be used a generation later in World War II.

The 100th Anniversary of World War I has drawn increased attention to the conflict and this book covers one of the comparatively lesser known aspects of the war. The book covers each raid in detail, as well as the key combatants, such as the Zeppelin crews and Gotha pilots. Rounding out the work are useful appendices, illustrations, and maps that show the areas affected by the raids.

Nanjing 1937: Battle for a Doomed City (Peter Harmsen, Casemate Publishing, Havertown, PA, 2015, 368 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, $32.95, hardcover)

The Sino-Japanese War of the 1930s is well-known for the level of hatred and often viciousness between the combatants. One of the defining events of the war was the infamous Rape of Nanjing, where victorious Japanese troops embarked on a veritable orgy of murder, rape, and looting inflicted on the civilian populace. The Japanese did not enter the city unopposed, though. There was a month-long battle for the city, a culmination of their campaign, which began earlier with the initial Japanese invasion and Battle of Shanghai. At Nanjing, tanks and aircraft both played major roles in the fighting, a small-scale version of blitzkrieg two years before it was unleashed in Europe. The Chinese struggled desperately and heroically against the Japanese juggernaut but the effort proved futile. The city fell and suffered the full weight of Japanese brutality.

This conflict has only recently begun to

simulation games

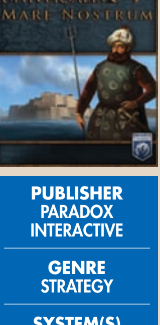
By Joseph Luster

PARADOX DEVELOPMENT STUDIO'S GRAND STRATEGY RPG GETS READY TO CONQUER THE SEAS IN A NEW EXPANSION.

Europa Universalis IV: Mare Nostrum

Originally released in 2013, Paradox Development Studio's *Europa Universalis IV* offers myriad ways to conquer the world. Whether you want to become a colonial superpower, strongarm rival nations through military prowess, or become dominant in the world of trade, it's all up to your own strategic abilities. Either way you'll have to make it to the top by aligning yourself with the right people and leveraging diplomacy to your advantage, which is part of what makes the *Europa Universalis* series so compelling in the world of grand strategy games.

Paradox has cooked up a handful of different expansions since *IV*'s initial release. There were four in 2014 alone, including *Conquest of Paradise, Wealth of Nations, Res Publica,* and *Art of War,* the latter of which focused on military mechanics and expanded a number of features. These were followed in 2015 with *El Dorado, Common Sense,* and *The Cossacks*. The common thread that binds each expansion is a change in mechanics and features, with each one building on what was established in the original *Europa Universalis IV.* Players were able to jump in with one at any time, adding to the accessibility of the whole package.



PUBLISHER
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GENRE
STRATEGY

SYSTEM(S)
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AVAILABLE
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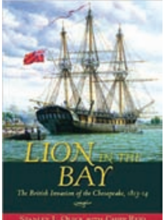
This trend continues with *Europa Universalis IV: Mare Nostrum,* which as of this writing is still just listed as coming "soon." It could very well be available by the time you read this, and if you're a seasoned *Europa Universalis* veteran you likely already have it on your list. The hook in the latest expansion is the open sea, which naturally introduces the concept of sailors to the ever-expanding *Europa Universalis* world. While the general idea of how sailors play will be familiar to anyone who knows the game decently enough, their inclusion throws a few more interesting wrinkles into the formula.

Those who want to build or repair ships will need sailors, which sounds pretty much like the currently implemented manpower statistic. You can send your

receive serious attention in the West. The author is an established authority on the subject with extensive experience as a Asian correspondent. This is his second book on the Sino-Japanese War. Like the first, it is full of the small details which make his work a pleasure to read. The accounts of unfortunate civilians, as well as high-ranking officers, are blended together into a tight narrative.

Lion in the Bay: The British Invasion of the Chesapeake, 1813-14 (Stanley L. Quick with Chip Reid, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2015, 280 pp., maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index, $32.95, hardcover)

The British Campaign in the Chesapeake Bay in 1814 eventually boiled down to revenge. Initially, the English strategy was to strike at the American coastline away from the Canadian border. This would force the Americans to spread troops along the vulnerable coast and dilute their available manpower on that northern borderline. It would damage their enemy's economy and strike fear into the populace, who would pressure their leaders for better protection. Soon, though, the British leader, Admiral



George Cockburn, chose to exact retribution for the American burning of the Canadian city of York. Along the way towns in Maryland would suffer and burn, American Commodore Joshua Barney's flotilla would be defeated, and the British would march on Washington. Against the approaching British the United States could offer an army composed mostly of militia, with a few sailors and Marines added in. This force was practically brushed aside and Washington burned as well. Cockburn next turned his attention toward Baltimore, a base for privateers he longed to punish. That attempt failed due to the resistance at Fort McHenry and nearby North Point.

The author became interested in this subject when he bought a home in Maryland that predated the war. He noticed damage to the house that had occurred during a skirmish between British troops and Maryland militia. It led him and his co-author on a journey of discovery that culminated in well-written and detailed book. □

navy out on missions, but you won't need to worry about managing every aspect of its outing while it's on the open seas. Instead you'll be able to instruct

the ships on when to return home, adding a nice little strategic nugget that also minimizes your already heavy workload.

Some of the other big changes include the ability to rent your soldiers out as mercenaries, both supporting those who might otherwise not have a fighting chance and filling your coffers at the same time. You'll also be able to create economic and military Trade League alliances, and share map discoveries with friends or ask them to do the same for you. This all comes along with new changes to subject nation management, diplomacy, and more.

Even if you're not ready to leap on the *Mare Nostrum* ship as soon as it sets sail, its arrival coincides with a major patch that will be free to all who own *Europa Universalis IV*. It's going to be interesting to see how the new focus on the seas plays into the many complex strategies involved in successfully pulling off world conquest. We should be getting our hands on it soon, so stay tuned for some impressions once we get some quality time in with the new expansion. □

guadalacanal

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Paige's men were hit. He continued firing the two machine guns alternately as he was able. At one point he endured enemy fire long enough to bring up a replacement gun for one that was knocked out of action. For his valor, he received the Medal of Honor.

Despite the stout Marine defense, the Japanese forced Company F from its position on the ridge. Major Odell Conoley scraped together 17 men, including rear-echelon troops, for a counterattack. They advanced at 5:40 AM. They were soon joined by Paige, a handful of Marines from Company G, and a couple of platoons from the 5th Marines. The ad hoc combat group retook the lost ground.

The battle for Henderson Field was over. It had been a bloody battle for the Japanese, who lost 2,200 soldiers killed by a Marine estimate. The Americans had suffered 86 killed and 192 wounded. The Marines and soldiers had good defensive positions and vital artillery support which proved to be critical to success. As Puller would later comment, "We held them because we were well dug in, a whole regiment of artillery was backing us up, and there was plenty of barbed wire."

While the 17th Army was recovering on October 26 and preparing to withdraw from the American perimeter, the naval Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands raged nearby. Among the U.S. Navy's losses during the two-day battle were a carrier, a destroyer, and 74 aircraft. The Japanese, who lost more than 100 planes and suffered significant damage to three carriers and two destroyers, retired from the area.

Although Hyakutake's 17th Army had been defeated in its attempts to take Henderson Field, the fighting was by no means over on Guadalcanal. The following month saw more naval battles. During that time, the Americans cleared the enemy from the Matanikau area and Koli Point.

December brought a change for the Americans at Guadalcanal. The exhausted leathernecks of the 1st Marine Division were replaced by units of the U.S. Army IV Corps under Maj. Gen. Alexander McCarrell Patch. Patch switched over to the offensive. By February 9, 1943, the Guadalcanal campaign officially was over and the island secured for the Allies. Japanese Captain Toshikazu Ohmae, an officer in the Japanese 8th Fleet, said afterward that following the Battles of the Coral Sea and Midway he still had hope of victory, "but after Guadalcanal I felt we could not win." □

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intelligence

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Catholicism, receiving the sacraments of both baptism and confirmation in 1960. In addition, she selected the music for mass, coached choir singers, and worked in the garden outside her barracks.

Assigned to the facility's craft room, Gillars in time became both an accomplished weaver and competent seamstress. As her room began filling up with her various completed projects, it even garnered the admiration of her guards. Placed in charge of the ceramics kiln, Gillars made exceptional blue Bavarian beer steins that featured the self-revelatory inscription, "Accept your fate, for it is sealed."

Her co-prisoner and fellow enemy radio announcer Iva Toguri D'Aquino, who was nicknamed Tokyo Rose, applied for and was granted a presidential pardon, being freed in January 1956. In contrast, Gillars never asked for nor received a pardon. When she became eligible for a normal parole at age 58 in March 1959, Mildred failed to apply because she did not want to be freed, fearing both physical harm in the United States and also possible deportation to the new Federal Republic of Germany. Besides, she reasoned, without a job or any money, she had nowhere else to go.

This situation changed for the better, though, after her religious conversion, when the Our Lady of Bethlehem Convent in Columbus, Ohio, offered her a job teaching music to novice nuns at the nearby St. Joseph Academy upon her release. In return, she would be given free room and board, living in the convent itself, and $30 a month in pay.

The parole board approved her release on January 12, 1961, with the stipulation that she report to her parole officer every two weeks into 1979, for another 18 years of supervision, to which she complied. Upon her release on July 10, 1961, the former notorious Axis Sally began yet another remarkable stage of her most unusual journey through life. Once more, there were press and popping camera flashbulbs for what was to be her last grand appearance on the stage of notoriety. She gave her last press conference in her stepsister's yard at age 60. "It was painful, but she pulled it off," said one observer.

Over time, she also taught the novice nuns French and German, piano, drama, and chorale music, being granted salary increases of as much as $100 a month. She also gave piano lessons on Saturdays to inner-city children. Noted biographer Richard Lucas wrote of this segment in her ongoing journey to redemption, "In her final role, she was respected, needed, valued, [and] even beloved."

During the two world wars she had sought fortune but found infamy instead, and she managed to reverse her life's trajectory in the four decades after World War II by shunning almost all publicity. There were two minor exceptions, though. In 1967 at age 66, Mildred granted an interview request to surprised local cub newspaper reporter Helene Anne Spicer, who found her to be, "A sweet, little old lady—nothing like I expected." Her second and last post-prison brush with fame occurred at age 72 on June 10, 1973, when she was duly awarded her college diploma after a hiatus of 51 years from her former alma mater, Ohio Wesleyan University.

When religious vocations dwindled down to but 11 sisters-designate in 1968, Mildred's restoration appeared to be coming to a close until her probation officer located her original birth certificate in Maine, allowing her to apply for and be granted both Social Security payments and Medicare. On her own for the first time since her arrest in 1946, at age 74 the self-reliant Gillars ended convent living after 13 years, moved into her own apartment once more, and underwent laser eye surgery for a detached retina. To earn extra money, Gillars tutored students at a nearby high school where her new superiors credited her teaching with raising former D grades to A status. One observer was amazed that she did crossword puzzles in German.

Surrounded by books and art in her small home, she refused all further interviews, ending her 30 years of supervision in 1979, her past largely unknown to her students, friends, and neighbors. Diagnosed with metastatic colon cancer, she died at age 87 on June 25, 1988, without any public funeral, but with friends present at her burial in a still unmarked grave at Lockbourne, Ohio.

Impoverished most of her life, Mildred was a hospital charity case, with her estate being valued at but $ 3,194.16, which was divided up for her medical needs, healthcare, and other expenses. Her neighbors were shocked to learn of her previous fame when her demise was covered by the *New York Times, Washington Post,* and the national news wire services. One friend proclaimed her "brilliant," while another observer declared that she had lived a good and simple life at the end.

In 1945, Gillars was alone, broke, and unmarried. She was a woman without a country who was about to go on trial for her life. Having lived through it all without repentance, she had survived and died having outlived her own treasonous past. The notorious Nazi propagandist had repented at last. □

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