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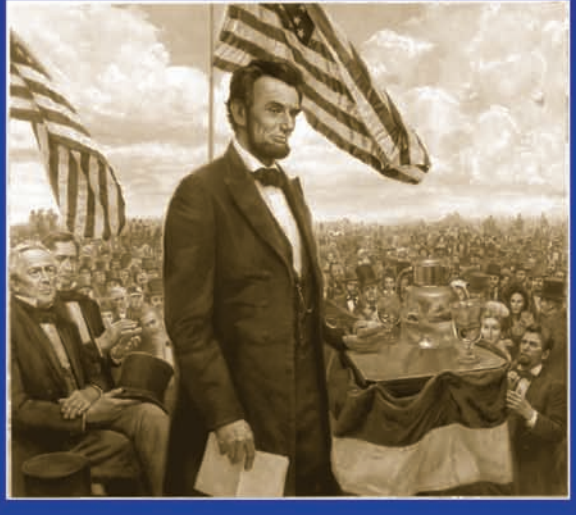

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COVER: American airborne troops loaded down with gear are prepared for the Allied invasion of Holland during Operation Market-Garden. See story page 12. Photo: National Archives.

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From the Publishers of WWII History Magazine

D-DAY

Through A Soldier's Eyes…

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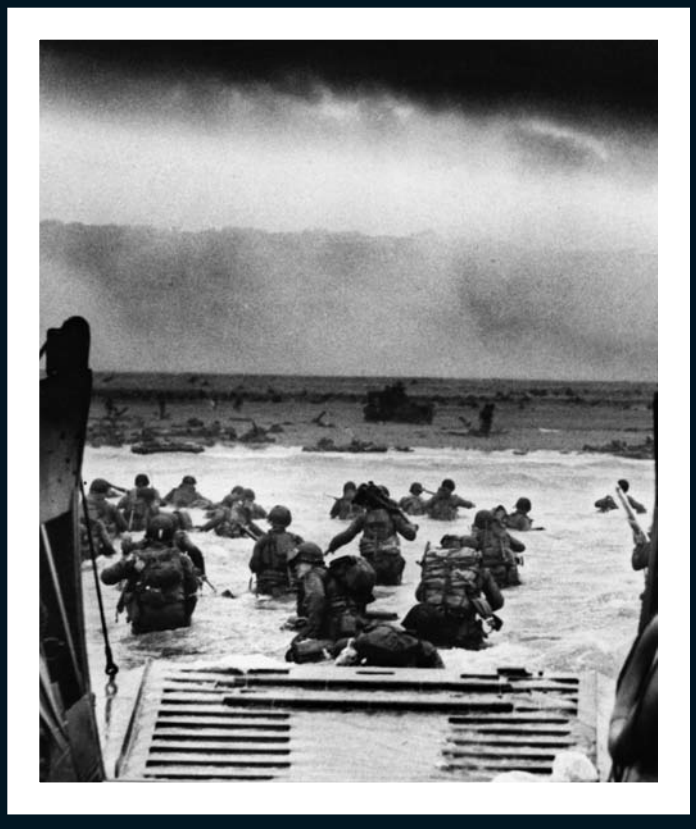
The storm was violent, the waves were huge and the noise was deafening for the soldiers in the landing craft on D-Day, June 6, 1944. As they neared the beach, the door dropped open… and this photo lets you see exactly what they saw, and feel what they felt: treacherous breakers, withering machine gun fire, a long beach, huge cliffs, and near-certain death.

None hesitated. These brave unselfish men jumped into the cold Atlantic waters. Two thirds of them died soon after, so that we could live in freedom.

This historic photograph shows American soldiers from Company E, 16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division exiting their LCVP landing craft under heavy German machine gun fire on Omaha Beach. The photo was taken by Coast Guard Chief Photographer's Mate Robert F. Sergeant.

Company E landed on Easy Red Beach at 0645 in the face of murderous fire. Those few who survived kept wading right into everything the enemy had and took their objective, which provided the only exit from the beach that the entire Fifth Corps had for two days. Company "E," perhaps by strength of will and courage alone, helped keep the entire landing force from being thrown back into the sea. For a month afterwards, those who survived remained almost in a daze.



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Young People and World War II

WE OFTEN HEAR that today's "younger generation" cares nothing for the past, and that "history class" is just a synonym for "nap time." So it's refreshing to learn about some students who are excited and fully engaged in learning about World War II and honoring the veterans.

I received the following letter from Karen Steele, director of the Partnership for Community Schools in Malden, Massachusetts: "Since September 2010, a dedicated group of 23 middle school students in Malden have been participating in My Generation: World War II Project. To be truthful, it was a little difficult getting 11- and 12-year-old students interested in something that happened more than 60 years ago. But they were lured by the idea of working on a video project and the possibility of traveling to Washington, D.C., at the end of the year.

"The project was inspired by one of our teachers who attended a World War II Memorial dedication in Malden last June with her dad—a World War II veteran himself. She looked at the veterans who were there and realized the time to tell their story was now. Our after-school programs, that encourage expanded learning and enrichment opportunities, seemed the perfect place to tell their story.

"As the year progressed, students became so devoted to the work they were doing that many of them also spent their nights and weekends learning about World War II. During the year the students not only learned about the war and the experiences of their hometown heroes, but they also learned interviewing techniques, listening skills, teamwork, and more about their community. By the end of the project, they had eight quality interviews with veterans—some veterans who had never talked about their war experiences to anyone else.

"All along, our hope had been to bring some students to Washington, D.C., so they could present the interviews to the Library of Congress. On May 15 we traveled to Washington with six students. During our three-day whirlwind tour, the students presented their materials to the Library of Congress where their work will be forever archived, saw the World War II Memorial, toured Washington, and visited with Senators Scott Brown and John Kerry, and the office of Congressman Edward Markey.

"The year culminated with a movie premiere on June 10. The final video was about 30 minutes long, and included not only the interviews but also the out-takes from the project, the research, and the visit to Washington, D.C. At the event we honored the veterans we interviewed, as well as all Malden veterans of all wars. Malden Mayor Richard C. Howard attended the event, along with Malden Supervisor Sid Smith.

"We are so proud of our students, and would love for them to get the credit they deserve for all the work they have done. Too often we hear about students making bad choices during the after-school hours. But these students have made all the right choices and have a tangible product to show for it."

Well said, Ms. Steele! Let me join all the others in saluting the students for a job well done!

PATTON MUSEUM MOVE UPDATE

Ed Miller, who wrote the feature about the Patton Museum at Fort Knox (see *WWII Quarterly,* Fall 2010), has provided the following update about the museum's move to Fort Benning: "As you may know, virtually everything from the Patton Museum is now in storage at Benning—even the library. The staff [at Fort Knox] is dealing with an 85 percent+ rebuild with new exhibits on the history of Army leadership covering 1775-2000s. The Army needs to get the word out that it's in transition and, while the Patton Gallery and some temporary exhibits are still open at Fort Knox, there is much more to come in the next few years. A set of interim exhibits is also in the works. The replacement museum will be exciting—but it will take time to get there."

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CARL A. GNAM, JR.
Editorial Director, Founder

FLINT WHITLOCK
Editor
WWIIQuarterly@gmail.com

LAURA CLEVELAND
Managing Editor

SAMANTHA DETULLEO
Art Director

MATTHEW CHESER
Research Assistant

CONTRIBUTORS:
Jan Bos, Kevin M. Hymel, Peter Kross, Stephen D. Lutz, Martin Morgan, Eric Niderost, Roy Stevenson, Blaine Taylor, Mason B. Webb, William Weidner

ADVERTISING OFFICE:

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

MARK HINTZ
Vice President & Publisher

LIZ BOWER
Subscription Customer Services
sovereign@publishersservicesassociates.com

KEN FORNWALT
Data Processing Director

CURTIS CIRCULATION COMPANY
WORLDWIDE DISTRIBUTION

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

SUBSCRIPTION CUSTOMER SERVICE AND BUSINESS OFFICE:

1000 Commerce Park Drive,
Suite 300, Williamsport, PA 17701

(800) 219-1187

PRINTED IN THE USA.

CONTRIBUTORS

JAN BOS, a policeman in Nijmegen, Holland, also serves as the 82nd Airborne Troop Carrier historian, and is a member of the Historical Section of the National Liberation Museum 1944/1945 at Groesbeek, Holland, as well as a member of the Groesbeek Airborne Friends. He also serves as a tour guide in Holland for American veterans and family members. He is the author of *Circle and the Fields of Little America*—a history of the 376th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion.

Frequent contributor **KEVIN HYMEL** is a historian for the U.S. Army's Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He is the author of *Patton's Photographs: War As He Saw It*. He also leads tours of General George S. Patton's European battlefields and gives personal tours of Normandy, France, for Stephen Ambrose Historical Tours. He resides in Platte City, Missouri.

STEPHEN D. LUTZ is a Vietnam War veteran who has been published in a number of military history magazines, including the previous issue of *WWII Quarterly* ("Sen Toku: Japan's Underwater Aircraft Carriers"); *WWII History* ("Project Habakkuk: An Iceberg Aircraft Carrier Nearly Became a Reality," September, 2011), *Civil War Times,* and *America's Civil War,* and has contributed several chapters to various books of military history. He resides in Portage, Michigan.

ROY STEVENSON is a freelance writer based in Seattle, Washington, specializing in military history, airborne history, military museums, fortifications, artillery, weapons, military vehicles, and aviation, signals and communications, and memorials and cemeteries. He has over 50 military articles published in over 15 military magazines in the U.S., UK, Scotland, and New Zealand. He writes the military museum column for *Military* magazine and is currently working on a guide book about World War II museums in western Europe, due for publication in mid-2011.

Towson, Maryland, freelancer **BLAINE TAYLOR** is the author of 10 illustrated books on the Nazi period, most recently *Hitler's Chariots Volume 3: Volkswagen From Nazi People's Car to New Beetle,* 2011.

Frequent contributor **PETER KROSS** writes from North Brunswick, New Jersey. He is the author of three books, including *The Encyclopedia of World War II Spies* and *Traitors and Moles: An Espionage and Intelligence Quiz Book*.

ERIC NIDEROST teaches history at Chabot Community College in California. He has 300 published magazine articles to his credit and has co-authored three books: *Civil War Firsts* (Stackpole, 2001), *A Nation Transformed* (Cumberland, 2007), and *Fighting Techniques of the Oriental World* (Amber, 2008). In 2005 he won the Army Historical Foundation's Distinguished Writing Award. He lives in Union City, California, near San Francisco.

MARTIN MORGAN is a World War II historian, History Channel regular, and author of *Down to Earth: The 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment in Normandy.* He lives in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Professional baseball player Moe Berg also led a shadowy existence as a spy for the U.S. government.

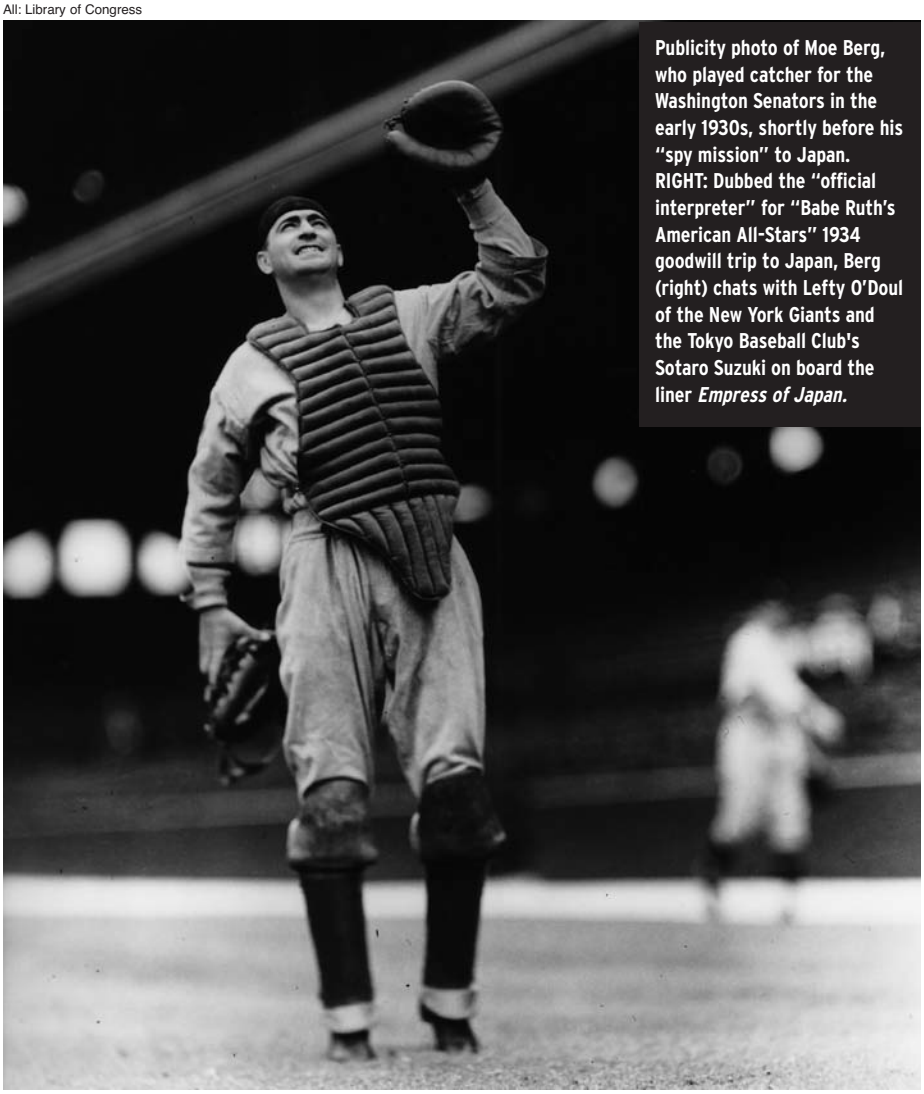
In 1920, a young, handsome Jewish boy from New Jersey took the train from Grand Central Station to Princeton, New Jersey, where he would enroll that fall. The Princeton University that Morris "Moe" Berg attended ran through the quiet Nassau Street, surrounded by the splendid campus buildings and bounded by stately trees that seemed to welcome one and all. This member of the class of '23 brought a unique blend of brains and brawn to that already well-endowed institution. At the time of his graduation, Moe Berg would be known as a star collegiate baseball player, an expert linguist, and an enigma to all who knew him.

Morris Berg was born in New York into a poor Jewish family of Russian heritage on March 2, 1902. His parents led a simple, middle-class existence. His father Bernard was a druggist, and his mother Rose was a homemaker. Moe had two siblings, a sister Ethel and a brother Samuel. In later years, when he was down on his luck, Moe would move in with one or the other.

When Moe was a young man, the family left its teeming neighborhood on East 121st Street in Manhattan for the greener pastures of Newark, New Jersey. From his home across the Hudson River, young Moe could see the Polo Grounds, the cathedral of baseball that would one day be home to the New York Giants.

In 1906, Moe's father bought a pharmacy on Warren Street in West Newark. He worked in that location until 1910 and later bought a building at 92 South 13th Street in the Roseville section of Newark. Moe hardly ever worked for his father in the store; instead, he was encouraged to spend his time studying and reading, traits that would endure his entire lifetime.

All: Library of Congress



Publicity photo of Moe Berg, who played catcher for the Washington Senators in the early 1930s, shortly before his "spy mission" to Japan. RIGHT: Dubbed the "official interpreter" for "Babe Ruth's American All-Stars" 1934 goodwill trip to Japan, Berg (right) chats with Lefty O'Doul of the New York Giants and the Tokyo Baseball Club's Sotaro Suzuki on board the liner *Empress of Japan.*

Besides studying, young Moe's passion was baseball. Every time he could, he was seen throwing a baseball on the street, oftentimes with a Newark policeman named Hibler who befriended Moe at a young age. In time, Moe would join the Roseville Methodist Episcopal Church baseball team, much to the chagrin of his father who viewed baseball as a waste of his son's time and intellect. At age 16, Moe graduated from Barringer High School and, when he was in his senior year, the *Newark Star Eagle* newspaper selected a nine-man "dream team" with Moe as the third baseman.

After graduating from high school in the spring of 1918, Moe was accepted to New York University at age 16. He played baseball as well as basketball, but only spent two semesters there until he transferred to

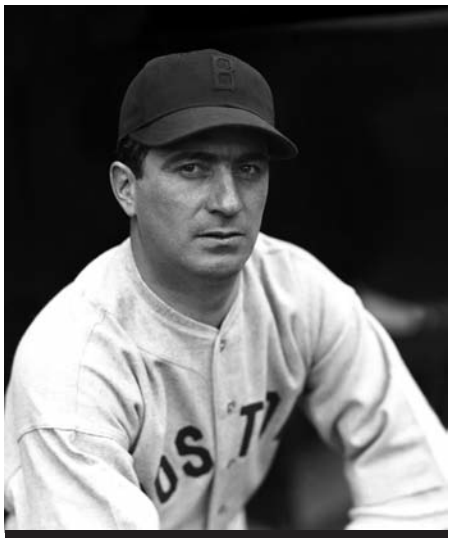
Princeton in September 1919. At Princeton, Berg studied languages including Spanish, Latin, Greek, Italian, German, and Sanskrit. He played first base and shortstop for the Princeton Tigers and started every game for the team for the next three years. He was never a great hitter, though, batting .235 in his sophomore year and .230 in his junior. In what must have been the thrill of his young life, Moe played for Princeton against Yale at Yankee Stadium on June 26, 1923 (Yale won 5-1). Berg had three hits, including a single and a double.

Moe graduated from Princeton in 1923 with a degree in modern languages. In later years, Ted Lyons, his Chicago White Sox teammate, said of Berg, "He can speak 12 languages, but he can't hit in any of them."

On June 27, 1923, following graduation, Moe was signed by the Brooklyn Dodgers for the then-handsome annual salary of $5,000, and his dream of playing major league baseball was now a reality. However, his talent on the field was not great; in 49 games at shortstop with the Dodgers, Berg batted just .186. But his educational background quickly attracted the attention of the nation's sports writers, including Red Smith, who became one of the foremost columnists of the day. After the season ended, Moe packed his bags and left for Paris, France, where he enrolled in the Sorbonne, and delved further into Latin.

In 1924, Moe returned home and resumed playing baseball. To his surprise, he was sent to Toledo in the minor leagues, where he finished the year batting .264. The next year saw Moe playing for the Reading Keys of the International League where he got 200 hits and batted a respectable .311. Due to his superior performance, Moe's contract was bought for the 1926 season for $50,000 by the Chicago White Sox. Instead of donning his uniform, he chose to attend Columbia University Law School. Thanks to contacts he made, Moe was able to complete his studies while also playing ball.

While with the White Sox, Moe played catcher, a position he played for the rest of



Moe Berg shown in a Boston Red Sox uniform, 1935, was an expert linguist.

Nuclear physicist Werner Heisenberg was a key figure in Germany's attempt to build an atomic bomb—and a key target of Berg.

his baseball days. Casey Stengel observed of Moe, "Now, I'll tell ya. I mean Moe Berg was as smart a ball player as ever came along. Knew the legs wouldn't cooperate in the infield and when the catching job opened up, he grabs a mask and puts it on and there he was. Guy never caught in his life and then goes behind the plate like Mickey Cochran. Now that's something. But I'll tell ya again, nobody ever knew his life's history. I call him the mystery catcher. Strangest fellah who ever put on a uniform." The normally loquacious Stengel of later years was for once, right on the money.

After an injury, Berg was sent to the Cleveland Indians and later spent time in the Washington Senators organization. In October 1934, he, along with an all-star American baseball team whose members consisted of Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Jimmy Foxx, "Lefty" Gomez, and others, boarded the liner RMS *Empress of Japan* in British Columbia bound for Japan. Why Moe Berg was selected to join this rarified company is a question in itself, one that still has no concrete answer. Unlike the other members of the team, Berg was no superstar. In actuality, he was nothing more than a mediocre player—albeit one with enormous talent that still had not been properly harvested. Is it possible that because of his language skills he was chosen to go along on the trip as an interpreter on some secret, government assignment? The jury is still out on that one.

The Americans were to play a round of exhibition games against the best of the Japanese players, but what Moe Berg carried in his valise was a letter addressed to the U.S. Consulate in Tokyo, instructing them to provide "Mr. Berg such courtesies and assistance as you may be able to render consistent with your official duties." The letter was signed by Cordell Hull, Secretary of State.

During the team's stay in Tokyo, Berg took part in all the official functions, holding forth his legendary intellectual prowess on the field and off. He even had time to lecture at one of Tokyo's major universities, but what Moe understood better than the other American baseball players who accompanied him on the trip was that that the Far Eastern nation was bent on more than just learning the fundamentals of baseball.

The Japan of the early 1930s had its foreign policy sights on territories well beyond its borders. Japan, then as now, was wholly dependent for its fuel on outside sources—mainly the oil fields of the Middle East and to a lesser extent, its neighbors in Asia. Japan, like the newly

awakening Germany under Adolf Hitler, decided that it needed more living space and, in 1932, invaded Manchuria, its first step toward conquering all of Asia.

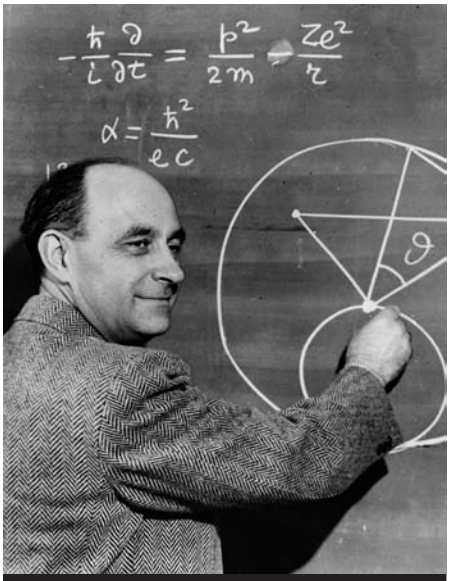
The United States was still nine years away from Pearl Harbor, and it would be another seven years before Hitler invaded Poland, touching off World War II. In those intervening years, Washington realized that it needed intelligence concerning future Japanese moves.

After playing a game at the Omiya Grounds near Tokyo, Moe Berg quietly slipped away from the stadium and made his way to St. Luke's International Hospital. Berg had a cover story on hand as he entered the hospital. He inquired as to the room of Elizabeth Lyon, the daughter of U.S. Ambassador Joseph Grew, who had just given birth. With flowers in hand, Moe made his way toward her room, but along the route he slipped out and climbed up to the hospital's roof, which had a commanding view of the city. Taking out his movie camera, Moe took pictures of Tokyo, including strategic sites as well as commercial and industrial centers and the naval base in Tokyo Bay. Berg never did meet with Ambassador Grew's daughter. Just as soon as he reentered the hospital, he quietly returned to his teammates.

Approximately seven and a half years later, military intelligence removed Berg's films from their resting place. Initially employed in the preparation of General Jimmy Doolittle's attack on the Japanese mainland from the carrier USS *Hornet*, they were among the chief photographs used to prepare planners and air crewmen for the massive raids against Tokyo in World War II.

The last few years of Berg's baseball career saw Moe playing for the Cleveland Indians, Washington Senators, and Boston Red Sox.

Shortly before his retirement from baseball, Moe Berg had been corresponding with 32-year-old Nelson Rockefeller, who headed the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs. By June 1941, Berg had been introduced to Rockefeller's office by a friend named Enrique Lopez-Herrate, a Guatemalan diplomat. While contemplating working for Rockefeller, Berg tried to



Berg persuaded Italian scientist Enrico Fermi to come to the U.S. and help develop the A-bomb.

get the FBI to hire him but was turned down. Berg officially signed on with Rockefeller on January 5, 1942, for the paltry salary of $22.22 per day. His supposed mission was to travel to Latin America as a special consultant to monitor the health of the American military and to extol the merits of physical fitness.

Moe met with both military and civilian officials in Brazil, Panama, and Peru. Later, when Berg began his work for the OSS (the Office of Strategic Services, America's fledgling intelligence service which was headed by William "Wild Bill" Donovan), he brought with him a letter from Rockefeller explaining that "he had been on a confidential mission for the White House." Commander R. Davis Halliwell, the chief of the Special Operations Branch of the OSS, said of Berg's trip to Latin America, "It is evident from Mr. Berg's conversation with me that his mission for the White House indicated that considerable responsibility had been placed on him and that he was entrusted with a most confidential mission since he was last in this office."

Returning to Washington after his Latin American sojourn, Berg found himself with little to do. While he waited for his new assignment, he was asked by the OSS to make a broadcast to the Japanese people. In his short wave address he talked about the long-time bond of friendship between America and Japan and said, "I ask you, what sound basis is there for enmity between two peoples who enjoy the same national sport?" Unfortunately, his words had no resonance with the leaders in Tokyo.

In the off-season, Berg worked for a Wall Street brokerage firm, a job that failed to capture his imagination. An unexpected knee injury cut Berg's playing time, and when he finally hung up his spikes at age 37, he had accumulated 441 hits in 1,812 at-bats, hit only six home runs, and had 206 runs batted in. Berg ended his baseball career with Boston while, at the same time, managing to earn his law degree from Columbia University.

Moe left baseball, the game he truly loved, on January 14, 1942, the same day his beloved father Bernard died. It was a bittersweet time for Moe, leaving one profession and not knowing what was ahead for him. But, as fate would have it, events a world away would plunge Berg into a new profession, one that he never saw coming, that of a spy for the United States of America.

On July 17, 1942, Seymour Houghton of the OSS thanked Berg "for making it possible to view your film [the one Moe shot from on the roof of St. Luke's International Hospital in Tokyo in 1934] and for your untiring efforts during the screening of it. Mr. John F. Langan, a member of our staff, reports your film to be of strategic importance."

Shortly after he left the Office of Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, Berg was officially recruited by the Office of Strategic Services. The man who signed up Berg was Colonel Ellery Huntington, a partner in the Wall Street law firm of Satterlee and Canfield. Huntington was also a personal friend of William Donovan.

Huntington, who served as the deputy director of operations at OSS, wrote a letter to Commander R. Davis Halliwell in which he said of Berg, " I can vouch for his capabilities. He would make a good operations officer, either here or in the field."

Berg officially signed on with the OSS at a salary of $3,800 per year and waited for his new assignment. The OSS did not know at first what to do with him, and its

records say of Berg's time in limbo, "It was believed best to keep Berg's assignment somewhat amorphous."

After completing his basic OSS training, Berg was stationed in the United States, doing routine work. One of his first assignments was to follow the movements of the exiled King Peter of Yugoslavia, who was now a student at Cambridge University. He also followed intelligence reports from the Balkans and checked on people from the Slavic-American community who had been accepted into the OSS.

Soon, though, his fortunes would turn, and by April 1944, Berg had been assigned as an agent in the Special Operations Branch where his travel was secret, his expenses were to be paid out of special funds, and he was authorized to carry a .45-caliber pistol and accessories and other special OSS equipment. Berg flew to Italy, Portugal, and Algiers on a mission that involved American interest in possible German development of an atomic bomb.

As Berg flew east across the Atlantic, neither he nor the majority of the American people knew that the United States was developing its own atomic bomb. Knowledge of this super-secret endeavor, called the Manhattan Project, was even withheld from Vice President Harry Truman.

Major General Leslie Groves, military director of the Manhattan Project, was looking for the best agents he could find, and he hired Berg to serve as an undercover operative to track down Nazi scientists who were developing a similar weapon.

Berg was given the code name Remus, was dispatched by his immediate boss Robert Furman to Italy on a submarine borrowed by the U.S. from the Italian Navy in Brindisi. For his own protection, Berg carried a Bersher 7.65mm automatic; he never had to use it. Furman sent Berg to Florence to investigate the Galileo Laboratory where Italian scientists were working on developing long-range missiles.

Berg also contacted Italian scientists to find out anything he could on the development of radar and jet propulsion engines. However, this was just a cover mission in case anyone was interested in Berg's activities. His real assignment, on direct orders from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, was to bring any willing Italian scientists back to the United States. He persuaded physicist Enrico Fermi to leave Italy. Fermi later contributed to the development of the U.S. atomic bomb. When Fermi arrived in the United States, Roosevelt said, "I see that Moe Berg is still catching pretty well."

The Italian project that Berg was assigned to was given the code name Project Larson, which was an OSS operation headed by John Shaheen, head of the department's Special Projects Division. Project Larsson, however, was just a subterfuge. Its real purpose was to determine what Italian scientists knew about two top German scientists: Werner Heisenberg and Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker.

To prepare for his mission, Berg consulted with the top American scientists who were knowledgeable in physics, quantum theory, and electronics. He read all he could on the subjects and talked with such eminent authorities as William Fowler, a Cal Tech Nobel Prize-winning physicist,

Continued on page 98

SHOT DOWN OVER HOLLAND

FOR THE CREW AND PARATROOPERS IN ONE C-47 DURING OPERATION MARKET-GARDEN, THERE WERE VERY DIFFERENT OUTCOMES.

BY JAN BOS

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL SEPTEMBER DAY over Holland. Gradually, a faint rumble began to grow, and the sunny sky was darkened. This was not caused by a sudden increase in clouds but by more than 1,100 American C-47 transport planes carrying some 20,000 paratroopers of Lt. Gen. Lewis H. Brereton's First Allied Airborne Army, consisting of three Allied airborne divisions and an airborne brigade, into battle.

Aboard one of the C-47s in the aerial armada, a plane dubbed *Bette* by its pilot, were 15 heavily laden paratroopers of H Company, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division. After taking off from their English airfield at RAF Spanhoe, they had been in the air for over an hour. The usual lighthearted horseplay and banter that had characterized their training in England was absent. They knew that a hot reception awaited them, and they were about to jump into a hornet's nest. However, none of them could guess just how hot it would be.

Their officers had briefed them about the mission, calling it Operation Market-Garden and passing along the information that it might just shorten the war. Many of the paratroops, however, worried that the only thing it would shorten would be their lives.

After the airborne and amphibious landings in Normandy four months earlier, the Allies finally were able to break through the German defensive positions in northern France. By mid-August the Germans were on the run; at least this is what Allied headquarters thought. The Germans still offered stiff resistance during their strategic withdrawal, and the Allies were doing their best to overcome this resistance. German positions were under constant artillery fire, and American and British bombers pounded their positions.

As the Germans retreated, additional American, British, Canadian, Polish, Norwegian, and Free French divisions poured into France from staging areas in England and rushed southward and eastward. The important harbor of Cherbourg was captured at the end of June, and Paris was liberated in August. Near St. Lô, however, mistakes were made and bombs fell accidentally on American positions, killing and wounding many men. By September 1944, the Allies were inside Holland and continuing to push the enemy back toward its homeland.

To keep the pressure on the Germans and to utilize the airborne forces, plans were drawn up for an airborne assault behind enemy lines. One of these plans was a major

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A mixture of elation and apprehension is visible on the faces of these heavily laden American paratroopers as they board their C-47 transport plane at the start of Operation Market-Garden.

parachute drop near Tournai in Belgium. Airborne forces were alerted and moved to their designated airfields in England, but the mission was cancelled when Allied ground troops overran the drop zones. The Germans were really on the run! Still, planners continued to think about ways paratroops and glider forces could be introduced into the battlefield in an effort to trap large numbers of the enemy and perhaps even shorten the war.

On September 10, 1944, 37-year-old Brig. Gen. James M. Gavin, commanding general of the U.S. 82nd Airborne Division, and Colonel John Norton, the division's G-3 (operations officer), were summoned to a meeting at Allied airborne headquarters in London. There Gavin and Norton were introduced to a new airborne operation in which American, British, and Polish airborne troops would play a leading role.

It was a daring plan named Market-Garden, with "Market" the code word for the coup de main parachute and glider phase, and "Garden" the British XXX Corps' tank and infantry assault portion. After the night drops on D-Day, June 6, 1944, in which there had been considerable confusion and widespread scattering of the paratroops, planners decided to make Market-Garden a daylight operation. Very little time was allotted for planning and preparation. The jump was scheduled to take place on Sunday, September 17, 1944, only seven days away! It would have been a risky, ambitious operation even if it had been seven months away.

The target for Market-Garden was southeastern Holland, the location of several important bridges over key waterways leading into the part of Germany not heavily defended by the Westwall or Siegfried Line. Selected to take part were the U.S. 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions and the British 1st Airborne Division, reinforced by the 1st Polish Independent Parachute Brigade.

As the plans were drawn up, the 101st would land north of the city of Eindhoven, capture bridges across the Zuid Willemsvaart and the Wilhelmina Canal, then take the cities of Veghel, Son, and Eindhoven. The Screaming Eagles, as the 101st was known because of its distinctive insignia, would drop nearest to the British ground forces coming up from the Dutch-Belgian border.

The 82nd Airborne Division, nicknamed the All Americans, would arrive at DZ (drop zone) "O," at Overasselt, and on DZs "N" and "T," northeast and southwest of Groesbeek. Their task was monumental: capture the bridges over the Maas River at Grave, the Maas Waal Canal, the railroad and highway bridges across the Waal at Nijmegen; Nijmegen itself; the villages of Grave, Overasselt, Groesbeek, and Beek; then take and hold the high ground between Groesbeek and Berg en Dal. The 82nd's area of operations was 57 miles from the closest British ground forces.

The British and Polish paratroopers and glider infantry would come down west of Arnhem, where their mission was to capture and hold the bridges over the Rhine River at Arnhem, about 10 miles north of Nijmegen.

Everything depended on the airborne forces being able to hold the bridges until the armor and infantry could reach them. It was a staggeringly audacious plan, made even more surprising by the fact that British Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery, known for his meticulous set-piece battles and his disdain for acting without long periods of painstaking preparation, had come up with the idea.

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Preparing for their jump into Holland, members of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment strap on their equipment prior to taking off from RAF Spanhoe, England.

Captain Adam Kosoma, 82nd Airborne, observes C-47s preparing for take-off from RAF Spanhoe. BELOW: Second Lieutenant Douglas Felber, copilot of *Bette,* was killed when the plane crashed in flames.

Both: Jan Bos Collection

As soon as the meeting in London was over, Gavin and Norton sped back to their headquarters, called their staff together, and informed them about the plans. With time short, the men immediately went to work. The staff quickly wrote up the plans and operation orders, and unit commanders pored over maps, examining the terrain and enemy positions where their troops would be dropped.

One of the 82nd Airborne units chosen to take part was the 504th Regimental Combat Team, which included the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, the 376th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion, and C Company, 307th Airborne Engineer Battalion. The 82nd Airborne Division's 504th PIR had not participated in the invasion of Normandy because it needed to be built back up after the heavy casualties suffered during the July 1943 invasion of Sicily and the subsequent costly fighting in Italy; the 504th did not arrive in England from Italy until April 1944. After enjoying a well-deserved rest, the 504th received replacements and went back to training while their comrades left for Normandy. Now it would be the 504th's turn again to be the spearhead against the enemy.

The 504th's mission was to land on DZ "O," capture the huge nine-span bridge over the Maas River at Grave, capture at least one of the bridges over the Maas Waal Canal, and mop up the area between Grave, Overasselt, and Heumen.

The 504th's timetable was as follows: two C-47s equipped with radar beacons would drop Pathfinders on DZ "O" at 1:13 PM to mark the drop zone; 1st Battalion would drop two minutes later. Second Battalion, less E Company, would drop at 1:17; E Company would be dropped west of the Maas River to capture the key bridge there. Third Battalion would follow suit in the taking of this bridge, the lifeline between the 82nd and the British ground forces, which had to be held at all costs.

Troop Carrier groups of the IX Troop Carrier Command, U.S. Ninth Air Force, were also alerted, and they began readying their fleets of transport planes; 7,250 All American paratroopers would be dropped by 480 C-47 and C-53 transport planes of the 50th and 52nd Troop Carrier Wings. After the paratroops were dropped, the same planes would return to their bases, hook up hundreds of Waco CG-4A gliders, and, the next day, tow the engineless craft to their LZs (landing zones).

One of the aviation units from the 52nd Wing was the 315th Troop Carrier Group, stationed at RAF Spanhoe, about 80 miles northwest of London in Northamptonshire. The 315th's mission for September 17 was to drop the 504th PIR on DZ "O" at Overasselt.

SOON THE DUTCH COAST LOOMED AHEAD, AND THE DUTCH ISLANDS WERE PASSED. MEN IN THE TRANSPORTS LOOKED DOWN AND SAW MILE AFTER MILE OF TERRAIN, SPARKLING IN THE SUN, THAT HAD BEEN FLOODED BY THE GERMANS.

The 315th's commanding officer, Colonel William L. Brinson, was briefed about the operation, and he and his staff went to work immediately, meeting constantly with the officers from the 82nd to work out the thousands of details and to coordinate the drop, as well as preparing the aircraft for their roles.

It was also vital to carefully study aerial photos, determine where the German anti-aircraft positions were, and find routes to the DZs that would avoid the groundfire as much as possible.

National Archives

Airborne soldiers can be seen preparing to enter their transport planes at an English airfield. Over 1,100 C-47s delivered some 20,000 U.S., British, and Polish paratroopers during the operation.

It was now D-3: Friday morning, September 14, 1944. The paratroopers from the 504th climbed into trucks that took them from their cantonment area to the Spanhoe airfield. As soon as the last truck entered the airfield, MPs closed the gates and put up tight security; no one was permitted to enter or leave the base, and no incoming or outgoing phone calls were permitted. The paratroopers moved inside a hangar on the base that would be their home until the operation began.

Aerial photographs of the targets and detailed sand table models of the operational area were made available. Both paratroop and troop-carrier officers were briefed about the upcoming mission, now just two days away. The paratroopers and glider troops were then briefed and issued maps of Holland and Dutch guilders (invasion money).

Saturday was spent loading heavy equipment, bazookas, ammunition, antitank mines, food, water, and blood plasma into parapacks (parachute-dropped cargo containers). Radios, the basic load of ammunition, grenades, and two boxes of K- and one box of D-rations were issued to the men. The parapacks were delivered to the airfield where they were attached beneath the transport planes.

Red Cross units, from which the men could get coffee and cigarettes, were set up around the fields. Letters home were written and stored; none would be sent until after the operation was under way. The aircrews were given a short lecture on "Escape and Evasion in Holland," and escape kits were issued. The tension was building but the men were eager to go.

In the early morning of D-Day, Allied bombers, escorted by American and British fighter planes, headed east to bomb and strafe known enemy positions in Holland.

Back at the troop-carrier bases in eastern England, the paratroops and their pilots were making final preparations. At 6:15 AM, there was a breakfast of hotcakes, syrup, cereal, fried chicken with trimmings, butterscotch pudding, hot coffee, and apple pie. The men were able to attend church service, followed by a last-minute briefing. The crews were then taken out to their planes.

One of the 90 planes lined up at Spanhoe, a brand new C-47A nicknamed *Bette,* tail number 43-15308 (34th Troop Carrier Squadron, 315th Troop Carrier Group), awaited her five-man crew that consisted of Captain Richard E. Bohannan (pilot), 2nd Lt. Douglas H. Felber (copilot), 1st Lt. Bernard P. Martinson (navigator), Staff Sgt. Arnold B. Epperson (radio operator), and Sergeant Thomas N. Carter (crew chief).

Like a mother hen, Sergeant Carter had been hovering around his airplane since the early morning, checking every inch of it. He had arrived in England in June 1944 and was assigned to the squadron as a replacement; the Holland mission would be his first operational mission.

Shortly after the crew reported for duty, the 15 paratrooper passengers from H Company, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, arrived, jumping from the truck and lining up at the plane's portside door. The men in the "stick" were 1st Lt. Isidore D. Rynkiewicz (jumpmaster), Sergeant Earl V. Force, Corporals James C. Bailey and Lawrence J. Demont, Pfcs. Joseph A. Foley, Norman R. Handfield, Walter P. Leginski, John F. McAndrew, Everett R. Rideout, and William F. Stewart, and Privates Roy M. Biggs, Mark L. Kaplan, Richard C. Reardon, George Willoughby, and Donald F. Woodstock. All but Corporal Demont had seen battle in Sicily and Italy; Demont was a recently arrived replacement and hardly knew the others.

Everyone sported the 82nd Airborne Division shoulder patch high on the left sleeve of their khaki jump jackets and a small American flag on the right sleeve.

Private Richard Reardon recalled that he, like the others, was loaded down with heavy equipment. He wore two parachutes, main and reserve, a Thompson M1928A1 submachine gun with a loaded clip plus four extra double clips, a Colt M1911A1 .45-caliber pistol plus two loaded seven-round clips, an antitank mine, a Gammon grenade, and four fragmentation hand grenades. To add some more weight, he carried 300 rounds of .45-caliber ammunition, a nine-inch steel jump knife, wool blanket, canvas shelter half, first-aid packet, compass, entrenching tool, several boxes of K-rations, a mess kit, canteen, carton of cigarettes, and several chocolate bars. Before struggling out to the plane, Reardon found a scale and weighed himself: 392 pounds. His normal weight was 185 pounds! All the men also wore Mae West life preservers that ballooned in front of their chests.

Rynkiewicz gave the order to harness up, and the men helped each other attach their parachutes. Then the order was given to load up and the men started to climb the steep ladder into the airplane. Being so heavily laden, the men had difficulty getting aboard, but helping hands from fellow troopers and Sergeant Carter enabled them to board the plane. The men took their positions on wooden benches on both sides of the plane's cabin and strapped themselves in. Many of the combat veterans were delighted to go back into

action but apprehensive, too.

The air crewmen put on their flak vests and helmets, and Sergeant Carter took his place near the open door; his task would be to pull the static lines in after the paratroopers had jumped.

The engines of 90 planes were cranked and turned over, filling the air with puffs of blue exhaust and a growing volume of noise. The planes then rolled to the end of the runway to await the signal to take off. It was 10:39 AM when the first of the 315th planes lifted off from Spanhoe; the rest followed in rapid succession.

The planes circled the airfield until all had taken off and joined the 315th serial (Serial A-11). On board were 1,240 paratroopers with 473 parapacks carried beneath their fuselages. For the paratroopers, this was a one-way journey with no return ticket.

A formation of C-47s carries Allied paratroopers over flooded Dutch fields, September 17, 1944.

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Courtesy *Into The Valley, The Untold Story of USAAF Troop Carrier in World War II*, by Col. Charles H. Young

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LEFT: Private Richard Reardon, H Company, 504th PIR, 82nd Airborne Division, fell out of the belly of the plane when it caught fire. CENTER: Private First Class Walter P. Leginski, H Company, 504th PIR, 82nd Airborne Division, photographed at his camp in England before Operation Market-Garden. RIGHT: German photo of Sergeant Thomas N. Carter, crew chief on the *Bette,* survived the fiery incident but was captured and spent the duration of the war in POW camps.

The planes flew in two 45-plane formations made up of V-of-V serials. Once aloft, the 315th rendezvoused with other troop-carrier groups coming from other RAF fields. Escorting the troop-carrier train were North American P-51 Mustangs, Republic P-47 Thunderbolts, and British Supermarine Spitfire fighter planes. It was the largest airborne operation so far in the war and presented a magnificent sight. The spectators on the ground could see more than 4,500 planes (transports, bombers, fighter planes, and gliders) passing overhead, a sight they would never forget.

The serial flew for 20 miles to Checkpoint March, then 69 miles to Aldeburgh in eastern England. Soon the armada passed the English coast and started to cross the North Sea, heading for Holland. The route over water was 93 miles. The weather was perfect; over the North Sea the visibility was between six and eight miles. There was 8/10ths stratocumulus cloud cover at 3,000 feet.

Some of the paratroopers fell asleep in the droning planes, and some of them talked to each other or smoked while others looked outside, contemplating the coming battle. The flight over the North Sea was uneventful. Below, several rescue barges could be seen on the water, just in case some of the planes had to ditch.

Soon the Dutch coast loomed ahead, and the Dutch islands were passed. Men in the transports looked down and saw mile after mile of terrain, sparkling in the sun, that had been flooded by the Germans; many houses and farms were partially or wholly under water. Down below, the unsuspecting people of Willemstad were attending church services.

As the aerial armada passed the Dutch coastline and crossed into enemy-held territory, German antiaircraft guns opened up, shattering the Sunday morning calm. An antiaircraft battery, consisting of an 88mm and two 37mm guns, was positioned on and near a bunker at Dintelsas and began blasting away at the incoming planes. Black bursts of flak exploded between the transport planes. The aircraft were also fired upon by heavy machine guns; tracer bullets could be seen coming up at the planes like bright spiderwebs. Three or four Allied fighter planes broke

formation and dived down to silence one of the flak batteries, killing several German soldiers.

Damage had already been done. There was a victim: C-47 tail number 43-15308—*Bette*.

One of the six parapacks beneath *Bette* had been hit and was on fire. The container held Composition C, a highly dangerous and combustible material used to make explosives. The Comp C was burning, and flames were spreading to the other parapacks under the fuselage, which also caught fire. The fire was so intense that it melted holes in the aluminum floor of the aircraft. *Bette*'s left engine was also ablaze.

Inside the plane, the paratroopers who, just moments before, had been sitting on both sides of the cabin, thinking of the upcoming battle in the Grave-Nijmegen area, chewing gum, smoking cigarettes, and trying to calm their nerves, were now in a panic. Bullets and shards of antiaircraft shells punctured *Bette*'s thin skin, and

SOON THE INTERIOR FILLED WITH SMOKE AND SOMEONE YELLED TO GET OUT OF THE AIRPLANE; THIS WAS AN ORDER THAT DID NOT NEED TO BE REPEATED.

flames were eating up the floorboards. Crew Chief Carter informed the pilots of the fire over the intercom.

In another C-47, 1st Lt. William M. Perkins was flying some 600 yards behind Captain Bohannan at an altitude of approximately 1,000 feet. Seeing flames trailing behind *Bette,* Perkins broke radio silence and called Bohannan: "Bo, your parapacks are on fire!" Since Perkins did not receive a response, he repeated the same call several times. Then he saw paratroopers starting to bail out of the burning aircraft.

Inside *Bette,* it was chaos. During the flight, Pfcs. Walter Leginski and Everett Rideout had been sitting just opposite the door next to the jumpmaster, Lieutenant Rynkiewicz. All three were slightly wounded by shrapnel in their legs and buttocks when the plane was hit; several other paratroopers also received minor injuries. Soon the interior filled with smoke and someone yelled to get out of the airplane; this was an order that did not need to be repeated. Both Leginski and Rideout noticed the crew chief jump from the plane and that Lieutenant Rynkiewicz was slumped forward in his seat. Leginski and Rideout did not hesitate, and out they went. Someone must have thrown Lieutenant Rynkiewicz out of the plane, since he survived the crash.

Everyone was tumbling out now. While trying to get to the door, Pfc. Reardon fell onto the burning floor. Suddenly, the floor gave way and he fell out through the bottom of the burning fuselage. Miraculously, his parachute opened. He looked up and checked that the canopy was okay; he did not have to pull his reserve.

On Bohannan's right wing was a C-47 piloted by 1st Lt. Jack B. Olds and 2nd Lt. Robert L. Cloer. They also witnessed Bohannan's flaming plane. Cloer took the radio microphone and tried to contact Bohannan but, like Perkins, got no answer.

Second Lieutenant Clarence E. Stubblefield, pilot of another nearby C-47, remembered, "I was flying on the left wing of Captain Bohannan's plane. After we had crossed the coast of Holland about five minutes, a burst of what I thought was machine-gun fire hit Bohannan's ship underneath, and also my ship. His parapacks burst into flames and in a few seconds his paratroopers started coming out. I could not count all the parachutes, but estimate about 10 or 11. The inside of the ship was burning as well as the outside and Captain Bohannan held his ship in position until all of his troopers that could, had gotten out, and then he dove towards the water [flooded landscape] at about a 45-degree angle."

Flight Officer Patrick F. McMorrow was copilot in Stubblefield's plane. He also noticed Bohannan's plane afire and that the parapacks were dropped. McMorrow watched and counted the parachutes from the ill-fated *Bette*.

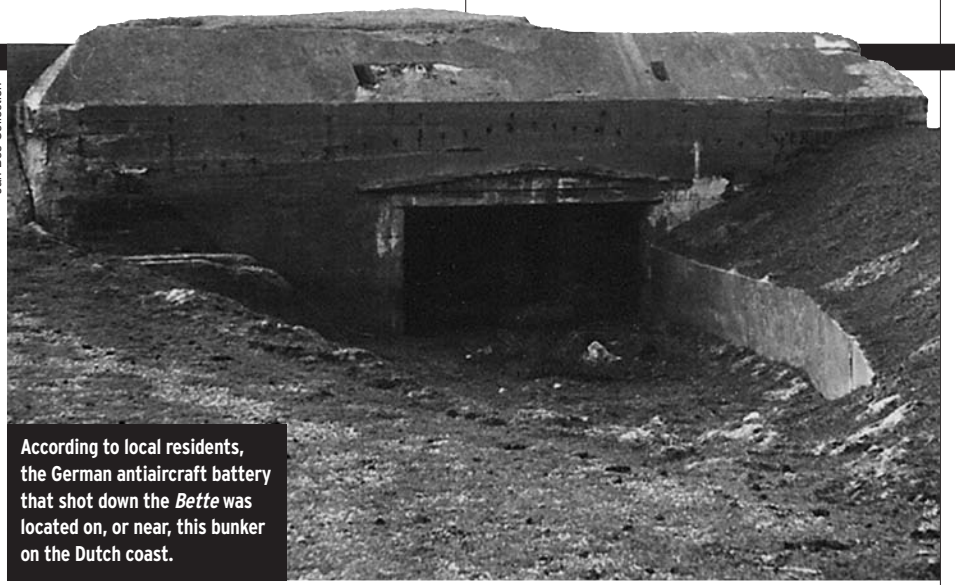
In the airplanes flying behind and beside Bohannan's stricken C-47, the crew members and paratroopers counted the chutes. Seventeen were seen to open and float down to earth. The 17th chute carried the plane's crew chief, Thomas Carter, who had followed the paratroopers out. The pilot and copilot were trapped inside the cockpit and could not escape.

Bette, engulfed in flames, was in a dive and with full throttle plowed into a field that had been flooded by the Germans near the Postbaan of the Stadschendijk in the Heiningse Polder, near the farm of A. van Sprang (51° 39'N; 4° 27'E). It was approximately 12:30 PM. The paratroopers believed that the pilots, Bohannan and Felber, had held the plane as long as they could so that the paratroopers were able to get clear. They owed their lives to the men up in the cockpit who had sacrificed theirs.

Undaunted by the flaming spectacle, the rest of the serial flew on. In several other planes in the formation, the jumpmasters, as a precaution, ordered their troops to stand up and hook up, although the planes were some 45 minutes away from their drop zones.

Except for the men in *Bette,* the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment was dropped as planned at Overasselt. As soon as the paratroopers had landed and unhooked their chutes, they gathered themselves into units and dashed off their DZs to fight the Germans. The major objective for the day was the huge and vital nine-span bridge over the Maas River between Grave and Nederasselt. Combat patrols were sent to the Maas-Waal Canal, south of Nijmegen, to capture at least one of the bridges and hold it until the sky soldiers could be relieved by British ground forces.

The 21 planes from the squadron had dropped 295 paratroopers and 105 parapacks on DZ "O." After the drop at Overasselt, the planes made a sharp 180-degree turn to avoid heavy antiaircraft fire at Nijmegen. The return trip was uneventful, except for some



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According to local residents, the German antiaircraft battery that shot down the *Bette* was located on, or near, this bunker on the Dutch coast.

National Archives

One of several C-47s shot down on the way to the Holland drop zones. The crew and paratroopers in this one jumped to safety.

small-arms fire; no plane from the 315th was lost on the way back to England. Only Captain Bohannan's plane had been lost on the way in, her crew missing or dead. Three other C-47's from the squadron had received minor battle damage. Several C-47s were forced to make emergency landings at Brussels.

The planes returned to Spanhoe between 3:20 and 3:45 PM. For unknown reasons, two paratroopers were unable to jump and were returned to England. Two other paratroopers had been wounded by shrapnel and could not jump. After the mission, the crews were debriefed. Six crews were alerted for a resupply mission, which was cancelled at 6 PM.

The following day, pilot Captain Ernest S. Henner noted in his report to the Commanding General, IX Troop Carrier Command: "I was flight leader of the second flight of the third squadron of the first serial on 17 September 1944. After we had crossed the coast of Holland and had gone about 20 miles, I first noticed that Captain Bohannan's airplane was burning (left engine) and there was a short space of time between which the pilot of the plane released his parapack bundles and tried to extinguish the flames. After that interval, several men were seen to jump from the airplane, which continued to fly straight and level in formation. It continued to do so for about 30 seconds after the last man jumped and then dove into the water at about a 45-degree angle."

Reports were made by the 315th and other groups and sent to Headquarters IXth Troop Carrier Command full of detailed information about the operation and the losses of airplanes and crews. The U.S. War Department began sending information to the families of the lost, missing, and wounded soldiers. First the families received a telegram with the information that their loved ones were missing over Holland. Then the soldiers' personal effects were gathered and sent to the Quartermaster Depot at Kansas City, Missouri. From there the belongings were sent to the families.

All that was in the future. On September 17, it was still raining paratroopers from *Bette* near the town of Heiningen. Pfc. Rideout came down in a flooded field, and Pfc. Leginski landed some 50 yards from him on dry ground. Both men unsnapped their parachutes and started bandaging their wounds. They noticed that the remainder of the stick had also jumped from the plane but had landed on the opposite side of the canal. The two men hid their parachutes and started to move away from the approaching Germans, using irrigation ditches to stay low.

On the other side of the canal, Crew Chief Tom Carter, coming down after his harrowing escape from ~~Bette~~, noticed water below him except at a crossroads around which were clustered several houses. It was the village of Heiningen. Carter was able to guide his parachute and landed on a roof of one of the houses; Dick Reardon and the other paratroopers splashed down nearby in the water. No one drowned because the water came only slightly above the knees of the men, but they had some trouble freeing themselves from their chutes and harnesses.

Once unencumbered, the men moved toward the houses. They were a sorry sight; the majority of the muddy, sopping-wet paratroopers were wounded or had burns over parts of their bodies and could hardly handle their weapons.

Suddenly, a Dutchman popped up and warned the men to take cover in a deep ditch. The men did so and proceeded along it until they entered one of the houses, where five Dutchmen wearing orange arm-

Walter Leginski and Everett Rideout were photographed with their Dutch Underground rescuers. Chris Moerland is at left, front.

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UNDER ARMED GUARD, THE PRISONERS BOARDED SEVERAL TRUCKS, AND THEIR LONG JOURNEY TO GERMANY BEGAN. TO GIVE THE CAPTIVES HOPE, DUTCH CIVILIANS MADE V-FOR-VICTORY SIGNS AS THE TRUCKS PASSED...

bands that symbolized that they were in the Dutch Resistance were waiting to help them. The men were Adriaan Nijhoff, Hendrik Nijhoff, Jan van Dis, J. Lanning, and Chris Moerland, a young boy only 14 or 15 years old.

Sergeant Carter had a map in his escape kit and pulled it out. One of the Dutchmen pointed out where they were, some 50 miles short of the intended drop zone at Overasselt. The Dutchmen then informed the troopers that they had to leave but would return soon with other underground members who would guide them to safety. Realizing that the Germans might arrive at any minute, the paratroopers set up defensive positions in the house. Carter and Reardon took some weapons and moved upstairs while others troopers went into a neighboring house.

A few minutes later, a trooper yelled, "Jerries on the road!" Sure enough, a squad of Germans from the 719th Infantry Division was approaching the houses with weapons at the ready. Soon a firefight broke out. One of the Germans threw a potato-masher stick grenade toward the house, but it missed the window and exploded outside. Another grenade was thrown and exploded inside. Corporal Demont was slightly wounded by shrapnel and also suffered considerable damage to his right ear.

The Germans shouted for the Americans to surrender. Realizing that they were surrounded, wounded, outmanned, and in no shape for a prolonged fight, the men surrendered. They were lined up in front of the houses and searched. The Germans took weapons, watches, rings, and cigarettes from the paratroopers, then marched them to a nearby school.

For the 504th troopers who had escaped the burning *Bette,* the war was over. Medical attention was given to them by German medics. Lieutenant Rynkiewicz was separated from the enlisted men and interrogated before being evacuated to a hospital. Under armed guard, the prisoners boarded several trucks, and their long journey to Germany began. To give the captives hope, Dutch civilians made V-for-Victory signs as the trucks passed through villages. Once inside Germany a few hours later, the men dismounted from the trucks and were taken inside a building. There they were questioned again.

Several days later the men were loaded into railroad boxcars, and the train started in a northerly direction. The men were afraid that the train might be strafed by Allied fighter planes. Their fears were soon confirmed, but somehow everyone escaped injury.

On another night the train sat in a rail yard while high-flying bombers attacked the yard, dropping their heavy ordnance. Luckily again, no one was hit and the men reached their first destination, Stalag XIIA (Prison Camp #12-A) in Limburg, Germany. Then they were transferred to Stalag III-C near Alt-Drewitz, some 50 miles east of Berlin, where they remained until the spring of 1945 when they were liberated by advancing Russian troops.

As an Air Force soldier, Sergeant Carter was separated from the paratroopers and held in Stalag Luft IV, a POW camp for aviators, in Tychowo, Poland, arriving there in the middle of October 1944. After Christmas 1944, he was moved to Stalag Luft I near Barth on the Baltic Sea in northeastern Germany. The majority of the journey was made on foot. Carter was freed by the Soviets on May 3, 1945.

A different fate awaited Leginski and Rideout. After they reached the outskirts of Heiningen on September 17, they stayed hidden, simultaneously looking for other paratroopers who might be in the neighborhood, avoiding the German staff cars and motorcycles that raced through the town, and searching for a way out of their predicament.

Dusk came, and both men decided to wait for nightfall before going farther. Suddenly, they were alerted by a noise nearby. At first they thought someone was calling for a dog, but then they heard the man say "Oranje," meaning "orange" in English. Oranje was

the code word for the Dutch Underground. Again the Dutchman called out Oranje, and both Leginski and Rideout cautiously approached the man, who they could see was wearing an orange armband.

The Americans, cold and wet, decided to follow the civilian, who carefully entered Heiningen and led them to a barn. There they were given dry clothes, food, and water. Their uniforms and weapons were hidden. Several days later, the men received their uniforms back, cleaned and ironed, and their next adventure began.

They were awakened one morning at 6 AM by an English-speaking Dutchman who informed them that the Germans, who suspected that Americans were hiding in the village, were approaching. After getting some cycling instructions, the two paratroopers, in civilian clothes, followed three Dutch Underground members (W. Strange, C. van Andel, and the teenager Chris Moerland) on bicycles. The five men headed for Fijnaart.

The trip took about an hour, and the group passed one German checkpoint en route. The Germans stopped them. The Dutchmen did the talking and apparently satisfied the Germans. The men continued on to the local underground headquarters where they learned the fate of two other troopers. Lieutenant Rynkiewicz and Private Biggs had been taken to a hospital in Willemstad.

Leginski and Rideout asked if someone could take a message to their lieutenant, asking for instructions. A Dutch messenger went to see Rynkiewicz and handed him the note. Rynkiewicz ordered Leginski and Rideout to stay with the Dutch. The two privates would remain hidden in Fijnaart until early November. It was very dangerous since Germans were still in the village.

While this was taking place, the underground members had visited the Bettecrash site several times and retrieved weapons, which were then stored in the basement of a carpentry shop. There was a curfew, and no one was allowed to be on the streets after 8:00 PM, but Leginski and Rideout were in need of some fresh air and exercise, so they were smuggled out of town and escorted in a southerly direction.

On Tuesday, September 19, 1944, several inhabitants of Heiningen (J. Akkermans, Theo Akkermans, B. Lanning, Johan Smits, M. Straasheijm, and Hendrick Nijhoff) obtained permission from the local German commander to go out to the C-47 crash site to retrieve and bury the remains of the four crewmembers killed in the crash. However, the German soldiers in the area had not been informed about the Dutchmen at the airplane and fired on them.

At great risk to himself, Nijhoff waded through the water and approached the Germans to show them their written permission for the burial detail. The Germans kept an eye on this unpleasant task. The four air crewmen were found in the demolished cockpit and were placed in wooden coffins, then taken to the Algemene Begraafplaats (general cemetery) of Dinteloord, where they were buried with military honors. Present at the burial were Nijhoff, Straasheijm, and J. de Visser, the latter the cemetery's caretaker. Captain Bohannan was laid to rest in grave 19. A cross with the Dutch text, *Hier rust een Engels soldaat Richard E. Bohannan 0-789977* ("Here rests an English [sic] soldier"), marked Bohannan's grave; similar crosses marked the graves of the other men.

Jan Bos Collection

The grave of radio operator Staff Sergeant Arnold B. Epperson at Margraten Military Cemetery, Holland, photographed by the author.

During Leginski and Rideout's southward move, the front lines came closer and British artillery barrages crashed around the group. The barrage finally lifted, and the men encountered British troops and learned that the enemy had left the area several days earlier. Leginski and Rideout helped to take care of the many wounded civilians, said farewell to the Dutchmen who had guided them to Allied lines, then were transported to Antwerp, where both men were debriefed.

The two paratroopers were then taken to Brussels, where they noticed a jeep with "505 PIR" stenciled on the bumpers. The jeep driver agreed to drive both men to Nijmegen where the 82nd Airborne Division was still fighting. They arrived there on November 5, 1944. The remainder of their stick was still carried as missing in action.

EPILOGUE

As the world knows, Market-Garden was a failure. For the most part, the paratroops achieved their objectives, but their reinforcement was delayed because strong German resistance blocked XXX Corps' advance. As a result, casualties among the airborne forces were high. On September 27, 10 days after it began, Operation Market-Garden was called off. A long, difficult, and costly slogging match through the Siegfried Line would commence in a few weeks.

In the spring of 1945, soldiers from the 18th Canadian Armoured Regiment, 12th Manitoba Dragoons, arrived in the village of Fijnaart. Mayor Huib Van Dis reported to the Canadians and informed them about the crashes that had occurred in his area the previous September. Members of the underground showed Canadian authorities the location of the crash. The authorities learned that a considerable amount of Dutch currency had been found scattered near the crash site. The money was believed to be the invasion money that had been issued to the crew and had been

Continued on page 96

THE LAWLESS RED ARMY LOOTED, KILLED, AND RAPED ITS WAY THROUGH GERMANY, FUELED BY REVENGE AND ALCOHOL.

WRETCHED MIS

THE VAST SOVIET WAR MEMORIAL IN Berlin's Treptower Park commemorates 5,000 Red Army soldiers who fell in battle in the city in April and May 1945. With a monumental architectural style typical among Soviet memorials, the park is enclosed by imposing stone entrance portals ornamented with the hammer and sickle. These direct visitors along paths leading to a statue representing Mother Russia and then on to a pair of massive eaves made of red Carrara marble recovered from the ruins of Hitler's Reich Chancellery.

There, a pair of giant statues depicting highly decorated Red Army soldiers on bended knee bow their heads reverently at the top of a set of stairs leading down to the main memorial promenade. On this level, an immaculately manicured garden is flanked by 16 granite sarcophagi representing the 16 Soviet Republics—each of which presents heavily idealized scenes from the Great Patriotic War in half relief.

At the end of this promenade, the memorial's final feature is a 30-foot-tall mound on

BY MARTIN K.A. MORGAN

CONDUCT

the top of which sits a pedestal and one final triumphal statue. Rising 36 feet, this statue depicts a Soviet soldier standing on a shattered swastika—a symbol of the complete destruction of National Socialist Germany. His right hand clutches a sword, and in his left he holds a child.

Dedicated on May 8, 1949, the Soviet War Memorial in Treptower Park is a perfect example of the kind of monumental state architecture the Soviet Union produced to memorialize its role in World War II. To the casual visitor, though, the statue of the triumphant Soviet soldier protecting an innocent child would leave the impression that the Red Army fought World War II as a benevolent force of compassion and justice. The truth behind

ABOVE: A crowd watches as a Soviet soldier wrestles a bicycle away from a Berlin woman shortly after Germany's surrender. German civilians faced much worse crimes as Stalin's troops sought revenge for years of atrocities at the hands of marauding German troops. OPPOSITE: A Berlin defender lies dead as Soviet soldiers rush into the heart of the city, May 1945. With their men either dead, captured, or gone, German women were vulnerable to the rampaging Soviets.

Above: Ullstein Bild/The Granger Collection, New York
Left: Getty Images

that image is much more complicated and, in certain respects, much less attractive.

In reality, the victorious Red Army committed a staggering number of unspeakable criminal acts during and after World War II. As a part of the ceaseless campaigning and unrelenting combat against the forces of fascism, Soviet soldiers explored the abyss of humanity's darker side in countless destructive and violent acts against Polish, Romanian, Hungarian, and (of course) German victims. In a ram-

Library of Congress

paging spree of looting, rape, and murder that went far beyond simple collateral damage, Stalin's legions did what they did in retribution for the vicious war that had been waged against the Soviet Union starting in 1941.

One anonymous Russian soldier announced this sentiment with chilling directness when he wrote these words in a 1945 letter home: "We are taking revenge for everything, and our revenge is just. Fire for fire, blood for blood, death for death." Clearly, the soldiers of the Great Patriotic War rationalized their crimes as "just" acts against an anonymous foe. They employed a euphemistic vocabulary provided by the Soviet state propaganda machine to express a vengeful righteousness justifying each and every cruelty. But did revenge alone drive the Red Army to commit these crimes? Or did other factors give birth to the impulse to carry out such abominable excesses?

The intense brutality that so closely characterized the Soviet Army during and after World War II has been examined in a number of recent books. Published since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the commensurate opening of former Soviet archives, these studies reveal how a diverse set of motivations drove the Red Army's violence and destructiveness.

Although revenge certainly motivated soldiers' actions to an extent, the actuality behind these episodes is that looting became a mass epidemic because the culture of shortage created by the catastrophe of forced collectivization and the failure of the NEP in Soviet Russia produced Stalinist subjects who sought every opportunity for self-aggrandizement and individual enrichment. While the massive number of crimes of sexual coercion can certainly be explained in part as being the expression of a vengeful impulse, other factors such as the abundance of alcohol in conquered territory, the absence of field brothels in the Red Army, and the deep sexual repression promoted endlessly by the Stalinist Soviet state also offer accurate explanation.

Beyond those influencing factors, the fact that Soviet troops also looted, raped, and murdered non-Germans suggests that revenge alone did not drive the Red Army to do what it did.

Because of the very nature of these war crimes, official documents barely recorded the Red Army's lawlessness during and after the war. With scarce records defining the contours of these criminal excesses, personal accounts have been a leading tool for bringing the story into focus. The authors who have written on this subject have all used these accounts to define a story that the Soviets wanted to keep quiet because of the negative pall it cast on the soldiers of the Great Patriotic War.

But for many of the men and women who would ultimately be a part of the Soviet Union's military, personal recollections of their wartime service inevitably touched on these uncomfortable subjects. While they remembered the German invasion in 1941, they remembered it in conflicting ways. One soldier recalled that "German field units did not engage in any particular abuses," but that rear-echelon units "were abominable."

"EVERYTHING IS ON FIRE.... AN OLD WOMAN JUMPS FROM A BURNING BUILDING.... LOOTING IS GOING ON.... IT'S LIGHT DURING THE NIGHT BECAUSE EVERYTHING IS ABLAZE."

A surprising number of Russians remembered a German Army that punished individual looting severely and that had officers who, as a rule, did not participate in "wholesale" looting. Families even willingly allowed them in to stay in their homes for this specific reason. Naturally, there were cases soon after the invasion where Germans "confiscated" wristwatches, but because of the abject poverty of Soviet subjects, these cases did not reach wholesale proportions.

For many Soviet subjects who endured the misery of forced collectivization and the shortages of material goods it created, the invading German Army of 1941 could be seen as a force of liberation—at least initially. But for all of the descriptions of a Wehrmacht that behaved benevolently on Soviet soil, others recalled looting that went "uncontrolled and unpunished" in a campaign that "was a purely practical, military affair, outright." In September 1943, as the German military retreated out of conquered Soviet territory, a 23-year-old Russian *Normirovshchik* (factory official) described how they evacuated civilians, "burning and looting at the same time."

Eventually though, the Russians brought the war back to German soil and the Red Army began doing what the Wehrmacht had done to their homeland earlier in the war.

Library of Congress

The mutilated corpses of women and children lie in the East Prussian village of Metgethen in February 1945. After the German 5th Panzer Division briefly retook the area, an officer from the nearby Königsberg fortress expressed his horror: "All were completely undressed and huddled up in a pile. Most of the children had had their skulls broken with a blunt object or their tiny bodies perforated with innumerable bayonet stabs." OPPOSITE: With fear on their faces, a line of German woman and children rush past the battered Brandenburg Gate, hoping to escape the Soviet occupiers.

In January 1945, Soviet forces launched the Vistula–Oder Offensive with a push westward into East Prussia, East Pomerania, and Upper and Lower Silesia. As they did so, the soldiers of the Great Patriotic War came into contact with German civilians for the first time. Accustomed to the scarcity that had become such a central characteristic of life in the Stalinist Soviet Union, the material wealth that they found there seemed nothing less than a world of abundance and plenty. When the search for war booty began, it was carried out mostly by individuals "who wanted to live well, liked to loot, or wanted to make the most of their situation."

Here, looting begins to resemble one of the "coping mechanisms" identified by Sovietologist Sheila Fitzpatrick in her 1999 book, *Everyday Stalinism*. In this work, Fitzpatrick closely detailed the experience of life in Russia during the 1930s when the state-run economy had chronically failed to supply the people with the necessities of life. Fitzpatrick even borrowed from anthropology when she identified the term *Homo sovieticus* to refer to the special breed of ordinary people who were profoundly shaped by the economy of shortage.

To her, *Homo sovieticus* was a wholly self-interested actor ruled by the overpowering desire to improve his personal living conditions. As the Red Army moved into Germany in 1945, *Homo sovieticus* was about to take looting to a level worse than anything anyone had ever seen.

When the 8th Guards Army attacked Schwerin, the capital city of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, novelist and war correspondent Vasily Grossman wrote in his notebook: "Everything is on fire…. An old woman jumps from a window in a burning building…. Looting is going on…. It's light during the night because everything is ablaze." Despite the fact that he personally observed looting, Grossman nevertheless believed that it was the rear-echelon soldiers who were responsible for the debauchery. He believed that the *frontoviki*—frontline soldiers—"advancing day and night under fire, with pure and saintly hearts" could not commit such crimes.

In reality, the *frontoviki*—along with everyone else who made it to the West—participated in the quest for war trophies. Of the 12.8 million men and women in the Soviet military in 1945, only 10 percent set foot on German or Austrian soil to participate in the outburst of looting. Although this percentage represented only a small proportion of the Red Army's total strength, it was nevertheless responsible for massive looting. The leniency and frequent cooperation of higher authority only made things worse. Although Stalin described the NKVD (People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs) regiments that moved forward with the tactical fighting units as a "gendarmerie" (military police force), they rarely intervened in the lawlessness.

In addition to its lack of intervention, the Soviet government also officially sanctioned the appropriation of "trophy goods" by its troops. As demobilized Red Army soldiers returned home during the summer of 1945, they were required to pass through customs controls. To avoid declaring their plunder at the border, they began selling everything off in Poland before crossing back into the USSR. Details of this situation reached Stalin that summer in a report emphasizing the fact that the current customs requirements benefited "speculators of Polish border towns" and not returning Soviet soldiers. A resolution dated June 14, 1945, corrected the situation by lifting the customs controls on returning Red Army troops, thereby opening the flood gates for "trophy goods" to flow into Mother Russia. The looted property that subsequently entered the Soviet Union in immeasurable volume included watches, motorcycles, pianos, radios, furniture, paintings, cloth, and gold. This ruling remained in effect through 1949, ensuring that plunder would flow eastward in great profusion for many years to come.

Special demobilization train No. 45780 is a perfect example of the extreme to which this situation could be taken. The train traveled from Vienna to Uzbekistan in September 1945 carrying demobilized veterans and an abundance of loot from the occupied West. One officer on the train brought more than 2,000 pounds of "luggage" while one of the enlisted soldiers had a "large number of suitcases and bags" in

Ullstein Bild/The Granger Collection, New York

After the war's end, a pair of smiling, well-dressed Soviet soldiers accost a German woman on a street in Leipzig.

addition to dozens of gold watches worn on both of his arms.

To explain why he was wearing all these watches, the soldier said, "It is more secure to have them on the arms because the suitcases might get stolen."

As it turns out, *Homo sovieticus* could loot a comrade just as easily as he had looted an Austrian civilian. With each trainload of returning Red Army veterans, a trainload of "trophy goods" from the West flowed into Uzbekistan. Those "trophy goods" quickly ended up for sale because, upon returning to the culture of scarcity at home, demobilized Uzbek veterans had to begin exchanging their "trophy goods" for the material necessities of civilian life. This situation meant that the markets in Tashkent in the Soviet Far East were as full of "foreign things" in 1945 as the markets in Moscow.

Soviet veterans did not leave their lawless impulses behind once they departed occupied territory. In December 1945, a train full of wounded and sick soldiers departed Germany on its way to Novosobirsk in Siberia. While on a station stop along the way in Poland, some of the veterans left the train, beat up the stationmaster, and then raped his wife and daughter. When the Polish Army attempted to arrest them, they fought back and escaped back to the train, which then departed on its continuing journey to the East. When it returned to Russian soil soon thereafter, the thugs continued to behave exactly as they had on foreign soil.

A few days later, at the station in Kropacevo, Chelyabinskaya Oblast, in the southern Urals, the same troops got into more trouble. There they broke into a shop near the station, kicked out the salespeople, and proceeded to steal 7,000 rubles and five gallons of vodka. They then scampered back onto their train just as it departed the station, once again making a successful escape. Authorities ultimately caught up to the perpetrators at another station farther down the line and made 22 arrests. The investigation that followed revealed the string of crimes that followed the train's route all the way home. In addition to what they had done in Poland and at Kropacevo, these same criminals had committed 30 robberies on the train and even raped a nurse serving on it.

The Soviet government that had encouraged lawless behavior in the occupied territories now had to deal with the monster it had created in the form of violent and criminally mischievous returnees. The fact that demobilized Red Army soldiers continued to behave as a lawless rabble on Russian soil can probably be explained by the mixed and confusing signals they received. At one time, the government exhorted them to follow a lawful code; at another time, the government looked the other way.

The failure of Soviet authorities to intervene in the face of widespread looting and other crimes stands in contrast with the government's repeated attempts to promote responsible and appropriate behavior outside the Soviet Union. On entering Poland in 1944, a Red Army officer recalled being told that they were doing so as "liberators" and that looting and rape would not be tolerated. A 26-year-old *kolkhoznik* and Army veteran who remained in Germany after demobilization to work as a shoemaker was required to take an oath swearing to conduct himself "properly" and "obey the authorities" at all times. In this oath, he also had to pledge that he would not loot. The soldiers simply ignored the state's exhortations and went on with the looting.

The image that emerges here of a Soviet government unable to control its people or enforce law and order does not look like the monolithic, all-powerful police state presented in the totalitarian/traditionalist model of Sovietology that flourished throughout much of the Cold War. Instead, the revisionist approach, with its emphasis on the individual agency of independent actors working within the Soviet system in pursuit of self-enrichment, seems the more fitting explanation.

The Soviet government also sent mixed signals to the troops about the crime of rape—something the Stalinist government euphemistically referred to as an "immoral event." Although the state actively repressed sexuality, those supposedly responsible for discipline actively turned a blind eye on sexual assault and permitted it to become as commonplace as looting. Whenever the Red Army handed out punishment in relation to a rape, the punishment was in response to a soldier contracting venereal disease—not the sexual assault itself.

Appropriate or officially sanctioned sexual expression scarcely existed in the modern Soviet state, driving sex underground for the average citizen. After all, the good socialist worker devoted his energies to production or reading *Pravda,* not to the bourgeois pursuit of sexual gratification. To the Stalinist dictatorship, even the Venus de Milo was deemed "pornographic." This extremely repressive environment made Soviet troops, who were far from home and enduring the hardships of combat, a ticking time bomb. Also, unlike other armies of World War II, the Red Army did not condone the establishment of field brothels for its servicemen.

Their bottled-up sexual energy, therefore, exploded violently as soon as the opportunity of hapless victims presented itself. In this respect, the crime of rape became a collective experience for both the victims and the perpetrators. One Soviet report stated that the Red Army raped every German woman who remained behind in East Prussia—young and old alike. The same report indicated that Red Army soldiers typically raped women in gangs. According to the British historian Anthony Beevor, in the city of Schpaleiten, for example, a German woman named Emma Korn endured repeated sexual assaults at the hands of Russian troops: "On 3 February frontline troops of the Red Army entered the town. They came into the cellar where we were hiding and pointed their weapons at me and the other two women and ordered us into the yard. In the yard 12 soldiers in turn raped me. Other soldiers did the same to my two neighbours. The following night six drunken soldiers broke into our cellar and raped us in front of the children. On 5 February, three soldiers came, and on 6 February eight drunken soldiers also raped and beat us."

IN BERLIN AND ELSEWHERE IN GERMANY, RAPE VICTIMS BEGAN TO TAKE THEIR OWN LIVES BY GUNSHOT, INGESTION OF POISON, SLITTING OF THE WRISTS, AND HANGING.

After the war, a Ukrainian auto mechanic described one of these gang rapes as a scene where 20 well-armed officers and men carried out a sexual assault on a 14-year-old German girl in a single "indescribable," alcohol-fueled attack.

The abundance of alcohol became a major factor wherever the Red Army went and contributed significantly to the epidemic scale of gang rape. As the war crossed into East Prussia, East Pomerania, and Upper and Lower Silesia, German military authorities made a critical error in judgment by choosing not to destroy stockpiles of alcohol in the approaching Red Army's path. The rationale behind this decision held that widespread drunkenness would prevent the Soviets from fighting at their maximum strength, but the result was actually just tragedy.

In Germany, Red Army soldiers by the thousands found liquor in quantities beyond their wildest dreams and began drinking with gluttonous enthusiasm. Their mass consumption celebrated the end of a long, brutal war and also gave them the courage to break free from the intense sexual repression of Stalinist Soviet society. One anonymous diarist writing about the fall of Berlin many years later concluded that "if the Russians hadn't found so much alcohol all over, half as many rapes would have taken place."

Although the volatile formula of sexual repression, lax discipline, and intoxicating spirits in plentiful supply produced "immoral events" on a shocking and unprecedented scale, many Soviet veterans denied the reports. One Red Army veteran remembered, "In the Russian Army of Liberation there was very little rape," especially in his company, because they "all had girlfriends." Another described relations with the "peasants" in his unit's area as "on the whole good," and that "rape, etc. were punished severely."

Though such denials are easy to understand in terms of a veteran's desire to ennoble his wartime service and downplay any possible connection to criminality, other personal accounts remember an entirely different Red Army. One describes an "extremely repulsive" Soviet major named Frolov who raped a 10-year-old girl in Warsaw. Another recalls how a daughter, mother, and grandmother were gang-raped together during the Battle of Berlin, and still another recalls a woman who "was raped by 23 soldiers, one after the other."

The novelist and war correspondent Vasily Grossman even jotted down the chilling words, "Terrible things are happening to German women." He also recounted the story of a young German mother who was being repeatedly gang raped in a farm shed by drunken soldiers. After hours of sexual assault, one of the woman's relatives appeared at the shed's door to plead with her rapists to give her a break so that she could breast feed her infant child because it would not stop crying. According to a neighbor's letter, a 13-year-old boy in Berlin named Dieter Sahl "threw himself with flailing fists at a Russian who was raping his mother in front of

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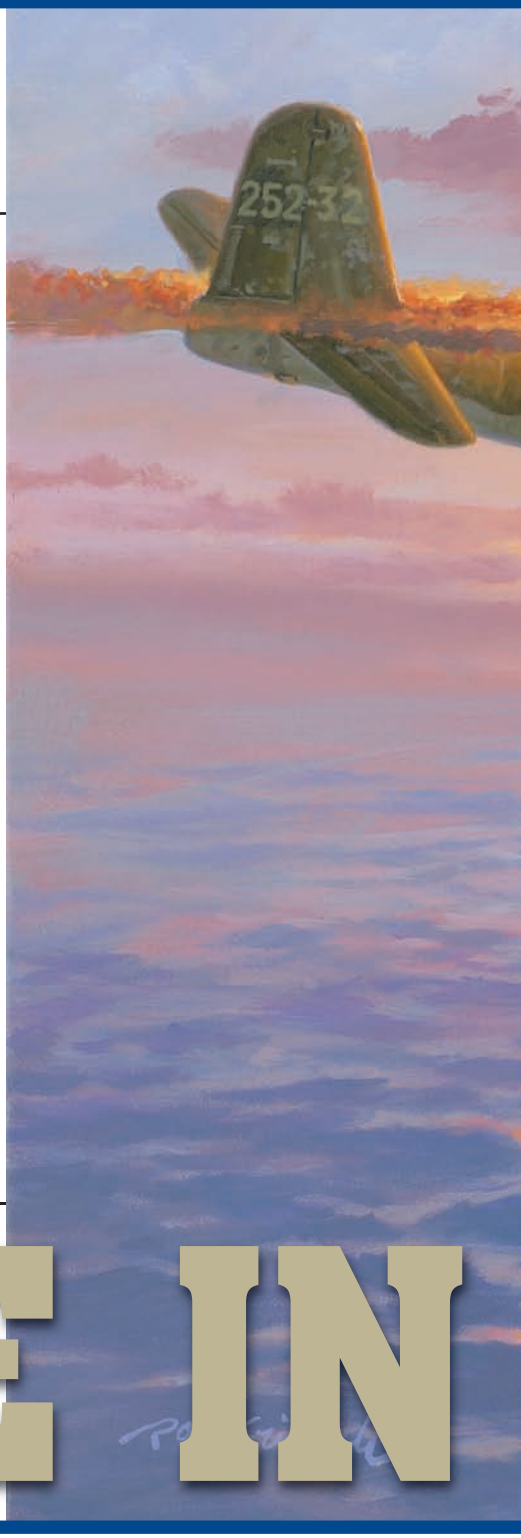
AN ACE IN

During furious fights over the Pacific, naval aviator Ted Crosby shot down five Japanese planes in one day. **BY ERIC NIDEROST**



LIEUTENANT (J.G.) JOHN "TED" Crosby banked his Grumman F6F-5 Hellcat around, observing the life-and-death drama that was unfolding below him. The *Yamato,* then the world's largest battleship and the pride of Japan, was entering its death throes. It was a few minutes after 2 o'clock on the afternoon of April 7, 1945, and aircraft from the Task Group 58.4 carriers *Yorktown* (CV-10), *Intrepid* (CV-11), and *Langley* (CVL-27) were moving in for the kill.

Crosby had seen his share of action and would soon become a fighter ace, but today his mission was more pacific. He was piloting a photo plane, there to document the unfolding drama. As an observer, he had a ringside seat to the last major sortie of the Imperial Japanese Navy.

By this time *Yamato* was a floating, flaming wreck, her antiaircraft crews decimated by Hellcat strafing runs, her upper works torn into twisted pieces of metal by 1,000-pound bomb hits. Three bombs hit *Yamato* amidships, followed by several torpedoes. The ship began to list heavily to port, the movement becoming a pronounced roll.

Ted Crosby

As Ted Crosby watched, *Yamato*'s giant, 18-inch guns hit the water, their enormous weight probably helping the battleship capsize. Suddenly, *Yamato*'s No. 1 magazine exploded, sending up a huge coil of smoke and flame that could be seen for over 100 miles. It was a strange foretaste of the atomic mushroom clouds that would envelope Hiroshima and Nagasaki a few months later.

Watching from above, Crosby had no feeling of elation. "I was thinking of the Japanese crew," he said in a 2011 interview. "Three thousand lives lost." As a former fighter pilot and Navy man, he could appreciate what it meant to go down fighting with his comrades.

During his World War II career, Ted Crosby served aboard two Essex-class carriers, *Bunker Hill* (CV 17) and *Hornet* (CV 12). There were 24 Essex-class carriers built during the war, and they soon became the backbone of America's naval offensive in the Pacific. The efforts of pilots like Crosby not only turned defeat into victory, but also changed the course of naval warfare forever.

Roy Grinnell

A DAY

In the 1930s, battleships were considered to be the most important vessels in any fleet. Essentially huge gun platforms, they were supposed to trade salvos with the enemy until the foe was battered into submission. It was a long tradition, dating back to the age of sail and men such as Nelson and Drake. Pearl Harbor changed all that. It is ironic that the Japanese, having blazed a trail with airplanes against capital ships, turned back and followed the traditional road by commissioning vessels like *Yamato*.

By June 1942, most of Japan's strategic objectives had been realized. The U.S. Pacific

ABOVE: In a dramatic painting by Roy Grinnell, Lieutenant (j.g.) Willis Hardy, a member of Crosby's VF-17 Squadron from the carrier USS *Hornet*, flames a Japanese kamikaze plane that was on its way to attack the American naval task force off Okinawa, April 6, 1945. The Hellcat's distinctive "white checkerboard" markings show it belongs to the USS *Hornet* (CV12). OPPOSITE: Ensign John T. Crosby, shortly after being commissioned in May 1943.

Ted Crosby

The pilots of Crosby's Squadron VF-18 photographed with a U.S. Navy Grumman Hellcat on the flight deck of the USS *Bunker Hill* (CV-17).

Fleet had been neutralized, at least temporarily, and the Philippines and much of resource-rich Southeast Asia overrun. Japan seized a number of far-flung islands, establishing them as a defensive barrier to protect the home islands. Flush with success, the Japanese began believing their own propaganda that America was a weak-willed, "soft" nation.

The Battle of Midway was the high-water mark of Japanese conquest in the Pacific. Japan lost four carriers, the Americans one. Thereafter, the Japanese would be largely on the defensive. By 1943, new American carriers were being commissioned, including the *Bunker Hill* and *Hornet*. It is here that John Theodore Crosby, known to his friends as "Ted," enters the story.

Ted Crosby was born in Eureka, California, on July 30, 1920. When his family moved to the San Francisco Bay area, Ted would visit ships when the fleet came into port. But as he matured, his initial goal was to be a pilot in commercial aviation. He had an older brother who got priority, at least when it came to a college education.

"My mother could only afford to send one of us to college," Ted explained. "My brother was much better in math than I was—in high school, he was even doing great in calculus. There was a family meeting about it, and he ended up in the University of California, Berkeley."

Undaunted, Ted worked at the Golden Gate International Exposition (World's Fair) on Treasure Island and managed to save enough money to attend Marin College, just north of San Francisco. War interrupted his studies, though, and on the spur of the moment he and some friends went to Hamilton Field (later Hamilton Air Force Base) to see about joining the Army Air Forces.

Crosby passed the physical and was considered a prime candidate for flight school, but the 22-year-old started having second thoughts. "I said no, because I wanted to go Navy. I understood Navy, and felt it gave you the best training."

Without any further ado, Crosby went down to San Francisco's Embarcadero waterfront and enlisted in the U.S. Navy. It was a long and painstaking process to create a carrier pilot, and Ted recalled that the Navy was in no hurry. "When I did sign up they told me to go back to Marin College, finish the semester, and they'd send me orders. I finally was told to report to [preflight school] at St. Mary's College, Moraga, California."

These initial stages were pretty easy since "I was in good shape. At St. Mary's we were building muscles, running along railroad tracks, and taking ground school. After about a month and a half, I went to Livermore Naval Air Station." Places like Livermore were sometimes called "E bases," short for elimination bases. The failure or "wash-out" rate could be as high as 30 percent in some places.

Crosby was now an AvCad, or naval air cadet. If he passed, he would become an officer and bear the prestigious title of naval aviator trained on Stearman N2-S "Yellow Peril" biplanes before being transferred to Corpus Christi, Texas, to earn his wings.

The newly minted aviator traveled to Opa-Locka, Florida (near Miami) for carrier landing practice. After that, it was on to the freshwater carriers on the Great Lakes. "They had two old coal oilers that they had converted into small flattops," Crosby recalled. "I practiced on the USS *Wolverine*."

After his training, Crosby went on leave, then headed to San Diego four days before his liberty was to expire. Ted was anxious to be assigned to a large carrier. "That's where the action was," he explained. The assignment officer had other ideas, though, and

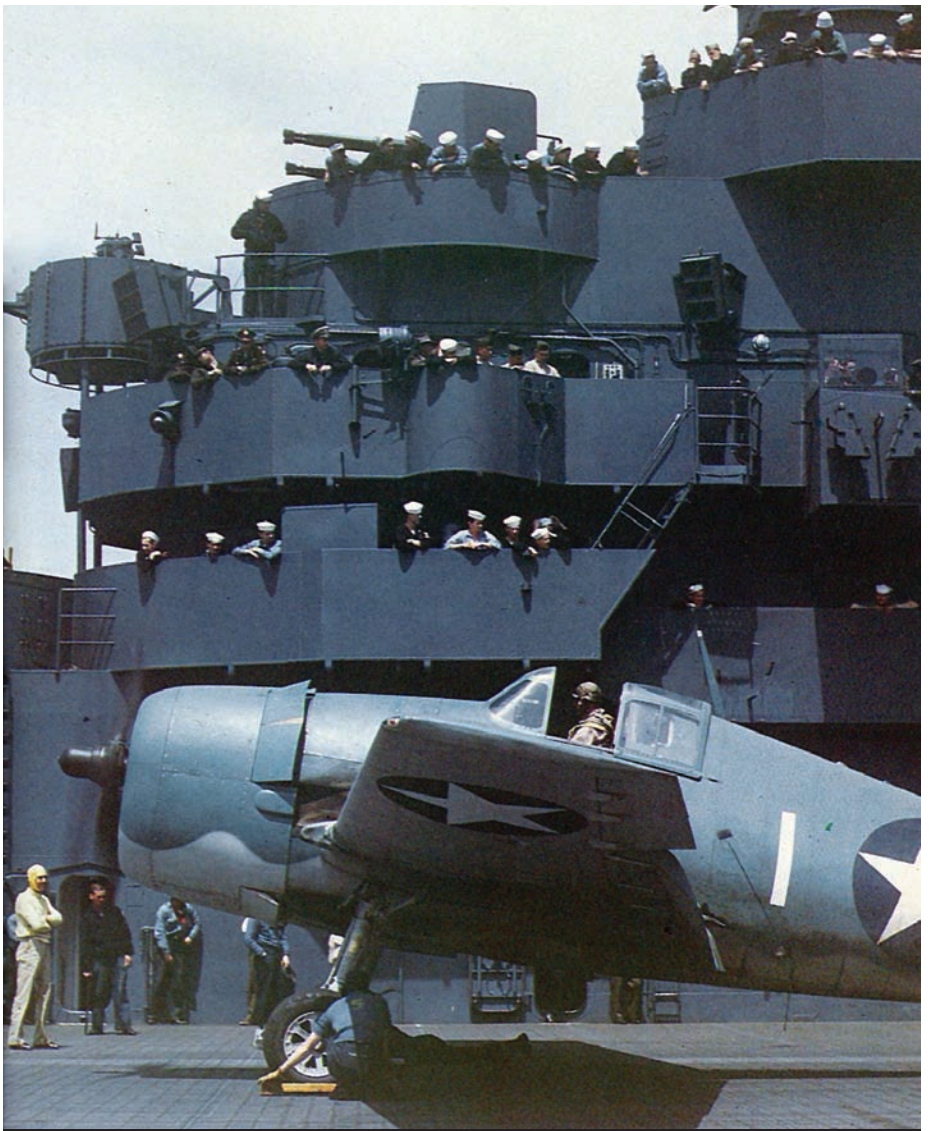
assigned Crosby to an escort carrier. About one-half the length and one-third the displacement of their bigger sisters, escort carriers were sometimes called "baby flattops" or "jeep carriers."

The assignment officer told Crosby in no uncertain terms that he was going to an escort carrier. "No," Ted replied, "I'm not. I'll be back tomorrow. I don't want a jeep carrier. If I go in, I'm going to go in on one of the big guys." It was a stubborn contest of wills—each day Crosby would return, and each day the assignment officer would offer an escort carrier.

Crosby received help from an unexpected quarter. Lieutenant James Bellows, a veteran of the Battle of Midway, was sitting at another desk and overheard the arguments. Bellows was in San Diego to form VF-18, a new fighter squadron of Hellcats. "He's coming with the VF-18," Bellows declared, whereupon the assignment officer had a fit. "He's mine!" the assignment officer insisted, stating he had other plans for Crosby.

Bellows was undeterred. "I think I've changed those plans," he said flatly. And so it was that Ted Crosby was assigned to VF-18 on the carrier *Bunker Hill*. In a sense, Crosby and *Bunker Hill* were both novices in the art of naval warfare. *Bunker Hill* was a new ship, commissioned in May 1943. By coincidence, Ted had also been commissioned that same month and year.

U.S. Navy



A crewman from the USS *Yorktown* prepares to remove the wheel chocks of a F6F-3 Hellcat, of the type flown by Crosby, prior to take-off, May 1943.

Bunker Hill reported to the Pacific in the fall of 1943. By this time Allied offensives on New Guinea were prospering, and Guadalcanal in the Solomons had been taken after a bloody six-month fight. As the Americans pushed forward in the South Pacific, the major Japanese base at Rabaul was a prime target.

Rabaul, located on the island of New Britain in the Bismarck Archipelago, featured five airfields, a harbor full of shipping, and formidable antiaircraft defenses. When U.S. Marines landed on Bougainville, well within striking distance of the Japanese base at Rabaul, it was essential that the facility be neutralized.

An autumn raid on Rabaul was a major effort involving several American carriers. It was also Ted Crosby's first taste of battle. The raid of November 11, 1943, involved dogfights on a massive scale. It was an aerial free-for-all, with the new F6F Hellcat generally gaining the upper hand over the vaunted Mitsubishi A6M Zero or "Zeke."

One incident stuck in Ted's mind after the passage of more than 65 years. As they flew over Rabaul, greenhorn Ted stuck close behind his division leader, Lieutenant Bellows. Suddenly, there was a blast of gunfire and Crosby was shocked to see the blazing fuselage of a Zero streak by just overhead, its fiery trail marked by an arc of dark smoke.

Bellows had seen the Zero and shot it down before Crosby was even aware of its presence. "At that moment," Ted confessed, "I wondered if I could do this. But later, back at the *Bunker Hill*, Jim [Bellows] told me that I was following him too closely; I should drop back a bit, so I could better be able to look around for myself. I followed that advice."

On November 26, 1943, Ted got his first kill—a piece of a Mitsubishi G4M Betty bomber. Bellows was leading his division—which included Ted—back to the

Bunker Hill after a routine CAP (combat air patrol) when the carrier radioed them in flight. Ted said, " The CIC [Combat Information Center] called us and said, 'Can you take another assignment?' Jim Bellows said, 'Yes, but remember—we only have between 20 minutes to a half hour of fuel left.' The CIC guys said, 'OK. Here's the heading....'"

It seems that there were some Japanese bombers in the area, as Ted put it, "snooping around." Bellows and his four Hellcat pilots finally caught up with a Betty, probably originating from Rabaul. The Betty was a twin-engine bomber, effective but very vulnerable due to its lack of armor and self-sealing gas tanks. "The tail gunner was giving us a fit," Ted recalled, "so I felt he had to go."

A steady stream of .50-caliber slugs sprayed from Ted's six machine guns peppered and shattered the Betty's tail and rear-gun position. Other Hellcats chimed in, joining Crosby's symphony of destruction until the stricken bomber crashed. When he got back to *Bunker Hill,* he claimed the Betty, but it was determined that the other pilots had a share in its downing. As a result, Crosby's official score stood at one-quarter of a Japanese bomber.

There was a harrowing postscript to the Betty episode. "We were running low on fuel," Crosby remembered, "and it was getting dark. When a ship goes by, it can leave a kind of fluorescent wake behind it. We detected just such a wake, probably a carrier. So, it was simply a matter of 'Which way did he go?'"

It turned out the ship in question was *Belleau Wood* (CVL 24), a light carrier. "Since it was getting dark, the last thing they wanted to do was to turn on the ship's lights. They did turn on a row of red lights in the center of the deck, so we could see something as we landed. But, you see, none of us had been trained for night landings, so this was definitely something different!

"I went in first, because I had used my fuel injector to get an extra push to get that Betty. In fact, I thought that I had less fuel than the other guys in the flight. Yet, when one of the other guys landed, his plane died on the spot—no more gas!"

U.S. Navy

A carrier's flight-deck crew watches carefully as an officer guides a Hellcat toward the elevator, which is being raised into position, November 1943. Each plane was assigned a captain who was responsible for staying with that particular plane. Pilots, however, did not fly the same plane.

Ted brought his Hellcat in without incident.

As the months passed, Crosby and his squadron honed their skills. VF-18 and its torpedo bomber and dive bomber counterparts raided Japanese strongpoints and provided ground support for Marines and soldiers landing on fortified islands. Notable raids included Truk in the Carolines, the Marianas, and Kavieng. Ted said these raids followed the same pattern. "We did most of these island raids early in the morning. We'd hit them at sunrise, so it would be a while before we'd encounter any flak. Once we rousted them out, of course we'd get antiaircraft fire. Sometimes you could even see Japanese troops running to their battle stations.

"When they started their antiaircraft fire, we fighters would be trying to protect our dive bombers and torpedo bombers. That meant strafing to knock the antiaircraft batteries out—and that we could do. You have no idea what six .50-caliber machine guns can do. In fact, they can tear up anything in their path."

In dogfights and strafing runs, Ted had only one rule: "Don't be in any one spot for more than 10 seconds! When I looked in my rear view mirror, I'd often see flak bursts where my plane had just been."

Crosby remembered the plane captains with particular affection. A plane captain is not to be confused with a mechanic. "A plane captain," Crosby explained, "was required

to stay with a particular airplane, tie it down when they moved it to a new position, etc. Each plane had a captain. If they moved a plane, a captain would untie it [from the deck], take all the cables and tie-downs with him, and secure the aircraft again. But when it would be raining like the devil, you might see the plane captain in the cockpit, canopy closed, sleeping!

"They were good young people," he recalled with a smile, "and you got to know them each time you saw them. Every time you'd mount a Hellcat you'd greet them just like meeting them on the street—'How ya doing? Got any problems?' And sometimes you'd find a kid who had a real family problem, and maybe you'd write a note to his parents telling them what a great job he was doing. I did that a couple of times."

Crosby once had a major problem with a particular Hellcat. "Whenever we'd have a break in flight operations," he remembered, "I would get with the plane captain and ask him what problems we were having with No. 14; this plane had an oil leak in the cooler system. No matter what you did, you'd come back with oil all over the belly. He and I spent a good deal of time trying to find the oil leak on that thing!"

The discussion of Hellcat No. 14 brought up another revelation: carrier pilots did not have their own "personal" planes. Crosby might have flown No. 14 several times, but it was strictly the luck of the draw. It was not his "personal" plane, nor did he have his name and/or kills painted on the fuselage. Land-based Army Air Force pilots could and did fly the same planes consistently, but not Navy aviators.

The topic came up when Ted discussed a typical daily routine: "Each squadron had its own ready room. The torpedo planes and dive bombers all had a ready room of their own. You'd find storage for your May West life jacket and other gear, and hangers on the wall for your flight suits. You'd go to the ready room to get briefings on what was going to happen that day.

"There was also a blackboard where your plane assignment would be chalked. Of course, you had your own group, and you went to your plane as part of that group, but you had no idea of what the flight deck looked like that day, or what plane you'd end up with." That was why Navy pilots almost never had their kills painted on particular planes; there was no guarantee that they would get the same plane again. According to Ted, it seems that photos of Navy aces with their kills emblazoned on the side are mostly "photo ops" and not much more.

Ted Crosby had high praise for the Grumman Hellcat, particularly the F6F-5, which was an improvement over the earlier F6F-3 version. "Excellent plane!" Crosby enthused. "For example, on the F6F-5 there were self-starters to start the engine. I was just a new, young kid, but I knew once we had the F6F, we had it made! It was a great airplane from the start, thought it did have flaws. Those flaws were corrected."

An earlier carrier plane, the Grumman F4F Wildcat, was found to be outclassed by the Japanese Zero. For one thing, the Zero was faster and could outclimb the Wildcat. Zeros would climb steeply, hoping that inexperienced Wildcat pilots would follow in pursuit. Usually they did, only to have their engines stall out. Powerless and in a corkscrew dive, the Wildcats would be easily picked off by the enemy.

But the Hellcats had a supercharger that enabled the fighter to climb sharply with ease. Ted noted that many Zero pilots discovered that the Hellcat was not a Wildcat—usually the last lesson they ever learned.

The Navy also used Chance Vought F4U Corsairs, the iconic gull-wing fighters that many associate with the Marines. The early Corsairs had teething problems, and it was thought that the airplane's hose nose configuration made it less than ideal for carrier landings.

The Corsairs could land on flight decks well enough, but the main problem was logistics. It would be hard to supply single squadrons of Corsairs when most carrier planes were Hellcats or Wildcats.

U.S. Navy

A pair of Hellcats prowls the sky. The Hellcat was the aircraft Crosby flew the day he downed five enemy planes.

"When I first got on the *Bunker Hill*," Crosby remembered, "there was a squadron of Corsairs aboard. But they were transferred to Espiritu Santo, an island in the Solomons. The pilots were pretty disgusted."

The Corsair squadron Ted referred to was VF-17, nicknamed the "Jolly Rogers." The Corsairs had a brief reunion on *Bunker Hill* when they came down for refueling. "Those guys looked pretty disheveled," Ted said. "Kind of dirty, with beards…." They managed to get some

U.S. Navy

The USS *Hornet*, home to Crosby's next squadron, VF-17, as shown in September 1944. After the first carrier *Hornet* (CV-8) was sunk in October 1942, a second flattop was named *Hornet* (CV-12) to carry on the heritage. BELOW LEFT: A bomb-laden kamikaze, scourge of the U.S. Navy, dives toward an American carrier. Crosby learned to keep his distance when firing on a kamikaze to avoid being caught in the explosion from the kamikaze's load of TNT. BELOW RIGHT: Ted Crosby today. This picture was taken on the *Hornet* (CV 12), which is a museum ship docked at Alameda, California.

National Archives

Ted Crosby

good Navy chow before taking off again.

By the end of 1944 and early 1945, it was clear that Japan was on its last legs. The Battle of the Philippine Sea in June 1944 and the Battle of Leye Gulf in October virtually destroyed what was left of Japanese naval aviation. Even earlier, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto's ill-advised I-GO offensive in the Solomons managed to decimate the cream of Japan's trained pilots, with no real advantage gained.

In January 1945, Ted joined a newly reformed VF-17 aboard the USS *Hornet*. The new VF-17 appropriated the old formation's skull and crossbones logo, but this time the men would be exclusively flying Hellcats, not Corsairs. The commander of the new VF-17 was Lt. Cmdr. Marshall U. "Marsh" Beebe.

By this time American forces were well within striking distance of the Japanese home islands, and preparations were underway to take Okinawa, only 350 miles from Kyushu, the southernmost Japanese home island. For their part, the Japanese were preparing a warm welcome with Ten-Ichigo, a concerted kamikaze effort. Hundreds of young pilots, often with minimal training, were going to deliberately crash themselves into American warships.

There were still a few trained Japanese pilots around, at least enough to make life uncomfortable. At one point, *Hornet* found itself under attack by Japanese dive bombers.

"There were Japanese dive bombers coming in on us," Crosby remembered, "and our antiaircraft wasn't getting them. We pilots wanted to take off because we were much more effective than antiaircraft; when antiaircraft hit something, they were lucky."

Crosby and other Hellcat pilots raced to their planes, but after he scrambled into the cockpit Crosby found he couldn't get the engine started. "It was in an older model, a Hellcat F6F-3," he explained, adding, "I was blocking Billy Watts [Lt. (j.g.) Charles Watts], who was right behind me in a F6F-5. The deck people moved me out of the way onto elevator No. 2, which was on the port side of the ship.

"When they got me out of the way, they launched Billy by catapult. I have to congratulate him. I don't know if I could have been as sharp as he was. He launched and knocked a Japanese dive bomber right out of the sky right out of the catapult! Just moments after Billy launched, a bomb was coming right for us. The captain ordered a hard starboard turn to avoid it."

The *Hornet* executed a violent turn, so steep that the flight deck tilted to one side. It was even possible that Ted and his Hellcat, perched precariously over the water on No. 2 hangar, might have been tossed overboard. "God bless my plane captain," Ted declared. "He had already secured my plane with a couple of cable anchors and tie downs. But I got sopping wet as I climbed out of the cockpit. It was from a waterspout created by a bomb that hit right next to us."

On April 16, 1945, Ted Crosby became an ace in a day, shooting down five Japanese planes on a single mission. The Marines had landed on Okinawa on April 1 and, as time

went on, the battle for the island intensified. Swarms of kamikazes flew out of Kyushu on suicide missions, crashing into any Allied ship they could find in the area. Ted and his fellow aviators called them "kamikrazies." They seemed to conform to the wartime stereotype of fanatics who would rather commit suicide than surrender.

In truth, a cultural gulf that was wider than the Pacific they fought over separated the Americans from the Japanese. Fed on ultra-nationalistic propaganda that glorified the Bushido Code and Samurai spirit, the impressionable young Japanese pilots did not think of themselves as committing suicide. Suicide per se might be dishonorable, but the kamikaze felt he was giving his life to protect the homeland. It was a moot point, and a tragic loss of life, for by 1945 such sacrifices were in vain.

Crosby began April 16 on a target combat air patrol with Lt. Cmdr. Beebe. Crosby's division (four Hellcats) was led by Lieutenant Milliard "Fuzz" Wooley; Ensigns J. Garrett and W.L. Osborn completed the quartet. As VF-17's war diary put it, "Wooley's division 'tallyhoed' [engaged] 12 Jacks and Zekes at 24,000 feet and started working them over."

Actually, there were two groups of Japanese planes, a dozen or so at around 24,000 feet and a second group that was flying about 9,000 feet lower. Their main target was a destroyer, possibly a Fletcher-class vessel, that was cruising north of Okinawa. Ted could not recall the name of the ship, but its call sign was "Whiskey Base."

The fighter director aboard the destroyer was happy to see Hellcats above him but dismayed when it appeared that they were leaving. "The fighter director said, 'I see what you guys are doing—don't leave us!' Wooley replied, 'Don't worry. We'll be back. We want to meet these guys halfway before they can get to you!'"

In the process, Wooley and Crosby became separated from the other pilots. Squadron Commander Beebe called them, asking for their position. Crosby said, "Fuzz" replied, 'Never mind, skipper, we got them [the Japanese] cornered!'"

"It was a mixed group," continued Crosby, "of some trained pilots escorting some kamikazes."

The first plane Crosby encountered was a Mitsubishi J2M "Jack" fighter that was coming head on. Crosby and his adversary were seemingly on a collision course, like two medieval knights jousting in a tournament.

"On the right-hand side of the cockpit there's a service counter that controls the Hellcat's six machine guns," Crosby explained. "There were levers that permitted us to control the guns—fire two at a time, four at a time, and so on. When you first enter a fight, you have all six going at the same time.

"Well, I met that Japanese plane head on with my six .50-caliber guns, and the impact of the bullets blew him apart. Part of his engine and propeller, with the prop still turning, flew right over my head. I picked out another [Japanese plane], executed a turn, and went right after him."

The second was a Zeke, a kamikaze, not a fighter, so Ted proceeded with caution. "We all realized you had to watch out what you did because the kamikazes were loaded with TNT to do us maximum damage. When you hit one, they would really explode! Once they exploded, you'd find yourself flying through lots of garbage and debris."

After he downed the Zeke, Crosby attempted to find his division leader only to notice tracer bullets zipping past his Hellcat. Ironically, Ted had found his leader, but not in the way he wanted! The bullets were from Wooley who, in the excitement, had mistaken Crosby for the enemy. Realizing his error, Wooley sheepishly radioed Ted, "Did I get you, Ted?"

"Noooo…." Ted replied, "but let's settle down and get more of these guys!"

Wooley readily complied, going after another Japanese plane, but found he was out of ammunition. Ironically, his last few bursts had been expended when he mistakenly fired on Ted. Wooley dove down, making himself a decoy by luring enemy planes into Crosby's guns. The ruse was successful, enabling Ted to down two more Japanese planes.

They decided to call it a day, but as they started back to the carrier Crosby spotted kamikaze heading toward the same destroyer they had helped protect earlier. Ted gave chase, tattooing the Japanese plane with a spray of .50-caliber lead. He broke off his attack because they were nearing the destroyer, and he knew that the ship's radar could not distinguish friend from foe.

Sure enough, the destroyer opened fire, and the kamikaze, already disabled by Ted's guns, angled down and crashed onto a nearby island. Thus, Ted Crosby became an ace in day, credited with three Jacks, a Zeke, and a Val dive bomber. His skill and valor that day won him the coveted Navy Cross.

Ted says he did not feel too good about downing those kamikazes at first. He realized that most of the suicide pilots had little training and were for the most part sitting ducks to experienced Navy airmen. However, Ted felt better "when I was told the extent of the damage they did on ships, and by shooting them down I was saving American lives."

Even late in the war the skies over Japan could be decidedly dangerous. Crosby participated in the raid on Kure, a major Japanese naval base near Hiroshima, and several surrounding airfields. H ornet's war diary states that on March 19, 1945, its Hellcats encountered a large formation of Georges while flying over the northwestern coast of Shikoku en route to Kure.

"George" is the Allied name for the Kawanishi N1K2-J Shiden-kai fighter, a plane many considered superior to the Zero—and equal to the Hellcat. Captain Minoru Genda of Pearl Harbor fame swore by them and urged that Japan build up squadrons of Georges instead of squandering lives in kamikaze attacks.

The H ornet diary states that though the Hellcats managed to splash 20 Japanese planes, six Hellcats were lost. "Yes,"

Continued on page 96

BY MASON B. WEBB

IN HONORED

THE GRIM BUT NECESSARY TASK OF CARING FOR THE WAR DEAD WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE ARMY'S GRAVES REGISTRATION UNITS.

The very nature of war means that some participants will be killed and others will be wounded. While battlefield medics and the surgical teams who care for the wounded have been hailed as unsung heroes, and books and articles have been written about them, very little has been said about the men of the U.S. Army Quartermaster Branch's Graves Registration units.

Since the dawn of warfare, the problem of what to do with dead bodies littering a battlefield has been an uncomfortable question for commanders. While it is unpleasant to think about violent death and the decomposition process, it is a reality that must be faced by all who go to war—and their families.

Ancient armies simply stripped the dead of their armor and weapons and allowed the natural processes to reclaim the physical remains; graves and tombs were, for the most part, reserved for kings, emperors, generals, and the wealthy nobility. As the common ancient soldier usually carried no means of identification, burial, if there was burial, was in a shallow, common mass grave. At other times, bodies might be piled up and a funeral pyre lit.

Accounts have been written by soldiers at Waterloo, Gettysburg, and the Somme describing the unforgettable stench of hundreds of decomposing corpses on the battlefield; the liberators of Nazi concentration camps, too, have vividly written about the overwhelming, permeating, sickly-sweet stench of mass death, so disposing of the dead has become a priority.

As the centuries passed, what to do with the remains of dead soldiers became more formalized. For those killed on foreign battlefields, a more-or-less swift burial was the norm; bringing the dead home for burial, a process that could take weeks before the advent of airplanes, was not an option.

Also, before the introduction of M1940 identification tags, the so-called "dog tags" of World War II, and the more recent science of DNA, being able to identify a particular dead soldier was a haphazard affair. Before going into battle, Civil War soldiers sometimes wrote their names and the names of their next of kin on a scrap of paper that they put in a pocket or pinned to their uniforms.

In his book, *Soldier Dead: How We Recover, Identify, Bury, and Honor Our Military Fallen*, author Michael Sledge writes, "Only those closest to the dead and to the combat situation will make the choice to risk bringing back the bodies of the dead, as it is an intensely personal decision."

For the American military, the past century has put more emphasis on retrieving the bodies of the fallen, even when retrieving the fallen puts others at risk. And who can forget the scene in *The Longest Day,* when John Wayne, playing battalion commander Lt. Col. Ben Vandervoort, looks up at his dead paratroopers hanging from trees at Ste. Mere Eglise and orders, "Down! Get them down!"

During World War II, Graves Registration Service (GRS) teams were deployed to land shortly after the first wave of amphibious troops hit the beaches to remove the dead from view, as it was felt that subsequent reinforcements, for morale purposes, should be spared the sight of dead comrades. Except for perhaps a few soldiers who had previously been employed in a morgue or funeral home, the handling of corpses, especially of those who had died a bloody and violent death, was a new and unpleas-

"Died for France" marks the grave of an American soldier killed during the invasion of Normandy.

GLORY

ant assignment for GRS troops.

During the Normandy invasion, Sergeant Elbert E. Legg, a member of the 4th Platoon, 603rd Quartermaster Graves Registration Company, attached to the U.S. VII Corps, volunteered to arrive in one of the 82nd Airborne Division gliders at Landing Zone "W" on D-Day to quickly establish a Graves Registration collection point because, as he said, "The schedule called for the Graves Registration unit and its vehicles to arrive on the beach about D+3. This would be too long for mass casualties to go unprocessed on the battlefield. Estimates of battle dead for establishing the beachhead ran as high as 10,000 American soldiers."

After coming in by glider on the afternoon of June 6, 1944, Legg set up a temporary cemetery in a pasture bordered by hedgerows. He recalled that the first temporary cemetery was established near the village of Blosville, about three miles south of Ste. Mere Eglise, "an area with crashed gliders strewn everywhere and hundreds of parachutes hanging from hedges, trees, and houses." The Blosville Cemetery was one of six American cemeteries established in a radius of about 20 miles.

At the outset, Legg noted, the Blosville Cemetery was intended to be temporary and primarily serve the 82nd Airborne Division. Shortly thereafter, jeeps began arriving with dead soldiers; the drivers stood back, not wanting to become involved. Legg, too, recalled his initial squeamishness: "For the first time in my life, I touched a dead man. I grabbed the leg of one of the bodies and it rolled onto the ground. As I struggled, the drivers gave in and assisted me with the remainder of the bodies. There were now 14 dead lying in a row and more loaded vehicles were driving into the field."

A Lieutenant Fraim, the Graves Registration officer for the 82nd, introduced himself to Legg and told him to establish a temporary cemetery in the area while he went into Blosville to draft volunteer civilian labor to dig the graves. Legg said, "When asked how he would pay the workers, he displayed a musette bag full of invasion French francs intended for that purpose."

Legg returned to the pasture and stuck

National Archives

The bodies of eight glider infantrymen are covered by a shroud of parachute silk after their Horsa glider crashed and flipped in a Normandy field. OPPOSTIE: Some of the many dead from the fighting during the first days of the Normandy landings, both American and German, await burial.

his heel in the ground. "This would be the upper left corner of the first grave. I found an empty K-ration carton and split it into wooden stakes. I paced off the graves in rows of 20 and marked them with the stakes. I had no transit, tape measure, shovels, picks, or any other equipment needed to establish a properly laid out cemetery. I also lacked burial bags [mattress covers], grave registration forms, and personal effects bags. The situation rapidly exceeded what had originally been planned for the one-man Graves Registration unit, and this was still the first day.

"Lieutenant Fraim returned and said he had arranged for about 35 Frenchmen to start digging graves the next morning. By this time about 50 bodies awaited burial. I found an abandoned foxhole in the middle of an orchard and set up housekeeping. Sleep came easily as the fatigue of the day's events had begun to take its toll."

The next morning Legg saw a column of Frenchmen coming his way down the road, "carrying a mixture of picks and shovels and lunch pails. All the men were very old or crippled in some way. It took little time to assign them to digging graves. There was little conversation since I spoke no French and they spoke no English. The long row of bodies and marking stakes made it apparent what was to be done." All 50 bodies were buried that day, with more arriving all the time.

"About 1600 hours on D+1, Lieutenant Fraim came by to inform me that I should stop work and move with the other troops located around Les Forges crossroads to a safer location. The Frenchmen were paid and instructed to return when they again saw activity around the cemetery. All graves were closed and a military chaplain came to conduct an all-faith burial service. I ... headed for a group of vehicles forming near the crossroads."

The next day Legg returned to the cemetery near Blosville where he found the French labor detail waiting to be told what to do. He said, "During the previous night, a sharp firefight had taken place around the crossroads and apple orchard area. Battle debris was everywhere, including German helmets, weapons, and gas masks. The cemetery area had not been disturbed. This was D+2 and the bodies were piling up, including about 25 enemy dead. Lieutenant Fraim arrived in mid-afternoon and said he would look for more laborers for the next day. He indicated he would also check to see if he could get German prisoners-of-war to assist with the digging.

"A few more bodies were interred on D+2, and several more rows of graves were marked off. The laborers were encouraged to return early the next day and to bring their friends. Before they left, I had them dig a slit trench near the hedgerow at the corner of the cemetery. This was covered by a tent shelter-half and would serve as my home for Graves Registration activities during the coming days."

Over the course of the next week, Legg was extremely busy. By D+3, he said, "Bodies above ground now numbered in the hundreds, with about half being German. About 70 Frenchmen arrived and dug over a hundred graves. I was pressed to do even rudimentary processing of the bodies."

At the Blosville Cemetery, a Quartermaster Service Platoon with vehicles, pick axes, and shovels arrived. "About 150 German prisoners of war also arrived and were assigned digging duties," Legg said. "Activity was picking up. The big limitation was processing bodies to insure proper identification and security of personal effects. A second plot of 200 gravesites was marked off to provide work space for all the diggers. French laborers were now handling and moving all bodies.

"This level of activity continued until D+7 when a portion of my unit, the 4th Platoon, 603rd Quartermaster Graves Registration Company, arrived and took over the operation of the cemetery. They found much of the work had to be done over, including relocation of all bodies. About 350 Americans and 100 Germans were underground by this time. Several hundred Germans awaited burial, but the backlog of American dead was less than 100."

"Bodies above ground now numbered in the hundreds, with half being German. About 70 Frenchmen arrived and dug over a hundred graves. I was pressed to do even rudimentary processing of the bodies."

Legg noted that weapons, ammunition, and equipment that had once belonged to the deceased were piling up at the cemetery. "Most bodies arrived fully clothed and with web gear," he recalled. "Some had gas masks and small-arms weapons, and nearly all had some sort of ammunition and rations. All usable government equipment was taken from the bodies. Initially, all government-issue equipment was thrown into a big pile and made available to anyone who wanted it. When the 4th Platoon arrived to take over the cemetery, personnel were assigned to sort the equipment and secure the ammunition. The French laborers watched longingly as most American bodies were buried with their jump boots. Later they were allowed to take the heavy leather boots from some of the German dead."

Bettmann/CORBIS

By the time Operation Cobra, the St. Lô breakout, took place and Allied forces moved east into central France, this cemetery contained over 6,000 Allied graves. They were later disinterred and reburied at the huge American Military Cemetery at Colleville-sur-Mer, atop the bluff overlooking Omaha Beach. Today a small monument at the Les Forges crossroads marks the location of the Blosville Cemetery.

As procedures for collecting the combat dead evolved, it became the responsibility, whenever possible, of the frontline infantry and/or medics to retrieve their fallen comrades and evacuate them through battalion and regimental areas to the division collection point, where GRS men were standing by for the next step in the processing operation; in some cases, it was GRS personnel who were also tasked with the retrieval.

Retrieving battlefield remains proved to be extremely problematic in some theaters of operation. A Quartermaster Branch report noted that problems of Graves Registration services in the Pacific area were more complex than in Europe due to the extended area over which fighting took place. "In New Guinea, for example," the report said, "consolidation of cemeteries has become necessary, due to the fact that group burials took place at widely scattered points and temporary battlefield cemeteries were established close to the actual combat area. Isolated graves were marked with improvised crosses fifteen feet high in order to permit future identification.

"The nature of the country in New Guinea, however, has proven an obstacle to search teams. Isolated graves are sometimes located far in the mountainous interior, and overland transportation, confined to native trails, is slow and difficult. Some New Guinea natives refuse to disinter bodies, and this means that at times the actual digging must be done by limited Graves Registration personnel. The task of locating isolated graves is sometimes complicated by the rapid growth of vegetation, the tall kunsi grass in some areas, and the dense jungle undergrowth in others.

"Confronting Graves Registration Service units in New Guinea is also the ardu-

ous task of recovering bodies from air crashes. Expeditions have been sent out from all bases to locate crashed aircraft and transport the bodies back for burial in military cemeteries. These expeditions into the densely forested, mountainous interior of the country sometimes cover great distances and must be accomplished on foot with the aid of native carriers. Steep native trails winding over mountain peaks are the only means of access to this country, parts of which have seldom been traversed by white men."

Even after the fighting was long concluded, challenges remained. According to the Quartermaster Corps' official history of the Graves Registration Service, in May 1945 the Army's 601st Graves Registration Company undertook its most difficult assignment when it began retracing the route of the infamous Bataan Death March to recover and identify the remains of Americans who died during that journey.

From Mariveles, a town at the southern tip of Bataan, Highway No. 3 stretches northward through the towns of Balanga, Orani, and Bacolor, and runs 120 miles north to the town of San Fernando, where the six-day march ended. All along this route lay the bodies of Americans, English, Dutch, and Filipinos, unclaimed and unidentified after nearly four years of war. With the capitulation of the Japanese on Bataan early in the spring of 1945, the Army set to work to track down all information that might lead to the identification and proper burial of the remains of Bataan's heroic defenders.

Army officials decided that the task might be simplified if an actual participant of the Death March could be found, a man who knew the route, the names of some of the victims, and the places where men had fallen. The only person still in the Philippines at that time who had participated in the march was Master Sergeant Abie Abraham, released from Cabanatuan Prison by the 6th Rangers in January. At the personal request of General Douglas MacArthur, Abraham, a 19-year Army veteran, consented to help the 601st in its efforts.

The problems faced by the Army were many. There were no official Army records of either the men on the march or the men who had died at the hands of the Japanese. Men of the 601st had no idea what three years of tropic rains and rapid growth of vegetation could do to hastily-dug graves. Also, there remained the greatest problem of all—proper identification of bodies.

Because of the lack of official information, Graves Registration officials turned to Filipino civilians for aid. The first platoon of the 601st, under the command of Lieutenant Manuel Nieves, contacted civilians in the town of Balanga, about halfway up from Mariveles, the starting point. Public officials of the town were asked to announce to the townspeople that any information they might possess would be of great value. At Sunday church services priests asked their congregations for cooperation.

A public meeting was held in the square of Balanga, and Sergeant Abraham was introduced as a survivor of the Death March. He told of seeing some of his comrades die when the weary, tortured marchers reached the town, and questioned the natives as to the disposition of the bodies.

At this point, Mario Bugay, a resident of the barrio, said that he had seen a burial take place near his home. Upon questioning it was learned that the man had not died on the march itself but had been killed a few months later while on a work detail in Balanga.

Bugay was asked how the man buried there was killed. "He was very weak at that time," Bugay replied. "The Japanese called for him but he could not move, so the guard clubbed him to death. He was buried by his comrades."

Bugay went on to describe the man as about 5 feet 11 inches tall, quite thin and pale. Another Filipino, Alfredo Pardillo, stated that he knew the name of the American soldier from an epitaph on the grave. Questioned as to how he could remember the name for such a long period of time, Pardillo answered, "I can remember the name, sir, because I have read it here during unforgettable times."

When the body was found and disinterred, evidence of a fracture on the left side of the skull was discovered, substantiating Bugay's story. It was also possible to make a dental chart to establish identity by checking against War Department files.

Unfortunately, not all recoveries were so easily accomplished. Six months after the job was started, very few bodies had been positively identified.

German prisoners of war dig graves for members of the 101st Airborne killed defending Bastogne.

National Archives

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LEFT: An American soldier and a war correspondent uncover wooden crosses that mark the graves of Americans who died in Japanese captivity after the Bataan Death March. BELOW: Officers and men of the USS *Intrepid*, killed during the Battle of Leyte Gulf, are buried at sea, November 1944.

National Archives

In all towns where meetings were held, Sergeant Abraham was introduced and did his best to search the natives' fading memories for information. At first the Filipinos were reluctant to assemble, remembering the meetings held by the Japanese at which machine guns and rifle butts exercised persuasion. American understanding and kindness soon won their confidence, however, and the numbers of volunteers gradually increased.

As the weeks went by and clues began to lead to conclusions, it became apparent that, although many individual graves and common graves amounting to small cemeteries could be found, this was merely the beginning of the process. Many more complicating factors arose. In some cases, after the passage of the Death March, entire towns were driven into the hills by the Japanese and in the void that was left no one remained to care for the dead. Swollen streams and tropical rains washed away many of the shallow, makeshift graves and, in some instances, scavenger animals had taken their toll.

Although fearing detection and retribution by the Japanese, brave Filipinos sometimes carried bodies hundreds of yards from the road, burying them in swampy land or rice paddies, and causing conflicting stories to arise. Witnesses to any event will always have slightly different versions, and in this case varying evidence on the location of graves had to be taken into account and investigated.

The Filipinos' love for trinkets became another barrier to success. From many talks with the natives along the route, it was evident that they had come into possession of many souvenirs, such as officers' bars, NCO stripes, unit insignia, and identification tags. These "souvenirs," either given to them by American soldiers or taken from the bodies of the dead, became naturally final and absolute identification factors of some of the dead.

Some of these had long ago been lost by the Filipinos, and some had become such prized possessions that their owners were reluctant to part with them. Graves Registration officials promised the natives that they would not be deprived of their souvenirs; the Army merely wished to examine them for possible evidence.

As each grave was found it was marked with a white cross, and detailed, scaled maps were made of the grave location. At one point near Bacolor, a few miles south of San Fernando, a white cross stood in a ditch by the roadway. A little farther south, about a hundred yards from the highway in a wet, marshy field, the graves of 20 unidentified dead were marked and staked off. The 601st had orders to disinter for proper burial only identified bodies so, while work toward that end continued, the dead lay in their initial resting places.

Sergeant Abraham noted, "Approaching San Fernando, casualties were naturally the heaviest. By this time, after nearly six days of marching, we were all about done for, and the Japs didn't hesitate to use their rifles and bayonets on stragglers. I was in good condition from my days as boxing coach of the 31st Division, so I managed to make it."

Disregarding all danger, and despite their many casualties during two years of battle in the Pacific, the officers and men of the 601st Graves Registration Company were a well-seasoned group with very high morale and a strong focus to find every American lost during the Death March. But even today, some 70 years later, not all of the dead have been accounted for.

According to Army Field Manual 10-63 ("Graves Registration," 1945, which superceded FM-630, 1941), one Graves Registration company was assigned to each corps having at least three divisions. Given the size of command they were expected to service, the GRS companies were, during large engagements, chronically understaffed and overworked.

Once the dead had been brought to the collection point, a medical examination was

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Marine Colonel Francis I. Fenton prays at the foot of his son's grave. Private Mike Fenton of the 1st Marine Division was killed in a Japanese counterattack on Okinawa.

made to establish the cause and certainty of death, and attempts at identification were conducted if the deceased had not otherwise been identified. In most cases the dog tags provided sufficient information but, when the tags were missing, the deceased soldier's pockets were searched for other evidence, such as a letter from home or a photo of a wife or girlfriend. In some cases, a note written by the dead soldier's superior or comrades before the body was evacuated provided the needed information. Sometimes a distinguishing feature, such as a birthmark or tattoo, or even laundry marks on clothing and serial numbers on watches, helped in the identification process.

Using these identifiers, the body would be placed in a mattress cover, blanket, or shelter-half fastened with large safety pins and buried in a temporary cemetery with a grave marker (usually a wooden cross or marker with a Star of David) bearing the identity of the deceased. At the time of burial, if a deceased soldier had both of his dog tags, one was left on the body and the other was affixed to the grave marker. Whenever possible, a chaplain of the same faith as the deceased performed the burial rites.

In too many instances, however, a soldier's identity could not be discerned (perhaps because of being too badly mangled, fragmented, burned, or intermixed with other remains) and his grave would be simply marked "Unknown." Identifying a group of victims, say, of an airplane crash or a crew incinerated inside a tank was always problematic, and every effort such as examining fingerprints and dental records was exhausted before declaring the dead "Unknown."

Once the victim was identified, the War Department was notified by the field command and a telegram was dispatched to the deceased's next of kin that began, "The Secretary of War desires me to express his deep regret that your son [husband, father, etc.] has been reported killed in action...." This was usually followed by a personal letter of condolence from the deceased's unit commander.

After the deceased's commanding officer had a chance to examine the fallen soldier's personal effects to ensure that no items that would cause embarrassment or additional heartache for the next of kin (such as pornography or letters from, or photographs of, a mistress), the effects were sealed in a personal effects bag and shipped first to the Army Effects Bureau at the Kansas City Quartermaster Depot in Kansas City, Missouri. Great care was taken to ensure that the personal effects bags were not stolen or pilfered.

There the effects were carefully inventoried, soiled garments laundered, any government-issue articles removed, foreign money (except for souvenir money) converted to U.S. currency, and any cash or negotiable checks deposited in a bank to the credit of the next of kin. The property was then packed for storage pending receipt by the Effects Bureau of a shipping order. Only after all this was done were the effects sent to the next of kin.

In addition to taking charge of bodies retrieved from the battlefield, GRS units were also involved in taking care of the remains of service personnel who died in field hospitals of combat- or non-combat-related causes.

As was often the case on the fast-moving battlefields of World War II, Americans frequently came across enemy, Allied, and civilian dead. In these cases, too, GRS personnel were given the responsibility of identifying, whenever possible, the names of the dead and placing them in well-marked temporary graves (the U.S. government compensated land owners whose fields were used as temporary cemeteries); the GRS units had, as part of their personnel roster, draftsmen whose duty it was to draw accurate maps of all the graves. Field Manual 10-63 specifies that GRS companies were "not authorized nor equipped to perform embalming."

On occasion, GRS personnel found themselves in danger from the battle still going on around them. Enemy snipers were as fond of picking off noncombatant medics and GRS men as they were shooting at fighting men. And, as FM 10-63 warns, "In the search for bodies, great care should be used to avoid booby traps and anti-personnel mines that may have been placed under bodies by enemy forces."

Personnel who died at sea, if it were not practical to return them to land, were "buried" at sea in weighted mattress covers; the latitude and longitude of the burial locations were

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A survey of the 72 autopsies and photographs of remains on file indicate that at least 20 had potentially fatal gunshot wounds to the head inflicted at very close range, in addition to wounds from automatic weapons. Most wounds showed powder burns on the skin.

An African American litter team from the 3200th Quartermaster Service Company, 24th Quartermaster Battalion carries a victim of the "Malmedy Massacre" from the snow-covered crime scene at Baugnez, Belgium.

then reported to high authority.

In 1997, Major Scott T. Glass, then commander of the Forward Support Company, U.S. Army Southern European Task Force, Lion Brigade, Vicenza, Italy, wrote a report on Graves Registration activities as they concerned the SS massacre of American POWs near Malmedy, Belgium.

As is well known, on December 17, 1944, an armored Kampfgruppe from the 1st SS Panzer Division, commanded by SS Colonel Joachim Peiper, encountered the U.S. Army's Battery B, 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion on the road at Baugnez. After a brief fight, the woefully outgunned Americans surrendered to the Germans. Under orders to show no mercy, even to prisoners of war, Peiper's men herded the Yanks into a snow-covered field and opened fire on the unarmed captives, killing 80 in a matter of minutes.

Some of the Americans played dead in the snow while a handful of others managed to escape into the nearby woods or took shelter in buildings but were soon flushed out and shot. Before World War I, the Malmedy area had been part of Germany. Local families had contributed sons to the German Army in World War II. In fact, local residents had pointed out to German troops the hiding places of some American soldiers attempting to escape the massacre. Once the killing was over, Peiper's column moved on to other objectives.

Late that afternoon, American commanders heard rumors of a massacre of POWs near Malmedy. Recovery of the remains to confirm what had happened and also to gather and preserve evidence for a possible war crimes investigation became primary goals. However, it was not until January 13, 1945, almost a month after the slaughter, that American units recaptured and secured the Baugnez area.

The U.S. First Army headquarters selected a unit for recovery operations and deployed an Inspector General (IG) team to exercise overall control of the remains collection mission. The 3060th Quartermaster Graves Registration Service Company's 4th Platoon drew the assignment of recovering, processing, and identifying the bodies.

The platoon arrived in the Malmedy area and entered the massacre site on January 13. Fortunately, snow had fallen several times since the massacre and a fresh layer covered the bodies. Temperatures had hovered below freezing, and the Germans had made no attempt to bury the bodies. These factors combined to keep the remains remarkably preserved.

The 3060th personnel conferred with the IG team, physicians, and representatives of the 291st Engineer Battalion before establishing recovery operations procedures. Operations began at the massacre field on January 14, 1945, and ended late the next day.

Throughout the operation, the recovery field remained a frontline combat area. American infantry units had dug foxholes across a corner of the field, and German artillery observers could see the activity around the crossroads area. On several occasions, incoming German artillery fire forced temporary suspension of the work. In some cases, the shelling mangled some of the remains, complicating recovery and identification.

Heavy snowfall, enemy shelling, and a lack of available eyewitnesses to the atrocity prevented the Graves Registration sol-

diers from conducting thorough, systematic searches to locate all of the widely scattered remains. Still, over the next four months, the surrounding area yielded an additional 12 sets of remains, all of which were later identified.

Location of individual remains required assistance from a platoon of the 291st Engineer Battalion, which used mine detectors to locate the bodies from the metal of gear or personal effects. When mine detectors located a set of remains, soldiers used brooms to sweep away the snow covering the bodies.

Graves Registration personnel assigned each set of remains a two-digit number. A total of 72 bodies were found at the massacre site. Two Signal Corps combat cameramen photographed the initial location and general condition of each body. After the photographs had been taken, GRS personnel removed each body to a nearby road. In addition to being frozen, most bodies had also adhered firmly to the ground and, in some cases, to other remains. After separating remains from the ground and each other, a careful search under the bodies yielded more personal effects. These effects, if any were found, accompanied the body as soldiers removed it from the field on an ordinary stretcher. Workers removed neither equipment nor personal effects from any remains during the recovery process.

Litter teams from the 3200th Quartermaster Service Company and the 291st Engineer Battalion carried the remains several hundred meters along a road leading to Malmedy to a point secure from German observation. There the teams loaded the remains onto trucks for the short trip to the processing site.

The 3060th set up processing operations in an abandoned railway building in Malmedy. The building had bomb and artillery damage to its roof and walls and had no running water and no electricity to permit night operations. However, it was the best available facility that combined space, proximity to the recovery site, security, and access to operation support. Processing operations ceased at nightfall.

Other advantages of the railway building included a tile floor for laying out the remains and the building's relative obscurity, which sheltered it from public view. The temperature inside stayed a little above freezing, and workers had to set up several coal-burning drums to provide some heat.

Upon entering the railway station, 3060th Quartermaster Company workers placed the remains on the tile floor and then moved them to tables for processing. They then removed any bulky, outer winter garments that would impede examination of body wounds. Processing included searching these garments for personal effects that might assist with identification. These personal items would prove valuable later.

The 3060th soldiers filled out emergency medical tags, collected and secured personal effects such as pens, letters, watches, and wallets. Processing included a preliminary identification. Usually a single identification tag around the neck of a deceased could establish identity sufficiently.

If processors did not find a tag around the neck of the victim and instead found a tag somewhere else such as in a pocket, a search of other personal effects was required to establish identity. Common practice for laundry marking at that time required American soldiers to mark the last four numbers of their Army service number on their clothing. This provided another way to check the identity of Malmedy victims.

Fingerprints also helped establish identity. In some cases, processors used hypodermic needles to inject water in the remains' digits to firm and fill out fingertips to allow a quality fingerprint. Almost none of the Quartermaster soldiers who were processing remains had received formal mortuary training before deploying to Europe, although a considerable number had already seen combat and the resulting human wreckage. This skill was one that had been specifically identified as critical and taught to new soldiers of the 3060th in France.

The 3060th Quartermaster Company soldiers lacked rubber gloves, aprons, and other similar gear to insulate them from thawed ice, blood, and bodily fluids. The standard-issue leather, cold weather gloves provided a poor substitute, becoming thoroughly soaked quickly. To solve this problem, workers discarded pairs of gloves after one or two sets of remains, but this created a severe demand for a scarce supply item.

Shortly after initial processing, three U.S. Army Medical Corps physicians, under close observation by the First Army IG team, performed autopsies on each set of remains. The autopsy team in nearly every instance used the two-digit number assigned in the massacre field to track and record the procedures. It was still possible that the massacre survivors could have been mistaken and the dead soldiers had died as a result of combat injuries. First Army headquarters meant to specifically determine if death had resulted from combat action or shooting after capture.

A survey of the 72 autopsies and photographs of remains on file indicate at least 20 had potentially fatal gunshot wounds to the head inflicted at very close range, in addition to wounds from automatic weapons. Most head wounds showed powder burns on the skin. An additional 20 showed evidence of small caliber gunshot wounds to the head without powder burn residue. Another 10 had fatal crushing or blunt trauma injuries, most likely from a German rifle butt. This easily confirmed suspicions that a serious atrocity actually did occur.

Only a couple of the personal effects registers or autopsy records mention the remains having identification tags. As thorough as the effects search and autopsy records are, it can be assumed that the massacred soldiers were not wearing their identification tags at the time of death. Why the soldiers in the Malmedy massacre did not have their identification tags on is not known.

This made recovery of personal effects associated with each set of remains critical to identification. Effects most valuable for identification purposes included pay books, wallets, rank insignia, small Bibles and religious tracts, rings, watches, and personal letters

found on or under the remains. Despite the almost complete absence of identification tags worn on the remains, 3060th Quartermaster soldiers identified all the remains with 100 percent certainty.

After processing, identification, and autopsy, each set of remains received a tagged mattress cover as a burial shroud. Several times daily during the recovery operation trucks evacuated the processed remains to a temporary U.S. military cemetery at Henri-Chappelle, Belgium, about 25 miles north of Malmedy, that served units operating in the area. Today it is a permanent American military cemetery holding some 8,000 remains.

After the war, beautifully landscaped, permanent American military cemeteries were established on land generously donated by the liberated countries, and all of the bodies buried in the temporary cemeteries were re-interred in the permanent sites; the temporary cemeteries were then closed.

Each cemetery has been granted use of the site in perpetuity by the host government to the United States, tax and rent free. All of the American cemeteries in foreign lands are under the jurisdiction of and maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission, headquartered in Arlington, Virginia.

Some of the next of kin, however, wanted the remains of their loved ones brought back to the United States and either re-buried in their local cemetery or in one of the many national cemeteries (such as Arlington) around the country. Beginning in 1947, a program for the repatriation of bodies was initiated and until the 1960s when it was discontinued, it was possible to have bodies returned from a foreign grave to the United States at government expense. A large number (171,000) took advantage of this offer, but 97,000 others chose to let their loved one rest among his comrades in the land for which he had fought and died.

Obviously, when dealing with dead and horribly mangled human remains, many of which may be in an advanced stage of decomposition, the mental effect on Graves Registration soldiers is certain to be great. Major Glass recognized this in his 1997 report: "Mortuary affairs soldiers, as well as the soldiers who assist with recovery operations, will definitely experience some emotional or mental discomfort because of the extremely taxing nature of these duties. This discomfort may range from mild to severe. The discomfort and its effects might not manifest themselves immediately.

"Commanders must recognize these facts and plan ways to offset them, especially if the unit will need augmentation from other units to accomplish its mortuary affairs missions. Ways to reduce mental stress include chain of command involvement and assistance from chaplains, psychologists, and social workers. This should be an essential part of peacetime preparation."

After the war, a Quartermaster report noted, "As of April 6, 1946, there were a total of 359 American military cemeteries containing the remains of 241,500 World War II dead. Estimated number of World War II service dead is 286,959 [that figure has since been raised to around 359,000, although estimates are higher still]. Of this number 246,492 have already been identified: Of the 40,467 who were unidentified as of March 31, 1946, the remains of 18,641 have been located by Graves Registration units. The remaining 21,826 were not reported located up to that time. Of those 18,641 remains which have been located, 10,986 now repose in military cemeteries and 7,655 in isolated graves."

In addition to eight World War I American cemeteries in Europe, there are also 12 in Europe from World War II (France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Holland, and Italy), one in England, one in North Africa (Tunisia), and one in the Philippines. Except for those remains that may, in the future be found on the battlefields, no further burials may be made in the cemeteries under the American Battle Monuments Commission's jurisdiction. On occasion, remains are found (even today there are groups of local volunteers digging in the battlefields of Europe in hopes of finding and repatriating war dead) and are respectfully buried in the nearest military cemetery to where the body was located, unless the family requests otherwise.

At some of the cemeteries, many of the local people have lovingly adopted the grave of an American soldier who is unknown to them but has become their "adopted son," and regularly place fresh flowers at the grave as a way of quietly thanking him for his sacrifice.

Although the name of the Army Graves Registration Service has been changed to Mortuary Affairs, the mission remains the same: to spare no effort in the recovery, identification, return, and burial of deceased personnel, and to assist families during an emotionally difficult time of bereavement. □

National Archives

The Normandy American Cemetary and Memorial at Omaha Beach, near Colleville-sur-mer, France.

Süddeustcher Zeitung/The Image Works

Although meek in appearance, SS chief Heinrich Himmler was the evil force behind many of the Third Reich's crimes against humanity. Here in this 1939 photo he is literally his Führer's right-hand man as they wait to view a parade of the Leibstandarte-SS, Hitler's personal bodyguard, in front of the Reich Chancellery on Berlin's Wilhelmsplatz.

THE RISE AND FALL OF HEINRICH HIMMLER

FROM HITLER LOYALIST TO ANTI-HITLER PLOTTER, THE WILY NAZI SS CHIEF PLAYED A DOUBLE GAME IN 1945—JUST AS HE ALWAYS HAD. BY BLAINE TAYLOR

ON THE EVENING OF May 23, 1945, in the northern German state of Schleswig-Holstein, five men in a British Army jeep were driving down a dark road. Four were guards and the fifth was one of the most important Nazi prisoners of war to have been found in the collapsed Third Reich.

The commander of the expedition, a colonel, thought that they were lost, but when he turned to say so, the prisoner set him straight: "You are on the road to Lüneberg."

The prisoner in question was none other than Heinrich Himmler, SS number 168, head of Germany's dreaded SS and Secret State Police, and his capture, almost accidental, was of great importance to the victorious Allies. Here was the highest ranking Nazi taken alive since the arrest of Hermann Göring on May 9, 1945. What secrets about the Hitler regime might he reveal?

Himmler was the third of four Reichsführer-SS (RFSS or National Leader of the SS). The first had been Josef Berchtold and the second Erhard Heiden. After Heiden resigned, Himmler assumed the post on January 6, 1929. He was already a close supporter of Hitler, having taken part in Hitler's abortive 1923 Beer Hall Putsch that had tried to overthrow the Bavarian government.

Although meek- and frail-looking—certainly nothing like the tall, blond, broad-shouldered, and athletic Aryans pictured on the SS and Wehrmacht recruiting posters—Himmler had an instinct for cunning and self-survival that few others possessed.

National Archives

When Hitler appointed Himmler head of the SS, the organization was nothing more than a small, elite bodyguard for the Führer within Ernst Röhm's much larger Sturmabteilung, or SA, and numbering only 280 men. Through his organizational skills, Himmler had, by 1933, built up the SS to 52,000 men. The uniform had changed, too. Instead of the brown shirts that marked the SA, Himmler went for an all-black costume for his SS (although, at one time, the SS wore brown shirts with black trousers and black kepis). It was Himmler who, along with Göring, persuaded Hitler that Röhm must be eliminated and the brawling SA brought to heel if the Nazi Party were ever to gain the support of the German Army generals and industrialists.

Süddeustcher Zeitung/The Image Works

Heinrich Himmler, holding the imperial war flag, stands with other storm troopers at a Munich barricade during the Nazis' abortive November 9, 1923, attempt to overthrow the Bavarian government.

Himmler had grandiose dreams for his SS. After his first visit on November 3, 1933, he had the SS lease the 17th-century Wewelsburg Castle near Paderborn, a structure that he envisioned being converted into an SS shrine and his official SS "Schoolhouse."

The castle was built in a triangular form of walls and towers on a pointed limestone spur that had been a Germanic stronghold at the time of the Roman invasion in AD 9. There was in Himmler's day the famed Knight's Hall and a trio of towers that were each five stories tall. The North Tower became the SS Valhalla, the fabled "Realm of the Dead." Moreover, the castle's crypt contained a dozen pedestals where it was planned that urns containing the ashes of the highest SS leaders of the Third Reich would someday rest. Himmler himself, captivated with the idea of Nordic mythology, fully expected to be interred with great Nazi solemnity in the fortress vault, designed by his hand-picked architect, Hermann Bartels.

Reconstruction performed by slave laborers from a nearby concentration camp began after the SS acquired the castle in 1934, and it was the intention of Himmler to make it the core of an SS city radiating 450 kilometers in all directions.

The castle's highlight was an Arthurian-like round table for Himmler's own dozen SS "Knights" that included Reinhard Heydrich; Himmler's administrative deputy SS General Karl Wolff, who would surrender northern Italy to the Allies in 1945, thus eluding the hangman's noose; and even their sometime rival, Chief of the German Order (Regular) Police, General Kurt Daluege, who would be hanged by the Czechs as a war criminal after the war.

Himmler's private study was in the West Tower, and he also had two rooms where he stayed on his frequent visits. During the war, Himmler's personal weapons collection was hidden within its walls, and thus the legend and mysteries of Wewelsburg persist to this day for treasure hunters.

An SS museum was at the castle, too, as well as a 30,000-volume library of rare books, plus a repository of SS rings. In 1938, Himmler announced that in the future all top SS generals would take their oaths of allegiance at the Wewelsburg each spring. He planned for his 12 department heads to one day be the forerunners of a new pan-European SS State after Nazi Germany won World War II, projected for 1950 by Hitler.

The last major reconstruction project was the North Tower during 1941-1942, but all work ceased in April 1944.

Over the castle's main entrance there was a Latin inscription that read, "Many would gladly enter, but they will not succeed," and none did, until Himmler ordered SS General Heinz Macher on March 30, 1945, to destroy the Wewelsburg before the Americans arrived. Much damage was done, but the castle was not completely destroyed.

After the SS withdrawal, the local townspeople looted the castle of 40,000 bottles of wine and champagne, furniture, carpets, art objects, silver utensils, fine china, and linens. Himmler's personal, top-secret safe was found and blasted open by American GIs, but the contents were never positively identified. It was rumored that the safe contained documents relating to the slain Heydrich. The castle was then occupied by the U.S. Army and is today a tourist attraction.

Born in Munich on October 17, 1900, the son of a pedantic schoolmaster father,

National Archives

Exiting his personal Ju-52 aircraft during a tour of the Eastern Front, a smiling Himmler responds to a salute of soldiers. Behind him is his personal masseur and confidant, Dr. Felix Kersten.

Himmler, whose godfather was Prince Heinrich of Wittelsbach, started keeping a diary at age 10 and in 1914 as a teenager during World War I, he turned it into a war journal: "Aug. 23rd: The Bavarian troops were very brave in the rough battle."

Heinrich's eyesight was too poor for him to join the Imperial Navy. While his older brother Gebhard joined the reserves, Heinrich could only stay at home and play with his toy soldiers. In 1915, though, he joined the Jugendwehr (Youth Forces) for field drilling and military lectures in preparation for later joining the Bavarian Army on the Western Front.

Prince Heinrich, 32, died of wounds sustained at the Battle of Verdun, while his namesake was rejected for service by two regiments. Distraught, Heinrich joined the 11th Bavarian Infantry Regiment as an enlisted man on October 16, 1917. Meanwhile, brother Gebhard had been awarded the Iron Cross before the war came to a sudden end in November 1918, followed by a communist revolt in Munich accompanied by considerable economic and political turmoil. His dreams of a military career dashed, Heinrich then decided to study agriculture but fell ill with paratyphoid fever. The following year, recovered, he enrolled as an agricultural student at the University of Munich, where he remained until graduating in 1922.

Caught up in the unrest that was wracking his defeated country, which the socialists had turned into a republic, Himmler joined a nationalist, paramilitary organization known as the Reichskriegsflagge (Imperial War Flag), headed by veteran Ernst Röhm. At some point, Himmler had occasion to hear a young firebrand named Adolf Hitler speak. Mesmerized by Hitler's oratory and nationalistic fervor, Heinrich joined the Nazi Party in August 1923 and took part in Hitler's abortive Beer Hall Putsch that November.

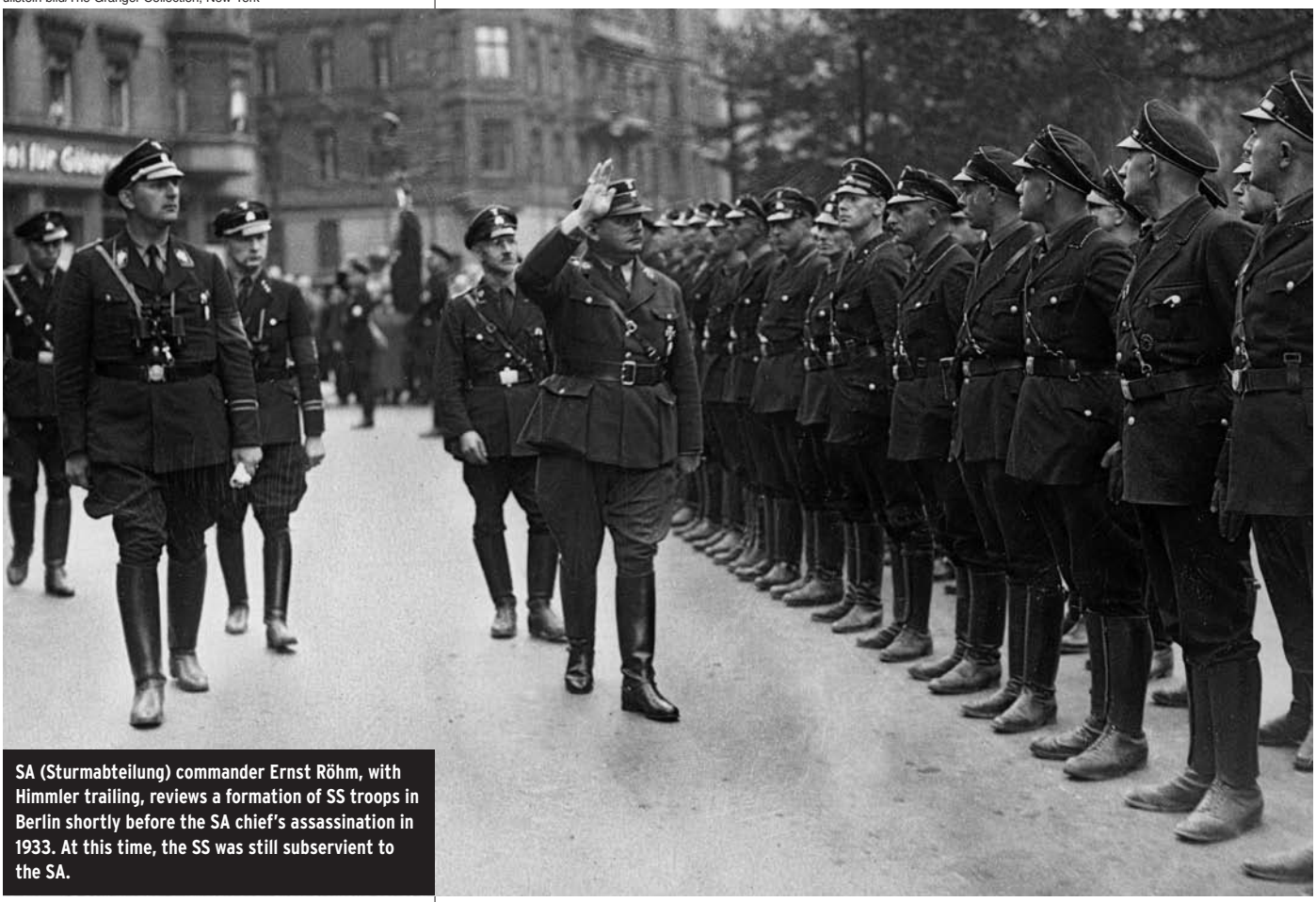
Having avoided arrest himself, Himmler threw himself into politics and began speaking at various rallies, espousing anti-government, anticapitalist, and anti-Jewish sentiments. After Hitler was released from prison in December 1924, and Röhm broke away from Hitler, Himmler threw in his lot with the Nazis and received a paid position at the party's offices in Landshut. His ambition and skill at organizational matters soon caught Hitler's eye, and Himmler was entrusted with more and more tasks. In 1927, he married Margarete Boden, a nurse seven years his senior. They had one child, a daughter named Gudrun. During the war, he also had a mistress, Hedwig Potthast, with whom he had a son and a daughter.

In 1929, when he wasn't yet 30, the shy, quiet, methodical, and organized Himmler was named Reichsführer-SS, commanding the Nazis' national force that protected Hitler and other leaders personally and broke up the meetings of the party's political opponents.

The unobtrusive Heinrich Himmler was on his way to a career unique in 20th-century history. By January 1933, when Hitler was named to the exalted office of chancellor of Germany, Himmler made the SS a haven for those elite young men who scorned the more plebeian brown-shirted SA storm troopers. By war's end, the Waffen (Armed) SS alone would number 900,000 men in 40 divisions.

Himmler's first great chance to shine in Hitler's eyes came in 1934 when the conservative German Army demanded that the chancellor rein in the unruly SA led by

ullstein bild/The Granger Collection, New York



SA (Sturmabteilung) commander Ernst Röhm, with Himmler trailing, reviews a formation of SS troops in Berlin shortly before the SA chief's assassination in 1933. At this time, the SS was still subservient to the SA.

Staff Chief Ernst Röhm. The latter's goal, allegedly, was to replace the regular army with his own men under arms and, as Himmler's immediate boss, Röhm also stifled the expansion and independence of the SS.

The wily, cunning Himmler and his major deputy, former junior naval officer Reinhard Heydrich, formed a secret political alliance with Hitler's second man, Hermann Göring, to destroy Röhm and his main SA subordinates. This was duly accomplished via Operation Kolibri (Hummingbird), which led to the murder of Röhm and dozens of his minions between June 30-July2, 1934, known variously in history as the "Blood Purge," the "Röhm Putsch," and the "Night of the Long Knives."

Following this national murder weekend, Nazi Minister of the Interior Wilhelm Frick correctly warned Hitler, "If you don't proceed at once against Himmler and his SS as you have against Röhm and his SA, all you will have done is to call in Beelzebub to drive out the devil." This prophecy came true a decade later during 1944-1945.

Himmler was rewarded for his organizational break from the humbled SA. On April 20, 1934, Göring had already turned over to the Himmler-Heydrich team his Secret State Police, the feared Gestapo. The black duo's next goal was to unite all the various German police forces under their lead, even though neither of them had any police training or experience.

They succeeded on June 18, 1936, when Hitler promoted Himmler to Chief of the German Police. At the Kremlin in August 1939, Soviet dictator Josef Stalin introduced Lavrenti Beria to German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop as, "My Himmler." Indeed, the two top cops had much in common, including being involved in their respective country's rocketry programs.

Like his American counterpart, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, Himmler was anti-communist by profession, yet it is possible to imagine Himmler accepting an NKVD police post under Stalin after World War II had it been offered. Like Dr. Josef Goebbels and Martin Bormann, Heinrich Himmler was a decidedly leftist Nazi in outlook.

The key, common wellspring behind the characters of all these men was naked power and its practical applications, however, not ideology.

On March 10, 1939, just six months before the outbreak of World War II, the high-strung, nervous Himmler underwent the first of a series of manual treatments by Finnish-born masseur Dr. Felix Kersten for his extremely painful stomach cramps. Over time, the doctor-patient relationship developed into one of confidant-mentor between the helpful doctor and his charge.

Two years later, in March 1941, the Himmler-Heydrich combine decided to build the first top-secret SS death camps in Poland, occupied by the German Army and SS during the Blitzkrieg campaign of September 1939. Here, they would attempt to systematically murder European Jews, gypsies, and Slavs by gassing.

Simultaneously, in March 1941 was launched a secret SS plan to make occupied Holland an SS state. This would be achieved by deporting the entire Dutch population to the East. As recounted in Dr. Kersten's 1947 memoirs, this was slated to begin on Hitler's 52nd birthday, April 20, 1941: "I saw this in secret documents at Himmler's headquarters on March 1, 1941 ... 43 typed sheets ... in a yellow folder ... signed by Hitler, and countersigned by Himmler ... designated as top secret.

"This transfer was to be completed within 13 months and four days ... in two installments. The Catholics of southern Holland and the Flemish population of Belgium were to be sent to the eastern states of Greater Germany. The inhabitants of the northern and eastern provinces of Holland and Belgium were to follow. After this, the inhabitants of The Hague, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, and Utrecht were to be sent eastward ... 8,200,000 ... to be moved. Trains, ships, and buses were to be used.…

"The capital of the new Holland would be Lublin [Poland]. The region to be assigned ... between the Vistula and Bug Rivers."

With the future planned for the defeat of the Soviet Union, the Lemberg region would also be given to the Dutch pioneers of the new Nazi East; the Dutch Jews would be eliminated along the way. Dutch Nazi leader Anton Mussert and his followers would be moved to the new Nazi Warthegau (region) in western Poland, with old Holland being established as Himmler's first fully SS state. The second would follow after the war in Heydrich's Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and this would entail a second Holocaust against all Slavic peoples.

SS Province Holland would be peopled by new, young SS farmers. The entire coast would be fortified against a possible Allied invasion.

Asserting that he was appalled by this plan, Dr. Kersten, who had a home at The Hague, allegedly convinced Himmler that his nerves would never stand the strain of this massive task added to all his other government portfolios. He reportedly convinced Himmler to ask Hitler to postpone the Dutch deportation until after the war, along with Heydrich's planned slaughter of the Slavs.

Remarkably, the Führer agreed, and thus the Dutch and Belgians were saved. Some authors believed that the portly Finnish masseur controlled his patient outright because he was able to alleviate his crippling stomach pains and thus gain his confidence while the stricken Himmler lay on the table during his manual healing treatments.

"TO HAVE STUCK IT OUT—AND AT THE SAME TIME, APART FROM EXCEPTIONS CAUSED BY HUMAN WEAKNESS—TO HAVE REMAINED DECENT FELLOWS, THAT IS WHAT HAS MADE US HARD! THIS A PAGE OF GLORY IN OUR HISTORY WHICH HAS NEVER BEEN WRITTEN, AND IS NEVER TO BE WRITTEN!

Yet, the fate of others was not so easily altered. On November 11, 1941, Himmler told his startled masseur, "The destruction of the Jews is being actively planned."

Simultaneously, yet another macabre plan was taking shape in Himmler's feverish mind. On July 16, 1941, even as the first Holocaust got under way in both Poland and the conquered Soviet Union, Hitler named his faithful Reichsführer-SS to establish and then police the newly occupied former Soviet Ukraine as a German colony, again to be populated by SS farmers following the deportation and murder of all its Jews. This grandiose scheme stretched far into the expected Nazi future, even to the 1960s.

On December 12, 1942, Himmler gave Dr. Kersten the Führer's personal medical files to read. Kersten, in turn, showed them to Dr. Ferdinand Sauerbruch, considered Germany's greatest surgeon, who said that he was "convinced that Hitler was out of his mind." Himmler dreamed of succeeding Hitler as SS Führer after the war.

What derailed all of this Nazi racial fantasy and empire building was the trio of Soviet Red Army victories in the Battles of Moscow, Stalingrad, and Kursk, reversing the course of the war and putting the Germans on the run. Reacting, the power-hungry Himmler convinced Hitler to appoint him to succeed his own nominal boss, Dr. Wilhelm Frick, as minister of the interior, in August 1943.

By October, Himmler's empire included almost two million SS troops and 300,000 Gestapo men, along with 30,000 concentration camp Death's Head guards.

When Himmler attempted to negotiate peace with the Allies in 1945, another bargaining chip with the Allies included the lives of the remaining Jews in those camps. He saw in Dr. Kersten a possibly useful negotiator who had contacts in Sweden, Finland, Holland, and Switzerland, where American OSS chief Allen Dulles was stationed. Indeed, SS General Karl Wolff opened his own negotiations with Dulles in 1945.

After the failed Army bomb plot of July 20, 1944, to kill the Führer in Rastenburg, East Prussia, Hitler further turned over to "the faithful Heinrich" command of the German Home or Replacement Army, for the first time placing the SS leader in charge of significant ground forces of the German Army. This was the late Ernst Röhm's 1934 goal, realized with a vengeance.

In all of his varied posts, Himmler was uniquely placed to realize that the war was lost. Still, he made a final effort to inspire the Nazi leaders to victory. He gave two speeches in October 1943, and four more in 1944, to more than 300 top German leaders. His message was clear: "This is what we have done—and are doing. We

are all involved in collective guilt. There is no turning back. There is either victory or the rope for all of us."

As it became clear that Nazi Germany was losing the war after disastrous battles on the Eastern Front, Himmler gave a top-secret speech on October 4, 1943, at Posen Castle in western Poland to an elite audience of Third Reich brass. Those present included not only party leaders, but also state ministers and industrialists, and later

National Archives

Himmler and Hitler, along with other officers, view live-fire military exercises at the Münsterlager training area, May 20, 1939.

the supreme commanding officers of the entire German armed forces. The aim of his speech was to reveal the extent of the regime's murderous activities that precluded any going back to normal modes of conduct. If Germany lost the war, they might all hang as war criminals, so the war must not be lost.

Some excerpts from Himmler's remarks that day:

"Now, I want you to listen carefully to what I have to say here in this select gathering, but never to mention it to anybody…. I refer—in this closest of circles—to a question which you all, my fellow Party members, have obviously addressed, which, however, has become for me the most difficult question of my life: the Jewish question.

"You all take it as self evident and gratifying that in your Gaus, there are no more Jews. All Germans—apart from a few exceptions—are also clear that we would not have endured the bombing, nor the burdens ... of perhaps ... the sixth year of the war, if we had this festering plague within the body of our people. The proposition, 'The Jews must be exterminated' with its few words, gentlemen, is easily spoken. For him who has to accomplish it, it is the hardest and most difficult of tasks….

"I want to talk to you quite frankly on a very grave matter. Among ourselves, it should be mentioned quite frankly, and yet we will never speak of it publicly…. I mean ... the extermination of the Jewish race…. Most of you [and here he gestured to his assembled SS generals] must know what it means when 100 corpses are lying side by side, or 500, or a thousand.

"To have stuck it out—and at the same time, apart from exceptions caused by human weakness—to have remained decent fellows, that is what has made us hard! This is a page of glory in our history which has never been written, and is never to be written…!

"We had to deal with the question: what about the women and children? I am determined in this matter to come to an absolutely clear-cut solution! I would not feel entitled merely to root out the men—well, let's call a spade a spade; for 'root out,' say 'kill,' or 'cause to be killed.' Well, I just couldn't risk merely killing the men, and allowing the children to grow up as avengers facing our sons and grandsons!

"We were forced to come to the grim decision that this people must be made to disappear from the face of the earth! To organize this assignment was our most difficult task yet, but we have tackled it, and carried it through, without—I hope, gentlemen, I may say this—without our leaders and their men suffering any damage in their minds and souls.

"The danger was considerable, for there was only a narrow path between ... their becoming either heartless ruffians unable any longer to treasure human life, or becoming soft, and suffering nervous breakdowns….

"Before the end of the year, the Jew problem will be settled once and for all! That's about all I want to say at the moment about the Jew problem. You know all about it now, and you had better keep it to yourselves! Perhaps at some later time—some very much later period—we might consider whether to tell the German people a little more about all this, but I think we had better not!

"It's us here who have shouldered the responsibility ... for action as well as for an idea…and I think we had better take this secret with us into our graves." He did.

Taking another secret tack, in November 1944 the now embattled Himmler, thinking about saving his own neck in the event Germany lost the war and wishing to change his horrific image among the Western Allies, ordered that the gassing of the Jews be halted. These orders, however, were often disobeyed by two of his fanatical Austrian SS colleagues, General Dr. Ernst Kaltebrunner (the assassinated Heydrich's ultimate successor) and Colonel Adolf Eichmann, who wanted the Holocaust to continue.

They were countered as 1945 began by the team of Kaltenbrunner's own deputy, SS General Walther Schellenberg, and the more moderate Dr. Kersten. They convinced the skittish Reichsführer-SS to initiate secret peace negotiations with the West and to surrender the death and concentration camps intact to advancing Allied troops.

Before that happened, however, on December 10, 1944, as the Western Allied armies neared the German border, Hitler granted would-be soldier Himmler his heart's dear-

Author's Collection

September 1941: Himmler and Reinhard Heydrich (second from left), the military governor of Czechoslovakia and the person who carried out many of Himmler's most diabolical schemes (such as the Holocaust), review SS guards at the Hradcany Palace in Prague. Heydrich was ambushed by Czech partisans the following May and died of his wounds.

est wish when he named him military commander of Army Group Rhine on the Upper Rhine River front. As with his prior career as policeman, Himmler's martial experience was nil aside from his few days in a Bavarian regiment in 1918.

Acting chief of the General Staff Colonel-General Heinz Guderian believed that Himmler's new post was a sly political maneuver by his chief Nazi rival for power, Hitler's secretary, Martin Bormann. If Himmler failed, his prestige would fall in Hitler's eyes, Guderian and Bormann both believed. It was also hoped that Army leader Himmler would now move the Home Army he still commanded closer to the fighting fronts both east and west.

Himmler's first attack, directed from his command Special Train Heinrich in the safety of a tunnel in Germany's Black Forest, was to retake Strasbourg from the French; the assault failed. Meanwhile, another SS army under Col. Gen. Josef "Sepp" Dietrich helped defeat the Americans in the early phase of the Battle of Bulge in the Ardennes Forest on the German-Belgian border.

As German Army General Siegfried Westphal noted, "He [Himmler] fired off every shell that was sent to him and then simply asked for more." On January 23, 1945, in the wake of both his Strasbourg debacle and the finally defeated Bulge attack, Hitler shifted Himmler yet again, this time to a third active military field command. This was as commander in chief of Army Group Vistula to defend the Nazi capital city of Berlin against the advancing Red Army from the east.

Wrote Guderian in his postwar memoirs, "He [Himmler] harbored no doubts about his own importance. He believed that he possessed powers of military judgment every bit as good as Hitler's, and needless to say, far better than those of the generals. 'You know, my dear colonel-general, I don't really believe the Russians will attack at all—it's all an enormous bluff!'"

Guderian later snorted at Himmler's alleged martial prowess, "He's never led a platoon across a river!"

In late 1944, Himmler found himself in charge of real soldiers in a desperate battle with the Red Army to stave off the Third Reich's collapse. One of his officers at Army Group Vistula, Colonel Hans-Georg Eismann, described vividly in his memoir how Army commander Himmler preferred to get his nightly sleep rather

National Archives

Himmler, accompanied by his entourage, inspects the Shirokaya Street camp in Minsk, Byelorussia, where thousands of captured Soviet soldiers were imprisoned, in August 1941. It was here that Himmler witnessed his first execution of a prisoner, an event that left him shaken.

than overly trouble himself about his new command's very real difficulties!

In the end, both Bormann and Guderian were proved right. Heinrich Himmler was simply not up to the job militarily. On February 12, 1945, there ensued a furious argument between Guderian and an irate Hitler in the latter's cavernous office at the Reich Chancellery in Berlin.

"I want General [Walter] Wenck at Army Group Vistula as chief of staff. Otherwise, there will be no guarantee that the attack will be successful," Guderian shouted to Hitler as he looked at a sheepish Himmler, adding acidly, "The man can't do it. How could he do it?" Ironically, trying to curry Himmler's favor in 1938, Guderian had predicted then that one day Himmler would, indeed, run the entire German Army.

His own judgment now called into question in front of everyone at the daily military situation conference, Hitler roared back, "The Reichsführer is man enough to lead the attack alone!" not realizing that Himmler and the colonel general had met previously to agree to let Guderian ask Hitler for Himmler's resignation because he was weighed down by too many offices.

After much shouting, Hitler at last wearily gave in: "Well, Himmler, General Wenck is going to Army Group Vistula tonight to take over as chief of staff." Turning to Guderian, Hitler smiled wanly, "Herr Colonel General, today the Army General Staff won a battle!" In March 1945, Himmler was replaced altogether as commanding officer of the army group by regular soldier Col. Gen. Gotthard Heinrici.

In the Reich Chancellery Park on March 21, 1945, General Guderian further told the stricken Himmler, "The war can no longer be won.… You must go with me to Hitler and urge him to arrange an armistice." But Himmler refused: "My dear general, it's too early for that." Guderian later asserted, "There was nothing to be done with the man—he was afraid of Hitler."

When General Heinrici arrived at his new Vistula headquarters to take over, Himmler whisked him aside for a private chat and revealed what he had not told Guderian: "Through a neutral country, I have taken the necessary steps to start negotiations

with the West! I'm telling you this in absolute confidence, you understand." Why Himmler chose an Army general he did not know to confide in no one knows. The crusty old soldier recalled, however, "Himmler was only too happy to leave. He made me want to vomit."

Oddly, just like Göring and even the jailed Rudolph Hess in Britain, Himmler saw himself as the head of a new, postwar, neo-Nazi Fourth Reich; in the case of Himmler, as leader of his own Party of National Union, replacing the Nazis. Recalled his boyhood friend and head of the German Red Cross SS Dr. Karl Gebhardt, hanged as a convicted war criminal by the Allies in 1948, "He believed what he was saying at the moment he said it, and everybody else believed it, too."

Himmler likewise veered from intimating to Dr. Kersten that Germany's atomic bomb would be ready if the war could last just a few more months (which he knew was untrue) to regretting that the Reich had not invaded neutral Sweden and Switzerland in 1940 when it had the chance. Meanwhile, the ever more radical Nazi SS peacenik General Walter Schellenberg was pressing Himmler daily to make peace, even to consider shooting or poisoning Hitler if necessary. For his part, the timorous Himmler quaked in his boots at such assertions, and his stomach pains grew worse.

Besides, the Reichsicherheitsdienst (Reich Security Service or RSD) men protecting the Führer reported to Hitler, not to Himmler, and with good reason. Hitler was taking no chances with anyone concerning his personal security, not even with "the faithful Heinrich," as he touted Himmler.

While SS General Schellenberg arranged two secret meetings with former Swiss President Jean-Marie Musy with Himmler to discuss the release of Jews, another deputy of Himmler, SS General Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Heydrich's successor as head of the Reichsicherheitshauptamt (Reich Security Main Office or RSHA), went to Hitler about it. The Führer immediately issued an order that anyone who released Jews and/or Allied POWs to the Western powers would be shot. Nevertheless, Himmler persisted, but more stealthily than before.

Auschwitz-Birkenau Archives

One of the Reichsführer-SS's duties was inspecting various facilities around the Greater Reich. Here, photographed in 1942, Himmler visits the I.G. Farben synthetic fuel and rubber plant at Monowitz-Buna (Auschwitz III), where thousands of slave laborers worked.

On April 21, 1945, the day after Hitler's 56th and last birthday, Himmler drove to Dr. Kersten's home outside Berlin for a top-secret meeting with Swedish Jew Norbert Mazur, a stand in for Hillel Storch of the World Jewish Congress in New York.

Himmler gave Mazur his rationale for the alleged Holocaust thus: "These men helped the Resistance. They fired on our troops from their ghettos, they carry diseases such as typhus. It was to stop epidemics that we sent them to the ovens, and they're threatening to hang us for this!"

Mazur was incredulous: "You cannot deny that crimes were committed against the prisoners in the concentration camps," to which Himmler conceded: "Oh, I'll grant you that there were excesses every once in awhile." They agreed on one thing: the killing would stop. But the dying continued.

There was more. A series of four equally top-secret peace meetings to end the war had also been arranged by Schellenberg for Himmler with the vice president of the Swedish Red Cross, Folke Bernadotte, Count of Wisborg, and a relative of the Swedish royal house. Thus, at the end of his career, Himmler was dealing once more with royalty.

Their first meeting took place on February 12, 1945, at the SS Hohenlychen Hospital, 75 miles north of Berlin. After the war, the count published his detailed remembrance of these negotiations with the dreaded Himmler. "When I suddenly saw [Himmler] before me in the green Waffen SS uniform without any decorations and wearing horn-rimmed spectacles, he looked a typical, unimportant official, and one would certainly have passed him in the street without noticing him.

"He had small, well-shaped, delicate hands, and they were carefully manicured.... He was, to my great surprise, extremely affable. He gave evidence of a sense of humor, tending rather to the macabre. Frequently, he introduced a joke when conversation was threatening to become awkward or heavy. Certainly there was nothing diabolical in his appear-

ance, nor did I observe any of the icy hardness in his expression of which I had heard so much."

Himmler was, however, the man who ordered the killings of the SA in 1934, launched the Holocaust, and possibly had a hand in the plots to kill Hitler both in 1939 and 1944. Now, in early 1945, Himmler's name and face were becoming infamous worldwide for the death and concentration camps that were then being overrun and liberated by the Allied armies.

The world gasped in horror as the camp crematoria doors swung open, yet, curiously, Himmler had a blind spot in this regard. He refused to believe that the West would not see in him the logical leader of the new Fourth Reich that would be a bulwark against the advance of Bolshevism—Germany's and the West's common enemy. He was now in for a rude awakening, however.

Count Bernadotte's terms were that Hitler must give all powers to Himmler, who must in turn remove all Nazi Party officials, cease Werewolf guerrilla activities, and release all Danish and Norwegian prisoners to Sweden via the Swedish Red Cross. The big shock was saved for last: Himmler could not possibly hope for any political role in a future, non-Nazi Germany.

Himmler wanted a message sent to Allied Supreme Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower offering a cease-fire in the West and an alliance against the Red Army. In fact, the new U.S. president, Harry S. Truman, and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill discussed the Himmler offer by trans-Atlantic telephone on April 25.

Truman rejected it, and Churchill agreed forthwith. Might Winnie, with his well-known anticommunist bias, have considered it without Truman's prior objection?

On April 29, Reutters news correspondent Paul Scott Rankine in San Francisco got the story from British Information Services head Jack Winocur, who in turn had received it directly from British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, that Himmler had offered a German surrender in the West.

When Hitler learned of the Reutters radio broadcast describing such events, he

National Archives

Himmler's corpse lies on display after committing suicide while in British custody in Lüneburg, May 23, 1945.

immediately fired Himmler and ordered him shot on sight, replacing him with Karl Hanke. In a fit of rage, the Führer also had Himmler's personal liaison officer in the Berlin Führerbunker, SS Cavalry General Hermann Fegelein, shot. Fegelein was the husband of Eva Braun's younger sister, Gretl.

Hitler committed suicide with wife Eva on April 30, 1945, in the bunker below the Reich Chancellery. His successor as Reich leader, Navy Grand Admiral Karl Dönitz, told a downcast Himmler that there was no place for him in his own new government at Flensburg on the German-Danish frontier. Having any connection with the loathed and despised Himmler would be a political and public relations kiss of death.

According to British author Dr. Hugh Thomas, an arrogant Himmler boasted, "They [the Allies] will never find me…. I, for one, shall certainly not commit suicide." He considered possible escapes to neutral Sweden or, perhaps, even to Franco's Falangist Spain, just as Belgian Waffen-SS leader Leon Degrelle actually succeeded in doing.

It did not work out that way, though. While Schellenberg was trying to surrender 400,000 German troops in Norway, his former boss and his entourage set off on their final, strange odyssey.

Thus it was that on May 10, 1945, Himmler and 14 disguised SS accomplices began their trek from Flensburg across northern Germany, first by car, and then on foot, sleeping in barns and sometimes outdoors. The group included Hitler's escort surgeon SS General Karl Brandt; Himmler's surgeon Dr. Karl Gebhardt; Berlin Gestapo chief Otto Ohlendorf; Himmler chauffeur and bodyguard Josef Kiermaier; General Heinz Macher; adjutant Werner Grothmann; two more escort battalion officers; and seven noncommissioned officers.

Himmler had taken the identity papers belonging to the dead Field Policeman Sergeant Heinrich Hitzinger—whom, ironically, he earlier had had executed for defeatism—shaved off his moustache, and put on a black eye patch.

Noted Dr. Thomas, "All carried papers claiming that they were a newly demobilized detachment of the secret Feldpolizei (Field Police), who were ill, and on their way to

Munich under the supervision of Dr. Gebhardt. They'd removed all insigniafrom their uniforms, and in their assorted unmarked jackets and rain coats, they were a memorably conspicuous bunch of cutthroats."

They hoped their exodus would lead them to safety in the high Bavarian Alps, where they would attempt to be secretly spirited out of the country by Werewolf agents—the clandestine Odessa operation. Instead, on May 18 the group reached Bremervörde. There they mingled with a crowd of Germans heading west on a bridge over the Oste River. Unfortunately for them, at the bridge was a British Army security roadblock manned by members of the Black Watch Regiment. Their papers did not seem to be in order and, since the German Field Police had been marked as a suspect group by the Allied intelligence services, the small group was taken into custody as prisoners of war.

On the morning of May 23, the group was taken to a civil internment camp at Westertimke. Himmler and two others were separated from the group and taken that evening to the 031 Civil Interrogation Camp at Barnstedt. After two days of interrogation by the British, the fugitive former Reichsführer-SS said, "You don't seem to realize who I am."

"No," said the sergeant.

"I am Reich Minister Heinrich Himmler, Reich Führer of the SS!" he boasted proudly.

"Oh, yeah?" said the sergeant. "Well, I'm Winston Churchill!"

"I am Himmler, you fool!" the prisoner shouted angrily. "I demand to be taken to General Eisenhower or Montgomery!"

The sergeant sent for Captain Sylvester, the camp commandant. Himmler repeated his claim, and Sylvester telephoned Colonel Michael Murphy, Chief Intelligence Officer at Second British Army Headquarters at Lüneburg. Intrigued that one of the most-wanted war criminals in all of Nazi Germany might actually be in British custody, Murphy told Sylvester that he would be there shortly.

Murphy arrived at Barnstedt at 9:45 PM to take charge of Himmler. The former Reichsführer, who had been stripped of his clothing, refused to put on a British uniform for the trip and so was given a blanket to wrap around him, then was put in a jeep with Murphy and an armed escort and driven the 10 miles to British headquarters at Lüneburg, arriving there at 10:45.

They pulled up in front of 31a Uelzenerstrasse, a red brick villa that British intelligence officers were using as an interrogation center. Although C.J. Wells, a British doctor, examined him carefully, he somehow missed the tiny vial of cyanide of potassium that was concealed in Himmler's mouth. The questioning began anew, and Himmler repeated his claim to be the Reichsführer-SS and again demanded to see one of the Allies' top generals. He even wrote out his signature to prove his real identity.

Even as a British POW, Himmler still believed it impossible that the Western Allies would not see the eminent sensibility of using his gifts as a secret policeman par excellence in their future rule of postwar Europe.

During questioning, Dr. Wells again became suspicious and ordered Himmler to open his mouth to be searched one more time. As Wells stuck his fingers in Himmler's mouth, the German clamped down on the doctor's fingers, worked the vial out of its hiding place with his tongue, and then bit down hard on the fragile glass. After briefly going into convulsions, he slumped to the floor. The officers quickly grabbed a bucket of water and, holding Himmler by the ankles, repeatedly dunked his head into the water, trying to dilute the poison.

"We immediately upended the old bastard," recalled one eyewitness, "and got his mouth into the bowl of water, which was there to wash the poison out. There were terrible groans and grunts coming from the swine.… It was a losing battle, and the evil thing breathed his last."

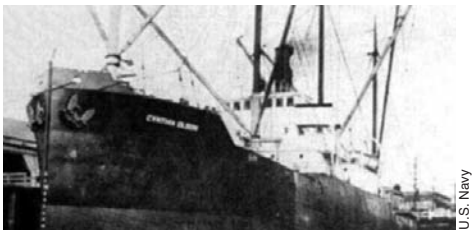
At 11:14 PM on May 23, 1945, Himmler, wearing only a British Army shirt and socks, was declared dead. With an Army blanket around his shoulders, someone placed a pair of eyeglasses on his face that made the corpse look more like Himmler. On May 26, after an autopsy, Himmler was buried by Major Norman Whittaker, Command Sergeant Major Edwin Austen, and Sergeants Ray Weston and Bill Ottery in a secret grave somewhere on the Lüneburg Heath, its exact location kept secret to this day. There was no funeral service of any kind.

As for the other players in the grim SS drama, Kaltenbrunner was hanged as a convicted war criminal at Nuremberg on October 16, 1946, where Schellenberg, too, was tried and sentenced, then pardoned in 1950. Schellenberg died in Italy of stomach cancer on March 31, 1952. Count Bernadotte, serving as a United Nations mediator in the Middle East, was assassinated in 1948 by Jewish Zionist terrorists who believed that he stood in the way of their planned State of Israel.

National Archives

Himmler's wife Marga (left) and daughter Gudrun in American captivity at Nuremberg in 1945. Marga was seven years older than Heinrich.

Arch-criminal Himmler, whom German historian Joachim Fest characterized as being "utterly mediocre ... a romantically eccentric petty bourgeois ... who attained exceptional power and hence found himself in a position to put his idiocies into bloody practice," still lies in his unmarked grave, gone but not forgotten. □



U.S. Navy

TARGET: AMERICA'S WEST COAST

PANIC SET IN WHEN JAPANESE SUBS RAIDED COASTAL AREAS. BY STEVEN D. LUTZ

IT SEEMED LIKE JUST ANOTHER ORDINARY DAY AT SEA. EARLY ON DECEMBER 7, 1941, a U.S. Army-chartered cargo vessel, the 250-foot SS *Cynthia Olson,* under the command of a civilian skipper, Berthel Carlsen, was plying the Pacific waters about 1,200 miles northeast of Diamond Head, Oahu, Hawaii, and over 1,000 miles west of the Tacoma, Washington, port from which she had sailed on December 1.

On board the unarmed *Cynthia Olson,* formerly the *Coquina* and renamed for the daughter of the owner, Oliver J. Olson Company of San Francisco, California, were several tons of supplies destined for the U.S. Army in Hawaii. Thirty-three Merchant Marine crewmen and two soldiers were accompanying the cargo.

Unknown to the crew of the *Cynthia Olson,* the Japanese submarine *I-26,* under Commander Minoru Yokota, was running alongside the slow, fat target, waiting for the moment to attack. The *I-26* was about to strike the first blow of World War II against America.

Five days earlier, Yokota had received the coded message, *Niitakayama nobore 1208* ("Climb Mount Niitaka, December 8"). The signal meant that war with the United States would commence on December 8, Japan time, or December 7 in Hawaii. Among the nine Japanese submarines assigned to patrol the waters between Hawaii and America's West Coast, the *I-26* had been at sea for a month. Its initial sea service took it to Alaska's Aleutian Islands; it was then ordered south to look for American ships.

At dawn on December 7, 1941, Yokota and his 90 submariners went to battle stations and surfaced. A warning shot from *I-26*'s deck gun raced across the *Cynthia Olson*'s bow. While skipper Carlson attempted some evasive maneuvers, the *Olson*'s radio operator sent out a distress call, but the ship had nothing with which to fight back.

Now the 5.5-inch shells from the sub's deck gun began to find their mark, and flying shards of steel sent the crew rushing for the lifeboats. The *I-26*'s gunners kept up the one-sided battle until 18 rounds had been expended and the badly damaged cargo ship appeared to be riding low in the water. She refused to sink, however, so Yokota submerged and fired a torpedo at her, but it missed. Resurfacing, Yokota ordered the deck gun to resume firing. Only after another 30 shots were fired did the *Cynthia Olson* go under.

Los Angeles Times

ARMY SAYS ALARM REAL

U.S. Flyers Reap Indies Victories

Storm Grows Over Delay in Alien Ouster

INFORMATION, PLEASE

Five Deaths Laid to Raid Blackout

Roaring Guns Mark Blackout

Rangoon Aces Bag 31 Planes

Americans Sink Jap Ships

IN THE 'TIMES' TODAY

Knox Indicates Raid Just 'Jittery Nerves'

Rubber a Carats Ordered Banned

Attention Subscribers!

ABOVE: Stories in the local media helped fuel fears shortly after the so-called Battle of Los Angeles. TOP: The unarmed freighter SS *Cynthia Olson,* attacked and sunk by a Japanese submarine between Hawaii and the U.S. West Coast on December 7, 1941. All aboard were lost.

During the shelling, a coded message was received aboard the *I-26*: "Tora, Tora, Tora," indicating that the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor had commenced and everything seemed to be going well for the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN). As the *Cynthia Olson* slipped beneath the waves, the *I-26* turned and sailed away, leaving the men on the transport ship and in the lifeboats to their fates; none survived.

Thus began Japan's submarine war against the United States.

Truth be told, the Imperial Japanese Navy had been preparing for submarine warfare long before Pearl Harbor. In time they honed a design to do just that. It

At a time before today's instant communications, most Americans learned of the West Coast attacks only through heavily censored newspaper and radio accounts. Here nervous San Franciscans catch up on the latest news. The city barely escaped being shelled by Japanese subs.

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became their B-1 class submarine. The B-1 class was designated the "I" Series, and 20 of them would sail the Pacific Ocean during the war.

The typical B-1, with a crew of 95 men, was 356 feet long and 30 feet at the beam with a hull 17 feet high. Its standard weight was 2,200 tons, and it could carry 800 tons of diesel fuel that enabled it to cruise 14,000 miles at 16 knots (17.6 mph) per hour. Its top speeds surfaced were 23.5 knots (25.3 mph) and eight knots (8.8 mph), respectively. It carried 17 torpedoes and had a deadly 5.5-inch deck gun. To ward off encroaching enemy aircraft, it employed two 25mm machine guns. Its safest maximum depth was 330 feet.

What made the B-1s unique was that each submarine housed one Yokosuka E14Y1 scout plane (code named "Glen" by the Allies) inside a watertight, on-deck hangar forward of the conning tower. A double-track launch rail catapulted the plane to get it airborne. Its normal cruising speed was 85 mph, with a maximum speed of 150 mph. Although the plane's primary role was scouting and it could do so with a 200-mile radius in a five-hour flight time, it could also carry a maximum bomb load of 340 pounds. The Glen's second crew member, a gunner, sat facing rearward behind a single 7.7mm machine gun.

To fit a Glen into the onboard hangar, its wings, floats, and tail assembly were either removed or folded. With a crew of four it could be made air ready in less than 40 minutes. Upon returning, it landed next to the sub where a crane lifted it back on board. Crew members then disassembled it to fit it into the hangar.

Before the war, America's military had no idea the Japanese had such capabilities. These weapons, the "I" subs and warplanes, were state of the art.

Japan's antagonistic attitude against America rose between 1922 and 1930. Japan keenly felt snubbed by the Western Allies following their World War I victory. During the negotiations of naval limitations in Washington, D.C., in the 1920s, restrictions were placed on the naval power of the United States, Great Britain,

All National Archives

Civil defense measures were instituted to reduce panic. At this control center in Ventura, California, in 1943, workers prepare a large city map that would identify road blocks, unexploded bombs, poison gas attacks, and other possible war-related calamities.

and Japan in a ratio of 5:3:3. In other words, for every five warships America and England built, Japan could only produce three. The Japanese considered this a blow to national prestige and their expansionist aims.

From that point on a grudge match evolved between Japan and America, and the militarists in Japan began scheming for retribution as early as 1931. At that time Japan was considering stationing four mine-laying submarines off the West Coast should hostilities with the United States erupt. A major emphasis was placed on developing state-of-the-art submarines that could carry their own reconnaissance planes stored in on-deck hangars. (See *WWII Quarterly,* Winter 2012.)

Three days after the sinking of the *Cynthia Olson,* December 10, 1941, the I-26, along with other subs, was called back toward Pearl Harbor. It was imperative that the U.S. Navy aircraft carrier *Lexington* be located and removed from action, but a four-day search proved fruitless. A new role was then established for the submarines. Vice Admiral Mitsumi Shimizu, commander of Japanese submarine forces, directed Rear Admiral Tsutomu Sato in his flagship *I-9* to park his nine submarines off San Francisco by December 17 and commence bombarding the city on Christmas Day. Each submarine was ordered to surface, then fire no fewer than 30 5.5-inch rounds into the city.

Beyond the Golden Gate Bridge the nine subs loitered undetected and waited for December 25. During the week before Christmas they cruised out of sight and resurfaced at night to recharge batteries as needed. On the 22nd an unexpected order was received postponing the attack until December 27. That order came directly from Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, commander in chief of the Combined Fleet.

Five days later, Sato had a message to share with headquarters. His subs were drastically short of fuel. In all probability the attack could still commence on the 27th, but

the complication would come in returning to Japan. Literally speaking, some subs might run out of fuel. Yamamoto called off the attack for that—and for another reason.

During the 1920s, Yamamoto had studied at Harvard University. He observed America's industrial capacity and realized that Japan could not hope to win a protracted war with the United States. Yamamoto was further hesitant to attack the U.S. civilian population, particularly during a holiday, and was concerned about U.S. retailiation sometime in the future.

Four and a half months later, Lt. Col. Jimmy Doolittle's carrier-launched North American B-25 Mitchell bombers, seeking revenge for Pearl Harbor, struck Tokyo. Had Yamamoto known that Tokyo would be bombed, he may well have authorized the shelling of San Francisco.

At 10:30 AM on Christmas Eve, one of the Japanese submarines nevertheless went into action near Los Angeles. The submarine *I-19,* captained by an officer named Nahara, was cruising off Point Fermin in the Catalina Channel when the 5,700-ton freighter *Absaroka*, which had sailed from Oregon with a load of lumber, was spotted heading south for Los Angeles harbor.

The *I-19* launched a torpedo that struck the freighter at the No. 5 hold, causing extensive damage and blowing the cargo from the hold into the air. A crewman was killed by flying debris. The radio operator sent an SOS signal, but within minutes the *Absaroka* had settled to her main deck. As the crew abandoned ship, one of their two lifeboats capsized, but the surviving 33 men managed to escape in a single lifeboat.

Shortly after the SOS went out, American war planes arrived and dropped bombs near where the sub was last seen. Following the aircraft attack, the patrol yacht USS *Amethyst* (PYc-3), assigned to the Inshore Patrol, 11th Naval District,

and patrolling the entrance to Los Angeles harbor, dropped 32 depth charges.

The A*bsaroka*'s crew was picked up over an hour after the attack, and the freighter was later reboarded by the Coast Guard, towed into San Pedro harbor, and beached below Fort MacArthur.

After the attack on the *Absaroka,* coastal defenses were strengthened around Santa Monica Bay and Redondo Beach. In early 1942, soldiers from Fort MacArthur installed two 155mm cannon and machine guns at the end of the Redondo Pier. This battery, known as Tactical Battery 3, was one of several around Santa Monica Bay. There were similar batteries installed at Pacific Palisades, Playa del Rey, El Segundo/Hyperion, Manhattan Beach, and Rocky Point and Long Point (both Palos Verdes). California was getting ready for invasion.

American soil was finally attacked by a Japanese submarine on February 23, 1942.

The sub that launched the raid was Commander Nishino Kozo's *I-17,* commissioned a year earlier at the Yokosuka Navy Yard. Prior to the war, Kozo had captained a Japanese merchant ship that made stops in California's Santa Barbara area at the Ellwood Richfield Oil Company refinery and storage facility, so he was familiar with the territory.

Kozo had another reason for the attack

ABOVE: The Japanese submarine *I-47,* photographed at the Kure Naval Yard at war's end, was typical of the subs that prowled the West Coast. BELOW: The patrol boat USS *Amethyst* dodged a torpedo and dropped depth charges on a sub near Los Angeles. RIGHT: The lumber-carrying freighter SS *Absaroka* was attacked close to Palos Verdes, California, by the *I-19.*

on the Ellwood oil facility. Prior to the war, he paused there to refuel his ship. As was the custom at the facility, Nishino came ashore to be greeted by the president of Richfield Oil Company. His party crossed the sandy, pear cactus-covered beach. Nishino lost his footing and fell onto one of the thorny plants. He took a couple of prickly thorns in his posterior and suffered a great deal more embarrassment when nearby depot workers laughed.

In the week prior to the attack, numerous nervous residents reported sightings of unidentifiable submarines surfacing off shore, but none were taken seriously. Besides, little could be done about it. Defenses at the oil storage facility were scant, consisting only of two obsolescent World War I howitzers at different locations. The closest officer in charge of those units was Captain Bernard E. Hagen of A Battery, 143rd Field Artillery, 40th Division. Furthermore, the Coast Guard patrol boat that was normally assigned to that area was off duty by the 23rd. At 7 PM that night, President Franklin D. Roosevelt commenced his radio fireside chat. Those in the Santa Barbara/Goleta area settled in to listen.

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A Civil Defense poster urging civilians to strictly obey blackout restrictions to thwart possible Japanese attack or invasion.

From the *I-17*'s vantage point on the surface, traffic along Pacific Coast Highway 101 was easily visible through binoculars. Oil derricks stood out just as plainly. There seemed to be no noticeable defenses or state of alert. Kozo's plan was to fire at least 20 shells into the facility before any coordinated reaction came from defensive positions, as he expected would happen. At 7:07 PM the *I-17* fired the first of 15 or 16 rounds into the depot from about a mile off shore. Most of the 5.5-inch shells fell harmlessly into the water, overshot the target, or landed as duds.

At 7:35, assuming that the Americans would be hot on his trail, Kozo fired his last round and beat a hasty retreat into the dark. He could have made a leisurely escape as nobody fired at his boat or came after him.

The results of the attack were minimal, producing only a slightly damaged derrick and a shot-up pier amounting to a few hundred dollars. But the panic caused by Kozo's less-than-spectacular raid was incalculable. Mainland America had been attacked! People did not know what to do. Residents of Ellwood jumped into their cars and drove madly inland, trying to escape the attack and worried that an invasion would follow. The local phone lines were so tied up that no military calls could get through.

Following the shelling, Captain Hagen and a master sergeant went to the refinery and were defusing dud rounds when one detonated and Hagen received a shrapnel wound. He became America's only assigned service member to receive the Purple Heart for a wound received from hostile action on American soil.

The San Pedro Naval Operations Base sent three planes and two destroyers to scour the area. The planes evidently saw something and dropped flares and depth charges to keep the enemy submarine submerged until the destroyers arrived. At 4:51 the next morning, the U.S. Navy reported that the USS *Amethyst* had made contact with a submarine three miles southwest of Point Vincente and was dropping depth charges. The *Amethyst* also reported that she had evaded a torpedo. War jitters were rampant in the wake of Pearl Harbor, the submarine attacks on coastal shipping, and *I-17*'s shelling of the Ellwood oil facility, just 80 miles from Los Angeles. Many saw these events as precursors of a greater attack, and tensions rose rapidly along the coast, a prelude for the "nonattack" on the West Coast, the so-called Battle of Los Angeles.

The forced evacuation and relocation of ethnic Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians from the coastal states and western Canada was just a few days old when, late on February 24, rumors of an impending attack on Los Angeles began to circulate. Around midnight, a report was sent out to antiaircraft batteries on the heights overlooking the L.A. area that enemy planes had been spotted, and the Battle of Los Angeles was on. One of the batteries opened fire on the unseen airplanes, and searchlights scanned the sky. The panic soon spread, and other gunners opened up.

Air-raid wardens dashed about, ordering people to extinguish lights and take cover. A number of auto accidents occurred as drivers drove through darkened streets with their headlights off, and several people suffered heart attacks, including one that was fatal. Some civilians rushed for shelters, while others went outside to see what the noise was all about. Some thought they saw the planes, while others thought they saw parachutes and bombs falling. Spent antiaircraft shells (over 1,400 were fired) and shrapnel rained

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: A U.S. government publicity photo from the Office of Emergency Management shows a family installing blackout curtains. BELOW: Being the most susceptible to Japanese attack, the West Coast was the best prepared. Here a Civil Defense warden shows Southern California civilians how to use a homemade fire-fighting apparatus.

down on homes and cars, with Santa Monica and Long Beach taking the brunt of the fallout.

There were also rumors that an enemy plane had been shot down and crashed at 185th Street and Vermont Avenue, and that other sections of the city were on fire.

The "battle" lasted over two hours before common sense prevailed and the guns fell silent. The next morning's *Los Angeles Times* headline declared in bold type, "L.A. AREA RAIDED." Like the rest of the populace, newspaper editors had succumbed to the rumors. A 1983 Air Force report attributed the panic to the sighting of a runaway weather balloon.

The fact that the city had not been bombed quickly became apparent, and there was plenty of chagrin and embarrassment. The realistic, unplanned air-raid drill was actually beneficial for Los Angelenos, however, because they gained experience in case the real thing happened. The Japanese did have plans to use giant seaplanes to bomb the city.

Of the nine I-boats off America's northwest coast, the busiest may have been Commander Meiji Tagami's *I-25,* which made two direct attacks on American soil. After putting out to sea on October 15, 1941, the *I-25,* like several of the other I-boats prowling the American West Coast, was a brand-new vessel. Arriving on station one week after Pearl Harbor, Tagami, like some of his fellow I-boat commanders, proved to have sloppy work habits.

The I-boats had one crippling restriction when attacking merchant vessels. They were allowed to fire only one torpedo per merchant ship. Everything else had to be done via the deck gun. On December 14, the *I-25* had sent 10 rounds toward the Union Oil tanker SS *L.P. St. Clair,* but all 10 missed. The tanker escaped into Oregon's Columbia River estuary, which separates southern Washington from northern Oregon.

Twelve days later, Tagami and *I-25* crossed paths with the 8,684-ton tanker SS *Connecticut.* This time Tagami exercised his single-torpedo option. He hit the target and set it afire, but it ran aground at the estuary. Afterward, Tagami departed for several months to attack military shipping in the Marshall Islands. He would return.

Near where the Columbia empties into the Pacific Ocean stands Fort Stevens, constructed on the Oregon side of the river during the Civil War. By 1941, its 10-inch coastal defense guns were near-antiques left over from World War I. The eight orig-

Both: National Archives

ABOVE: This photo published in the *Los Angeles Times*, February 26, 1942 edition, is the only one taken of the "battle," and has been used by conspiracy theorists as proof of the existence of UFOs. However, the photo was heavily modified prior to publication. LEFT: Like the cities of England and Germany, the West Coast (such as here at San Pedro, California) was well equipped with powerful searchlights and batteries of antiaircraft guns.

inal guns were made in 1900 and installed at the site in 1904, but six of them had been removed, as local residents complained of their excessively noisy concussions during firing practice. The two remaining pieces, capable of firing 617-pound shells up to nine miles, were mounted at Battery Russell on carriages that retracted out of view. The fort was manned by the Oregon Army National Guard's 249th Coastal Artillery Battalion, led by Lt. Col. Lifton M. Irwin.

Three months after Doolittle's April 1942 bombing raid on Tokyo, Tagami and *I-25* approached Fort Stevens. Believing that he had a worthwhile target before him (Fort Stevens was wrongly thought to be the entrance to American submarine pens), Tagami submerged and followed a collection of fishing boats closer to shore. Just before midnight on June 21, 1942, the *I-25* fired 17 5.5-inch rounds in the direction of Fort Stevens. Tagami expected immediate return fire, so he ordered his gun crew to fire as quickly as possible without bothering to aim properly.

Those on shore would testify that only half the shells hit the ground. The rest were either duds or landed in the water. The most property damage done was to the post's baseball field and a power line. One soldier incurred an injury running to his post.

Having quickly fired his rounds, Tagami made a hasty escape, but not a single shot was returned his way. Captain Jack Wood's Battery Russell failed to reply. Gun crews totally miscalculated *I-25*'s position, believing it was out of range. The post commander ordered Wood to hold his fire so as not to reveal the fort's exact gun positions.

Tagami later asserted that had he known of the fort's insignificance he never would have fired on it. By mid-July 1942, the *I-25* was back at its naval base of Yokosuka.

Whatever Japanese intentions were for America's West Coast, they never fully developed. But if there was a shining star in their abortive show, it would be Warrant Flying Officer Nobuo Fujita.

Fujita was born in 1911. Twenty-one years later he was drafted into the Navy and he became a pilot in 1933. Fujita was aboard the *I-25* during a deployment in the Aelutian Islands. In the spring of 1942, he had flown above Kodiak Island at 9,000 feet and observed that the American response to an unidentifed plane was apparent indifference.

Fujita suggested an air raid against the United States utilizing Glen reconaissance planes launched from surfaced I-boats. The proposal was later endorsed by Prince Nobuhito Takamatsu, younger brother of Emperor Hirohito.

When a Japanese official who had been previously assigned to the consulate in Seattle, Washington, mentioned that late summer was quite dry in the Pacific Northwest, it was decided to launch such an attack, dropping incendiary bombs to ignite major forest fires and threaten population centers.

Fujita had also noted that the Panama Canal could be similarly targeted. The *I-25*, under Tagami, left Yokosuka on August 15, 1942, and headed back toward America's West Coast with pilot Fujita and six 170-pound incendiary bombs aboard.

Each incendiary contained over 500 igniting elements that would disperse across a 100-yard blast area. Fujita's aircraft would deliver two such bombs on successive flights.

Arriving off the Oregon coast during the first week of September, the *I-25* whiled

away the days waiting for a strong storm to blow over. Unusually heavy rain pelted the area, but in the predawn hours of September 9, 1942, conditions had moderated and Fujita and his bombardier, Petty Officer Shoji Okuda, were propelled off the sub. Flying 50 miles eastward, Fujita saw the lighthouse at Cape Blanco, and it became their beacon.

The first bomb was dropped 50 miles inland. Six miles farther, the second was released. In a flash both ignited. The two fliers fully believed they had succeeded and enthusiastically shared the news with Tagami. However, although both bombs exploded, the foliage was too damp from rain and lingering mist for a raging fire to develop. Fire warden Howard Gardner and one volunteer, Keith Johnson, easily controlled what smoldered.

A second raid went ahead on September 29 in the same general locale. Fujita reasoned that no one would expect a repeat incident. Flying 90 minutes inland, he let two bombs go. They plummeted onto a site called Grassy Knob near Port Orford, Oregon, but even less came of these as the wet foliage refused to catch fire.

Finding his way back to *I-25* was a challenge for Fujita because of low cloud cover. He was able to find the submarine by following a trail of oil on the ocean's surface. The *I-25* had been previously attacked by air, and no one was aware of an oil leak until it was seen from above.

Unfavorable weather and heavy seas precluded a third attack.

Later in the war, the Japanese resorted to using long-range, high-altitude balloons to cross the Pacific in hopes of starting forest fires. They were as ineffective as the bombers. However, in one unfortunate incident, several civilians were killed when a bomb exploded near their picnic site.

One question remains: Why did the Japanese choose the isolated region of Brookings, Oregon, to drop their bomb? Nothing of significance was there. even massive forest fires would not have impaired the American war effort.

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Men chop down a tree to retrieve a Japanese incendiary bomb. Most of these balloon bombs, released from Japan, landed harmlessly and failed to create the hoped-for results.

By the end of 1942 most of the I-boats off the West Coast had been recalled for operations elsewhere in the Pacific.

The Japanese did contemplate another air raid plan, this one involving the Kawanishi H8K "Emily" flying boat. The Emily had four engines and floats, making it a bomber-reconnaissance seaplane. Its wingspan extended 124 feet, and its fuselage was 92 feet long. It had a maximum air speed of 290 mph, a cruising range of 4,400 miles, and a bomb load of 5,000 pounds, with an armament of four 7.7mm machine guns and six 20mm cannons. In time, a dual 20mm cannon replaced the machine guns. By war's end, 131 Emilys had been built but failed to realize their potential.

Lieutenant Commander Tsuneo Hitsuji, himself a pilot, proposed flying six updated Emilys to just off the California coast. There a flotilla of I-boats would meet them for refueling. The Emilys would then bomb Los Angeles. After hitting their targets, the planes would fly as far west as possible, seeking Japanese-held territory for landing.

Hitsuji dreamed even further. A fleet of 30 H8K2s might set down in Mexico's Baja California waterway. There Japanese I-boats and German U-boats could surface to refuel and load them with bombs. Their new targets would be the Texas oilfields and beyond. With a 4,400-mile range, the Emily could fly any direction to hit the interior of America. Alas for the Japanese, as with other grandiose schemes, time ran out.

The Japanese threat to the U.S. West Coast never became substantial. The Imperial Navy claimed to have sunk five freighters off the West Coast for a total of 30,370 tons. Five others were damaged but salvageable. Captains of the I-boats grossly exaggerated America's military response to their attacks.

The few responses made by the U.S. military were often as haphazard as the I-boat attacks. In the end, Japan never had the time, opportunity, or resources to launch a major offensive effort against the continental United States. □

IKE *VS.* MON

A German panzer somewhere in northern France tries to hold off the advancing Allied armies. But a British-American squabble allowed tens of thousands of German troops to escape through the Falaise Gap and protracted the war. INSET: A picture of postwar harmony: Eisenhower, Montgomery, and Bradley address troops in 1946.

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

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COMMAND FAILURE AT THE FALAISE GAP

BY WILLIAM WEIDNER

BACKGROUND: WITH THE EXCEPTIONS OF THE NORMANDY INVASION and the Battle of the Bulge, few other World War II battles in the European Theater have received more historical scrutiny than the Battle of the Falaise Gap. Yet nearly every account of the battle has gotten it wrong. If you believe that General Omar N. Bradley initiated the "halt order" he gave to George Patton on August 13, 1944, you have it wrong.

The Falaise Gap was one of those rare battles that gave both British and Americans a reason for obscuring the truth. How many Germans escaped through the Falaise Gap after the Allies bungled the encirclement? It is difficult to say. Everyone who gives an estimate is trying to prove a point. The Battle of the Falaise Gap was a huge Allied victory, but it was a less complete victory than it should have been.

The Allies had agreed to appoint an American Supreme Commander for Operation Overlord, the cross-Channel invasion of northwestern France. U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt selected General Dwight D. Eisenhower for that role. The British then selected the operational commanders in chief for the Allied air, sea, and ground forces that would serve under Eisenhower. The same system of command had been used in the Mediterranean in 1942 and 1943 with mixed results. It was further agreed that Eisenhower would take command of Allied ground forces when a second U.S. Army (George Patton's Third) was activated in France.

Historians in the United States have been wrestling with Eisenhower's role as supreme Allied commander since the end of the war. A group of American senators touring the Mediterranean in 1943 asked the critical question: "[Andrew] Cunningham commands the naval forces. [Arthur] Tedder commands the air forces, and [Harold] Alexander commands the ground forces. What in hell does Eisenhower command?"

The answer to that question had left his supporters worried that the truth would diminish Eisenhower's historical stature. Historians from the United States do not like to discuss the Falaise Gap because events suggest that Eisenhower did not exercise

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ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

ABOVE: Allied armored advances across Normandy, raising a cloud of dust, as they encircle the Germans near Falaise. LEFT: General der Panzertruppen Heinrich Eberbach, shown in France in July 1944, wanted to withdraw to avoid encirclement in western France but was ordered to hold fast.

his command authority; this battle seemed to set the tone for the rest of the campaign.

Through the end of the war in Europe, the British would dispute Eisenhower's ability to command the Allied ground forces. According to General Bernard L. Montgomery, very few senior American or Canadian Army officers were up to British standards. He wrote to his friend and mentor, Chief of the Imperial General Staff Sir Alan Brooke: "Ike is apt to get very excited and talk wildly—at the top of his voice!!! He is now over here [in Normandy], which is a very great pity. His ignorance as to how to run a war is absolute and complete; he has all the popular cries, but nothing else."

Montgomery was easily the most popular general in the British Isles. His was also a troubled personality. Biographer Nigel Hamilton suggests that Montgomery's ornery nature could be traced to his "will of steel and a fundamental inflexibility of mind." He also suggests that the source of Montgomery's unusual personality was an unloving and sometimes brutal mother. Alun Chalfont wrote that although it is "often misleading to stray into the thickets of psychoanalysis, it is reasonably safe to say that Montgomery became an obsessive personality." Montgomery's attempt to control everything seems to have affected all aspects of his life. If Montgomery could control it, he controlled it down to the most infinite detail. If he could not control it, he tried to push it out of his mind.

Empathy was one emotion Montgomery seldom experienced. R.W. Thompson wrote of the field marshal, "His eccentricities, the pedantry of his military dogmatism, his deliberate isolation and his inability to enter into the problems of others, rendered him peculiarly unsuitable for any cooperative role." Montgomery's crippled personality made it almost impossible to achieve the "unity of command" so essential for success on the battlefield. British historians often ignore the Battle of the Falaise Gap because it was Montgomery who was responsible for the "halt order" General Bradley gave to George Patton on August 13, 1944.

Our story begins after two months of very bloody fighting in Normandy, of very stout German defensive battles on both flanks. Following up the British attack at Caen (Operation Goodwood), the American breakout effort near St. Lô, known as Operation Cobra, finally succeeded in punching a hole in the German line. By July 31, the Americans had turned the Germans' western flank, and within days General Patton's Third U.S. Army was driving into Brittany and northeast behind those Germans still fighting in Normandy. The German commander, Günther von Kluge, warned his chief of staff, "It's a madhouse here." Adolf Hitler decided against his general's recommendation for a withdrawal from Normandy. Instead, he saw a chance to save France by counterattacking the Americans at Mortain and driving on to Avranches, cutting Patton's Third Army off from its supplies.

In spite of General Bradley's statements to the contrary, the German attack at Mortain on the night of August 6/7 did not catch Courtney Hodges's First Army by surprise. Thanks to an early ULTRA warning, the Americans had plenty of time to prepare for

the German attack. Bradley was amazed when he later looked at the maps in his trailer. With elements of Patton's Third Army driving northeast nearly unopposed into the exposed German southern flank and the German armor attacking west at Mortain, there was a great possibility the Allies could surround and destroy the German Seventh and Fifth Panzer Armies in Normandy. Bradley's staff loved the plan.

The following morning, August 8, Bradley tracked down Eisenhower on the battlefield and, in the back seat of Eisenhower's Packard, sold him on the plan. He asked Eisenhower to return to his headquarters so they could look at a better map and place a telephone call to the commander of Allied ground forces, Montgomery. After Montgomery's questions about the German Mortain attack were satisfied, he readily agreed to Bradley's plan to trap the Germans in Normandy. Montgomery said he would direct the Canadians to attack south through Falaise to Argentan while the Americans drove north from Le Mans to Carrouges and Sees. Montgomery also agreed to move the inter-Army Group boundary line north a few miles into the British zone to just south of the Briouze–Argentan–St. Leonard line.

The preceding paragraphs outline the official Eisenhower, Bradley, and Montgomery version of the Allied decision to destroy the German Fifth Panzer and Seventh Armies in Normandy. This version of the event has been adopted by nearly all historians on both sides of the Atlantic. British intelligence officer and Group Captain F.W. Winterbotham offered a vastly different—and far more believable—version of these same events. In *The Ultra Secret,* Winterbotham related how he recorded an ULTRA message on "two whole sheets of my ULTRA paper.…" The date was August 2, 1944. Winterbotham listed Hitler's instructions to Kluge "in considerable detail, [Kluge was] to collect together four of the armored divisions from the Caen front with sufficient supporting infantry divisions and make a decisive counter-attack to retake Avranches and thus to divide the American forces…."

Winterbotham recalled that he got the intercept to Churchill right away and that Eisenhower thought the message was so important that he had its authenticity checked. Satisfied that the message was genuine, according to Winterbotham, Eisenhower then directed Montgomery to close the trap on the Germans from the north while Bradley and the Americans closed the gap from the south. Winterbotham also wrote, "The opportunity that had been offered to us was such that the decision to alter the entire strategy became one for Eisenhower himself, and I understand it had also to be approved by the joint Allied chiefs of staff."

Winterbotham says that Bradley was instructed to prepare for the German attack by preparing a "defense in depth in the Avranches area…." Winterbotham also learned that "despite the signals from Hitler, Montgomery was still in favor of an advance on a broad front to the Seine…." Although it differs significantly from the Eisenhower-Bradley version of these events, Winterbotham's account is far more believable. He was not directly involved in the Allied chain of command in France, and he had nothing to hide. He was simply an impartial observer of vital ULTRA intelligence information at a critical phase in the battle. His account has been largely overlooked because it does not follow the accepted version of the Battle of the Falaise Gap.

Captain Harry Butcher, Ike's naval aide, made an entry in his diary on August 8: "Ike keeps continually after both Montgomery and Bradley to destroy the enemy now rather than to be content with mere gains of territory." August 8 was the day Eisenhower and Bradley agreed to conduct the short envelopment between Falaise and Argentan. Butcher's phrase—"Ike keeps continually after both Montgomery and Bradley"—suggests that the possibility of destroying the German Army in Normandy had been available for some time and was not the result of a sudden thought that had popped into Bradley's head the evening before. Such a scenario also fits more closely with Winterbotham's account, which suggests that the Allied command had been watching for the possibility of an encirclement for a few days before Butcher's August 8 comment.

On August 9, Eisenhower wrote to George Marshall, chief of staff in Washington, and explained how he thought the battle would develop: "Patton has the marching wing which will turn in rather sharply to the northeast from the general vicinity of Le Mans and just to the west thereof marching toward Alençon and Falaise.… We have a good chance to encircle and destroy a lot of his forces." Eisenhower's mention of Falaise as a goal for Patton's Third Army is clearly prescient. This was exactly what should have happened. Again, Eisenhower's letter seems to confirm Winterbotham's account.

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Eisenhower and British Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill confer in France, summer 1944.

The American hinge at Mortain continued to hold against German counterattacks as Patton's Third Army poured through along the one good north-south road at Avranches. By the evening of August 7, Maj. Gen. Wade Haislip's XV Corps had three divisions investing Le Mans: 5th U.S. Armored, 79th and 90th U.S. Infantry Divisions. The following day, Le Mans fell to the Americans.

In London, an interested observer was closely monitoring the events in France.

British Prime Minister Winston S. Churchill had been getting immediate ULTRA updates from Winterbotham, who noted that Churchill was getting copies of the German radio messages within an hour of their transmission. The dispatches revealed that the German commander in France, von Kluge, was in an argument with Hitler over the Mortain counterattack. Hitler insisted that the attack must go forward, while Kluge was equally insistent that the attack was beyond the ability of his forces in Normandy and that the Americans were already driving northeast around his vulnerable southern flank.

The argument was transmitted back and forth between German headquarters in East Prussia and Kluge in France by German radio messages encoded on an Enigma machine, which British intelligence (ULTRA) was reading almost as easily as the Germans. They had obtained a copy of the "Enigma" coding/decoding machines' daily settings from a short German airdrop intended for the defenders of Brest a few weeks earlier. Winterbotham later wrote, "Everybody ... [including] the Prime Minister, was deeply involved in the Hitler-Kluge drama…. When I was reading these ... signals over the telephone to Churchill, I sensed his controlled excitement at the other end. I think we all felt that this might well be the beginning of the end of the war."

Churchill's excitement may have been tempered with an understanding that Montgomery's British/Canadian Army was still stalled north of Falaise and the Americans were about to turn north at Le Mans into a vulnerable German southern flank. The Germans, Churchill knew from the ULTRA intercepts, were terribly desperate. They were short of fuel and ammunition and possibly near a total collapse. If the Germans did not reinforce their southern flank in time, the Americans could drive straight through to Falaise. It would appear to the press corps, especially to the Americans, as if George Patton had come to the rescue of the poor British Army, which had stalled only a few miles south of their D-Day objective. Churchill may have sensed that Montgomery had gotten himself into a jam. Churchill was terribly sensitive to press coverage and the political fallout from the battles being fought in France. He resolved to do what he could to help Montgomery.

With the Canadians moving south from Caen and Patton's Third U.S. Army coming north, the Allies hoped to bag large numbers of enemy troops, but a controversial "stop" order derailed those plans. OPPOSITE: Men of General Jacques-Philippe Leclerc's 2nd French Armored Division, driving Shermans and wearing American uniforms, are shown shortly after arriving in France at Normandy and before beginning the liberation of their homeland.

On August 9, Churchill summoned Eisenhower to 10 Downing Street for another round of heated arguments over Operation Dragoon. The British had been trying to get the invasion of southern France canceled for months, but Churchill's timing was interesting. It had been only four days since their last arguments over Dragoon, and the invasion was scheduled to go forward in only six days, on August 15. Churchill blustered and bullied the American general. He threatened and he cried. He did his best to intimidate Eisenhower. He said the Americans had become a "big, strong and dom-

inating partner," and he threatened "to go to the King and lay down the mantle of my high office." When it was over, Churchill had done his best to browbeat the American general. Eisenhower later described the session "as one of the most difficult of the entire war."

Churchill had given a masterful performance, but Eisenhower could do nothing to placate the prime minister's distress. He remembered that when the meeting broke up, Churchill was still crying. Churchill's performance won him a deeply personal letter from Eisenhower on August 11: "I would feel that much of my hard work ... had been irretrievably lost if we now should lose faith in the organisms that have given higher direction to our war effort, because such lack of faith would quickly be reflected in discord in our field commands."

Although he was a granite wall against which Churchill hurled his most eloquent pleas, two days later, on August 13, Eisenhower, the "big, strong and dominating partner," would not challenge the British ground forces commander over an inter-Army Group boundary line dispute at Argentan. Churchill had lost the arguments over Operation Dragoon, but he lost them so gloriously that Montgomery now had a more forgiving boss, a boss who would be very sensitive to British political interests for quite some time.

On August 9, Maj. Gen. Wade Haislip's U.S. XV Corps received two new divisions: the 2nd French Armored and 80th U.S. Infantry Divisions. Patton also gave Haislip verbal orders "to change the Corps' direction of advance to the north and capture Alençon [with the German Seventh Army's Supply Depots]." XV Corps sent its 106th Cavalry Group to the area of La Ferte Bernard with the mission of reconnaissance and protecting the corps' eastern flank. The 80th, after assembling near St. Hilaire, was trucked to the vicinity of Le Mans, where it was to secure the bridgehead there and protect the left flank and rear of the corps by holding the road centers at Sille-le-Guillaume and Evron.

Early that morning, 5th Armored Division's commander, Maj. Gen. Lunsford E. Oliver, received a warning order from Haislip changing the direction of his attack to the north. Oliver sent his 85th Cavalry Squadron to reconnoiter the Orne River lowlands and bridges. Late that afternoon, orders came through from XV Corps Headquarters: 5th Armored was to drive north, "seize crossings over the Orne River, and continue north to the Carrouges-Sees line."

These orders also contained information about the other units involved in the attack. Oliver's 5th Armored was to be followed closely by Maj. Gen. Ira T. Wyche's 79th Infantry Division; one regiment of the 79th had been fully motorized so that it could keep up with the armor. Their left flank would be covered by the 2nd French Armored Division, commanded by the

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feisty Maj. Gen. Jacques-Philippe Leclerc, which was then assembling near Vitre. The French tankers would be followed closely by Maj. Gen. R.S. McLain's 90th U.S. Infantry Division, which also had one regiment fully motorized.

Oliver of 5th Armored decided to attack that night. Combat Command A [CCA], commanded by Brig. Gen. Eugene A. Regnier, was soon in a fight with elements of the German 9th Panzer and 708th Infantry Divisions for control of the five Orne River bridges near Ballon. Combat Command B [CCB], commanded by Colonel John T. Cole, on the division's right flank, cleared

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Montgomery (left) and "Freddie" De Guingand, his chief of staff, review a document. It was De Guingand who passed the order instructing the Americans to halt and not close the gap at Falaise.

Le Mans and was ordered to assemble near Bonnetable and be prepared for further movement. Combat Command Reserve [CCR], commanded by Colonel Glen W. Anderson, drove a few miles past Ballon to Marolles-les-Braults and seized five more river crossing points.

The next day, August 10, Leclerc's division caught up with 5th Armored. "They took over the task of holding bridges taken by CCA and also placed a column on CCA's left flank." Throughout the day, CCA was heavily engaged with elements of the 9th Panzer Division at Marolles-les-Braults while CCR was battling other elements of the same German division in a firefight near Mamers. According to Lt. Col. Emmanuel Cepeda's report, "It was a case of draw fire, deploy, establish a base of fire and maneuver for the entire day…. Darkness and fatigue called it a day. CCA and CCR were blooded."

The morning of August 11, 5th Armored received orders to bypass enemy resistance at Mamers and Marolles and drive toward Sees. That evening additional orders said to continue the attack north to Argentan and to cut communications to the north.

Sees was taken on August 12 by the combined efforts of CCA and CCR at 12:10 PM. This engagement included dispersing a battalion of Germans overtaken on the road to Sees. Just as 5th Armored's CCA left Sees heading north toward Argentan, they ran into the point of a column of the 116th Panzer Division that had apparently intended to enter Sees from the west and northwest. Elements of the 1st SS and 2nd Panzer Divisions were also in the area.

In a running firefight that lasted for several hours that afternoon, Regnier's CCA used massed tanks and artillery to destroy the elements of 116th Panzer that had been blocking their way. Shattered remnants of the German formations were sent reeling back to defensive positions and reformed on the high ground near Argentan.

That evening CCA approached Argentan from the southeast. By 7:00 PM, "CCA was on the edge of their goal, Argentan, just south of the Orne River." Apparently it was decided that it was not feasible to continue the attack at night because CCA withdrew to higher ground to the southwest that overlooked the town. "Patrols were successful in getting into Argentan during the night and they reported intense tank and infantry activity." Meanwhile, Oliver had sent two task forces to cover his division's eastern flank. The division's history says, "Task Force Boyer dug in for the night at Exmes. Task Force Hamberg established a road block at the road junction five miles south of GACE by 2100 hours."

The German defenses in Argentan on August 12 were not coordinated because their senior officers were out of contact with the units they commanded. Many of them, like Heinrich Eberbach, ran out of messengers during the battle. Eberbach later wrote, "No report had arrived from 116th Panzer Division; whether Sees was still in our hands was not known."

Later that afternoon Eberbach received a report that indicated the 116th Panzer Division had run into stiff resistance on its way to Sees. "In a subsequent report which reached headquarters in the evening," Eberbach wrote, "we learned that those advancing elements of 116th Panzer Division had been destroyed by heavy artillery fire from masses of enemy tanks and also that the enemy was forcing his way towards Argentan." Sees was being defended by a company of bakers. The 9th Panzer Division had been reduced to "one infantry battalion, one artillery battalion and a half-dozen tanks." Remnants "of the 708th German Infantry Division and the 6th [Parachute] Division were on their way to barricade the area of Gace-Laigle." The German southern flank had been shattered by Haislip's powerful XV Corps.

On the night of August 12/13, German defenses in the vicinity of Argentan consisted of one antiaircraft regiment, weak security elements, and the remnants of 116th Panzer that had escaped destruction on the road to Sees earlier that day. The Germans could count no more than 80 tanks on a front of over 45 miles from Briouze to L'Aigle, and many of those tanks were immobilized. They were terribly short of fuel and ammunition since XV Corps had overrun the German Seventh Army's Supply Depots at Alençon.

According to British intelligence, the German defenders at Argentan were close to a complete collapse. Winterbotham noted, "We knew that what was left of Eberbach's armor was virtually immobile; he was short of ammunition and fuel. It looked as if the American corps [Haislip's XV Corps] could close the gap."

An American half-track towing a trailer speeds past a line of German equipment destroyed by overwhelming Allied air strikes along a road near Ardennes, France.

For four days, from the evening of August 12 through the arrival of II SS Panzer Corps on August 16, the southern German flank at Argentan-St. Leonard-Gace lay vulnerable to Allied attack. What was obvious to British intelligence at the time is also obvious to historians; the only reason the German southern flank held for so long was the "halt order" given to Patton on August 13.

Mobile elements of the 2nd Panzer and 1st SS Panzer Divisions arrived during the night of August 13/14, but their protective infantry shield did not arrive until the following day. It was not until the arrival of the II SS Panzer Corps on the 16th that Eberbach considered his defensive positions fairly adequate. But no sooner did they arrive than II SS Panzer Corps was gone, sent out of the pocket on the night of August 17 to Vimoutiers to prepare for the attack that, it was hoped, would hold open the last German escape routes between Trun and Chambois.

Leclerc's 2nd Armored Division was driving toward Ecouche-Argentan on Haislip's western flank. On August 12 they occupied Carrouges. Leclerc sent one combat command left of the Forest of Ecouves, one down the middle of the forest, and the other on the right, where they got tangled up with CCA of 5th Armored Division. By midday on August 13, 2nd French Armored had made excellent progress, CCB was covering the crossroads at Castelle, and CCR was a little late after their encounter with elements of 9th Panzer on the road through the center of the forest.

Leclerc arrived with his division headquarters and CCA at the inter-Army Group boundary between Ecouche and Argentan, ready to continue the attack. General Jacques Leclerc, like George Patton, believed that the attack of XV Corps from Argentan to Falaise should have gone forward.

That afternoon a detachment of 60 soldiers from the 10th Company, 3rd Tchad Foot Regiment, 2nd French Armored Division, walked into Argentan by way of the back paths to see "how many Jerries there are in the northern part of the town between the town hall and the Falaise road junction." The afternoon patrol reported, "Argentan seemed deserted. Two or three reconnaissance cars ... a few not very aggressive infantrymen." Other reports indicated German tank activity in Argentan, but French soldiers from the 3rd Tchad Foot completed their patrol without losing a single man.

Bradley and Patton had planned on using Maj. Gen. Walton H. Walker's XX Corps to cover Haislip's left flank and Maj. Gen. Gilbert R. Cook's XII Corps to cover his right flank. Neither of these corps was available for that purpose, however. On August 11, Montgomery ordered Bradley to withhold a corps of at least three divisions in the Le Mans area in preparation for the wider Seine envelopment, should the Germans try to escape the Allied trap being set between Argentan and Falaise.

Cook's XII and Walker's XX Corps remained at Le Mans on Montgomery's orders until late afternoon on August 14. This represented a fundamental disagreement with General Eisenhower, Montgomery's boss, who had asked his generals to destroy the enemy on their front, rather than simply occupy ground.

Montgomery's orders to Bradley on August 11 also produced an immediate argument from Bradley. The flavor of the argument was picked up by Bradley's aide, Chester Hansen, and faithfully recorded in his diary: "There is some discussion now concerning an alleged disagreement in strategy between Brad and Monty concerning the timing for this northward movement. I am told that Monty is anxious that the continued movement toward Paris in seizure of more terrain, while Brad is equally insistent that we turn north now at Le Mans and trap the German army containing the hinge of the 1st Army and those elements following the 30th and 12th Corps in the 2nd British Army."

Bradley had remarked that he was concerned about Haislip's [XV Corps] open left flank, and later wrote, "On the after-

Rue des Archives/The Granger Collection, New York

Greeted by cheering civilians, vehicles of the 2nd French Armored Division roll into Alençon on August 14, 1944.

noon of August 12, as Haislip's forces closed on the 'boundary' near Argentan, Ike came to my CP to monitor Haislip's progress, and he remained through dinner." That afternoon, after securing Eisenhower's approval, Bradley ordered Maj. Gen. J. Lawton Collins to drive his VII Corps northeast from the Mortain sector to close on Haislip's open left flank. Bradley believed that VII Corps were the best troops he had in Normandy.

Although Eisenhower and Bradley did not record much of their conversation on the evening of August 12 for future historians, Bradley later admitted that they did discuss Haislip's open flank. Bradley would probably have mentioned Montgomery's orders of August 11 that instructed him to withhold three U.S. divisions in the vicinity of Le Mans in preparation for the wider envelopment. The two generals would have also discussed Montgomery's change in plans from their August 8 telephone conversation, when Montgomery had verbally agreed to conduct the short envelopment between Alençon-Argentan-Falaise. Now, in a move that mystified Bradley, Montgomery was apparently going to send the Americans off to the Seine while the Germans were still fighting in Normandy.

With the sudden disagreement in tactics, one might have expected that either Bradley or Eisenhower would pick up the telephone and talk to Montgomery. Amazingly, neither Eisenhower nor Bradley later admitted discussing the issue with Montgomery. Indeed, Bradley states categorically that he never asked Montgomery to allow the Americans to move north of the inter-Army Group boundary line at Argentan.

The historical record says otherwise. Thanks to detailed notes on research conducted by eminent U.S. Army historian Dr. Forrest C. Pogue and one of Montgomery's 21st Army Group staff officers, we have a firsthand account of the "halt order." Dr. Pogue conducted the interview on May 30 and 31, 1947. The interview was given by Montgomery's intelligence officer, Brigadier E.T. "Bill" Williams, who said he was there on the evening of August 12 when the telephone call went through. These are Dr. Pogue's notes:

"Remember (he) was in Freddie's [De Guingand, Montgomery's chief of staff] truck near Bayeux when 2nd French Armored made its swing up and crossed the road towards Falaise. Monty said tell Bradley they ought to get back. Bradley was indignant. We were indignant on Bradley's behalf. De Guingand said, 'Monty is too tidy.' Freddie thought Bradley should have been allowed to join the Poles at Trun. Monty missed closing the sack. Bradley couldn't understand. Thought we were missing our opportunities over inter-Army rights. However, it should be pointed out that Monty regarded Bradley was under his command; therefore his decision was not made on the basis of inter-Army considerations ... Master of tidiness. He was fundamentally more interested in full envelopment than this inner envelopment. We fell between two stools. He [Montgomery] missed his chance of closing at the Seine by doing the envelopment at Falaise. Monty didn't want to do the short hook.

"Freddie, using my information and his own ideas, persuaded Monty into that with Bradley arguing for it from his angle. Monty didn't want to do it but saw a chance to pull it off after he had pushed Bradley back. In the first stage he was looking toward a grander basis, and he thought 'Hell, those guys are excited; they are spoiling the way we are going.' Then Freddie and Bradley favor the short hook. He agrees, but it's already too late. So he misses both opportunities."

Brigadier Williams's interview with Forrest Pogue is the only firsthand account of the "halt order" at the Falaise Gap that has surfaced. Most other statements about the order are deliberately misleading. The evidence that Montgomery issued the "halt order" is conclusive. Maj. Gen. Sir Francis De Guingand agrees with Williams's account: "My impressions at the time were that [Montgomery] had been a little too optimistic about the probable progress of 21st Army Group.... It is just possible that the gap might have been closed a little earlier if no restrictions had been imposed upon the 12th Army Group Commander as to the limit of his northward movement." The only general in Normandy who could have imposed boundary restrictions on the "northward movement of Bradley's 12th U.S. Army Group" was General Bernard Law Montgomery. Bradley denied that this ever happened, but De Guingand has a solid reputation for historical accuracy.

The diary of Air Vice Marshal Stephen C. Strafford is also in agreement with the mem-

ories of Brigadier E.T. Williams and Sir Francis De Guingand. In a diary entry from August 14, 1944, he recorded Bradley's "general intensions. [Bradley] stated that immediately the Germans were pinned in the area west of Argentan/Falaise, he wished to detach a minimum force necessary to complete the tidying up of the Brittany peninsula and the opening of the Brittany ports and then to drive east from Alençon in an encircling movement against Paris through the gap as early as possible. He states that the American forces had little opposition between Alençon and Argentan and had started toward Falaise, but had been instructed by the C-in-C, 21 Army Group to halt on the inter-army group boundary. There had been few German troops in the area when the Third Army forward elements had arrived there and he was confident that the Third Army now held a firm front on the arc to the north of Falaise."

Bradley confirmed in Strafford's diary what is obvious from historical research. Despite claims of stout German opposition at Argentan made after the event to cover up the Allies' failure to close the gap on August 12 and 13, there was in fact little German opposition in front of Patton's Third Army. According to the German commander, Heinrich Eberbach, "What was left of 116th Panzer Division reached the Argentan area. Together with the antiaircraft regiment, they took up a thin line on both sides of the town and held their positions."

After the Americans had captured Alençon and Sees, General Eberbach warned Army Group B of "the necessity of an immediate and quick retreat on a large scale because otherwise a complete collapse [of the southern flank] was unavoidable." The vulnerable Germans were held in Normandy on orders from Hitler until the afternoon of August 16. Their escape could not begin until the night of August 17/18, five days after 5th U.S. Armored closed on the inter-Army Group boundary line near Argentan.

General George Patton was not convinced that Bradley was telling the truth; he saw through the ruse immediately. A few days after his telephone conversation with Bradley's chief of staff, General Leven Allen, Patton wrote, "I told him ... it was perfectly feasible to continue the operation [the drive to Falaise]. Allen repeated the order [from Bradley] to halt on the line and consolidate…. I believe that the order ... emanated from the 21st Army Group, and was either due to [British] jealousy of the Americans or to utter ignorance of the situation or to a combination of the two. It

ullstein bild / The Granger Collection, New York

Camouflaged to avoid detection from the air, German SdKfz 7 half-tracked troop carriers move through a French village in hopes of breaking out of the encirclement.

is very regrettable that the XV Corps was ordered to halt, because it could have gone on to Falaise and made contact with the Canadians northwest of that point and definitely and positively closed the escape gap." Patton was right on both accounts. There was very little German opposition in front of his army on August 12 or 13.

The commanding general of the 2nd French Armored Division, Maj. Gen. Jacques Leclerc, was also bitterly disappointed that the operation was not allowed to go forward. Shortly after the battle, he wrote to Charles de Gaulle, "For several days I really had the impression that I was reliving the situation of 1940 in reverse. Complete disarray in the enemy ranks, columns surprised, etc. The picture of this attack would have been superb had it been decided to close the Argentan-Falaise Pocket. The Supreme Command was formally opposed to it. History will be the judge." Historians have been too long at their task.

The German commander for their southern flank, General Heinrich Eberbach, spent most of the night of August 12/13 stuck in a traffic jam while trying to move his headquarters from Vieux Pont to Chenedouil. Eddy Florentin wrote, "At Bourg-Saint Leonard, an eyewitness observed an extraordinary sight in the afternoon [August 12]: German vehicles of all kinds, tanks, small and large trucks, motor bicycles and carts fleeing en route for Chambois. This time it was a debacle. Some of the cars had lost their windows, others had no doors left. We saw one, carrying officers, with no front tires and another which had only three wheels." While joyful French residents watched in amusement, the once-proud German Army was disintegrating into chaos.

The German defeat in Normandy had turned into a rout. Those German soldiers working in the support branches of administration, medicine, and supply were fleeing from the American tanks as fast as they could. Eberbach later wrote, "Catch lines in rear of the front had to be inaugurated. Even the SS was no exception to this rule. The 1st SS Panzer Division had never before fought so miserably as at that time. The fighting morale of the German troops had cracked." As a result of the chaos within the pocket, many German generals were out of contact with their units.

After Eisenhower and Bradley discussed moving Maj. Gen. Collins's VII Corps from the Mortain sector to close off Haislip's open left flank west of Argentan, whatever else they discussed during the evening of August 12 was never made public. They certainly discussed Montgomery's refusal to allow the Americans to move north of the inter-Army Group boundary line at Argentan. Brigadier E.T. Williams remembered that Bradley was indignant. Bradley liked to have Eisenhower by his side when he talked to Montgomery, for apparently he did not trust Monty. Bradley may have asked Eisenhower what he was going to do about the situation. Although Bradley rarely showed any emotion, this time was probably different. If Bradley had found the courage to get indignant with Montgomery, he was probably not restrained in expressing himself to Eisenhower.

On the evening of August 12, Bradley was trying to decide whether to send Patton north of Montgomery's arbitrary inter-Army Group boundary line. His final decision was probably not clear in his mind. Two events were continuing to develop that could influence his decision to send Patton north against Montgomery's wishes.

First, ULTRA had alerted the Allies to an impending German attack against Haislip's vulnerable western flank. If the Germans hit Haislip hard during the night of August 12/13, Haislip and Patton might be happy to dig in on defensive positions south of Montgomery's boundary line.

The second outstanding issue was Collins's VII Corps. How long would it take Collins's divisions to cover Haislip's left flank? If Collins ran into trouble during the night, it might be prudent to order Haislip to stop south of the inter-Army Group bound-

ABOVE: American troops rest in the rubble of Argentan next to a knocked-out Panther medium tank and wonder why their offensive to seal off the enemy escape routes has ground to a halt. OPPOSITE: GIs enter the damaged French village of Argentan, August 20, 1944, where the closing of the gap came too late to prevent the German withdrawal from being partially successful.

Both: National Archives

ary and prepare for the German attack. But if Collins found few Germans blocking their way and experienced little trouble in closing with 2nd French Armored Division on Haislip's left, it might be possible to send elements of both VII Corps and XV Corps north side by side in a double envelopment.

Bradley may have thought about giving VII Corps the road axis Ranes-Ecouche-Argentan-Falaise; he would then be required to move XV Corps a few miles east to the road axis St. Leonard-Trun-Fresne. This would have created a double cordon around the Germans. Eisenhower and Bradley may have agreed to delay the final decision on Montgomery's plan to keep the Americans south of his inter-Army Group boundary line until the next day. They would wait and see what happened to Collins's and Haislip's corps over the night of August 12/13.

Haislip's XV Corps had been cleared to attack up to the boundary line south of Ecouche-Argentan-St. Leonard and cut off the enemy's escape routes to the east. By the evening of August 12, XV Corps had fulfilled that mission, but nothing was forthcoming from Third Army Headquarters until 8 o'clock that night. Then message No. 4 was sent to: "COMMANDING GENERAL, XV CORPS: UPON CAPTURE OF ARGENTAN PUSH ON SLOWLY DIRECTION OF FALAISE ALLOWING YOUR REAR ELEMENTS TO CLOSE. ROAD: ARGENTAN-FALAISE YOUR LEFT BOUNDARY INCLUSIVE. UPON ARRIVAL FALAISE CONTINUE TO PUSH ON SLOWLY UNTIL YOU CONTACT OUR ALLIES." The message was probably delivered some time that night.

Early on the morning of August 13, Regnier's CCA of the 5th Armored Division attacked east of Argentan and suffered heavy tank losses. Apparently the attack got caught out in the open just as the morning fog lifted. CCB was supposed to attack just to the right of CCA, but the attack was called off just before it was to start.

In his "Report after Combat" General Haislip said that he was trying to initiate the attack plan from the night before when orders came through "directing the Corps to halt on the Orne [River]." At one point during the morning General Oliver was warned not to send his men beyond the line Argentan-Gace because a large-scale bombing mission was planned for the area north of that line. Although a series of halt orders restricted XV Corps' movement to the north, there was no indication that these orders were meant to deny Third Army the

authority to cross the inter-Army Group boundary line just south of Argentan.

Sunday morning, August 13, must have been hectic at 12th Army Group Headquarters. There was a lot going on. The hand-wringing over Haislip's open flank had come to naught. Eberbach simply did not have the forces he needed to attack XV Corps' flank; the meager force available to him at Argentan was able to defend itself only because the Americans never attacked it in strength. Historian Russell F. Weigley wrote, "The true reason why the German front held at Argentan was the halt order."

Just after their staff meeting at around 10 AM, Bradley got an excited call from Courtney Hodges of First Army. Hodges told Bradley, "General Collins [VII Corps] called asking for more 'territory to take.' The Division was, in some places, on the very boundary itself, and General Collins felt sure that he could take Falaise and Argentan, close the gap, and 'do the job' before the British even started to move."

Hodges was officially endorsing Collins's request and was asking for an extension of their boundaries so that VII Corps could continue the attack. "But the sad news came back that First Army was to go no further than at first designated, except that a small salient around Ranes would become ours." Bradley now had two Army commanders [Patton at Third and Hodges at First] demanding a chance at "the opportunity of a lifetime," a chance to destroy two German armies by completing the drive to Falaise. There were now nearly 250,000 American soldiers sitting on the vulnerable German southern flank.

Bradley was probably mad right down to the tip of his toes; he was past indignant. He did not trust his temper on the telephone with Montgomery, so he asked 12th Army Group's Operations Officer, Brig. Gen. A. Franklin Kibler, to do it. Then, following orders, Kibler, "phoned Montgomery's headquarters trying to get permission for Patton to go beyond Argentan. He spoke with General De Guingand ... who told him bluntly: 'I am sorry, Kibler. We cannot grant the permission.'"

Kibler's telephone call represents the last recorded American attempt to move north of Argentan. At around 10:30 that morning, Bradley left his headquarters and drove straight to Shellburst, Eisenhower's headquarters, to seek Ike's help with their "Montgomery problem."

Any questions Eisenhower and Bradley may have had about Patton's ability to attack north from Argentan and VII Corps' ability to close on Haislip's open flank had been put to rest overnight. Neither Bradley nor Eisenhower chose to make their discussions that Sunday morning a part of the public record. The historian must carefully infer what they discussed from what they did after their conversation ended.

Bradley's concerns about Montgomery's "halt order" may have poured out to Eisenhower in an emotional torrent. Bradley probably told Eisenhower that the "halt order" was wrong, dead wrong. It was contrary to everything they had learned about military strategy. Bradley likely warned Eisenhower about Patton (who was probably on the phone trying to reach either general) and the American newsmen. If American reporters ever discovered Montgomery's chicanery, Eisenhower could kiss his precious Anglo-American alliance goodbye.

Eisenhower probably waited patiently for Bradley to finish. Then he told Bradley that he had given their "Montgomery problem" considerable thought. Ike may have told Bradley not to worry about George Patton; Eisenhower would take care of that. But then Eisenhower probably said that he agreed with Bradley about the press. If the American press discovered that the ranking British officer in Europe had ordered two American armies to halt on an arbitrary inter-Army Group boundary line for reasons that defied military logic, the Anglo-American alliance might be shaken to its core. Eisenhower had carefully considered the aftermath and it worried him.

The supreme commander probably thought that it would be too risky to allow Montgomery's "halt order" to stand as a direct order from the senior British officer in France. He then tried to convince Bradley that it would be politically expedient for them to handle Montgomery's "halt order" within the U.S. Army's chain of command. Eisenhower would then have asked Bradley to issue the "halt order" in his name, taking Montgomery out of the controversy. He probably told Bradley to make up any reason he liked for issuing the order. Eisenhower promised Bradley his full support in later explaining the "halt decision." Bradley probably cringed, but in the end he agreed to do what Eisenhower asked. He would issue the "halt order" to General Patton in his name.

At about 11:20 that Sunday morning, while he was still at Eisenhower's headquarters, Bradley called his own headquarters and talked to his chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Leven C. Allen. He directed Allen to call Third Army headquarters and give them an order to halt on the Argentan-Sees boundary line in his (Bradley's) name—with the added provision that the boundary line was not to be crossed under any circumstances. At 11:30 Allen, following Bradley's very specific instructions, called and delivered Bradley's "halt order" to Patton's chief of staff, Maj. Gen. Hugh J. Gaffey.

Eisenhower liked to lecture his subordinates about the virtues of destroying the enemy force rather than simply pushing the enemy back and occupying the ground. He was right, especially in Normandy where they had the Germans virtually surrounded. He was also fond of quoting the 19th-century military strategist Carl von Clausewitz, who wrote, "It follows that the destruction of the enemy's force underlies all military action; all plans are ultimately based on it.... Thus it is evident that destruction of the enemy forces is always the superior, more efficient means, with which other cannot compete."

Eisenhower had apparently decided that the Anglo-American alliance was worth more than the men whose lives would be sacrificed to the bad tactical decision he had just endorsed.

Ike had refused to take command of Allied ground forces on August 1 when Patton's Third Army was activated. He cited poor communication facilities at his new headquarters near Granville, but the real reason seemed to be his reluctance to demote Montgomery.

National Archives

This photo of bodies and blasted equipment grimly illustrates the fate of thousands of Germans who were unable to escape the killing zone near Chambois.

Unfortunately, Eisenhower's willingness to pamper British political sensitivities did little to address the Allies' main problem. Russell Weigley put it bluntly: "The Allied armies in Europe simply lacked one of the prerequisites of military success, unity of command."

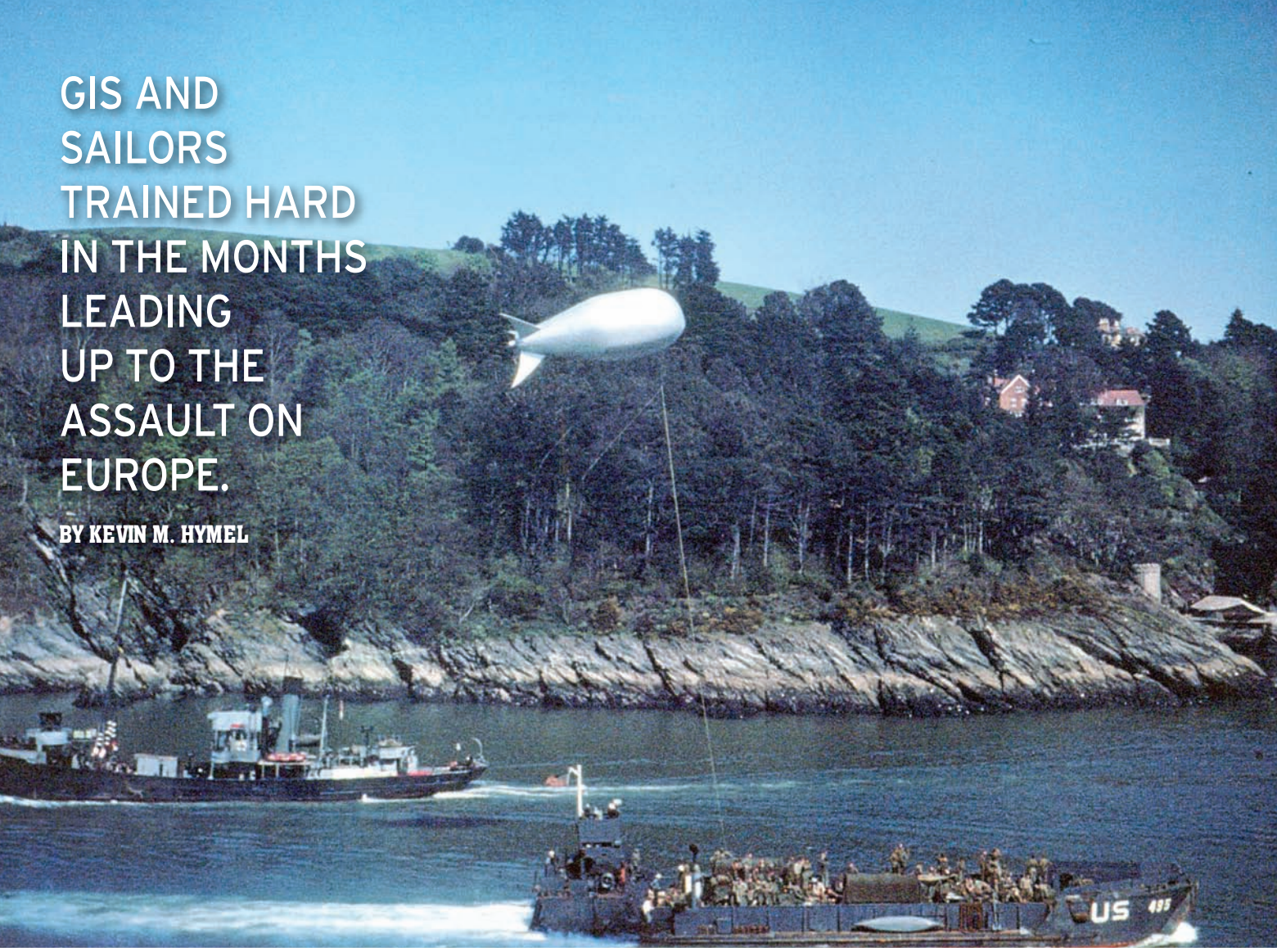
How many Germans escaped through the Falaise Gap? The Allies killed 10,000 Germans during the battle and captured another 50,000 after the pocket was closed. Martin Blumenson, using Royal Air Force estimates, calculated that on August 19 there were 270,000 Germans either in the Falaise pocket or heading for the Seine River. Subtracting the German dead and prisoners from this total leaves about 210,000 Germans who escaped through the Falaise Gap. Canadian Maj. Gen. Richard Rohmer comes up with the same total (210,000) in his book, *Patton's Gap*.

Allied soldiers paid a terrible price for Montgomery's failure to destroy the German armies trapped in the Falaise pocket. Russell Weigley wrote, "German higher headquarters for the most part escaped the [Falaise Gap] envelopment…. These headquarters [later] demonstrated the remarkable rapidity with which they could reconstitute divisions and corps around themselves."

All 10 of the German panzer divisions that fought in Normandy were later reconstituted around cadres of men hardened in battle who had escaped from the Falaise Gap. Nine of the 10 reconstituted German panzer divisions would go back into action in December 1944 against Courtney Hodges's First U.S. Army during the Battle of the Bulge.

General Eisenhower had warned his boss, George C. Marshall, about Montgomery. "Eisenhower reported back to Marshall that ... Montgomery's procrastination had added weeks to the length of the Italian operation and cost the Allies thousands of lives. He now showed every evidence of doing the same in the battles in northwestern Europe."

Despite Montgomery's severe limitations, British efforts to wrest command from Eisenhower would continue through the end of the war. It would eventually require every ounce of Eisenhower's tact and forbearance to save the Anglo-American political alliance. The military alliance, which Eisenhower had worked so hard to protect, was gone. It had been sacrificed to British vanity at the Falaise Gap. □



GIS AND SAILORS TRAINED HARD IN THE MONTHS LEADING UP TO THE ASSAULT ON EUROPE.

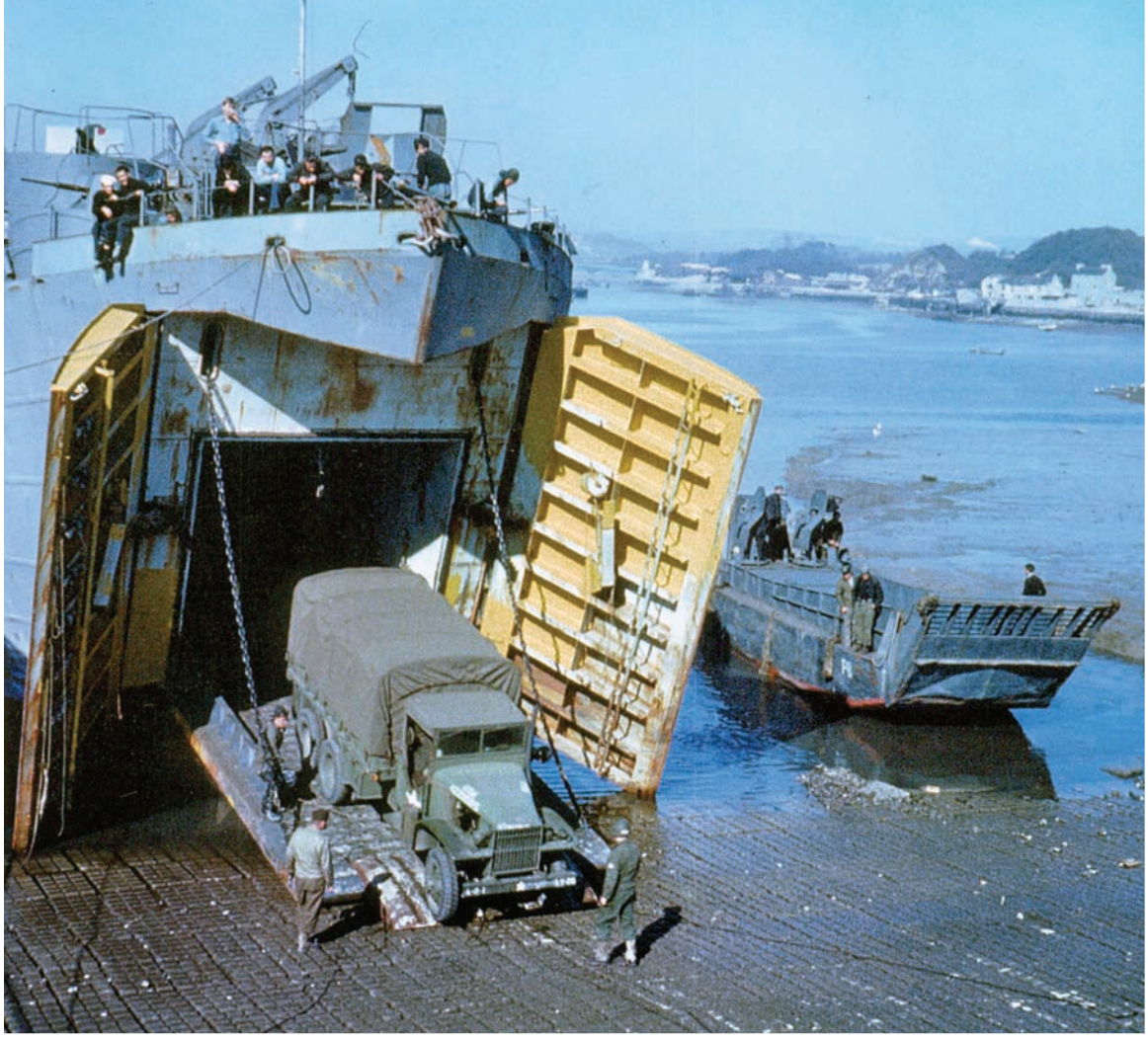
BY KEVIN M. HYMEL

Preparing *for* D-Day

THE AMERICAN ARMY that stormed the beaches of Normandy was mostly green but well trained. For months men practiced climbing down rope ladders into landing craft, exiting in columns of threes, racing across a beach, assaulting pillboxes, storming bluffs, and digging foxholes. Medics treated and evacuated the mock-wounded, while supply soldiers loaded and unloaded ships.

To make the training as realistic as possible, soldiers and sailors fired live ammunition. "It was unnecessary for the instructors to tell us to stay low to the ground," recalled Sergeant John Slaughter. "Strategically placed explosives boomed all around, which made them seem like the real thing." In one exercise, the Navy saturated the beach with 80mm mortar fire. "The bombardment was not lifted in time," recalled Private Harold Baumgartner, "and Andy Peacock was wounded in his upper lip."

The routines were exhaustive and redundant, but the soldiers' ability to act without thinking became the difference between life and death on the battlefield. The exercises also gave the soldiers confidence that they were ready to go to war and best the soldiers of Adolf Hitler's armies. ■

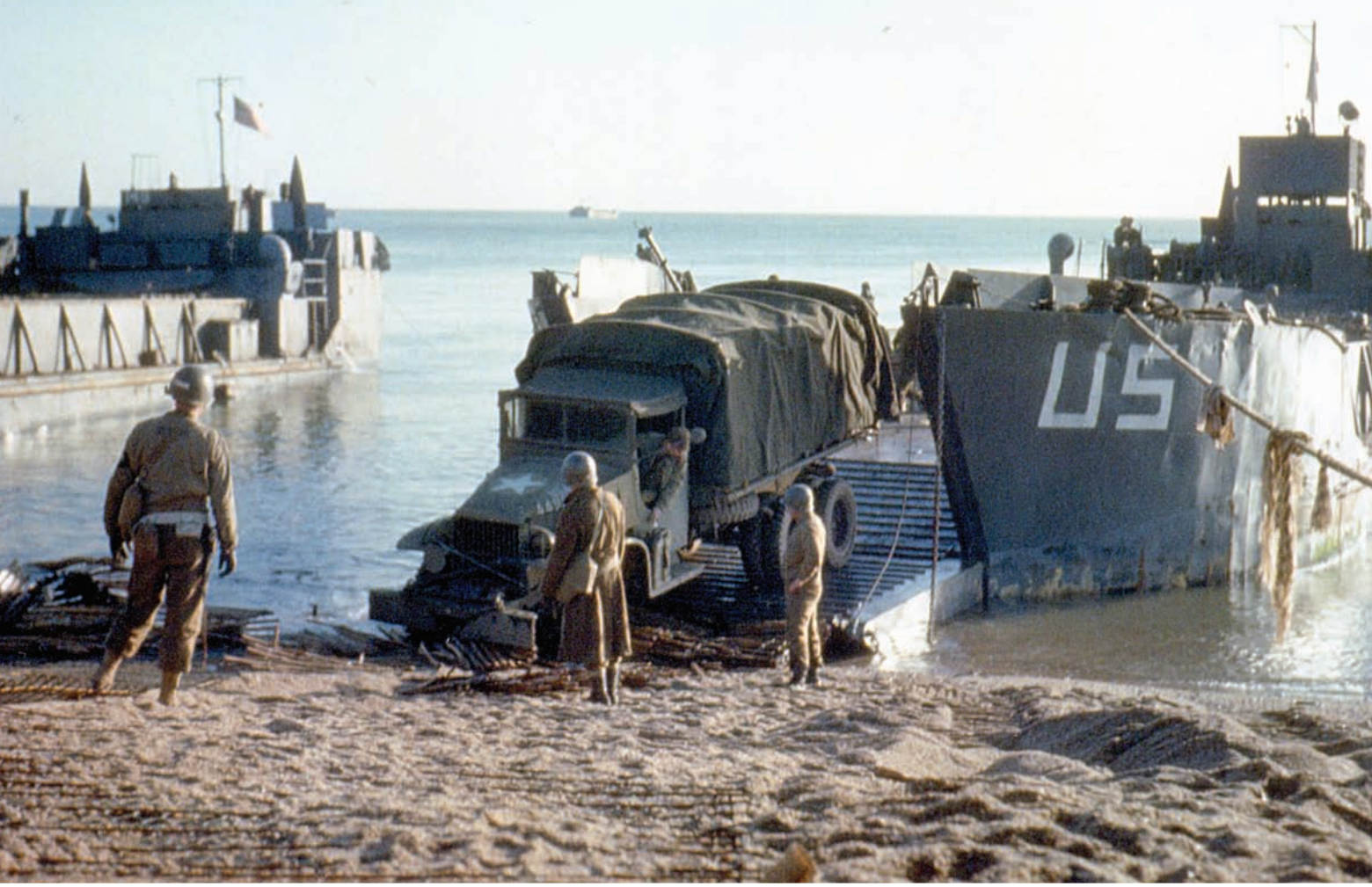


LEFT
A 4th Infantry Division 2½-ton truck backs onto an LST at Berth Port. An LCM sits to its left.

BELOW LEFT
Navy corpsmen practice mending wounded soldiers. This training would come into heavy practice on June 6, 1944.

BELOW RIGHT
On a cloudy dawn, LCTs and other ships practice the D-Day invasion on an English beach. Such large-scale dry runs were vital to working out the D-Day logistics.

OPPOSITE
Under the protection of a barrage balloon, a Landing Craft Patrol heads to Slapton Sands, a British beach similar to the Omaha and Utah Beaches of Normandy.


US


HAPPY

TOP LEFT
A truck rolls out of an LST at Slapton Sands.

TOP RIGHT
Navy beach masters take a break from their training with a friendly game of darts. The black bag on the shooter's hip holds a gas mask, attesting to the anxiety of a gas attack so close to the invasion.

BOTTOM LEFT
U.S. Navy Beach Masters communicate with ships offshore with walkie-talkies and signal lamps.

BOTTOM CENTER
Soldiers drive a jeep off an LST. Notice the snorkel attached to the right side of the windshield to prevent saltwater from pouring into the exhaust.

BOTTOM RIGHT
As the date of D-Day approaches, GIs shave their heads. Some did it for sanitary reasons, other to look like American Indians, whom, it was rumored, terrified Adolf Hitler. The crudely drawn woman on the soldier's jacket attests to what the GIs miss the most.

akg-images

Behind a wall of flame, a squad of German Fallschirmjäger assault the Belgian citadel of Eben-Emael, purportedly the strongest fortress in all Europe.

HOW DID THE WORLD'S FIRST GLIDERBORNE ASSAULT GRAB THE WORLD'S STRONGEST FORTRESS?

CAPTURED!

BELGIUM'S MIGHTY FORT EBEN-EMAEL

AT 4:25 AM in the predawn darkness of May 10, 1940, nine German gliders silently skidded to a stop on the hilltop of the most heavily defended fortress in Europe, disgorging 71 highly trained German Fallschirmjäger.

These paratroopers were about to attack what was considered the most impregnable fortress in Europe—a mission that was regarded as nothing short of suicidal. Yet, by 11:30 AM the next day a Belgian officer clutching a broom handle with a white bedsheet attached, and accompanied by a trembling bugler, appeared at the entrance of Fort Eben-Emael to surrender the massive concrete fortification to the German forces. Only six German Fallschirmjäger were killed and 15 wounded, while 780 dispirited Belgian troops marched out of Fort Eben-Emael's casemate, hands held high in surrender.

Adolf Hitler's big gamble on this early strike of World War II had worked. The gateway to Belgium had been forced. The German offensive rolled over the Albert Canal and into the neighboring country. By May 28, after only 18 days of fighting, Belgium had capitulated and German panzers had plunged deeply into France through the green, rolling hills of the Belgian Ardennes Forest, outflanking the French Maginot Line.

BY ROY STEVENSON

Not only had Belgium fallen, but Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and France had also surrendered or were on the brink. By the end of May British and French forces would be forced to evacuate the Continent at Dunkirk. This marked the beginning of five long, dark years of German occupation until Europe would be liberated by Allied forces after the D-Day landings on June 6, 1944, and by Soviet forces coming from the east.

World War II literature is filled with examples of shock attacks where sheer audacity, combined with swift action in a surprise lightning strike, has resulted in a small number of well-trained commandos overcoming a numerically superior force of enemy soldiers in short order. Although relatively unknown outside Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany, the dramatic lighnting strike that led to the fall of Fort Eben-Emael is, for many reasons, World War II's most impressive example of such a shock action. Despite its relative obscurity, the classic airborne invasion and capture of Fort Eben-Emael in May 1940 is still used today at West Point and other military colleges as a classic textbook example of the effectiveness of airborne operations.

The capture of Fort Eben-Emael is renowned for a number of military firsts. It was the world's first gliderborne attack, where specially trained glidermen were inserted into an enemy's defensive position. It was the first time that hollow shape-charge explosives were used to breach steel and concrete fortifications that were considered impregnable. And the attack on Eben-Emael (and the adjacent Albert Canal bridges) also marked the first useof Hitler's Blitzkrieg tactics. This bold action changed the way military strategists would prosecute war in the future, and it still heavily influences military planning today.

Why did Hitler choose to attack the most heavily armed fortress in all of Europe as his opening thrust in World War II? Fort Eben-Emael lay within 15 miles of

the German border, south of the Dutch city of Maastricht, and adjacent to the Meuse River, the border between the Netherlands and Belgium. The fort was situated to cover the Vise Gap through which it was anticipated that German forces would pour when they began their invasion of the Netherlands and Belgium. It was also the portal to the Gembloux Gap that led to routes into central Belgium; if Eben-Emael fell, the heart of Belgium would be open to invasion.

Eben-Emael was the foremost central bastion in a large chain of 12 formidable and heavily manned Belgian fortresses interspersed with natural obstacles of marshlands, rivers, valleys, and mountains that ringed the city of Liège and protected the entry to the flatlands of central Belgium. This ring of fortresses was named Position Fortifiée de Liège.

Fort Eben-Emael was designed to be the showstopper. Lying alongside the newly constructed 50-yard-wide Albert Canal, dug as a strategic defensive barrier, the fort had large gun casemates emplaced into the side of the canal. Their function was to lay covering fire up and down the canal to protect the three large steel bridges that a German army would have to cross to enter Belgium and the Netherlands.

The importance of these three bridges cannot be underestimated. Hitler's divisions first needed to cross the Kanne, Vroenhoven, and Veldwezelt Bridges to enter Belgium. If Hitler's advance forces could be stopped cold here, or so the thiking went, there would be enough time for the Belgian and the Dutch armies to prepare defensive positions farther inland, and the invasion would be held up long enough for the French and British armies to rush to the scene.

Thus, Eben-Emael's strategic position was a linchpin in overcoming other defenses behind it. If Eben-Emael could not hold, Belgium and the Netherlands would be unable to contain an invasion, and their defenses would likely unravel, exposing the heart of Belgium.

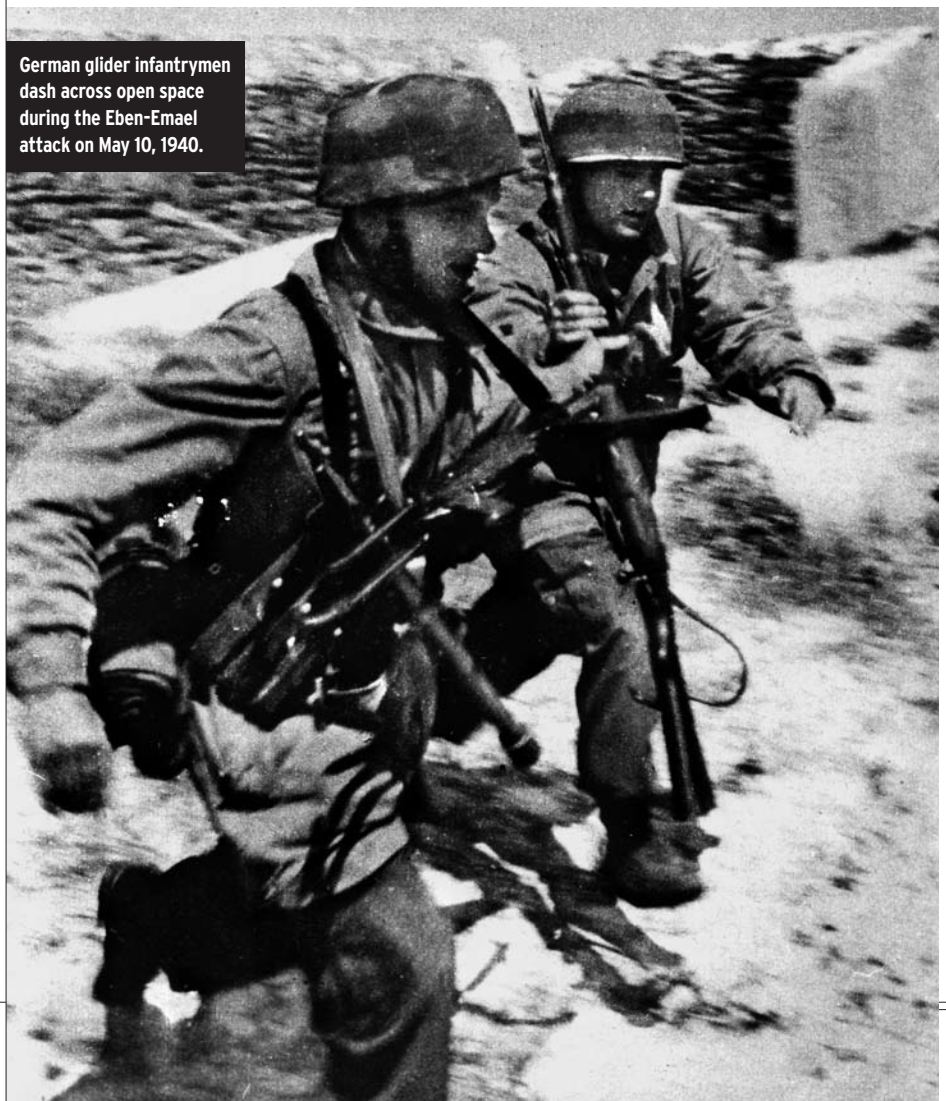
The fort was built between 1932 and 1935 on Saint Peter's Hill, a strong defensive position and natural overlook from which hostile military movement could be seen miles away. It was literally built into the hill at a cost of 50 million Belgian francs, a massive cost at the time for a small country like Belgium.

Eben-Emael's design rendered it virtually unassailable by conventional ground forces; in fact, it was built to "deter an aggressor from the east from contemplating breaching Belgian neutrality."

Shaped like an arrowhead or diamond, with the sharp point facing north, the fort measures 3,600 feet from north to south and 2,600 feet from east to west, and occupies an area the size of 70 football fields. The fort's defenses took advantage of natural and engineered obstacles that would make it too costly to attack. The Albert Canal, running along its eastern edge, lined with near-vertical concrete sides more than 130 feet high, rendered assault from that quarter impossible. To the west, the fort was bordered by the Geer River and reinforced by an antitank ditch. To the south it was defended by a 30-foot-wide antitank ditch 20 feet deep.

Fort Eben-Emael's offensive and defensive capabilities and weaponry were awesome, even by today's standards. To intimidate anyone contemplating attacking the fort, it boasted a total of 16 gun emplacements. The top of the fort, 120 feet higher than the entry blockhouse at the base, was dotted with seven fortified blockhouses armed with 60mm antitank cannon and machine guns, topped with small concrete observation domes.

Six other thick, concrete casemates were sprinkled around the top of the fortress, four of which were armed with triple 75mm guns with a range of seven miles. Two of these casemates were positioned to fire to the north where the Albert Canal and Maastricht



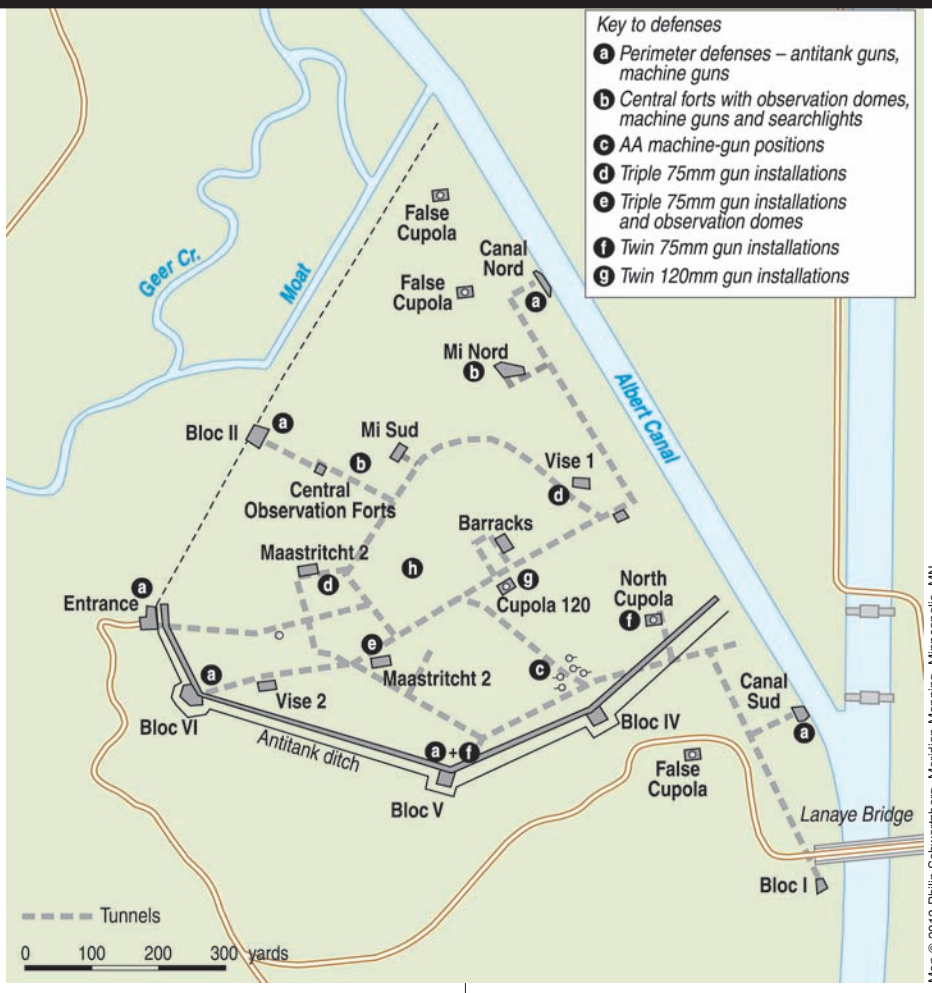
German glider infantrymen dash across open space during the Eben-Emael attack on May 10, 1940.

BPK / Art Resource

were located, thus they were called the Maastricht casemates. Two casemates faced south toward the small town of Vise, and were named Vise 1 and Vise 2. These casemates covered the southern bridges across the Albert Canal and could also be used to fire on the other fortresses around Liège if they came under attack.

Three large, flying-saucer-shaped cupolas with 12-inch-thick, 360-degree rotating armored domes fitted with twin 75mm guns that could fire in all directions were also placed on top of the fortress. The domes could rise four feet above the casemate for better observation and firing ele-

National Archives



Map © 2012 Philip Schwartzberg, Meridian Mapping, Minneapolis, MN

ABOVE: Strategically located on commanding heights overlooking the Albert Canal and several key bridges, the mammoth fortress of Eben-Emael could only be successfully penetrated from the air—by glider troops. LEFT: In charge of the lightning raid was Hauptmann Walter Koch, who commanded 420 glider troops and 42 glider pilots.

vation and then be retracted for reloading. Coupole Nord (Cu 120), the center cupola, had the largest guns in the fort—two 120mm guns positioned alongside each other for maximum firepower effect. Three false cupolas made of thin steel were emplaced around the fort's perimeter to further confuse and deter potential attackers. Each casemate or cupola had electric elevators to provide ammunition to the gun emplacements.

Two blockhouses were sited on the banks of the Albert Canal to fire north and south to protect the bridges and were thus named Canal Nord and Canal Sud. Six outside artillery observation posts were linked to the fort, covering the most likely enemy approaches. Additionally, five large, heavily defended concrete blockhouses protected the south and east sides of the fort, with Bloc 1 being the fort's main entrance. Gun crews consisted of 16 to 30 men, depending on the type and number of guns in the emplacement.

And, as if all of these positions were not formidable enough, two concrete machine-gun emplacements, Mi Nord and Mi Sud, were sited to cover the other gun emplacements on top of the fortress in the unlikely event that any enemy ground troops managed to penetrate the impressive exterior defenses.

Thus, the fort's Offensive Battery comprised the north- and south-facing artillery casemates, while the three gun cupolas and the Defensive Battery consisted of the blockhouses and machine-gun emplacements, with four antiaircraft pits added on the south end of the fort for good measure.

TO ENSURE MAXIMUM SECURITY, THE FORT WAS DESIGNED WITH BACK-UP DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS THAT COULD BE BROUGHT INTO PLACE IF ANY OF THE CUPOLAS OR CASEMATES WERE BREACHED.

Despite the impressive machine-gun and antiaircraft emplacements, the fort's upper

surface lacked fully developed belts of barbed wire, mines, and trenches to protect the casemates and cupolas from direct airborne attack simply because Belgian planners had never thought the idea of an airborne attack was feasible. The scarcity of antiaircraft emplacements indicates exactly how oblivious the planners were to such an eventuality. Airborne assault, whether by paratrooper or glider, had still not been fully conceptualized in 1940. Hitler ordered his airborne troops to train in absolute secrecy, lest the Belgians be warned of his plans.

Five miles of underground tunnels and galleries inside Saint Peter's Hill were installed over the fortress's two levels. Signs at intersections indicated which direction the soldiers should go to reach their defensive positions. Even today, when touring the fort, guides are very careful to keep the groups together so no one gets lost in the long passageways.

The Lower Level, accessed through Bloc 1, contained a decontamination room, defensive positions, armorers' workshops, toilet and shower facilities, holding cells for recalcitrant Belgian soldiers, electrical generators, kitchens, storerooms, a commander's office, barracks, an infirmary, and a pump room. The Intermediate Level consisted of three miles of tunnels that provided access to all fighting blocs, casemates, cupolas, and defensive blockhouses, plus a command post, telephone exchange, ammunition magazines, and ammunition hoists and stairs.

To ensure maximum security, the fort was designed with back-up defensive systems that could be brought into place if any of the cupolas or casemates were breached. A series of armored doors could seal off each gun emplacement if the emplacement was captured. The armored doors were arranged in twin pairs, with a space between that could be filled with sandbags and eight-inch steel beams in an emergency. These worked effectively when the German glidermen attacked, and the fort's interior was never breached.

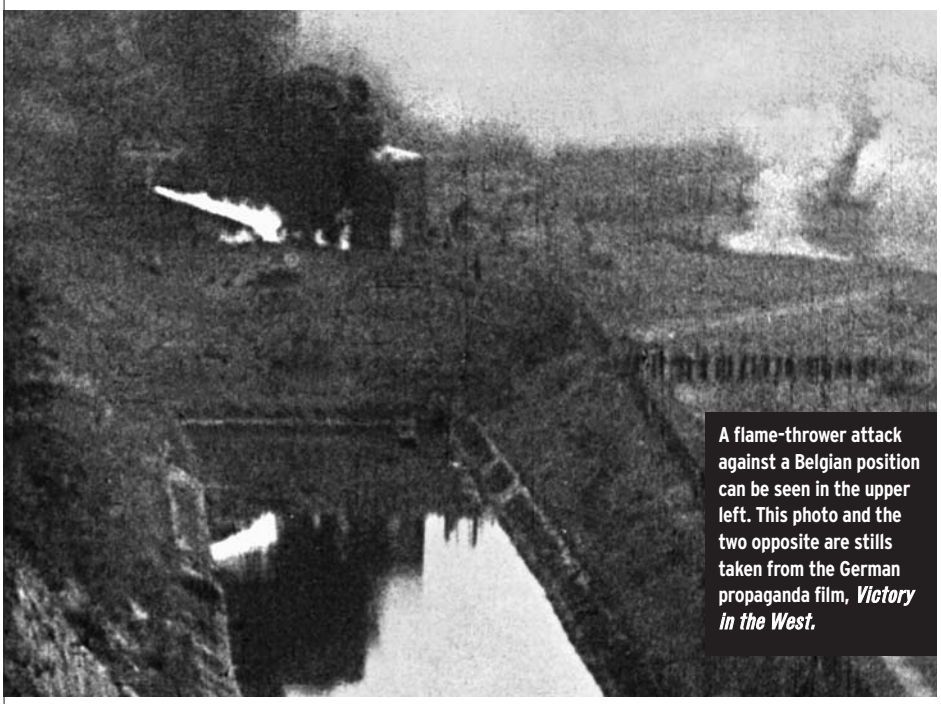
The garrison's normal complement of soldiers was 500, plus another 200 for command, technical, and administrative duties. However, in May 1940, many were sick from throat and respiratory irritations from their weeklong stints in the dusty tunnels. On May 9, 1940, the day before the attack, the gun battery strength was down by 100 men, as many conscripted soldiers, with war looming, were recruited away into the Belgian Army. Between sick soldiers, conscripts whose service had expired, and an additional 150 men away on leave, the garrison was 250 men below operational strength at this crucial time.

The total authorized garrison strength of 1,200 men, 233 of whom were stationed four miles away in the village of Wonck, meant that reinforcements would be late if the fort were to come under attack; the off-base soldiers would be summoned by the firing of 20 blank rounds from the fort's big guns. By May 1940, morale was low due to repeated alerts and false alarms during the Phoney War, and the men were bored with garrison life. Training suffered, and equipment was not maintained for combat readiness. Furthermore, the Belgian troops were all artillery trained, versus infantry trained, which showed in combat when the Belgian soldiers were ordered to counterattack the Germans on top of the fort.

The complicated Belgian chain of command meant that fort commander Jean Jottrand could not directly order the guns to fire. They could only be fired on the command of the Belgian units in the surrounding area, and only at targets specified by them. This would prove to have dire consequences during the assault—for this lack of independent decision making and immediate reaction would enable the Germans to gain a foothold on the fort before the guns could fire.

While no single one of these mistakes would have resulted in the fall of the fort, the combined effect would cost valuable lives and time at critical moments during the attack.

THE KEY TO SUCCESSFULLY OVERCOMING THE FORT'S DEFENSES WOULD BE TO KNOCK OUT THE FORTIFICATIONS WITHIN THE FIRST HOUR.



Ullstein Bild/The Granger Collection, New York

A flame-thrower attack against a Belgian position can be seen in the upper left. This photo and the two opposite are stills taken from the German propaganda film, ***Victory in the West.***

Ullstein Bild/The Granger Collection, New York

ABOVE: German troops cross the Albert Canal as an artillery round smashes into Eben-Emael's 40-meter-tall walls. BELOW: Two DFS-230 gliders lie where they came to rest on top of the fortress.

National Archives

The airborne assault on Fort Eben-Emael was only one part of a complex airborne and ground attack plan. Hitler's strategy called for three other glider parties to be launched at the same time as the Eben-Emael assault group.

These three groups were to take the three road bridges across the Albert Canal. Sturmgruppe Stahl (Assault Group Steel) was to capture the Veldwezelt Bridge, Sturmgruppe Breton (Concrete) would attack the Vroenhoven Bridge, and Sturmgruppe Eisen (Iron) was to capture the bridge at Kanne.

All bridges had been wired for demolition by the Belgians, so the assault groups had to land as close as possible to the target bridges in simultaneous surprise attacks before they could be defeated by the Belgian defenders. All of this while the fort was being neutralized by the fourth glider assault group—code-named Sturmgruppe Granit (Granite). It was the largest of the four groups, with 87 men assigned.

Altogether, 420 Fallschirmjäger and 42 glider pilots under the overall command of Captain Walter Koch were assigned these difficult tasks.

Junkers Ju-87 Stuka dive-bombers would be provided for close air support. Then paratroopers would land to provide support 40 minutes after the initial glider landings, followed by the 4th Panzer Division of the German Sixth Army that would provide artillery support as the troops approached the bridges from the border.

The key to successfully overcoming the fort's defenses would be to knock out the fortifications within the first hour, while the Belgians were confused and disoriented. If this could not be done, the Belgians would have time to regroup and counterattack, hindering the Fallschirmjägers' demolition of the guns. The pioneers (combat engineers or sappers) of Granit were divided into 11 sections, with one section in each glider. Each section was assigned a particular numbered target on the fort's surface. Granit's first priority was to destroy the antiaircraft guns, then the observation domes on top of the casemates. Then the Granit force would destroy the guns pointing north.

The German combat engineers would be relieved within 24 hours by pioneers of the 51st Battalion and 151st Infantry Regiment, who would attack the interior of the fort and force its surrender. Even today, many regard this complicated plan as too risky, yet Hitler's Fallschirmjäger trained for it with great relish and confidence.

The Sturmgruppe Granit glidermen, under the direct command of 1st Lieutenant Rudolf Witzig, were essentially Germany's first Special Forces, trained in firearms, night operations, parachuting, and survival training, with much emphasis placed on independent thinking and mental and physical resilience. They were even trained on how to drive Belgian trams. Because the battalion trained in Brandenburg, near Berlin, they were called the Brandenburgers. They were then moved to Czechoslovakia to practice on the Czechs' fortified defense lines in the Sudetenland, then to Poland, and finally to two airfields near Cologne.

The Brandenburgers trained in complete secrecy for six months before the attack, completely cut off from the outside world. No mail, no visitors, no leave, and no contact with other German soldiers were permitted. Their parachute badges were removed from their uniforms. The place they were going to attack was never mentioned; they only learned the name of the fortress after they had captured it. Two paratroopers who were overheard making indiscrete comments about their mission were court-martialed and sentenced to

death within hours, although the sentences were commuted the day after the assault took place.

Highly trained sport glider pilots were recruited for the assault, although many at first refused the opportunity to take part in this attack; they were expected to become infantrymen after the landing and participate in the fighting. Reluctant pilots were eventually persuaded to take part in this great adventure by appealing to their patriotism "for the Führer," and were given the same pioneer training as the Brandenburgers.

Hitler, who had conceived of this complex assault, had another secret weapon up his sleeve. His engineers had recently invented a new type of explosive, the hollow-charge weapon—without which the attack could not have been attempted. By shaping conventional explosives around a copper cone, the detonation produced a plasma jet of molten metal that could penetrate nearly 10 inches of steel and even go through almost 14 inches of concrete—perfect for the bunker busting at Fort Eben-Emael.

The shaped charges came in two sizes. The largest charge, weighing 110 pounds, was in two sections and had to be hand placed on the bunker. Then a fuse had to be lit while the soldiers took cover. The smaller charge could penetrate from 4.75 to 6 inches of steel. The paratroopers trained to carry the explosive charges by carrying heavy rocks around, making their fellow soldiers think they were military prisoners.

Ironically, a Swiss scientist had invented a similar explosive for the French military, and the French officially approved it on May 10, 1940, the day the shaped charge was used by the Germans on Eben-Emael.

The DFS 230 glider was based on the design for a meteorological aircraft, with a short airframe and stubby 72-foot wingspan. With a framework of steel tubing covered by painted canvas fabric, the DFS could carry eight troopers, a pilot, and several hundred pounds of ammunition, for a total payload of 4,600 pounds. It was towed by a Junkers 52 transport plane and, once released from the tow plane, could glide 12 miles and land accurately on a pinpoint target. Its undercarriage was a skid attached below the fuselage.

Two full dress rehearsals of the glider assault on Eben-Emael were made, but it was found that the gliders could not stop on top of the fort; they would have slid right across the top and over the edge. To address this, a wooden saw-toothed drag brake was installed under the glider to dig into the ground. Hannah Reitsch, Hitler's famous test pilot, personally tested the glider braking system and found it to be operational.

As the date for the operation drew near, the gliders were disassembled and loaded into furniture trucks, then transported to the Cologne airfields under heavy security and along empty roads at night. The airfields were surrounded by barbed wire and hidden from the view of other German troops by straw mats that were hung around them.

At midnight on May 9 the German High Command, Oberkommando des Heeres (OKH), issued orders to start the invasion of Belgium. Captain Koch received the orders at 12:40 AM, woke the men at 3 AM, and ordered them to make final preparations. The Junkers aircrews and Luftwaffe ground crews arrived at the airfields to make last-minute preparations. The departure time was 4:30 AM, calculated to have all four glider groups landing at 5:25 AM on their various targets. All went smoothly; at 4:35 the last glider was off the ground.

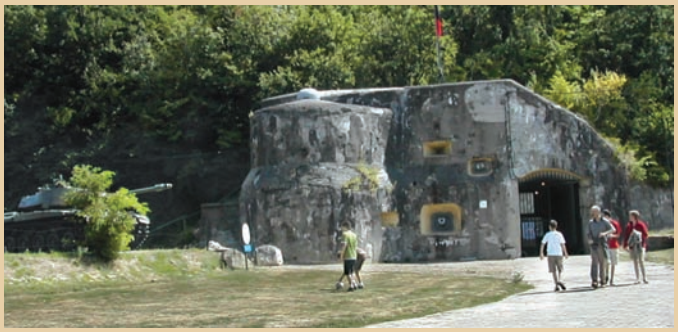
TOURING FORT EBEN-EMAEL TODAY

A visit to Fort Eben-Emael makes an excellent day trip. The fort and its upper surface are the property of the Belgian Army, and the site remains the equivalent of a much-revered military monument. The fort is open one weekend each month from March to November, and visitors can enter the inside of the fort and walk around the field above on the surface. Visit the website www.fort-eben-emael.be for exact details of the open days and tours.

Once inside the entrance you should proceed to the bookshop to get a map of the interior. Then you can do a self-guided tour of the armorers' rooms, oil tanks, electrical power plant, showers, and washing rooms. A little further along you'll find the commander's office, guardroom, officers' mess, barracks rooms, ventilation system, a room of remembrance, the hospital and operating theater, and a small museum with rifles, pistols, machine guns, cannon, shells, ammunition, German and Belgian World War II uniforms, dozens of historic photographs, documents, and soldiers' military packs and personal items.

There is a two-hour tour with an English-speaking Belgian guide offered once each day. The guide gives an excellent overview of the history and construction of Eben-Emael. Places of interest visited on the tour include the generator machine room, gun turrets (with graphic examples of the destruction done by the shaped charges), bunkers, fire-direction offices, the telephone exchange, the radio room, and the air-filter installation.

The interior fort tour covers one mile, giving some idea of the size of this behemoth fortress, so wear comfortable walking shoes.



A view of Bloc 1, the main visitor entrance to Eben-Emael today. Scars caused by munitions are visible on the concrete.

The pilots flew along a path illuminated by a line of blue searchlight beams and bonfires 20 kilometers apart, directing them to the Dutch border, at 8,500 feet. Problems soon arose. The glider carrying commander Lieutenant Witzig was cast loose early, and another glider was freed by a near collision, depriving the Granit assault group of two gliders before they had even reached the fort. This was 20 percent of their strength and included their commanding officer. Nevertheless, once the plan had been activated, it could not be recalled, so the remaining planes continued.

A strong tail wind meant that the Junkers had to tow the gliders over the Dutch border, compromising the silent approach. The gliders were finally released at 5:10 and, after 15 minutes of gliding, approached Fort Eben-Emael.

Much earlier, the Dutch and Belgian armies had detected the sound of German armor moving along the border, and Eben-Emael's commander, Major Jottrand, received an alert order at 12:32 AM from Headquarters III Corps. The fort's internal siren rang and the process of calling in key personnel by telephone began. Confirmation of the alert came at 4 AM, when the Junkers were heard flying over Dutch airspace. Jottrand finally sounded the invasion alert. He ordered the Kanne Bridge and the lock at Lanaye to be demolished, and for the two temporary wooden barracks at the entrance to Bloc 1 to be razed to the ground to permit a full field of fire from the position.

Unfortunately, some of the gun crews sent to demolish the barracks were Jottrand's experienced gunners, leaving inexperienced troops at the guns. These soldeirs did not know the procedures for summoning the rest of the troops at Wonck (firing 20 blank rounds). Further, firing pins from Coupole Sud had recently been removed and had not been replaced properly. Finally, an armorer replaced them and some warning blanks were fired at 3:25, but the muzzle flashes set fire to the camouflage netting, obscuring the firing periscope's view. The warning shots were not completed, and many of the Belgian soldiers at Wonck ignored the summons.

At 5:15 AM, Jottrand was informed of unidentified aircraft over Maastricht, so he put the four machine-gun and antiaircraft crews on high alert. By 5:25 the gliders were already skidding to a stop on top of the fort, and the machine-gun crews that had opened fire at close range could not zero in on the fast moving gliders. Two of the machine guns jammed. Gliders were landing simultaneously by the three bridges on the Albert Canal. Ten minutes later the German ground offensive began.

The 71 German paratroopers fanned out as they landed and rapidly went about their business, now under command of Sergeant Helmut Wenzel. The machine-gun positions at the south end of the fort were captured immediately by Sergeant Erwin Haug's section, the first glider team to land. The glider landed so close to one position that it tore a machine gun right out of the pit and stopped beside another pit. Sergeant Karl-Heinz Lange led a brief charge on the pit and threw a stick grenade into it, killing one Belgian and enabling the Germans to capture two others.

Sergeant Karl Unger's section landed within 30 meters of its target, Coupole Nord, and was joined by Haug's section. Privates Hannes Else and Herbert Plietz dashed toward the objective. Inside the cupola, the Belgians had discovered that they did not have any canister rounds ready to sweep the top of the fort. Had they been available, these rounds may well have tilted the odds in favor of the defenders. Else detonated a 110-pound charge outside the infantry exit doors, killing and

If you are claustrophobic, you will probably not enjoy this tour. The temperature is always a cool 12 degrees Celsius or 54 degrees Fahrenheit, so a warm jacket is recommended. There is a cafeteria and bookshop near the entrance.

Once you have explored the fort's interior, a visit to the upper surface is a must to complete the story. That is, after all, where the action took place. You walk up a narrow dirt trail that starts just to the left of the Bloc I entrance. The trail winds uphill through a small forest to emerge on the huge 185-acre field on top of the fort; this is where the gliders landed. Today it is used for growing rye, and also serves as a nature reserve with trees, plants, and flowers. Even today, when standing atop the fort, looking out over the golden rye fields, it is difficult to imagine that a massive military complex lies directly beneath you. When you are trying to orient yourself, remember that there were no trees or foliage on the superstructure.

In the summer you can walk to all of the defensive positions, casemates, and gun turrets through tall rye and clamber up the ladder to the rear of each concrete defensive position. Bullet marks and shell holes pit the concrete surface of the blockhouses—a poignant reminder of the fierce battle that raged here in 1940. □

ABOVE: A German DFS 230 glider of the type used on the Eben-Emael assault. This glider is on display at the Berlin Gatow airfield aviation museum. LEFT: Cupola 120. Note the circular damage caused by a hollow-shape charge over the gun.

Ullstein Bild/The Granger Collection, New York

German troops, tank obstacles, destroyed buildings, and the shell-scarred exterior of Bloc 1 are all visible in this photo taken several days after the Eben-Emael garrison surrendered.

wounding several Belgian soldiers inside. On top of Coupole Nord, two German glidermen had detonated one of the new 26-pound shaped charges, making an impressive explosion that shook the ground around the cupola. The blast twisted the guns, damaged the ammunition mechanism, and cut the cables to the control system. Coupole Nord was put out of action. The surviving Belgian soldiers retreated down the stairs and prepared the barricade of steel beams and sand bags.

Sergeant Hans Nidermeier and his section quickly attacked the Maastricht 2 casemate after their glider landed heavily in the open ground between Maastricht 2 and Coupole 120. The two observers in the small observation post atop Maastricht 2 had not seen the gliders landing, but they knew something was up when they saw legs in German uniform on top of their casemate. A Belgian sergeant barely had time to warn the gun crews below when a charge went off atop the post, killing the men inside and causing splinters to fly in all directions.

A second charge was placed below a gun port, throwing the 75mm gun off its mountings, killing two Belgians and wounding one, and opening a two-foot square hole through which the glidermen scrambled after throwing hand grenades. Some Belgians lay stunned from the blasts, but the remainder scrambled down the stairs to the intermediate level where they packed steel beams and sandbags into the security door.

Sergeant Peter Arent's section attacked Maastricht 1 after landing only 80 feet from it. They placed a shaped charge against one of the gun embrasures and blew one of the 75mm guns off its mounting. The Belgians retreated down to the intermediate level and prepared to counterattack, but Arent dropped a bundle of hand grenades down the elevator, forcing the Belgians to seal off the lower entrance with the steel beams and sand bags.

After landing only 55 yards from Mi Sud, Sergeant Ewald Neuhaus found it empty because its gun crew was still back at Bloc 1 clearing the administration offices and tearing down the wooden barracks. However, Belgian machine gunners soon arrived and opened fire on the attackers. Sergeant Ernst Schlosser discharged a flamethrower against the embrasure, silencing the guns, and soon two 27-pound and three 110-pound hollow charges detonated in the southern embrasure, causing the shaken Belgians to withdraw to the intermediate level below.

Kurt Engelmann's section assaulted Mi Nord in a similar manner. They attacked with flamethrowers, a 2.2-pound charge, a 27-pound charge and a 110-pound charge, blowing a hole through its walls through which they attacked. Several dead Belgian soldiers lay about. The field telephone rang, and Engelmann calmly answered it. He listened to some rapid-fire French then said, "Here are the Germans," to which the Belgian officer replied, "Oh, Mon Dieu." Mi Nord was to become the German command post for the rest of the assault.

By 6:30 AM, Lieutenant Witzig, whose glider had been cast loose from the tow plane too early, had commandeered another glider and Junker tow plane, landed on the fort and resumed command. His immediate problem was Coupole 120, which was still rotating although its guns could not fire because its periscope had not been attached to the cupola and the ammunition hoists and loaders were not working. However, the soldiers within were firing their rifles at the attacking Germans.

At 6:45, Witzig ordered another attack on Coupole 120; the Germans advanced, sheltering behind Belgian prisoners, and attached a 121-pound hollow charge above the left-hand gun. Although the charge did not penetrate, the cupola stopped turning. So the Germans moved on, thinking the cupola was out of action, and attacked Bloc 2. However, the Belgians reoccupied Coupole 120, wearing gas masks to protect themselves against the poisoned atmosphere, and continued shooting at the Germans. Later, one of Haug's men, Sergeant Ernst Grechza, roaring drunk from rum in his water bottle, climbed up Coupole 120 and sat astride the gun, riding it like a bronco. Furious, Wenzel ordered the soldier down and placed some charges into the gun barrels.

Within 20 minutes the glidermen had successfully attacked nine of the Belgian positions. Charges were placed on seven armored observation domes, with five domes rendered inoperable. Nine of the 75mm guns in three of the casemates were destroyed. Most of the other casemates and emplacements fell like dominoes. Thus, the main gun emplacements that could have seriously hindered the Albert Canal attacks, with one exception,

had been cleared by only 71 men. Coupole Sud was the only gun atop the fort that remained operational, firing on targets aimed by the Bloc 1 observation posts. All German attempts to destroy these positions failed, including attacks by Stuka dive-bombers.

As the day wore on, things got hot for the Germans as the Belgian army recovered from the initial shock of the attacks. There were two half-hearted counterattacks by the Belgians within the fort, but these soldiers were artillery trained and did not know how to prosecute a ground attack.

The exhausted and thirsty Germans had not been relieved according to the timetable. An effort to cross the Albert Canal on the evening of May 10 to relieve Sturmgruppe Granit on Eben-Emael was stopped by Blockhouse Nord's 75mm guns.

At the fort, Witzig's assault group was running low on ammunition and water. To make matters worse, the other Belgian fortresses within range of Eben-Emael began directing their fire onto its upper surface to dislodge the Germans, lobbing 1,200 shells onto the position. Several Germans were wounded, but most of them safely sheltered in the gun emplacements they had captured.

After dark the Germans renewed their attacks on several operational gun emplacements. Descending into Maastricht 1, they found the armored doors blocking their way. They went up to the surface and returned with a 110-pound hollow charge with which they blew in the armored doors, killing four Belgian soldiers, but could go no farther into the fortress because of the debris.

Meanwhile, two bridgeheads over the Albert Canal had been taken intact, with the third, the Kanne Bridge, destroyed by the Belgians. Just 40 minutes after the glider landings, paratroopers reinforced the glidermen, and eventually Belgian resistance was overcome.

At 4 the next morning, Pioneer Battalion 51 managed to cross the Albert Canal to subdue Bloc II by firing a flamethrower through the aperture and exploding a 110-pound charge against the embrasure, killing one Belgian gunner and wounding six more. By 7 AM, the Germans were climbing the slope of the fort and linking up with Witzig's group, and at 8:30 Witzig turned the captured installations over to them.

Still, some defenders were holding out. By mid-morning, the air inside the fort was deteriorating as poisonous fumes from the explosions spread through the ventilation system, and Belgian morale was falling. Major Jottrand planned the surrender, and at 11:45 a Belgian bugler, Vervier, and an officer, Captain Vamecq, stepped outside Bloc 1, walked across the retractable bridge across the moat and, with a white sheet flying on a broom handle, negotiated the surrender of the fort.

The firing ceased, but no one had pulled the bridge back, and suddenly the entire garrison of 780 men came out with their hands in the air behind a perplexed Vamecq; the line of despondent Belgian prisoners was one mile long. The garrison had suffered 21 killed and 145 wounded. The survivors were transported to Dortmund and Hemer and kept in strict isolation until July 4, 1940, because the Germans did not want knowledge of their glider attack or their secret hollow-charge weapons to reach the Allies. Finally, they were imprisoned in a POW camp at Fallingbostel, near Hannover, Germany.

THE FALL OF EBEN-EMAEL DEMONSTRATED HOW A FAST, HARD-HITTING, SURPRISE ATTACK COULD SHOCK DEFENDERS, CAUSING MORALE TO PLUMMET RAPIDLY, LEADING TO SURRENDER.

The fall of Eben-Emael demonstrated how a fast, hard-hitting, surprise attack could shock defenders, causing morale to plummet rapidly, leading to surrender. Through excellent planning, innovative use of gliders, and hollow-charge technology Eben-Emael fell in just over 31 hours. Sturmgruppe Granit suffered six killed and 15 wounded. All officers of the glider assaults received the Knight's Cross, and the NCOs and men of Sturmabteilung Koch, the parent regiment, received a generous allowance of Iron Crosses, personally presented by Hitler in a special ceremony on May 15, 1940.

The daring assault on Fort Eben-Emael paved the way for rapid German victory in the West. Within weeks, Hitler's army marched into Paris. □

National Archives

Wearing their iconic jump smocks and Fallschirmjäger helmets, a group of glider troopers relax after securing the victory.

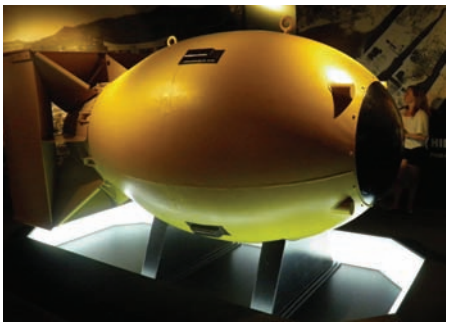
The world-class National Museum of the Pacific War recalls the conflict's vast sweep.

THE SMALL (population 12,000), central-Texas town of Fredericksburg, about an hour's drive west of Austin and a little more than that northwest of San Antonio, may seem an odd location for the National Museum of the Pacific War until one realizes that Fredericksburg is the hometown of Fleet Admiral Chester Nimitz—the Eisenhower of the Pacific Theater.

And while it may seem a bit off the beaten path and a long way to drive, the NMPW is worth every mile. In fact, the museum is the equal of the world's other great military museums: the National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning; the Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson (Dayton); the Marine Corps Museum at Quantico, Virginia; the 1st Infantry Division Museum in Wheaton, Illinois; the Imperial War Museum in London; the World War I Museum in Kansas City, etc.

Dramatic lighting, music, sound effects, and strikingly designed exhibits guide the visitor through the sometimes-complex Pacific campaign in an easy-to-follow, chronologically arranged trail. The museum is jam-packed with important artifacts, such as one of the Japanese mini-submarines raised from the waters at Pearl Harbor; a rusty hatch recovered from the sunken USS *Arizona*; a number of U.S. and Japanese aircraft, including a B-25 of the type that Jimmy Doolittle's squadron used in the 1942 raid on Tokyo; a damaged Aussie Stuart tank and, nearby, the very Japanese gun that knocked it out on Buna; and much more.

This Australian M-3 Stuart tank was knocked out by a Japanese gun during the battle for the Kokoda Track on New Guinea, May 1942. A video interview with the surviving tank commander adds the human element to the display.



TOP: A full-size replica of "Fat Man"—the atomic bomb dropped by the B-29 *Bock's Car* over Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. ABOVE: Richard Koone, education director of the museum, gives a weapons demonstration in front of the realistic "Tarawa" battlefield at the Pacific Combat Zone. BELOW: Two reenactors in Marine uniforms assault an enemy pillbox with a flamethrower during the fiery conclusion of a battle for spectators. (Courtesy NMPW)

Exterior view of the Admiral Nimitz Museum (formerly a hotel) and a part of the National Museum of the Pacific War.

ABOVE: Well-designed displays lead the visitor chronologically from one island engagement to another, while offering occasional reminders of what was taking place in the European Theater of Operations and elsewhere. BELOW: After its gyrocompass malfunctioned, this 78-foot-long midget submarine, the *HA-19*, ran aground on Oahu during the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Full-scale aircraft carrier hangar deck diorama in the Pacific Combat Zone annex featuring a TBM "Avenger" torpedo bomber of the same type as flown by Lieutenant George H. W. Bush.

In addition to the displays at the main facility, the museum also has an annex—the Pacific Combat Zone—located three blocks east. The annex, which requires a guide to visit (available for free at the main museum), houses the last existing PT boat (PT-309) to see combat, a TBM Avenger, and a realistic outdoor amphitheater where reenactors representing Japanese troops and U.S. Marines do battle for the public on certain weekends of the year; check the museum's website for dates and times.

Plan to spend several days in the Fredericksburg area (call the convention and visitor bureau's toll-free number 1-888-997-3600 or see www. VisitFredericksburg TX.com). In addition to the museum, the Texas Hill Country area is akin to Taos or Santa Fe, with many art galleries, wineries, and distinctive architecture dating from the mid-1800s. A great place to stay to put you in the mood for the museum is the Hangar Hotel (www. hangarhotel.com), with its nostalgic 1940s decor, located at the Gillespie County Airport, three miles from the museum. □

LOCATION: 311 E. Austin Street, Fredericksburg, TX 78624

PHONE: (830) 997-8600

WEBSITE: www.PacificWarMuseum.org

ADMISSION: Admission fee charged; see website for pricing

HOURS: Open 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
7 days a week (Closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day)

Holland

Continued from page 21

secured by the Dutch. The money was given to the Canadians, who turned the guilders over to American officials. It was sent to the quartermaster depot along with the inventory of personal effects.

After the war the remains of *Bette*'s four crew members were exhumed from the cemetery at Dinteloord and taken to the temporary American cemetery at Margraten in southern Holland. Captain Bohannan was buried in grave 3K-10-245, and Lieutenant Felber in grave 3K-10-241. During the correspondence between the government and the families involved, the families informed the government they wanted the remains of their loved ones repatriated to the States.

In December 1948, the remains of Captain Bohannan and Lieutenants Martinson and Felber were exhumed from Margraten, transported to Antwerp harbor, and taken on board the Victory ship USAT *Barney Kirschbaum* together with many others. At New York harbor the transport ship was unloaded and the coffins were put in a storage facility on Pier 61. From there the coffins were taken by train to the respective hometowns.

Captain Richard E. Bohannan is buried in the Kensico Cemetery at Kensico, Westchester County, New York. Second Lieutenant Douglas Felber was buried on January 31, 1949, in the Camp Butler National Cemetery, located in Springfield, Illinois, in grave C-534. First Lieutenant Bernard P. Martinson was first buried at Margraten in grave 3K-10-242. Today he rests in the Calvary Cemetery in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Staff Sergeant Arnold B. Epperson was first buried in the temporary American cemetery at Margraten in grave 3K-10-244. Today, he still rests in Margraten Cemetery but was moved to grave P-3-15.

The sacrifice of the men in the C-47 transport plane *Bette*, as well as all the Allied soldiers who came and fought to liberate people they did not know, is still remembered by the grateful people of Holland more than six decades after the war. □

Ted Crosby

Continued from page 35

Crosby sadly admitted, "I lost friends that day—we lost six guys. And it was due [in part] because we had a stupid leader." Ted doesn't name the officer but described the events as he remembered them. "We were flying along under a thin overcast. Wooley and I were trying to get this guy [the leader] to fly over it, but he wouldn't do it. 'Stay off the air—I'm the leader—get out of here!' he said. Well, Wooley and I dropped back and climbed up. As we popped up over the overcast, we saw them—four Georges tracking and watching the rest of the squadron, who were ahead of me and Wooley."

As soon as they saw Crosby and Wooley, and knew their cover was blown, the Georges plunged down on the main body of Hellcats without hesitation. The result was a massive dogfight that cost the lives of six Americans.

Crosby also had a close call on a photo-recon mission near Shokaku, after American carrier planes had attacked Japanese shipping in the area. "I had my plot board out and I'm putting down the time of day, the slant of the sun, and all that had to do with photography. Suddenly, I saw stuff [bullets] bouncing off my wing. I look back, and there's this guy on my tail—probably a George. Only time I ever had a guy on my tail."

After one pass the George broke off the attack and seemed to head back to his base. Crosby was not inclined to follow him. At the moment he was alone, and following an enemy plane over enemy territory did not seem like a wise thing to do. After he got back to Homet, Ted found an unexploded 30mm shell in his cockpit armor, mute testimony to his luck and the fact that American aircraft designs protected their pilots.

Ted Crosby remained in the Navy after the war and retired with the rank of commander. Although he had a long and distinguished naval career, the memories of his days aboard Bunker Hill and Homet remain fresh, even after the passage of 65 years. □

Misconduct

Continued from page 27

him. He did not succeed in anything except getting himself shot."

The stories reach an almost monotonous and ghastly infinity where each is more lurid than the one that preceded it, but they indicate the severity of the problem. The almost incomprehensible scale of that problem can only be presented in numbers. In Berlin alone, the city's two main hospitals estimated that as many as 130,000 women had been raped there. One of the doctors dealing directly with the crisis believed that more than 10,000 of those victims had died.

One of the alarming consequences of this epidemic was a widespread wave of suicides. In Berlin and elsewhere in Germany, rape victims began to take their own lives by gunshot, ingestion of poison, slitting of the wrists, and hanging. In East Prussia, Pomerania, and Silesia, the number of victims of the Red Army's "immoral action" soared to 1.4 million. Of the two million victims of the Soviet Army nationwide, almost half were thought to have endured multiple sexual assaults during the closing months of the war.

In terms of the overall scale of the crime, there was nothing like it elsewhere in Germany. Comparison to the "surprisingly high" incidence of rape in areas overrun by the U.S. Army was superficial at best. In terms of intensity and brutality, only French colonial troops from Morocco matched the Red Army's rapacity. During the initial occupation of Baden and Württemburg, they subjected German women to the same indiscriminate sexual assaults seen in the East. Although the Soviet Union was not alone in committing sexual crimes against German women, it did so with a vastness unmatched elsewhere in World War II.

To be fair, the crime of rape is an all-too-familiar instrument of war that has accompanied conquest through the ages. The Red Army soldiers who conquered parts of Germany in 1945 did not invent this wretched form of misconduct—they just took it to an unprecedented level. □

Moe Berg

Continued from page 11

and Dr. Vannevar Bush, chief of the U.S. Office of Scientific Research.

Werner Heisenberg was the most prominent German physicist of the day, and it was widely believed by the OSS that he had made significant advances in the development of a German atomic weapon. To stop Germany's progress, the OSS hatched a plot to kill Heisenberg. The operation began in October 1942 and ended in December 1944 when it was no longer considered prudent to continue.

As time went on, a scheme was hatched to kidnap Heisenberg. The plan called for Heisenberg to be taken from Germany to Switzerland, then by plane across the Mediterranean and dropped by parachute to a waiting American submarine. Dr. Hans Berthe, who helped build the American atomic bomb at Los Alamos, New Mexico, tried to get British intelligence to go for the kidnapping plot but was refused.

Like a scene in a Keystone Kops routine, the Heisenberg operation was canceled but reactivated in the summer of 1944. In December, Berg met with William Casey of the OSS (Casey was later to serve as the head of the CIA under President Ronald Reagan) at Claridge's Hotel in London and was told by the spymaster that he (Berg) was "going to try to find Heisenberg." Two days later, Berg left for Paris and then Switzerland. Before leaving, he spent one week being briefed by Major Tony Calvert, an intelligence officer based in London, and by Samuel Goudsmit, a Dutch-born physicist.

The OSS had plans for Berg to enter Switzerland under the cover of "a technical expert who desires to proceed to Switzerland and for a period probably not exceeding two months for possible consultation with well-known Swiss scientists."

That month, Heisenberg traveled to Zurich to give a talk at the Federal Technical College. Moe Berg was sent to observe the German scientist. If Berg thought that Heisenberg believed Germany was close to building an atomic bomb, Berg was given free rein to kill him.

After watching and listening to Heisenberg, Berg had the chance to meet with him and, following their discussions, he decided not to take Heisenberg's life. Berg was later to write, "As I listen, I am uncertain what to do."

In *Heisenberg's War*, author Thomas Powers writes, "Heisenberg was quite right when he insisted that a huge effort would be required to build a bomb.... But in Germany the first prerequisite for success was missing—desire for victory. No sense of danger, no optimism that a bomb could be built, no enthusiasm for the effort was ever pressed on authorities by Heisenberg or any other leading German scientist.... But Heisenberg did not simply withhold himself, stand aside, let the project die. He killed it."

In April 1945, shortly before the war in Europe ended, Berg met with Bill Donovan in Paris, where they both learned of the sudden death of President Roosevelt. Donovan informed Berg that the late president had known about his mission regarding Werner Heisenberg.

After Germany surrendered, Berg returned to Newark where he moved in with his brother. Berg was informed that he had been awarded the Medal of Merit by the U.S. government for his extraordinary wartime service. For reasons known only to him, he declined to accept it. Berg returned to his prewar habits of attending baseball games and spending endless hours browsing used book stores near his home.

In the late 1950s, Berg continued his covert life working for the CIA and later helped NATO select sites for its intercontinental ballistic missiles. In fact, he continued his undercover work almost until the time of his death.

No longer a young man, Berg never returned to baseball but continued to follow his favorite teams. After a fall at home, he died on May 29, 1972. Shortly before his death in a Newark hospital, Berg asked the attending nurse, "How did the Mets do today?"

His family took Berg's ashes to Israel for burial. In an act that would have pleased Moe greatly, the place of interment remains a secret. □

John D. Hoptak | Faculty, School of Art & Humanities

John D. Hoptak is an American and Civil War historian and educator. Author of *The Battle of South Mountain, Our Boys Did Nobly, First in Defense of the Union*, and *Antietam: September 17, 1862*, Hoptak brings to life the riveting conflicts that divided a nation. Hoptak's laboratory is the Antietam National Battlefield, where as a Park Ranger he shares his vast knowledge about the bloodiest day of battle in U.S. history.

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