

Curtis 02313

# WWII HISTORY

## Paratrooper's **D-Day Battle**

WINTER WAR

## **Red Army Ravaged**

FIRST DAYLIGHT RAID

## **Bombers Over Germany**

V-1 AND V-2 ROCKETS

## **Nazi Terror Weapons**

FEBRUARY 2018

\$5.99US \$6.99CAN



0 71658 02313 0 023

RETAILER: DISPLAY UNTIL MARCH 12

**+** LYUDMILA PAVLICHENKO: RED ARMY SNIPER,  
THE WAR IN NEW CALEDONIA,  
BOOK & GAME REVIEWS, AND MORE!

**WARFAREHISTORYNETWORK.com**

# THE LIBERATOR

*Aboard the Legendary Sea Cloud II*

OCTOBER 19 – 28, 2018 • MALTA, SICILY, & ITALY



ALEX KERSHAW

Join beloved author Alex Kershaw and The National WWII Museum's Senior Historian Rob Citino, PhD as we set sail from Valetta, Malta to Rome, Italy following the path of Kershaw's newest book, *The Liberator*. This all-new, nine-night program features five-star accommodations on land and aboard the luxurious *Sea Cloud II*.

SAVE \$2,000 PER COUPLE WHEN BOOKING BY APRIL 2, 2018

Engage. Reflect. Explore.  
The National WWII Museum Educational  
Travel Program



Call 1-877-813-3329 X 257 or visit  
[ww2museumtours.org](http://ww2museumtours.org)

SAVE \$1,000 PER COUPLE WHEN BOOKING BY MARCH 15, 2018



# TYRANNY

— on Two Fronts —

THE BALTIC DURING WORLD WAR II

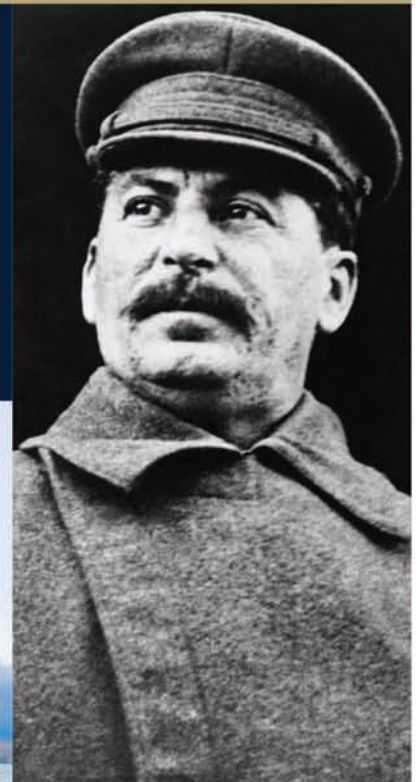
JUNE 6 – 15, 2018

• Featuring Historian Dr. Alexandra Richie •

INTRODUCING AN ALL NEW 9-NIGHT  
CRUISE ABOARD

*Le Soléal*

STOCKHOLM • HELSINKI • ST. PETERSBURG  
TALLINN • COPENHAGEN



# ALPVENTURES® WORLD WAR II TOURS

Alpventures® World War II Tours  
are packed with History, Fun & Adventure.

*Visit the World War II Battlefields of Europe and Russia  
on our Guided Tours, and enjoy exceptional service,  
first-class hotels, experienced guide, and much more...*

**(888) 991-6718**

**[worldwar2tours.com](http://worldwar2tours.com)**



## **MAXIMUM 25 GUESTS PER TOUR!**

- **Normandy to the Eagle's Nest Tour**
- **Men, Masterpieces & Monuments Tour**
- **Holocaust Memorial Tour to Poland**
- **Battleground Italy Tour: Sicily to Rome**
- **Franco's Spain Tour with Gibraltar!**
- **Britain at War! Tour**



**Travel with America's most  
knowledgeable Tour Guide**



# Contents



February 2018

## Features

### 30 Riding the German Rail

Taken prisoner shortly after D-Day, Charlie Lefchik vividly remembers the cramped freight cars that transported Americans to camps in Germany.

By Richard A. Beranty

### 38 Who Fired the Best Generals?

The relief of the 1st Division's top commanders remains a topic of debate decades later.

By Walter Holden

### 44 The Classic Victory

Finnish forces dealt a serious blow to Soviet ambitions during the Battle of Suomussalmi.

By David H. Lippman

### 52 First Over Germany

Lieutenant Frank Yaussi participated in the Eighth Air Force's first daylight bombing raid on a German city.

By Lance Thompson

### 56 Cultural Clash in New Caledonia

Despite common opposition to the Japanese, the Americans and Free French experienced a difficult coexistence on the important island.

By Gene E. Salecker

## Columns

### 06 Editorial

Hitler's blunder resulted in a devastating defeat for the German Army on the Eastern Front.

### 08 Profiles

Soviet sniper Lyudmila Pavlichenko was an expert who took a heavy toll in enemy troops on the Eastern Front.

### 14 Ordnance

The British and German media waged rival campaigns to inform the public of the V-1 and V-2 weapons' potential to alter the course of World War II.

### 20 Top Secret

The government of Thailand declared war on Britain and the United States, but circumstances dictated that the Allied governments view the declaration quite differently.

### 24 Insight

Britain's Home Guard stood ready to defend the island nation against the invading Nazis.

### 68 Books

Although the evacuation of Dunkirk ended a military disaster for Britain, the British people drew strength from the heroic effort to rescue the BEF.

### 72 Simulation Gaming

We take America back from the Nazis in *Wolfenstein II* before exploring a particularly unique take on the war.



Cover: An unidentified paratrooper photographed during training at Fort Benning, Georgia in 1943. See story page 30.

Photo: The Frank S. Errigo Archive / Getty Images

*WWII History* (ISSN 1539-5456) is published six times yearly in February, April, June, August, October, and December by Sovereign Media, 6731 Whittier Ave., Suite A-100, McLean, VA 22101. (703) 964-0361. Periodical postage paid at McLean, VA, and additional mailing offices. *WWII History*, Volume 17, Number 2 © 2018 by Sovereign Media Company, Inc., all rights reserved. Copyrights to stories and illustrations are the property of their creators. The contents of this publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without consent of the copyright owner. *Subscription services, back issues, and information:* (800) 219-1187 or write to *WWII History* Circulation, *WWII History*, P.O. Box 1644, Williamsport, PA 17703. Single copies: \$5.99, plus \$3 for postage. Yearly subscription in U.S.A.: \$24.95; Canada and Overseas: \$38.95 (U.S.). Editorial Office: Send editorial mail to *WWII History*, 6731 Whittier Ave., Suite A-100, McLean, VA 22101. *WWII History* welcomes editorial submissions but assumes no responsibility for the loss or damage of unsolicited material. Material to be returned should be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope. We suggest that you send a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a copy of our author's guidelines. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *WWII History*, P.O. Box 1644, Williamsport, PA 17703.

**Bigger  
Buttons**

# “My friends all hate their cell phones... I love mine!” Here’s why.

**No  
Contracts**



Say good-bye to everything you hate about cell phones. Say hello to the Jitterbug Flip.

**“Cell phones have gotten so small, I can barely dial mine.”** Not the Jitterbug® Flip. It features a large keypad for easier dialing. It even has a larger display and a powerful, hearing aid compatible speaker, so it’s easy to see and conversations are clear.

**“I had to get my son to program it.”** Your Jitterbug Flip setup process is simple. We’ll even program it with your favorite numbers.

**“What if I don’t remember a number?”** Friendly, helpful Personal Operators are available 24 hours a day and will even greet you by name when you call.

**“I’d like a cell phone to use in an emergency.”** Now you can turn your phone into a personal safety device with 5Star® Service. In any uncertain or unsafe situation, simply press the 5Star button to speak immediately with a highly-trained Urgent Response Agent who will confirm your location, evaluate your situation and get you the help you need, 24/7.

**“My cell phone company wants to lock me in a two-year contract!”** Not with the Jitterbug Flip. There are no contracts to sign and no cancellation fees.



Available in Red and Graphite.

Monthly Plan	\$14.99/mo <sup>1</sup>	\$19.99/mo <sup>1</sup>
Monthly Minutes	200	600
Personal Operator Assistance	24/7	24/7
Long Distance Calls	No add'l charge	No add'l charge
Voice Dial	FREE	FREE
Nationwide Coverage	YES	YES
30-Day Return Policy <sup>2</sup>	YES	YES

More minute plans and Health & Safety Packages available. Ask your Jitterbug expert for details.

**“My phone’s battery only lasts a short time.”** Unlike most cell phones that need to be recharged every day, the Jitterbug Flip was designed with a long-lasting battery, so you won’t have to worry about running out of power.

**“Many phones have features that are rarely needed and hard to use!”** The Jitterbug Flip contains easy-to-use features that are meaningful to you. A built-in camera makes it easy and fun for you to capture and share your favorite memories. And a flashlight with a built-in magnifier helps you see in dimly lit areas. The Jitterbug Flip has all the features you need.

**Enough talk.** Isn’t it time you found out more about the cell phone that’s changing all the rules? Call now! Jitterbug product experts are standing by.

**Order now** and receive a **FREE Car Charger** – a \$25 value for your Jitterbug Flip. Call now!

Call toll-free to get your **Jitterbug Flip Cell Phone**  
Please mention promotional code 108029.  
**1-877-421-3732**  
[www.JitterbugDirect.com](http://www.JitterbugDirect.com)



IMPORTANT CONSUMER INFORMATION: Jitterbug is owned by GreatCall, Inc. Your invoices will come from GreatCall. <sup>1</sup>Monthly fees do not include government taxes or assessment surcharges and are subject to change. Plans and services may require purchase of a Jitterbug Flip and a one-time setup fee of \$35. Coverage is not available everywhere. 5Star or 9-1-1 calls can only be made when cellular service is available. 5Star Service will be able to track an approximate location when your device is turned on, but we cannot guarantee an exact location. <sup>2</sup>We will refund the full price of the Jitterbug phone and the activation fee (or setup fee) if it is returned within 30 days of purchase in like-new condition. We will also refund your first monthly service charge if you have less than 30 minutes of usage. If you have more than 30 minutes of usage, a per minute charge of 35 cents will be deducted from your refund for each minute over 30 minutes. You will be charged a \$10 restocking fee. The shipping charges are not refundable. There are no additional fees to call GreatCall’s U.S.-based customer service. However, for calls to a Personal Operator in which a service is completed, you will be charged 99 cents per call, and minutes will be deducted from your monthly rate plan balance equal to the length of the call and any call connected by the Personal Operator. Jitterbug, GreatCall and 5Star are registered trademarks of GreatCall, Inc. Copyright ©2017 GreatCall, Inc. ©2017 firstSTREET for Boomers and Beyond, Inc.

We proudly accept the following credit cards:



## Hitler's blunder resulted in a devastating defeat for the German Army on the Eastern Front.

**WHEN ADOLF HITLER LAUNCHED OPERATION BARBAROSSA, THE NAZI INVASION** of the Soviet Union, on June 22, 1941, he expected yet another in a string of spectacular victories. The Soviet military was but a shell. "We need only to kick the door in and the whole rotten structure will come crashing down," he told his generals.

Swift early successes, however, gave way to brutal cold and a stiffening Red Army that fought on despite horrendous casualties. Hitler's tanks reached to within 12 miles of the Soviet capital of Moscow. Officers could see the gleaming onion domes and spires of the city through their field glasses, but they could advance no farther. The winter of 1941 shut down offensive operations.

When the Nazis resumed their attacks in the spring of 1942, Hitler's focus had changed. The immediate prize, he believed, was the oil fields of the Caucasus. German spearheads would drive south and secure this vital resource that could supply their war machine with the precious commodity indefinitely. At the same time, Hitler fatally weakened the offensive, instructing the Sixth Army, under General Friedrich von Paulus, to attack eastward and capture the industrial city of Stalingrad on the Volga River.

Was Stalingrad of any consequential military value? That is an open question. The truth, however, is that its capture appealed to Hitler's vanity. The conquest of the city that bore his arch enemy's name, that of Soviet Premier Josef Stalin, would be incredibly satisfying.

By October, the Sixth Army and the Soviet Sixty-Second Army, commanded by General Vasili Chuikov, were locked in a deadly embrace in the city. Utterly devastated buildings were pounded relentlessly, and snipers picked off enemy soldiers who dared peek above cover. Battles raged at the Red October Steel Works, the Tractor Factory, and the Barricades armaments facility.

As long as they could hold a shrinking perimeter, time was on the Soviets' side. The strength of the German force was inevitably eroded as supply became more difficult and replacements for mounting casualties were few. Winter came again, and along with it were horrific privations. One German officer invited a friend to share dinner. The meat was tender and accompanied by a "nice gravy." When the officer thanked his friend, the cook remarked that they had enjoyed the last of his Doberman Pinschers.

While the battle in Stalingrad dragged on, the Soviets were actually closing the jaws of a tremendous vise. Stalin, relieved of concerns that a Japanese attack was imminent in the East, released hundreds of thousands of troops in his Siberian divisions. These troops and others were hurried westward to Stalingrad.

Operation Uranus was launched on the night of November 18 and sounded the death knell of the Sixth Army. Cut off and surrounded, the Germans were utterly destroyed. Hitler refused to allow Paulus to break out of the trap and instructed him to fight to the last man. Luftwaffe efforts to resupply the beleaguered troops in Stalingrad produced an epic failure, and an attempt to reach the besieged Sixth Army on the ground came to nothing.

Eventually, Hitler promoted Paulus to field marshal, expecting him to commit suicide rather than surrender since no German field marshal had ever been captured alive. Nevertheless, after a five-month ordeal, Paulus surrendered the remnants of his command, and on February 2, 1943, resistance ended. Estimates of German casualties at Stalingrad topped 300,000 with 130,000 marching into Soviet captivity, a new kind of tribulation that only a relative few would survive. Paulus made propaganda broadcasts for the Soviets and lived out his postwar life in East Germany.

Stalingrad was a spectacular Soviet victory, a real turning point in World War II. Seventy-five years ago, the defeat on the Eastern Front marked the beginning of the end for Nazi Germany. Coupled with the surrender of more than 275,000 Axis soldiers in North Africa only weeks later, Stalingrad shattered Hitler's grand design, although World War II continued for two more years.

—Michael E. Haskew

CARL A. GNAM, JR.  
Editorial Director, Founder

MICHAEL E. HASKEW  
Editor

LAURA CLEVELAND  
Managing Editor

SAMANTHA DETULLEO  
Art Director

KEVIN M. HYMEL  
Research Director

### CONTRIBUTORS:

Richard A. Beranty, Bob Bergin, Walter Holden, Michael D. Hull, David H. Lippman, Joseph Luster, Adam Lynch, Christopher Miskimon, Gene E. Salecker, Charles W. Sasser, Lance Thompson

### ADVERTISING OFFICE:

BEN BOYLES  
Advertising Manager  
(570) 322-7848, ext. 110  
benjaminb@sovhomestead.com

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

MARK HINTZ  
Chief Executive Officer

ROBIN LEE  
Bookkeeper

TERRI COATES  
Subscription Customer Service  
sovereign@publishersserviceassociates.com  
(570) 322-7848, ext. 164

CURTIS CIRCULATION COMPANY  
WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION

SOVEREIGN MEDIA COMPANY, INC.  
6731 Whittier Avenue, Suite A-100  
McLean, VA 22101-4554

SUBSCRIPTION CUSTOMER SERVICE  
AND BUSINESS OFFICE:  
2406 Reach Road  
Williamsport, PA 17701

(800) 219-1187

PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

**WARFARE HISTORY NETWORK**

www.WarfareHistoryNetwork.com



LIVES REMEMBERED ARE NEVER LOST

STEPHEN AMBROSE

ESTD  1979

HISTORICAL TOURS

STEPHEN AMBROSE HISTORICAL TOURS PRESENTS

**D-DAY TO THE RHINE: A TOUR YOU WON'T FORGET**

*Travel with us on June 1-13, July 27-August 8 or September 7-19, 2018*



Follow along the path where America's best and brightest fought in WWII as you travel from England to Normandy to the Ardennes on our *D-Day to the Rhine Tour*. Pay homage to the fallen in Europe on our *Operation Overlord*, *Original Band of Brothers*, *In Patton's Footsteps*, *Italian Campaign*, *Ghost Army* and *Poland and Germany Tours*. Travel to the Pacific on our *Iwo Jima Tour*, a transformative experience.

Founded by author Stephen E. Ambrose, our American-owned, family-operated company carries on his legacy by offering WWII, Civil War and Lewis and Clark tours that are unparalleled in their historical accuracy.

EXPLORE NOW AT [STEPHENAMBROSETOURS.COM](http://STEPHENAMBROSETOURS.COM)

1.888.903.3329



rifle matches. As Hitler's spreading war threatened to engulf the Soviet Union, she prepared by enrolling in a volunteer sniper school arranged by her local Komsomol.

At the recruiting office, she took out her sniper's diploma, Voroshilov Marksman's Badge, and other shooting and paramilitary honors and dropped them on the table in front of the recruiter who had laughed at her. The expression on his face changed.

"You're going to get your fingernails dirty," he said as he stamped her application. Accepted.

Pavlichenko was on her way to becoming one of 2,000 female snipers to serve in the Red Army, only 500 of whom would survive the war. Within a year, this petite, dark-haired beauty would become the most dangerous woman of the 20th century, the deadliest female sniper in any army, in any war.

Through bitter experience against Finnish sharpshooters like Sino Itayha, who picked off more than 500 Russian soldiers during the Winter War of 1939-1940, the Soviet Union learned the value of snipers and began to place more emphasis on its sniper training program. Special sniper units were embedded in nearly all major unit commands.

After undergoing truncated training in basic military and sniper tactics, young Lyudmila



**TOP:** In this photo that was probably recently colorized, Soviet sniper Lyudmila Pavlichenko stands with her sniper rifle at the ready. **ABOVE:** In this posed photo taken near Sevastopol, Pavlichenko appears to be scanning the horizon for another unsuspecting German target.

## The Most Dangerous Woman of World War II

Soviet sniper Lyudmila Pavlichenko was an expert who took a heavy toll in enemy troops on the Eastern Front.

**THE LAST TRAIN WEST CHUGGED ACROSS THE RIVER BUG TO THE GERMAN-**occupied side of the Russo-German border at 0200 on June 22, 1941. An hour later, as the short summer night lifted from central Ukraine, Hitler violated his nonaggression pact with Stalin and launched Operation Barbarossa. Three million Axis soldiers, 6,000 big guns, 2,000 Luftwaffe warplanes, and thousands of tanks flooded into the Ukraine.

Kiev, capital of Ukraine, was one of Hitler's final objectives, along with Moscow and Leningrad. Lyudmila Mikhailovna Pavlichenko, 24, a history student at Kiev University, was walking to classes when a swarm of Nazi fighters buzzed in low and fast to chew up the block. She dashed for cover. That night, she made up her mind. "I am going to fight."

She arrived at the recruiting office the next morning wearing high heels and a crepe de chine dress with her nails manicured and her dark, wavy hair groomed short. She looked more like a fashion model than a German killer. The recruiter laughed at her.

"Why don't you work in the factories like other women?" he demanded.

The rapid industrial development of the Soviet Union and the worldwide depression of the late 1920s and 1930s combined to move large numbers of Russians from their farms to the cities. In the spirit of egalitarianism, young women were encouraged to work, go to college, and participate in military training. Like many girls and boys of the times, Lyudmila was fond of military sports and activities. She was an excellent natural rifle shooter and won a number of badges in regional

# GREATEST AIRCRAFT OF WORLD WAR II

## Zippo® Lighter Collection



Display actual size is 10 3/4" H x 6 1/4" W; sculptural B-17 wingspan is 12 1/2" W. Display made in China. Lighters ship unfilled; lighter fluid not included.

### A STRIKING TRIBUTE TO HISTORY AND VICTORY

- Genuine Zippo® windproof lighters emblazoned with imagery inspired by WWII aircraft in flight and vintage nose cone art
- Custom-designed display—a \$100 value—features a hand-painted, sculptural B-17 bomber with an impressive 12 1/2" wingspan
- Lighters are officially licensed, lifetime guaranteed by Zippo Manufacturing Company and proudly made in USA

**Strictly limited. Order now!**

*Greatest Aircraft of World War II* is limited to only 8,000 complete collections. Order these fine limited editions, including the display, at \$39.99\* each. You'll receive one edition about every other month and you can cancel at any time by notifying us. Send no money now. Just return the coupon today.

\*For information on sales tax you may owe to your state, go to [bradfordexchange.com/use-tax](http://bradfordexchange.com/use-tax)



PREMIERE EDITION,  
"B-17 Flying Fortress"



Distinctive bottom stamp authenticates this collectible as a genuine Zippo® windproof lighter.

ZIPPO, Zippo, and the Zippo logo are registered trademarks in the United States and in many countries. The listed Trademarks are used in the United States under license of ZippMark, Inc. All Zippo lighter decorations are protected by copyright. ©Zippo Manufacturing Company 2017

[bradfordexchange.com](http://bradfordexchange.com)

©2017 BGE 01-27870-001-BD

PLEASE ORDER PROMPTLY

SEND NO MONEY NOW

THE  
**BRADFORD EXCHANGE**  
—COLLECTIBLES—

9345 Milwaukee Avenue · Niles, IL 60714-1393

**YES.** Please accept my order for the *Greatest Aircraft of World War II* Zippo® Lighter Collection. I need send no money now. I will be billed with shipment.

\*Plus \$8.99 shipping and service per edition; see [bradfordexchange.com](http://bradfordexchange.com). Display will be shipped after your second lighter. Limited-edition presentation restricted to 8,000 complete collections. Please allow 4-8 weeks for shipment. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

Mrs. Mr. Ms. \_\_\_\_\_  
Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

**904939-E57491**



**ABOVE:** Before heading to the front, a group of female Red Army snipers poses for a photograph. Female snipers proved themselves just as deadly as any man during the cat-and-mouse game of survival in the rubble of Soviet cities on the Eastern Front.

**RIGHT:** Using a helmet as a decoy, Soviet soldiers wait for Germans to fire and reveal their positions. In turn, these troops would hope to take the German snipers down with effective return fire.

Pavlichenko, no longer the fashion plate in her baggy olive-drab man's uniform with camouflage overalls, was issued a five-shot, bolt-action 7.62mm Mosin-Nagant rifle that had been adopted as the standard sniper's rifle in 1932. With a 4-power telescopic sight, it could be fired with authority at ranges of 1,250 meters.

By July 8, the enemy was almost at the gates of Kiev, fighting in the forests less than 150 kilometers away. Russian women and children were conscripted to fight. Pretty teenage girls were found dead on the battlefield still clutching automatic weapons. Soviet soldiers who panicked and fled the fighting were shot by their own officers. Unfortunates taken prisoner were declared traitors and their families' rations taken away, which often meant starvation.

Pavlichenko found herself assigned to the Red Army's V.I. Chapayev 25th Rifle Division. Armed with her new rifle and a combat load of 120 cartridges, the young history student massed with thousands of other recruits and replacements at the Kiev railyards for transport to the front. Her unit was already engaged in desperate combat with Romanian and German forces in Moldavia, attempting to block the enemy's southern approach to the Black Sea city of Odessa, the most important port of trade for the Soviet Union and the site of a Soviet naval base.

The railyards were in turmoil as soldiers with their packs and weapons piled into boxcars, open wagons, and anything else that could be

moved by rail. Trains arrived and departed day and night, their steel wheels and shrill whistles signaling an urgency that Russia had not experienced since Napoleon's invasion.

Clouds of dust obscured the horizon as troop trains reached their destination near the Dniester River that formed the boundary between Moldavia and the Ukraine, where the 25th was making its stand. Pavlichenko and her comrades heard the distant thunder of dueling artillery.

"I knew my task was to shoot human beings," Pavlichenko later reflected. "In theory, that was fine, but I knew that the real thing would be completely different."

The Soviet 25th, 95th, and 421st Rifle Divisions and their support formed three separate defensive lines of trenches, pillboxes, and anti-tank ditches some 50 kilometers outside the city of Odessa. Pavlichenko's No. 2 Company was in the center of the first defensive line when the German offensive against Odessa began on August 8, 1941, preceded by thunderous barrages of enemy artillery.

Pavlichenko and other soldiers from her company hugged the ground overlooking a narrow, open field. A number of enemy soldiers, easy targets, moved about on the near side of a hill. However, to her dismay, she found her finger frozen on the trigger. Perhaps she did not have the courage to be a sniper after all.

The sudden crackle of rifle and machine-gun fire from the opposing tree line signaled a probe. Pavlichenko heard a sound like a ham-

mer striking a melon, followed by a cry of pain and surprise. To her horror, she saw that a young soldier she had befriended on the troop train had taken a round through the head, exploding it in a pink mist of blood and brains.

"After that," she recalled, "nothing could stop me."

She killed her first German a day or so later. She and a spotter crawled through thick undergrowth outside the defensive perimeter and set up a hide overlooking the enemy's most likely avenue of approach. Russia was the first military to employ snipers in teams consisting of a shooter and an observer.

Through her scope she picked out three Germans stealthily moving in and out of shadow, unaware that they were being watched. This time she did not hesitate. As soon as her target paused to look around, she took a deep breath



and squeezed the trigger. Even before the impact of the bullet slapped him to the ground, she had already acquired and killed the second German. The third panicked and fled before she could finish him.

"There was no change of expression on her pretty face," her spotter reported, predicting, "Russia is going to be talking about Lyudmila Pavlichenko."

The pretty sharpshooter from Kiev University hardened and quickly adapted to the harsh and dangerous climate of battle as the enemy reached the main line of Russian resistance and began shelling Odessa with a reinforcement of 10 heavy artillery batteries. She and other Soviet snipers were granted virtual free rein in carrying out their mission of scouting and slowing down, harassing, and demoralizing the German advance by long-distance suppressive fire

against targets of opportunity.

Pavlichenko proved to be as relentless as she was strikingly attractive. Day after day, she and an observer crept into no-man's land to ply their bloody trade. Fortified by her sense of mission, she often crawled into a hide and remained for up to 18 hours at a time, living on dry bread and water, conducting bodily functions in place, all just to get the one shot—one kill of the sniper's trade. Her body count grew almost daily in a cat-and-mouse game played out in the wreckage and rubble of war.

Crafty and deceptive, with a strong sense of survival, she employed various ploys and tricks to keep going when the lifespan of the average sniper was about three weeks. Captured snipers from either side were summarily executed on the spot.

Thunderstorms or artillery barrages that masked the report of her rifle were her favorite times to hunt since her targets were less alert to her presence and her location more difficult to pinpoint. She rarely fired more than once from the same position and never returned twice to the same hide. She tied strips of cloth to bushes in danger areas to flutter in errant breezes and distract enemy observers. Sometimes a clothing store mannequin disguised as a tempting target lured enemy snipers into exposing themselves.

The single crack of Pavlichenko's Mosin-Nagant in no-man's land was enough to strike terror into the hearts of German and Russian soldiers. Whenever she went to the rear, infantrymen gawked in disbelief that this slip of a girl could be the ruthless killer whose reputation spread throughout the Ukraine. By August 29, just 28 days into the Odessa offensive, her body count stood at 100, an average kill rate of nearly four per day. Few snipers in any war had been so successful in such a short period of time. She was rapidly becoming the world's most accomplished harbinger of death.

Working alone for a day outside the defensive perimeter along the Voznesensk-Odessa Highway, she climbed a tree inside a graveyard to obtain a better view of the terrain, depending on foliage to conceal her.

Barely had she settled before two shots from an enemy sniper's rifle zapped into the trees only inches from her head. Realizing she was in dire straits, she let go and fell 12 feet to the ground, landing between two graves. Pain shot up her spine. She gritted her teeth and lay perfectly still, pretending to be dead until the sun went down and she could make her way back to her own lines under cover of darkness.

The cold rains of late September turned trails and roads into impassable bogs. Horses sank up to their collars, men to their knees, and vehi-



**Taking positions in support of the Third Shock Army on the Kalinin Front in 1943, Soviet sniper Lyuba Makarova and other female snipers peer through their rifle scopes before seeking concealment to hit targets of opportunity.**

cles to their axles. Scarcely a building in Odessa remained intact. Fires burned almost constantly as fighting raged. It was a target-rich environment for snipers like Pavlichenko, now promoted to senior sergeant, who chalked up another 87 kills.

On October 9, 1941, a shell splinter gashed her scalp. Her company commander fell dead, and Sergeant Major Leonid Kitsenko, a sniper and senior NCO of Pavlichenko's sniper element, was wounded. Pavlichenko assumed command, a valiant figure wearing a dirty bandage around her head, cap pulled low to hold the dressing in place, face masked by blood, struggling to maintain consciousness.

"Cowards!" a political officer railed against her frightened comrades. "Look at the woman. Pavlichenko has the balls of a man."

She was eventually moved to a medical battalion to recuperate and was released only days before Odessa fell to the Germans on October 15. German and Romanian casualties numbered 17,729 dead and 63,345 wounded, among whom were 187 killed one shot at a time by Lyudmila Pavlichenko.

More savage fighting lay ahead for her at Sevastopol, which subsequently came under siege. By this time, she was becoming celebrated throughout the Crimean region. The entire world would soon hear about "the most dangerous woman of the century."

The battle for Sevastopol and the tip of the Crimean Peninsula jutting into the Black Sea raged fiercely for nine months. Russian snipers were cast forward of the main defensive line in a thin screen of modified "rifle pits."

Pavlichenko continued the practices that had made her so successful at Odessa. She generally crept into a hide at around 0300 and sometimes waited for as long as two days for a single shot.

Winter arrived with its miserable conditions, exacerbating her previous injuries. She lost weight, growing thin and gaunt. Streaks of white appeared in her raven-black hair. No one from the old days would have recognized her. She knocked off one or two enemy soldiers every few days. She was constantly on the move, transferred from sector to sector so her true eye and steady hand could be used to their best advantage.

As word of her exploits spread, the Communist Party used her to inspire ordinary people who were suffering horribly from cruel wartime conditions.

"If this beautiful young woman can endure," went the spiel, "then how can we who are not at the front complain about food rationing and other hardships?"

Even the Germans became aware of her unerring eye. One afternoon she picked off an enemy radioman on a long shot in cold rain that impaired visibility. Such a shot could only have been made by "the Russian bitch from hell."

A German officer stood up long enough to shout, "Lyudmila, leave your Bolshevik friends and come and join us."

She killed him.

Through autumn and early winter snowfalls, Russians clung stubbornly to this spit of land on the Black Sea. The Russian sniper contin-



gent—estimated to number less than 300 shooters—wiped out about 10,000 German soldiers, almost an entire division. Pavlichenko, who won a battlefield promotion to junior lieutenant, was the siege’s top scorer, followed by Sergeant Major Leonid Kitsenko, the senior NCO now recovered from his wound at Odessa.

Pavlichenko and Kitsenko became a team so effective that commanders described them as worth an entire division of infantry. They frequently returned from a hunt claiming three or four kills between them for the day. German snipers were encouraged in their trade by rewards for kills and by bounties on the heads of successful Russian snipers like Pavlichenko, whose fame had spread as far as Berlin. Not only was she deadly, but, even more humiliating to the Germans, she was a woman. As the Wehrmacht closed its steel bands around Sevastopol, German snipers made a point of trying to put an end to the Russian woman with the long-reaching rifle.

On November 11, she confronted her greatest challenge when 60,000 Axis soldiers launched a four-day attack against a mountainous sector of Sevastopol’s defenses. As was her custom, she crawled into her hide well before dawn on a clear, frosty morning and settled down to wait for a target. Her usual partner Kitsenko was assigned elsewhere.

In the early morning light she glimpsed a helmet in a copse of trees and detected a flutter of branches. She herself had sometimes used the old trick of tying a line to a bush and shaking it to draw fire and pinpoint an enemy sniper’s location. She held off and waited, tensed and edged for action.

Several times during the next few hours as the sun climbed higher she detected movement but never a clean target. She knew this movement was simply a distraction to entice her to reveal her position. The soldier out there knew what he was doing. She held her ground.

The enemy sniper got off the first shot. Her peripheral vision caught the suspicious shifting of a shadow, just in time to see the blink of a muzzle flash. A rock within touching distance of her head disintegrated.

A second shot snapped at her head. She wriggled backward out of her hide and, crouching low and using the reverse slope for cover, scrambled to a nearby rocky outcropping and burrowed into a thicket of briars interwoven with old-growth timber. The site provided a view of the lowland between her and the ridge-line occupied by her deadly foe.

She dared not move. Clouds rolled in, and snow began to fall. Cold, stress, hunger, and



**ABOVE: Soviet hero Pavlichenko meets factory workers near the city of Odessa. Pavlichenko became a national hero as stories of her exploits were published. BELOW: This rare photo of Pavlichenko out of uniform was taken during her visit to Washington, D.C. in 1942.**



thirst plagued her as the strange standoff continued all through the afternoon in a high stakes poker game in which each shooter challenged the other to blink.

Ultimately, the German proved the less patient. Succumbing to curiosity, he made the mistake of lifting his head to take a better look across the clearing. Pavlichenko’s crosshairs locked onto his forehead. He seemed to be looking directly at her when she massaged her trigger. It was her first shot of the duel. No other was required.

A Russian patrol later confirmed that the dead man was an expert sniper whose “kill log” had recorded the deaths of more than 400 Allied soldiers since Dunkirk.

Pavlichenko and partner Kitsenko continued to create mayhem all through what the Germans referred to as the “Winter Crisis.” At some point in the spring of 1942, Lyudmila and Leonid Kitsenko apparently married. It was recorded shortly thereafter that Pavlichenko’s “husband, also serving with the Red Army, was

killed in the [Sevastopol] siege.”

Fellow snipers noted Lyudmila’s increased bitterness following Kitsenko’s death. In late May, the Southern Army Council cited her for killing 257 Germans. During a meeting of her sniper unit, she vowed to raise her score to 300 within the next few days—and kept her word.

From June 2-6, 1942, the Luftwaffe dropped 570 tons of bombs on the beleaguered ruins of Sevastopol and its harbor. Shrapnel riddled Pavkichenko’s worn, young body. She was moved to a field hospital and evacuated by submarine late at night before the Germans took the city on July 1. She was not to see personal combat again.

Her final official tally stood at 309 kills. Since she often worked alone, however, and every kill had to be verified, her actual number may have been nearer 500. In comparison, Russia’s other famous World War II sniper, Vasili Zaitsev, killed 225 enemy soldiers during the Battle of Leningrad.

Due to her fame, Lyudmila was sent to the United States and Canada at the end of 1942 to drum up war support. She delivered speeches in 43 American cities and was the first Soviet citizen to be received at the White House, where she had dinner with President Franklin Roosevelt and First Lady Eleanor. Celebrities all over the continent lined up to be photographed with her. Folk musician Woody Guthrie recorded a song dedicated to her, “Miss Pavlichenko.” She was featured in a 1943 comic book, *War Heroes*. She played with Laurence Olivier in the documentary film *Chernomortsy*. Actor Charlie Chaplin gallantly kissed her fingers one by one, saying, “It’s quite remarkable that this small, delicate hand killed Nazis by the hundreds.”

The most dangerous woman in the world rode out the rest of the war as a sniper instructor near Moscow. Highly decorated, she was discharged with the rank of major in 1945 and returned to Kiev University to complete her postgraduate degree. She served out her life as a historian and was active in veterans’ affairs until she died of natural causes on October 17, 1974, at the age of 58. Sevastopol named a street after her, not far from where Sergeant Major Leonid Kitsenko died. □

*Charles Sasser is the author of the classic book of sniper warfare titled One Shot-One Kill. He has written dozens of other books and articles and appeared on numerous television networks including ABC, Fox, the History Channel, and CNN. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Army Special Forces. He resides in Chouteau, Oklahoma.*

# Spirits Ride High in this Tribute to THE UNITED STATES MARINES!



Artist  
James Griffin

*James Griffin*

Celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the 1953 Ford truck with this hand-sculpted, 1:36-scale replica featuring the patriotic artwork of James Griffin!



Hand-numbered  
limited edition

Shown approximate  
size of 5½" long

Metallic and high-gloss  
paints give it a smooth  
showroom finish



LIKE US ON



Fastest way to order:

[HamiltonCollection.com/SemperFi](http://HamiltonCollection.com/SemperFi)



## Two American Classics Together for the First Time!

With a distinguished history of more than 200 years, the United States Marine Corps is America's mightiest fighting force.

Also recognized for years of rugged capability, outstanding performance and dependability are USA-built Ford trucks.

Now, Hamilton unites these proud icons in a first-ever handcrafted collectible ... the "Semper Fi" truck.

**Ford trucks feature the artistry of James Griffin!**

Master Artists sculpt every detail of this limited-edition 1953 Ford truck in 1:36 scale, including the truck's big front grille ... white-

rimmed wheels ... official emblems ... chrome-colored trim ... and much more!

Then, they use metallic and high-gloss paints to create an ultra smooth surface to proudly showcase the stirring patriotic artwork of artist James Griffin.

**Act now and reserve your FREE 30-Day Preview!**

"Semper Fi" is hand-numbered, and includes our Certificate of Authenticity. Demand will be strong, and we assure your satisfaction or your money back. **Send no money now** to reserve a FREE 30-Day Preview in your name!

MAIL TO:

09-05526-001-BD2

**The Hamilton Collection**

9204 Center For The Arts Drive, Niles, Illinois 60714-1300

**SEND NO MONEY NOW!**

**YES!** Please accept my order for "Semper Fi" for the low issue price of just \$39.99\*. I need send no money now. I will be billed with shipment.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print clearly.)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email (Optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

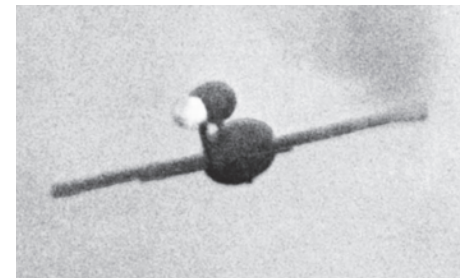
**09-05526-001-E70101**



ities faced mounting destruction. Hitler thirsted for revenge. Under his increasing demands for immediate results, the V-1 program got off to an early, shaky start. Ironically, it might have been ready sooner had Hitler himself not delayed its development. Also, Luftwaffe chief Herman Göring never supported the program. On June 12 that year, Germany launched 19 of the flying bombs. Of the first salvo, only nine actually left the platform, none of which reached England. Of the second salvo, four quickly crashed alarmingly nearby, two went down in the English Channel, four reached England, and only one hit London. Lord Cherwell, an adviser to Prime Minister Winston Churchill, announced, “The mountain hath groaned and given forth a mouse.” All too soon, however, Lord Cherwell would regret his lofty observation.

Citizen John Franklin was one of the first to see this revolutionary weapon. On June 17, the *News Chronicle* in Croydon quoted Franklin’s description. “When I first caught sight of the plane (sic) it appeared at 300 to 400 miles an hour at about 2,000 feet. In size it was half that of a Spitfire. Soon after it passed over, the engine cut out and it went into a steep dive. A few seconds later, it blew up.” Over the next year as more Buzz Bombs roared across the Channel, Londoners learned to fear the sudden stop of the engine noise that preceded its deadly dive.

The British government had long known of a new, still unidentified, potential threat. As far back as 1939, a secret report out of Oslo, Norway, warned that Germany was beginning research on flying bombs and rocket bombs, but British intelligence advisers downplayed the report, believing it could only involve solid fuel rockets with limited range. Then, as late as October 1943, French spies reported unusual construction at Peenemünde, near Stettin, along the Baltic Sea and on the Normandy coast of France from Cherbourg to the Pas de



TOP: A British Bobby looks over the wreckage of a German V-2 rocket, which was in fact an early ballistic missile. ABOVE: A V-1 Buzz Bomb zips through the skies over Britain.

## Failure of the Terror Weapons

The British and German media waged rival campaigns to inform the public of the V-1 and V-2 weapons’ potential to alter the course of World War II.

**DURING ANY WAR, COMBATING COUNTRIES PREDICTABLY ISSUE REPORTS AND** create publicity more favorable to their own side. Often the difference is subtle, but sometimes it is profound. A perfect example occurred during World War II as Germany unleashed its V-1 and V-2 onslaught against England. Both governments were well aware that the weapons introduced a whole new aspect to an already violent war. How they described and reported it was in marked contrast.

In England the V-1 may have acquired some funny names, but there was nothing funny about its death-dealing power. Its pulse jet engine made a peculiar, raspy, loud sound and it carried a one-ton warhead that Londoners learned to fear. Twenty-five feet long, with stubby wings and a range up to 150 miles, the robot bomb flew at 400 miles an hour. It took only five minutes to cross the Channel, which made defending against it most difficult. The British called it the Buzz Bomb, Doodlebug, or Diver. It was Adolf Hitler’s latest attempt to force England out of the war. Hitler told his rocket pioneer Wernher von Braun, “This will be retribution against England. With it we will force England to her knees.” The ways in which official statements, including broadcast and print media, in Berlin and London reported this new chapter of making war in early 1944 reveal the extraordinary differences between the two governments of the time.

Officially, the Buzz Bomb was the V-1, or Vergeltungswaffe—Vengeance Weapon, simple to build but sophisticated in its engine and auto pilot guidance system. Constructed of plywood and sheet steel, it did not require scarce aluminum. Before Allied armies finally overran its launch sites, it killed more than 6,000 people in southeast England. Soon after, Germany’s even more revolutionary V-2 rockets began to fall, killing another 2,855 persons.

By 1944, as the Allied bombing campaign escalated, German factories and transportation facil-

Perfect Choice HD Ultra™ is simple to use, hard to see and easy to afford...

# Invention of the Year

PERSONAL SOUND AMPLIFICATION PRODUCT (PSAP)



## IT'S NOT A HEARING AID

Understand what people are saying... the first time



Now you see it...

Now you don't



If you are one of the 48 million Americans suffering from hearing loss, we have great news for you. An innovative team of doctors and engineers have teamed up to create a truly revolutionary personal sound amplifier. It's not a hearing aid- those require trips to the audiologist, hearing tests and can cost as much as \$5,000. It's also not a cheap amplifier that just makes everything louder, making it virtually impossible to hear conversations. It's Perfect Choice HD Ultra™... and it may be the perfect solution for you.

Perfect Choice HD Ultra™ is the first PSAP that features Dynamic Speech Optimization (DSO). This technology enables the device to prioritize the spoken word over other sounds. These noises are generally in different frequencies than voices, but they can drown out the words and make conversations hard to understand. This invention targets the frequencies of the human voice and amplifies the words. It's even designed to diminish feedback even at higher volumes, so you can customize your hearing experience to meet your needs. Just imagine how great it will feel to be able to understand what people are saying... the first time they say it.

Perfect Choice HD Ultra™ is perfect for...

- Watching TV • Restaurants
  - Dinner parties • Lectures
  - Outdoor conversations • Sermons
- ...and other times where you need to turn up the volume

That's only the beginning. This unit is small and lightweight at less than an ounce, so it hides discreetly and comfortably behind your ear. The only way people will know you have it on is if you tell them. Plus, its moisture resistant coating make it durable- you could even leave it in when you take a shower! There's no fitting or hearing test required, so it's ready to use right out of the box. Once it's arrived, a helpful product expert will provide a one-on-one set up over the phone so you'll get the maximum benefit from this new technology. Call now, and you'll find out for yourself why so many people love their Perfect Choice HD Ultra™. Call now, and be sure and ask about special discounts for Seniors and Military personnel.



Call now toll free

**1-888-862-2884**

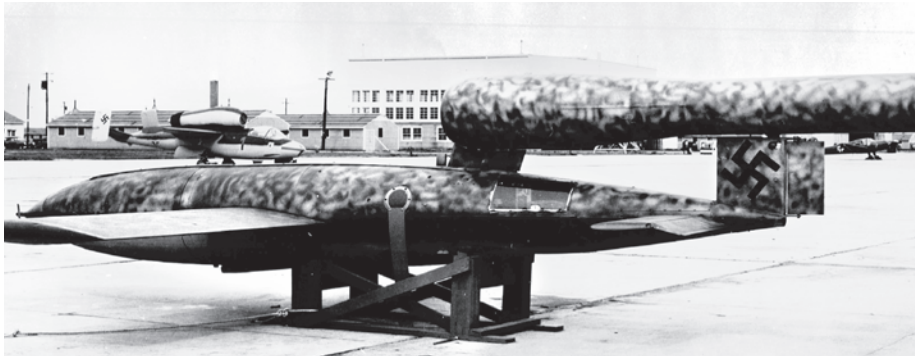
Please mention promotional code 108027.

1998 Ruffin Mill Road,  
Colonial Heights, VA 23834

Perfect Choice HD Ultra is not a hearing aid. If you believe you need a hearing aid, please consult a physician.

### It's Better

COMFORT	Less than 1 ounce
SOUND QUALITY	Excellent: Optimized for speech
FITTING REQUIRED?	No
ONE-ON-ONE SETUP	Free
SENIOR AND MILITARY DISCOUNTS	Yes



**ABOVE:** This captured V-1 is on display in the United States in 1945. The V-1 was called the Buzz Bomb because of the distinctive sound of its pulse jet engine, and when the engine cut out, the bomb began an uncontrolled descent to impact. **BELOW:** Searchers look through the wreckage caused by the blast of a German terror weapon in London on January 19, 1945.



Calais. The Allies called them “ski-sites” but didn’t yet know what they were. Thousands of slave laborers were used in underground caves under appalling physical conditions to manufacture the craft. As workers collapsed they were replaced with new slave labor taken directly from concentration camps. It was largely because of Albert Speer’s role as armaments minister in supplying such labor that he received the sentence of 20 years at the Nuremberg trials.

In operation, the V-1 engine would be started, and the craft then steam-catapulted off a 157-foot long, elevated launch rail pointed straight at London.

Quickly, the number of V-1s and resulting casualties increased. The British press had to report the obvious. On June 16, 1944, the *London Evening News* headlined, “Pilotless Warplanes Raid Britain.” The next day, *The Times of London* carried the official government position: “Militarily, therefore, this new weapon cannot have the slightest effect on the course of

the war. The aim of these raids is, no doubt, to shake the morale of the British public.” Of course, they were quite right. That was exactly what Hitler had in mind. The Normandy invasion, landing thousands of troops on “Fortress Europe,” had occurred back on June 6. If he could now break the British will and force England into a settlement of some kind, he might forge a deal short of unconditional surrender. Although that never happened, the Allies watched the mounting death toll in and around London with apprehension. Each new announcement in Europe was followed closely in the United States. Hitler’s plan to create morale-breaking devastation was, perhaps, an unrealistic hope. But, while that is obvious now, it was less so back then.

And so the war of words heated up. Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels shouted on Radio Berlin, “The pilotless planes have caused the war to enter a new phase—unique destruction, enormous conflagration, stopping of work in factories and office-panic!”

It was, of course, a wild exaggeration but in England, official concern ramped up to a new level. Herbert Morrison, Minister of Home Security, tried to head off such panic. In an address to the House of Commons on June 16, Morrison announced, “While I have thought it right to inform the House about the new weapon used by the enemy, the available information does not suggest that exaggerated importance need be attributed to this new development. The nation should carry on its normal business. But I must impress on the public the importance of not exposing themselves to danger in the streets out of curiosity.” It was a masterful, understated warning, but clearly the Churchill government was becoming increasingly worried.

By June 19, more than 500 V-1s had hit southeast England. Great Britain tried fooling the enemy by reporting the bombs were landing farther north, when they were not. The hope was that Germany would then alter the launch direction and fire the missiles into unoccupied areas. It fooled no one since honest news reporting revealed exactly where the Buzz Bombs were coming down. The worst single death toll occurred on November 25, 1944, as 168 persons died when a V-1 exploded amid a crowded Woolworth store in New Cross. The pluck and resilience of British public spirit were being severely tested.

Meanwhile, Goebbels raised his propaganda level. He proclaimed, “In London, life has practically come to a standstill as the rain of secret weapons continues almost without interruption.” Soon, Berlin Radio announced, “The British government has given orders for the immediate evacuation of the (London) population.” Not quite true, but in fact by early September and with government urging, more than a million residents, mostly women, children, and the aged or infirm had left. On July 7, United States network radio commentator Raymond Gram Swing announced, “Prime Minister Churchill’s revelation as to the seriousness of the robot bombs took this country aback. We had no idea the German secret weapon was so formidable.” Churchill demanded the best possible defense and, as it turned out, that defense was already taking a heavy toll on the incoming V-1s.

Although the manufacturing and launch sites were heavily defended and partially underground, British and American bombers and fighter bombers hit them again and again. On the English side of the Channel, a combination of antiaircraft guns, barrage balloons, and speedy fighter planes were thrown into the battle. Those three elements, working together,



A V-2 rocket lifts off from a site somewhere in continental Europe. The rockets were the world's first operational ballistic missiles, and captured examples helped begin the U.S. space program.

were titled Operation Crossbow.

But, fighter pilots in even fast aircraft like the RAF Hawker Tempest or U.S. Army Air Forces' North American P-51 Mustang found catching the robot difficult and dangerous. On June 17, 1944, USAAF Mustang pilot Captain William Anderson destroyed one. He recently wrote, "I dove down on the doodlebug at between 3,000 and 4,000 feet. You had to look for two things when chasing and firing at a V-1. One was friendly fire from antiaircraft gunners trying to knock it down, and you didn't want to get too close while you were shooting because if it blew up in front of you it would take you down with it." Some daring pilots would catch up to the V-1 and slide in next to it close enough to tip the bomb's wing with their wing, thus upsetting the missile's gyrocompass and sending it crashing.

RAF pilot Joseph Berry got a hero's recognition for his exploits. The leader of No. 501 Squadron, flying a powerful Tempest fighter, accounted for an amazing 59 buzz bomb "kills." In some ways it was like the earlier days when Messerschmitts and Spitfires tangled in the skies over London.

By mid-July, Germany had launched some 4,000 V-1s. Of the 3,000 that actually reached the defense area, an impressive 1,000 were destroyed, but more kept coming and casualties and concern mounted. British-born traitor and Nazi broadcaster Lord Haw-Haw weighed in: "There is a general and very natural feeling among the people that the British Government

**BK Tours & Travel, LLC**

**Battle Tours**  
**Back To Normandy**  
August 14-27, 2018

**TOUR INCLUDES:**

- Roundtrip Air - Washington D.C. to Paris
- Motorcoach & Transfers
- 12 Nights in Deluxe & 1st Class Hotels
- Certain Meals Per The Itinerary
- Admission To Listed Tour Sites
- English Speaking Guide
- Travel Insurance

**TOUR HIGHLIGHTS:** Caen (D-Day Museum, Battle Sites & City) - Pegasus Bridge - Merville Battery Ouisterham & Atlantic Wall Museum - British & Canadian Beaches Mulberry Harbor - Longue Sur Mer (German Coastal Battery) Omaha Beach Pointe Du Hoc - Ste. Mere Eglise - Utah Beach - Mont St-Michel - Falaise Pocket - Giverny Versailles - Paris & More



**Check Battle TOURS at [www.bktravel.com](http://www.bktravel.com) ■ [wridley@bktravel.com](mailto:wridley@bktravel.com) ■ 703-250-3044**

**WWII PLAQUES**

**D-Day Landings**



with sand from the D-Day Invasion Beaches in Normandy - Utah, Omaha, Gold, Juno and Sword  
Price \$99.99 + shipping

*A portion of your purchase will be donated to the National D-Day Memorial Foundation.*

For more information or to order online:  
[www.dayofdaysproductions.com](http://www.dayofdaysproductions.com)  
803-663-7854  
Or mail a money order for your plaque(s) + \$10.00 shipping to: Day of Days Productions  
PO Box 645 • Warrenville, SC 29851-0645

- ★ These are the ONLY collectibles with actual sand from all five D-Day Invasion beaches and from all seven of the United States Army European Theater of Operation landing beaches.
- ★ Each plaque will include a Certificate of Authenticity.
- ★ These are certain to become a cherished part of your WWII collection and a family heirloom.

**European Theater of Operation & Landings**



with sand from the Torch, Husky, Avalanche, Shingle, Overlord and Dragoon Invasion Beaches  
Price \$119.99 + shipping

*Unlike your summer beach vacation, these beaches were not their choice*

## 3rd REICH MONEY



### NAZI GERMAN SILVER COINS

The infamous eagle holding a swastika is featured on both the silver 2 Reichsmark and silver 5 Reichsmark of Nazi Germany. The 5 Reichsmark coin is the size of a half dollar. The 2 Reichsmark coin is the size of a quarter. The coins grade Very Fine.

**GET BOTH SILVER COINS FOR only \$39  
OR GET 3 SETS FOR only \$110**



### HITLER YOUTH ON NAZI 5 REICHSMARK NOTE

This 1942 Nazi German 5 Reichsmark banknote features a Hitler youth, along with a small eagle and swastika. The note replaced the silver 5 Reichsmark coin which was hoarded due to the War. The note grades Fine.

**Only \$12 each, 3 for \$35**



Calif. residents add 7.25% sales tax. 3 week return privileges. Checks, money orders, Visa, Mastercard, Discover, AMEX & Paypal accepted.

Free catalog is available by mail or at our website.

**JOEL ANDERSON**

[www.JoelsCoins.com](http://www.JoelsCoins.com)

Interesting World Coins — Since 1970

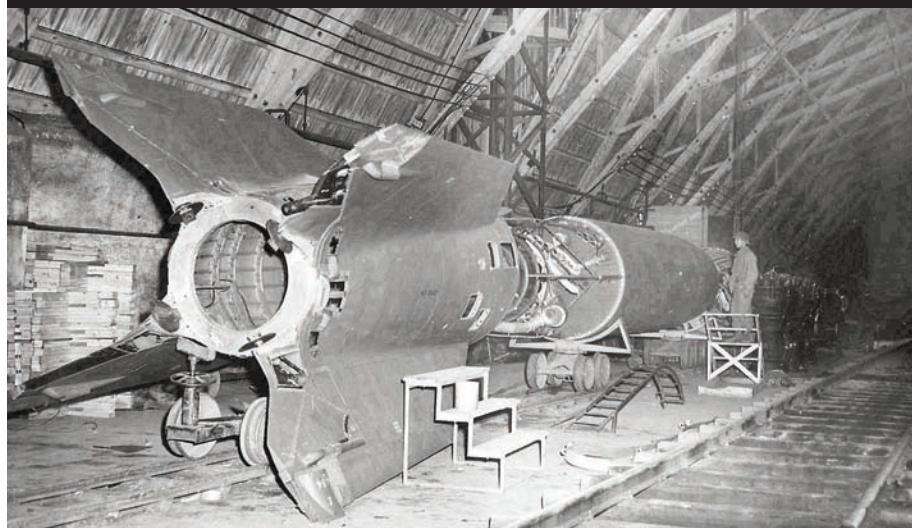
(805) 489-8045

e-mail: [orders@JoelsCoins.com](mailto:orders@JoelsCoins.com)

P.O. Box 365-MH, Grover Beach, CA 93483-0365



**ABOVE:** In the wake of a V-2 blast, the body of a truck passenger burns after the vehicle has been engulfed in flames. This photograph was taken in Antwerp, Belgium, in November 1944. **BELOW:** U.S. soldiers inspect a German V-2 rocket at its manufacturing facility in Kleinbodungen, Germany, in 1945.



### PzG - Your Third Reich HQ!

Books • CDs • Videos • Flags • Pins  
T-shirts • Posters • Daggers & more

#### 2018 German Calendars

CAL18-15 - Manner  
Der Waffen SS - Hero's  
of the Waffen SS  
Calendar

Imported from Germany  
with European style  
& dating format with  
German text.

Only \$30.00 +s/h each



#### Waffen SS Flags



F07 - SS Death Head Nazi - Flag

Details: Polyester, 3' X 5', reinforced edging,  
brass grommets, indoor / outdoor use.

Only \$25 +s/h

Shipping / handling \$10.00 per order.

**PAYMENTS ACCEPTED**  
Cash, Check or Money Order



PzG Inc.  
© P.O. Box 3972  
Rapid City, SD 57709-3972  
[pzg@sprynet.com](mailto:pzg@sprynet.com)

has failed seriously in an emergency which ought to have been foreseen." The German newspaper *Nachtausgabe* crowed, "We give in to the feelings of hatred and retaliation against the enemy who wanted to destroy Germany by terror and unscrupulous barbarity." The war of words was intense.

Meanwhile, Allied armies were pushing ever closer to the original V-1 launch sites. The Germans pulled back to safer launch areas in Belgium and also tried releasing some robots in the air from twin-engine Heinkel bombers. It was a largely unsuccessful effort, and by late August, although some V-1s were still launched against Allied forces at the port of Antwerp, it appeared the Buzz Bomb crisis might be ending. In fact, on September 7, a member of the British War Cabinet told the press, "The battle of London is over except possibly for a few last shots." He was wrong. The very next day a new aerial nightmare began.

The 46-foot tall V-2 was essentially a sub-

orbital intercontinental ballistic missile. The first one hit southeast England on September 8, 1944. It reached speeds of 3,000 miles per hour, weighed 13 tons, and also carried a one-ton warhead, but unlike its predecessor it gave no warning. More frightening was the fact there was simply no defense. It came down suddenly from high overhead. Germany launched some old V-1s loaded, not with explosives, but with propaganda leaflets that read, "German scientists have invented a new and more destructive weapon. It is the V-2. It's time for the British people to listen to the words of reason of the Führer. Give up this war. It is one you cannot hope to win."

An early attempt by the British government to attribute these new explosions to gas buildup in the sewer system was wisely and quickly dropped. Such misleading announcements were few in number as official British reaction was somber but more candid. Churchill instinctively understood the need for honesty if he was to

maintain public confidence. Government announcements were “fine tuned” but not untruthful.

Air Chief Marshal Sir Philip Joubert later wrote, “Our retaliation against this enormously fast weapon was to attack the launching areas and the bombing of supply depots. There was nothing more we could do.” On November 10, Churchill addressed the nation, saying, “Because of its high speed, no sufficient public warning can under present circumstances be given. There is, however, no need to exaggerate the danger. The use of this weapon is another attempt by the enemy to attack the morale of our civilian population.”

He added the very serious suggestion that those who did not need to be in London should leave. Sometimes entire neighborhoods were blown apart. Obviously, Hitler had once again raised the stakes, and Great Britain was trying hard to stay calm. Later, writer Basil Cardew captured the mood of that time in an article in *The Daily Express* edition of April 28, 1945. “Londoners never knew when a new blow would fall upon them during the months of the V-2 attacks. But they carried on in their normal lives and they continued with their work.”

The Churchill government and the British news media made no attempt to minimize the

threat. In a very real sense, the flying bomb and rocket attacks paralleled the “blitz” unleashed by the Luftwaffe in 1940 and 1941. The targets were much the same. The residents of south and east London once again lived in constant apprehension. However, unlike the earlier blitz, these attacks came in daylight when folks were out and about. This new Battle of Britain afforded no sleeping in subways for nighttime protection.

Although Hitler could not admit it, the truth was, even if London had disappeared altogether, his time was now running out. As the rocket launch sites were being overrun, his military each time pulled back, desperately constructing new ones ever closer to Germany. Armaments Minister Speer said in his *Inside the Third Reich* memoir, “Hitler, and all of us, hoped this new weapon [the V-1] would sow horror, confusion and paralysis in the enemy camp. We far overestimated its affect.”

As for the V-2, Speer wrote, “Hitler now decided to use our big new rocket to retaliate against England. He wanted 900 produced monthly. The whole notion was absurd.” Historian William L. Shirer in his *Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* put it this way: “The hopes of the promised miracle weapons which had for a time sustained the masses, the soldiers and some

hard-headed generals, were finally abandoned.”

Thousands more would die on both sides. The Battle of the Bulge was yet to come, and the revolutionary Messerschmitt Me-262 jet fighter plane would make Allied bombing raids more difficult, but the end of the war in Europe was at least now in sight. By late March 1945, the last of the V-2s hit England. By then, much of Berlin was bombed out and its rabid radio propaganda finally silent. In London the rebuilding was underway. The integrity of the British government and media reporting had remained intact. During the most trying of times, public statements were obviously carefully worded but as honest as they could be under wartime conditions.

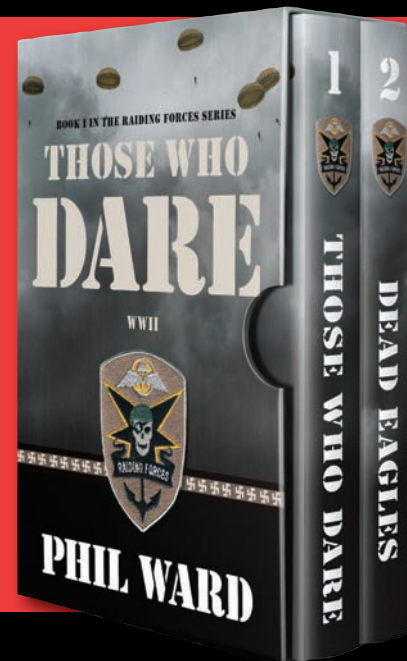
Today, car parks and residential housing cover most of the places where the bombs landed in London. No obvious evidence remains. However, it can be noticed that very old trees do not exist there. Time has thinned the generation that suffered under the V-1s and V-2s but those who are still alive remember well that while British spirit may have been severely bent, it never broke. □

*Adam Lynch has worked as a historical writer and researcher for many years. He resides in Monroeville, Pennsylvania.*

# FROM AUTHOR **PHIL WARD**

## **RAIDING FORCES SERIES HISTORICAL WORLD WAR II FICTION**

**2 E-BOOKS FOR THE PRICE OF 1  
(Book 1 & Book 2) \$9.99**



AVAILABLE ON  AT RAIDING FORCES SERIES BOXED SET

National Archives



and should be punished for taking the side of the Japanese.” This difference in British and American attitudes toward Thailand set the stage “for policy conflicts that would persist until the war’s end and beyond.”

The story of the undelivered Thai declaration of war started with the man who would have delivered it, Seni Pramot, Thailand’s ambassador to the United States. Reynolds notes, “Seni subsequently claimed that Bangkok had instructed him by telegram to deliver the war declaration to the State Department, but he dramatically informed [Secretary of State Cordell] Hull of his unwillingness to do so in a face-to-face meeting in the latter’s office. There is nothing in Hull’s office diary or other State Department records to support this story.”



Library of Congress

## The Infamous Thai Declaration

The government of Thailand declared war on Britain and the United States, but circumstances dictated that the Allied governments view the declaration quite differently.

**IT IS A GREAT STORY, AND WELL KNOWN THAT IN JANUARY 1942 THAILAND’S** ambassador to the United States refused to deliver Thailand’s declaration of war to the U.S. government. As a result, there was never a state of war between the two countries. But that is not exactly how things happened.

Thailand declared war on Great Britain and the United States on January 25, 1942. The British responded by declaring war on Thailand; the U.S. government ignored Thailand’s declaration of war.

In *Thailand’s Secret War*, his definitive history of the OSS, SOE, and Free Thai in World War II, Professor E. Bruce Reynolds cites a January 1942 State Department document that explains the reasoning behind the U.S. decision that “the USA not dignify the action of the present Japanese-controlled government of Thailand by a formal declaration of war, but treat Thailand as an occupied territory.” That decision had far-reaching consequences for Thailand when the war ended and for both Thailand and the United States for the rest of the 20th century.

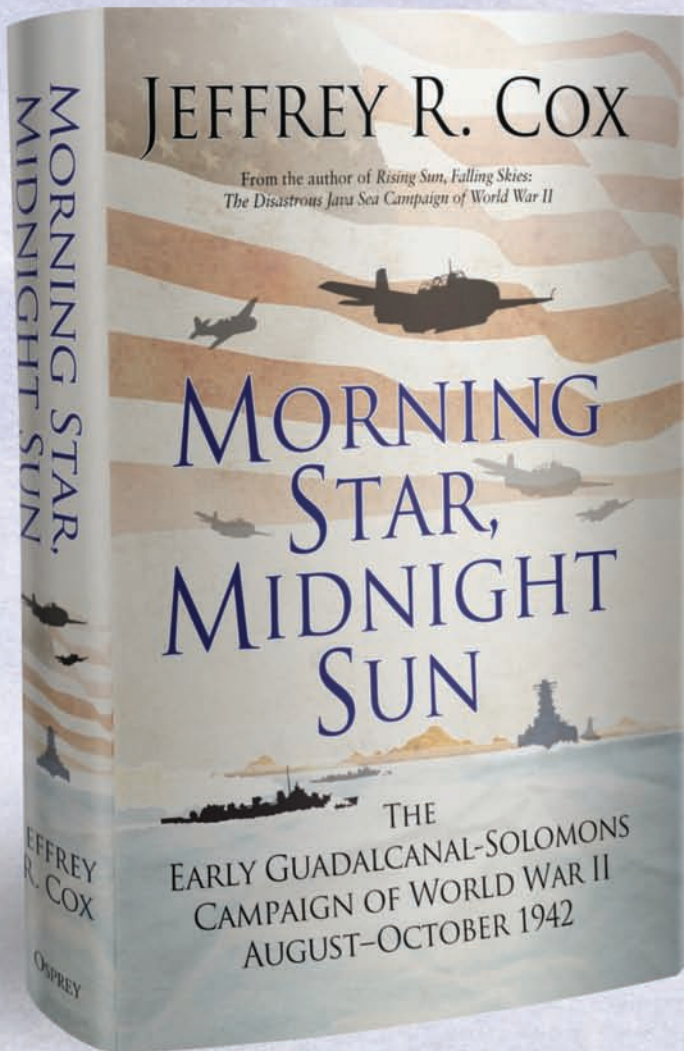
On the British decision to declare war on Thailand, Reynolds quotes an unnamed British official: “Either the Thais are children and should be subject to control after the war or they are rogues

**LEFT: Officers of the Japanese and Thai armies pose for a photograph after a meeting in Bangkok following the Japanese occupation of Thailand. ABOVE: Pridi Banomyong (left) was the leader of the Free Thai movement while Plaek Phibolsengkham (right) cooperated with the Japanese during World War II.**

In a June 1979 letter, Pridi Banomyong, the wartime leader of the Free Thai Movement, then in exile in France, addressed this issue. “[During 1978] I was asked by many Thai students whether it was true, as written by some so-called history professors, that Field Marshal Phibul’s government sent the Declaration of War on the USA to the Thai Minister in Washington, but the Minister did not deliver it as instructed... that the Minister kept the document of the declaration of war in his pocket and did not present it to the U.S. government. I told the students that I really did not know. However, I made some observations for them to consider.”

The Thai government had followed diplomatic practice and international law by notifying the Swiss consul in Bangkok, who represented U.S. interests in Thailand at that time. The notification was forwarded to Washington via the American chargé d’affaires in Berne, Switzerland, who received it as a note from the Swiss Foreign Office on January 31, quoted as

# GUADALCANAL: WHEN THE FATE OF THE PACIFIC HUNG IN THE BALANCE



From the author of the bestselling *Rising Sun, Falling Skies*, Jeffrey Cox tells the gripping story of the battle for Guadalcanal, the first Allied offensive of the Pacific War, as the Allies sought prevent Japan from cutting off Australia and regaining dominance in the Pacific.

Hamstrung by arcane pre-war thinking and a bureaucratic mind-set, the US Navy had to adapt on the fly in order to compete with the mighty Imperial Japanese Navy, whose ingenuity and creativity thus far had fostered the creation of its Pacific empire. Starting with the amphibious assault on Savo Island, the campaign turned into an attritional struggle where the evenly matched foes sought to grind out a victory. A victory that both knew would determine the course of World War II in the Pacific.

Praise for *Rising Sun, Falling Skies*, also by Jeffrey R. Cox

*“A forgotten epic of character and honor”*

—Dennis Showalter

*Morning Star, Midnight Sun*

By Jeffrey Cox

Hardback, 448 pages

\$35 US / \$47 Canada



Available wherever books are sold or at [www.ospreypublishing.com](http://www.ospreypublishing.com)

**OSPREY**  
PUBLISHING

follows: “[Thailand’s] Ministry Foreign Affairs notified [Swiss Bangkok] Consulate by letter 25th January: By royal command a declaration of war on Great Britain and the United States of America has been as from noon 25th January 2485 BE [Buddhist Era calendar year corresponding with 1942].” The U.S. State Department received the note on February 2, 1942.

With that done, the Thai government had no reason to send an “extra” declaration of war to its ambassador in America. And there was something else Pridi noted. In mid-December 1941, Ambassador Seni started a series of radio broadcasts to the Thai people in which he regularly stated that he would have nothing to do with the Thai government. “So why should [the Thai government] send [him] a telegraphic declaration of war ... when it knew well enough that [Seni] had renounced his allegiance to it?”

Pridi Banomyong, the chief political rival of Prime Minister Plaek Phibolsongkhram, commonly referred to in the West as Phibun, was a member of the Thai cabinet when the Japanese Army entered Thailand at 0200 hours on December 8, 1941, coming across the land border from Malaya and via sea landings on the Gulf of Siam. The Thai Army resisted until the Thai government ordered a ceasefire at 0730 hours.

The previous day, the Japanese ambassador to Thailand had met with the Thai foreign minister to request passage for the Japanese Army through Thailand to the areas bordering the British colonies of Burma and Malaya. Only Prime Minister Phibun could make that decision, he was told, but Phibun was not in Bangkok. An urgent meeting of the Thai cabinet was called, and Phibun was asked to return immediately.

When Prime Minister Phibun reached Bangkok at 0700 the next morning, the Japanese Army was already in the country and “everyone [in the Thai cabinet] seemed to be of the opinion that Thailand could not really fight the Japanese forces.” Pridi called for discussion, but Phibun cut him short and called for a decision. The ceasefire was issued. Phibun had been looking to the Japanese for support in regaining Thailand’s “lost territories” from French Indochina. In the days that followed, under Japanese pressure, Phibun signed a formal alliance with Japan and ultimately a declaration of war against the Allies. Thai historian Charivat Santaputra writes that Phibun “probably knew of the nature of the impending attack but not its exact timing.”

Later on December 8, many Thais, from politicians to ordinary citizens, visited Pridi at his home. “They all had one aim in mind,”

National Archives



**The exiled Thai King Ananda Mahidol reviews Australian troops beside Lord Louis Mountbatten, Allied commander in the China-Burma-India Theater, on January 19, 1946. Postwar cooperation between Thailand and the Allies relegated the earlier Thai flirtation with the Japanese to the dust bin of history.**

noted an observer, “to discuss the unacceptable situation that Phibun had led Thailand into. This could be seen as the actual inception of the [Free Thai] resistance movement.” Dr. Charivat goes on to tell how Pridi exploited his position as regent to the king to work with the resistance. In this position, Pridi was able to meet Thai politicians and high-ranking officials “without the Japanese being able to accuse him of hatching a plot. As his revered position was highly respected by, and consequently immune from the Japanese troops, Pridi was able to ... set up successfully an underground resistance movement under the Japanese noses.... There were many who came to him and simply offered their services to do anything that Pridi saw fit.”

The Free Thai Movement Pridi created was unique in the annals of clandestine warfare. In the *War Report of the OSS*, Kermit Roosevelt described the Free Thai as “a patriotic governmental conspiracy against the Japanese in which most of the key figures of the state were involved. The regent himself, the minister and chief of police, the minister of interior, the minister of foreign affairs, senior officers of the armed service, and many other ranking officials belonged to it.”

Back in the United States, three days after the Japanese Army entered Thailand, Thai ambassador Seni Pramot “publicly declared that he would work for the reestablishment of

an independent Thailand.” He called on the Coordinator of Information (COI), Colonel William J. Donovan’s office of the OSS, to make radio broadcasts to Thailand. Reynolds quotes from Seni’s first broadcast: “We can not very well expect to regain our freedom unless we fight for it.... Start a revolt, spread it far and wide. Give up your lives for your country!” A memorandum to Donovan from the COI Far East chief suggested that Seni’s speech would “electrify the Thai people.” Dr. Charivat writes, “This is viewed as the starting point of the Free Thai Movement abroad.” Seni believed that “public relations alone would not insure Thailand’s continued independence in the event of an Allied victory.” He set in motion his plan to recruit Thai volunteers from among Thai students enrolled in American colleges and universities.

Seni next turned to the Thai students in England who “had received neither help nor sympathy from the Thai Minister in London.” There were no obvious leaders to organize the Free Thai in London, but in time they appeared. Prominent among them was Prince Suphasawat, or Prince Vasti as he was better known, and later as “Major Arun,” he conceived operations to be out carried in Thailand by British Special Operations Force 136. He was in contact with Seni early on and believed that “all [Thai] operations should be in concert with the Americans.” But he soon learned the two Allies

themselves were not in concert.

After many delays, the Free Thai started trying to infiltrate Thailand by parachute, submarine, and walking in from China. Several were lost before the linkup was made with the internal Free Thai. The actual existence of the internal resistance movement could not be confirmed from outside until April 1943, but it was found to be a strong, vibrant movement, its members adept at manipulating the Japanese and collecting intelligence on them. Before long, the OSS was able to open its Bangkok base. It was set within 100 meters of the Japanese Army Headquarters and was able to operate with impunity. Pridi and his internal Free Thai were also eager to mount armed guerrilla operations against the Japanese occupiers but were held back by Lord Louis Mountbatten of Burma, the Supreme Allied Commander Southeast Asia.

In a December 1946 speech in London, Lord Mountbatten described the situation: "By the end of the war he [Pridi] had organized sabotage and guerrilla forces comprising some 60,000 fighting men and numerous passive supporters, who were in position at all the key strategic points in Siam, and poised to strike. I realized the difficulty he had to hold those forces in leash, but I also had to keep in mind

the tremendous danger of a premature move which would bring down crushing counter action and disturb my strategic plans for the theatre as a whole."

The most significant service the Free Thai rendered their own country came as the war ended. Pridi writes that from the beginning the Free Thai had two goals: to fight the Japanese invaders and to assure that "Thailand would not be treated as one of the defeated nations." In early September 1945, just weeks after the war ended, Mountbatten summoned a Thai military mission to Ceylon for discussions and presented an agreement for the Thai leaders to sign. The agreement's 21 clauses had wide-ranging consequences for Thailand, including surrendering to Britain all its surplus rice, which would otherwise enable Thailand's return to postwar world trade. Contrary to prior agreement, the Americans were not informed of the terms. The Thai leaders put off signing, and the OSS expressed its concerns to Washington that the British—in the names of the Allies—were imposing terms that infringed on Thai political and economic independence and trying to establish a basis for prolonged occupation of Thailand. Major players in Washington became involved, and then British Prime Minister Clement Atlee,

who promised that Mountbatten would be told to stand down.

That did not put an end to British demands. Negotiations between Great Britain and Thailand continued, but in a more equitable fashion. On January 1, 1946, the formal agreement that ended the state of war between the two countries was signed. It noted that on the day the war ended, "16 August 1945, the Regent [Pridi Banomyong] did, in the name of His Majesty King of Thailand, proclaim the declaration of war made by Thailand against the United Kingdom to be null and void, as it was contrary to the will of the Thai people."

The following was the agreement's operative paragraph: "Whereas the Government of the United Kingdom and the Government of India, in consideration of the acts of repudiation already carried out by the Thai government, and not unmindful of the services rendered by the resistance movement in Thailand during the war with Japan, desire to bring the state of war to an immediate end." □

*Bob Bergin, a former U.S. Foreign Service officer, writes on the history of aviation in Southeast Asia and China and on intelligence and military operations in the World War II China-Burma-India Theater.*



**0107-000-006**  
Knight's Cross Ribbon  
\$2.50 1/2 Fl. \$7.50 YD

**Dealer Inquiries Welcome**

### 3-Piece Knight's Cross with Case & Cover Box

Correct 3-Piece construction, with nickel plated frame marked "800" and rare "Lazy 2" maker mark for the famed C. E. Jücker firm of Berlin. This fine copy features a crisply detailed swastika & lettering, with "beaded" edging on the frame. Furnished with lined leatherette case, neck ribbon & cardboard cover box.

**0107-011-501 \$59.00 Each**

---

### Sterling Silver SS Totenkopf (Honor) Ring

These high quality, heavy weight rings are fine copies of the originals, featuring highly a detailed skull and runic symbols. Each ring includes the proper inscription inside, with each size featuring the name of an actual Third Reich recipient. Specify Size: 8, 9, 10, 11 or 12. Replace \*\* in the item number with the size desired.

**0104-051-0\*\* \$89.00**

Send \$5 Today for our Full-Color Catalog!  
P.O. Box 847 D-44 \* Pottsboro, TX 75076

**1-800-786-6210** Please add \$8.95 for shipping for orders under \$150.  
[www.reddickmilitaria.com](http://www.reddickmilitaria.com)

All: Imperial War Museum



## The Broomstick Army

Britain's Home Guard stood ready to defend the island nation against the invading Nazis.

**AS POWERFUL, FAST-MOVING GERMAN PANZER AND INFANTRY COLUMNS** rampaged across Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, and into northern France early in May 1940, the British held their breath and watched apprehensively from across the narrow English Channel.

The lightning “blitzkrieg” advance split the retreating French and British armies, and the outlook was bleak for Western freedom. Within a few days, the small British Expeditionary Force, mauled and leaving behind its heavy equipment after a fighting retreat, was evacuated miraculously from the fire-swept beaches of Dunkirk. The dispirited French capitulated after a few desperate weeks, and Britain was left alone to face the Axis powers. As Prime Minister Winston Churchill grimly told the House of Commons on May 13, “I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears ... and sweat.”

Across the tiny island nation, people went about their business with characteristic calm and even good cheer, though all knew that with France fully under the German heel they were sure to be invaded. Their innate stoicism veiled fear, for it was no secret that the British defenses were in a pitiful state. Army units were away battling the Italians in East Africa and the Germans in Norway, and Royal Navy squadrons were strung out thinly in the Mediterranean, Atlantic, North Sea, and the Far East.

In England, there were troops in the process of training and reequipping and also some coastal defense units, but if the expected 39 seasoned German panzer and infantry divisions landed, they would face only one fully trained Canadian division and a second partially trained division. The Spanish and Napoleon Bonaparte had attempted to invade England and had failed. But in the bright spring of 1940 there was little to stop the Nazi juggernaut. It was just a matter of time.

Britons scanned cloud-flecked skies for the first signs of German paratroops; anti-aircraft gun emplacements were hastily dug on golf courses and in parks; concrete pillboxes were built on hillsides and at road junctions; and highway and railway station signs were blacked out to confuse potential invaders. But there was virtually no significant defense force available. A swiftly organized armed militia was the only answer, and Secretary for War Anthony Eden proposed it to the British Cabinet in London on May 13, 1940.

So, on the following day, the handsome, urbane Eden broadcast a national radio appeal for men of all ages to volunteer in the defense of the homeland. He said, “We want large numbers of such men in Great Britain who are British subjects, between the ages of 17 and 65, to come forward now and offer their services in order to make assurance doubly sure. The name of the new force which is now to be raised will be the Local Defense Volunteers. The name describes its duties in three words. You will not be paid, but you will receive uniforms and will be armed. In order to volunteer, what you have to do is give your name at your local police station, and then,



**ABOVE:** Prior to being issued uniforms, new recruits of the Home Guard parade in their suits and ties sometime in 1943. **TOP:** Equipped with rifles and Molotov cocktails, these Home Guard soldiers are training in the streets of a British town.

# Portable Oxygen For The Way You Want to Live



## The ALL-NEW INOGEN ONE<sup>G4</sup>

Includes Everything You Need  
To Regain Your Freedom

Meets FAA Requirements for Travel

### Portable Oxygen That Will Never Weigh You Down.

At just 2.8 lbs, the Inogen One G4 is the ultralight portable oxygen concentrator you have been waiting for. The Inogen One G4 is approximately half the size of the Inogen One G3.



REQUEST YOUR **FREE**  
INFORMATION KIT TODAY.

**CALL NOW!**

**1-800-877-8851**





**ABOVE:** Originally called the Local Defense Volunteers, members of the Home Guard, some of whom served in the British armed forces during World War I, stand in ranks prior to inspection in July 1940.  
**BELOW:** British Prime Minister Winston Churchill inspects a detachment of the Parliamentary Home Guard. Its work completed, the Home Guard was officially disbanded on December 3, 1944.



when we want you, we will let you know.”

The stated mission of the LDV was to deal with landings of German parachute troops. Its tactical functions would be “(a) warning; (b) delaying the enemy; (c) harassing the enemy.” The volunteers were to “serve as observation and combat patrols, which are designed to stalk the enemy and hold a defensive position as long as possible, thus forcing the enemy to check his advance.” Their task was to “delay and weary such forces, thus aiding their own regulars in

their counterattack.” Part of the militia’s function was also to “carry on the struggle, if necessary, in areas temporarily overrun by the enemy.”

The response to Eden’s appeal was instant. Even before he had finished speaking, lines of volunteers started forming outside police stations, bewildering local constables who had not been briefed. By July 8, a total of 1,060,000 men and boys had signed up, eager to “do their bit.”

Motley groups of paunchy, ruddy-cheeked Boer War and World War I veterans, callow

teenagers, and men classified medically unfit for the regular services mustered in cities, towns, and villages for nightly and weekend training sessions. Working men kept their jobs and spent most of their spare time learning to become soldiers. The need for the LDV became even more urgent in the next few weeks as German forces massed on the other side of the English Channel and as the men of General John V. Gort’s defeated BEF—bedraggled, dazed, but unbowed—were brought home from Dunkirk.

The LDV got off to a spontaneous and haphazard start, and there was a dearth of weapons and equipment available for it. After Dunkirk, weapons were even scarcer. Training began on a freelance basis and was organized by veterans or provided by schools set up on private initiative by wealthy backers. One such training school was established at Osterley Park in West London, supported by leading publisher Edward Hulton and headed by Tom Wintringham, a former Communist who had led the British contingent of the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War. His goal was a people’s army trained in guerrilla warfare and with a minimum of formal drill and discipline. After instructing 5,000 men, the school was taken over by the War Office.

Former Army officers and sergeants enthusiastically emerged from retirement to lead LDV platoons and companies, instructing them in marching, marksmanship, bayonet and hand grenade use, night fighting, fieldcraft, map reading, camouflage, signaling, aircraft recognition, and first aid. Some units had the advantage of guidance from NCOs in the crack Guards regiments. In town squares, outside timbered village inns and taverns, and in country lanes and meadows, the new citizen soldiers drilled with aging shotguns, pistols, hunting rifles, pitchforks, clubs, hoes, broom handles, and even ancient pikes donated by museums. Small boys trooped after the marchers in amusement. Equipment was minimal, and the volunteers’ only identification was an “LDV” armband until they were eventually issued with ill-fitting Army battledress or denim overalls.

Prime Minister Churchill took a keen interest in the concept of the volunteer force, which he had suggested in October 1939, the month after World War II broke out. But he did not like the name Eden had presented. “I had always hankered for the name Home Guard,” said the prime minister. So, on July 26, he told Secretary Eden, “I don’t think much of the name, Local Defense Volunteers, for your very large new force. The word ‘local’ is uninspiring. Mr. Herbert Morrison (minister of supply and later home secretary) suggested to me today the title,

‘Civic Guard,’ but I think ‘Home Guard’ would be better.”

The persuasive Churchill found that “everybody liked this,” so the LDV became the Home Guard. A new spirit of purpose took hold, and, the prime minister observed, “The mighty organization, which presently approached one and a half million men and gradually acquired good weapons, rolled forward.”

The organization of the Home Guard was overseen by the tall, handsome General Sir Claude Auchinleck, leader of the Southern Command and an Indian Army veteran of Egypt, Aden, Mesopotamia, the North-West Frontier, and the ill-fated Norway campaign. With his encouragement, the Home Guard became a strong military asset. “The Auk” later distinguished himself by checking Field Marshal Erwin Rommel’s vaunted Afrika Korps at the first Battle of El Alamein on July 1-27, 1942, though he lost favor with Churchill.

The militia concept caught the national imagination. One of its members, Basil Boothroyd, wrote in the weekly humor magazine, *Punch*, “For some reason or other, the press has taken us to its fickle heart. We take precedence over the RAF, Mr. Churchill, and Gracie Fields (a popular Lancashire singer and comedienne). We appear in every other headline. The penny papers have special articles telling us how to take cover behind trees and how deep we ought to dig our trenches. The *Times* has light leaders about our neckties and whole columns of correspondence about whether we’re worth one-and-sixpence a night or not.”

Fearful of the peril Britain faced, Churchill was convinced of the potential worth of the Home Guard. He saw it “manning a line of antitank obstacles running down the east center of England and protecting London and the great industrial centers from inroads by armored vehicles.” As the prime minister told Sir Josiah Wedgwood, a parliamentary member, “You may rest assured that we should fight every street of London and its suburbs. It would devour an invading army, assuming one ever got so far. We hope, however, to drown the bulk of them in the salt sea.”

Late that July 1940, Churchill observed, “For the first time in 125 years, a powerful enemy was now established across the narrow waters of the English Channel. Our re-formed Regular Army, and the larger but less well trained Territorials (National Guard), had to be organized and deployed to create an elaborate system of defenses, and to stand ready, if the invader came, to destroy him—for there could be no escape. It was for both sides ‘kill or cure.’ Already, the Home Guard could be

**EXPERIENCE THE ACTION OF WWII AFLOAT!**

**Sail Aboard the Liberty Ship**

# JOHN W. BROWN


**2018 CRUISES** FROM BALTIMORE ON THE CHESAPEAKE BAY

★ **Saturday, June 9**  
★ **Saturday, September 1**

- ★ Tour the Ship ★ Lunch
- ★ See Wartime Aircraft Attack & Battle\*
- ★ Live Music & Entertainment of the '40s

• Order your tickets online at:  
[www.ssjohnwbrown.org](http://www.ssjohnwbrown.org)  
• Information call: 410-558-0164

Find us on Facebook



Project Liberty Ship is a Baltimore based, all volunteer, nonprofit organization.

SS John W Brown is maintained in her WWII configuration, visitors must be able to climb steps to board. \* Weather permitting

## USS SLATER

**Albany, New York**

**Tour the only restored WWII Destroyer Escort afloat in America.**



518-431-1943  
[www.ussslater.org](http://www.ussslater.org)

Publication Title: WWII History Magazine. 2. Publication Number 1539-5456. 3. Filing Date 10/30/17. 4. Issue Frequency: Bi-Monthly. 5. Number of Issues Published Annually: 6. Annual Subscription Price: \$19.95. 7. Complete Mailing address of Known office of publication: 6731 Whittier Avenue, suite A-100, McLean, Fairfax County, Virginia 22101-4554. Contact Person: Mark Hintz. Telephone (including area code) 703-964-0361 x101. 8. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: 6731 Whittier Avenue, Suite A-100, McLean, Virginia 22101-4554. 9. Publisher (Name and complete mailing address): Mark Hintz 6731 Whittier Avenue, suite A-100, McLean, Virginia 22101-4554. Editor: Michael Haskew, 6731 Whittier Avenue, suite A-100, McLean, Virginia 22101-4554. Managing Editor: Carl Gram 6731 Whittier Avenue, suite A-100, McLean, Virginia 22101-4554. 10. Owner: Full Name: Sovereign Media Company, 6731 Whittier Avenue, suite A-100, McLean, Virginia 22101-4554. Mark Hintz: 6731 Whittier Avenue, suite A-100, McLean, Virginia 22101-4554. Carl Gram: 6731 Whittier Avenue, suite A-100, McLean, Virginia 22101-4554. 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities: None. 12. Tax Status: N/A. 13. Publication Title: WWII History Magazine. 14. Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: December 2017. 15. Extent and nature of Circulation. Average No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months a. Total Number of Copies (Net Press Run) 54,421. (1) Mailed Outside County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541-0. (2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541-0. (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails including Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution outside USPS 11,533. (4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS-0. C. Total Paid Distribution - 41,564. D. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail) (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County copies included on PS Form 3541-0. (2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541 (2) 0. (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (eg. First Class mail) 0. (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means) 0. E. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution 0. F. Total Distribution 41,564. G. Copies Not Distributed 12,857. H. Total 54,421. I. Percent Paid 100%. Number Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date a. Total Number of Copies (Net Press Run) 52,375. (1) Mailed Outside County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541-0. (2) Mailed In-County Paid Subscriptions Stated on PS Form 3541-0. (3) Paid Distribution Outside the Mails including Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales, and Other Paid Distribution outside USPS 21,990. (4) Paid Distribution by Other Classes of Mail Through the USPS-0. C. Total Paid Distribution - 50,979. D. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail) (1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County copies included on PS Form 3541-0. (2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541 (2) 0. (3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (eg. First Class mail) 0. (4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means) 0. E. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution 0. F. Total Distribution 50,979. G. Copies Not Distributed 1,396. H. Total 52,375. Percent Paid 100%. 16. Electronic Copy Circulation. Average No. Copies Each Issue during Preceding 12 Months. A. Paid Electronic Copies 207. B. Total Paid Print Copies + paid Electronic Copies 41,771. C. Total Print Distribution + Paid Electronic Copies 41,771. D. Percent Paid (Both Print & Electronic Copies) 100%. No Copies of Single Issue Published Nearest to Filing Date. A. Paid Electronic Copies 0. B. Total Paid Print Copies + Paid Electronic Copies 50,979. C. Total Print Distribution + Paid Electronic Copies 50,979. D. Percent paid (both Print & Electronic Copies) 100%. 17. Publication of Statement of Ownership If the publication is a general publication, publication of this statement is required. Will be printed in the February 2018. Issue of this publication. 17. Signature and Title of Editor, Publisher, Business Manager or Owner Mark Hintz. Date 10/30/17

## Jessen's Relics

**military memorabilia**

Specializing in Original U.S. • German • Japanese Militaria from WWII



Badges • Medals • Flags  
Cloth / Metal Insignia  
Buckles • Edged Weapons  
Documents • Uniforms  
Head / Field Gear Etc.

**Jessen's Relics Inc.**  
**Anthony H. Jessen**  
P.O. Box 1180  
Harrison, TN 37341  
Ph: 205-919-1069  
Fx: 423-326-0970  
email: [ahjessen@mindspring.com](mailto:ahjessen@mindspring.com)

[www.jessenrelics.com](http://www.jessenrelics.com)

included in the general framework of defense.”

From the start, the part-time soldiers found themselves the butt of jokes, songs, newspaper cartoons, and even snide comments questioning their chances if faced with invading Huns. Some people started referring to the men of the Home Guard as the “Broomstick Army.” But there was no doubting their pride and zeal.

Turned down by the War Office for health reasons, 61-year-old, sciatica-ridden Arthur F. Umfreville Green volunteered for the LDV platoon in the village of Storrington near the West Sussex coast and joined it on June 15. A retired Royal Artillery officer who had fought in the Boer War (1899-1902) and at the First Battle of Ypres in 1914, he said, “I was a young brigadier general nearly 25 years ago, and was proud of it. I am a damn sight prouder to be an old volunteer today and to show respect to those put in authority over me.” He became a musketry instructor, weapons procurer, and adviser to the commanders of other units.

Also among the first to join the LDV was 55-year-old, owlish Maj. Gen. Percy C.S. Hobart, who had recently been forced into retirement. He was promoted at once to the rank of lance corporal and charged with the defense of his home village, Chipping Campden, in Gloucestershire. He was soon made a deputy area organizer. An outspoken Army maverick and armored warfare innovator, “Hobo” Hobart later gained fame as the creator of “Hobart’s Funnies,” a series of specialized tanks used with great success by the Allies in the 1944 Normandy invasion.

Brian Poole, an enthusiastic teenage member of a Home Guard platoon in Cheshire, wrote in a letter to his American pen pal, Trude, in August 1940, “The best news yet, I am in the Home Guard (ex-Local Defence Volunteers). I’ve had three rifle drills up to now and I do my first duty from 9 PM to 6 AM on Wednesday, three hours duty, the rest a sleep on the floor ready for action. We are hoping to be in the fight night fronts!!! What we want is not to shoot the Bosche but to bayonet him. That which the Germans don’t like, cold steel.... Done a fine bit of work today, cleaned 20 rifles with Dad. Not so bad eh? Our house is simply littered with field dressings, supplies of uniforms, steel helmets, ammunition and I don’t know what.” Poole was soon in action, helping to search for the crew of a German Junkers Ju-88 bomber shot down during the bombing of Liverpool.

One of the first to enlist in the Home Guard was 55-year-old Jack Potter, the father of seven children. He carried a Lee-Enfield infantry rifle and a hoe.

A number of celebrities joined the Home



**In this May 1943 photograph, a trio of Home Guardsmen train with a Blacker Bombard spigot mortar. Although supplies and weapons were limited in the early months of the Home Guard’s activities, they were better armed as World War II progressed.**

Guard soon after its inception, and readily encouraged others to do so. J.B. Priestley, the popular writer and broadcaster, told his wide radio audience, “Ours is a small and scattered village, but we’d had a fine response to the call for volunteers; practically every able-bodied man in the place takes his turn.... I think the countryman knows, without being told, that we hold our lives here, as we hold our farms, upon certain terms. One of these terms is that while wars still continue, while one nation is ready to hurl its armed men at another, you must necessarily stand up and fight for your own.... There we were, ploughman and parson, shepherd and clerk, turning out at night, as our forefathers had often done before us, to keep watch and ward over the sleeping English hills.”

Author George Orwell, a socialist and a wounded veteran of the Spanish Civil War who would later write the milestone novels *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949) was characteristically more cynical. As a sergeant in a London detachment, he reported, “The Home Guard swells to a million men in a few weeks, and is deliberately organized in such a way that only people with private incomes can hold positions of command. It is ... the most anti-Fascist body existing in England at this moment, and at the same time is an astonishing phenomenon, a sort of people’s army officered by Blimps [“Colonel Blimp” was a cartoon caricature of an aging, outdated Army officer]. The rank and file are predominantly working class, with a strong middle-class

seasoning, but practically all the commands are held by wealthy elderly men, a lot of whom are utterly incompetent.”

Nevertheless, during the sunny, tense spring and early summer of 1940, the men and boys of the Home Guard drilled and trained, practiced on firing ranges operated by British and Canadian troops, and occasionally joined in their maneuvers. They stood ready for invasion, buying precious time for the depleted Regular Army to be expanded, reorganized, and reequipped. Starting in August 1940, Home Guard units were affiliated to county regiments of the Army.

The volunteers performed a wide variety of useful if humble functions. They set up barricades of felled tree trunks, hay carts, and scrapped vehicles to hamper possible enemy columns, stood watch on southern beaches and other vulnerable areas, patrolled the chalk hills of the South Downs, guarded road junctions, bridges, airfields, power stations, factories, and railway tunnels, manned roadblocks to check people’s identities and ensure that no members of any German fifth column were infiltrating their areas, and sometimes rounded up downed Luftwaffe fliers. Some volunteers stood guard on 1,600-year-old ramparts erected by the Roman invaders of England. Bicycle-riding Girl Guides (Girl Scouts) aged from 12 to 16 acted as messengers for Home Guard units.

Inevitably, the volunteers’ zeal caused some cynical fellow citizens to look upon them as overgrown Boy Scouts with weapons, perhaps

more of a threat than enemy paratroops.

London's many park keepers in their quaint brown uniforms were mobilized and armed, the railways established their own Home Guard force of 200,000 men to guard junctions and main and branch lines, and mounted Home Guard detachments were formed in rural areas from the rugged northwestern moorlands to Dartmoor and the rolling uplands of the scenic southwest. In three-man pickets and accompanied by trusted Alsatians (German shepherds) and mastiffs, armed farmers, grooms, and hunt members ran messages and patrolled day and night.

Although their own country was still neutral, Americans living and working in Britain also rallied and formed a mobile Home Guard detachment in July 1940. Based in London, it was led by retired Brig. Gen. W.H. Hayes, who had served on the staff of General John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces in France in 1917-1918. The bespectacled, pipe-smoking Hayes explained, "We started the American unit because our homes are here, and we wanted to show that we were ready, with the British, to share the responsibility of defending their soil."

Meanwhile, as its numbers grew, so did the weapons and equipment made available to the Home Guard. British industry was in high gear, and more Lee-Enfield rifles, machine guns, and hand grenades were distributed to the volunteer platoons. In July 1940, the first shipments of half a million rifles and light machine guns purchased from the United States and Canada crossed the Atlantic safely. These included surplus Springfield Model 1903 rifles, Canadian Ross rifles, and Browning automatic rifles.

Recognizing the growing Nazi menace and steering his neutral nation away from its isolationist stance, President Franklin D. Roosevelt had decided to send as many weapons as possible to the British Army after the Dunkirk evacuation and the fall of France. By ransacking arsenals and armories, America was able to transfer 970,000 rifles, 87,500 machine guns, 895 field guns, and large quantities of ammunition to England. Although most of the arms were leftovers from World War I, they were to prove useful for training purposes and for arming the Home Guard.

Also, the newly formed American Committee for the Defense of British Homes dispatched thousands of assorted weapons and ammunition, including rifles from game hunters and private collections, modern revolvers, old frontier buffalo guns, and rifles used in Louisiana during the Civil War. Many of the donated weapons had little messages attached to them.

One read:

"Dear friend, for Heaven's sake forbear  
To let a German come too near;  
Blest be the man whose aim is straight,  
But woe to him who draws too late."

Special trains were waiting in all of the ports for the precious cargoes, and Home Guard members sat up all through the night to receive them. "Men and women worked day and night making them fit for use," Churchill reported. "By the end of July, we were an armed nation, so far as parachute or airborne landings were concerned. We had become a hornet's nest."

The prime minister was right in more ways than one, for the Battle of Britain was now raging over eastern and southeastern England. German bomber formations were overhead to soften up defenses preparatory to invasion, and Royal Air Force Fighter Command Spitfires and Hurricanes were scrambling hourly to repel them. The fate of Western freedom was being decided in history's first major aerial battle, and the Home Guard was playing its part on the ground.

While being machine gunned, the men of a Home Guard platoon coolly shot down a German bomber with 180 rounds of rifle fire during a raid on southern England on August 18. Another Home Guard unit later downed a Dornier bomber with rifle fire. News of the citizen volunteers' marksmanship drew virulent responses in the German press and on Berlin radio.

"The British government is releasing criminals from prison and training them for murder," reported one announcer bitterly. "Every Englishman who agrees to act as a franc-tireur is digging his own grave. Churchill is leading the British civil population on a fatal path."

But the RAF, aided staunchly by the Regular and volunteer gunners on the ground, defeated the Luftwaffe. Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler's planned invasion, Operation Sea Lion, was shelved, and the British breathed a collective sigh of relief and girded anew to continue the struggle.

Home Guard sections and platoons, meanwhile, underwent more intensive training, were issued with smarter regulation serge battledress, increased their firepower with spigot mortars, antitank guns, Thompson submachine guns, and Sten guns, and extended their functions. They cooperated closely with the police and civil defense organizations and patrolled the River Thames and other waterways in outboard motorboats mounting Lewis guns.

By late 1940, the Home Guard had grown to 5,000 companies (or 25,000 platoons) and was commanded by Maj. Gen. Thomas R.

*Continued on page 74*

## WORLD WAR SUPPLY

VETERAN OWNED & OPERATED

Accessories For Your  
Military Firearms

24/7 Order Center:  
**616-682-6039**



Large selection of Military  
T's and hoodies. Please  
check the website for details.

WWII  
Japanese  
Army  
Cap Hat  
**\$39.99**



U.S. HELMET Steel Pot  
with Liner **\$39.99**

[www.worldwarsupply.com](http://www.worldwarsupply.com)



Taken prisoner shortly after D-Day, Charlie Lefchik vividly remembers the cramped freight cars that transported Americans to camps in Germany.



# Riding the

**T**he large number of Allied prisoners being funneled south to Rennes, France, following the D-Day invasion swelled the German transit camp to capacity so the decision was made to transport the men to permanent locations inside Germany. They had been captured from all points of the Normandy battlefield and marched 100 miles in the four weeks that followed.

Scores of POWs converged at the Brittany rail hub. The men were assembled into groups of 40 and led to wooden freight train cars. Their farewell ration from the Germans was a slice of wurst and a piece of cheese along with a small loaf of bread that required special instructions from their captors. “*Drei tage*,” they were told in German, “*drei tage*.” The message was not lost on the POWs. Make the bread last three days.

“There were hundreds of us, and it took some time to get all of us loaded, which made it a pretty long train,” explained Charlie Lefchik, a 24-year-old American who was captured by German forces on June 10, 1944. “Being already used to hunger, we figured that we could make the three days easily. But it turned out we were in those boxcars a lot longer than that.”

The train pulled away from Rennes just before dark on July 5 headed east, making progress only at night because of daylight patrols by Allied fighter planes. At morning the boxcars were dropped at a train siding, and at dusk the engine would return to move the cars to another location. The men were given water, wurst, and cheese once a day, and on the fourth day received the promised loaf of bread. With it came the same advice from the Germans: *drei tage*. The men’s cycle of misery continued for 23 days.

“One time during those 23 days we were put on a siding at dawn, and our train never moved for about a week,” Lefchik said. “For two days during that time they didn’t give us any water, and thirst is much worse than hunger. Being July, it didn’t take long for us to start dehydrating. During one of those nights it rained some, and one of the guys wiggled out a canteen cup between the bars and barbed wire over the small window opening in the corner of the car and caught some rain from the roof.”

The POWs found themselves locked inside a slow-moving French railroad car called the 40 and 8, a relic from World War I so named because it could ferry 40 soldiers or eight horses into battle. Originally built to haul farm produce, the narrow gauge boxcar measured 10 feet wide and 20 feet long, about one-third the size of a typical American boxcar. It became notorious in U.S. Army lore from doughboys a war earlier who thought it pure torture standing inside one, loaded with gear, while being moved to the front. They, however, were not required to sleep in it.

“We slept with 20 men on each side of the boxcar, but you had to sleep on your side to make room for 20 men,” Lefchik said. “If you slept on your back, you took the place of two men, which crowded that side of the car. We slept with our heads against the

Author’s Collection



**ABOVE:** Charlie Lefchik strikes a jaunty pose as a young soldier in 1943. Lefchik jumped into Normandy on D-Day with the 82nd Airborne Division. **OPPOSITE:** During a wartime training exercise, an American paratrooper exits a transport plane. Casualties among the airborne troops were expected to be high on D-Day, but despite difficulties turned out to be acceptable.

wall, and we overlapped our legs in the middle of the car.”

The Germans furnished the 40 and 8 with a can placed in the center of the car surrounded with straw. Lefchik said prisoners were allowed to empty it once a day. “The can was used for relieving ourselves and any waste matter if we had any since we hardly had anything to eat for so long.”

The loaves of bread continued every fourth day for another three weeks. Their caged torment finally ended on July 28 when the train reached its destination near Chalons in eastern France. The POWs had traveled nearly 700 miles by rail, averaging just 30 miles a day. They all suffered from the crippling effects of muscular atrophy as a result of physical inactivity.

“When we got off those boxcars we were so weak from lack of food and exercise that we had to lift our legs to get over the rails,” Lefchik said. “That’s when I noticed how thin I was. I could touch both of my middle fingers together under my thighs, and I could touch my thumbs at the top of my thighs with space in between.”

Lefchik’s hard luck ticket on the 40 and 8 was punched at 2:30 AM on June 6, when he jumped into Normandy with the 82nd Airborne Division as a private in H Company, 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Many planeloads of men in the final wave of D-Day land-

BY RICHARD A. BERANTY

# German Rail

ings touched ground miles away from their targeted areas because of thickening clouds and a spirited defensive effort on the part of alerted German gunners. Of the six U.S. airborne regiments to take part in Operation Overlord, the 507th PIR suffered the highest number of killed, wounded, or captured, including Colonel George V. Millett, Jr., its commanding officer, who was taken prisoner on June 9. It has been said that of the 78 busloads of regimental soldiers taken to their airbase at Barking Heath and Fulbeck prior to takeoff on June 5, only eight busloads of men returned from combat one month later. The tragic misdrop was Lefchik's first parachute jump into combat, his 16th and final one of the war.

"I was surprised how well I could see the shapes of trees in the dark and the poles that were set up to keep gliders from landing,"

National Archives



**Stand up! Hook up! Paratroopers of the 82nd "All American" Airborne Division prepare to jump from a transport aircraft during a training exercise.**

explained Lefchik, who landed in a seemingly tranquil area of the region dotted with farms, fields, woods, and apple orchards. "I kept searching the ground for signs of the enemy, but there was none. I met up with some other guys, and we decided to stay put in some trees until daylight so we could find out where we were and what to do."

Lefchick said an eerie haze covered the low ground at dawn on D-Day when they spotted a column of U.S. troops framed against the skyline on higher ground south of their position. "Watching them trudging along I suddenly recognized them as some of the men from my

company, so I ran to join them as fast as my legs would let me."

The group moved toward the sound of gunfire and found more men from their unit who had ambushed an enemy supply detachment, capturing eight Germans along with two vehicles that were riddled with bullets. "The trucks contained bread and jars of jellies. The bread was gray in color and very solid, different from the kind we knew. But with jelly it wasn't too bad, and it curbed our appetite."

Ahead of the men stretched a field blanketed by waist-high grass and weeds. "We were near the edge of the woods, and a German was coming down the slope from the right in a running crouch almost hidden by the grass. I raised my rifle and fired. Two other shots blended with mine, and the man dropped out of sight. We didn't know if he was really hit or not, and if he was

hit whose shot found its mark. That was the first time in my life that I shot at a human being."

Toward evening on D-Day, Lefchik was ordered to an outpost on some higher ground along a hedgerow to watch for enemy activity. "I was there for about an hour when my lieutenant came by with five other troopers, and he told me to follow them. We followed a hedgerow to where it ended at the woods and scrambled up an embankment and followed another hedgerow to where it ended at an open field. I was bringing up the rear, and after going about 30 yards I saw an object up ahead in the field only a few feet from the hedgerow. It was

a German soldier lying partially on his right side, no helmet, and the left rear part of his head was blown off. Directly across from him, half dug in and cowering in the hedgerow, were two German soldiers, blood on their faces and bloody hands held high. You could see the terror in their eyes as they pleaded with each of us as we passed by, 'Nien. Nien.' We kept going, figuring there was no danger from them in their condition."

The enemy ruse worked as intended. Lefchik said in a short time they received gunfire from the two bloody Germans they had passed minutes earlier. "We lined ourselves up on a small bank and started firing at their position. One of our guys was hit in his elbow and was bleeding like hell. Someone put a tourniquet on it, and we got out of there and back to our unit, which was on the other side of a small and narrow road. Each of us took his turn going across. Since I was last in line, and it came my turn to go across, I didn't go. I stayed about 10 seconds longer than the others, thinking, 'What if the Germans saw us crossing at spaced intervals and sighted their weapons down the road on me.'"

The paratroopers stayed hidden in a copse of trees overnight and throughout the following day, becoming some of the first Americans to experience combat in Normandy's hedgerow country. While the centuries-old method of land division was alien to U.S. soldiers, it represented a tactical paradise to its four-year occupiers. "The fields in Normandy were divided by hedgerows, not fences like we have," Lefchik said. "They were mounds of dirt piled about two feet high with thick hedges about five or six feet high growing out of the mounds of dirt. They had openings, usually at the corners and sometimes in the middle. The openings were only wide enough for one person to go through at a time."

As daylight faded an attempt was made to cross German lines and try to reach U.S. forces fighting inland, but their prisoners posed a problem. "The Germans were being kept in a little barn across the road behind us. Even though it was war, none of us could dispose of them by shooting them in cold blood. Our only alternative was to leave them."

The men waited until dark and quietly left the area and their captives behind. In single file they cautiously moved away, following several hedgerows to a field and its bordering woods when the column came to a stop. "We were hunkered down, and one of our officers came down the line headed for the rear. In a few minutes he came back followed by two other troopers. After about 15 minutes we heard a muffled cry, hardly audible, of pain and agony. Then

word came down to us that the head of the column happened on two sleeping Germans and the two men brought up from the rear sneaked up on them as they slept and knifed them.”

The column next entered an orchard where the men were met with a German challenge they could not answer. They began to ease their way back when Germans suddenly fired in their direction. “Most of the men ran back the way we came while the rest of us ran to the opening in a hedgerow,” Lefchik said. “One trooper couldn’t wait his turn to go through, so he ran in a short circle to pick up speed and like an airplane taking off ran toward the hedgerow and soared up and through the top of it.”

They followed a ditch that ran parallel to a blacktop road and encountered a German truck with intricate wires leading away from it to a nearby farmhouse. “It must have been a communication truck because it had a spider web maze of wires coming from it. We went through the wires without getting hung up, crossed the road, and headed for a gully in the center of a field with small trees and bushes. Dawn was breaking so we decided to hide out there during the day. We could hear the Germans who were already awake and on the road above us yelling orders as they prepared to move out.”

Hidden from German eyes, the small group of Americans spent the long daylight hours of June 9 hiding in the woods. The men got little sleep because of artillery fire throughout the day. Guns boomed from one side and then the other, Lefchik said, and about two or three seconds later they heard the fading “sh-sh-sh-sh” sound of shells passing over their heads. Realizing the coming night might be their last chance to reach U.S. lines, they decided once again to try their luck solving Normandy’s labyrinth of hedgerows.

“As soon as it got dark we were just like rats coming out of their holes,” Lefchik said. “We moved in single file without incident until just before daybreak. Our column was crossing a field and entering some woods, and the two front men came running back out. They met Germans just waking up after bedding down in the woods.”

German guns fired, and a man beside Lefchik fell to the ground, killed instantly. Lefchik and five others raced to the nearest cover, some bushes and weeds, while the rest of the column fled the way they had come. The men threw a grenade into the woods, and the Germans responded with three of their own. “Everything was quiet for a while, and then I heard a pop. A German flare was shot out over the field. As the flare burst, the field was covered in a brilliant light that came down slowly on a small



**ABOVE: A short time after parachuting into Normandy during the predawn hours of June 6, 1944, American paratroopers advance warily down a dirt road and into a small village. Contact with the Germans was, in some cases, immediate upon landing. TOP: After coming to earth, a paratrooper of the 82nd Airborne Division helps his comrade disengage from the tangled lines of his parachute.**

parachute.”

The Americans remained motionless, partially exposed to the enemy and trying their best to absorb and blend with everything the bushes and weeds had to offer. Over the next several minutes two more German flares were sent skyward. “They have a machine gun set up at the corner of the field and pointed in our direction,” said a paratrooper in a hushed tone dur-

ing one of the dark intervals. Desperately lost and on the run behind enemy lines for 100 continuous hours, one of them yelled “*kamerad*” from inside the bushes and was told by the Germans in broken English to come out.

“Dawn was beginning to break, and we had no place to go with the Germans in the woods and flares being shot out over the field,” Lefchik explained. “Our only recourse was to

surrender even though one of our men said, 'Don't trust them.' But we had no choice. As the saying goes, discretion is the better part of valor, so we had to take our chances."

Over the next five days the men were kept inside a small barn that became a collection point for other U.S. prisoners, mostly airborne, who were captured after D-Day. On June 16 they started a 10-day march to the transit camp at Rennes, surviving on what little rations the Germans provided and the gratitude and generosity shown by French civilians they met along the way.

"Several people from a house we were passing stopped the group and asked the guards for permission to feed us," he said. "They brought out vegetable soup in large pots, the best and most delicious food I have ever eaten. It had everything in it: potatoes, carrots, beans, onions, and also milk. We were like hogs slopping at the trough, eating from anything that would hold soup. From all our hunger and shrunken stomachs it was a wonder that none of us got sick because we certainly gorged ourselves. Another time we were fed by the French and one of the ladies came up to me and gestured if she could have the little American flag on my right shoulder. I gestured for her to cut it off, which made her happy. I even saw someone standing back in the doorway of the house waving a small American flag."

The men were marched mostly at night, dictated by whether the sky was clear or overcast and the presence of Allied aircraft. "There were times during the daylight marches we would come upon a section of the road that was peppered with holes about eight or 10 inches in diameter where fighter planes did some strafing," Lefchik said. "About 50 yards farther on we would come upon a vehicle in a ditch that was strafed and all burned up and full of bullet holes."

Housed in barns or any other outbuildings encountered along the way, the dusty and hungry prisoners arrived at Rennes on June 26, where they remained for eight days. Lefchik said the transit camp provided the best rations he received from the Germans since his capture 16 days earlier. Breakfast was two slices of bread with butter and jam and a small dipper of sweetened tea. Dinner was one dipper of thick onion, potato, and cabbage soup. Supper was the same. It was fine dining, he said, compared to what lay in store when the prisoners pulled out of Rennes on the 40 and 8. "I don't know how or why we didn't go crazy all the time we spent in those boxcars starving for food and thirsty for water," Lefchik remarked about their 23-day confinement.

The prisoners were badly malnourished when the train arrived at Chalons, and it took some time for the Germans to unload them all. Rations improved somewhat, consisting of hot tea for breakfast, a dipper of watery soup for dinner, and the same for supper along with a loaf of bread shared by four men. Hunger had no relief and trying to end it did not always work. "One of the boys at the head of the line got his one dipper of sauerkraut soup and immediately ran back to the end of the line, eating his sauerkraut soup as he moved forward

with the line. He got seconds, and again he ran back to the end of the line to see if he could get more. He got a third helping, but while he was eating it his body rebelled because of his shrunken stomach and he lost all his food."

The prisoners were housed inside a three-story building with blown-out windows. After 18 days they were loaded into boxcars bound for Stalag XIII A at Limburg, Germany. "This time they gave us a loaf of bread and a half quart of meat, which was quite a treat at that time," Lefchik said.

Both: National Archives



**ABOVE:** Near the village of Ste. Mere Eglise, which they captured on D-Day, paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division walk along a road lined with hedgerows. **TOP:** The body of a drowned 82nd Airborne paratrooper, weighed down by the load of his parachute pack and equipment, floats quietly in a flooded field somewhere in Normandy. The Germans intentionally flooded the area to make airborne landings and cross-country movement difficult for the invaders.

The Limburg camp near Frankfurt was not capable of handling such a large number of prisoners, so the men were kept under circus-sized tents with straw for bedding. For the first time they received Red Cross parcels, a godsend to POWs, with their variety of foodstuffs. Most appreciated was not the assortment of delicacies such as powdered milk and raisins, but rather the cigarettes, which became standard currency for purchasing power in German camps throughout the war. The highest priced commodity was a two-ounce container of American coffee valued at 40 cigarettes. "Each item in the Red Cross parcel had a price for a certain number of cigarettes. The men who smoked could sell some of their items for cigarettes because money was of no use in the prison camp. I didn't smoke, and if I found a pack or two in my parcel I kept them in case I wanted to buy an item."

On September 5, Lefchik and a trainload of other prisoners were transferred from Limburg to their final destination, Stalag VIIA at Moosburg, Germany, which was a sprawling complex north of Munich that contained thousands of POWs from many different countries. Double strings of barbed wire fencing kept the nationalities apart inside their own separate compounds of one-story wooden barracks. Unlike Hollywood's depiction of prisoner life, Lefchik said officers were not housed with enlisted men, and Germans were extremely proficient at running the camp. "The nonsense you see on TV and in movies never happened," he said.

The men slept in bunk beds stacked three high on a burlap mattress stuffed with straw. Four slats held the mattress in place but were not nailed down. Lefchik said one had to be careful when moving not to fall through and onto the man below. Still, the top rack was the most desirable of the three. "Guys tried to get the top bunk because every time you moved around there was always dirt falling out of the burlap on the guy below," he said. "And because of all the straw in the mattress a lot of fleas and lice did too."

POWs were provided showers once a month—50 men at a time. They were marched under guard to a facility that served the entire camp. They carried only their wash cloth and a cake of soap with them, placed their clothes and shoes on numbered hangers that were hung on racks. Next door to the showers was a gassing chamber, and the racks were placed inside of it. "After showering we stood around to dry off and waited for our clothes to be fumigated," Lefchik explained. "When they took our clothes out of the gas chamber they let them air out a little and then started calling out the



**A single German soldier stands guard over several American prisoners, captured in the confusion on D-Day. At least some of these prisoners were airborne, and Charlie Lefchik shared a similar journey to a prisoner of war camp.**

numbers on the hangers. You had to remember your number to get your clothes. We would dress then go back to the barracks for more dirt, lice, and fleas."

Moosburg was the distribution point of Red Cross parcels arriving from Switzerland, and each POW received one per week. Men who experienced confinement in German camps largely credit the packages for their general well being even in ways beyond nutrition. To heat water for coffee the men used a POW invention made from Red Cross tins called a "blower," a wood-burning stove about 18 inches long. The hand-operated, crank and pulley rigged device turned a wheel of metal blades that produced airflow, which fanned a small fire to cook over. British soldiers, some of them prisoners since the fall of Dunkirk four years earlier, devised the gadget that created fire "like a blowtorch."

"Our evening ration was seven men to a loaf of bread, two cooked potatoes for each man, a piece of wurst, and a piece of cheese," Lefchik said. "We would combine that with some of the contents from the Red Cross parcels and make stew on the blower."

Germans also gave the men soup at times—cabbage and potato or pea—along with another type that was less appetizing but more memorable. "It was some kind of green vegetable cooked in greasy water with no taste and already getting cold when we got it. We called it hedgerow soup because it looked a lot like the hedgerows that we fought among

in Normandy."

In early October Lefchik was put in the camp hospital for an infection of his right foot, which had swollen to nearly twice its normal size. The next day German doctors treated it with an early form of anesthetic skin refrigerant called ethyl chloride to control pain as a prelude to surgery.

"They told me not to move, and one doctor held a large hypodermic needle and the other doctor pointed to a spot between my big toe and the one next to it. He wanted him to squirt liquid from the needle three feet away to the spot he gestured. As he squirted the liquid the other doctor blew on it and froze that part of my foot. Then he took a scalpel and made an incision between my toes, and the blood and infected matter just poured out. Then they started to squeeze my leg from the calf down to get it all out. It was very painful. I was in the hospital for six weeks, and every day I had to soak my foot in hot water that contained some kind of medicinal liquid that helped draw out the infection. At first I thought maybe I would lose my foot, but it turned out okay."

Willing to haul brick and clear rubble for a chance to leave camp and barter with German civilians, some POWs volunteered to help with the heavy work of cleanup following an Allied bombing raid on nearby Munich. They traveled from Moosburg on 40 and 8 boxcars, providing one solution to Germany's manpower shortage brought on by the strain of war. It was



**Liberated from a German prison camp in the spring of 1945, American and British soldiers relish their first moments of freedom in months. Medical treatment, ample food, and the long trek home awaited them after a long period of privation.**

not uncommon for prisoners to be sent to cities and farms throughout the country and used as manual labor. In Munich guards were lenient with POWs who traded with civilians, and securing bread to eat was a top objective.

“We got two loaves of Vienna bread for a pack of cigarettes because Germans liked American cigarettes,” he said. “We got two loaves of bread for a bar of soap because our soap lathered so well and women wanted it for themselves and their kids.”

Prisoners faced a challenge trying to smuggle items into Moosburg upon their return. Some men sewed pockets on the lower inside of their overcoats and entered the stalag with coats unbuttoned so not to give guards notice of their concealed contraband. “Since I was a paratrooper, I had my pants bloused in my boots and put a loaf of bread in each pant leg and you couldn’t tell they were there,” he explained. “We had to be careful when going back into camp. If they noticed us bringing anything in, they would take the whole group of 50 men off to the side and take everything from them.”

Lefchik left Moosburg in late March to work on a farm and spent his final five weeks of imprisonment performing the chores normally done by German men. He and 22 other volun-

teers were taken under guard in a civilian passenger train to the tiny hamlet of Amberg and assigned to surrounding farms. Hard work, fresh air, and farm food allowed the men to regain some vigor after months of inactivity and a lacking diet. They worked and ate at the farms but did not sleep there; instead they were kept overnight in a village house with barred windows. Every morning two German soldiers unlocked the door to the building and escorted the prisoners to their respective farms. At day’s end they were gathered from the farms and returned to the house by the same two guards.

“Women were in charge of the farms in the absence of their husbands, and they all had a young Ukrainian girl to help them,” Lefchik said. “They were almost like prisoners, brought there after the Germans overran Ukraine. The lady I worked for had a girl named Varga, about 15 years old, and she helped me to communicate since I could understand Slovak, which is close to the Ukrainian language.”

One evening in late April, their final night as POWs, the 23 men lay awake in the house and listened as German guards returned well after dark, quietly unlocked the door, and fled. American ground units were advancing toward the area, and German forces were in retreat and had been for some time. U.S. tanks rumbled in

the distance and occasionally fired their machine guns while the men stayed inside their confines. When day broke they gathered outside, and soon a U.S. spotter plane flew overhead making two circles above them. Not long afterward a reconnaissance unit from the 10th Armored Division arrived in a fast-moving, gun-mounted jeep and liberated the men at 12:25 PM, Friday, April 27, 1945.

“The guys in jeeps were going through the small communities to see if they would meet any German resistance,” Lefchik said, “and if they did, tanks and half-tracks on the outskirts of town would come in and wipe them out. We knew the war was coming to an end because every night we could hear German soldiers walking by our house moving back. The three men inside the jeep couldn’t take us back all at one time, but they did take us back in two loads. We were all over that jeep—on the fenders, on the bumpers, the hood, and all over the back of it. They took us to a half-track that was waiting on the edge of town and then to a command post. From there we got on any kind of vehicle that was moving to the rear away from the front. As we were moving back, we passed large fields that were filled with thousands of German prisoners. It really was a mass of humanity.”

Lefchik returned to the United States on a liberty ship from Camp Lucky Strike at Le Havre, France, and was given a 60-day convalescent furlough, a customary practice for returning POWs, along with a mental and physical evaluation required by the Army prior to discharge. In 1951, his claim for benefits under Section 6 of the War Claims Act awarded Lefchik \$322 for time spent as a POW, equivalent to about \$3,000 today. Before he died at age 93 in his hometown of Ford City, Pennsylvania, in 2013, the retired factory worker reflected on the fear and uncertainty one soldier felt prior to battle.

“When I went into combat I imagined all kinds of things that could happen to me, such as being killed, wounded, or crippled,” he said. “My mind was racing with questions. Will I make it safely to the ground? Will I be able to see where I’m going in the dark? Will there be Germans on the ground waiting for us? But never once did I imagine being captured and taken prisoner. That was really the unexpected.” □

*Richard A. Beranty is a frequent contributor to WWII History. For additional reading he suggests Down to Earth: The 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment in Normandy by Martin K.A. Morgan.*

# NAVY SPIRIT

## COLD-CAST BRONZE SCULPTURE

Hand-cast, hand-painted, sculpture of a sailor stands atop a patriotic base with Navy emblem

Backdrop recalls the look of a ship's sail and features a golden Navy emblem and the words to the Sailor's Creed

Certificate of Authenticity

**Strictly limited to only 5,000**

**"I am a United States sailor."**

This proud proclamation is the first sentence in the Sailor's Creed and it carries with it the honor of every sailor who helped make the U.S. Navy the distinguished institution it is today. Now these powerful words form the foundation of a new naval collectible of the highest caliber: the hand-crafted *Navy Spirit Cold-Cast Bronze Sculpture*. Acquire yours now in four monthly installments of \$29.99 each, for a total of \$119.99\*, backed by our 365-day 100% satisfaction guarantee. Send no money now. Mail the Reservation Application today!

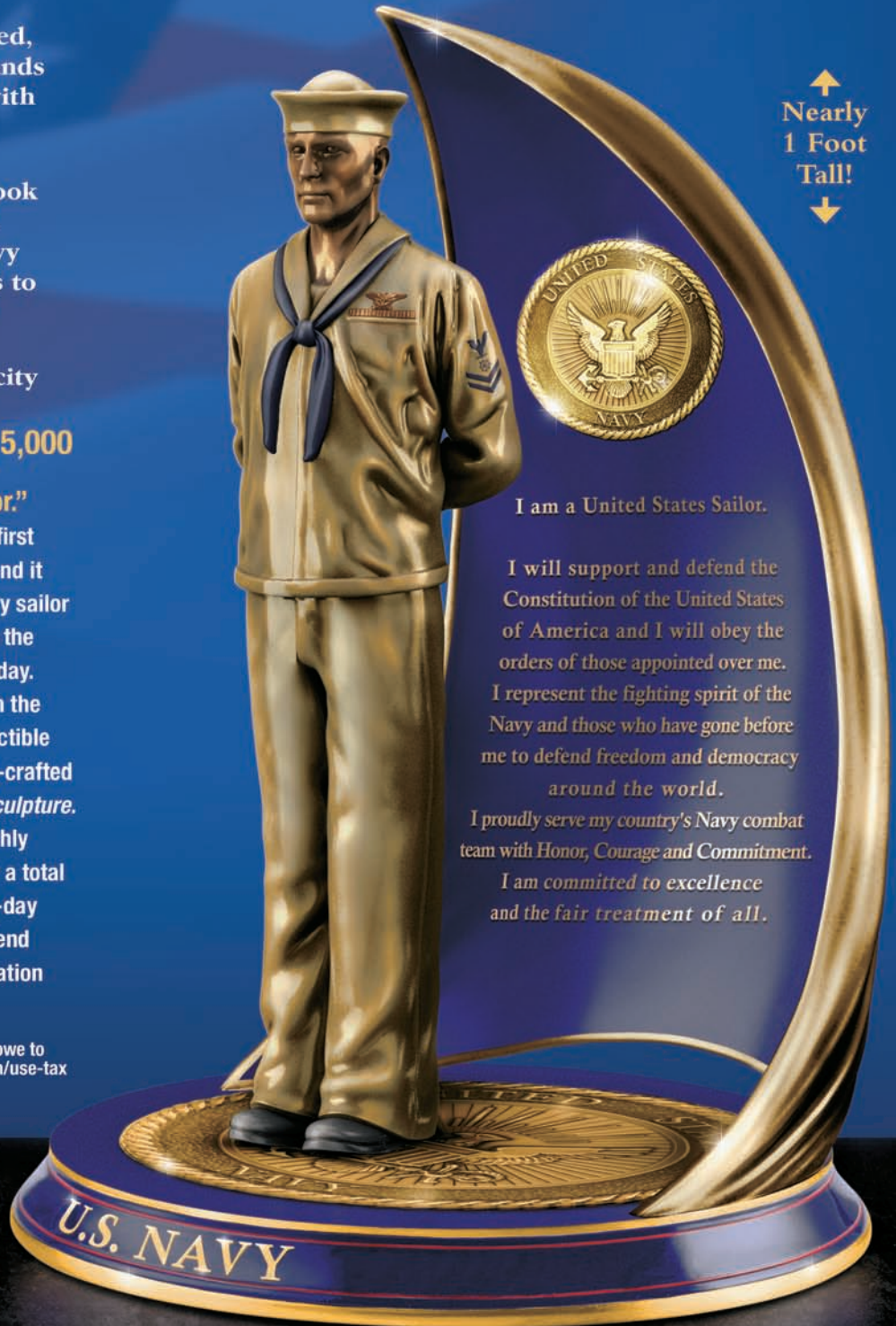
\*For information on sales tax you may owe to your state, go to [bradfordexchange.com/use-tax](http://bradfordexchange.com/use-tax)

Neither the Department of the Navy nor any other component of the Department of Defense has approved, endorsed or authorized this product.

Orders will be filled first-come, first-served.  
Order now!

[www.bradfordexchange.com/navyspirit](http://www.bradfordexchange.com/navyspirit)

↑  
Nearly  
1 Foot  
Tall!  
↓



I am a United States Sailor.

I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America and I will obey the orders of those appointed over me. I represent the fighting spirit of the Navy and those who have gone before me to defend freedom and democracy around the world.

I proudly serve my country's Navy combat team with Honor, Courage and Commitment.

I am committed to excellence and the fair treatment of all.

Shown smaller than actual size of appr. 11 inches tall

© 2017 BGE 01-25887-001-BIL

RESERVATION APPLICATION

SEND NO MONEY NOW

THE  
**BRADFORD EXCHANGE**  
-HOME DECOR-

9345 Milwaukee Avenue · Niles, IL 60714-1393

**YES.** Please reserve the *Navy Spirit Cold-Cast Bronze Sculpture* for me as described in this announcement.

Limit: one per order.

Please Respond Promptly

\*Plus a total of \$16.99 shipping and service; see [bradfordexchange.com](http://bradfordexchange.com). Limited-edition presentation restricted to 5,000 editions. Please allow 4-8 weeks for shipment. Sales subject to product availability and order acceptance.

Mrs. Mr. Ms.

Name (Please Print Clearly)

Address

City

State

Zip

Email (optional)

01-25887-001-E57491



**American soldiers patrol along the slope of a vineyard in Sicily during the campaign to capture the island from Axis forces. General George Patton led the American forces in Sicily and did not approve of General Terry Allen's style of command.**

# WHO FIRED THE BEST Combat Generals?

THE RELIEF OF THE 1ST DIVISION'S TOP COMMANDERS  
REMAINS A TOPIC OF DEBATE DECADES LATER.

BY WALTER HOLDEN

DURING WORLD WAR II, TERRY DE LA MESA ALLEN AND THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JR., WERE "relieved" during a victorious campaign. These two men commanded the 1st Infantry Division of the United States Army, which, even their strongest critics admitted, under the two generals' "inspirational leadership," was by far the best division fighting against the Germans in North Africa and Sicily.

The controversial firing has been argued ever since, bits of blame falling all over the command structure, from Generals Dwight Eisenhower, Walter Bedell "Beetle" Smith, and John Lucas at headquarters to Generals Omar Bradley and George S. Patton, Jr. in battle command.

In August 1943, as the fight for Sicily neared its close, Terry Allen and Ted Roosevelt seemed to be at the top of their game, being widely praised in the press.

Ernie Pyle, who usually favored common infantrymen over generals, wrote, "Major General Terry Allen was one of my favorite people.... If there was one thing Allen lived and breathed for, it was to fight." Another frontline reporter wrote: "Never in my life have I seen a man so worshipped.... Terry Allen is the greatest leader of men and the greatest tactical general in our army."

At that time it was the fashion for American generals to be disparaged by the more experienced British, but General Sir Harold Alexander, the senior British commander, called Allen the best division leader he had seen in either world war. When Allen and Roosevelt were being relieved, *Time* Magazine was on press with a quite favorable cover story on Allen, which ironically appeared before the magazine knew of the firing.

Ted Roosevelt, famous son of a famous president, earned his spurs in World War I combat. His superior called him "an officer of unusual ability" and "an excellent commander of men." In one battle he was gassed; in another he was shot in the leg, but in both battles he stayed with his command. Between the wars he founded the American Legion. He was a poor politician, but he made millions in business. In World War II, Roosevelt maintained the reputation for reckless bravery he had gained in World War I. In his jeep "Rough Rider" he rode down an enemy cavalry patrol, shooting one man off his horse and scattering the rest. Among his soldiers, the betting was 10 to one against his lasting two weeks in combat, but he lived long enough to die in bed more than a year later.

Neither Allen nor Roosevelt was a member of the "West Point club." Allen had flunked out of the Point but gotten his commission later. In 1940, Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall jumped Lt. Col. Allen over 900 senior officers and made him commander of the division that was first both in name and in prestige. In World War I, Allen,



General Terry Allen (above) is pictured with staff officers shortly after the invasion of Sicily. This photo was taken in the town of Gela, near the American landing beaches. General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., (below) sits in front of his Jeep "Rough Rider" at Gela.



like Roosevelt, had been wounded leading troops and awarded medals for bravery. In one battle he was sent to an aid station for treatment. He ripped off the wound tag and returned to the front, only to be wounded again. In another battle a German bullet tore through his mouth, knocking out molars on both sides and leaving him with a permanent whistle in his voice when he became excited. Being advanced over so many other officers made Allen the object of jealousy; his maverick actions made him an easy target for charges of insubordination.

Seeing Allen and Roosevelt in action buoyed the infantrymen's faith in the generals and in themselves. Allen told his officers, "A soldier doesn't fight to save suffering humanity or any other nonsense. He fights to prove that his unit

plaints from Oran and further repercussions from General Eisenhower's May 1943 visit to the 1st Division command post.

The relationship between the commanders of the 1st Division and George Patton has been much discussed. In *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph*, Ladislav Farago projects himself into Patton's mind to introduce Allen, Roosevelt, and the 1st Division in Sicily: "The cocky bastards! Patton did not like Allen.... The 1st Division had been a problem since back in Tunisia ... a magnificent group of bold men, led flamboyantly by their iconoclastic commanders.... Allen was too independent and moody; Roosevelt had a bad case of arthritis and was drinking heavily." Even so, Farago was forced to conclude, "But as leaders in combat they had no peers."



is the best in the Army and that he has as much guts as anyone else in the unit." After initial setbacks in North Africa, the 1st Division fought two panzer divisions to a standstill, leading the famed Desert Fox, German General Erwin Rommel, to withdraw, admitting, "I was forced to the conclusion that the enemy had grown too strong for our attack to be maintained."

Combat results were fine, but there were unfortunate noncombat results from the proud attitude Allen and Roosevelt engendered in the 1st Division. Not saluting officers, a practice used in combat to prevent the enemy from picking off the leaders, became the custom out of battle as well as in battle; rear-echelon soldiers like those in Oran who refused combat men admission to their clubs found themselves in fights they could not win. There were com-

Carlo D'Este, in *Bitter Victory*, a history of the battle for Sicily, discusses the firing over several pages. Attempting to lay the blame for the action and especially for the "unthinkable timing" that humiliated both generals, D'Este complains of a "plethora of theories." He touches on the possible roles of the various general officers, from Eisenhower, who found the 1st Division undisciplined when out of combat, to the messenger Maj. Gen. John D. Lucas, whose comment on Allen was the patronizing, "The boy is tired." D'Este, a careful historian, finds his plethora of sources confusing.

Writers cite remarks bandied about at headquarters as well as diaries and official reports. When Maj. Gen. Bedell "Beetle" Smith, Eisenhower's chief of staff, was told by another officer that Allen had made the division, he burst out: "Allen ruined the 1st Division. He thought

it was enough to win battles. He didn't realize the necessity of discipline when the troops are out of the line."

The same argument was made against Ted Roosevelt, but the infantrymen saw no problem with either general. They thought that their job was to win battles, and that was what they were doing. Lucas, Eisenhower's "eyes and ears," blamed Roosevelt for "spoiling the troops." He said that although the soldiers had been told that their division was "the best in the world, as far as real discipline is concerned they have become one of the worst."

While the opinions of generals like Smith and Lucas may have carried some weight, they were, after all, only the views of staff officers, not of commanders. What Eisenhower thought, however, was critical. Eisenhower wrote his opinion of the meeting with Terry Allen three months before the actual "relief." On his way to Allen's command post, Ike noticed soldiers not observing the military courtesy of saluting his four-star staff car. About the meeting, Ike's assistant, Captain Harry Butcher, wrote, "Allen had been out most of the night on his duties. Obviously he was very tired."

Besides finding the division weak on discipline, Eisenhower found the division commander mumbling short answers, complaining of high casualties, citing World War I experience, and appearing altogether disconsolate and passive. Eisenhower was in no mood to either understand or forgive.

Omar Bradley, commander of the II Corps and in his first combat command, was Allen's immediate superior. Particularly sensitive to matters of discipline and protocol, he wrote, "Terry's own career as an army rebel had long ago disproved the maxim that discipline makes a good soldier. Having broken the mold himself he saw no need to apply it to his troops." The same yardstick was applied to punish the assistant commander. "Roosevelt had to go with Allen for he, too, had sinned by loving the division too much."

Eisenhower and Bradley aside, it was Patton's longstanding rivalry with Terry Allen that fueled the final blowup. When both Patton and Allen had been promoted over the heads of hundreds of senior officers, he wrote Terry a gushing letter of congratulations. "We must be in for some serious fighting and we are the ones who can lead the way to hell.... You know I am tickled to death." Perhaps, but he would have been twice as tickled if he alone had been favored.

More than any other general on either side, Patton rode high on waves of publicity. He wrote to his wife that the men regarded him as

a god, and so, it seems, did the general himself.

Except for the two soldier-slapping incidents, the press also enforced Patton's opinion.

Three keys to Patton's actions at the end of July 1943 lie in the letter he wrote to Allen nearly three months before. A cover story on Patton in the April 12, 1943, issue of *Time* quoted the flamboyant general in detail and made statements that Terry Allen (among others) took as disparaging of the American troops. "The men were fighting bravely, but they could do no better than their training. If all the men under him had been as beautifully trained as the armored division, which he taught, there might have been a different story in the hills of El Guettar.... General Patton's infantry were Americans and they were freshmen."

The contrast between the armored division and the infantry divisions was particularly insulting and inaccurate. Of the four divisions under Patton in Tunisia, the armored division, as Patton himself later admitted, was the least effective, so bad that he replaced the commanding general.

Terry Allen, fiercely defensive of his infantrymen, wrote Patton a scorching letter.

Patton replied to "Dear Terry" with the following: "I should be somewhat hurt with you for writing me the letter ... if I did not realize that you were very tired. After the amount of publicity that you personally have received, you should know that anyone can be quoted without ever having been seen; and if you were not tired, you would know very well that I have never at any time nor at any place criticized American troops for anything."

The letter demonstrates Patton's extraordinary inability to see himself in an unfavorable light. As to his never criticizing American troops under any conditions, in a high-pitched argument with Allen over soldiers' uniforms, he had called the 1st Division soldiers "yellow bellies" and "sons of bitches." He used the "sons of bitches" epithet again when demanding the 1st Division for the Sicily invasion. His worst treatment of men under him occurred in what became famous as the soldier-slapping incidents a week apart in August 1943. Both occasions occurred in hospitals; both times he smacked a soldier across the face twice and called him a "yellow coward." The affairs were partially covered up for a time, mainly because Eisenhower soothed the three correspondents who investigated the situation and demanded that Patton be removed. He was removed for a short time and nearly sent home, but Ike decided he was too valuable to lose and ordered him to make amends by apologizing to the



**ABOVE: Soldiers of the U.S. 1st Infantry Division dig in near El Guettar, where they went into action against the German 10th Panzer Division and won. The 1st Division was a crack combat unit, molded under the leadership of Generals Allen and Roosevelt. OPPOSITE: Shortly after the Operation Torch landings of November 8, 1942, Maj. Gen. Terry Allen confers with officers.**

units of his command.

Patton, never adept at admitting he was wrong, found it hard to apologize without excusing his own conduct. His letter to Terry Allen was a good example; smothering the "apology" were three arrows pointing to Patton's desire to rid himself of Allen. First, he complained of his own "hurt" feelings, surely a strange personal reaction between generals.

Second, and this became the accepted rationale, he made two allusions to Allen's being "tired."

Third, and perhaps most significant, he referred to "the amount of publicity" Allen was receiving. Patton, from his close reading of *Time*, saw in that magazine pictures of both Allen and Roosevelt and read that Allen was "the best known general of an infantry division" whose men "had distinguished themselves throughout."

Apparently praise for the 1st Division and its generals detracted from rather than added to Patton's personal glory. Among Army commanders he was a famous figure, and he could not help regarding Allen as a rival, going back as far as the 1920s. The jump promotions in tandem evidently damaged the relationship between the two proud and rambunctious generals. D'Este points out that Patton always seemed to overreact in Allen's presence. The most telling episode occurred during the battle of El Guettar when Patton, visiting Allen and Roosevelt at their command post, found it surrounded by slit trenches against Luftwaffe attacks.

Patton to Allen: "Which one is yours?"

When Allen showed him, Patton went over and urinated in it. "There," he said, "now try to use it."

Flint Whitlock in *The Fighting First* describes what happened next: "Allen's body guards audibly clicked the safeties on their Thompson submachine guns as a not-so-subtle hint.... Patton evidently realized that he had crossed the line and prudently departed the scene." Ted Roosevelt had related slit trench story. "At El Guettar I was in a slit trench with Terry Allen, only large enough to hold two. Patton came up. I got out and gave Patton my place. He took it."

During the campaign Eisenhower recorded his opinion of Patton in his diary. "A shrewd soldier who believes in showmanship to such an extent that he is almost flamboyant. He talks too much and too quickly and sometimes creates a very bad impression. Moreover, I fear he is not always a good example to his subordinates."

One bad example Ike might have noted was insubordination. When Eisenhower slated the unblooded 36th Division for the Sicily invasion, Patton came tearing in to headquarters demanding the 1st Division instead. "I want those sons of bitches. I won't go without them." Ike refused. Patton went over his head to General Marshall and got his way. Marshall overruled Eisenhower.

The Army chain of command is like any other human chain. To avoid being regarded as a weak link, a general must show himself mak-



**General Patton meets with General Roosevelt in Sicily in early August 1943. Roosevelt and General Allen were relieved of command of the 1st Infantry Division on August 7.**

ing decisions, being strong even if being wrong. Eisenhower and Bradley both claimed credit for sacking the Army's two fighting generals. Ike said that as a result of the early May meeting he made the decision that "Allen was too tired to continue." If that were so in May, why was Allen still able to lead the 1st Division victoriously through the Sicily campaign in July and August? When it came to the actual firing, Eisenhower's role was merely to agree to the decision of a subordinate.

Eisenhower had high regard for Lt. Gen. Omar Bradley. He wrote, "This officer is the best-rounded, well-balanced senior officer that we have in the service. His judgments are always sound." Ike, who did not like either Allen or Roosevelt, apparently disregarded the grim puritanical streak in "Brad," which led him to despise these two generals for their drinking habits.

Bradley also mishandled facts. His crediting Ike rather than Marshall and the Joint Chiefs

of Staff with the decision to assign the 1st Division to Patton's Sicily attack was harmless enough, but his mythical description of the firings of Allen and Roosevelt shows a more than casual disregard for the truth. "I relieved both Allen and Roosevelt.... This controversial action was mine and mine alone. Patton merely concurred."

Even more surprising, Bradley "remembers" an event that never occurred. He wrote in his autobiographical *A Soldier's Story* that he called both Allen and Roosevelt to his command post in Nicosia and "personally told them that they were relieved." This book-like confession—appearing six years after the war—flatly contradicts Patton's diary entry written the very night of the firing.

Even more stunning than the firing of Allen and Roosevelt was the cruel, casual, and untimely way it was handled. Despite Bradley's story, the two generals received no warning that the axe was about to fall. While Terry Allen

was in one room giving subordinates instructions for an attack, the mail bag from the II Corps came into another room. In the bag the fateful dispatch was discovered by shocked staff officers. Since the dispatch would be seen simultaneously in other headquarters, the loyal officers decided that Allen should be told immediately. One officer took the paper in and wordlessly handed it to the general. Allen looked at it, nodded, said a few words in undertone, and then continued with his briefing with tears in his eyes.

About the generals fighting in Sicily, Patton had written to Eisenhower on July 24, 1943, "I have nothing but praise for all of the General Officers concerned." Strangely, six days later he pulled the 45th Division out of the line because he thought its commander, General Drew Middleton, "looked tired." And his diary entry on the seventh day revealed, "I got Ike's permission to relieve both Allen and Roosevelt.... I telegraphed Allen's and Roosevelt's relief to Bradley and sent him a personal note suggesting that he postpone it until the 1st Division is relieved."

Despite the humiliation of being fired during battle, both generals came back strong the following year. Terry Allen trained a brand new infantry division, the 104th "Timberwolves," took them to Europe, and led them, as a Patton biographer admitted, "with brilliance and distinction." In *Eisenhower's Lieutenants* Russelll Weighley wrote, "The 104th Division had been organized and trained by one of the first American heroes of the war in Africa, Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen.... There had never been any question about his competence as a trainer, organizer, and inspirational battle captain, and the 104th immediately showed it had been well brought up."

For his heroic actions on Utah Beach, Ted Roosevelt, assistant commander of the 4th Infantry Division, the oldest man and the highest ranking officer on the beach, received the Medal of Honor. Omar Bradley credited him with performing that day the bravest action in the war. Ironically, Ted Roosevelt died in bed of a heart attack five weeks later. Even more ironic was the fact that Eisenhower had on his desk ready to sign Roosevelt's promotion to command of the 90th Infantry Division.

Thus, despite being booted from command by Patton with the concurrence of Bradley and Eisenhower, both generals returned to demonstrate with grace and dignity their continued ability to lead troops in combat. □

*Author Walter Holden is a first-time contributor and veteran of World War II. He resides in Franklin, New Hampshire.*

The best selling auto-loading scooter in Europe is now available in the US!

# Finally... A scooter that loads itself in and out of your car.

Shipping  
Included

*Introducing the Quingo® Flyte - the powerful, portable mobility scooter that you never have to lift. Now featuring patented 5-Wheel Anti-Tip Technology.*

It's a sad fact. Many people who have mobility issues and could benefit from a scooter aren't able to use them away from home. Struggling to get it into a car or loading it onto a bumper-mounted lift just isn't worth the effort. Now, there's a better scooter, the Quingo® Flyte. It's easy to use, even for one person, and requires no more effort than closing a car's tailgate. Clever design enables it to fit into SUV's, mini-vans, crossovers and hatchbacks.

Quingo® Flyte can load and unload itself in less than 60 seconds using an innovative ramp and a simple remote. The built-in guide rails can be installed in minutes and safely direct your scooter to ground level.

This scooter provides 5-Wheel Anti-Tip Technology for stability, agility and comfort with its unique wheel



*"For the first time in years I've been able to go with my granddaughters to the mall. A crowd gathers every time I unload my scooter from my car!"*

– Judi K, Exeter, CA

## Only one scooter is this powerful and portable

- Patented 5-Wheel Stability™ by Quingo takes you almost anywhere.
- No dismantling or lifting of heavy scooter parts.
- Fits most SUV's, mini-vans, crossovers and hatchbacks.
- Large motor + up to 350 pound capacity.
- Extra long range with BIG scooter performance.
- Won't bounce around in your car– locks in place.



Available in portable, auto-loading and luxury models

configuration. The patented 5-wheel Bumpmaster™ design by Quingo enables it to ride safely over a wide variety of surfaces. It uses 4 ultra slim powerful batteries providing a range of up to 23 miles on a single charge.

The best selling auto-loading scooter in Europe is now available in the US! Don't wait to take advantage of this exciting new technology, call today to find out more.

# Quingo® flyte

featuring 5-Wheel Anti-Tip Technology

Call now toll free for our lowest price  
Shipping Included.

## 1-888-612-6009

See it in action at [www.QuingoUSA.com](http://www.QuingoUSA.com)

*Medicare and Medicaid no longer subsidize scooter sales. Today, cheaper scooters are cheaper for a reason. Get the most out of your investment with the best scooter on the market today.*

Please mention code 108028 when ordering.

© 2017 firstSTREET for Boomers and Beyond, Inc.

83719

# The Classic Victory

BY DAVID H. LIPPMAN

FINNISH FORCES DEALT A SERIOUS BLOW TO SOVIET AMBITIONS DURING THE BATTLE OF SUOMUSSALMI.





**T**he word itself was bland. “Motti” is Finnish for a “bundle of sticks,” but the theory was how the tiny armies of Finland would deal with the long columns of Soviet troops that had been storming down the roads and logging the trails of that nation’s sub-Arctic wilderness since the Russo-Finland War broke out on November 29, 1939.

Joseph Stalin’s blatant war of aggression pitted the Soviet Union’s 105 million people against Finland’s three million in a brutal drive for land and power. But when Stalin’s troops and tanks butted their heads uselessly against the Finnish troops defending the Mannerheim Line (named for their commander in chief, Baron Gustav Mannerheim), Stalin decided to put the pressure on Finland’s central belt, sending the 9th Army toward Oulu via the small town of Suomussalmi. The 9th Army’s spearhead was the 163rd Infantry Division and the 44th Motorized Infantry Division, whose troops were well equipped with tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, and even a motorized brass band to maintain morale. But it lacked skis, sleds, and winter-trained troops. These were fatal weaknesses, and the Finns, despite their small numbers, knew how to exploit them.

The “motti” would enable the Finns to deal with a long column of Soviet road-bound troops in their nation’s wilderness. It had three phases:

*Phase 1:* Reconnaissance to fix the Soviets and encirclement to prevent them from moving, thus pinning them in a narrowly circumscribed area.

*Phase 2:* Quick, sharp attacks with concentrated force to gain local superiority or equality at vulnerable points in the column, to split it into isolated fragments.

*Phase 3:* Destruction in detail of each pocket in turn, weakest first, so that the strongest ones, cut off from their supplies, would wither in the cold and become weaker before being destroyed.

The Finns benefited from the Soviet forces being unable to maneuver off-road. They also benefited from the fact that Joseph Stalin had gutted three quarters of the Soviet Army’s leadership before the war, replacing them with men who were politically reliable but militarily timid at best and utterly incompetent at worst. Further, every decision made by a Soviet combat officer had to be approved by a “Politruk,” a frontline commissar, who would ensure that the plan would be “politically sound,” regardless of its military merits or lack thereof.

The result was a Red Army that was overly disciplined and utterly lacking in initiative at every level and inept in such critical skills as camouflage and skiing.

The “motti” tactic, however, had weaknesses. First, it could only be used against Soviet forces that had actually strung themselves out along a road in sub-Arctic Finland, which was not a given. Second, it meant giving up terrain to the invaders. Third, it required time for the Finns to make reconnaissance, assemble troops, cut through the weak defenders, and whittle down and starve out the Soviets. And whatever faults the Soviet Army had on the offense, its men were equipped, formidable, and determined when seeking to hold their ground. They could inflict casualties on the Finns that could not be replaced.

The “Politruks” told the men that any ground they held was “Soviet” and had to be defended as a part of the Motherland, and Soviet troops did so.

Suomussalmi was a small, provincial town of 4,000 loggers, hunters, and their families surrounded by forests and lakes in the central wilderness of Finland. It stood directly along a road from the Murmansk-Leningrad rail line to Oulu on the Baltic Sea.

With the Baltic Sea frozen over, there were only two ways to ship supplies into Finland—by rail from Sweden, through Oulu, or behind a convoy of icebreakers to the Finnish port of Turku. The Finns had the world’s largest fleet of icebreakers and two coast defense bat-

SA-kuva



**ABOVE:** Finnish soldiers wearing camouflage suits watch for movement along a forest road as the Soviet Red Army advances into their country. The Finns utilized effective tactics to halt and decimate Red Army columns on the march. **OPPOSITE:** Soviet Red Army troops and heavy weapons advance into Finland during the Winter War. Almost immediately the Soviets were confronted with the difficulties of winter warfare and the narrow roads that led deep into the Finnish forests and facilitated Finnish Army combat tactics.

tleships at Turku to keep that port open, but it was dangerous for foreign powers to ship in supplies through a Baltic Sea dominated by Soviet and German planes and warships.

If a Russian force could drive down that road to Oulu, the Soviets could divide Finland in two and also cut Finland off from its land source of supplies in Sweden. Yet the Finns lacked sufficient forces to block the road. The Soviets had more than enough to storm down it, turning the job over to Corps Commander V. Dukhanov's 9th Army and his five divisions. Oddly enough, when Finland's Baron Mannerheim served in the Imperial Russian Army, he had been in the 9th Army. The Soviets did not bother to change army designations.

Two roads led to Suomussalmi from the Soviet frontier. To the north was the Jun-

down the Raate Road, which was defended by two platoons of border guards and some improvised roadblocks. Even so, the Raate Road force drove only six miles on the first day of attack, December 5, 1939.

The slow Soviet progress gave the Finns time to evacuate Suomussalmi's civilian population, burn some but not all of the town's buildings, and rush in reserve companies from Kajaani to delay the invaders.

Meanwhile, Zelentsov's two regiments on the Juntusuranta Road made better progress, forcing the Finns to send in Major I. Pallari's ErP-16—the 16th Independent Battalion—to hold the ground. They reached Peranka at 1 AM on December 6 and started setting up a defensive line. As soon as they did, Colonel Sharov's Soviet 662nd Regiment showed up and began

ment could not advance easily as it lacked felt boots (*valenki*), snowsuits, and rations. Other messages told the Finns that one of Zelentsov's Politruks, named Boevski, had been "fragged" by some of his men. A third message, on December 13, reported 48 frostbite cases and a need for 160 replacements for men lost to Lieutenant Elo's roadblocks. Other messages warned that his officers "could not handle their men."

The Finns were amazed. Clearly the 662nd Rifle Regiment was not a particularly tough force. That point was proven when Sharov sent his men into an attack on Ketola village, which failed with a loss of 150 men. With that, Sharov's regiment was finished—20 percent of his men were out of action from bullets or frostbite. He went over to the defensive for the rest of the battle.

With the 662nd out of the game, the Finns concentrated on the two regiments headed straight for Suomussalmi, entering the remains of the town on December 7. Mannerheim appointed Colonel Hjalmar Siilasvuo, another one of his Jager Battalion protégés, to head there with his JR-27 (27th Infantry Regiment) to take over and defeat the Soviets.

Short, blond, blunt-speaking Siilasvuo was another capable citizen-soldier, a newspaper editor's son, and peacetime lawyer. But JR-27 lacked any antitank or antiaircraft guns and had no artillery at all. It also lacked tents and snowsuits. But all the men had all their skis, and the troops were from small towns in the area and understood the value of mobility.

Siilasvuo wasted no time. He headed straight to Suomussalmi and reported to Maj. Gen. W.E. Tuompo, the sector commander, at Kajaani, on December 8. Tuompo had just arrived himself. Even so, the Finns moved decisively. JR-27 and its associated units were within 2.5 miles of Suomussalmi by December 10.

Meanwhile, at the town Lieutenant Elo's exhausted Civil Guardsmen were crumpling under the Soviet attack. His men had taken 50 percent casualties, and Elo shot himself in despair that day. ROII lacked radios, so they had no idea that help was on the way and could not stand up to the attacking tanks.

Aware that the defenses were hanging by a thread, Siilasvuo set up his tactical headquarters in a forester's home in Hyrynsalmi village on December 10, at the end of the rail line, which enabled him to receive supplies and reinforcements. By day's end, he was planning a counterattack with all three of JR-27's battalions, plus two battalions of covering troops who had been fighting there since November 30, including Elo's men.

To boost morale, Siilasvuo told everyone that

Sovfoto



**Soviet tanks and infantry advance along a narrow road in Finland. The dense forest growth and narrow roadways minimized the effectiveness of Red Army tanks during the Winter War.**

tusuranta Road from the settlement of that name on the Soviet border, which joined a major north-south artery that led through Suomussalmi to Hyrynsalmi in the south and Peranka to the north. The southern track was the Raate Road that went straight to Suomussalmi. The Finns figured that any Soviet attack on Suomussalmi had to come that way.

Major General Andrei Zelentsov's 163rd Rifle Division, drawn from Tula, a city north of Moscow, was ordered to take the lead. Zelentsov put his 662nd Regiment on the Juntusuranta Road, which gave him complete surprise. The Finns opposed this regiment with ROII, a 58-man unit of border guards under Civil Guard reservist Lieutenant M. Elo, a 22-year-old schoolteacher. The Soviet division's other two regiments, the 759th and 81st, drove

probing attacks. After 24 hours of vigorous skirmishing, the Finns held the Russians in check. Pallari himself was badly wounded.

All Finnish forces came under command of Lt. Col. Paavo Susitaival, a member of Parliament, Great War 27th Jager Battalion veteran, and peacetime reservist. He placed all forces fighting against the 662nd under his command in Task Force "Susi," but first requested permission from the Finnish Parliament to be absent from its sessions while he performed his military duties. He got that permission without delay.

Mobile Finnish radio intercept teams listening to Soviet message traffic quickly learned that the 662nd was on the defensive. The Soviets used simple codes and sometimes sent messages uncoded. One such message from Sharov, sent on the 11th, reported to Zelentsov that his reg-

his force was the lead element of the 9th Division, a new force. Mannerheim backed the move. He later declared the scattered units to be the 9th Division, putting Siilasvuo in command.

Next, Siilasvuo moved JR-27 to an assembly area southeast of Suomussalmi, where it would lay down an “ice road.” That consisted of scraping clear a path in the ground and flooding it. The smooth surface that resulted was perfect for soldiers to move rapidly on skis and haul supplies on sleds. The Finns were able to bring up their scarce artillery, move it from point to point, fire off some shells, damage the Soviets, and pack up again to avoid being spotted.

Siilasvuo’s plan was to cut the road between the 163rd and the Soviet border and then crush the Soviets. The 163rd’s commander did not seem aggressive or imaginative, so Siilasvuo was betting that his men could show more aggression and initiative in attack than his opponent.

With the ice road laid, JR-27 began sending out patrols to find the best approach routes to the road and secure them by positioning pickets of ski troopers on the flanks. Then the attack teams would move into final positions, where they would shed their heavy gear, leaving it under guard. Wearing only lightweight snowsuits and carrying as much firepower as possible, the attack teams would move in as close as possible to the enemy.

The attacks would start with a quick barrage of mortar and machine-gun fire. After a few moments, the fire would be shifted 100 yards to the right and left of the target to give the attackers a sealed corridor in which to attack.

The Finnish infantry would then attack, hurling grenades and gunning down foxholes, tents, and trucks. Other Finns, equipped with satchel charges, would hurl them into vehicles, open tank hatches, field kitchens, and mortar pits to cause general destruction. Sharpshooters were to cut down officers.

With the Soviets then reacting, the Finns would withdraw as quickly as possible. The goal was not as much to kill Soviet troops as to cut breaches in the column and damage or destroy the Soviet supporting arms that fed and led the frontline troops.

Once breaches were created in the Soviet column, additional Finnish troops, more heavily equipped, would charge into the hole and create barricades and earthworks, even flipping over wrecked Soviet vehicles to do so. The Soviets, unable to dig trenches in the permafrost, could only knock down trees to create their own defensive barriers.

Siilasvuo and his men launched their attacks on the 12th and set up their main roadblock to

SA-kuva



**Finnish ski troops, highly mobile in winter warfare, advance through a snow-covered forest. The Finnish troops were highly trained and well equipped.**

the east at a natural chokepoint between Lakes Kuavasjärvi and Kuomasjärvi, under Captain J.A. Mäkinen. The Finns set up heavy machine guns between the frozen lakes, knowing that the Soviets had a choice—drive across the frozen lakes, dismount from their vehicles and drop off their heavy equipment to move through the woods, or attack the machine guns head on. The Finns knew it would take a major Soviet drive to hook up with the 163rd, now trapped at Suomussalmi.

Zelentsov knew he was trapped. He was sending panic-stricken messages to his superiors, and the 44th (Ukrainian) Motorized Rifle Division, under Commander Second Rank A. Vinogradov, was ordered to drive west to relieve the 163rd. But the 44th attacked according to the Finnish plan—down the road—and a bare 350 Finns held off 17,000 Soviets.

Despite its heavy equipment, the 44th was no elite outfit. GRU Captain Ismael Akhmedov, a Politruk assigned to the division, drove up the division’s column and found the men unenthusiastic. “Their faces were sullen, their bodies tired, their spirits low. Men, machines, artillery, tanks, horses, all moving toward Suomussalmi, most of them, it proved, to destruction and death.

“At one stop among those troops, a soldier, a simple Ukrainian peasant from the Poltava area, asked me a question: ‘Comrade Commander,’ he said, ‘tell me, why do we fight this war? Did not Comrade Voroshilov declare at the Party Congress that we don’t want an inch of other people’s land and we will not surrender an inch of ours? Now we are going to fight. For

what? I do not understand.’” One of Akhmedov’s fellow Politruks interrupted and told the soldier about “the Finnish danger to Leningrad.”

Worse, by intercepting uncoded Soviet messages, the Finns knew exactly when and where the 44th would come. The messages told the 44th’s commander, Vinogradov, that he was to fortify the Raate Road as he advanced along it. But the head of 9th Army’s Operations Department, Colonel Ermolaev, “edited” the messages sent to Vinogradov, so he never got that one.

To make matters worse, due to transport shortages, Vinogradov’s reconnaissance teams reached the line of departure on foot and behind the armor and artillery. The 44th streamed up the Raate Road with the wrong units in the lead.

On December 23, Mäkinen abandoned his strongpoint and attacked the leading 44th Division force, the 25th Regiment. The entire Soviet division, advancing on a one-tank front, ground to a halt, jamming thousands of vehicles, horses, men, and its motorized brass band on a single track amid worsening weather.

Meanwhile, Siilasvuo turned on Suomussalmi. The town stood in two pieces, surrounding a frozen lake. The 163rd Rifle Division was suffering from the -25 degrees C temperatures, food shortages, and Finnish fire.

First Siilasvuo sent in sharp raids against the road leading north from Hukoniemi and against the town’s western outskirts. Two Soviet T-28 tanks attacked a Finnish squad caught in lightly wooded terrain near the village. Lieutenant Hovinen taped five stick

grenades together and crawled to the tanks, while his buddy, 1st Lt. Virkki, tried to provide covering fire with his 9mm Lahti automatic pistol, firing at the tank's observation slits. The T-28 fired at Virkki, and he hit the dirt to load another magazine into his weapon. Then he popped up and fired more bullets at the T-28. Three times this scene was played out. Finally the Soviet tankers grew frightened of the crazy Finn and began to pull back.

At that moment Huovinen pointed his grenade bundle at the tanks, and they put on speed to retreat. Incredibly, a two-tank attack had been repulsed by pistol fire.

Finnish battlefield leadership was a hallmark of their counterattacks. Another lieutenant named Remes reacted to taking a bullet in his hand by turning over his command to a subordinate, making a few jaunty remarks to his men, and sauntering off to an aid station. He never arrived. Just after dark the next day, his body was found in the deep woods. He had apparently run into a Soviet patrol that now lay around him—six dead Russians.

On December 26, Siilasvuo received artillery support in the form of a four-gun battery of 76mm guns that predated the 1904 Russo-Japanese War. But they could still fire. On the 28th, he received a more modern battery, and on January 2, 1940, a pair of Bofors antitank guns. On the 22nd, he received something else more substantial, official command of the 9th Division. On Christmas Day, he got Infantry Regiment JR-64, a newly organized battalion of ski guerrillas designated P-1 and an independent battalion of infantry. With 11,500 men, he had a considerable force to address the surrounded 163rd.

To the north, Task Force Susi was still facing the 662nd Regiment with help from Bicycle Battalion PPP-6. Their job was to clear out some Russian cavalrymen operating along a primitive road between Lakes Alajärvi and Kovajärvi just two miles northwest of Suomssalmi. They did so, and PPP-6 was assigned to Siilasvuo after that.

On December 23, Mannerheim provided Task Force Susi with JR-65, a new regiment that rode in trucks 100 miles from Oulu in -25 degrees C weather. Positioned on the north shore of Lake Piispajärvi, the regiment drove back the enemy as far as Haapavara by Christmas.

At Suomssalmi, Zelentsov decided he had spent enough time in the trap and ordered a breakout on Christmas Eve. Backed by his two artillery regiments, the 86th and 356th, Zelentsov attacked the Finns at 11 AM, damaging their phone lines, and began moving at

noon. Colonel Mäkinen's two covering battalions stopped the breakout, and the Soviets withdrew. On Christmas Day, the 163rd tried again, this time attempting to cross the frozen Lake Vuonanlahti to the west. The Finns were baffled. Were the Soviets trying to make a loop around the Finns or were they just lost? The Soviets later claimed that magnetic ores in Finland's lakes led their compasses astray. Others said the compasses simply did not work.



**ABOVE: The Soviet advance into Finland was accompanied by what Red Army commanders and Premier Josef Stalin believed to be overwhelming force. However, instead of melting away, the Finnish Army effectively resisted the invasion. BELOW: Finnish counterattacks were aimed at isolating advancing Red Army columns and destroying them in detail.**



Maps © 2018 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

Even so, the Soviets charged across the ice in brown uniforms—they wouldn't get any snowsuits until January—and came under heavy Finnish automatic fire. Soviet soldiers died on the ice, and the rest fell back to the wrecked village. By now the 163rd was running out of ammunition as well as food.

On December 27, Siilasvuo launched his final assault, backed by all eight of his artillery pieces. He sent his men across the frozen Lake Vuonanlahti to outflank the Soviets.

But the Soviets proved tenacious in defense despite their hunger, cold, and lack of ammunition. For three days, Siilasvuo's men fought against the Soviet pockets, but at noon on New Year's Eve, the Soviet defenses cracked, and the 163rd's men began breaking into groups, fleeing in all directions, mostly across the frozen Lake Kiantajärvi toward their main supply dump. In their brown uniforms, the Soviets made excellent targets.

At this point, the Finnish Air Force made a rare appearance, as two of its British-made Bristol Blenheim bombers swooped in and dropped bombs on the ice, smashing holes that sent men, vehicles, horses, and sleds into the lake.

With nowhere to go, Soviet troops fled into the wilderness, often dying of exposure and exhaustion, or surrendered where they were. Those who went in the Finnish bag were relieved to be taken as they were suffering from frostbite and fear. They told their captors about bad Soviet food, bad Soviet treatment, and bad Soviet leadership. One prisoner said he had been visiting a shop in a little town on the Murmansk Railroad near Leningrad just before the war broke out, buying his wife a new pair of shoes. A local commissar spotted him and dragged the man into the army on the spot, hoisting him by his coat lapels and asking to know why such a fine specimen of Soviet manhood was not marching to the aid of the oppressed Finnish proletariat.

The prisoner marched into Finland without one hour's formal training and was captured, his wife's shoes still in his pack. The Finns gave him fresh socks, cigarettes, and time in the sauna. It was the first time in four weeks he had seen soap and water. After that, they kept him as a kind of headquarters mascot and translator for the rest of the campaign.

As the 163rd disintegrated, the victorious Finns took 500 prisoners and began assessing their booty, which included large amounts of ammunition, 30 field artillery pieces, three dozen antitank guns, shoddy cotton uniforms, inadequate footwear, distinctive Soviet conical caps known as *budenovka*, inedible dehydrated millet gruel and pork fat rations, which



SA-kuva

**Finnish soldiers man their antitank guns in deep snow. The Finns brought the Soviet invasion of their country to a standstill for a time and laid bare the shortcomings in the Soviet command structure after Stalin's purges of Red Army officers in the 1930s.**

offended the Muslim soldiers in the Russian Army, and some empty vodka bottles that were good for Molotov cocktails. There were 5,000 corpses on dry land.

Zelentsov was among the dead, but his body was never identified. The best theory was that he shredded his general's identity papers, put on an enlisted man's uniform, and tried to break out into the woods, dying anonymously in the crossfire or in the snow. Either way, he vanished from history, which was probably lucky for him—Stalin's secret police had little use for generals who failed their assignments.

Now it was time to dispose of the 44th Motorized Division, whose tip was two miles from the Suomussalmi battlefield. Its men could hear the shooting and comrades dying. The 44th was strung out along a 20-mile stretch of the Raate Road and unable to move in any direction. They had thousands of pairs of skis dumped into their supply train at the start of the campaign, but nobody knew how to use them. A handful of men volunteered to ski into the forest on patrol, but they never came back. The rest of the division could only wallow helplessly in the snow.

The 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment (JR-27)—1,000 well-fed men under Lieutenant Lassila—was tapped for the job of starting to eliminate the 44th. They arrived 400 yards south of the Raate Road just east of Suomussalmi at 11 PM on January 1, 1940. From their start line, the Finns could see roaring log fires built by the miserable Ukrainian soldiers, desperately trying to stay warm.

Lassila set up two groups, each with six

machine guns, about 500 yards apart and trained on the edges of the gap he wished to make. That would seal off the edges of his attack route. His target was the main part of the 44th Division's artillery park. At his signal, the infantry charged the road while the machine guns opened fire. Engineers followed to blow up trees and create roadblocks to prevent the 44th's vehicles from intervening.

The attack succeeded. Soviet sentries 60 yards from the road went down first. The Finns stormed across the road and right into an artillery battalion's park, cutting down gun crews with grenades and short bursts. The Soviets hit back with fire from their mobile anti-aircraft guns, but the Finns were too close for them to have any impact. The anti-aircraft tracer went over the Finns' heads, and the Finns shot down the Soviet gunners at point-blank range.

One hundred Russians were killed, and a tank, several trucks, and a field kitchen knocked out for the loss of two Finns. By dawn, the 44th had been decapitated. Its spearhead was cut off from its tail.

Siilasvuo decided to press his luck, sending his two Bofors guns across the ice roads and emplacing them by dawn, pointing east against the Soviet tip. Just as the guns got into position, the 44th counterattacked. In 15 minutes, the two guns blasted open seven tanks, jamming the road with burning wrecks and strengthening the new Finnish roadblock.

With that, the Finns began cutting the 44th into small, manageable "mottis" over the next few days. The Finns set up rings of command

posts, supply depots, and camouflaged dugouts around each "motti" 5,000 to 1,000 yards from the Soviets to protect them from Red Army bullets. Finnish patrols would go out in the snow for two hours, harass the Soviets, and then hike back to their warm dugouts for four hours of rest, food, and sleep. After two or three days, each Finnish soldier would go to one of the frontline saunas, a national tradition and important morale benefit.

Finnish skiers would hit Soviet radio sets, command posts, gun pits, ammo points, and above all Soviet field kitchens. Finnish troops shot them up to deny the enemy hot food and then let them starve and freeze. Akhmedov wrote that his "battalion had been badly punished when the men had lit fires to warm themselves and heat food. From treetops the Finns had machine-gunned every fire, easily picking out the dark silhouettes of the men against the snow."

Vinogradov did not even issue a counterattack order, but some of his men tried to break out to Russia on January 2. They came under flanking fire from the woods and were stalled. A captured Soviet colonel told the Finns it was like "butting our head against a stone wall ... it was unbelievable." The Finns wondered why the Soviets did not try simultaneous counterattacks east and west, but did not argue with Vinogradov's passivity.

The same day, 3rd/JR-27 assaulted the road farther west near the Haukila farm. The Russian defenders were strong, and the Finns could only tighten their grip on them, using mortars to wipe out the Soviet field kitchens. More Finnish counterattacks went in from Sangin-



**The human wreckage and destroyed equipment of a Soviet column lie abandoned after a Finnish attack has utterly destroyed it.**

lampi farm against Soviet positions near Eskola. It took the Finns three days to clear out the enemy from those positions. On January 4, Task Force Kari cleared the enemy from that sector and had its hold on good terrain near Lake Kokkojärvi.

On January 3, the Finns built more ice roads, widened wagon tracks, and improved their surfaces. The next day, Siilasvuo attacked again. Task Force Mäkinieimi, consisting of JR-27, a battalion from JR-65, and ski-guerrilla unit P-1, hit the strongest remaining Soviet “motti” in the Haukila farm sector. Siilasvuo committed six guns—two thirds of his pieces—to this attack. Colonel Mandelin’s task force, consisting of two battalions of JR-65 and three additional companies, was to hit the Haukila section of the road from the north at the same time that Mäkinieimi’s men hit from the north. Task Force Kari would launch sharp flanking attacks against the Soviet positions from Tynnelä to Kokkojärvi, with its three infantry battalions and the last two artillery pieces. Finally, Task Force Fagernas would backstop the actions by cutting a road at the Purasjokie River and again near Raate village, a mile from the Soviet border.

By January 5, the 44th Division consisted of seven separate detachments. The biggest was a two-mile segment just east of Captain Mäkinen’s roadblock manned by a regiment of infantry, 20 armored vehicles, and most of the division’s artillery. Siilasvuo was going to break that portion into smaller and smaller elements and let them all freeze and starve before attack-

ing each in turn.

Siilasvuo moved his men along his ice road south of the Raate Road in two task forces, one under Major Kari, the other under Lt. Col. Fagernas. Kari’s men went into a bivouac near Mäkälä, while Fagernas’s men dug in at Heikkilä. A third raiding detachment, a reinforced company, moved into position at Vanka, along a crude wagon track that led to Raate village.

Siilasvuo’s offensive went off on schedule against fierce resistance. Task Force Mäkinieimi’s men were pinned down short of the road by heavy Soviet fire. Captain Lassila’s men also took heavy casualties from Soviet artillerymen firing over open sights.

When these attacks failed, Lassila met a sergeant who had taken over his company when three senior officers had been killed or wounded and the sergeant himself had been shot in the lung. Lassila asked how the wounded man was, as he lay back on his stretcher. The sergeant said it was easier to breathe with two holes in his chest.

Lassila’s battalion took 96 casualties in six hours, men it could ill afford to lose, and it had been dribbling away 10 percent of its strength each day. He believed his men had reached their limit. He asked permission to abandon his roadblocks, deploy in the woods, and block the road with fire alone.

When the request went up the Finnish chain of command to Colonel Mäkinieimi, the colonel was irate. All of his men were heavily engaged. He told Lassila that if the roadblocks were

abandoned Lassila would be court-martialed and shot. Lassila got the point and held on.

Task Force Kari moved against the Kokkojärvi junction at 6 AM but could only get a quarter mile from the road intersection. Unable to deal with Soviet tanks or firepower, Kari withdrew to the forest.

Fagernas made the day’s best progress, blowing up a small bridge about 2½ miles east of Kikoharju. But he could not reach the main objective, the bridge at Purasjoki. Siilasvuo decided to reinforce success and sent troops to support Fagernas, which helped ambush a convoy of fresh NKVD troops sent over from Russia. With the reserves, Fagernas was able to detonate the Purasjoki Bridge at 10 PM. The river’s ice was not strong enough to support vehicle traffic, which helped seal off the Raate Road area from mechanized or truck-borne reinforcements.

Finally, Task Force Mandelin, on its own, wiped out some Russian patrols and established a blocking position on the secondary Puras Road to prevent breakouts on that route.

While the day’s showing was a poor one for the Finns, it put the Soviets under strain, and Vinogradov was unable to make a coherent breakout. The next day they tried to do just that anyway, attacking Lassila’s position. The Soviets drove herds of horses along the roads, hoping to clear Finnish mines and provide themselves with food. The callous slaughter sickened and angered the Finns, but they held their ground. Task Force Mäkinieimi fought its way through to the road in several places, knocking out Soviet positions one by one.

On the night of the 5th, Kari’s forces established another roadblock east of the Russian position at Kokkojärvi, which was in place by 3 AM. It held fast against repeated Soviet attacks all day.

Another one of Kari’s units, ErP-15, took three hours in the heavy snow and dense firs to reach the road at a point east of Tynnelä. There they saw hundreds of Soviets fleeing toward the Puras Road. Siilasvuo reinforced the roadblock on that cowpath and chipped away at Soviet pockets.

Vinogradov called for air support and got it. Soviet fighters and bombers roared over the battlefield looking for targets to paste but could not find them easily. Soviet transport planes were even less successful. Three small scout planes dropped six packs of hardtack into an area where 17,000 men were going mad with hunger. By the time these parcels had landed, the men in the “motti” had suffered five days of -30 degrees C temperatures on barely cooked horsemeat.

Everything worked against the Russians in the battle, as in the war. Their 1902 model Moisin-Nagant rifles were single-shot bolt-action weapons that could fire 7.62mm bullets with great accuracy, but in temperatures below -15 degrees C their gun-oil lubricants froze. The Finns used the same weapon and same caliber bullet, but their gun oil was a combination of alcohol and glycerine.

The 44th Division's vehicle engines had crankshafts that could not turn over when the temperature fell below -10 degrees C, so they had to be kept running all the time, using up fuel and lubricant and putting a strain on their batteries. The Russians learned from this failure. Their later T-34 tanks employed massive pump-driven compressed air reservoirs to turn over their engines.

Adding to the Soviet terrors were the long sub-Arctic winter nights, made darker by the endless fir trees. Soviet troops were denied sleep by the sound of Finnish bullets ricocheting off bark and hitting men and horses, which set off more agonized cries. Despite being a motorized division, the 44th had 2,500 horses, mostly Siberian panjes, to haul artillery and other equipment.

The Soviets had to cut down on campfires, which only made things worse. Men could not touch metal or they would be welded to it. They tried vodka to stay warm, but that didn't help. The alcohol only opened their skin pores and reduced their body heat.

Politruk Akhmedov found that his men from the Ukraine were unprepared for a winter harsher than those of their native steppes. "All was terribly unreal. I thought of the haunted forests of the fairy tales of boyhood. I was very nervous but tried not to appear so. I looked at the faces of Nikolayev and the driver. They were ashen," he said later.

Wounded men were doomed. Even a small injury (mostly frostbite) could prove fatal as the Soviet Army medics struggled in an unequal battle against gangrene. Freezing wounds mortified quickly, leaving medics with no option but to amputate. Soon stacks of shattered limbs appeared in piles outside dressing stations. As the Finns retook these areas, they were shocked by the tableaux of cold, bloody, amputated limbs, frozen bodies and excrement, and distorted corpses.

Vinogradov's division was split up. He was convinced he was surrounded by superior numbers. The Finns seemed to be everywhere, hitting him with sniper attacks, five-minute mortar barrages and nighttime ski raids that kept his men awake and exhausted. Every time a Finnish sniper fired a bullet, panic-

stricken Soviets would fire everything they had for as long as 15 minutes, causing no casualties but wasting ammunition. The Soviets called the Finnish snipers "cuckoos" for their treetop perches.

The Soviets were shocked by this situation. Two of their divisions were being slaughtered in the Finnish wilderness, and there seemed no way to get them out. The 44th had plenty of vehicles but no skis.

Now Siilasvuo's men moved to methodically cut up the "mottis," working to kill maximum numbers of Russians at minimum cost to themselves.

Vinogradov realized that his division was doomed. On January 4, he sent a message to 9th Army requesting discretion to act on his

SA-KUVA



**Dead Red Army soldiers lie in heaps after a Finnish attack on their position. The Finns themselves were shocked by the massive Russian casualties they encountered after the battle.**

own initiative. The request was refused. But on January 6, after a further exchange of messages, Vinogradov was allowed to make a "tactical withdrawal."

The division did not withdraw. Vinogradov gave his men an "every man for himself" order, and his men began fleeing across the forests and through the snow in little, brown-uniformed clumps.

But by then the 44th Division was almost destroyed. The Finns harried the fleeing men over the border, taking 1,000 prisoners while 700 Russians made it back to the Soviet Union, most of them the division's Politruks. The political officers showed little courage; they tore off their insignia as they ran away.

The rest of the 44th Motorized Division's

17,000 men died or fell prisoner to the advancing Finns.

As the 44th Division disintegrated, the Finns took possession of the Suomussalmi battlefield and vast amounts of abandoned equipment and men. They found the expected: 43 tanks, 270 other vehicles—trucks, tractors, prime movers—in various states of disrepair and destruction, along with 27,500 stiff Russian bodies from the 44th, the 163rd, and supporting commands. "The wolves will eat well this winter," a Finnish officer said laconically.

The useful booty included four dozen artillery pieces, 600 working rifles, 300 functioning machine guns, a few mortars and tanks, and a collection of armored cars and trucks.

The Finns also found the unexpected:

dozens of plaited leather whips sewn with ball bearings used by Politruks to "encourage" their men.

There were also hundreds of prisoners to care for, all undernourished, unfit, and many middle-aged conscripts, some of whom had no idea where they were. Some believed they were on the outskirts of Helsinki. Covered with body lice, they were terrified that they would be shot after horrific torture.

The Finns assured their captives such was not the case and deloused and reclothed their prisoners quickly. The Finns shot newsreel footage of their dirty uniforms being burned for propaganda purposes and shared hot food with the Soviets. The prisoners were astonished. They

*Continued on page 74*



# First Over Ger

# Lieutenant Frank Yaussi participated in the Eighth Air Force's first daylight bombing raid on a German city.

BY LANCE THOMPSON



**A**mong the many sticky issues British Prime Minister Churchill would discuss with President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the Casablanca conference in January 1943 was the fact that the U.S. Eighth Air Force still refused to join the RAF's Bomber Command on nocturnal bombing missions into Germany. Though United States bombers had been striking enemy targets since August 17, 1942, Churchill noted, "The Americans have not yet succeeded in dropping a single bomb on Germany."

The Allies had a fundamental disagreement in the use of heavy bombers. The RAF believed in night area bombing, which delivered a massive amount of bombs onto a broad urban or industrial center. The Americans believed in daytime precision bombing, hitting specific targets such as factories or refineries with pinpoint accuracy. The British, having experienced heavy losses with daytime raids early in the war, believed the American method would prove too costly, and Churchill argued for American adoption of the British system.

General Henry "Hap" Arnold, chief of the U.S. Army Air Forces, knew that the future of America's strategic bombing campaign in Europe was at stake. If Roosevelt abandoned daylight strategic bombing, then the big Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress heavy bombers that were beginning to arrive at Eighth Air Force bases in England in significant numbers would be parceled out to the many other commands around the world that were demanding them, the navy for patrol bombers, General Douglas MacArthur in the Pacific, the army in North Africa, and British allies for antisubmarine patrols.

General Ira Eaker, Eighth Air Force commander, argued for the continuation of both

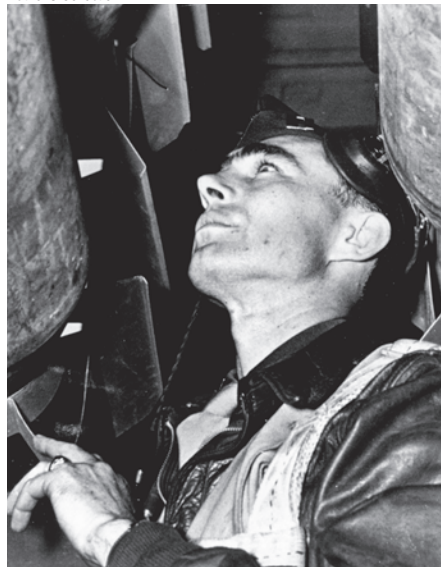
strategies at the Casablanca conference: "If the RAF bombs by night and we bomb by day, bombing around the clock, the German defenses will get no rest." Churchill loved the concept of "bombing around the clock" and became an enthusiastic advocate for the Combined Bomber Offensive.

Still, Americans had to prove that their bombers could fight their way into Germany in broad daylight, beyond the range of fighter escort, and carry out their missions. Which is why, on January 27, 1943, Lieutenant Frank Yaussi, lead bombardier for the 306th Bomb Group, peered into thick 90 percent cloud cover over the German port city of Wilhelmshaven, trying in vain to locate the Eighth Air Force's first target in Germany.

It was the responsibility of the lead bombardier to identify the target and make the decision to drop the bombs. When Yaussi dropped his bombs, the 52 other B-17s in the group would drop theirs. Two hundred and sixty-five 1000-pound general purpose bombs would drop based on Yaussi's decision. But Wilhelmshaven and the 306th Bomb Group's target, the pocket battleship *Admiral Scheer*, were hidden beneath thick clouds.

In the pilot seat above and behind Lieutenant Yaussi was Colonel Frank Armstrong, commander of the 306th Bomb Group. If Yaussi could not identify

Author's Collection



**ABOVE:** Bombardier Frank Yaussi inspects the payload of a B-17 at the 306 BG base in Thurleigh, England. **LEFT:** *First Over Germany*, a dramatic painting by artist Ray Waddey, depicts Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress bombers of the U.S. Eighth Air Force executing the first American daylight raid over Nazi Germany. The event took place on January 27, 1943, and Lieutenant Frank Yaussi served as lead bombardier for the 306th Bomb Group.

# many



**ABOVE:** Flight and ground crew of the B-17 Yaussi flew into Wilhelmshaven. In the back row, left to right, are Colonel Frank Armstrong, lead navigator Robert Salitnick, and lead bombardier Frank Yaussi. **BELOW:** American Boeing B-17F Flying Fortress heavy bombers drop their bombloads through thick cloud cover against an unseen target below. **OPPOSITE:** In this 1945 photograph, the devastation wrought by Allied bombers in repeated aerial assaults is evident at the Wilhelmshaven shipyard.



Armstrong, commander of the 306th Bomb Group. If Yaussi could not identify and bomb the target, he would have to answer to the colonel. And Armstrong did not lead the 306th into Germany for the first time to fail.

If Colonel Armstrong had known that the Air Corps had twice refused Frank Yaussi, he might have had less confidence in the Kansas-born bombardier from Glendale, California. In 1940, with war on the horizon, Yaussi applied for duty in the Army Air Corps. He was turned down due to high blood pressure and told to reapply in six months. On October 28, 1940, conscription began for United States military service. "Mine was the 19th number called," Yaussi remembers, and he was drafted into the

infantry in January 1941. Meanwhile, he reapplied for air corps duty, passed the flight physical, and entered flight training.

At the John Hancock Aviation School in Santa Maria, California, students were assigned instructors alphabetically, four students to each instructor. But a few leftovers "at the end of the alphabet" had to fit in where they could, taking intermittent lessons with different instructors when other students were absent. "I flew 12½ hours with seven different instructors and at the end of that, they told me I wasn't progressing fast enough," Yaussi explains. "So they sent me home." The Glendale draft board asked why Yaussi was not in the army, which is where they had sent him 10 months before. "They turned

me loose," Yaussi answered. The draft board told him to get a job, so Yaussi went to work at the nearby Lockheed plant as a timekeeper. "I worked there until Pearl Harbor."

Wartime manpower needs were more urgent, so Yaussi got his third shot at the air force, this time as a bombardier. After graduating from twin engine school in Houston and flight training in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Yaussi graduated on June 13, 1942, and went to Wendover, Utah, for final training. He describes the no-frills facility: "All that was there was big old tar paper barracks and a water tank."

At Wendover, Yaussi was introduced to the B-17 and a navigator named Robert Salitnick from Alhambra, California. Both would figure prominently in Yaussi's future. "Those B-17s were flying 24 hours a day," Yaussi remembers, and no one planned more ambitious training flights than Salitnick. "He called Yellowstone and asked what time Old Faithful let go," Yaussi recalls. Then Salitnick planned a navigation exercise that took three B-17s from Wendover, Utah, north to the Canadian border, then back down through Yellowstone, timing their pass over Old Faithful precisely with one of the geyser's hourly eruptions. The formation went on to the Grand Canyon, where the three B-17s followed the course of the Colorado River "100 feet below the rim," Yaussi boasts. "It was the most fun flight I ever had."

After buzzing these national landmarks Yaussi, Salitnick and the rest of the 423rd Bomb Squadron flew to Westover, Massachusetts, to pick up "brand spanking new B-17Fs," which they flew across the Atlantic to their base of operations at Thurleigh, England. There the squadron practiced formation flying and familiarized themselves with their new aircraft.

The 423rd Squadron was part of the 306th Bomb Group. After their first mission to Lille, France, on October 9, 1942, Salitnick was named group navigator. "They asked him who he wanted for group bombardier," Yaussi recalls, "and he said, 'Yaussi and I trained together. How about him?'" That's how I got to be group bombardier."

Through the rest of 1942, the 306th flew missions against U-boat facilities on the French coast. But the first mission of the new year would send American bombers into Germany for the first time. "A recon mission trying to photograph the sub pens at Wilhelmshaven spotted the (pocket battleship) *Admiral Scheer*," Yaussi recalls. "That was our target."

Yaussi was instrumental in planning the mission. To spend the least amount of time over the target, he preferred a downwind approach. "The wind always came off the North Atlantic,

always blowing east.” He also had to consider the time of day and time of year. No bombardier wanted to approach a target with the sun in his eyes. The ideal route would avoid the major flak concentrations. And Yaussi liked to approach the target over a recognizable landmark—a river, railroad or shoreline—to help identify the target. The one unpredictable element was the weather. Many January missions had been cancelled due to winter overcast. All these factors and more had to be considered when planning the mission.

According to the official history, approximately 100 German fighters intercepted the bombers. “I thought there were only about 50,” Yaussi remembers, “but I was in the nose and I don’t know what was going on behind me. There were some Me-109s, Focke-Wulfs, a few twin engine jobs,” Yaussi recalls. “One of ‘em came circling around (in front of the formation) and four turrets (on four B-17s) let go. Each turret had twin fifties, and the bombardier had one, so that (German fighter) went blooey.” The German fighter exploded less than 50 yards from Yaussi’s B-17.

After fighting their way to the target, the men of the 306th faced disappointment. Wilhelmshaven was completely obscured by cloud. Yaussi searched for the harbor through the telescope on his Norden bomb sight, but could see nothing as the group droned on, burning fuel and allowing time for enemy anti-aircraft gunners to find their ranged. “I realized we over-shot,” Yaussi said.

B-17s over Europe flew in closely coordinated formations, which ensured that any approaching fighter would face defensive fire from multiple aircraft. Staying in formation gave each bomber a better chance of warding off German fighters. But each time a formation changed course, the formation loosened up because aircraft on the inside of the turn had to reduce speed while those on the outside had to increase speed to maintain formation. These adjustments inevitably left temporary gaps in the formation until the turn was complete and the aircraft could retake their original positions.

Making such a turn over the target was more dangerous because the anti-aircraft gunners were already alerted and knew the altitude of the American bombers. If the B-17s made another run at the target, they could be sure the enemy flak would be more intense and more accurate the second time. The decision to turn around and make a second run on any target multiplied the risk to every airplane and crew in the group. This was the decision that now rested with Frank Yaussi. Yet, failing to hit the target on this trip just meant another mission to

accomplish the same thing.

Yaussi decided to make a second run. “We made a left turn to come back, and through a break in the clouds we saw some sort of construction near the harbor entrance—either sub pens or part of the new locks.” Yaussi made the decision to drop the group’s bombs on this, the only target he could identify. When the B-17s were on the bomb run, bomb doors opened, ready to unload, Salitnick pointed out the *Admiral Scheer*, now visible off to the left of the target they were approaching. By then it was too late. “It was too sharp a turn,” Yaussi remembered, “and we couldn’t make it, so we let ‘em go.”

Three aircraft of the 53 that bombed Wilhelmshaven failed to return. After the mission, intelligence officers wanted to know what tar-



get the 306th had bombed. Yaussi remembers, “I told them, ‘Get me some more photographs of the area and I’ll pick it out for you.’ But they never did, so I still don’t know. We were lucky to see anything at all.” Strike photos released weeks later showed hits on new installations at the harbor entrance.

After completing 17 combat missions and being promoted to wing bombardier, Frank Yaussi came back to the States to be lead bombardier in a Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber group that General Armstrong was forming. “But that group went to [General Curtis] LeMay, so I ended up training B-29 crews in Grand Island, Nebraska.” One crew Yaussi trained, the crew of the B-29 *Enola Gay*, would become famous for dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima.

Yaussi kept a few mementos of his military service, a Distinguished Flying Cross for a mis-

sion to Romilly-sur-Seine, an Air Medal, and one small piece of hardware. The bombs loaded onto B-17s before a mission all had safety pins in the noses which were only removed after takeoff by the bombardier. “Had to do it before you got to 10,000 feet—after that you were on oxygen,” he said. Frank Yaussi still has the pin he removed from the first American bomb dropped on German soil, a cherished reminder of his contribution to an historic mission.

Half a century after his historic mission, Frank Yaussi was the owner of a tool and die business in Los Angeles. He happened to mention to a colleague, Kirk Harris, that he had been a bombardier in World War II. Harris, a military history buff whose father served in the Army Air Corps, was interested and discovered his soft spoken friend had been lead bombardier on the

first American strike into Germany.

“I though his story needed to be told,” Harris related. He felt the best way was to commission a commemorative painting of the mission. But all the well-known aviation artists were too expensive. “I saw the work of Ray Waddey on commemorative plates and liked it, he recalled. “So I contacted him and commissioned him to do the painting.”

The result is *First Over Germany*, the spectacular limited edition print depicting the mission Frank Yaussi planned and flew to Wilhelmshaven. Yaussi’s reaction: “Pretty good. But there aren’t enough clouds.” *First Over Germany*, signed by the artist and Frank Yaussi, is now available through B-2 Aviation Art. □

---

*Author Lance Thompson is contributing to WWII History for the first time with this article. He resides in Meridian, Idaho.*

**IN JUNE 1940**, when France capitulated to Nazi Germany, the victorious Germans agreed to let the French retain control over the southern portion of their country and all their colonial possessions. A de facto French government was established at Vichy under the direction of Marshal Philippe Pétain, the hero of the World War I Battle of Verdun. Concerned that the Vichy French would allow Germany access to the French colonies in Africa and the Caribbean, President Franklin D. Roosevelt opened relations with Marshal Pétain, sending an ambassador to France to get assurances that the French fleet and the country's colonial possessions would stay out of German hands.

At the same time, General Charles de Gaulle, in exile in London, was rising to prominence. Having been the undersecretary for war in the old French government, de Gaulle had fled to England just before the surrender to the Nazis. Now, from his base in London, he called upon all French citizens to ignore the Vichy government and fight back against the Germans.

Although the official stance of the United States government during World War II was to help Britain, France, the Netherlands, and every other Allied country defeat the Axis powers, it was not too keen about reestablishing the imperial colonies of those nations when the war ended. Between 1870 and 1914, during the Age of Imperialism, many European countries had

Peninsula in Asia. The Dutch controlled the Netherlands East Indies and the western half of New Guinea. Although seemingly small in comparison, France had colonized Indochina (present day Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia), Polynesia (Tahiti), the New Hebrides, and New Caledonia.

In 1853, France annexed the island of New Caledonia. Over the next seven decades, more than 22,000 convicts and political prisoners or deportees were shipped to the island. When it was discovered that New Caledonia contained large deposits of nickel and chrome, French, Japanese, and German mining companies rushed to the island. When the native population proved uncooperative with its imperialist masters, hundreds of laborers were imported from the Netherlands East Indies to work the mines. By the start of World War II, almost 60,000 descendants of French convicts and political dissidents, imported laborers, money-hungry industrialists, and harried civil servants populated New Caledonia, with 10,000 living in the capital city of Nouméa.

Cigar-shaped New Caledonia is 248 miles long and 31 miles wide. Cocked at a northwest to southeast angle, two steep, razor-backed, rugged mountain ranges run down the length of the island, leaving beautiful secluded valleys and plateaus in between. Most of the island's towns are built along the coasts with Nouméa

Despite common opposition to the Japanese, the Americans and Free French experienced a difficult coexistence on the important island.

BY GENE E. SALECKER

# Cultural Clash in

carved up both Africa and Asia in an attempt to control the natural resources of those continents, including oil, rubber, tin, nickel, and manganese. Coinciding with the Industrial Revolution, the powerful European nations sought the raw materials to keep their factories humming and their navies and armies growing. By the start of World War I, almost all of Africa and most of Asia had been colonized.

At the beginning of World War II, the British Empire controlled Burma, India, and the Malay

on a small peninsula jutting out from the southwest coast about 30 miles from the island's southern end. Moselle Bay at the very tip of the peninsula was an excellent deepwater port. Situated only 900 miles off the northeast coast of Australia and in almost a direct line between the Hawaiian Islands and Australia, New Caledonia was strategically positioned across the vital seaborne supply and transport lines to and from the United States.

With the fall of France and the establishment

of the Vichy government, most of the French colonies in Africa and the Pacific swore to fight on, disregarding instructions from Vichy to lay down their arms. One by one, however, almost all of these colonies came into line and accepted the fact that France had surrendered. To fight on would be treason.

Although the government in the French colony of Indochina initially resisted the capitulation, resistance soon waned as pro-Vichy activists came to the forefront. Japan, an ally of





U.S. ships unload matériel on the docks at New Caledonia harbor. The Free French colony of New Caledonia served as a vital staging area and supply base for American operations against the Japanese in the Pacific.

# New Caledonia

Nazi Germany, was already at war with China and wanted to move into Indochina to cut off outside supplies to the Chinese. In spite of some initial resistance, by September 26, 1940, Japan had moved 40,000 troops into the French colony. To Great Britain, the United States, and especially Australia, the Japanese move into Indochina was a threat that needed to be carefully watched.

In addition to keeping their eyes on Indochina, the three countries began to take a

closer look at New Caledonia. On June 24, Governor Georges Pélucier of New Caledonia and the General Council adopted a resolution promising to fight on. As it turned out, however, the governor and council were stronger in word than in deed. As Henri Sautot, a pro-Free French nationalist in the New Hebrides wrote, "That motion seemed more theoretical than practical, for when it came to the point of a decision to rally to General de Gaulle, the fine unanimity of 24 June fell to pieces."

Throughout July 1940, while Japan solidified itself in Indochina, Australia cozied up to New Caledonia. The world's leading exporter of nickel, which as an alloy provides strength and quality to many highly stressed metals, the pro-Vichy government in New Caledonia signed an agreement to provide 5,400 tons of high-grade smelted nickel per year to Australia. In return, Australia provided the coal and coke needed to run the blast furnaces. Although Australia was never in need of large quantities of smelted



The bustling harbor of New Caledonia is shown in November 1942 as supply ships enter and exit the port. New Caledonia also served as a stopping point for American troops entering the Pacific Theater.

nickel, it monopolized the sale of New Caledonian nickel to support the economy of the French colony.

Because of the Export Control Act that President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed that July prohibiting the “export of essential defense materials,” Japan was no longer getting its refined nickel from America. A Canadian company that bought its nickel from New Caledonia refused to sell to the Japanese in a “moral embargo.” Although New Caledonia would still sell its unrefined nickel to Japan, the Japanese lacked the refineries suitable to smelt it into usable metal.

While nominally still pro-Free French, Governor Pélacier received a telegram from the Vichy government in France instructing him to adhere to a “strict application of [the Vichy] government’s instructions concerning breach of Franco-British diplomatic relations.” In other words, New Caledonia was to have nothing to do with Australia and the British. In reply, Pélacier protested that he needed open trade with Australia in order to avert “famine and grave disorders.” Already Pélacier was hearing rumbling among the people and leading citizens as his government leaned more and more toward Vichy. On July 29, bowing to pressure from France, Pélacier published the new constitutional decrees set down by the Vichy government. Four days later, the General Council passed a resolution proclaiming its disapproval of the governor but did not break ties with Vichy itself, never fully backing the Free French and General de Gaulle.

As the government teetered on collapse, the Japanese sought to gain control of New Caledonia’s nickel. Japanese commissioners in Nouméa lobbied for the precious commodity while Japan put pressure on the Vichy government in France. On August 25, Governor Pélacier received instructions from Vichy “that all production of nickel matte [i.e., refined nickel] and metal ores should be reserved for Japan.” The governor, becoming more pro-Vichy by the moment, passed the instructions on to the head of the New Caledonian smelters. The two men in charge, both pro-Free France, ignored the orders. Additionally, they knew full well that if they switched production to the Japanese Australia would stop shipments of coal and coke and shut down the smelters anyway.

With the publication of the Vichy constitutional decrees, social unrest began to grow. More and more of the populace were leaning toward full cooperation with Charles de Gaulle and the Free French. In response, Governor Pélacier asked Vichy to send a warship to Nouméa. On August 23, the gunboat *Dumont d’Urville* arrived with a pro-Vichy captain. Although meant to cower the people, the captain reported that the *Dumont’s* presence only irritated the people more. He also reported that Governor Pélacier was “weak and unequivocal.” On August 28, Vichy instructed the local militia commander, Lt. Col. Maurice Denis, a pro-Vichy activist, to relieve Governor Pélacier of his duties and take over as interim governor. On September 4, the ex-governor boarded a Pan

American Airways flying boat and headed for exile in the United States.

While Acting Governor Denis tried to crack down on the Gaullists, General de Gaulle in London received notice that the pro-Free French people of New Caledonia were ready to act. All they needed was a leader. Almost immediately, de Gaulle contacted Henri Sautot in the New Hebrides. If Sautot could go to New Caledonia, he might be able to rally the populace to overthrow the pro-Vichy governor. One of the things that bothered Sautot, however, was the presence of the *Dumont d’Urville*. Believing that as long as the warship remained in harbor, the pro-Gaullists on New Caledonia would be reluctant to act, de Gaulle requested that the British have an Australian warship accompany Sautot to Nouméa. With the approval of both the British and Australian governments, Sautot set out for Nouméa aboard the Norwegian tanker *Norden*, accompanied by the Australian cruiser HMAS *Adelaide*.

Word of Sautot’s arrival preceded him, and on September 19, when *Norden* and *Adelaide* reached Nouméa, the New Caledonians marched into the capital and confronted Governor Denis, demanding that he either come over to the side of the Free French or resign. By 3 PM, backed by a wild and enthusiastic crowd, Henri Sautot succeeded Colonel Denis as governor of New Caledonia. Almost a week later, after obtaining assurances that none of the pro-Vichy officials and activists would be arrested or harmed, *Dumont d’Urville* left Nouméa and

sailed to Indochina.

Starting with almost nothing, Governor Sautot began to piece together a working government, relying on economic aid from Australia to help stabilize the situation. In Australia, officials began to fear that the Japanese might take advantage of the destabilized condition of the colony to try a takeover. With most of its warships in the Mediterranean supporting Britain against Germany, Australia did not want a Japanese presence only 900 miles off its eastern coast.

Over the next two months, Australian and New Caledonian authorities agreed to turn New Caledonia into an advance base that would include both flying boat and land-based aircraft facilities, two six-inch coast guns and searchlights at Nouméa, and arms and equipment for a local defense force. While all of these activities benefitted the New Caledonians, the Australians also saw this military buildup as protection for their own country, concluding that the protection of New Caledonia would contribute materially to the defense of Australia in the event of war with Japan. By mid-May 1941, after obtaining approval from General de Gaulle, work was completed on the initial military buildup around Nouméa. Over the next few months, additional airstrips were built at Tontouta, about 34 miles north of the capital along the west coast, at Plaine des Gaiacs on the west coast, and at Koumac near the northern tip of the island.

With the war in Europe and rising fears of eventual war with Japan, the economic outlook in New Caledonia began to improve. As the United States became the great "Arsenal of Democracy," American factories began turning out weapons for Great Britain and her allies. Simultaneously, the need for New Caledonian nickel matte and chrome increased dramatically. As the demand for nickel went up, so too did the economy of New Caledonia. Unfortunately, as the importance of New Caledonia's raw materials and strategic geographic location increased, so too did de Gaulle's worries of British, Australian, and American motives toward the Free French colony.

On April 18, Governor Sautot had sent a telegram to de Gaulle complaining that the Australian government was imposing "unacceptable" controls on the island's economy. Officials in New Caledonia believed that "Australia merely desires to exploit New Caledonia in Australian interests."

In a memorandum, the Free French in London complained that New Caledonia's economic interests had been sacrificed to those of the British Empire. Having had many bitter dis-

putes with his British hosts, de Gaulle was suspicious of Allied intentions toward New Caledonia and the other French possessions in the area. Wishing to have a loyal, trusted representative in the area, General de Gaulle named his friend Captain Georges Thierry d'Argenlieu High Commissioner for France in the Pacific and dispatched him to Nouméa.

Although d'Argenlieu has been described as vain, meticulous, devious, ambitious, and filled with "lofty pride," de Gaulle trusted him completely. He was instructed to go to New Caledonia and sort out the defensive arrangements made with Australia. The newly promoted Rear

Admiral d'Argenlieu arrived in Nouméa on November 6 and immediately began to familiarize himself with the situation. Shortly thereafter, two U.S. military officials, one from the Air Corps and one from the Corps of Engineers, arrived apparently unannounced.

Unknown to either d'Argenlieu or de Gaulle, on October 15 the United States had requested permission from the British, Australian, and New Zealand governments and the Netherlands government in exile in London to help in the construction of airfields throughout the Pacific. Unfortunately, the United States had not spoken to General de Gaulle or the Free French.



**ABOVE: Soldiers from New Zealand begin construction on a new hospital on New Caledonia. The Free French government on the island often cooperated grudgingly with the Allied military command. BELOW: A severe housing shortage, made worse by the uncooperative nature of the Free French authorities, forced some American personnel to live in native huts in a small area of the island. As many as 50,000 American personnel were in New Caledonia at any given time.**



Although d'Argenlieu allowed the officials to complete their survey of the airbases already established by the Australians, he showed deep resentment that he, de Gaulle, and the Free French had not been privy to their arrival.

On November 21, de Gaulle sent d'Argenlieu specific instructions on setting up rigid safeguards of French sovereignty and authority and specifying that all airdromes built on French soil would be under exclusive French control. When the two American military officials suggested that the airstrip at Plaine des Gaiacs be expanded to accommodate heavy bombers, d'Argenlieu halted construction completely until he received word from the Free French delegation in Washington, which was working out an agreement with the U.S. State Department.

Perhaps still unable or unwilling to accept the complicated political situation on New Caledonia, the United States War Plans Division wrote to the State Department on December 4, explaining that the Army Air Corps desired to expand the runways at Plaine des Gaiacs and had "contracted with the Australian Government to improve the field." The report continued, "The Army desires the Australian Government to assume responsibility for defense." Nowhere in the report did the War Plans Division mention the Free French or indicate that it was actually the Free French that controlled the island of New Caledonia.

All arguments ended on December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. The next day, General de Gaulle telegraphed d'Argenlieu to place "at the disposal of the Allied

Forces all the facilities that may be offered by bases in the New Hebrides, Tahiti and New Caledonia." He added, "As soon as a state of war exists between Great Britain and Japan you will consider yourself at war with the latter." Britain, of course, declared war on Japan that same day, and though d'Argenlieu allowed the work on the airfield at Plaine des Gaiacs to proceed he was fearful that the expanded airdrome would make the island even more desirable to the Japanese.

For defense New Caledonia boasted an 800-man French garrison, two light coastal defense batteries, and a poorly armed colonial French home guard. Although Australia had no excess military personnel to send to New Caledonia since most of its forces were fighting the Germans and Italians in North Africa, a 300-man commando unit was quickly rushed to New Caledonia to enhance the morale of the Free French Forces.

On December 10, 1941, an officer with the U.S. State Department wrote, "I believe we ought to call to somebody's attention to the fact that according to our latest information Australia has not taken over [New Caledonia's] defense. The loss of New Caledonia to the Japanese would, of course, constitute a considerable blow to our whole war effort."

When Chief of Staff General George C. Marshall asked his Deputy Chief of the War Plans Division, Brig. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, to draw up a plan for what action should be taken in the Pacific, Eisenhower concluded that the Philippines were untenable and that the only

place to start operations against the Japanese was Australia. Concluded Eisenhower, "Our base must be Australia, and we must start at once to expand it and to secure our communications to it." Of course, the communications to Australia led through Hawaii, Fiji, New Caledonia, and New Zealand.

Unknown to anyone in Washington, however, the real threat to New Caledonia was not the Japanese. After December 7, when Japanese troops were running rampant throughout the area, Vichy officials envisioned a decisive Japanese takeover of the southern Pacific. In a communiqué to the Japanese embassy at Vichy, Marshal Pétain's government expressed that if the Japanese continued to push southward, "French aircraft and a detachment of French troops [from Indochina] could take part in the event of actions against New Caledonia."

The Vichy French would take back New Caledonia and offer Japan the much needed supply of smelted nickel.

In mid-January, plans were being made for French warships in Indochina to race to New Caledonia ahead of the Japanese and retake the island in the name of the Vichy government. This expedition would establish the "permanent sovereignty" of New Caledonia as a pro-Vichy colony. On January 23, a telegram was sent to Vichy outlining the plan and asking for the approval of its undertaking as soon as the Japanese zone of action came sufficiently close to New Caledonia. Fortunately for the Allies, events happening elsewhere prevented the Vichy French in Indochina from making their move south.



While the Indochina Vichy were waiting for a reply, a hastily assembled American task force was steaming toward New Caledonia. On January 23, 1942, a conglomerate force of hastily assembled units totaling 17,000 soldiers and service personnel left New York City for Melbourne, Australia, where they would be shipped to New Caledonia. The task force commander, Brig. Gen. Alexander M. Patch, Jr., would fly to Australia and meet his new command at Melbourne.

While the ships were en route, officials in Washington began hearing rumors of the intended Vichy move toward New Caledonia. Immediately, Washington warned the Vichy government against any change in the status quo in her Pacific colonies. What was Vichy would stay Vichy, what was Free French would stay Free French. On February 22, before the American reinforcements had arrived, the State Department sent a message to Nouméa announcing, "This Government recognizes, in particular, that French island possessions in that area are under the effective control of the French Nationalist Committee [i.e., General de Gaulle].... [The United States] Government appreciates the importance of New Caledonia in the defense of the Pacific Area."

At the same time, High Commissioner d'Argenlieu was having a fit. Never informed that an American task force was on the way, d'Argenlieu was angered that the Americans were unwilling to commit troops and matériel to New Caledonia. In late January, he sent a telegram to de Gaulle outlining his frustrations. "From the United States we have obtained only the appointment of a liaison officer. No reply to our urgent request for equipment.... The United States seems determined to extract from us all they need without any compensation."

Always suspicious of the underlying intentions of both the United States and Australia, d'Argenlieu added, "I apprehend, without any firm confirmation, a secret combination between America and Australia to impose on us, without prior consultation, the landing of American troops. You have instructed me not to accept such a thing. I shall carry out my orders by every means."

Worried that d'Argenlieu would resist the arrival of American troops, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff sent a communiqué to de Gaulle informing him that the British and the Americans "appreciated the importance of New Caledonia and have initiated measures for its defense." Nothing was stipulated, but the general was assured that help was on the way. The telegram concluded, "It is requested that you so inform the High Commissioner at Nouméa, and impress



**ABOVE:** Disassembled Lockheed P-38 Lightning fighter planes, loaded on trucks, are transported through the streets of Nouméa, provincial capital of Free French New Caledonia. Despite their alliance, relations between the Americans and French authorities on the island were often strained. **OPPOSITE:** U.S. Navy personnel overhaul engines and clean up Consolidated PBV Catalina flying boats at Ile Nou naval air station on New Caledonia. Note the numerous huts near the machine shop.

on him the necessity for absolute secrecy."

When d'Argenlieu received the information on February 1, with no details, he still felt snubbed. In the future, he insisted on being informed well in advance of any proposed American support. He also insisted that any American force landing in New Caledonia was to be placed under his command. Hoping to placate the high commissioner, General Marshall instructed General Patch to meet with d'Argenlieu. The two men met on March 9 at Nouméa, and three days later d'Argenlieu reported to de Gaulle, "Contact is now established between Patch and myself ... it seems clear that the command of the Allied forces in New Caledonia can be held only by Patch, whose forces and resources are overwhelming in comparison to ours. Having requested him to communicate his instructions to me ... [he] assured me that he would keep me informed of all his activities."

On February 26, the American task force arrived at Melbourne. American troops landed at Nouméa on March 13. By the end of the month, another 5,000 American troops from a heavy artillery regiment arrived, giving General Patch more than 22,000 troops. Later, the 164th Infantry Regiment arrived to further increase the American presence.

New Caledonia was not prepared for the sudden influx of Americans; nor were the Americans ready for New Caledonia. There were no facili-

ties to house or shelter the troops, and the Americans had no information on where to go or how to get there. Fortunately, General Patch soon acquired the services of three Australian liaison officers. In time, the Army engineer and supply troops managed to get a hold on the situation, and with the assistance of the Australian liaison officers began sending supplies and equipment, including crated airplanes and parts, along the "little Burma road" that connected the port of Nouméa with the unfinished Australian airfields and some new defensive positions established around the northern tip of the island.

Near the end of March, General Douglas MacArthur, who had left the Philippines and relocated to Australia, was made Supreme Commander of the Southwest Pacific Area, which extended east of Australia to the 160th meridian with a slight bulge incorporating the Solomon Islands. The rest of the Pacific was placed under the command of Admiral Chester Nimitz as Commander-in-Chief Pacific. The separate sea areas of New Zealand, the New Hebrides, Fiji, Samoa, and New Caledonia were placed under the South Pacific Area. On April 19, Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley was placed in command of this area with his headquarters at Auckland, New Zealand. Ghormley was told that soon, perhaps by autumn, he would have enough troops and equipment to go on the offensive.

It took months for General Patch to meld his



**ABOVE:** A color guard renders honors and accepts the salute of American officers, including General E.B. Sebree, during a review on New Caledonia. Sebree served as an assistant to General Alexander Patch, commander of U.S. forces on the island. **OPPOSITE:** En route to combat in the Solomon Islands, U.S. troops loaded with gear board a transport ship in the harbor at New Caledonia. The base at New Caledonia was vital to Allied ability to wage an offensive campaign in the South Pacific.

motley crew into a well-trained fighting machine. In May 1942, he was unwillingly dragged into the political mess that was New Caledonia. Although Admiral d'Argenlieu was the high commissioner for France in the Pacific and responsible for all of the French island colonies in the area, he continued to reside at Nouméa and make decisions that should have been made by Governor Sautot. When some of the locals began to complain, d'Argenlieu convinced General de Gaulle that he alone could deal with the turbulent conditions in New Caledonia and got the general to "invite" Governor Sautot to London to receive a new assignment.

Although Sautot originally agreed, he eventually changed his mind after deciding that d'Argenlieu just wanted him out of the way. On May 5, after Sautot sent a message to de Gaulle requesting to remain as governor, troops loyal to d'Argenlieu rounded up Sautot and four of his leading supporters and spirited them out to the waiting sloop *Chevreuil*.

One of Sautot's confidants, George Dubois, managed to avoid being arrested and rushed to General Patch seeking American assistance. Unwilling to interfere in island politics, especially when he was trying to put together a viable fighting force, Patch sent Dubois home but provided him with an armed escort. It was this single act that aroused anger on both sides. New Caledonians loyal to d'Argenlieu argued that Patch should have arrested Dubois, while those loyal to Sautot complained that Patch should have freed the governor and the others

who had been falsely arrested.

The next morning, *Chevreuil*, carrying Sautot and his four compatriots, started out for New Zealand. On the way, *Chevreuil* heard distress calls from a Greek ship that had been torpedoed by a Japanese submarine. Although the Greek ship was only 30 miles to the south and *Chevreuil* was equipped with the latest antisubmarine devices, the captain ignored the call and continued on, so intent was the anti-Sautot faction to get rid of the governor. Then, after dropping off the four leaders at the tiny island of Walpole about 150 miles from Nouméa, the ship went on to Auckland, where Sautot was put ashore. Accompanying Sautot was a liaison officer who was to keep tabs on him until he was safely in England.

The next day, Patch complained to d'Argenlieu that *Chevreuil* had ignored a distress call and did not participate in the search for the Japanese submarine. Patch told the admiral that three American ships carrying troops and supplies were close to New Caledonia and within the danger zone of the Japanese sub. He requested that d'Argenlieu return *Chevreuil* to help in the search. In response, the admiral stated that he would be willing to recall the sloop "for a few hours" but only if Patch told him specific details about the routes and contents of the three American ships. This Patch was unwilling to do, so *Chevreuil* stayed in Auckland and relations between the Americans and the Free French worsened.

When the people of New Caledonia discov-

ered that *Chevreuil* had taken away their leaders, they rose up. To help quell the disorder, d'Argenlieu asked Patch to use American troops to disperse the mob. Patch refused. In a dispatch to Washington, Patch explained the situation and said that he expected the trouble to escalate unless d'Argenlieu were removed. Patch went on to write that if the Americans helped d'Argenlieu the United States would "lose the military support of the local militia and the entire population [which backed Governor Sautot]." He then asked if he had the military authority to place d'Argenlieu and his staff under protective arrest since "the disorders grew into an immediate and dangerous military threat."

British authorities were shocked by what was happening in New Caledonia. As author John Lawrey wrote, "D'Argenlieu's behavior ... seemed incredible. New Caledonia was on the very edge of the battle and might be an early objective for the enemy. But at this very moment [d'Argenlieu] had chosen to dismiss the Governor who had brought the island over to de Gaulle and had worked in harmony with both the British and the Americans." The British put pressure on de Gaulle to straighten things out on New Caledonia.

On May 8, d'Argenlieu conveniently left Nouméa for a visit along the west coast in order to rally the population, which had been disgracefully misled by foreign-concocted propaganda. Once away from the capital city, however, he was arrested by local authorities. Wishing to avoid any unpleasantness, General Patch pressured the locals, without using the American military, and had d'Argenlieu released. Eventually, the locals managed to get d'Argenlieu to agree to the return of the four leaders that had been dropped off at Walpole Island. On May 17, the men returned to a cheering crowd.

In London, de Gaulle repeated d'Argenlieu's claim that the United States was nothing more than "a democratic country with imperialistic ambitions" hoping to kick the French out of New Caledonia at a time when France was weak and take over the island for itself. Over the next few months, de Gaulle repeatedly spoke of "American imperialism" and instructed his followers to resist any American attempt to control any of the island colonies in the Pacific. Accordingly, Commissioner d'Argenlieu wrote, "We have only one objective in Nouméa, which is to see that the island remains French while at the same time assuring its defense."

In early May, however, General de Gaulle, Admiral d'Argenlieu, and all of New Caledonia found out just how desperately they needed to work with the Americans to defend their island. On May 3, Japanese forces captured Tulagi in

the Solomon Islands, and on May 10 it was reported that a Japanese aircraft carrier was headed toward New Caledonia. General Patch's command and the island militia were put on full alert. As it turned out, the Japanese ship was part of the invasion force headed toward Port Moresby, New Guinea, that eventually turned back after the Battle of the Coral Sea. Although the immediate threat was over, it had emphasized how much the different factions needed to work together for the common good of New Caledonia.

In an attempt to mollify d'Argenlieu, Patch sent the high commissioner an apology for involving himself in the Dubois affair. He did, however, request that no further action be taken against Dubois. To the Free French, Patch's apology was an admission of guilt for taking sides in local politics. Both d'Argenlieu and de Gaulle highly resented the "American interference." Admiral d'Argenlieu harbored a deep hatred for General Patch and the Americans, and when Vice Admiral Ghormley passed through Nouméa on his way to Auckland on May 20, d'Argenlieu handed him a long list of unsubstantiated complaints against Patch.

Virtually until American troops landed at Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands on August 7, 1942, the high commissioner kept a running correspondence of petty grievances with Patch. At the same time he repeatedly reminded Patch that he was not under any authority other than de Gaulle in London. Unfortunately, the British invasion of Vichy-controlled Madagascar off the eastern coast of Africa only added to de Gaulle's and d'Argenlieu's suspicions that the British and Americans were out to take over all pre-World War II French colonies.

On May 23, the conglomerate American military force on New Caledonia was officially organized into the 23rd Infantry Division, better known as the Americal Division from "Americans on New Caledonia." Until November 1942, the Americal Division and the handful of Australian and local troops would be the only defenders on New Caledonia. Eventually, as the island became a major supply base for the Solomons campaign, more American troops were brought over, peaking at 50,000.

Between June 29 and July 2, 1942, the American Joint Chiefs of Staff devised a plan to take back Tulagi in the Solomons. Then, when it was discovered that the Japanese were building an airstrip on nearby Guadalcanal, the decision was made for the newly formed 1st Marine Division to invade the two islands as soon as possible. To place the invasion under Navy control, the Joint Chiefs shifted the boundary of MacArthur's Southwest Pacific Area to the west

and placed the Solomon Islands in Admiral Nimitz's command and within Admiral Ghormley's South Pacific Area.

A cautious, worrisome individual, Ghormley did not want to move against the Solomons. He felt that his forces were not ready. In a letter written in conjunction with General MacArthur, who also felt that the United States was not ready to take the offensive, the two men wrote, "[We] two commanders are of the opinion, arrived at independently ... that the initiation of the operation at this time ... would be attended with the gravest risk. It is recommended that this operation be deferred." The Joint Chiefs ignored the recommendation. The invasion would go on. Unfortunately, Ghormley remained pessimistic throughout the campaign.



To prepare for the August 7 invasion date, Ghormley moved his headquarters from Auckland to Nouméa, 1,100 miles closer to the Solomons. Although described as a pleasant man, it has been written that Ghormley was nearing the end of his career and was already mentally and physically tired. He was no match for either High Commissioner d'Argenlieu or the new governor, Auguste-Henri Montchamp, who was seen as a carbon copy of d'Argenlieu. When Ghormley arrived at Nouméa aboard his aging headquarters ship USS *Argonne*, he was informed that he and his staff could not come ashore and that he could not use any offices in town. Nothing was available. Never one to ruffle feathers, Ghormley did not push the issue

but calmly settled into his office on the sweltering *Argonne*, which had never been upgraded for air conditioning, and began to direct the campaign against Guadalcanal from there.

Governor Montchamp did not trust the Americans and felt that they were "rude and aggressive." Another crony of Charles de Gaulle, Montchamp helped take some of the pressure off d'Argenlieu in dealing with the Americans. Whenever Admiral Ghormley got up the nerve to ask for office space on New Caledonia, Montchamp flatly refused. In his appointment by de Gaulle as the new governor of New Caledonia, the Free French leader had stressed the need for someone that would work well with d'Argenlieu and would stand up to the Americans in spite of their immense resources. He got

just that in Governor Montchamp.

On August 7, the Americans stormed ashore on both Tulagi and Guadalcanal. Although the land operations went well, the American navy suffered one of the worst defeats in United States naval history on August 9 after Admiral Ghormley allowed an old Naval Academy friend, Vice Admiral Frank J. Fletcher, to pull his three aircraft carriers and their supporting ships far away from the Solomons after only 36 hours on station. In the night Battle of Savo Island, the Americans lost three cruisers along with one Australian Navy cruiser and had one cruiser and one destroyer damaged. The Japanese had only one destroyer damaged. In his official report to Nimitz, Ghormley covered for

Fletcher's early withdrawal by reporting simply, "Carriers short of fuel proceeding to fueling rendezvous."

Over the next few weeks, Admiral Fletcher and his carriers stayed far south of Guadalcanal, purportedly protecting the sea lanes between the Solomons and Australia while the Japanese poured thousands of men onto Guadalcanal. During daylight hours, Japanese air raids came at will, and at night Japanese ships bombarded the captured airstrip and U.S. Marine positions on the island.

Although Fletcher's carrier planes could have provided much needed help, neither he nor Ghormley responded. Finally, on August 24, Fletcher moved his carriers forward and engaged the Japanese in the Battle of the Eastern Solomons. In the ensuing fight the Americans sank one Japanese carrier, one destroyer, and one light cruiser, while the Americans suffered one carrier damaged. A few days later, however, Japanese submarines sank a second American carrier and damaged a third. With all his carriers either lost or damaged, Fletcher seemingly lost confidence and requested immediate sick leave. It was granted. He never returned.

Ghormley contacted MacArthur for his thoughts, and once again the two commanders jointly told Nimitz that Guadalcanal could not be held. The Marines would have to be pulled out. This defeatist attitude angered Nimitz. He knew that the Japanese were fully committed to holding Guadalcanal. They had lost thousands of men, dozens of ships, and hundreds of planes defending the island. Although the Marines were barely hanging on, Nimitz argued that they were doing just that—hanging on. And America was just beginning to rise up to its full potential. The situation on Guadalcanal was going to get better!

Vowing to see for himself what was happening in the South Pacific, Nimitz flew to Nouméa for a meeting with Ghormley. Amazingly, Nimitz found his old Naval Academy friend sitting aboard his sweltering headquarters ship, unwilling to provoke the Free French authorities ashore. Although Nimitz had told Ghormley to "exercise strategic command in person," he discovered that in almost two months' time Ghormley had never visited Guadalcanal.

After visiting Guadalcanal, where Nimitz discovered that the Marines themselves were highly optimistic about their chances of defeating the Japanese, he returned to Nouméa for another meeting with Ghormley. Nimitz wanted to know why South Pacific warships were not being used to stop the Japanese from reinforcing Guadalcanal. He wanted to know why the Americal Division, training on New Caledonia

since March, had not been sent to reinforce the Marines. He wanted to know why other islands had not been stripped of their garrisons to reinforce Guadalcanal.

After Nimitz left, Ghormley dispatched the 164th Infantry Regiment of the Americal Division to Guadalcanal. While protecting the convoy of transports, a screening force of American warships surprised a smaller Japanese naval force just north of Guadalcanal on the night of October 11-12. In the Battle of Cape Esperance, the first night victory for the U.S. Navy, the Americans sank one cruiser and one destroyer and damaged two more cruisers. The Americans lost only one destroyer but had two cruisers and two destroyers damaged. On October 13, the first of the Americal Division troops went ashore unmolested.

When Nimitz returned to his headquarters in Hawaii, he immediately began stripping the Central Pacific bases of planes and forwarding them to Guadalcanal. At the same time he notified the



**First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt stops by a hospital bed to exchange a few words with a patient while touring medical facilities on New Caledonia.**

Army's 25th Division in Hawaii to be ready to move forward at a moment's notice. He also realized Ghormley was on the verge of a nervous breakdown so he sent Admiral William F. "Bull" Halsey to Nouméa for a further study of the South Pacific area. After Halsey's seaplane touched down in Nouméa harbor on October 18, he opened a sealed envelope that had suddenly been handed him. "Immediately upon your arrival at Nouméa," the dispatch from Nimitz read, "you will relieve Vice Admiral Robert L. Ghormley of the duties of Commander South Pacific and South Pacific Force."

Halsey responded, "Jesus Christ and General Jackson! This is the hottest potato they ever handed me!"

While Patch and Ghormley had been easy-going and almost apologetic to the Free French authorities on New Caledonia, Halsey was aggressive and impatient. When Halsey intro-

duced himself to Governor Montchamp, since High Commissioner d'Argenlieu had removed his headquarters to the Free-French controlled island of Tahiti, he found Montchamp to have an undeserved "aloof attitude." Wrote Halsey, "The French governor kept sulkily (but not silently) aloof in his 'palace' on the hilltop."

To help negotiations between the Americans and the Free French authorities on New Caledonia, Washington asked de Gaulle to allow Governor Montchamp to deal directly with Halsey without going through London. Although de Gaulle agreed, Montchamp continued to insist that he had to check with London first before making any crucial decisions, thus delaying everything indefinitely. Although far away on Tahiti, Commissioner d'Argenlieu supported everything that Montchamp did.

In the first six weeks between October 18 and December 1, Halsey's new command fought three naval battles and several land battles. In each naval engagement, Japanese forces were turned back from their missions of shelling the Marines on Guadalcanal or reinforcing their own troops. In the ground action, the reinforced Marines stopped each enemy advance and managed to expand their defensive perimeter around Henderson Field, the vital base for American aircraft operating from Guadalcanal.

The importance of Nouméa's harbor came to the forefront after the October 25-27 Battle of Santa Cruz Islands, when the damaged aircraft carrier *Enterprise* limped into the harbor for immediate repairs instead of retiring all the way to Pearl Harbor. By November 11, she was back in action off Guadalcanal.

In December, during a lull in the fighting, Halsey, still aboard *Argonne*, wrote, "I was able to turn my attention, for the first time, to organizing my command and settling in for the long struggle ahead." Delegating authority, Halsey began to expand his staff. "Operations alone was getting the full-time attention of twenty-five of my officers," he wrote.

Knowing full well that remaining on the overcrowded, stifling *Argonne* was not going to work, Halsey sought better working and living conditions. "I have always insisted on comfortable offices and quarters for my staff," he wrote. "Their day's work is so long, their schedule so irregular, the strain so intense, that I am determined for them to work and rest in whatever ease is available."

Although knowing that Admiral Ghormley's repeated requests to move his offices ashore had constantly been refused by the Free French, Admiral Halsey figured he would try again.

Realizing the importance that the French officials attached to decorations, Halsey instructed

Lt. Col. Julian P. Brown, one of his staff members, to put on his dress uniform adorned with all his medals, including a Croix de Guerre awarded during World War I, and see Governor Montchamp to ask for accommodations on shore. “What do we get in return?” Montchamp asked. “We will continue to protect you as we have always done,” Brown replied. Montchamp said he would see what he could do.

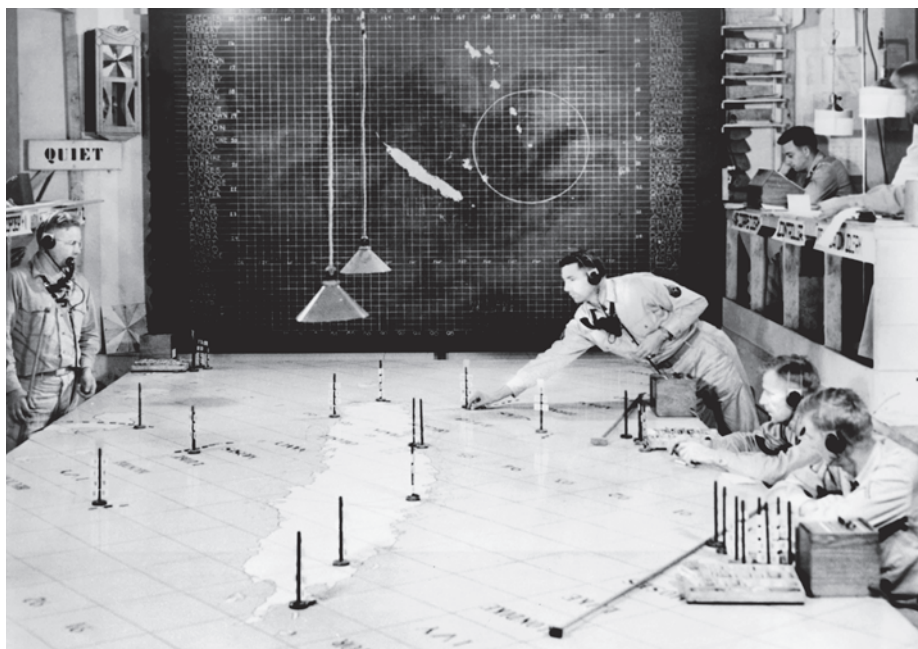
Instead, the governor sent off a blistering note to de Gaulle. He informed the general, “The imperious and constantly increasing requests of the Allied commanders ... are making the situation impossible.” He told the Free French leader that U.S. Army officers were occupying every available space. If the U.S. Navy wanted to come ashore, the Army personnel would have to move out. There was not room enough for both of them. In Tahiti, Commissioner d’Argenlieu backed Montchamp fully. He informed de Gaulle that the Americans were already occupying every newly constructed building, laying the blame upon the old governor. “Sautot always gave in to their requests.”

Two more times in December, Halsey requested permission to move his staff ashore. Each time Governor Montchamp either refused outright or told Halsey that he would have to contact London to see what they had to say. Halsey knew that it was nothing but a stall tactic. Finally, when Colonel Brown met with Montchamp a fourth time he told the governor straight out, “We’ve got a war on our hands and we can’t continue to devote valuable time to these petty concerns. I venture to remind Your Excellency that if we Americans had not arrived here, the Japanese would have.” Unperturbed, Montchamp just shrugged his shoulders.

When Halsey heard about Montchamp’s response, he remembered, “We simply moved ashore.” Finally fed up with the haughtiness of the Free French governor, the short-tempered Halsey called for his barge and loaded on an impressive Marine Corps guard. Recalled Halsey, “The offices ‘put at our disposal’ had been the headquarters of the High Commissioner for Free France in the Pacific.”

Knowing that the high commissioner’s offices were unoccupied since d’Argenlieu was in London, Halsey and his Marine escort came ashore and marched up to the offices. While some of the Marines surrounded the building, a few others raised the Stars and Stripes from the flagpole. Halsey was there to stay.

“We were still crowded in our new offices, but not so badly as on the *Argonne*,” Halsey wrote. Next, Halsey and his Marines went in search of living quarters. For Halsey they seized a brick house on a “cool, airy hilltop” that had



**U.S. Army Signal Corps personnel track enemy and friendly aircraft movements via radio, radar, and a large map at an operations and early warning center located in Nouméa.**

belonged to the Japanese consulate. Earlier in the war, the consul himself had been sent to Australia for internment.

“The chairs were so squatty that we felt as if we were sitting on the deck, and the tables hardly reached our knees,” Halsey wrote. “My Filipino mess attendants never became accustomed to my response when they broke a piece of the consul’s china. Instead of bawling them out, I told them, ‘The hell with it! It’s Japanese.’” Halsey’s deepest satisfaction, however, came every morning when his Marine guards “raised the American flag over this bit of property which had once belonged to a representative of Japan.”

Once ensconced in the consulate building, Halsey looked for living quarters for his staff. “[We] eventually established ourselves in a cluster of buildings constituting a miniature International Settlement,” Halsey explained, “two Quonset huts, which we christened ‘Wicky-Wacky Lodge’; [and] one ramshackle French house, ‘Havoc Hall.’” Needing more, he pressed the governor for additional living and working space. Montchamp, already angered by Halsey’s uninvited foray into town, again refused. “It appears to be just an entire lack of desire to cooperate,” Halsey reasoned.

To his own superiors, Montchamp wrote that the Americans were “trying to kill French life, by suppressing little by little through requests based on military considerations, all our organization—to substitute for it some American form which would lead to the ruin of all that is French.”

Halsey did not care about the French way of

life. He had a job to do and would get it done no matter whose feathers he ruffled. “Our principle difficulty,” he noted, “lies in the non-cooperative ‘business as usual’ attitude of the French. They are jealous of their prerogatives and anxious to preserve, war or no war, French traditions and customs.” He summed up the situation by adding, “I think they desire to avoid the mental discomfort of changing their habits and the physical discomfort of contracting their installations to make room for us.” In spite of the war, Halsey felt that the Free French want “life as usual.” He concluded they were “more obstacles than allies in the war effort.”

On January 4, 1943, while Free French and American relations on New Caledonia remained tense, the Japanese finally decided to abandon Guadalcanal. Although Halsey had anticipated moving his headquarters out of Nouméa as soon as possible, he quickly learned that it was not to be. New Caledonia had become the main staging area for American troops and supplies flowing into the Solomons. By May 1943, realizing he would be staying longer than expected, Halsey asked for more facilities. In response, Commissioner d’Argenlieu sent Halsey a list of all of the buildings and facilities that the Americans were already occupying and insisted that the Free French forces could not give up any more buildings. D’Argenlieu wanted to know why the Americans did not build their own buildings as they had done in Australia.

When Halsey read the commissioner’s reply, he ordered his staff to put together a list of all of the buildings that had been constructed by

the Americans and all of the improvements they had made to Nouméa. When finished, the list showed that the Americans had built 2,186 structures on New Caledonia, including 271 warehouses. The report also showed that for every 1,000 U.S. troops on New Caledonia, 905 were living in tents, 90 were living in American-built buildings, and the other five were in French houses, mostly officers paying rent to the French owners. Halsey sent his list and an accompanying report to London to “entirely refute the impression Admiral d’Argenlieu gave of us.”

As the American juggernaut continued up the Solomon Islands chain, New Caledonia took on more and more importance. In 1943, Nouméa was second only to San Francisco in the amount of tonnage passing through a Pacific port. In November 1942, when Admiral Halsey took over, Nouméa was handling 1,500 tons a day. By early 1943, with improved management and an increase in storage space in Quonset huts built near the docks, the port was handling more than 10,000 tons a day. Unfortunately, this increase in activity meant further inconveniences for the New Caledonians since military goods had priority in unloading and civilian items sometimes had to wait days to be brought ashore.

The unforeseen hardships for the New Caledonians seemed to overwhelm Governor Montchamp and the authorities. As goods sat on the ships waiting to be unloaded, prices began to rise. As one American put it, price control was “only a phrase.” Inflation increased, and rationing was poorly controlled. Fresh meat, fruit, and vegetables were in short supply. The town and peninsula of Nouméa were totally swamped by this unprecedented military occupation.

While many townspeople came to resent the sprawling occupation of the Americans, as the population of Nouméa tripled others found the occupation an economic boom. Laborers found jobs on the docks and in the warehouses, women worked as laundresses, and many women and children sold sandwiches and soft drinks. Unfortunately, many of the snacks and drinks came from American canteens and snack bars, which paid no local taxes and higher wages than the local establishments. French businesses suffered from this unfair competition.

As American tent cities sprang up all over New Caledonia, the two cultures clashed. It was reported that many New Caledonians were angry because “their cattle had been killed, their fences torn down, roads built over their property, trees cut down and many other things done.” An American report confirmed, “The feeling is increasing, and unless the destruction and stealing by the U.S. forces here is curbed

there may be difficulty.” This time, instead of complaints coming from Montchamp or d’Argenlieu, or even de Gaulle, the complaints were coming from the people themselves.

New Caledonians began to believe the talk that the Americans wanted to take over the island. Australian officials on New Caledonia received an anonymous report on the anti-American feelings. “There are many insular and bone-headed [Americans], possibly even more among the officers than enlisted men,” stated the report, “who think nothing of insulting the French openly, and of discussing in public whether or not America will have the bounty to take over New Caledonia now, or after the war.”

Fearing an outright rebellion, General Rush Lincoln, in charge of the First Island Command, a collection of American units with the sole duty of protecting New Caledonia, tried to calm the islanders’ fears. In a radio speech given in March 1943, the one year anniversary of the arrival of the American troops, Lincoln assured the people that the Americans were only there to protect New Caledonia, not to take over their country. He regretted the inconveniences placed upon the New Caledonian people but said that it was necessary during a time of war. He finished by thanking the people for their hospitality and understanding. The speech was then broadcast in French and later published in both English and French. Although allaying some fears, followup reports indicated that there was a “cooling” of friendliness toward the occupying Americans.

By June 1943, Governor Montchamp had had enough. After 10 months in office he had come to despise the Americans, the New Caledonians, and the politics of the island. Writing to High Commissioner d’Argenlieu, Montchamp asked to be reassigned. “I most ardently hope, Admiral” he wrote, “to never return here and wish to be assigned to a combat unit.” He termed New Caledonia a “graveyard for governors.” Having fallen into disfavor with d’Argenlieu because of his inability to stand up to Halsey and the Americans, the high commissioner was more than happy to let him go.

On August 28, an interim governor arrived in Nouméa. He was Christian Laigret, d’Argenlieu’s handpicked man and another rabid Gaullist. Laigret continued with the long list of complaints against the Americans; however, this time he had the backing of the people. One of his first acts was to take a tour of New Caledonia to speak with the people and see firsthand the destruction caused by the Americans. He was shown the downed fences and telephone lines, the cattle killed by soldiers hunting deer, and the damage done to fields and roads by

American vehicles. The interim governor agreed to make amends and pursue complaints against the Americans.

One of Laigret’s biggest complaints concerned the actions of American soldiers and sailors toward the women of New Caledonia, especially African American soldiers, who had begun arriving in New Caledonia in late 1942. Laigret complained that the attitude of the black soldiers toward the New Caledonians was aggressive and offensive and that the African Americans prowled the streets looking “for adventures.” While the governor wanted blacks banned from the city of Nouméa completely, General Lincoln refused. Instead, the general settled on restricting the African Americans to visiting only certain parts of the city, perhaps unwittingly reinforcing America’s policy of segregation. Additionally, the American military police and shore patrol presence was increased.

Governor Laigret also complained about the impact that the influx of American dollars was having on New Caledonia’s economy. While some islanders were reaping great benefits from working with or for the Americans, others were suffering. Civilians were finding it hard to purchase such necessities as sugar and flour, while great quantities were being sold to the Americans. The ability of United States authorities to outbid the local businessmen meant that American vehicles had all the oil and gasoline they wanted and American servicemen had all the food and drink they desired.

American authorities were also accused of hiring native workers, called Kanak, over New Caledonians. Governor Laigret and many of the Free French felt that this was elevating the dark-skinned Kanaks over the light-skinned New Caledonians and giving the natives an unprecedented new status on the island. Laigret felt that this elevated status would make it hard for the French to control the Kanak after the Americans departed.

To try to control activities within his own government, Laigret began to dismiss French officers that he felt had become too friendly with the Americans. Although he continued to act on orders from Free French authorities who wanted to ensure the maintenance of French sovereignty in New Caledonia, Laigret became a liability. His strong anti-American stance and his inability to work with both the Americans and some of the highest members of New Caledonian society eventually led to his recall in December 1943. However, before he left he gave two blistering speeches on what he thought of the Americans and how New Caledonia would go to ruin without him.

Halsey was glad to see Laigret go and wrote,

“Governor Laigret has failed utterly to appreciate the necessity for cooperation in the war effort, has deliberately attempted to sow the seeds of dissension between French residents ... and the American forces..., has utilized the powers of his office to intimidate those who have been friendly toward the Americans, and has thus prevented the friendly cooperation that should prevail.”

Halsey concluded, “Under no circumstances should New Caledonia be handed back to the French; its administration is a disgrace.” What Halsey failed to understand, however, was that the United States was not in control of the island and had nothing to hand back. Although at one point President Roosevelt actually questioned whether the French should remain in control of New Caledonia once the war was over, the United States never made a firm attempt to keep the Free French from controlling the island once peace was restored.

In February 1944, a new governor, the sixth since the fall of France in 1940, took over and immediately began to repair the relationship between the Free French and the Americans. Although Jacques Tallec was pro-Gaullist, he was determined to work with the United States to ensure the protection and prosperity of New Caledonia. Unlike the previous governors, Tallec felt confident that although the Americans might want to keep a military base on New Caledonia after the war they had no real intention of claiming the island for themselves. In an act of good faith, he immediately reinstated some of the French officers that had been dismissed by Governor Laigret.

More of a threat to French rule than America’s future ambitions was a movement by the New Caledonians themselves for autonomy. The autonomists wanted a greater say in running their own affairs while the native Kanaks and small Asian populations did not want to go back to the former status quo where they had no political voice and earned generally low wages.

In March 1944, when the Solomons campaign ended, American troops began moving most of their equipment and supplies out of New Caledonia to forward bases. The Navy gave up consideration of Nouméa harbor as its main base, instead shifting its repair facilities to Ulithi Atoll in the Caroline Islands. On June 15, as the war moved north and west, Halsey left New Caledonia. As he was being driven through the streets of Nouméa toward a waiting plane, soldiers, sailors, and townspeople lined the roadway. “Their cheers and the bands and the flags stung my eyes,” Halsey wrote. “I never saw Nouméa again.”

As Admiral Nimitz continued his island-



**ABOVE: Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz greets French Governor of New Caledonia Christian R. Laigret, who was hostile to the Americans. BELOW: French Governor Jacques Tallec, who followed Christian Laigret, realized that the United States had no interest in a long-term occupation of New Caledonia and cooperated with the U.S. military more readily than his predecessor.**



hopping campaign through the Central Pacific and General MacArthur drove his troops toward the Philippines, New Caledonia fell into the quiet backwater of the war. Commented the new Australian consul to the island in August 1944, “New Caledonia has completed its transition from a combat base to a supply base and hospital center.” The tiny French colony had been transformed into a place of “rest and relaxation” for American troops back from the front lines.

For the next year, until the war ended in September 1945, Governor Tallec walked a

fine line to keep New Caledonia under French control. Due to the many disingenuous reports of High Commissioner d’Argenlieu and the various governors, General de Gaulle had been led to believe that the people of New Caledonia were secretly anti-American and openly pro-French. He could not understand why, once the Americans left, the New Caledonians did not rush back to the Free French. In reality, many of the island people felt that the Gaullist authorities treated them as second-class citizens, and they did not want to return to business as usual.

Although the Americans had moved on, their presence on the island was still being felt years later. Prosperity brought on by the Americans led to better wages and better working conditions. Roads had been improved, telephone wire had been strung, and Nouméa harbor had been expanded. Additionally, many buildings that had been constructed for use by the U.S. Army or Navy were now available for the people of New Caledonia. Recognition of Kanak and Asian rights by the United States military led to their demand for a voice in the government. In 1946, New Caledonia was granted the status of an overseas territory of France, and seven years later French citizenship was granted to all islanders, no matter their ethnicity.

By the end of World War II, most Americans felt that their presence in New Caledonia had kept the Japanese from invading the island. They likewise felt that they had been little appreciated by the Free French forces on New Caledonia and abroad. On the other hand, the Free French felt that they had acted as reasonable hosts to the Americans, giving them the use of New Caledonia so that they could defeat the Japanese in the Solomons. Without New Caledonia, some of them felt, victory in the Solomons would have been impossible. Many Free French felt exploited and unappreciated by the Americans.

In reality, all sides benefited from the interactions between the Free French, the New Caledonians, and the Americans. Although egos had been bruised and times had been turbulent, all three factions had managed to come together, succeeding in accomplishing their common goal, the protection of New Caledonia and the defeat of Imperial Japan. □

*Author Gene E. Salecker is a retired university police officer who teaches eighth-grade social studies in Bensenville, Illinois. He is the author of four books, including Blossoming Silk Against the Rising Sun: US and Japanese Paratroopers in the Pacific in World War II. He resides in River Grove, Illinois.*



## Morale-Boosting Miracle

Although the evacuation of Dunkirk ended a military disaster for Britain, the British people drew strength from the heroic effort to rescue the BEF.

**ROYAL ENGINEER ROBERT HALLIDAY WAS HUNGRY. HE HAD SEARCHED THE** town of Dunkirk, France, for food only to find nothing. As he searched a German bomb exploded nearby, blowing out his eardrums and hurling him 50 yards. Now, hungry and with little else to do, he and 50 other engineers began building a raft out of empty fuel cans and boards from truck beds. They thought they might be able to get it out to a ship; those who could not swim would sit on it while the swimmers pushed it out to sea for rescue. As they worked other soldiers sat around doing nothing. One saw a British helmet lying on the beach and quipped, “Blimey, he’s dug himself in well!”



Subaltern Anthony Irwin was on leave from the 2nd Battalion, Essex Regiment when the Battle of France began. He spent days trying to get back to his unit, searching through the chaos with one of his sergeants. He managed to find it and soon found himself in battle. Days later,

**A British soldier on the beach at Dunkirk prepares to take aim at an attacking German plane. The photo is from the battle, not the recent movie.**

he recalled being bivouacked in an orchard when a British plane was beset overhead by a half-dozen German Messerschmitt Me-109 fighters. As each fighter attacked, however, the British pilot expertly maneuvered to avoid it, to the cheers of the infantrymen.

The Germans then attacked the RAF plane simultaneously, but they had to come low to catch the descending aircraft. When they did, every Bren gun in the company opened up on the Me-109s, bringing one down in flames. The rest promptly forgot the air battle and began strafing Irwin’s troops, only to be chased off moments later by RAF Hawker Hurricanes. Within hours they dug in after relieving a gingerbread factory of its contents. Anthony Irwin would reach the beach at Dunkirk and be evacuated aboard an Isle of Man ferry, surreally being served a glass of beer by a steward who would not give it to him until they were three miles offshore—as per regulations.

By the time it was done more than 330,000 Allied soldiers were evacuated from Dunkirk to England, providing a nucleus from which the future British Army would be created. Hundreds of small boats and civilian craft were used along with naval vessels to bring them home, and many were lost. It was a time when the entire United Kingdom came together to retrieve its army, saving it from destruction.

The evacuation at Dunkirk in May and June 1940 is famous, and the use of civilian craft to rescue thousands of Allied soldiers is equally well known. The true details of the story are in the myriad personal tales of the operation, where privates, sergeants, and junior officers had to get through the ordeal and bring order out of chaos. That is the tale the reader gets in *Dunkirk: The History Behind the Major Motion Picture* (Joshua Levine, William Morrow Publishing, New York, 2017, 354 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, \$16.99, softcover).

This is a companion book to the recent film *Dunkirk*, which has received many favorable reviews for its depiction of the event. This book also deserves favorable mention due to its detail, flowing narrative, and ground-level storytelling. The movie focuses on lower level leaders and enlisted men, and this book does the

same. Dunkirk was not a great victory or even a great defeat, though it stemmed from a defeat. It is instead a story of survival, revealing how a disparate group of soldiers, sailors, and airmen



# ALL-INCLUSIVE HISTORICAL TOURS STARTING AT \$2,000



## BEYOND BAND OF BROTHERS TOURS

Procom America LLC | 811 Corporate Drive Suite 108 | Lexington, KY 40503

Contact us Monday-Friday 9 am to 5 pm EST at

1-888-335-1996 (toll free) | 1-859-368-7292

[info@procomtours.com](mailto:info@procomtours.com)

EXPLORE HISTORY 24/7 AT [www.beyondbandofbrothers.com](http://www.beyondbandofbrothers.com)



[@BeyondBandBrothersTours](https://www.facebook.com/BeyondBandBrothersTours)



[@beyondbandofbrotherstour](https://www.instagram.com/beyondbandofbrotherstour)



[@procomtours](https://www.twitter.com/procomtours)



[www.pinterest.com/BBobTours](http://www.pinterest.com/BBobTours)

came together to preserve an army that would go on to help defeat Germany within five years, fighting in North Africa and Italy along the way. Hundreds of thousands of men occupied the beaches of Dunkirk. There are far too many stories to recount in a film; this work gives the reader a deep look at some of those stories.

Since this is a book meant to accompany a film, it also contains a nicely done section where the making of that film is discussed. The film's director is loath to use the extensive computer-generated images so many movies depend upon now, so sets, aircraft, and vehicles all had to be located and procured for use. All of the aircraft are actual flying examples or large scale remote-control models, for example. How such attention to detail is used to make a realistic war film is also worthy of attention.

*We Stormed the Reichstag* (Vassili Subbotin, translated by Tony Le Tissier, Pen and Sword Books, South Yorkshire, UK, 2017, maps, photographs, \$\$34.95, hardcover)



Mikhail Yegorov and Meliton Kantara were just regular soldiers, scouts in the Soviet Army's 756th Rifle Regiment. According to the author, on April 30, 1945, these two men were part of a group that stormed the Reichstag building in Berlin, Germany. They carried with them a flag that had been passed down from the 150th Division commander. The building was practically in ruin as the pair made their way to the roof, where they raised the flag; an iconic photograph of the incident is a common image of the war in Europe's last days.

It is a glorious image and story, but it is not altogether true. Other flags were raised earlier in the building, and other men seized the Reichstag from its Nazi defenders. The author of this work was a Red Army soldier in 1941, and by 1945 he was a war correspondent accompanying the troops as they fought the last days of the war in Germany. He records some of these incidents, throwing together a fascinating narrative of what Soviet troops experienced in those days. The book reads very much as if written by a reporter of the times, which it was. The author, an expert on the Eastern Front, served in Berlin during the Cold War and it is to his credit he has brought this work to English-speaking readers, providing more source material on the Red Army in World War II.

*Sons and Soldiers: The Untold Story of the Jews Who Escaped the Nazis and Returned with the U.S. Army to Fight Hitler* (Bruce Hen-

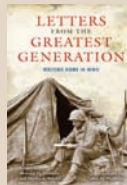
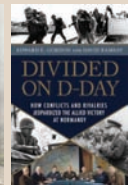
derson, William Morrow Publishers, New York, 2017, 448 pp., photographs, appendix, notes, bibliography, index, \$28.99, hardcover)

The Ritchie Boys were the initiators of a classified operation used by the American army against the Nazis during World War II. Named for the camp where they were trained, these

German-born Jewish men managed to escape Germany before the war began, but once the conflict started their unique knowledge was needed by the Allies. The Ritchie Boys spoke fluent German; they knew the culture, the traditions, and the tiny details of life inside the Third Reich. Almost 2,000 of these men were

## New and Noteworthy

**Bader's Last Fight: An In-Depth Investigation of a Great WWII Mystery** (Andy Saunders, Pen and Sword, 2017, \$29.95, softcover) Douglas Bader was a fighter pilot shot down in 1941. The author explores the possibility he was downed by friendly fire.



**Divided on D-Day: How Conflicts and Rivalries Jeopardized the Allied Victory at Normandy** (Edward E. Gordon and David Ramsay, Prometheus Books, 2017, \$26.00, hardcover) This book highlights the egos, national rivalries, and abilities of the high-ranking leaders who planned Operation Overlord. The authors argue these disagreements lengthened the war.

**Letters from the Greatest Generation: Writing Home in WWII** (Edited by Howard Peckham and Shirley Snyder, Indiana University Press, 2017, \$25.00, softcover) This is a collection of letters written by men and women serving overseas during the war. It is intended as a tribute to their service and experience.

**The History of the Panzerwaffe Volume 2: 1942-45** (Thomas Anderson, Osprey Publishing, 2017, \$40.00, hardcover) The Panzer force reached the height of its power in 1942 but declined afterward. This volume chronicles that period.

**Hitler's Soldiers: The German Army in the Third Reich** (Ben H. Shepherd, Yale University Press, 2017, \$35.00, hardcover) This is a new work examining the relationship between the German Army and the Nazi state. It relates that the Nazis could not have done what they did without the Army's complicity.

**Blitzkrieg, Myth, Reality and Hitler's Lightning War: France 1940** (Lloyd Clark, Atlantic Monthly Press, 2017, \$27.00, hardcover) This is an unvarnished look at the French Campaign. The author maintains it was not the easy victory portrayed in popular history.

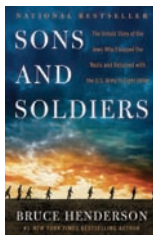
**The Accidental President: Harry S. Truman and the Four Months That Changed the World** (A.J. Baime, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017, \$30.00, hardcover) Harry Truman took on Germany, Japan, and Stalin and ordered the dropping of the atomic bomb in his first four months in office. Just as important, he had to deal with the aftermath and peace.

**Selling Hitler: Propaganda and the Nazi Brand** (Nicholas O'Shaughnessy, Hurst and Company, 2017, \$34.95, hardcover) This examination of the Nazi propaganda machine demonstrates how it became not just a tool but a purpose of the state.

**Tanks of the Second World War** (Thomas Anderson, Pen and Sword, 2017, \$39.95, hardcover) This reference work covers all the main tank models of the war. It is well illustrated and full of technical tables.

**The Normandy Battlefields: Bocage and Breakout** (Simon Forty, Leo Marriott and George Forty, Casemate Books, 2017, \$34.95, hardcover) This coffee table book takes an in-depth look at the landings and subsequent fighting. It has many before and after photos.





given training in special interrogation techniques and formed into small teams. These groups were attached to every large unit in the European Theater, where they were used to gather vital intelligence from captured enemy soldiers. These Jewish soldiers did so despite the risks if they were themselves captured by the Nazis, who would almost surely execute them. Their contributions helped win the war, gathering information that saved lives in combat.

It is widely known that German-speaking soldiers were used as translators and interrogators in the American military during the war, but the story of these Jewish-American troops is almost entirely unknown in popular history today. The author interviewed surviving Ritchie Boys and pored through archival records, succeeding in creating a work that does justice to their effort and sacrifices. The book has a flowing narrative and a down-to-earth style that is very engaging.

***The Allies Strike Back 1941-1943: The War in the West*** (James Holland, Atlantic Monthly



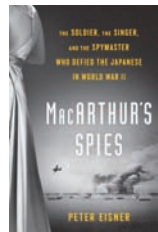
Press, Berkeley, CA, 2017, 720 pp., maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, \$30.00, softcover)

Mid-1941 was a bleak time for the Allies. It seemed Nazi Germany was victorious everywhere, from the deserts of North Africa to the North Atlantic to the vast steppes of the Soviet Union. By the end of the year the situation, while still serious, began to show signs of change. The Germans had not been defeated, but they were stopped in several places, including the gates of Moscow. The Americans had entered the war, though it would be months before their presence was felt in any real way. Within a year, General Erwin Rommel would be defeated by the British and driven back across the desert, where he would find American troops awaiting him to the west. Germany would also begin to suffer under the bomber offensive, and their second year of grand offensives against the Soviets would bog down again, this time at Stalingrad. There was much yet to be done, but the job of victory was well started.

This is an epic, sweeping work that relates the wide events of the war to each other in a compelling way while still paying attention to the experiences of the soldiers and civilians in harm's way. The author's grasp of detail and

persuasive arguments are both compelling and interesting. This book is a good overall history of the war in Europe's middle years.

***MacArthur's Spies: The Soldier, the Singer and the Spymaster Who Defied the Japanese in***



***World War II*** (Peter Eisner, Viking Press, New York, 2017, 335 pp., maps, photographs, notes, bibliography, index, \$28.00, hardcover)

On January 2, 1942, the Japanese Army occupied the Philippine capital city of Manila. They were unopposed by the Filipino-American Army, which could not hope to defend the city without risking its destruction and its own ability to defend the rest of the nation. Within a few months that army would be defeated and its survivors marched off into captivity, brutality, and death. Not everyone gave up, however. Colonel John Boone led a group of guerrilla fighters from hiding, infiltrating Manila and striking the Japanese where they could. "Chick" Parsons was a businessman and reserve naval intelligence officer who managed to escape disguised as a Panamanian diplomat and returned to service as an overseer and coordinator for the resistance operations in the Philippines. Claire Phillips sang at a Manila nightclub where she and the other employees gathered intelligence and smuggled food and supplies to both the guerrillas and prisoners.

This account of resistance to the Japanese occupation is filled with the details of harrowing risks, daring gambles, and hard-won successes. The prose is smooth and engaging; at times the book reads almost like a spy novel. The author delves into the controversies surrounding Claire Phillips like a detective sorting out a case. The result is a work that vividly recounts the real-life adventures of a unique group of people struggling to help win a war and survive the experience.

***Shadow Over the Atlantic: The Luftwaffe and the U-Boats 1943-45*** (Robert Forsyth, Osprey



Publishing, Oxford, UK, 2017, 312 pp., maps, photographs, appendices, notes, bibliography, index, \$30.00, hardcover)

By the autumn of 1943, the Nazi U-boat service was past its heyday. Allied advances in technology and tactics were forcing enemy submarines into a defensive fight. German Admiral Karl Dönitz needed something to

give his sailors an advantage and looked to one of the weapons the Allies were using so effectively against him: the airplane. He asked the Luftwaffe to provide a group that could scout for convoys and shadow them so the submarines could be directed in for the attack. This unit, aptly nicknamed "Atlantik," flew the large four-engine Junkers Ju-90. This aircraft carried radar and could range thousands of miles from bases in western France. Though their efforts proved futile in changing the course of the war, the aircrews worked endlessly to provide the naval high command with the intelligence they needed to maximize the effectiveness of their U-boats.

The Battle of the Atlantic is usually told from the point of view of submariners and their opponents. This work is significant in telling the story from the point of view of the German maritime reconnaissance flyers, whose story has never before been told outside official records. Their history through to the war's end is thoroughly covered, appealing to both naval and aviation enthusiasts alike.

***Their Backs Against the Sea: The Battle of Saipan and the Largest Banzai Attack of***



***World War II*** (Bill Sloan, Da Capo Press, Boston, 2017, 304 pp., maps, photographs, bibliography, index, \$27.00, hardcover)

Lieutenant Colonel William O'Brien stayed with his men as an enormous Japanese banzai attack overwhelmed his battalion. He refused to leave while even one of his soldiers was still on the line. He took up a position at a water cistern and fired his carbine at the hundreds of charging enemy troops. Ahead of him two Japanese were moving among wounded Americans, slashing them with their swords. O'Brien cut them down with his carbine and reloaded. Soon he ran out of carbine ammunition and switched to a pair of pistols. When those were empty he grabbed a rifle and even manned a .50-caliber machine gun. When that too was empty he took up an enemy sword and leaped at the Japanese, shouting "Don't give them a damn inch!" He slashed away at them until he was cut down. When his body was recovered the next day, 30 enemy soldiers were found around him.

The Battle of Saipan was a brutal three-week struggle, with the attacking Americans fighting a well-entrenched and determined enemy. The battle culminated in a desperate banzai charge by 4,000 starving troops that lasted four hours. This book is a detailed, in-depth account of that

engagement, giving the reader a ground-level view of the battle, revealing what the survivors experienced.

*Patton's Way: A Radical Theory of War* (James Kelly Morningstar, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD, 2017, 280 pp., maps, pho-

tographs, notes, bibliography, index, \$35.00, hardcover)

General George Patton was a complex man, and history has treated him in an equally complex way. Popular history idolizes him for his effectiveness while glossing over his flaws. Many scholarly assessments are more critical

of his methods and shortcomings, however. The author of this new work argues that Patton's techniques were not understood by his peers and didn't conform to accepted doctrine. These techniques included targeting enemy morale through shock attacks,



## Simulation Gaming BY JOSEPH LUSTER

WE TAKE AMERICA BACK FROM THE NAZIS IN *WOLFENSTEIN II* BEFORE EXPLORING A PARTICULARLY UNIQUE TAKE ON THE WAR.

### WOLFENSTEIN II: THE NEW COLOSSUS

**PUBLISHER** BETHESDA SOFTWORKS •

**GENRE** SHOOTER • **PLATFORM** PS4, XBOX ONE, PC • **AVAILABLE** NOW

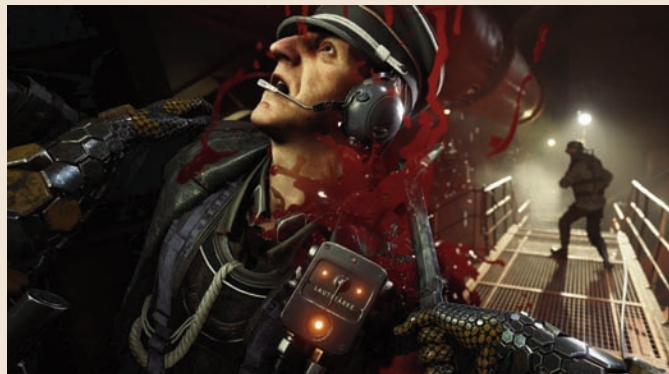
When last we saw the mighty Captain William J. Blazkowicz, well, he wasn't looking quite so mighty. Sure, he managed to score a major victory in the battle against the postwar alt-history Nazi regime, but he was left more or less on death's fickle doorstep. Our chisel-chinned hero is made of sterner stuff than that, though, and the fact that he's back in action for *Wolfenstein II: The New Colossus* makes a convincing case for him being downright

backs to his youth. MachineGames didn't pull any punches when putting this one together, which is impressive considering how lazy you could get away with being while developing something like *Wolfenstein*.

They deftly avoid those all-too-tempting pitfalls, skipping the low-hanging fruit and fleshing out a truly loathable villain in the process. You might think Nazis are already loathsome enough on their own, but there aren't many fictional examples that can boast the seething hatred you're likely to have for Frau Engel by the time the endgame approaches. Her admirably obscene villainy is bolstered with

To make matters worse, *Wolfenstein II* has its fair share of open, maze-like environments. You won't have any issues getting lost, but you will have trouble figuring out who the hell is shooting you in certain situations. By the time you figure it out you're already dead, so it's usually best to play with caution. It almost seems to go against the nature of this type of shooter, but stealth is a legitimate option, and taking your time in each area will let you get the drop on Commanders before they can call in the limitless reinforcements.

Just like the first game, the Commander-killing mechanic plays a major role in the game's flow. If



invincible. So, is developer MachineGames' second time at war as potent as the first?

Let's get this out of the way first: *Wolfenstein II* is insane. I'm not talking about the gameplay itself; it's more or less a standard first-person shooter with some really intense set pieces and over-the-top firefights. But when it comes to the narrative, MachineGames took some serious risks, and it's safe to say they all paid off in this memorable sequel. I won't go into specifics because that would spoil half the fun, but you should definitely expect the unexpected as you gun your way through the story.

Once again, the portrayal of BJ and his team is top notch all around. They do a fantastic job of humanizing what is otherwise ostensibly an unstoppable Nazi-killing war machine. BJ has plenty of tender moments throughout, both with his love interest and soon-to-be mother of his children, Anya, and in a handful of harrowing flash-

the help of plenty of formidable enemies, from your standard heavy gunners to colossal diesel-powered robots and relentless Nazi defense systems. The violence that ensues around every corner is consistently gruesome, especially when BJ pulls off one of many up-close-and-personal stealth kills.

As quick as I was to call BJ "downright invincible," the opening hours of *Wolfenstein II* will have you thinking otherwise. Our crippled hero has seen better days, and his current state is reflected in his ability to take punishment. In short: You're going to die a lot in the first half of the game. You'll die plenty in the second, but the beginning is particularly brutal. Stuck at half health for the majority of it, you'll find just a few flurries of bullets to be enough to send you to the continue screen. The moment you find yourself surrounded by enemies, you're probably better off just pausing and loading your most recent save before they do it for you.

you go in guns blazing, you'll simply make matters much more difficult, so it pays to creep your way to the Commander first and then take out all the remaining soldiers, dogs, and machines. I continue to have mixed feelings about this system. On one hand, it's a reasonable method of mixing up the action and presenting the player with more challenging, almost puzzle-like scenarios. Can you make it to a Commander without being seen? It's satisfying when you manage to do so time and time again, but I also tend to let out an audible sigh whenever I see the Commander signal icons pop up on the screen.

Weapon balance is another positive here, even if I spent most of the game hammering away with my trusty Sturmgewehr. You can also dual-wield most weapons, and finding upgrade kits will make some of the later battles a little more trivial than they were meant to be. Even with the best weapons available,

being flexible in the command and control of his units, and using multiple intelligence assets to identify German weaknesses. The book is full of real-world examples of Patton's operations, showing how he achieved his victories in Tunisia, Sicily, and France after the Normandy breakout. Many books have been written about Patton; this one stands out for its thorough analysis and effective arguments. □

though, *The New Colossus* provides just as much challenge as the first game and the DLC that followed. This challenge may come off as a roadblock at the beginning, especially for those who aren't very experienced with shooters, but you can turn the difficulty down at any time. Oh, and protip: you can save anywhere at any time.

The year 2017 was really good for video games in general, and *Wolfenstein II: The New Colossus* proved to be another bright spot, both for the series and for games as a whole. If you haven't played the previous games—*Wolfenstein: The New Order* and its prequel DLC, *Wolfenstein: The Old Blood*—you owe it to yourself to dive into those first. As far as alternate timeline action goes, this is up there with the best.

#### ATTENTAT 1942

**PUBLISHER** CHARLES UNIVERSITY •  
**GENRE** ADVENTURE • **PLATFORM** PC •  
**AVAILABLE** NOW

Many of us have friends and family members who served in the military during World War II, but how intimately do we know their story? This is something that's addressed in unique ways in the recently released *Attentat 1942*, a PC adventure game that has players diving into the past through historical footage, survivor dialogue, and interactive comics.

The story begins when you learn that the Gestapo arrested your grandfather shortly after Reinhard Heydrich's assassination. Does that mean he played a role in the attack? And how come no one else in the family has heard this story until now? *Attentat 1942* is all about exploring the truth behind this via mini games and the previously mentioned storytelling methods, including a series of interviews devised and written by historians.

If it sounds like an interesting experiment in game design, that's because *Attentat 1942* comes from Charles University and the Czech Academy of Sciences. The version available on Steam is an enhanced version of *Ceskoslovensko 38-89: Atentát*, which originally made its Czech language debut back in 2015. The developers say any revenue made on this game will go toward further field research, and it's worth checking out what they've cooked up thus far.



**HISTORICAL MILITARY PRODUCTS**

 NAZI ARMBAND - OFFICER	 US 2ND RANGER BATTALION SCROLL PATCH ORIGINAL	 US WW2 M1 HELMET WITH ST CLAIR LINER AND SECOND PATTERN US MARINES COVER ORIGINAL	 U.S. WWII DISTINGUISHED FLYING CROSS IN CASE	 GERMAN WW2 PARATROOPER BADGE
 M42 REVERSIBLE CAMO SMOCK - PLAIN TREE	 JAPANESE WW2 SPECIAL NAVAL LANDING FORCES TYPE 92 MARINE DIVISION COMBAT HELMET ORIGINAL	 US M-1917 WWI STEEL BRODIE HELMET, LINER & CHINSTRAP	 GERMAN WWII IRON CROSS 1st CLASS 1939 WITH MAKER MARK L/11	 GERMAN WW2 STYLE WINTER WOOL GLOVES (SIZE 2 MEDIUM)

Over 2000 items on-line supplying the WWII re-enactor and collector

[www.militarytour.com](http://www.militarytour.com)

Email: [dj@militarytour.com](mailto:dj@militarytour.com)  
Tel: 1-800-785-8644

We welcome new suppliers

## WWII HISTORY

### Attention Subscribers


#### Important Note From the Publisher Suspicious Phone Calls/Letters

Some of our readers have received suspicious phone calls or offers in the mail to renew their subscription to this magazine. Follow these steps to make sure your renewal is legitimate:

1. Make sure the renewal notice sent to you lists the date your subscription expires. Check that date against the label on your magazine, which also lists your expiration date. The dates should match.
2. Do not respond to a telephone solicitation for a renewal unless your subscription has expired. We do not phone subscribers until their subscription expires.
3. Make sure the return envelopes in your renewal notice go to this magazine in Williamsport, PA.
4. If you are uncertain about any offer you receive, call us at 1-800-219-1187 (toll free).

#### WORLD WAR 2 BOOKS USED AND OUT OF PRINT

**T. CADMAN**  
Send \$1.00 for Catalog to:  
T. CADMAN DEPT.-A  
5150 Fair Oaks Blvd., #101  
Carmichael, CA 95608  
Visit us on the web at:  
<http://www.cadmanbooks.com>



#### Kampfgruppe Medals and Badges

High Quality German World War II Militaria

**Steve Mezey**

358 Speedvale Ave. E. Suite 26021  
Guelph, ON, Canada N1E 6W1  
Phone: (519) 823-8249 • Fax: (519) 823-8249  
Email: [info@kampfgruppemedals.com](mailto:info@kampfgruppemedals.com)  
[www.kampfgruppemedals.com](http://www.kampfgruppemedals.com)

### Real War Photos

Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam & beyond  
**(734) 327-9696**  
[www.realwarphotos.com](http://www.realwarphotos.com)  
P.O. Box 414, Somerset Center, MI 49282

## MOVING?

Please notify us 6 weeks in advance, so we can keep WWII HISTORY coming to you. Send us your old and new address, and the date of your move to:

WWII HISTORY  
Sovereign Media Company, Inc.  
2406 Reach Road  
Williamsport, PA 17701

“Rusty” Eastwood, a Rifle Brigade veteran of Egypt, Gallipoli, North Russia, and the 1940 Battle of France. Regular Army ranks were introduced, and a cadet corps of 25,000 youngsters was even formed.

The Broomstick Army had become an effective and disciplined military force, and on the march its members were often mistaken for Regular Army troops. On May 14, 1941, its first birthday, the Home Guard was granted the honor of trooping at Buckingham Palace. King George VI said, “I heartily congratulate the Home Guard on the progress made by all ranks since it was established a year ago today. On many occasions I have seen for myself the keenness with which they are fitting themselves for the discharge of vital duties in the defense of our homes...” That same month, General Eastwood was replaced as director general by Maj. Gen. Sir Robert C. Bridgeman, also of the Rifle Brigade and a wounded World War I veteran.

The scope of Home Guard activities continued to increase. Two hundred transport companies were formed using about 13,000 War Department vehicles; dispatch riders were trained under Army supervision; street fighting tactics were taught at a school in Glasgow; and Home Guard members were given priority to take over the manning of 6-inch naval guns on the south coast and antiaircraft batteries all over the country, thus freeing Regular Army units for overseas service. Eventually, 140,000 men of the Home Guard manned antiaircraft guns. The Port of London Authority had a Home Guard unit specially trained to protect the vital docks from river assault.

When Churchill made an inspection of the Westminster Palace unit on May 12, 1942, to celebrate the Home Guard’s second anniversary, he declared, “To invade this island by air is to descend in a hornet’s nest. There is no part of that nest where the stings are more ready and their effective power to injure more remarkable than here in the ancient Palace of Westminster.”

Because there had been such a response in manpower to the Home Guard, recruiting was temporarily suspended in October 1942. The ban was lifted the following month under new government legislation, and men aged 18 to 51 were conscripted. Fines were levied against personnel who failed to attend drill nights. By the summer of 1943, there were 1,750,000 men in 1,200 battalions, and the average age was now under 30. A women’s auxiliary was formed that year.

The threat of invasion had passed, but the Home Guard found itself busier than ever, par-

ticularly during the frequent air raids on England. When Luftwaffe bombers came in daytime and increasingly at night, the alert Home Guard crews gave them a warm welcome with their 3.7-inch and 4.5-inch batteries. After they shot down and damaged several enemy planes during severe night raids on the London area on January 17, 1943, a terse Ministry of Defense communiqué noted, “The Home Guard turned out and manned AA guns during last night’s raids. The muster was very satisfactory. More than one Regular [Army] battery commander stated that they came fully up to expectations and did ‘a good job of work.’”

The Home Guard had come a long way from its pitchfork and broomstick days. When a reporter asked at a May 6, 1943, press conference if too much of a defense burden was being placed on the part-time soldiers, General Bridgeman bristled, “Never yet has the Home Guard turned back from any job which they realized was necessary, and was in their power to perform and they were the right people to perform it.”

Home Guard personnel also manned new multi-barreled rocket guns to bring down low-flying enemy dive bombers. The British-designed weapons proved highly successful against targets traveling at more than 400 miles an hour and at altitudes of up to 25,000 feet.

Ironically, as the effectiveness of the Home Guard increased further, the need to deploy it was waning. Its citizen soldiers were standing by their antiaircraft and coastal guns, having freed an estimated 100,000 Regulars for other duties, when the British, American, and Canadian Armies invaded Nazi-occupied Normandy on June 6, 1944. But the successful landings and the subsequent enemy retreat spelled the coming end of the home defense force.

Prime Minister Churchill, ever mindful of its sterling defense role and concerned for the welfare of its personnel, had said in January 1944, “We should make every effort to ease the lot of the Home Guard, whose duties are more exhausting than those of any form of civil defense.... Many of these men have had little free time for more than three years. At this stage in the war, Home Guard hours of duty should be officially reduced and not left to the discretion of the unit commander.”

Eventually, after its 4½ years of staunch, diverse, and sometimes thankless service, the Home Guard was officially stood down on December 3, 1944. □

*Author Michael D. Hull is a frequent contributor to WWII History. He resides in Enfield, Connecticut.*

had assumed that the Finns were starving and whipped under a Fascist tyranny.

The Finns shot more newsreel footage of the scrawny and pathetic prisoners, particularly those with bad teeth, passing them out to reporters at the Hotel Kemp bar. The Finns suggested that the Soviets were sending “cannon fodder” into these battles to rid the Soviet Union its “undesirable elements.”

The Finns also fired artillery shells filled with lurid photographs of dead Soviet troops at the Russian front lines bearing a simple slogan “*Belaya Smert*,” meaning “White Death.”

The Finns also counted their own losses: 900 dead and 1,770 wounded.

The victory was classic and complete. Two Soviet divisions had been wiped off the map, utterly destroyed, in a miniature Cannae, by a far smaller and poorly equipped force. Only in mobility, leadership, and morale were the Finns superior to the Soviets. Once the Finnish troops cut the Soviets off from their supplies, denied them hot meals, and rendered them immobile, they had no chance. It was one of the great victories of military history and a legendary battle.

Such thoughts probably did not enter into Vinogradov’s head as he fled the battlefield, reaching Vazhenvaara in a commandeered T-26 tank. The Director General of the Red Army Political Directorate, Lev Mekhlis, was sent to investigate how the 44th Motorized Division and 163rd Rifle Divisions were slaughtered. The 163rd’s commander, Zelentsov, was not around to account for himself, but Vinogradov was certainly available, and Mekhlin placed Vinogradov and his commissar, Gusev, under arrest.

The Soviet GRU and the Army held an investigation and summary court-martial, which ordered Vinogradov and Gusev shot before the 700 survivors of the 44th Motorized Division who had made it back to Soviet lines. Among them was Akhmedov’s old pal Nikolayev, who “had become a physical and mental wreck. He cried steadily, babbled incoherently, shot blindly at anybody, and was soon sent to an asylum,” Akhmedov said later.

Also shot a month later was 9th Army’s Ermolaev, whose “edited message” had helped condemn the 44th Division to its fate.

For Vinogradov, the stated court-martial offense of record was “the irrecoverable loss of 55 field kitchens.” □

*Author David Lippmann has contributed to WWII History on a variety of topics. He resides in New Jersey.*

INTRODUCING A NEW SERIES FROM OSPREY PUBLISHING

# AIR CAMPAIGN



**BATTLE OF BRITAIN 1940**  
The Luftwaffe's 'Eagle Attack'

DOUGLAS C. DILDY | ILLUSTRATED BY GRAHAM TURNER



**RABAUL 1943-44**  
Reducing Japan's great island fortress

MARK LARDAS | ILLUSTRATED BY MARK POSTLETHWAITE

## THE AIR CAMPAIGNS THAT CHANGED HISTORY

Analyzing the goals of the attacking air commanders, the aircraft they had to work with, the opposing air defences, how they planned the attack and how the pilots actually fought it, this new series sheds light on why air campaigns have been won and lost.



**ROLLING THUNDER 1965-68**  
Vietnam's most controversial air campaign

RICHARD P. HALLION | ILLUSTRATED BY ADAM TOOEY



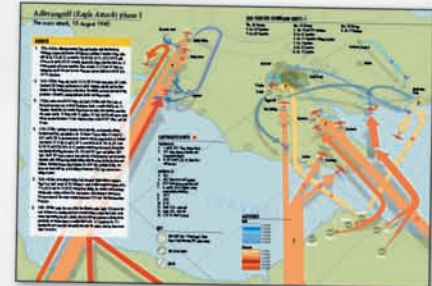
**MALTA 1940-42**  
The Axis' air battle for Mediterranean supremacy

RYAN K. NIPPEN | ILLUSTRATED BY GRAHAM TURNER

REVEALING MAPS ILLUSTRATE THE CONTEXT AND CONSTRAINTS OF EACH CAMPAIGN



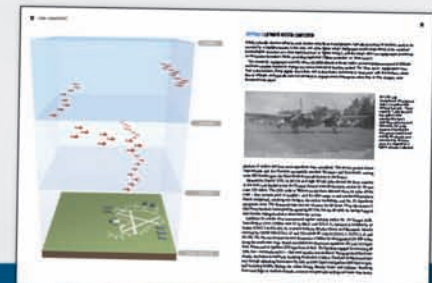
NEWLY DESIGNED AERIAL BIRD'S-EYE VIEWS SHOWING KEY MISSIONS IN 3D



STUNNING DOUBLE-PAGE BATTLESCENES OF KEY MOMENTS THROUGH THE CAMPAIGN



NEW 3D COLOUR DIAGRAMS SHOWING THE TECHNIQUES THAT WERE USED



**OSPREY**  
PUBLISHING

The Destination for  
Military History


AVAILABLE FROM ALL GOOD BOOKSHOPS AND [WWW.OSPREYPUBLISHING.COM](http://WWW.OSPREYPUBLISHING.COM)



# T R A V E L

Unique worldwide ... Unforgettable...

1944-2018 74<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

EXPERIENCE FULL IMMERSION... 

## In Normandy

Imagine that you are part of a unit of GI's landing on Normandy.

Imagine yourself wearing the uniform of Paratroopers while riding in convoy Willys Jeeps on Normandy pathways.

Imagine the French villages, le Bocage, the roads and hedgerows, the landing beaches, Utah and Omaha and more.

This is what we propose to experience a full IMMERSION with D-DAY MEMORY TOUR. We are passionate about History and the liberators who came on June 6th, 1944 to fight for Freedom. We will show and share with you Normandy as no one has ever done yet. We have the expertise, the proficient guides, the best team based here in the USA and in Normandy near St-Mere-Eglise, one of the first towns liberated on June 6th, 1944. This journey will transport you into the past to live a unique and incomparable experience.

ENLIST NOW...

JP

# D-DAY MEMORY TOUR

## A JOURNEY INTO THE PAST

*a new way to visit Normandy*

NORMANDY AS YOU HAVE NEVER SEEN IT  
BOOK YOUR TOUR



American Company Fla. Seller of travel No.ST40723 Boca Raton



## Testimony

I had the pleasure to meet JP on a trip to Europe, he shares his passion for History. I know his commitment to perpetuating the memory of the events of D-Day, in memory of those who fought for freedom. This is so important today to remember the sacrifices of those who gave their future to our present...

Undoubtedly, this new way of traveling offered by D-DAY MEMORY TOUR is unique and will give you thrills.

Major General Retired  
USAF

John Van Blois



[www.ddaymemorytour.com](http://www.ddaymemorytour.com) – [info@ddmtusa.com](mailto:info@ddmtusa.com)

1-844-276-1611